



dynamics of the reception of world literature

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dynamiques de réception de la littérature
mondiale

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dynamik der rezeption der weltliteratur

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dinámica de recepción de la literatura
universal

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Polishness or Europeaness? Adaptations of the classics in Polish textbooks after 1999

DOROTA MICHULKA, BOŻENA OLSZEWSKA

The educational reform, implemented in Poland since 1999, concerns the structure and the curriculum. As a result, the following types of schools have been established: the 6-year primary school, the 3-year middle school (*gimnazjum*) and the 3-year secondary school. For the first time since the war teachers themselves can not only choose from amongst numerous syllabuses¹ one on the basis of which they will work, but they can also write their own syllabuses. The most significant advantage of the curricular reform is the change concerning the repertory of set books, thanks to which tendentious texts have been removed from the textbooks for the Polish language education. With the new selections, textbooks no longer constitute ideological tools. The texts are to stimulate the motivation to read in the child. The main objective in syllabuses — regardless of their authors — is that of reading and cultural education, which means a direct breach with with the infamous practices of the previous epoch. An analysis of textbooks for the first two levels of the Polish language education clearly shows it. (We have expressly excluded secondary school textbooks because of the age factor. The area of interest is children aged 10–16.) In the choice of texts, authors considered their artistic and axiological value, tradition, and not only fashion or their own taste. This is also valid in

¹ It is difficult to say how many syllabuses have been created, as different sources quote different data. On average there are around 15 per each level. Popularity of a particular syllabus depends firstly on the current fashion and the geographical region, and recently also the price of the textbook written according to this syllabus.

the case of high literature which is adapted for school use. Such an approach is dictated by one of the school's educational objectives, stipulated in the curriculum:

...introducing [pupils] to the world of culture, in particular through . . . stimulation of the motivation to read and development of the skill of reception of literary works and other texts related to culture, including audiovisual materials, through which facilitation of understanding of man and the world should be achieved; introducing them to the tradition of national culture and European culture.²

The Ministry does not recommend either a traditional list, nor obligatory set texts, nor even authors to be discussed in class. The directives specify the subject matter and genres.

Fairy tales, legends, short stories and poems (including regional works). Excerpts from Polish and world classics for children and adolescents with systematic motivation of pupils to become acquainted with the whole texts on their own. Texts representative for the whole European culture. Prose and poetry introducing to Polish tradition and contemporary literature — according to capabilities and needs of the pupils. Texts representative for various kinds, genres and forms of artistic expression, in particular prose, including varieties of fiction (among others travel and adventure novels, novels of manners, fantasy novels. (Ib.).

A consequence of this is the noticeable free choice of set books within particular syllabuses, though a sort of a list of texts emerges, constituting 'the basic code shaping the persistence of collective memory and a field of common experience of culture,' (M. Inglot and T. Patrzalek, *Polonistyka*, 1996) which are therefore indispensable for participation in culture. Among them are included works for adults, which are adapted for child readers for popularisational, cultural, educational and national reasons. There are also significant works

² *Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej o reformie podstawy programowej, kształcenie blokowe, Biblioteczka reformy, Warsaw 1999.*

from the perspective of national and European heritage: the *Bible*; Homer's *Illiad*; *Pan Tadeusz* (*Thaddeus*) and the 3rd part of *Dziady* (*The Forefathers' Eve*) by Adam Mickiewicz; *Krzyżacy* (*Teutonic Knights*) by Henryk Sienkiewicz; *Don Quixote* by Miguel Cervantes, masterpieces, e.g. *The Song of Roland*; *Tristram and Iseult*; *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare. The universal dimension of these works, extended symbolism and metaphor render these books too difficult for young readers and therefore they require appropriate adaptation. Adaptation (Waksmund 1997: 8)³ for school purposes in the light of the new regulations cannot be reduced to a mechanical process with a new author but it must be a purposeful transformation in order to facilitate understanding of the universal dimension of literature, the beauty of the language, ideological trends (patriotism, heroism, love for the past). Therefore, school adaptation conforms to educational and formative aims. Thus authors reject — with very few exceptions — drastic changes. In their textbooks they include shorter or longer fragments, minding that ideology and artism of the whole are preserved. In their choices they also follow clearly defined rules resulting from the organisation of the didactic process. The length of the text is primarily dictated by the age of the pupil, and only secondly — by the didactic purpose. Yet, the fragment selected must always be significant artistically and ideologically, a complete unit in terms of composition, homogeneous in the subject matter or representative for the original. (There is a majority of excerpts illustrating an issue or portraying a protagonist.)

The new textbooks for schools at various levels of education contain excerpts of good quality Polish and world literature. In addition, collections of literary passages in the form of anthologies of literary excerpts have been officially recommended for use in schools. The fact that extended repertoires of set books have been replaced with collections of literary excerpts has led to heated debates among teachers of Polish — in schools and universities. Advocates of 'the

³ In this paper we are using Ryszard Waksmund's definition of adaptation: 'transformation of a literary work with a view to adjusting it for particular readers, with the preservation of constitutive features of the original which allow to identify the adaptation with the source. It is thus both a process and an effect of writing, part of which constitutes the starting point for re-coding the work into the language of other branches of art: theatre, film, cartoon strip, radio play, etc.', in: *Słownik literatury popularnej*: p. 8.

theory of reading excerpts' support their claims with the training given in the skill of reading and text comprehension, which is considerably easier to introduce in the Polish language education in the case of shorter passages. Let's quote some valid views.

An excerpt (fragment) is a small piece or a part broken from something whole, Published separately, for instance, in an anthology, periodical or florilegium (or miscellanies). It is also a bit of the unfinished whole, publicized posthumously or during a writer's life⁴.

For a few years now, (particularly in the last two years), we have observed a practical introduction of *reading comprehension exercises* to schools. Often, these collections of texts are small studies on the border of belles-letters and utilitarian texts. And, in fact, they become more and more instrumental in their nature. At present in the Polish language education (on different levels of teaching), fragments extracted from extensive texts are used for accomplishing various types of mental operations. There is even the valid list of operational verbs which on the level of memorizing information (on the level of 'knowing') are as follows: name, define, list, identify, enumerate, but on the level of understanding the message of an instruction are: summarize, explain, illustrate, differentiate, and on the level of ability (competence) in the application of knowledge (information) in typical situations ('to shape'), the list of operational verbs is as follows: to solve, to apply, to compare, to characterize, to stipulate, etc. And on the last level of knowledge (or information) application in problematic situation, the list of verbs is as follows: to analyze, to evaluate, to offer, to plan, to anticipate⁵.

⁴ Translation from Polish to English based on: Sławiński, J., ed., *Słownik terminów literackich*: p. 131.

⁵ Many of these items were used by the authors of the textbook *To Lubię*. In an excellent manner, they have managed with aspects of linguistic pragmatics on the basic level (to notice, to understand, to utter, to express). These are the exemplary sets of texts and exercises. In the textbook for the fourth grade, there is an excerpt from Prus's *Antek* under the title *Antek w szkole*, an excerpt from *Alicja w krainie czarów* (*Alice in Wonderland*) titled *Alicja rozmawia o szkole* (*Alice talks about school*), an extract from *Przygody Tomka Sawyera* (*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*) titled *Dać w ucho* (*Slap in the Ear*), a fragment extracted from Jerzy Andrzejewski's story *Niby gaj* — without title. In the textbooks for the fifth grade, there is an excerpt from

According to the author's ordering method of themes and issues, fragments are presented in sections. In this way, together with other texts, they constitute a theme cycle. This organisation of the didactic process in theme cycles makes it possible to show an issue in various lights (Chrzastowska 2000: 460). Therefore a better term in relation to numerous school practices after 1999 would be 'adoption', i.e. including a text in the repertory and naturalising it for reception, rather than adaptation *sensu stricte*, though the latter also can be encountered, which shall be discussed later. Unless for the needs of this paper we shall borrow from translational adaptation the term adaptation *sensu largo* (Rajewska 2002: 51). It could even be said that 'naturalisation' is cosmetic in character. It involves titles seen with the bare eye, then motives and sub-plots, characters, situations, descriptions. Among regularly used devices is reduction, used in relation to characters, events, motives, especially those unwelcome from the point of view of pedagogics (e.g. incest); purification; situational abbreviations, in reference to the original generally quite neat 'cutting' and 'trimming' within one excerpt; narrative simplifications or amplifications (supplying a text with a popular or historical foreword, sometimes information about the author and the work, or the plot). Yet, more frequently — especially in textbooks for older pupils — authors include an excerpt from the original. It is not surprising, therefore, that they supply it with questions and tasks facilitating its reception. Texts from earlier epochs, or those using archaisms, are complemented by glossaries explaining meanings and forms of more difficult words, e.g. 'wczas' meaning 'wypoczynek' ('rest'), 'smętarz' — 'cmentarz' ('graveyard'), 'sierci' — 'sierść' ('fur/'bristle'), 'ogrójec' — 'ogród' ('garden').

It is worth examining some devices used.

Pięcioro dzieci i coś under the title *Cały kamienioloł bogactw*, a fragment titled *Lalka doskonała* (*The Perfect Doll*) from Michael Ende's novel *Momo*. In the sixth grade, there is for instance an excerpt from M. Dąbrowska's short story *Wilczęta z czarnego podwórza* titled *Samo życie!*, a fragment titled *Jeść! — wrzasnęła nagle Pulpecja* from Musierowicz's *Kwiat Kalafiora* (in the contemporary anthologies, there are many fragments touching upon family issues taken from Musierowicz's creation) or a fragment from *Robin Hood* by Howard Pyle. In the first grade of junior high school, the pupils get familiarized with good world literature, e.g. excerpts from Homer, Cortazar, Tolkien, Salinger, Shakespeare.

Titles are the first and foremost a sign of school adaptation of the original text. As a rule, they are changed. They very rarely remain in the original version, just like *Sophy's World* by Jostein Gaarder, *Krzyżacy* by Henryk Sienkiewicz, *Szczenięce lata (Tender Age)* by Melchior Wańkowicz. They are hidden under various, oftentimes even misleading, names, such as *Historia Alfa (Alf's Story)* — associated by a fifth-former with adventures of the alien from a popular television series, and not with the protagonist of *Konrad Wallenrod* by Mickiewicz. Most frequently they refer to an event, e.g. *Pojedynek (The Duel)* (Homer's *Illiad*), *Bitwa (The Battle)* (*Krzyżacy* by Sienkiewicz), *Wesele Boryny (Boryna's Wedding)* (*Chłopi (The Peasants)* by Władysław Stanisław Reymont); characters — a symbol of culture, e.g. Prometheus, Hector, Achilles, Odysseus, Roland; space: *Matecznik (Backwoods)* (*Pan Tadeusz* by Mickiewicz); narrative situation: *O tym, jak Danusia uratowała Zbyszka (How Danusia Rescued Zbyszko)* (*Krzyżacy* by Sienkiewicz); a custom or a rite, e.g. *Rycerskie ślubowanie (Knights' Pledge of Allegiance)* (*Krzyżacy*). Those addressed to younger readers are more specific. They contain some introductory information. Even though they attempt to preserve 'the beautiful style,' adapters — here textbook authors — do not resort to using metaphors. Even *The Bible* or mythology, full of symbols, do not spur poetic experiments (e.g. metaphorisation or allegorisation). Any attempts have rather been unsuccessful, e.g. *Stworzony z błota (Made from Mud)* (Siberian myths). An exception is the title *Odfruniesz całkiem gdzie indziej (You Will Fly Completely Somewhere Else)*. The metaphor becomes clear after reading Astrid Lindgren's book *The Brothers Lionheart*, which introduces the difficult subject of death. Sometimes authors use a typical phrase from the original: 'If you tame me' (*The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint Exupéry).

Even a summary analysis of titles, without examining the content of the fragments, shows a certain regularity. The works included mainly deal with us; the sense of human existence and the greatest values. Fragments borrowed from literature for adults concern mankind; man's qualities and aims; the obstacles on the way and methods of overcoming adversities of fate. In relation to the reader's address and characteristics of school communication, textbook authors try to choose excerpts containing clear, unambiguous educational issues; the need to fight for one's country or to help another person. Sometimes

texts are preceded by a foreword providing information about the writer and the work or the protagonist, or introducing the reader to the situation in the excerpt. This takes place in the case of an excerpt from the *Illiad* — the fight between Achilles and Hector.

But these are not the only abridgements aiming to condense and consolidate the plot. Within the quoted fragments, authors leave out scenes which are too drastic for the young reader, omit longer descriptions or episodes and reduce the number of characters. In the aforementioned fragment of the *Illiad* dialogues have been shortened (the verbal duel between Hector and Achilles, gods' argument), Achilles' reply to Hector's request has been cleared of vituperations, as well as Hector's monologue when the spear misses. From the fragment of *Świtez* addressed to pupils in the fifth form — in addition to the first verse sketching the narrative situation and the introductory description of the lake, which turned out to be too difficult for children due to lyrical metaphors and Romantic 'strangeness' — more elements have been removed: numerous descriptions (e.g. of flower 'tzars', of the inundated city, of the water nymph), listings (Tuhan's actions) and narrative parts imbued with emotionalism (manifest in drastic phrasing ('accursed', 'crime', 'violation') and exclamations), or dramatically lyrical portrayal of characters and events. In comparison with the original, the text lacks numerous dialogues (Tuhan's conversation with his daughter about the imminent threat), Tuhan's daughter's promise reverberating with strong determination and cries of despair, the Angel's declaration of help and protection. The detailed description of how the enemy was punished with poisonous herbs is dropped, as it was thought too drastic. These practices are also used in relation to prose, e.g. the novel *Krzyżacy* by Sienkiewicz and *Chłopi* by Reymont. From the former, textbook authors most frequently choose the scenes of the battle of Grunewald, the knights' pledge of allegiance and the description of the Slavonic custom in which an innocent girl could save her beloved from trouble by covering his head with a white shawl. In comparison with Sienkiewicz's novel, the last scene mentioned here has fewer Polish knights on the ground (even without the legendary Zawisza Czarny (The Black Knight) and Maćko z Bogdańca), less narratorial commentary, fewer sentences to introduce or consolidate the text (e.g. 'People did not understand what it meant and why this white-clad maid was to look at the execution of the convict.' (Sienkiewicz 1958: 140); less of the protagonist's

internal monologues; finally, less description of the atmosphere and the growing tension in the crowd before the execution was to take place. In all textbook adaptations of longer prose works there is a clear tendency to simplify narration. Embedded narration, comments and double narration are removed; dialogues and monologues are shortened or removed, sentences are cut off⁶ or reduced (*Krzyżacy*) and verse parts, which in the case of the novels in question serve as symbols of culture and have a stylistic role, are dispensed with (*Chłopi*). In the first fragment the elimination of the song starting with *incipite* 'Adam, God's yeoman' does not ruin the conceptual and artistic frame, in the second case — numerous frivolous folk and wedding songs have been removed for educational reasons. 'Purification' is also clearly visible here. It concerns phrasing and descriptions of improper behaviour, e.g. drunkenness, love-making. In such cases authors leave sentences unfinished and move on to a 'safer' fragment. This can be illustrated with the following excerpt:

And young folks spilled into the country lanes; embracing, they came to the road to chat and to mate — and you could here the rumbling (Reymont 1970: 223), which is shortened to contain only the first message: 'And young folks spilled out behind the fences,' (Gis 1999) with the quotation having been linguistically corrected. The whole sub-plot is skipped, with the focus on the protagonists, i.e. Jagna and Boryna. There are no panoramic descriptions of dancing and entertainment of wedding guests, dialogues between them, any psychological portrayal, e.g. of Dominikowa or Jambroży. The number of characters is reduced, including housemates (Józia, Witek), the anonymous crowd and guests by name have been done away with, as well as any superfluous descriptions, e.g. of the setting sun, of the moon, which are included in the novel for aesthetic and action-delaying reasons. Situational abbreviations are made. One cannot help having an impression that textbook authors present a summary 'on the basis of Sienkiewicz's text.' They supply fragments with iconographic materials: drawings, film takes, photographs and paintings, which appear there as components equivalent in significance.

⁶ The utterance: 'But then his solemnity left him and his heart filled with a great joy that from then on the whole court will consider him a mature man, so — shaking Danusia's mittens — he began to shout half-wittingly, half-earnestly: — Farewell, bastards with peacock crests! Fare thee well!' finishes with 'man'.

There must be compromises made in school adaptations, due to the inclusion of the fragments in school communication. The selections are made in response to educational and psychological needs of the readers. Hence, obviously, books for younger pupils contain cartoon strip adaptations, exemplifying *sensu stricte* adaptation. These are subjected to the needs and capabilities of the contemporary addressees. Authors, conforming to the tastes and trends of young readers, reach out for this means of presentation and popularisation of the classics. Good material for such adaptations are myths, and only secondly novels. It must be added here that in the West real masterpieces of world literature have been honoured with comic strip adaptations, to mention but Homer and Shakespeare. Among the 500 titles printed on the cover of the English series of 'Classics Illustrated. Featuring Stories by the World's Greatest Authors' there are works by Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, M. G. Wells next to classical adaptations (*Gulliver's Travels*, *Robinson Crusoe*). The list features only one Polish work: *Ogniem and mieczem* (*With Fire and Sword*) by Sienkiewicz (Zakrzewski 1966: 193–194).

A fragment of Jules Verne's novel *Around the World in 80 Days* has been adapted for pupils from the fifth form. Readers travel 'Through India on an elephant's back.' Familiar in the form of presentation, with lively action, adventure, humour, exotic land, the adaptation should encourage children to read the whole or the relevant fragment. In the respect of the phrasing and the message conveyed, the cartoon strip closely follows the original novel. The limitations related to this specific genre (a ready picture and a limited number of words) imply relevant commentaries summarising the plot or explanations of cultural and social phenomena, as in the following examples:

In ancient India, after her husband's death a woman's life was filled with anguish and humiliation; therefore, the poor women agreed to die or were forced to make such a decision. (Verne 1999: 31)

Travellers had to act with greatest care. If they were discovered, they would be killed by the Hindu, in defence of their cruel tradition. (Ib.)

Genre is used once again, this time the film version, in an adaptation of a Greek myth, namely Heracles' labours. Naturally, both comic strips present the plot in a simplified way and therefore need to be supplied with appropriate commentary. The comic strip tale about

Heracles does not mention the full story of his birth, related in the Greek myth. Instead, the picture version offers the simple information:

One day, gods gathered in Zeus's palace on Mount Olympus to celebrate the birth of his son Hercules (Ib. 208).

The film *Hercules* served as a basis for a novella. So not the text but the film was adapted. The Greek myth illustrates the evolution of a literary text in contemporary culture which it has to undergo in order to appeal to masses. In this case there is a multiple or chain adaptation, an adaptation of an adaptation. The sequence leads from the original text, through the carton strip and the cartoon film, to the novella based on the film. Therefore, does not the latter mean victory of word over image?

Textbook adaptations correspond to texts preceding and following them. Their placement in school textbooks results from the didactic concept. A work can be discussed separately or in connection with others. Cyclical presentation and coherence enforce on authors of textbook adaptations some abridgement in issues and themes. Whether a fragment is appropriate is content-related and based on the artistic beauty of the text. The chapter *Tyle rzeczy niezwykłych* (*So Many Unusual Things*) of the textbook for pupils from the fifth form contains a fragment of *Konrad Wallenrod*. In the cited story of the protagonist emphasis is placed on Konrad's extraordinary and tragic fate and on the issue of the conflict between Lithuanians and Teutonic Knights. The sub-plot of his love for Aldona has been deleted. The book by Danuta Chwostek and Elżbieta Nowosielska entitled *Oglądam świat. Podręcznik do kształcenia literackiego w klasie szóstej* (*I Look at the World. A Textbook for Literary Education in the Sixth Form*) in the chapter *Wędrowką jest życie* (*Life Is a Journey*) contains descriptions of sunsets from *Pan Tadeusz* and from *Krzyżacy* and a reproduction of Wojciech Weiss's painting *Promienny zachód słońca* (*A Glowing Sunset*). In this minicycle the focus is on the sunset in three different forms of presentation and the cuts in the original conform to it. From the fragment of Sienkiewicz's novel *Zbyszko's* internal monologue and the opening scene — the hunting expedition — have been removed. What remains is these passages which illustrate emotions of the protagonists evoked by watching the sunset (this is also true in the case of the excerpt from *Pan Tadeusz*). The pragmatic aims behind the choice of these descriptions are made clear in the didactic tasks accompanying these materials.

In the adaptations in question already the very choice of passages reveals that they are intended for children, e.g. from Słowacki's *Balladyna* authors of the textbook *Dziwię się światu* (*The World Makes Me Wonder*) for pupils of the fourth form choose the description of Fairy Goplana. The character corresponds to the children's world of the fairy tale and its protagonists.

It is worth mentioning that 19th-century Galician reading texts tried to acquaint children with Romantic literature, which can be justified not only by the value of this literature, but also by the political situation (partitions).

The range of the subject matter of the Romantic works selected for the schools in Galicia was linked — which must be strongly emphasized here — with the notion of the **Fatherland** in the sense of the family home — Heimat [homeland, patrimony] and the fatherland in the ideological sense, the state — Vaterland [the mother country]. Thus, patriotic education in Galicia also consisted in making the young generation aware what the fatherland is. (Dzieduszycka 1883: 237–256).⁷

However, the world presented by the Romantic works read in schools in Galicia forms a specific image of a private Fatherland — a homestead, church and manor house⁸. The image of nobility predominates. The Romantic texts introduced to schools the old Poland and mainly its Eastern Borderland. The space of the private fatherland was included in several temporal orders: natural time (farmer's time), mystical time (the cycle of Christian festivals) and historical time evoked by the important heroes in the national history.

Therefore Polish literature was not officially introduced to schools in its full scope. Romantic works and their fragments published in Galician coursebooks and readers were adapted to the school use, e.g.

⁷ The function of the image of home is certainly traditionalist, however it is quite possible that it may be considered a specific topos determining Polish identity. "Home" is presented in this way by Alina Witkowska, who explains that Poles in exile failed because they got lost abroad to the extent unrivalled by other nationalities. Witkowska says: "This mysterious phenomenon may be connected with great cultural symbolism, e.g. Heidegger's idea of space and home. Polish spiritual life may be first of all connected with the place and home, this forms them as people of culture and personalities", "Tygodnik Powszechny", no. 46, 12 Nov. 1995.

⁸ Other trends could also be observed in Galician education. Cf. Dynak: p. 37.

by removing patriotic accents. Thus, it was the process of “taming the Romanticism”. Yet, the research of the schools in Galicia shows that nevertheless they had pro-Polish character, because the fragments depicting the Eastern Borderlands, the Wisła, Kraków, Polish kings and rulers — were about Poland. This phenomenon was brilliantly presented by W. Dynak, who discussed the notions connected with the national symbolism in Galician elementary schools and referred to the mechanisms of “symbolic equivalent” or “thinking through images” and the resulting transfer of meaning (which is seen in a fragment of one of the reading texts:

Even if there was no written history of the Polish people, the very monuments, the cathedrals would tell the tale of the fame and glory of our ancestors⁹.

The place most frequently referred to was the Eastern Borderland, so readily described by the Romantic authors, the land of longing for the great and powerful Jagiellonian Poland. Under the dynasty (the 17th century) Poland occupied a vast territory comprising the lands of today's Ukraine and Lithuania. Forty five coursebooks for teaching Polish in the elementary schools and lower classes of the secondary schools by F. Próchnicki, K. Mecherzyński, B. Baranowski, A. Dzieduszycka and others included many fragments concerned with the Borderland and the nobleman's traditional Poland and forming the picture of life and culture of the traditional Polish nobility. Traditional Polish nobleman's Arcadia, the idealised past emerging from

...the fragments of Romantic works deprived of their context, describing little settlements, hunting, musical jubiliations after the hunt, not only fail to show the disappearing traditional nobleman's Poland but they even create the illusion of its undangered permanence at the levels which correspond with the idyllic and solidaristic tasks facing the school. (Dynak 1983: 45).

⁹ W. Dynak, *op.cit.* In this article, when writing about “symbolic equivalent” and “thinking through pictures” Dynak refers to Podraza-Kwiatkowska: p. 247–249. The quotation comes from *Trzecia książka do czytania dla szkół ludowych*. Lvov 1881. p. 67.

Thus, the principle of the native and the homeliness understood as referring to the national tradition became the superior educational strategy at the Galician school.

Authors of contemporary textbook adaptations also reach for Romantic texts, but choose from them these fragments which represent fairy-tale fantasy (*Balladyna*, ballads, fairy tales). Clearly, they reckon with children's preferences and are aware of the stages in psychological development.

Bearing in mind young readers, editors also show special care for editing. The texts are made accessible through appropriate type size, depending on the age. Those for children are printed in types 12 and 14. Equally important is boldfacing, the layout of the excerpt on the page(s), paragraphing (often different from the original), illustration insets, clear spaces, etc. One should constantly bear it in mind that school adaptation of the classics serves both as a literary text and as exercise material for development of skills and abilities in the Polish language education.

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The Reception of World Literature in Estonia. Some Preliminary Remarks¹

JÜRI TALVET

Although culture as such can be understood in a number of ways, there are no signs that any culture would voluntarily give up an ideal of vitality. Our post-modern culture would like to differ from all previous types of culture, but it still identifies itself as culture and, thus, conceives itself as part of a longer tradition, through notions that have been established a long time ago. Even though the culture of totalitarian political systems, observed from outside, could rather appear as cultural anaemia, these systems themselves, without any doubt, have always imagined themselves as the sustainers of “authentic” culture.

When speaking about the adaptation and domesticating of a foreign culture, or the culture of the “other”, it is not so easy to launch judgements about its values. Soviet cultural ideology, the traces of which have not yet been completely effaced from contemporary Estonian culture, refuted firmly Western mass literature and at the same time favoured the publication of classical and older world literature. Was it good or bad to Estonian culture?

A historical contemplation proves that there is hardly a surer guarantee of a culture’s vitality, in a longer perspective, than its intercourse with other cultures and with world culture in its broadest sense. Even the greatest cultural spaces have not been able to do

¹ In Estonian, the present article under the title “Maailmakirjanduse kodustamise küsimusi” has been published in *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 6, 2005, pp. 433–441. It is also part of a larger treatise, “Maailmakirjandus Eestis. Vahendajad: Nähtavuse ja nähtamatuse arhetüübid” in my book *Tõrjumatu äär* (Tartu: Ilmamaa, 2005, pp. 333–371).

without an interchange of values with other cultural spaces outside them.

There is no cultural identity that would be granted or predetermined from the oldest times. Culture is rather a movement, a search — mutually intertwining with a movement and a search that embrace and condition whole societies. It does not exclude at all “out-of-phases”. Culture is modified by historical “leaps” and “explosions”, as Yuri Lotman has pointed out. At the same time the attempts of societies to produce miraculous “leaps” — all empires, in fact, have tried it — have constantly brought about deep traumas. One could find a number of eloquent examples about how culture as creativity was at its highest peak of originality, while at the same time society had fallen into decadence or come to a standstill (e.g. Spain in the first half of the 17th century). It may sound as a paradox, but it can be proved by a number of examples that several of the most outstanding works of Estonian literature of the second half of the 20th century were created in the 1970s and 1980s, under the Soviet rule in Estonia.

The above-said should be seen as an argument against (mainly French) sociological thinking that since the 1970s has tried to explicate literature by means of describing ideological-political power strategies in whose bosom literature is created and put into circulation.

When adapting these postulates to small cultures, a number of peculiarities should be taken into account. In the first place, small cultures cannot avoid openness. They do not possess a physical-political capacity to create such “purified” and “sanctified” centres that could deny their border and periphery — the most primeval territories of intercourse — or submit them to total monologues. Small cultures usually embody themselves, in their entirety, a border or a periphery. The attempts of their centres to become established as authentic power centres generally tend to look grotesque. Openness, instead, is their natural state. As soon as from outside pressure is exerted to organize their openness in a different way — to give it a “more determined” direction — small cultures become especially vulnerable. Acculturation directed from big cultural spaces, possessors of powerful physical and economical catapults, perpetually menaces to swallow up small cultures and, thus, to violate cultural ecology the world really desperately needs for its survival in a larger perspective.

Since its aspirations to independence, Estonia has been an epitome of such a border or peripheral culture of a minor nation. There has

ever been a tendency to find for it a “defined” cultural orientation, to attach it to a model of a bigger culture. This has not, however, borne any good fruits. In the 1930s Estonia adopted a semi-official orientation (transcending culture) to the British model. When German Nazi ideology rapidly gained ground, Johannes Semper, one of Estonia’s top intellectuals, warned against German cultural influences and, instead, put forward the French cultural model.² During the entire period of the Soviet occupation in Estonia, there was a constant official attempt to domesticate us in the “friendly family” of Soviet nationalities. After Estonia’s new independence, a number of personalities belonging to the country’s political and intellectual elite have stressed that Estonia is an inseparable part of Scandinavia or, at least, of the Western world.

All these attempts to “attach” us to some pre-determined socio-cultural model, have, however, failed. Should we now be disappointed? I do not think so. Instead, the non-adaptability of our culture should be viewed as a good sign of hope. We are probably closest to our identity in natural movement, in “suspended flight” — not in suspended movement! — in the periphery, on the border.

In general acceptance, the core-image of the notion of “culture” has been modelled above all by man’s spiritual-intellectual creation and legacy. World literature comprises one of its weightiest facets, in analogy with the role of literature in any culture. Literature is an almost boundless spiritual-intellectual field, which in different historical epochs has not been acknowledged exclusively as *beaux arts*, *belles lettres* — a source and a means of poetical-aesthetical experience —, but has had a primary function in the religious, mythical, cosmological, juridical, philosophic-semiotic, ethical, pedagogical, sociological, psychological, historical-documental, scientific-theoretical and political-ideological conscience of societies. Literature is, thus, an interdisciplinary field *par excellence*, by its very nature. It does not have the “innocence” of some other arts. It has been under a special watch and scrutiny of ideological and moral censors of all times.

² See Semper’s essay “Paralleele (rahvuslikust vaimulaadist) in *Looming*, 1, 1934.

Depending on its object, literary research, too, is an interdisciplinary science, by its very nature. Here a strict formalism as well as straight-minded sociological approach is doomed to failure.

The notion of "world literature" also calls for some precision. I certainly would not include in it all literature that has been created in the world, nor, in our Estonian case, all literature translated from other languages into Estonian. Instead, I would rather stick to the understanding of world literature as it emerged from the ideas of German pre-romanticism: world literature as the outstanding (appreciated, recognized) part of literary creation and heritage in different nations and nationalities, (at least potentially, hypothetically) having significance for broader world culture.

Even as such, "world literature" would still need minor specifications. The nice metaphor, "horizon of expectations" (*Erwartungshorizont*) launched a long time ago by the German reception researcher Hans Robert Jauß, and not very clearly defined by the author himself (ECLT 1993: 382, see also Jauß 1970), allows at least two interpretations. One can expect (wait for) something that is aesthetically and perceptually new, overcoming the known-already and the established (existing) norm. Similarly, one can also expect (wait for) something that is already known, has been accepted and acknowledged as a norm. The former tends to be characteristic of a minority of literary scholars and intellectuals. The latter, on the contrary, satisfies the big reading public, the majority, and at the same time explains the explosive spread of mass literature since at least WWII.

Yet there is also an intersection area, where both expectations meet. We can expect from creativity anything that, at one level, has already been experienced — what has not! — but at the same time would refresh and revive our experience. At least from the beginning of the Modern Era mass literature has been closely intertwined with creative world literature. Thus, Cervantes's great *Don Quixote* could hardly have been born without its author's conscious and differentiating opposition to mass literature (i.e. the romances of chivalry of those times). In parallel with writing the second part of *Don Quixote* (1615) Cervantes was himself engaged in writing an exemplary romance of chivalry, the "septentrional story" about the Icelandic prince Persiles and the Frisian princess Sigismunda, and their pilgrimage to Rome.

Besides, the overall “known-ness” of a writer — the premise for his/her belonging to world literature — is formed by extremely sinuous ways. Thus it is extremely difficult to bring literature into the world conscience and “canon” from those cultures that are not supported by major international languages. Even the best cultural policy from “inside” a small culture cannot compete here with sporadic (and in no ways pre-regulated!) enthusiasm, which is often characteristic of a periphery rather than of a centre. To provide an example, until today the only anthology of Estonian poetry published in the Pyrenean Peninsula appeared in 2002 in Galicia, in the Galician language, while an analogous enterprise in Spanish, the “centric” language of the Peninsula, still belongs to the realm of dreams.

In the case of poetry, reading it from the “inside” of even a major culture cannot guarantee that it would be equally appreciated from “outside”. (The linguistic factor binding poetry, to a greater extent by far than prose, to one’s mother tongue, is not the only reason in the “rejection” of a part of poetry in its transmission from “inside” to “outside”). One could mention as an example the poetry of Victor Hugo, which has been highly appreciated by the French themselves, while in the wider Western poetic perspective it has hardly rivalled the work of such major European romantic poets, as Byron, Shelley, Keats or Goethe.

On the whole, an exclusive point of view from “inside” a culture is seldom capacitated to determine the aesthetic-perceptual value of a work. More trustworthy would be a point of view from “outside”, from other cultures, as fostered most immediately by a vision from the “border”. The latter is generally constituted by sufficiently influential creative personalities “within” a (bigger) culture — either translators, scholars or writers interested in cultures outside their own culture. The best example from the past is provided, of course, by German romanticism. The world owes to its great personalities Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, and the brothers Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel a sketch of world literary history, now generally accepted, in which the literary creativity of the Middle Ages and the early Modern Age (great medieval epic poems, Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Calderón, etc.) for the first time came to occupy a worthy position beside the European antiquity. At the same time the sketch handed to the posterity by the German romantics was

opened to the "other" in the widest sense, definitely neutralizing a strictly Occidento-centric perspective.

I am speaking, naturally, about the establishment of literary canons, both of world literature and national literatures. A point of view from "outside" and the "border" may not be accepted immediately from "inside" a culture, but gradually it infiltrates and starts to dominate, in general, over an exclusive "domestic" point of view. Thus, the genius of William Faulkner was first recognized by French existentialist philosophers and critics, and only after that a general discovery and acceptance of Faulkner's work in the US followed.

The above-said does not mean at all that a point of view from "outside" or "border" would be always unerring. Thus especially in small cultures an influential group or circle of writers-translators-critics can successfully build up an image of a foreign writer and establish it for quite a long period as an epitome of world literature in the given culture. To give an example, I think there was a considerable exaggeration in the evaluation of the world significance of Lion Feuchtwanger's historical novels in Soviet Estonia after WWII. Naturally, the ideological status of Feuchtwanger, accepted by the post-Stalinist ideology, had its decisive say in the process of translating Feuchtwanger's work in the former USSR, Estonia included. Yet at the same time it is undeniable that through the work of Feuchtwanger — who was also himself a kind of a "border"-writer — enriching visions from more distant cultures reached Estonia. I could just mention Feuchtwanger's novel *Goya*. The Estonian translation (1958) of it not only provided a literary image of the Spanish artist, but the book also contained a series of reproductions of Goya's best-known paintings and engravings, scarcely known until that date in Estonia.

In the most recent stage of Estonian culture, now in the conditions of a re-established political independence (since 1991), commercial structures have powerfully contributed to the image of world literature in Estonia. Mass literature or simply mediocre literature is, using all means, "pushed" onto the level of significant world literature. Small cultures are seriously menaced by their inevitable openness. The loss of orientation in the reading public has become a general feature. Readers do not know what to read, the librarians do not know what to buy for libraries and what to catalogue. While the official rejection of mass literature in Soviet Estonia made the bibliographies of translated literature quite a trustworthy source about the reception of world

literature in Estonia,³ I cannot frankly imagine how the librarians in our days could cope with the task of forming such lists, especially as regards the massive influx of literature translated from English. They can at their best reflect data about translated literature, but definitely not about the reception of world literature.

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From the work of the influential French critic Roland Barthes, in the first half of the 1970s, literary theory gradually started to adopt the idea according to which the author of a literary work and his/her intention were really not so important; instead, it became fashionable to imagine that a literary text was above all created by interpreting meta-texts or critical discourses, playing through the text on several planes and providing it with new meanings. An effort was made to redeem the text from its author's pre-determining intention (the author's will), as well as to free criticism from the idea that by a thorough treatment of an author's life and a structural analysis of the work one could establish "definite truths" about this or that phenomenon. The rebellion of postmodern theory was, thus, targeted against genealogical positivism, known from older literary science, and at the same time, also against "scientific" structuralism. Both, indeed, had by that time revealed their strongly biased nature. The former clearly overestimated the factor of an author's life and its (social) surroundings, the latter — departing also from a positivistic desire to describe with a scientific precision everything "positive", — inevitably tended to overvalue the formal features of a work.

Post-structuralism, under the guidance of the late Jacques Derrida, in fact, has not been able to overcome the formalist approach of structuralism, while the other influential trend in the postmodern discourse, in its turn, has overemphasized the genetic and corporal factor, and, thus, has submitted a work of art to social determinism (Foucault, and in his footsteps, "new historicism", "cultural materialism", Bourdieu, etc.).

I would claim here, on the contrary, that authors have not at all disappeared. Only an author's genius is capable of creating influential

³ Cf. for instance the exemplarily compiled bibliographical series (by Leida Püss), *Nõukogude Eesti tõlkekirjandus: 1940–1968, 1969–1975, 1976–1980, 1981–1985*; Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, respectively in 1970, 1977, 1983, 1988.

meta-texts — i e, far-reaching generalizations and interpretations, in which the work enters into an intense dialogue with the after-world — that can hope to be redeemed from oblivion. In that sense, one can claim that Dostoievski and Rabelais created Mikhail Bakhtin, as Pushkin gave birth to Yuri Lotman and, in the case of the pre-war Estonian culture, Shakespeare and Shelley begot Ants Oras, one of our most influential literary critics and translators. Not only the “primary” creation but also the creation of metatexts (interpreting discourses) seem to belong to the semiospheric activities described by Yuri Lotman. In their historical significance they have occurred as “leaps” and “explosions”, rather than a “noo-spheric” gradual process, in which intellect, assimilating knowledge, step by step, aspires to a kind of a ideal definite perfection.

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Estonian literary culture has been at quite an early stage characterized by the presence of a synthetic creative impulse, an ample “border” where the “other” and the “own” become intensely intertwined. From the very beginning of the 20th century not only translators have had a part in the mediation process, but also our best literary critics and writers. One could claim that the role of writers and critics in discovering world literature for Estonia at the beginning strongly overweighed the part occupied by translators as mere mediators of a text. Critical discourse on world literature runs ever ahead of world literature made available in translation. It was but natural in a young minor culture, whose language itself had not yet attained an adequate level of maturity, to support worthily a wider corpus of translated texts.

The hesitations of the mediators of world literature in finding a proper “style” are eloquently reflected in a letter by Aleksander Aspel to the editor-in-chief of the main literary magazine *Looming*, as regards his essay “Racine” (published in *Looming* 1, 1940, pp. 82–97):

I have a hangover about my article, because it is too lengthy and, to some extent, unequal: I had ever in mind two types of readers: those that know Racine, and others for whom he is hardly more than a mere name. (Quoted from Aspel 2000: 519–520; translation is mine — *JT.*)

I might add that even an Estonian interpreter of Racine in the year 2005 — if such could be found —, would need to add to his writings a

similar apology. Maybe Racine would be in the present-day Estonia even less than a mere name, because the reception of French literature in our criticism has lost a good deal of the intensity it had before WWII. Not a single tragedy of Racine has so far been translated into Estonian or staged at Estonian theatres.

Yet the main pathos of my present writing was not meant to be critical, but instead I would like to emphasize the undeniably positive values in our national reception of world literature. The “synthetic” character, imposed to our mediators of world literature — partly because of the smallness of the nation and its intellectual vanguard —, has certainly not paralyzed or weakened our culture but, quite on the contrary, has been one of the most important premises for a rapid cultural development as well as for forming an interior (one could say, a hidden) equilibrium of our culture even during the harshest years of the political-physical and ideological occupation by foreign regimes.

From the end of the 19th century, when the reception of world literature in Estonia started, there were, naturally, many translators who had no other ambition than simply to convey a text from a foreign language into Estonian. Such “non-synthetic” translators have obviously been part and parcel of any culture, whatever the epoch. Often these mediations were, in fact, free adaptations, the shortened and substantially modified versions of a work. One should not underestimate their role either, in increasing the corpus of literary texts and testifying literary language. Especially in the youth of a nation and its culture — as was the Estonian case at the final part of the 19th century — simplifying adaptations of works of world authors could well perform their cultural mission. Creative personalities were not missing among those who produced free adaptations. Thus, some of the earliest adaptations of Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* and Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* in Estonian, at the start of the 20th century, were produced by Eduard Bornhöhe, a well-known writer and author of historical narratives.

However, most probably every culture reaches a momentum of maturity at which simplifying and abbreviated translations prove to be unsatisfactory. From the start of the 20th century the leading role in the field of translation of world literature in Estonia was taken over by our young literary vanguard — outstanding writers, critics and essayists or, in any case, creative personalities. Their mediations gradually became the “vertebral column” of our reception of world literature.

Their position in our own culture was the surest guarantee that literature coming from outside was at an early stage received almost as our "own". Their names, appearing at the translated texts, were "brands" of trustworthiness in the eyes of the reading public.

Quite a few of them — in the first place, Johannes Semper, Ants Oras, Aleksander Aspel — became exemplary "border-personalities". All of them translated world literature, wrote about it, providing their interpretations, and at the same time contributed to the critical discourse on our own Estonian literature. Their knowledge of world literature increased the cultural weight of the texts they dedicated to Estonian literature.

It goes without saying that a notable presence of creative personalities in the reception of world literature in Estonia became also a substantial factor in building up defence mechanisms in culture. It did not obey direct commandments of politics and commerce. It was characterized by a high degree of self-awareness and faithfulness to its mission in society and nation. In the times of foreign occupations, that deeper layer of culture went "underground". However, it gradually emerged again, whenever the social and political conditions became relatively more liberal (like from the start of the 1960s, under the Soviet rule in Estonia).

During the early period of building up the Estonian state and nation, there was an acute consciousness about the role of translated world literature in our general cultural-historical formation. It was understood that good and essential literature, either coming from "outside" or "inside", not only did enrich our culture and spirit, but was also to be the basis for a vital development of our language. The broader a writer in his mind, the richer, in general, his / her language embedded in images. Therefore the mission of mediating world literature was seen as identical with the mission of laying the foundations of Estonian literary language and national culture. It has been resumed in an essay by Ants Oras, in 1927:

Like so many others, I am convinced that in the newer times one could hardly find a writer of such an immense broadness and intensity, as Shakespeare was. Therefore, mediating and spreading knowledge of his work can be regarded as a national task, which no culturally orientated nation can avoid, without damaging itself. (*Looming* 7, 1927, p. 670)

Thus a small but strong elite group of Estonian writers became devoted, from the 1920s, to the mission described by Oras: building up Estonian language and literary culture relying greatly on mediating world literature into the Estonian language.

Recent translation theory has foregrounded the idea that a translator's personality should be made visible in translated texts and, at the same time, has distanced itself from the earlier idea about a translator's "invisibility" (cf e.g. Torop 2001: 55).

In my opinion the experience of the most influential mediators of world literature in Estonia proves that such an opposition really has never existed. I fully accept that only a talented personality can create an enjoyable translation, relying on a rich usage of language and conveying the essence of the philosophical image of the original work. However, one should not conclude from it that a translator, to reveal or make "visible" his/her "personality", should impose on the translated text any personal philosophy or a personal language conception. If for instance Uku Masing, an outstanding Estonian intellectual, liked to use in his writings, translations included, the letter "y", instead of the normative "ü", I do not think it has made his translations any better or worse.

The great renovator of the Estonian literary language, Johannes Aavik, did introduce in his translations of E. A. Poe, in the 1920s, numerous neologisms of which an outstanding number, indeed, has been gradually accepted by the posterity. However, Aavik conveyed faithfully the main imagery and philosophy of Poe's stories. Thus "invisibly" Aavik turned Poe into his "accomplice" in his linguistic experiments that lead to restructuring Estonian as a language of a cultured nation.

I would rather formulate it as follows: a translator as a personality, above all, has the premises to feel through philosophically and aesthetically an original work and to find corresponding means in his/her language, to transmit the original image so that the translation, approximately, keeps intact the significance (meaning) of the original work. Any translator, naturally, is an interpreter of the original work/text but, to all probability, he/she still assumes the role of an original creator to a much lesser degree than, for instance, a stage director, in respect to the dramatic text he/she stages.

The personality of a translator is revealed rather in his/her magical capacity to make him/her-self "invisible" — so that the receiver

accepts the translated text (approximately) as his/her "own": as belonging to his/her own culture and language, thus as something devoid of a raw taste of "foreignness". Such excellent translated texts, created by "invisible" personalities, in fact, abound in Estonian literary culture, both before WWII and after that, including the large Soviet period. Our translators-personalities have ever aspired to transmit original works in their entirety. If some fragments or phrases of an original work have been missing in the translations made during the Soviet era in Estonia, it was never the fault of translators-personalities, but the censorship had its hand in it.

Once again: the faithfulness of a good translator to the original source work by no means contradicts creativity and inspiration in the act of translation. Without these, any translation becomes dull, its reception is inadequate. It is obvious that the dominant part of the reading public just has such translations, inspired and creative, and at the same time still faithfully transmitting the basic imagery and philosophy of the original work, on its "horizon of expectations". (I do not speak here of the adaptation of classical works for children or special adaptations of, let us say, novels, for the use of theatre. That is a different theme).

Poetry still tends to be a chapter apart. Thus, the predominant paradigm of translating poetry in a full concord with the forms of the original work (rhyme patterns included), established in Estonian literature from the 1920s, seems to have become exhausted by the end of the 20th century. We have now examples of much freer verse translations of the works of world literature.⁴ A new paradigm seems to be breaking in.

One can further claim that the "visibility" of a translator-personality, speaking in general terms, is not created not so much by the translated text itself, *sensu stricto*, but by all kinds of para-texts (by-texts) that a translator-personality might also provide in the translated book. I have already mentioned that in Estonian literary culture the coincidence of a translator and a critic-interpreter (in one and the same mediating person of a work) is quite a frequent phenomenon. It seems to be undeniable that if a translator takes up the role of an editor (by selecting texts, writing introductory essays in his own right, etc), it

⁴ Thus, Tõnu Õnnepalu's translations of Baudelaire in blank verse and my own rendering of Calderón's *La vida es sueño* in free verse.

definitely makes more “visible” his /her personality. And in general, a translation is always made more “visible” in a culture if it is produced by outstanding personalities having previous cultural merits.

One final remark. The reception of world literature can by no means be exhaustively described if we fix our attention exclusively to what is “visible” (translations, criticism, textbooks, etc.). A great hidden part in the reception process is also played by those works of world literature that the members of the intellectual vanguard of any society, by reading them in a foreign language, absorb and translate invisibly in their personalities. There is hardly any need to argue whether what they convey and transmit to their own cultures carries more weight “visibly” or “invisibly”. The process is rather symbiotic: “visibility” and “invisibility” are complementary terms.

I do not think Estonian culture, in this respect, is an exception. It is likely that the above described features in the reception of world literature characterize many other smaller — and maybe even not always so small — cultures and nations.

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Additions to the Comprehension of “Noor-Eesti” (“Young Estonia”) as a Receptive “Explosion” of World Literature

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The aim of the present article is the accentuation of the tenet, accepted in Estonian literary history, that the revolutionary nature of the “Noor-Eesti” cultural movement “was largely born on the basis of literary influences received from outside” (Annus, Epner, Järv, Olesk, Süvalep, Velsker 2001: 162). This is grounded on two theoretical postulates. The first has already turned out to be trivial: to some extent, each culture is a loan and a translation. As regards transformation, notification, coding and decoding, translation belongs to the nature of culture as culture “as a thinking mechanism cannot be one-structured and one-tongued: it must necessarily include semiotic formations of different languages, which cannot be inter-translated” (Lotman 2002: 2647). This can also be called inter-textuality, which in its turn is one of the expressions of cultural textuality and of culture as the hierarchy of text identities (Torop 2000: 37–51).

Adoption or rejection of a loan or a translation requires reception. The nature of the reception process determines whether the culture borrowed from someone else or translated will be integrated, whether the “strange” text will be adapted or assimilated to enrich the so called borrower-culture or are we dealing with a contrary process, the process of becoming creole, as a result of which “one’s own” transfers into “alien” (Torop 2002: 593–605). Jaan Undusk has expressed it almost as a maxim: “Culture is always a loan, but it is a loan, which is made at the cost of resubstantiation” (Undusk 2005)

The other theoretical postulate originates directly from Yuri Lotman. His work *Kultuur ja plahvatus* ('Culture and Explosion') (Lotman 2001: 215), regarded as his scientific will, includes the idea that the development of semeiotics (*resp* culture) occurs in two ways. The consistent development process can be predicted. But beside consistency, development can also be fluctuating and explosive. A change realised as an explosion cannot be predicted (ib.17). In an explosion, structure is creatively restructured (ib. 21).

The cultural movement "Noor-Eesti", which introduced the 20th century in Estonia and with its four albums (1905, 1907, 1909, 1912, 1915), four art exhibitions (1910–1911, 1912, 1913, 1914), the programmatic renovation of the Estonian language and theatre renovation (*Teatri-raamat*, 1913) and laid down the cultural discourse of the following century, was a thorough "explosion" as regards its reception by both Estonian and world culture (including world literature). As a result of the "Noor-Eesti" movement, the national-romantic cultural paradigm was transformed into the modernist cultural one with a touch of neoromanticism.

As a result of the activity of the "Noor-Eesti", Estonian literary culture, which earlier had mostly been based on the adaptation of the German literary culture, acquired a new "European" scale. This is self-evident today. With the words "We are the successors of the "Noor-Eesti". The world of "Noor-Eesti", of which one of the creators and developers was Gustav Suits, is our world and our life," Peeter Olesk starts his concluding remarks to the essays by Gustav Suits with the pathos typical of the "Noor-Eesti" (Olesk 2002: 421) and in the treatment of whatever areas or components of Estonian high culture, we always have to join this pathetic conclusion.

As for the name "Noor-Eesti", it paradoxically goes back to the Europe of the 1830s with its revolutionary secret societies "Noor-Itaalia" ("Young Italy"), "Noor-Poola" ("Young Poland"), "Noor-Saksamaa" ("Young Germany") and "Noor-Prantsusmaa" ("Young France"), which had assembled around "Noor-Euroopa" ("Young Europe"), the society active in Switzerland in 1834–1836. The members of those societies were political refugees who aimed at the unification of their countries into democratic nation states and at the moral recovery of the society.

As is well known, in 1903–1904, the "Noor-Eesti" movement also started as a secret circle of students. Friedebert Tuglas, one of the

ideologists and leaders of the group, was also a political refugee for some time.

The Russian revolution of 1905–1907, which had a strikingly different pattern in the Baltic provinces and in Finland, represents a significant background for the “Noor-Eesti” movement, but unlike its European precursors, not just the concrete political purpose but cultural modernism, supported by the neoromantic perception of life, dominated in “Noor-Eesti” movement, irrespective of the revolutionary rhetoric.

When in 1905 Gustav Suits, a poet and later on the first Estonian professor of literature of the University of Tartu, declared in his manifest “Vabaduse väraval” (“At the Gate of Freedom”) that “the free social order and free homeland, this is what we want”, the statement was directed against the lower middle class and in general the “intellectually poor classes” (Suits 2002: 12). Though literature was seen as the means to clean the society mentally and ethically, a writer was still supposed to be, above all, a writer. “In literature, a serious poet should neither be a social democrat, a bourgeois nor an aristocrat, but a poet first of all,” Suits has stressed (Suits 2002: 13).

Finland provided immediate examples for the “Noor-Eesti” as several leading figures of the movement (Gustav Suits, Johannes Aavik, Willem Grünthal-Ridala) had stayed there for some time. Suits lived more than fifteen years, Tuglas six and Aavik at least three years in Finland. At the beginning, Ridala stayed there for four to five years, but later, after being elected teacher of the Estonian language in 1923, he remained in Finland until his death in 1942.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Finnish and Scandinavian literature became channels for the reception of European culture in Estonia. Finnish nature directly inspired Tuglas’s early work. However, for the members of the “Noor-Eesti”, Finland was still “a country of transit” of European culture. This becomes evident in Johannes Aavik’s and Friedebert Tuglas’s correspondence of the “Noor-Eesti” years, in which Aavik, first studying at the University of Helsinki and later actively working in Tartu, passionately describes his translation work, language innovation, *Ruth*, the “Noor-Eesti” albums and Estonian linguistic and cultural life against the background of Finnish and European cultural life, and in which Tuglas answers with the thoroughness and abundance of detail characteristic of him (Kultuurilugu 1990).

In the 1880s, “Nuori-Suomi” (the “Young Finland”) movement developed in Finland, their forum being the literary album “Nuori Suomi”. The idea to publish an album in its turn supposedly originated in Estonia. In 1930, one of its founders, Santeri Ivalo, recalled that the experience gained on a cultural trip to Estonia to visit the national song festival of 1890 (Tartu newspaper “Olevik” also published a belletristic addendum) had furnished them with the idea of publishing an album (Ivalo 1994: 58–59).

In 1904, the preparation of the first “Noor-Eesti” album started and in its way this was the closing of the circle. There are similar *art nouveau* features in the format and design of both Finnish and Estonian albums. The importance of the “Nuori-Suomi” (started in 1891) albums and movement in the reformation of Finnish culture and society has been considered to be smaller than the importance of the “Noor-Eesti” albums and movement in Estonia, though the “Nuori Suomi” albums appeared longer, as the Christmas albums of the Finnish Writers’ Union from 1924 to 1940, when the 50th volume of albums was published. On the other hand, the tradition lasting for two generations has been regarded as “a remarkable cultural force” in Finland (Mällinen 1994: 55).

However, Finland as a social and literary standard only became a take-off board, as the ideological nucleus of the “Noor-Eesti” movement was Europe-centered. This was reflected in the leading principle formulated by Gustav Suits: “More culture! More European culture! Let us stay Estonians, but let us become Europeans!”.

The “Noor-Eesti” manifest also emphasizes the “centre — periphery” relationship. It has been claimed that in the 19th century the new developments of European literature were induced from the European cultural peripheries, such as Russia (Lev Tolstoi, Fjodor Dostojevski, Anton Tšehhov), Scandinavia (Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg) and Ireland (George Bernard Shaw, James Joyce) (Scholz 2001: 100). Thus, the call for “European culture” may also be interpreted as the challenge of the periphery to the centre. By the beginning of the 20th century, actually two cultural peripheries were present in the Estonian cultural space — the Baltic-German, looking for its identity and its centre in “Baltic-German nationalism” (“...to be the European bulwark against the East and the europeanization of the East”) (Jansen 2005: 42), and the Estonian own cultural space preserved in national romanticism under the pressure of Russification.

But this “periphery squared” meant that according to the nature of periphery, where semeiotic processes are always more active than in the centre itself (Lotman 1999: 16), culture before and after the “Noor-Eesti” was “free from standardization, dynamic and adaptable” (Veidemann 2004: 197) and cut and dried for new identification.

First of all, the “Noor-Eesti” slogan manifests cultural determinism, being a continuation of the Estonian national movement launched in the middle of the 19th century. Regarding its nature, it was also cultural nationalism, proceeding from the people as a social entirety with a common territory, history, language and intellectual space and not so much from ethnic features (*resp* clannish, the so-called blood ties).

The formation of the Estonian national identity in opposition to the German and Russian context, predominant from 1860 to 1880, when through contrastings the Estonian intellectuals of the first generation developed local cultural consciousness, did not satisfy the new generation at the beginning of the 20th century. For them, Europe meant more than German and Russian culture (Feldman 2000: 414). In the “Noor-Eesti” context, European culture should be treated as a metonym of world literature. At the same time, it can also be understood as the take-over of structuralism, which began to dominate in scientific discourse at the beginning of the 20th century. The idea of this structural consciousness was that “no structure includes presumably independent units, but is formed as a result of the intersection of different relationship vectors” (Undusk 2002: 1369). In that case, it is rather “abstract dynamism” than primary substance, which is considered.

Thus, the “Noor-Eesti” slogan did not mean the change of substance (Estonian national identity was still stressed!), but a revolutionary change of value orientations. The “Noor-Eesti” opposed itself to the stagnated national romantic 19th-century paradigm of German origin and not only with ideological negation, turning back to sentimental daydreaming, but with a wish to lift the Estonian language and literary expression and thinking in this language to a completely new level, equal to that of the European cultural languages.

So the “language revolutionary” of the “Noor-Eesti” movement Johannes Aavik writes in his letters to Friedebert Tuglas, emphasizing his motto “first a tool, then the work, first language, then literature”,

that he would like to see the Estonian language free from the German tyranny of the sequence of words (*Kultuurilugu* 1990: 43).

Thus, the development, which up to then had taken place rather uniquely in the German paradigm, was subjected to a new interpretative model of art and life, leading to the revaluation of earlier experience, to the so-called retrospective transformation.

This is the essence of the "Noor-Eesti" receptive explosion. The literary culture of the national awakening in Estonia was socio-pedagogic and national mythological (Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald, Lydia Koidula, Carl Robert Jakobson), which was supplemented by circumstantial realism (Eduard Vilde, Juhan Liiv, Ernst Särgava). The "Noor-Eesti" literary generation manifested itself as a representative of an individual and artistic literary movement. In his reference to this generation, Ants Oras has underlined "the intellectual individuality" and self-realisation of the members of the "Noor-Eesti", saying that "for this generation, meaning is the element inseparable from literature" and "conscious art and conscious conception of the world are required" (Oras 2001: 238). This is why the reception of world literature was realised through the preference prism of individualism, work of genius and style. The scholars of Estonian literature have over and over been surprised by the short period of its accession to the big currents of European literature. Not only intensive translation, but also the enthusiastic adoption of European meta-literary experience and philosophy (Georg Brandes, Friedrich Nietzsche, Maurice Maeterlinck, Aleksandr Bogdanov) served as the basis of this. Tuglas has called it "giving modern artistic, scientific, philosophic and social attitudes a national character" (Tuglas 1936: 171).

However, it cannot be stated that the "Noor-Eesti" world literature reception was systematic. Even Friedebert Tuglas acknowledged that "it (the "Noor-Eesti" movement — R.V.) was eclectic in nature, encyclopedic, comparative and selective. Its interests stretched to the literatures of all nations and periods and it devoted itself to all cultural impacts without exception" (Tuglas 1920: 23). According to Tuglas, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian and modern Finnish literary masterpieces were "discovered" in new literary cultures, but new was also discovered in traditional "loan cultures" — German and Russian literary cultures (Tuglas 1936: 173).

As regards the Russian literature of the beginning of the century, at the beginning of the 20th century, Lev Tolstoi added *Anna Karenina*

to his *War and Peace*, which was already published in the 1890s. As for the number of translations published in the press, Anton Chekhov took the first place, but Maksim Gorki had a very special position in the translation of the Russian literature of the new century. As it was already said, Finnish literature could be regarded as outstanding for its translations (Juhani Aho, Minna Canth, Eino Leino). Translations of Anglo-American authors Charles Dickens, Harriet Beecher-Stowe (*Uncle Tom's Cabin*), Mark Twain and Edgar Allan Poe have to be regarded as important. Of the translations of French authors, Guy de Maupassant's novels had the biggest influence on the development of the Estonian novel tradition. Translation of Charles Baudelaire's poetry gave an example for the fostering of naturalistic and symbolic image formation in Estonian poetry.

From the region of Scandinavia, Henrik Ibsen, Knut Hamsun, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Selma Lagerlöf and August Strindberg became rooted in the Estonian literature of the beginning of the century. Besides full translations, adaptations (for instance, Cervantes's *Don Quixote*) were also published in the "Noor-Eesti" days.

Translation of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* into Estonian was a particularly great event. The arrival of this indisputable key text of world literature in the Estonian cultural space both for reading and performance in 1910 — the new building of the theatre "Estonia" was opened with the production of *Hamlet* in 1913 — was probably one of the first symbolic texts for the Estonian explosive reception of world literature. Ants Oras said, looking back at the thirty years of activity of the Estonian Literary Society: "...it is understandable that the publication of *Hamlet* in the Estonian language and its production in "Estonia" was felt as a national achievement (my spacing — R. V.). On this occasion, Gustav Suits produced an enthusiastic prologue" (Oras 2003: 96).

On the eve of the First World War, translation from world literature had made a quantitative leap, compared with the turn of the century. Besides translations, world literature was also intensively introduced through criticism. Gustav Suits's sophisticated treatments of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Molière, Romain Rolland, Georg Brandes, Ernst Renan and Aleksandr Pushkin indicate mission-sensitive enlightenment. The same can be said about self-taught Friedebert Tuglas, who shared his amazingly broad and diverse reading with the readers of his time.

On the one hand, it was the so called catch-up lesson in literary culture for Estonian readers, on the other hand, Estonian writers themselves learned by translating. In Estonian literature, symbolism, impressionism and German expressionism of the period of the First World War did not just mean the mechanical copying of different trends of European literary culture, it was receptive adaptation.

This is apparent in Friedebert Tuglas's search for a creative method ("synthetic realism") during the two first decades of the 20th century. This also becomes apparent in the organisation of the theoretical principles of literature reception, observed in Gustav Suits's literary and theoretical work. In his article written in memory of his teacher Georg Brandes, Suits emphasizes that "when scientific literary mediocrity eats away at the mere criticism of the text, one has to resort to Brandes" and sums up as follows: "With his example, Brandes teaches over and over again that valuable study of literature arises from a big personality of powerful insight and rich in ideas" (Suits 2002: 347).

However, the receptive "explosion" experienced in world history at the beginning of the 20th century only concerned the very best of literary people. This continued in the following years. In 1935, Ants Oras — a translator and one of the most productive world literature promoters of this decade and of the following decades in Estonia — wrote that "since the "Noor-Eesti", contacts of our most representative intellectuals with world culture have become very intimate, but broader masses have not caught up" (Oras 2003: 57).

Oras calls for intensive and high quality translation work, as a nation cannot become independent without contacts of its native language with world literature.

Though in traditional treatment Friedebert Tuglas, who loved to experiment, has always been regarded as the most outstanding representative of world literature reception, I am of the opinion that in this aspect Anton Hansen Tammsaare's work deserves even more distinction. Though Tammsaare did not officially join the "Noor-Eesti", the ideas of the movement had great a impact on him. In his prose experiments of the beginning of the 20th century, Gogol's, Chekhov's and Sudermann's influence can be felt. His psychological sketch "Tähtis päev" ('An Important Day'), which was finished in 1903, is regarded as a piece written in Chekhov's style. Thereafter, elements of naturalism and symbolism can be observed in his work

(miniature "Poiss ja liblik" ('The Boy and the Butterfly'), 1915). It is generally known that the narrative *Varjundid* ('Shades'), published in 1917, marks the climax of Tammsaare's impressionistic work. With his novel *Kõrboja peremees* ('Master of Kõrboja'), published in 1921, Tammsaare returns to realism, but in its synthesized form of Estonian neo-realism, in which realistic material (peasant life) in lyric-impressionistic language acquires a strong suggestive power and rises to symbol level. In the 1920s, Anton Hansen Tammsaare becomes "a European writer *par excellence*, whose work reflects the state of Estonian and European literature within the first four decades of our (20th) century" (Scholz 2001: 105).

The receptive "explosion" of world literature (and particularly of European literary culture) released by the "Noor-Eesti" laid down the basis for a new generation of writers and critics who matured in the 1920 and 1930s (with "flagships" like Johannes Semper, Ants Oras, Aleksander Aspel, August Annist), who with their systematic activity tried to make world literature a natural part of Estonian literary culture. Anne Lange, the researcher of Oras's life and work, has paraphrased one of Oras's thoughts as follows: just thanks to the first deeper furrows made by the "Noor-Eesti" and to their first followers, let them be either in Estonia or abroad, "for them, Estonian literature is world literature at all events like any other modern literature" (Lange 2004: 4488–489).

Thirty-five years after the beginning of the "project" of the Europeanization of Estonian literary culture initiated by Gustav Suits and the "Noor-Eesti", Aleksander Aspel wrote in his article "Õnn on olla väike" ('The Good Luck of Being Small'), published in the album *Võim ja vaim* ('Power and Spirit') of the students' society "Veljesto" about its programme the following: "Unfortunately, it is a fact that of the factors dominating in the world, no one represents to perfection the quantity of values called the civilization and cradle of the human race. Balance requires that having once crossed the border we should not limit ourselves to one path only but we should try to see at least in outline the direction of other relevant connecting roads, the most important stops, opening prospects. If lucky fortune has placed a small nation at the crossroads, where draught is sometimes more severe and standing more painful, but inspection much easier, this nation may perform the role of an intellectual intermediary, a melter and a transmitter of impacts, which has always

been a historical mission of small nations" (Aspel 2000: 488–489). A hundred years later this is still true.

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**Spleen the Estonian Way: Estonian Literary
Decadence in J. Randvere's *Ruth* (1909),
Friedebert Tuglas' *Felix Ormusson* (1915),
and Anton Hansen Tammsaare's Novellas
Noored hinged (1909) and *Kärbes* (1917)**

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Jaak Rähesoo argues that "Nowhere else in Europe [except the nations of Eastern Baltic, namely the Estonians, Finns, Latvians, and Lithuanians] have people rushed directly from folklore to modernity, the only narrow bridge between these distant worlds being a Bible translation and a handful of purely practical or edifying tracts." Rähesoo adds: "It is only with the Young Estonia (Noor-Eesti) movement of 1905 that the Estonian literature (and the other arts too now) more or less caught up with contemporary European trends, rushing headlong into the refined world of the still — fashionable Symbolism. This synchronization of cultural development went hand in hand with an extremely rapid modernization of all spheres of life." (Rähesoo 2000: 104; 106.)

Finnish literary researchers have made similar observations. Rojola finds that although Finnish cultural development began much later than elsewhere in Europe, it was a very rapid process — what the rest of Europe experienced over 100 years, Finnish society underwent during a very short time. Yet Rojola does not focus so much on Finnish modernization, but rather on how the influence of these rapid changes of modernization has been represented in Finnish literature. According to Rojola, because the process of modernization was so fast in Finland, the changes were perceived as extremely radical, and the reaction to modernization thus was thus much the same as elsewhere in Europe. (Rojola 93: 157–181.) I propose to ask the same question in

relation to modernization in Estonia: can Rojola's specific observations of accelerated cultural development, perceived as and reacted against as radical also be applied to the literature of the Young Estonians¹? And are the relations between Estonian literature and modernity comparable to those found in the cultural texts of *fin de siècle* Europe?

Before beginning to answer these questions we should keep in mind that even though the processes of modernization (particularly urbanization) took much less time in the Eastern Baltic region than in some other places in Europe, modernization was actually perceived to be too quick everywhere. Therefore there were many throughout Europe who could not keep pace. In turn this often paradoxically meant that to be modern was to be anti-modern, to define oneself in explicit opposition to the prevailing norms and values of one's own time. (Felski 1995: 11.)

This paradox — being simultaneously modern and anti-modern — is distinctly visible in the discourse of decadence, which was one of the most influential discourses at the end of the 19th century in Europe.² To understand its function, we must locate the meanings of

¹ Young-Estonia movement consisted mostly of Estonian writers and artists. The active years of this movement were between 1905 and 1915 and during that time they published five albums (1905, 1907, 1909, 1912, 1915), six numbers of the journal *Noor-Eesti* (*Young-Estonia* 1909–1910) and organized four art exhibitions. "Let us remain Estonians but let us also become Europeans" (1905) was part of the Young Estonians manifesto, which Gustav Suits — poet and one of the main organizers of this movement — verbalized in the introductory article of the first Young Estonia album (1905). Since then this sentence has become the most often repeated slogan of this movement, whose activities have been associated with words like mental revolution, esthetical revolution and the beginning of modern Estonian literature.

² Words like degeneration, decadence, atavism, neurosis and feminisation, which were very popular in the context of *fin de siècle*, refer to something much broader than what in fact was a marginal movement in France. Actually, all over Europe people were talking about decadence, not only in the field of literature, but also in history, philosophy and in different disciplines of science, including the theory of genetics, the race question and eugenics — thus at the turn of the 20th century one should speak about decadence as a whole discourse.

the concept of decadence in the context of *fin de siècle*.³ Etymologically decadence means ‘to fall down or from’; by definition it describes a temporal contrast or comparison. A body, a society, or an artistic form discards something prior and better: health, virtue, tradition, or the like. Hence at the turn of the 20th century this concept has a double function — on the one hand as a metaphor for many changes in culture and society, on the other hand as a critical reaction to these changes. No doubt decadence was often used as a critical theory of modernity. Matthew Potolsky even argues that at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the concept of decadence was used as a paradigm for explaining historical, artistic and social change (Potolsky 2004: V–VI; see also Morley 2004).

Literary decadence is one of the various discourses of decay of the late 19th century, outlining in different ways a presumably inevitable stage in Western civilization. (Lyytikäinen 2003: 12) It starts later than the theoretical debate, and does not culminate in many countries before the beginning of the 20th century (see also Krobb 2004: 556). In the field of Estonian culture literary decadence began still later, around 1908–1909, reaching its phase of maturity during World War I. In order to understand this mature phase, one must also examine the beginning of Estonian literary decadence, of which the most important examples are Tammsaare’s so called “university novellas” — *Pikad sammud* (“Long Steps” 1908), *Noored hinged* (“Young Souls” 1909) and *Üle piiri* (“Beyond the Limit” 1910); Friedebert Tuglas’ novel

³ Many contemporary researchers of literary decadence argue that as concerns the concept decadence, the question of how *fin de siècle* artists, writers and philosophers used this term has often been ignored. The uncritical study of decadence has confined itself to quite a narrow set of meanings, associating decadence for example with morbidity, a cult of artificiality, exoticism or sexual non-conformism. Partly because of this narrow understanding there are many examples of criticism which have tried to differentiate themselves from this term. But the term decadence does not characterize only bodies, empires and artworks; it was also used to challenge and historicize the present. Decadence encompassed a remarkably wide range of critical attitudes toward modernity, from scepticism to outright contempt, and from radical critique to reactionary condemnation. (Constable, Potolsky, Denisoff 1999: 1–32; Potolsky 2004: V–XI).

Vilkuv tuli ("Flickering Fire" 1909) and J. Randvere's essay-novella *Ruth* (1909).⁴

All of these texts have components of form and content and usually related to literary decadence,⁵ yet particularly in Tammsaare's university novellas, they sometimes remain decorative features, without constellating broader meanings. However, one text from this short period stands out from the others for its richness of intertextual connotations and ambivalences related to transforming value-laden concepts and ideologies. This text — J. Randvere's (the pen-name of Johannes Aavik) *Ruth* — was published in the third and most scandalous Young Estonia album in 1909. The genre of this text is hard to define. In some sense it could be considered an essay-novella, because it is written in the form of diary (about 56 pages) and consists almost entirely of the narrator's descriptions of an ideal woman from head to foot.⁶ Nevertheless, even *Ruth* with all its paradoxical and decadent tendencies does not achieve such depth in its relations with modernity as do texts from the years 1915–1917 — A. H. Tamm-

⁴ Johannes Aavik (1880–1973) and Friedebert Tuglas (1886–1971) were both initiators of the Young Estonia movement. Tuglas was also the leading modernizer of Estonian literature and this holds also for the case of Anton Hansen Tammsaare (1878–1940), who did not actively participate in the Young Estonia movement, but had a close relationship with some of its members (Gustav Suits and Bernhard Linde) and published his literary works in the albums of Young Estonia. Johannes Aavik (pen-name J. Randvere) was actually a well-known Estonian language reformer and *Ruth* is almost his only literary work.

⁵ According to Wolfdietrich Rash and many other theoreticians of literary decadence, there are many fixed motives and themes in literary decadence like disease, mystification of the *femme fatale*, aestheticism, artificiality, world-weariness, and lack of power, sensitivity and irritability, remoteness from life and isolation, eroticism, violence, the identity of life and death, consciousness of loss, talk about an age of decadence, and repudiation of decadence itself. (see Rash 1986).

⁶ *Ruth* is young and beautiful, but unlike traditional representations of woman at that time, *Ruth* is also smart and creative with a ravishing ability to improvise on the piano. Furthermore the narrator stresses *Ruth*'s consciousness about herself, relating it to her awareness and activity in sexual matters, which reminds the reader of the seductive body of a *femme fatale*. But this is not all: it also becomes clear that *Ruth* is a good scholar as well.

saare's novellas *Kärbes* ("The Fly" 1917) and *Varjundid* ("Shades" 1917) and Friedebert Tuglas' novel *Felix Ormusson* (1915).

In the following I set out to analyze four texts: J. Randvere's *Ruth* (1909), Friedebert Tuglas' *Felix Ormusson* (1915), and A. H. Tammsaare's novellas *Noored hinged* (1909) and *Kärbes* (1917) with the purpose of locating relationships among the motifs and themes of decadence. A comprehensive analysis of the themes and styles of decadence is not possible within the limits of one article. Therefore I will concentrate on the representation of the decadent-aesthete — the main protagonist of literary decadence, and show what kind of feelings, fears and dreams related to modernization Estonian writers articulate through this figure. In addition I will point to some inter-texts pertaining to this representation and offer some speculations as to the function of the discourse of decadence in Estonian literature.

In a 1914 article, Tammsaare gives a clear description of the above mentioned dizzying experience of modernity: "We are living at a time when there is much talk about nerves. There is not much stability, standing still — everything is in motion and changes like a babbling brook. If you do not join in the motion and begin to look around, then you will smile and become melancholic, which can be best cured by going into nature." (Tammsaare 1986: 299) This short quotation epitomizes Rojola's idea of Finnish modernity as a kind of shock, the reaction to which is the same as in Europe.

In the Tammsaare passage the opposition of the urban and the rural implicitly carries the meaning of modernity and the reaction to modernity: more precisely, the city is perceived as modern, with connotations of permanent motion and change, and the rural setting (specifically nature) as anti-modern and unchanging. However, it is not just any city that Tammsaare has in mind. One cannot imagine that small provincial Estonian towns, such as Tartu and Tallinn at the beginning of the 20th century really were, would have generated a feeling of speed and ceaseless movement comparable to and associated with the experience of modernity in the great metropolises of the day. Thus, it would be far more to the point to think that it is life in a metropolis such as Saint Petersburg, Berlin, Vienna, London or Paris that represents the experience Tammsaare wants to express. In relation to this, the function of nature is therapeutic, a cure for the feelings created by a modern metropolis, making it possible to handle the challenges of modernity. Also, nature, and the appeal to nature

epitomizes distrust of the belief in progress, reason, and democracy. In other words, as in many other texts of literary decadence, this quotation implicitly includes the resistance to changing norms and values associated with metropolitan life. It should be added that this resistance is also the reason why metropolitan life is tacitly regarded as sick and decadent, and why the cure is sought in nature. Consequently this opposition between urban and rural (which could be very well replaced by culture/nature) is hierarchical, with associations to the urban sphere taking on negative meanings.

As in the texts of Tammsaare, so in Randvere's *Ruth* and in Tuglas' *Felix Ormusson* the opposition of the modern decadent city *versus* healthy anti-modern life in agrarian society or just in nature (raw, wild, or unspoiled) is in the service of expressing the experience of modernity, and ambivalent feelings situated in modern European metropolises — those places where the experience of modernity actually got its broader meanings. To make this opposition work, Estonian writers, just as writers of many other European nations, constructed the decadent aesthete — the main carrier of decadent mentality: a young, intelligent and creative man⁷, resident of the modern decadent city, who has enough spare time⁸ to walk and look around, to register changes around him as well as to reflect on himself and his feelings. However, he is not accustomed to city life, with its tremendous speed and bustle. His crises of acclimatization are

⁷ There are not many examples of the female decadent in literary decadence and this holds also in the case of Estonian literary decadence, because the construction of *Ruth* rather reproduces the model of "masculine" decadent than destroys it.

⁸ The fact that all Estonian decadents whom I am here examining, have enough spare time (especially in case of Felix Ormusson and *Ruth*) and the a question about their material opportunities never arises, indicates that examples of Estonian literary decadence probably relied strongly on such paradigmatic examples of literary decadence as J.-K. Huysmans' *A Rebours* or O. Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*, in which decadent-aesthetes belong to the upper class or to the aristocracy. Yet one should keep in mind that at the beginning of 20th century in Estonia no classes per se existed, and that the first-generation Estonian intellectuals were quite poor. Nevertheless Tammsaare already considers the material conditions of Estonian intellectuals in his so called university novellas (1908–1910), emphasising their problems of poverty and therefore, in postcolonialist terms his decadents are already "hybrid" figures.

associated with an inability to create, with nervous and rebellious feelings; his dreams are often anti-modern, composed of idealizations of rural, "a-cultural life", and nature.

Randvere's representation of Ruth contains the same attitudes and behavior: much of the narrator's construction of this ideal woman follows the "masculine" model.⁹ "She is intelligent on high level, in the special sense given to this word in France; namely a being, whose ability to think, the activity of whose brain has been developed to the extreme; who has gathered into her memory's storehouse a huge amount of scientific and literary ideas and facts." (Randvere 1980: 14)¹⁰ These are the features typically connected in literary decadence with the male decadent-aesthete. Another sign that Ruth is patterned on a "masculine" model can be seen in the fact that her sexuality is not related to reproduction, as sexuality traditionally is when related to women.¹¹ And one should also add that *Ruth's* narrator's inclination to stress Ruth as being "utopian" is also a sign of a "masculine" point of view, as by doing so the fictive narrator emphasizes explicitly and implicitly the mental inferiority of the "real" woman and so reproduces antifeminist misogyny.¹² But this is another theme.

To summarize, one should quote Aino Kallas, the first to notice *Ruth's* relations to modernity. According to Kallas in *Ruth* "there appears for the first time in Estonian literature a totally contemporary spirit, a modern man — the beautiful soul. How much [---] of refined and analytical spirit of this modern man — and at the same time also of impotence." (Kallas 1909: 6.) Although Kallas does not reflect in her article about the genderedness of the modern human (she uses the gender-neutral "inimene", human being), behind this refined and

⁹ Already the words "As a matter of fact it is I myself, if I were a woman." (Randvere 1980: 9) contain the aspect of "masculine" projection.

¹⁰ From this citation also appears Randvere's context of influences. Randvere = Aavik was a Francophile and very much impressed by Paul Bourget — one of the first to define the term decadence.

¹¹ As feminist theorists have argued, it was not possible in the context of *fin de siècle* to see female sexuality and reproduction as totally separate from each other, if for no other reason then because no safe contraceptives were available. (Lappalainen 2003: 215).

¹² The best example of such misogynist ideas from this period is Otto Weininger's tract *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903), which has had quite a big influence both on J. Randvere's *Ruth* and on A. H. Tammsaare's works.

analytical spirit is the representation of the male decadent, because relations to modernity were at the turn of the 20th century mostly masculinized (see Felski 1995). But why did Estonian culture need this kind of “masculine” representation, and how this construction of “a contemporary spirit, a modern-man — an aesthete” relate to the Estonian experience of modernity? And how was this Ruth, this ideal woman, linked with the program of Young Estonians, with their “becoming European and remaining Estonian”? These questions will be explored later in this article.

As a matter of fact Ruth was not the first representation of the decadent-aesthete in Estonian literature. Very analytical, refined, but the same time exhausted young men appear already in Tammsaare’s *Pikad sammud* in the year 1908. Furthermore, Tammsaare repeats one and the same type of figure — a male decadent aesthete in five different novellas in the course of the years 1908–1917. Thus it is relevant to ask, does the repetition of this figure refer to some broader fields of meaning? Or what does this decadent aesthete actually represent?

To answer this question I would like to point to the novella *Noored hinged* (1909), where a character named Rein Muhem, a formerly promising poet expresses his feelings as follows: “there is nothing more difficult..., when one is endangering one’s virgin soul, for believe me, the body sooner gets accustomed to truffles and liqueur than the soul does to the blandishments of the city; a little bit of this, a dash of that, a tiny snippet of a third thing, a whiff of the fourth, just a glance at a fifth, an earful of the sixth, an intuition of a seventh, a conjecture about an eighth — and all of it in the blinking of an eye, as if in passing, in order to forget it all later, to make room for the next. If one goes along with the whole game, then one loses one’s ground altogether.” (NH 1978: 232.)

This citation has clear connections with Tammsaare’s words in the article quoted earlier. Thus this passage also tries to capture a changed perception of time, so implicitly including the consciousness of changing norms and values connected to urbanization and the experience of the metropolis. In his book *Five Faces of Modernity* Matei Calinescu argues that when it became possible to measure Time as a sequence of events depending on each other; and Time, like any other product began to have a measurable equivalent in the form of money (one could buy and sell Time), this brought with it on a psychical level

a dramatically increased Time-consciousness. Life came to be perceived as ceaseless movement towards the future, which in its turn generated the feeling of acute danger (Calinescu 1987: 41–42; 151–157).

For Muhem it is not possible to embrace everything around him at once, because the ceaseless stream of impressions goes beyond the capacity of perception as well as killing interest and sensibility, making one indifferent and superficial. Therefore Muhem and many other male characters from Tammsaare's novellas in the period 1908–1917 are quite neurotic and suffer from boredom or *ennui* and melancholy. "*Ennui* is a modern illness of the soul. All interesting people are dull," (Tammsaare 1978: 188) argues Muhem, actualizing with these words many inter-textual references to examples of the decadent-aesthetes from European literature.

As many critics have argued¹³, the first one to articulate decadent mentality or more broadly the experience of modernity was Charles Baudelaire. His term spleen signifies constant feelings of morose dissatisfaction and powerlessness, which are ascribed by Baudelaire to his representation of the dandy — the first version of the decadent-aesthete, who appears in many of his poems and writings.

Not only Muhem from Tammsaare's novella *Noored hinged* suffers from spleen. More thoroughly all the signs of spleen are deployed in the example of Felix Ormusson from F. Tuglas' novel of the same title. Ormusson addresses himself as follows: "Observe the life of ordinary people. Go even further go even deeper. Go to that place where thought stops altogether: make yourself acquainted with a child or an animal — You, who are sick with thoughts." (Tuglas 1988: 116.) Ormusson's "thought-sickness" is connected to the fact that contemplation and reflection from a distance are his only ways of being. Like Ruth, whose "thinking ability and brain activity are developed to the extreme," Ormusson is a representative of a late stage of culture, which has reached the zenith of civilization¹⁴, but

¹³ P. Bourget's book *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* (1883), which was very popular at the end of the 19th century, for the first time represents Baudelaire as a paradigmatic example of decadence. One should also mention W. Benjamin's essays about Baudelaire, especially his "Das Paris des Second Empire bei Baudelaire" (1938).

¹⁴ Bourget and many other theoreticians of decadence define decadent culture with the aid of the organic metaphor. In his terms this is a culture

because of this high level of development he has lost something very important — contact with the real world. As one can see from the above quotation, Ormusson's sickness is related to the problem of not being able to free himself from his thoughts. Cut off from real life, he issues an order to himself to find contacts with ordinary people, and also with children or animals, who symbolize such a relation with life, which is in some sense free of interpretations. Ormusson's head is stuffed full of interpretations and citations from different texts — he lives in himself, in his world of imagination. Pirjo Lyytikäinen similarly describes the Finnish decadent from the novel *Antonius* by Volter Kilpi; Ormusson “represents the self-sufficient pleasure of an individual focusing on himself, which erodes the basis of communal life and morals alike.” (Lyytikäinen 2003: 15.)¹⁵

Ormusson's narcissism and egotism are in turn influenced by the modern metropolis because, as many theoreticians, among them Oscar Wilde, have thought these characteristics were “entirely the result of indoor life” (Wilde 2000: 49). Compared to Tammsaare's decadents and Randvere's Ruth, Ormusson's narcissism and egotism are much more thoroughly sketched out. Therefore in *Felix Ormusson* there are also many references to modern European cities, among them to Venice, the city of decadence *par excellence*. But at the beginning of the novel the reader learns that Ormusson has escaped from a metropolis, specifically from Paris. He has gone to the country to have a rest, to cure himself from the sickly feelings of the metropolis, in order to write and just be happy. However, he is not able to free himself of his mental and bodily decadence, of his thoughts, of his fatigue, lack of energy and boredom. Restlessness and his constant need for reflection and introspection caused by increased Time-consciousness do not let him enjoy the summer.

Ormusson's linear and subjective perception of time is revealed in his interpretations of the countryside, where he feels that a cyclical understanding of time prevails. Everything repeats itself — voices, household chores, ideas. (Tuglas 1988: 12). In contrast, Ormusson's

which has developed to the point of no further development, from that point is only possible to decline.

¹⁵ It is quite obvious that Tuglas received many influences also from the examples of Finnish literary decadence: after the revolution of 1905, between 1906–1917, he was a political refugee, living mostly in Finland, but also travelling around Europe.

ideas will never come back to the same place again. So the mentality of Ormusson, raised in the metropolis, has one good quality in the eyes of Ormusson himself: the ability to create something new and original which never repeats itself.

This ability to imagine connects Ormusson with the protagonists of Tammsaare and Randvere's *Ruth*, who also have a great imaginative power. Unfortunately, though, this imagination is not very fruitful, as it does not lead to artistic creation. Its greatest achievement is to make a work of art out of one's lifestyle — and of this Ormusson is the paragon. This introduces the theme of dilettantism, which often accompanies the representation of decadent-aesthetes. In Tammsaare's novella *Kärbes*, there is an ageing writer named Meriheini who argues: "But then something terrible happened /.../ I was reading a work by an Italian author and from him I found my great dream, which I didn't have the heart to put into words /.../ I loved my dream too much /.../ But one mustn't love dreams too much, these must be loved in the way that one could be /.../ pitiless, merciless towards them. Yes, but then I didn't know /.../ that one can steal the dreams. I /.../ thought that I was pregnant with some heavy thing but there was nothing to give birth to; someone else had given birth to my dream, perhaps even before it appeared in my soul." (Tammsaare 1979: 181.)

Meriheini's words are significant as they amplify the feeling that the times of originality have passed and that the creations and deeds of modern times merely copy something old, that in addition, these copies are but pale shadows of ancient times.¹⁶ In other words the culture of *fin de siècle* renders genius as such impossible — the whole culture lacks the ability to be original (Lyytikäinen 1997: 164).

According to Paul Bourget, one of the first to define literary decadence, it is in fact the dilettante who becomes the hero of decadence. Bourget argues that "dilettantism is the condition of very sensitive and lustful souls: they are attracted by all kinds of different forms of life and lend themselves to all of these forms, but they never give themselves totally up to any of them. They do not relate themselves with dogmas and truths, because for them many opposite viewpoints are valid. They cannot say anything without improving their

¹⁶ The best theoretical description of these changes is Walter Benjamin's "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit" (1936).

argument with nuances. /.../ They make the mosaic from their souls.” (Bourget 1993: 36–44.)

Thus, if decadents produce any beauty at all, it is the overripe fruit of an overly refined neurotic culture worshipping nuance and form (Lyytikäinen 2003: 13). In *Ruth* the narrator argues that “The superiority of Ruth /.../ lies mostly in the event that she perceives tiny little nuances of an idea and different sides of a phenomenon; she can look at things from every different point of view, /.../ can find in them such relations that nobody has ever conceived of before. /.../ But this superiority can also make her weak: just because she perceives an enormous amount of nuances in one phenomenon, she often hesitates /.../ when there is a need to make up her mind quickly. Sometimes it can cause her troubling moments of internal struggle. But on the other hand, it brings along a new superiority, because this makes her already subtle sensibility become even more supreme and refined.” (Randvere 1980: 17–18.)

There is no doubt that the narrator of *Ruth* in this context repeats Bourget’s thoughts about dilettantism. Moreover, he implicitly expresses Bourget’s whole definition of psychological decadence. For Bourget decadence means that on the one hand individual interests begin to prevail over collective purposes and therefore social “organism” declines; on the other hand Bourget admires the decadence which appears on the individual psychological level: “If the citizens of a decadent society are inferior as workers for the greatness of their country, are they not very much superior as artists in the description of their emotions? Although they are rarely suited for private or public work, is it not true that they are more skilled in lonely thoughts? It is a fact that they seldom bring forth a future generation; but do they not produce an abundance of fine and exquisite effects of rare feelings which result in accomplished artists, sterile but refined, who possess a high degree of sensibility as well as a capacity to suffering?” (Bourget 1993: 15.)

In the context of Bourget’s ideas about individual interests prevailing over collective pursuits, it is also relevant to ask how the representatives of modern individualism — *Ruth*, Felix Ormusson, and the protagonists of Tammsaare’s novellas are involved in the process of nation building or how they participate in realizing the aim of “remaining Estonians”, the first segments of the Young Estonians manifesto? This question brings us to yet another theme of literary

decadence — that of surpassing decadence¹⁷, which likewise evokes the critique of decadence and modernity as well.

In the texts under discussion the surpassing of decadence is closely related to construction of national ideology. For example in *Felix Ormusson* the affirmation of national identity is gradually reached, on the one hand through Ormusson's identification with the bourgeois and nationalist attitudes of his friend Johannes — a hardworking doctor; on the other hand it becomes visible through Ormusson's idealization of an agrarian mentality, represented in the novel by the old peasant Adam. Also in Tammsaare's novellas, it often happens that male decadents adopt a bourgeois world-view, and come to work as journalists and pastors — those very professions which they have hated the most at the beginning of their narrations. In Tammsaare's texts, this overcoming of decadence also goes hand in hand with recovering the ability to create and work. In other terms, this means marriage instead of woman-hatred, work instead of transgression, egoistic pleasure and decay; collective and common interests instead of individualistic ones.

To my mind, the most interesting case as concerns the construction of national ideology is J. Randvere's *Ruth*. In reality Ruth consists of two opposite poles: as a representative of the decadent femininity, she is a symbol of old, decaying (and therefore feminizing Europe because of women's emancipation) Europe, a "feminized Europe," attributed by F. Nietzsche, O. Weininger and many others to women's emancipation. The narrator of *Ruth* says: "It seems to me that a Woman could realize a bigger work of art in herself. Concerning her outlook, she is a product of humankind, which represents a more developed, more aged and more refined culture. Because her body is finer and more delicate, her physical power has diminished, her bones are refined, and her hand and foot have lost their voluminous skirts. Altogether she is a more ethereal, more dematerialized and more spiritual being." (Randvere 1980: 10.)

At the same time Ruth is the negation, or at least the neutralization of these feminized characteristics of decadence. Moreover, because the narrator stresses Ruth's youthfulness, she gradually begins to symbolize a young Estonian nation. Following the narrator's description closely, one sees that "Ruth is still a young woman, hardly over

¹⁷ See citation nr 5.

twenty. /---/ She is kind of blond, racially some sort of Finnish. She is something homely, familiar, simple and natural, but at the same time something cultural and refined. Ruth's tint is privileged with two good qualities: with race and with stamina; without which there can't be any serious beauty. The color of her face is neither rustic red nor naive-tender. It is a healthy paleness." (Randvere 1980: 20–28.) So as an icon of a feminized Europe, behind which one can perceive the feminized figure of the male decadent, Ruth is old, experienced, smart, intelligent, cultivated, even artificial, but at the same time the narrator shows her as young, simple and natural — thus constructing Ruth as a symbol of young Estonian culture.

In some respects Ruth's psychology has lost its coherence — as a typical male decadent, she is very refined and reflective, worshipping nuance and form. On the other hand the narrator stresses her diligence, which is the opposite of decadent passivity and diletantism. An oscillation also emerges between healthiness¹⁸ and sickness, between a rustic lifestyle as a sign of health and modern, therefore sick and decadent, city-life. Once again, Ruth's complexion is a good example. The narrator does not want to connect Ruth with something red and rustic, the characteristics of the peasantry; at the same time emphasis is put on her simple homely, familiar lines, which have something to do with the Finnishness and Finnish culture altogether¹⁹.

The mixture of different styles and ideologies in the text amplifies this oscillation. The scope of the present article does not allow for an analysis of decadent style, but in all the texts under discussion, emphasis on detail at the expense of plot is related to the representation of an internal rather than external world. In the case of Randvere's *Ruth* and Tuglas's *Felix Ormusson* stylistic decadence also appears in that these texts have been written in the form of a diary. This impression is strengthened by the fact that these texts are "learned" works, based on inter-texts rather than on direct observation of the experiential world, a tendency that Pirjo Lyytikäinen considers essential to the literary decadence (Lyytikäinen 2003: 15).

Friedebert Tuglas notices this tendency already in the year 1912, in one of his most famous articles "Kirjanduslik stiil" ("Literary Style"):

¹⁸ One can argue that *Ruth* was also influenced by the race question and eugenics.

¹⁹ Estonians also drew a great deal on the example of Finnish culture as a young developing culture.

“Because we do not have a metropolis, we have in fact acquired the cultural feelings of the great world too theoretically, indirectly, through education and foreign literature and art. We have not yet had the opportunity actively to take part in creating European cultural values. We do not have any relations to the history of these values. We are theoretical Europeans.” (Tuglas 1996: 52.)

However, one should not infer from this, as did Estonian critics in the period of Young-Estonia, that all these decadent ideas were “strange birds”, having nothing to do with the situation in Estonia at the beginning of the 20th century. In the same article Tuglas also says that: “the city, the new tempo of life, the new psychology that actually does determine the personal tendencies of the writer and the new literary movement, will not pass without exercising their influence also here [that is, in Estonia]. /.../ A new, more self-conscious energy of life requires a new, more self-conscious literary form. It will find for oneself a new technique and method, a new linguistic and stylistic choice.” (Tuglas 1996: 53.)

The city, the new tempo of life, the new psychology — are these three elements not an essential part of the representation of decadent? In conclusion, one might say that the representation of the decadent and his decadence functioned for Estonian writers as a symbol of the transitional or decadent period not only in Europe, but also in Estonia. This figure represented both the new time-consciousness brought with by increasing urbanization, and the new psychology and the new identity related to those changes. In the case of artists it also represented their changing position in the conditions of marketing and commodification. The protagonist of literary decadence thus symbolized the difficulties of acclimatization with modernity, while being at the same time its representation. On the basis of the above discussion, it is important to argue that although in Estonia, as in Finland, decadence did not appear in such a powerful form as for example in *fin de siècle* France, Germany or England, its themes and style were acutely present in Estonian literature at the beginning of the 20th, helping on the one hand to identify with the centers of Europe and to construct an European identity, on the other hand to oppose Europe and to claim and enforce a distinctive national identity.

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Looking at One's Self — Reflecting the Other: From the Knowledge of Estonian Poetics to the Understanding of the Reception of Foreign Poetry

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The question always present in the reception studies, if not openly, then implicitly, is: where should we look when trying to understand how literary works are received in a particular context? The easiest answer is that we should see what people (critics, teachers, ordinary readers) have written (articles, monographs, school books, diaries, private correspondence) about their understanding of the works in question. But what if it is not possible? Such a problem has also been encountered and methods developed or proposed to solve it. Usually it is a question of reliability, for instance, Daniel-Henri Pageaux points out that we need to consider much larger fields of study than literature itself, if we are to understand how a foreign author or foreign text is perceived in the receiving culture: we must also study ways of representing the cultural otherness in other domains than literature (Pageaux 1983: 21). Fritz Nies, on the other hand, reminds us that the written word is not necessarily a sufficient source of knowledge, the written word may not even always be available, if we are dealing with reception in the historical perspective and can no longer turn directly to the readers we are trying to understand — as a possible solution to this, Nies has spoken of the iconography of reading (Nies 1977/1978). Pageaux has also hinted at the possibility of not having written sources about reception available: if so, we could turn to more general sources circulating in the cultural context in question, which could tell us about the expectations of the public, about the dominant ideologies, about the concepts of otherness and foreignness (Pageaux 1983: 23).

However, both cited authors, as well as many others who have worked on these issues, come themselves from the cultures where there usually is a considerable number of sources available. Written, iconographic or otherwise, in old European cultures¹ a respectable corpus usually can be established in order to study a phenomenon of reception of foreign literature. In Estonia, this is not always so.

On the other hand, foreign literature has always had an important role to play in the shaping of Estonian literary traditions, perhaps more so than in the aforementioned old European cultures, which have had their periods of "receptivity", of course, but also other, more self-centered and self-sufficient ones. The history of Estonian literature is much shorter, and even if we consider it in its longest possible perspective, as we know it, the importance of other literatures grows only more evident. Itamar Even-Zohar argues that the status of foreign literature is especially high in "young" literatures; "peripheral" or "weak" literatures; and in the times when there are crises in literature. At these moments translated literature can be very intensely involved in the processes of development of the original literature and the translations are often produced by great authors of the receiving culture. (Even-Zohar 1978: 120–122). The epithets above are already introduced between inverted commas by Even-Zohar: they do not carry an evaluation, but refer to a specific situation which the Estonian literature has also been confronted with since its beginnings: born in a multicultural space (the presence of the German gentry in the Baltic provinces being the most influential cultural factor at the time), at a time when several other European literatures were going through some of their most inspired and influential stages, Estonian literature has always looked towards "foreign" horizons.

My own inverted commas are imposed by the fact that the models of this new-born 17th-century Estonian literature, of which only some texts have been preserved, were hardly foreign to those who wrote it. When the German poet Paul Fleming, who arrived in Tallinn in 1635, gathered there around him a group of local German literature lovers, they were engaging in the mainstream literary practices of their time. The gallant occasional poems of one of Fleming's friends and

¹ By which term I don't mean to imply that these cultures are, in this respect, different from all other cultures in the world, but they are different from the Estonian culture, also it is within these cultures that my theoretical sources have been created.

disciples, Reiner Brockmann, stand at the very beginning of the Estonian poetry. As Herbert Salu suggests, his works and others of that kind were more numerous at the time and did not just constitute the occasional pastimes of an eccentric German poet: there most probably was a considerable amount of such poetry and there is evidence that it was also known among the Estonian-speaking peasant population (Salu 1965).

If we set the "true" beginnings of Estonian poetry in the 19th century, when it was already written by poets of at least partly Estonian origin whose texts are actually known by today's readers, we move the focus of the "foreign" models (from French classicism *via* the poetics of Martin Opitz and the poetry of Paul Fleming to German romanticism and *Biedermeier*), but their fundamental role still remains. The literature one grows up with as a reader is hardly a truly foreign literature — to the Estonian poets of that time, whose education was mostly German, the German poetry was *their* poetry. In that sense, to this day, to all Estonian readers, foreign literature is from very early on their literature. It is impossible to imagine a living Estonian reader of any age, whose most essential reading material does not contain a large number of translated authors. The level of professional reading (whether the reading *is* the profession or just a means to learn and practice it) is impossible to obtain or preserve without knowing foreign languages. In the 19th century, and a long way into the 20th, the lack of translations applied this condition to one's readings much sooner in life. At that time, a monolingual Estonian reader was confined to a very restricted choice of texts and poetics (a few newspapers, didactical stories, practical books, manuals and such). Such a reader would have never been able to turn into a writer, a poet.

At the very beginning of the 20th century, when there already was an Estonian poetic tradition to speak of, the project of renewing and modernizing it was also a project of looking for new models in European literature. It was initiated by a group of young authors, from the first university-educated generation of Estonians, who, for the first time, made of this search for models an intentional and calculated process. At that time, the first generation, who could count on full education (up to a university degree or at least a high school diploma) in their language, was yet to be born. The times when drawing a neat line between foreign and original in the Estonian literary practices,

practices that are inseparable from language, became at least technically possible are thus very recent in Estonia. Foreign poetry is written into our own literary patterns at several levels: its translations constitute a large part of the literary tradition in Estonian language; translating it is a large part of the work of many Estonian poets; in its source languages it belongs to the reading repertoire of most Estonian poets of all times, and to that of quite many readers as well. But it is quite common that a most influential foreign author, such as Baudelaire whose work is going to serve as an example here, does not really move on from the reading (and translating) repertoire to that of criticism and commentary. So the researcher is often confronted with the problem I referred to in the beginning: we have difficulty in establishing a sufficient and valid corpus of texts that would explain the reception of his poetry, while this poetry clearly has had a significant meaning in Estonia during the whole 20th century, as the frequent translations of his poems and frequent casual mentions of his name suggest.

One possible solution lies with the very definition of the horizon of expectations, one of the key notions of reception studies. According to Hans Robert Jauss, the literary historians should first consider the dialectic relationship between the aesthetic effect produced by a literary work and the former experience of the readers: experience that concerns the literary genre of the new work in particular, the form and the content of formerly available literary works in general, and the opposition of poetic and practical language, the imaginary world and that of everyday realities (Jauss 2001: 51–54). Jauss goes on to say that the aesthetic distance that results from the incompatibility of the new (possibly foreign) work to the original horizon is best measured by the reactions of the public and the critics (Jauss 2001: 58), but in the already noted lack thereof we still have the means to explore the original poetic experiences particular to the Estonian culture. That is, we can discover characteristics of Estonian poetry that obtain a new significance in comparison to the foreign poetics introduced by translations, and we can analyze the ways translations, and thus the images of foreign poets, are influenced by these characteristics.

Since an Estonian reader can, as likely as not, be a reader of a lot more than Estonian poetry, we should not assume (at least not at once) that an analysis of Estonian poetry tells us all about the experience of readers. But it most certainly tells us a lot about the experience of the

poets. Michel Collot points out that all poetic experience involves at least three notions: a subject, a world and a language (Collot 1989: 5). Poetry is a way of exploring one's self and one's experiences with the world by giving these phenomena a structure in the form of subjective expression, by means of imaginative and reflective faculties. When a poet turns into a translator, all these faculties that otherwise serve his own experience are turned towards understanding and recreating the structures that another has given to his. The translations of Baudelaire by several great Estonian poets allow thus to bring out an aesthetic difference between Baudelaire's poetry and theirs. In the light of the first, the latter has a surprising number of common characteristics, so at least in this context we could generalize them and speak of the Estonian poetics in opposition to baudelairean poetics, even if the following observations are based solely on the works of his translators Gustav Suits, Johannes Semper, August Sang, Ilmar Laaban, Ain Kaalep, Jaan Kross and Indrek Hirv.² There have been other significant translators and poets involved in the translation of Baudelaire in Estonia, but here I shall consider only those that have been both and share a general approach to the poetics of translation (translation in rimed and measured verse).

Baudelaire's poems often describe the experience of seeing, or more generally, the experience of perception. This is the case of three texts that have been very popular among our translators: "Les Phares", "Une Charogne", *Je t'adore à l'égal de la vouûte nocturne...*³ Instead of that experience of perception, the translations focus on the object perceived. That is, they often transfer the properties of the experience (that is, the subject) to the object connected with the experience. In these three poems the subject reflects on his perception of art, of a one-time seen image of death, of love and the beloved. The reader never quite finds out from these texts what a painting of, for example,

² The editions of their poetry that I have used are given in the references: if a representative edition of collected or selected works has been available, I have used this, if not, I have made my own selection of their lyrical works published over the years that I hope to be reasonably representative for the purpose of sketching the general characteristics given below.

³ The first one has been translated by Ants Oras (1936), Ain Kaalep (1967), Tõnu Õnnepalu (2000); the second by Johannes Aavik (1909), August Sang (1967), Tõnu Õnnepalu (2000); the third by Ilmar Laaban (1966), Indrek Hirv (2000), Ain Kaalep (2000), Tõnu Õnnepalu (2000).

Leonardo da Vinci looks like, or what the famous dead creature looked like, or what kind of person the subject is in love with. In the Estonian texts, however, we have a much clearer view of these objects, achieved by the assumption that they really are what the subject perceives or believes them to be. Thus we learn, for example, from Kaalep's version that the figures of Michelangelo move about in the fog (Baudelaire's *lieu vague*, see Baudelaire 1975: 13, Baudelaire 1967: 15) or that the woman the subject addresses resembles the night sky, while from the original we only learn that the poet adores her as much as he adores the night sky: the declaration *Je t'adore à l'égal de la voûte nocturne* becomes *Nagu põhjatu taevas, öös tummuv ja mustav, nagu nukruse vaas oled* in the translation by Indrek Hirv (Baudelaire 2000b: 35).

At first sight, these may seem minor transformations. However, one of the basic principles of *Les Fleurs du mal* is that the world is not structured according to the essence of objects in it, but according to the way the subject understands them. That is, Baudelaire's object (be it a work of art or a woman) does not have an independent existence, it exists for him, by him and because it has a function in his world — to help him construct his own lyric subjectivity. The lyrical subject doesn't exist, says Jean-Michel Maulpoix, it takes place (Maulpoix 2001: 147, 153). In Baudelaire's case, this "happening", this coming into being is a very self-conscious process, the subject is well aware of his own ambiguity, his self-critical and ironic disposition, of his involvement in a "duplicitous discourse" (Stephens 1999: 12), so that Barbara Johnson calls Baudelaire "homo duplex" (Johnson 1979: 15). Of this notion as well our understanding should be dynamic: the duplicity of the subject, who constantly tries to see himself as an exterior object and forces the objects around him to participate in his quest of himself, is not a stable characteristic, but the very poetic method of Baudelaire. This complex subjectivity has brought several earlier Estonian translators of Baudelaire, such as Johannes Aavik and Marie Under, much perplexity: in the grasp of what J.-D. Hubert calls "biographic fiction" (the presumption that the lyrical subject directly and stably represents the historical identity of the author), they look for its essential condition — sincerity (see Hubert 1993: 18) — and either find it lacking (Under 1930: 6–7) or see behind it a rather deviant and pathetic person (Aavik et al. 1937: 71). Later commenta-

ries published in the Soviet era (for example, see Sang 1967) find ways to look past the complexity altogether.

In Baudelaire's texts we actually never see the objects, but the subject looking at them. This filter tends to disappear in the Estonian translations and to be ignored in interpretations of Baudelaire's work. On one hand, this helps to understand the difficulties that the Estonian critics (often the same as the translators of the texts in question) have had explaining the objects Baudelaire chooses to contemplate in his poems. His essentially egocentric approach does not give them an independent life, but it gives them a reason. With that approach lost, we may also lose the reason to contemplate these objects and be perplexed or even disgusted when confronted to them: why, for instance, would somebody write a poem about a dead, decaying creature? This is, however, a line of reasoning that I will not follow at present, having defined the initial problem otherwise and discussed these issues elsewhere (Talviste 2004).

On the other hand, if the said filter is removed, the structure of experience can also change considerably. If there are real, independent objects, even as disgusting as a dead creature or as scary as the woman in poem XXIV, the subject can actually interact with them. It is the endless movement of projections and reflections from object to subject and vice versa that makes Baudelaire's subject suffer endlessly (and also attack his objects in his craving for vengeance and, even more, of real reciprocity with something or somebody other than himself). As Jean Starobinski points out, Baudelaire is the solitary prisoner of his own reflexive mind and introspection (see Starobinski 1989: 36–45). Our poets' rather advanced insensibility to such a state of mind transforms Baudelaire's introspective and solitary universe into a less lonely one. The world of the Estonian Baudelaire is more about communication and togetherness than the original one.

This can be seen in "Les Phares" (Kaalep's version) and "Une Charogne" (Sang's version). Also see in "La Mort des amants", translated by an eminent critic and translator, although not a poet himself, Ants Oras. In this poem we see how with Baudelaire distance and filters are present even in the otherwise most exultant image of love and passion. In a most analytical fashion, Baudelaire constructs an image of heart and mind, compared respectively to a torch and a mirror. Love is an introspective process in itself, and this process is simultaneously affecting the subject and his counterpart, their feelings

are parallel, it is a twin feeling (*jumeau*), but that is as far as Baudelaire goes. Even in love there is no real union. In the Estonian text, however, we see these analytical, parallel figures quite literally melt into a perfect union. The process, here already more like a situation, loses its introspective character, instead of two hearts mirrored by two minds we have a continuum of hearts and souls shared by the two lovers:

Usant à l'envi leurs chaleurs dernières,
 Nos deux cœurs seront deux vastes flambeaux,
 Qui réfléchiront leurs doubles lumières
 Dans nos deux esprits, ces miroirs jumeaux.
 (Baudelaire 1975: 126)

ning me südameis viimse kiretahte
 laialt lõkatav tõrvikute viirg,
 ning me hingedes, heiastav neid kahte,
 suure heleda kaksikpeegli kiirg...
 (Baudelaire 1967: 111; Baudelaire 2000b: 63)

The lonely and self-centered subject, unable to really reach the other, disappears, like he disappears in many other texts (“Allégorie”, “L’Héautontimorouménos”, “De profundis clamavi”, translated respectively by Hirv, Sang and Laaban). Estonian texts build sort of bridges between the Baudelairean subject and the world. Also between the Baudelairean subject and himself, since this utter detachment, seeing himself through a filter, is also characteristic of Baudelaire (“Bénédiction”, “De profundis clamavi”, “Spleen” LXXVI) and much less characteristic of the translations.

The distances grow less in space as well, especially in the vertical dimension. The fundamental image of depth is much less conspicuous in translations, for example in “L’Albatros” or “Élévation”. In the first one we can very clearly see the reason and also the consequences: in the context of the poem alone we could say that it is not very important that the sea where sail the ships followed by the albatross, who then gets captured by the sailors, is deep, *gouffre amer*. The main agents in this poem are the sailors, the bird, the ships, and if a translator wants to render the relations between them in a form close to that of the original, it can be expected that a seemingly auxiliary figure is abandoned. It does not much change the poem. But it does

make a dent in the underlying figurative structure of the book as a whole, where depth is an essential dimension. And with many dents of the same tendency, the imagery developed by Baudelaire is no longer perceptible in the translation. There are quite many dents of the same tendency. It is not only the vertical depth that gets erased, but also the horizontal one, as we can see in one of the "Spleens": the original introspective nature of the subject that in the original is parallel to the many-layered perception of space is replaced in the translation by a more immediate relationship with one's self and the world, parallel to a two-dimensional image of the space. Things that originally are behind other things, far away, just appear before us in the Estonian text (see Baudelaire 1967: 49, 111).

The distance and filters that always come between the lyrical subject and his object in general, or in human relations and in space in particular, are thus much diminished in Estonian. This is characteristic of all translators. Of course, not always and not in the same manner — it is hardly an intentional strategy. But I find it significant because of its systematic direction: if the compromises required from the translator affect the figures of distance/proximity, which need not always be the case, these figures always turn into more simple and immediate ones. This even happens in the translation that Tõnu Õnnepalu published in the year 2000 where he gives up all pretence to follow the form of Baudelaire's verse in order to preserve the meaning (Õnnepalu 2000: 485–487). It is true that in this respect his strategy is more efficient, but even here we find some echoes of that tendency — a most charming example can be found in the poem "L'invitation au voyage" where *miroirs profonds* are transformed into *peegli sügav pind* 'the deep surface of the mirror' (Baudelaire 2000a: 153). We are obviously dealing with something essential and symptomatic.

Paul-Eerik Rummo has suggested, in reference to August Sang, that a poet usually chooses to translate the work of his "soul-mates", those who resemble himself (Rummo 1975: 219). The poetry of Sang and other translators of Baudelaire cited above points to the carelessness of such an assumption. The structure of figures and experiences in their poetry is of a remarkably non-Baudelairean nature. Their poetic self-image is that of a person able to communicate easily with the Other. Even if the subject is occasionally seized by a romantic fit of loneliness, he generally identifies himself with a community, and quite often takes the role of a partner (in some ideological cause, in

love, in work...), even of a parent. An Estonian poet has a much stronger sense of belonging and reciprocity than Baudelaire. The easy access to one's self and to others is also represented in the perception of space. The vertical dimension is not very much developed. There could be something happening on the earth-sky axis (subject looking up or stars looking down), but even that axis is usually constructed into an otherwise open space. There is no troubling and vertiginous vertical reaching into abyss and climbing into heaven, both of them really inaccessible to the Baudelairean subject who always remains trapped in this two-way tension. To the contrary: we could say that the lyrical subject of the Estonian poets more often than not finds himself moving too easily. The world is wide around him, the wind is almost always present, bringing news from distant places or threatening to uproot him. There is always a risk of upheaval, always a feeling of being on a journey and a need to attach one's self to the firmer ground.

The reasons for these patterns are many, from our cultural and historical background to the influence of Gustav Suits' early poetry on all the other poets that came after him. The possibility to connect these patterns in our own poetry to the transformations of Baudelaire's poetry in our language leads to the following conclusions. Even in a culture which easily accepts and welcomes foreign poetics in order to broaden its poetic horizons, the deeper, less controlled level of poetic conscience and perception influences the construction of figures in translation in a "domesticating" way and thus reveals the patterns of understanding or misunderstanding that can establish themselves between the two cultures. That also means that in a culture where the criticism and analysis of foreign poetry are not very widely and thoroughly practiced, as is the case in Estonia, these patterns explain much more about the issues of the reception of a particular poet than an occasional article written about him. The two characteristics belong to the young, peripheral cultures in which the foreign literature is very much in the centre, on one hand, as a model and inspiration, but on the other hand, not nearly as central as an object of study and opinion. The phenomena of reception of foreign poetry should therefore be much more thoroughly studied in the light of "local" poetics, examining the latter on the very levels where it concerns itself the least with adoption of foreign poetics. Only when we have taken a thorough look at ourselves, can we tell us apart from the Other and also understand how the Other is reflected in what we are.

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The Reception of the "Other": Nietzsche and Slovenian Literature

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The theme of the present article is the relationship between Nietzsche and Slovenian literature. As the word "Other" in the title suggests, the reception of Nietzsche in Slovenia was a complex one. Above all, it was burdened — at least in the first decades — with an a priori mistrust of Nietzsche's philosophy.

One of the reasons for this situation lies in the structure of Slovenian literature on the one hand, and of Nietzsche's philosophy on the other. It has been noted that Nietzsche's thought is always characterised by an ambiguity of structure. In other words: Nietzsche's texts, even as they evolve, never cease to resist rationalist description, summary, and the usual processes of objectifying and systemising thought. They prefer *de-con-struction*, that is, a journey into the unknown, desire for the new, adventure, risk — or any other of the similar, mostly metaphorical expressions used by Nietzsche. Such deconstruction, then, is preferred to the *form* of the Whole as established in academic discourse. This kind of discourse is the radical opposite of what Nietzsche calls "the gay science". His polemic attitude to science in general is a fact which has to be taken into account in any treatment of his philosophy — *including* the treatment that takes place *within* the formal requirements of *today's* science. Obviously, literary history and theory can be no exception here.

Anti-systematicity, the form of un-wholeness, is the distinctive feature of Nietzsche's thought. It is precisely this *revolt against the system*, inscribed into the very *structure* of Nietzsche's thought, that has contributed to the complex and confusing history of his reception. It has given rise to conflicting interpretations and divergent "readings"

of Nietzsche's philosophy, as well as to *Nietzscheanism* as a special form of adopting Nietzsche's ideas.

In regard to Nietzsche's reception in Slovenian culture, I may start with the statement that the original reception of his philosophy was mainly an *ideological* and *cultural* one. This applies to both the Catholic (conservative) and the Liberal (freethinking) parties, that is, to the two rival ideological models that predominated in Slovenia at the turn of the century. Presumably, similar features could be discovered in certain other European, especially Central European, literatures.

This attitude to Nietzsche (and philosophy in general) may be partly attributed to the state of philosophical thought in the late 19th and even in the early 20th century. It lacked the necessary elaboration for a fully qualified dialogue with Nietzsche's philosophy. In other words, his philosophy had no *proper*, that is, no philosophical interlocutor in Slovenia. And this is generally reflected in the Slovenian reception of Nietzsche, including his reception in *literature*. At the turn of the century, to encounter Nietzsche was usually to encounter something *different* and *alien*, if not downright unfathomable. Despite major ideological differences, the common denominator of the Catholic and freethinking parties was *traditionalism*. This traditionalism was an important basis of understanding, accepting, and, not least, of rejecting Nietzsche's thought. Indeed, Nietzsche, or the attitude to him, came to form a kind of boundary within Slovenian literature — the boundary between the *traditionalists* and the *moderns*.

In Slovenian fin-de-siècle literature, the reception of Nietzsche was more flexible, reaching beyond the established ideological frame of reference. Essentially, however, it was still limited — primarily by the structural features of a nation that had a literature but not a state of its own. In the first uncertain decades after the turn of the century, non-statehood was one of the key elements which prevented any lasting *radicalisation* of Slovenian literature, especially in its attitude to the Nation, Literature itself, and its Tradition. An author who clearly reflects these dilemmas is prose writer, playwright, and publicist Ivan Cankar (1876–1918), today considered the greatest classic of Slovenian literature, along with the Romantic poet France Prešeren.

Cankar's first phase was marked by a number of clashing yet intertwining orientations, both in his world view and his literary

aesthetics. His world-view orientations comprised Christianity, Socialism, anarchism, and "Nietzscheanism", while his literary aesthetics combined the elements of naturalism, decadence, symbolism, and — gradually — even "engaged" or "committed" literature. Some formulations attesting to the author's increased interest in Nietzsche appeared around 1900. The best known example of his "Nietzschean" vocabulary is the formulation which refers to morality as to something hostile — hostile especially to what he himself calls "souls of Dionysian gaiety". On the other hand, art is still understood in Cankar as an emphatic *ethical authority*, closely linked to the so-called "life-practice". In order to enter the world of Cankar's literature, then, Nietzschean concepts — such as "will", "power", "overman" — have to pass through the sieve of *humanisation*. This humanised literary program is sometimes referred to by Cankar as *tendentiousness*, but in a positive sense of the term. This context should be taken into account in any interpretation of the two texts justly considered as the most clear-cut instances of Cankar's Nietzscheanism: the short-story collection *A Book for Thoughtless People* (*Knjiga za lahkomiselne ljudi*; 1901) and the play *The King of Betajnova* (*Kralj na Betajnovi*; 1902). In *A Book for Thoughtless People*, Nietzschean themes are dominated by criticism of "the crowd" (that is, of philistinism), as well as of state and church institutions; other themes include an apology for individualism, a parody of the traditional values, etcetera. The work most clearly referred to is Nietzsche's book *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Yet Cankar's reception of Nietzsche can shade into ambivalence as well, even in *A Book for Thoughtless People*. This ambivalence about Nietzsche springs from the incompatibility of some of the ideas brought together in Cankar's literature, such as the idea of an amoral "overman" and the vision of a just society. The play *The King of Betajnova*, for example, can be interpreted as an "intratextual" dispute with Nietzsche's philosophy, which was seen by Cankar as primarily "the philosophy of the overman".

The poetry of Oton Župančič (1878–1949), characterised by an "elemental orientation", comes nearer to Nietzsche's philosophy — particularly to those general traits which justify its label of "a philosophy of life". There are two themes linking Župančič to Nietzsche, a fact which is confirmed by interpretative readings of single poems from his collections *A Cup of Intoxication* (*Čaša opojnosti*; 1899) and especially *Over the Wide Plain* (*Čez plan*; 1904).

These two themes are a critical attitude to Christianity and a cult of artistry or creativity. In Župančič, art is a manifestation of vitality.

When we move to interwar Slovenian literature and its attitude to Nietzsche, there are three names to be emphasised: avant-garde poet Anton Podbevšek (1898–1981), critic Josip Vidmar (1895–1992), and prose writer Vladimir Bartol (1903–1967). Podbevšek is important for his poetry collection *A Man with Bombs* (*Človek z bombami*; 1925), Vidmar for his reviews and essays, particularly those from the late twenties, and Bartol for his short-story collection *Al Araf* and his novel *Alamut* from the thirties. The works of these three authors embody the utmost possibilities of *adopting*, *adapting* and *understanding* Nietzsche's philosophy which were open to Slovenian literature at the time.

Podbevšek's poetic texts admit no doubt of his dialogue with Nietzsche, since they abound in Nietzschean references. These range from well-known Nietzschean syntagms and their thematic background to single thematic elements. Similar observations would be yielded by an analysis of Podbevšek's poetic "I"/"Ego", particularly his "Titanism" and "overhumanity". Unfortunately, however, the poet's oeuvre is slender and of uneven quality.

To Josip Vidmar, Nietzsche was important especially in the twenties, when he edited the magazine *Criticism* (*Kritika*) and wrote polemic critical essays, centring on the issue of (a)morality in art and the world view. The summary of his opinion is that the standpoint of humanity is the standpoint of art — noting, of course, that humanity is "beyond good and evil". In Vidmar's terms, this standpoint is the standpoint of freedom, but a freedom that has no base. Eventually, however, he did discover a base in the fifties. This was a return to the materialistic metaphysics of the pre-Kantian period, but it liberated his thought from the paradox into which it had strayed in the twenties, when he attempted to transcend the "amoralism" that had evolved with his approach to art. These attempts included a justification of the "free ethos" with an apology for art as a manifestation of vitality, and above all the view that a nation is a "positively" oriented form of the "will to power".

The link between Vidmar and Bartol is the notion of "the amorality of art", except that Bartol persisted in all but explicit Nietzscheanism well into the thirties, which saw the publication of his works *Al Araf* (1935) and *Alamut* (1938). The problem with his approach is that it is

highly "externalised": the issues of "nihilism", "will to power", "baselessness" are presented only at a *thematic* level, that is, as part of the plot and the actions of demoniac heroes, who are mostly immoral and subversive. These "contents", however, are not reflected in the literary *form*. A comparison of Nietzsche and Bartol reveals that the former is in fact a *more literary* author than the latter. The *radicalism* of Bartol's writing may have been blocked by the conventionality of his literary technique.

The novel *Alamut* has become one of the most frequently translated Slovenian novels today. What is relevant to this discussion, however, is the observation that it is precisely this novel that reveals one of the general characteristics of the Slovenian literary "dialogue" with Nietzsche. This feature might be called "voluntary limitation". In Vidmar's case, it is manifested as the evasion of the dangerous edges of Nietzsche's philosophy, sheltered by the notion of a "world view". The very concept of a world view, of course, implies a view of the world as a seamless totality (hence its "world" dimension). In Bartol's case, by contrast, the limitation applies to the *form*. But since *form* has implications that transcend the formal, there emerges a paradox: dangerous, subversive, radically critical truths are expressed in surprisingly homely, popular language. Bartol's use of literary language is hardly a convincing evocation of the "experience of displacement". The claim that his novel represents the most consistent thematisation of "metaphysical nihilism" in pre-war Slovenian literature is probably true. What I would add is that this thematisation is a *problematic* one. Indeed, it can never be anything else as long as it is limited to Nietzscheanism, rather than finely attuned to the dimensions of Nietzsche's thought.

Bartol's *Alamut* is the last literary text to be addressed in my paper. Does this mean, then, that the issue of Nietzsche and Nietzscheanism in Slovenian literature becomes unnecessary, misplaced, perhaps even contrived, once we move to the second half of the twentieth century?

Yes and no.

Yes — if the researcher set out to measure Nietzsche's *direct* impact on post-war, that is, *contemporary* Slovenian literature, to supplement his findings with a catalogue of Nietzschean themes and motifs, and finally shelve everything in the archives of literary criticism. Although such a task is feasible, its *relevance* is diminished by the fact that the post-war *literary* decades are no longer the era of

Nietzsche, especially not in the sense of direct historical impact. Nor do they bear the stamp of Nietzscheanism, whose original form, inspired primarily by the figure of the overman, is now history. As a Nietzschean scholar observed: with the rule of the underman, the overman became suspect. The same happened to the reformatory pathos which was linked with this concept.

In Slovenia and most Eastern European countries, the attitude to Nietzsche underwent drastic changes after 1945 for ideological and political reasons as well: the "official" philosophy at least harboured a Marxist, predominantly Lukacsian (mis)understanding of Nietzsche, pigeon-holed as "bourgeois philosophy".

Nietzsche's philosophy was revived in the works of Slovenian philosophers and literary theorists after 1960 (by Dušan Pirjevec, Ivan Urbančič, Valentin Kalan, Tine Hribar, and others). The most common approach was a Heideggerian development of issues which had been raised by Nietzsche in his critique of metaphysics, morality, and religion, and subsequently thematised and deepened by Heidegger, the thinker of "European nihilism". The second half of the twentieth century saw the retreat of Nietzsche the *writer* in favour of Nietzsche the *philosopher*. The increased philosophical interest in his thought, however, may also be interpreted as a signal of his *literary revitalisation*.

Of course such general judgments need to be formed with care: as far as Nietzsche's philosophy enters into more recent literature, the dialogue is more difficult to define. Direct references and impulses in the domain of theme and content, language and style are replaced by general attempts to diagnose the spirit of the age and by the problematisation of such concepts as the subject, object, truth, reality, I/Ego, and others. The de(con)struction of such concepts is, after all, one of the keys to understanding postmodern prose, the so-called end of the "great stories", the plurality of truths, ontological relativism, etcetera. It can hardly be a coincidence that the book *The Dismemberment of Orpheus* (1972) by Ihab Hassan, one of the most influential critics of postmodernism, connects the loss of every firm foundation, of a supreme criterion of truth and reality, not only with Einstein's theory of relativity and the Heisenberg indeterminacy principle, but also with Nietzsche's philosophy.

The predominantly indirect, secondary understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy, less suitable for concrete explications because of its

Zeitgeist generality, began to echo in the literary works by Slovenian modernists and postmodernists (and now, gradually, post-postmodernists). And these premises of the modern understanding of the *event Nietzsche*, roughly sketched in the present paper, should underlie any discussion which aimed to address Nietzsche's place in the literature of the recent period, that is, of *our* period.

There is still time, then, for Nietzsche *after* Nietzsche. The Nietzsche who faces us now is *Nietzsche after Nietzsche*. Returning to the title of my paper, I shall conclude with a question: when we talk about Nietzsche after Nietzsche, do we still talk about the reception of the "Other"? This, of course, is a question to be answered by "us, others".

So: What do we talk about when we talk about Nietzsche *today*?

Ideological Blocks to the Reception of Existentialism in the Cultural and Political Context of Slovenia: The Case of Edvard Kocbek

VANESA MATAJC

In the decades before and after World War II, the reception of existentialism in the culture and politics of Slovenia was programmatically hindered by the political ideologies of the time: political Catholicism, fascism, national socialism, and communism. This is no coincidence, of course: the fin-de-siècle (1850–1918) collapse of metaphysical systems was followed by a flowering of existentialist philosophy and literature, of both theistic and atheistic orientations. The spread of existentialism was stimulated especially by the philosophies of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche and their new concept of man: man who establishes himself in his free (and thus risky) individual decision for a historical action. Political ideologies, by contrast, which flourished especially after the end of World War I, saw the solution to the contemporary cognitive and ethical crisis in subordinating man to the systemic, social and political order of the collective.¹ Their accommo-

¹ Ideology is to be understood here as defined by Louis Althusser: as “a ‘representation’ of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (Althusser 2000: 87). For Althusser, a “representation” (*représentation*, *Vorstellung*) can also denote a world view (a religious, moral, legal, or political ideology) which is largely imaginary and thus contrary to reality. Yet people need this imaginary relation to real conditions of existence so as to form a mental picture of them (*ibid.* 88). Ideology, according to Althusser, has a material existence as it always exists within the practice(s) of an apparatus (*ibid.* 91). The subject freely chooses the ideas which lead him to the performance of these practices, to rituals. Ideology

ation processes were largely similar, involving concepts of a future social order which robbed the individual of his authentic freedom, placing him in a functionally static social role. Construing man as subject, these ideologies were the very opposite of the open-ended concept of the human existence or condition ("la condition humaine") which was expounded by literary and philosophical existentialism. Since Central Europe was overshadowed by conflicting political ideologies in the decades before and after World War II, it is hardly surprising that existentialism was the literary and philosophical current whose productivity and reception were most hindered by the contemporary ideological regimes. The causes and effects of these reception blocks are drastically illustrated by a Central European case from Slovenia: writer and politician Edvard Kocbek (1904–1981).

Kocbek's literary and essayist oeuvre is informed by existentialism, or rather, personalism. This literary and philosophical current, present already in Kocbek's first collection of verse, entitled *Earth* (*Zemlja*, 1934), gained full force with the author's entry into history, that is, into active political and social life. An evident personalistic stance — Christian belief and full social commitment at a time of historical crisis — is expressed in his collection of four short stories, *Fear and Courage* (*Strah in pogum*, 1951), two diaries published as *Companionship* (*Tovarišija*, 1949) and *Document* (*Listina*, 1967), and his verse collections *Dread* (*Groza*, 1963) and *Report* (*Poročilo*, 1969). Kocbek's personalism gains expression through the following themes: "a linking of the personal and collective experience, a belief in transcendence and the final meaning of the human life, and a religious principle of love, which is both a reflection of the supernatural in man and an irrational link between the social and metaphysical, between existence and transcendence, between the temporal and eternal" (Vasič 1984: 81). Kocbek's posthumously published diaries "symbolise" his embeddedness in existentialism by their very genre: a continuous reflection which eludes the systemically compact form of a philosophical treatise by its fragmentary themati-

"interpellates" individuals in order to constitute them as its subjects. A single ideology, however, can only command a multitude of subjects if there exists an absolute Subject. In religious ideologies this role is filled by God, and in non-religious ones by some other absolute, such as a political goal. Every ideology thus revolves around an absolute, subject-constituting centre, which makes individuals recognise their subjecthood in relation to it (Ib. 103–105).

sation of immediate experiences. Kocbek's aversion to ideological and other systems attempting to fix and control free existence is given voice in his *Diary*, in the entry for January 15, 1952. He quotes from the novel *La Vingt-cinquième Heure* (1949) by Virgil Gheorghiu, a Romanian author writing in French: "Herein lies the crime of Western civilisation. It kills the living man by sacrificing him to theory, abstraction, planning." "Man is reduced to a social being, to automata, to the laws of the machine" (Kocbek 1952: 40).

As mentioned earlier, Kocbek's literary and political activity stemmed from personalism, that is, the theistic branch of existentialism.² "However personality may be perceived in individual cases, it always presupposes that man is not driven by a blind force but able to choose and to set his own tasks; in other words, that he is not a function but a free being" (Nosbüsch 1998: 6–7). Through this view of man's freedom and of his consequently responsible choice, personalism belongs to the philosophy and literature of existence, theistic or atheistic. It comprises two variants based on a static and dynamic concept of person respectively, the former holding that man is pre-defined as a person (as in Thomist scholasticism), and the latter that he has yet to establish himself as such. "In the former case man is a person, in the latter he is still in the process of becoming one" (*ibid.* 8), which is achieved through his relationship to the Other (in the philosophy of existence, e.g. in early M. Heidegger, K. Jaspers, and G. Marcel). This relationship is also the distinctive feature of personalism as theistic existentialism: "Existence is that which is in a relationship to itself and thereby to its own transcendence," but God is revealed to it only in symbols, remaining a "hidden, unprovable God", accessible only through "philosophical faith" (Jaspers 1955) and leaving man in the "polysemy of the objective". Abandoned in this uncertainty, man is forced to make responsible choices in which he fulfils his authentic existence, thus resisting the nihilism prompted by his awareness of the

² The concept of "personality" (Personalität), which forms the substance of personalism, is understood from two aspects, each informing a variant of personalism: (a) at the level of man as an individual (with "person" representing an ontological category, the fulfilment of the human essence); (b) at the level of man as a fellow creature (with "person" defined by commitment to his or her fellow men, environment, and God, i.e., through his or her relationships).

absurdity of existence. This personalistic stance³ becomes Kocbek's own when he is faced with an ideologically governed reality: "Last night in the dark /.../ I suddenly, physically, felt that everything around man was nothing but absurd reality, that, moment by moment, man was locked in a struggle with nihilism, and that, moment by moment, man was also in mortal danger, since he might be annihilated by the merest accidental trifle. How terrible and yet how salutary, this recognition — it makes me a poet, a thinker, a Christian, and a child at once" (Kocbek 1952: 324).

According to Nossbusch (1998: 40), the personalistic "I-You mentality gained particular currency with the painful experience of the two world wars" — a trend which brought out the difference between the philosophy/literature of existence and ideological systems. Personalistic reflection, framed in the philosophy of existence, moved

³ Theistic existentialism, based on the existentialist philosophy of Soeren Kierkegaard, gathered together thinkers of various creeds and denominations: Catholics (for example Romano Guardini, Gabriel Marcel, Emmanuel Mounier), Protestants (Karl Barth), and Jews (Martin Buber), while the influential Eastern Orthodox philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev likewise collaborated with the Christian existentialist circle at the literary magazine *L'Esprit*. The most influential representative of Christian existentialism is considered to be Gabriel Marcel, whose distinction between "being" and "having" provides an analytical basis for the conflict between existentialism and ideologies. Ideologies or those who implement them are characterised by a possessive attitude: the existent which is encountered is an object of possession, arousing a desire for having (that is, for control or domination), rather than for "perceiving" being. But it is the latter that constitutes humanity — when man ascends from a rational control of the world to a different reflection, one concerning existence: "the self as self-consciousness exists only when it becomes aware of itself as existing for others, that is, only in relation to the Other" (cf. Marcel: *Being and Having*). This "transition to being", which brings to life the "person" or authentic existence, denotes an attitude to the others/Other in which they are no longer perceived from the standpoint of the self's purposes (the possessive standpoint) but accepted in the difference of their otherness. According to Marcel, "the most essential property of person" is thus his or her "availability"; the person is constituted by an acknowledged responsibility to the self and others/Other. The person is indeed self-established, but only comes into being as he or she progresses from possessing reality to allowing the others/Other to assert themselves as other. The person is therefore in a dynamic relationship to the others/Other, and personality is formed through reciprocity between the two.

away from the abstract rationalism typical of ideologies to the immediate experience of existence. Thus it shaped the stance of the "visionary thinker" or, as in the case of Kocbek, of an ecstatic poet who had been in "conflict with society" ever since his student years, having abandoned the study of theology at 23 in the belief that a layman was closer to Christianity and a life of creativity.

Kocbek, who left the Catholic seminary for the study of Romance languages and literature but remained a convinced Christian believer, first came into contact with personalism in Berlin through Romano Guardini.⁴ His first verse collection *Earth (Zemlja)*, (1934) and above all his short-story collection *Fear and Courage (Strah in pogum)*, (1951) thematised some of Guardini's ideas, at the same time embodying in literary form the core of Guardini's thought: the mutual complementation of "opposites" as developed in *Der Gegensatz: Versuch zu einer Philosophie des Lebendig-Konkreten* (1925). Guardini's thought was characterised by the rejection of an abstract philosophical system, a feature which was shared by Kocbek and exposed the latter both to severe criticism and to irreconcilable conflicts with the dominant ideologies.

In the course of his later studies in France, he became acquainted with two French versions of the personalistic movement, centred around the literary magazines *L'Esprit* and *L'Ordre nouveau*. He presented both versions to the Slovenian public in an article entitled *A View of the New Movement of the French Youth (Pogled na novo gibanje francoske mladine)*, published in 1935. His own version of personalism, developed under the influence of the *L'Esprit* magazine, perceives God as a solid, absolute point in man: as "the most precious foundation of the human spirit, /so/ that the spirit's essence is determined by this element /absoluteness/. The spirit identifies itself

⁴ Romano Guardini (1885–1968), priest and professor of the Catholic religion at the Freie Universitaet Berlin (from 1923 to 1939, when the chair was abolished by the Nazis). He influenced the German youth movement Quickborn, which began to call after World War I for a revival of the Christian way of life, for a reformation of the individual and the community, for a renewed religiosity with an emphasis on experience rather than doctrine. These reformatory tendencies made the Church wary of Quickborn and Guardini's work, and it was only in 1951 that he was promoted to the rank of prelate. He refused the rank of cardinal in 1965. One of his students was the physicist W. Heisenberg.

only on condition that there exists an immovable, immutable point on which the mutable and movable world turns" (Kocbek 1952: 165). A friendly correspondence with the editor of *L'Esprit*, Emmanuel Mounier, was maintained even after World War II. Kocbek's literary, essayist, and political activities were one of the key factors promoting the reception of existentialism in Slovenian culture between 1930 and 1980. His activity spans two phases of the Slovenian response to existentialism: the pre-war phase, with a predominance of theistic, personalistic existentialism, and the post-war phase. Aside from Kocbek, the latter was marked by atheistic existentialism, but mostly of a committed type, such as was developed during and after World War II by Sartre and Camus.

In the 1930s, Kocbek edited the magazine of the Slovenian Catholic youth movement, *The Cross on the Mountain* (*Križ na gori*), or simply *The Cross* (*Križ*; 1924–27, 1928–30). Both the movement and the magazine were steeped in the spirit of the age, which was marked by an eschatological catastrophism and the desire for a "new renaissance" of the endangered civilisation. Therefore they sought to modernise⁵ the Slovenian Catholic community in the evangelical spirit through a reform of Christianity. The Slovenian Catholic Church, on the other hand, which was influenced by the same catastrophist spirit of the age, tried to return the community to the authoritative stability of the pre-revolutionary period (before 1789). The beginning of the 1930s in Slovenia thus saw a conflict between theistic existentialism — personalism — and political Catholicism: the former as the philosophy of an open, risky existence, the latter as a closed ideological system. At the same time, another ideological opponent of existentialism was revealed in the communist ideology.

The year 1934 saw the publication of Kocbek's first poetry collection *Earth* (*Zemlja*), the first treatment of existentialist themes in Slovenian literature that revealed a high artistic quality. Since the

⁵ The modernising, Christian-existentialist movement was outlined by Kocbek in a programmatic article for the *Cross* (*Križ*) magazine in 1928. The article was entitled *The Slovenian Catholic Youth* (*Slovensko katoliško mladinstvo*). In the same year, Kocbek presented the cosmo-theurgic aspect of Berdyaev's philosophy in his essay *Biocentric Metaphysics* (*Biocentrična metafizika*). Moreover, a Liberal magazine (*The Ljubljana Bell — Ljubljanski zvon*) published two of Berdyaev's essays, *The Crisis of Contemporary Culture* and *The End of Modernity*, in Slovenian translation.

collection *Earth (Zemlja)* was published in the cultural milieu of Central Europe, its lyricism was admittedly influenced by expressionist poetics. It must be noted, however, that Central European expressionism had a lot in common with the contemporary Western European, Romance spread of existentialism. They shared the central idea of eschatological catastrophism and the collapse of the absolute subject; they had, after all, a common initiator in the philosopher Nietzsche. This similarity is evident in both phases of Central European expressionism: the early phase of the “dissociation of the subject” (1910–14) and the later, Messianic phase. It is revealed, for example, in Kocbek’s line: “There is no centre in the dark place.” The loss of the centre is catastrophic, but also invigorating and purifying. Kocbek’s transcendence of this loss echoes Guardini’s view (*Anschauung*) of opposites: “Life is revealed as something both inmost and transcendent, as something so intimate to its bearer that it cannot be alienated by any act, yet displaying a self-transcending order. Thus we are faced with the opposition between immanence and transcendence. Life is an immanent activity, but one which reveals a transcendent direction going beyond itself /.../ the personality always maintains a balance which tends towards the mean” (Trstenjak 1998: 224). For Guardini, the opposite as a fundamental fact characterises life both as a ceaseless change and as an enduring condition: as movement and state, as a dynamic event and as the essence. This view of opposites presumably inspired Kocbek’s ubiquitous use of paradox, evidenced in the content and structure of his literature and essays. His free verse, for example, has a fixed form in approximately one half of his work (it is rhymed and divided into stanzas, often of equal length) (Bjelčević 2004: 116–17). The paradox of the content arises primarily out of the theme of (omni)temporality: the motifs, such as evening, autumn, and autumnal symbols in *The Autumn Cycle (Jesenski ciklus)*, evoke both the ephemeral and static (eternal) nature of the events (cf. Matajč 2004: 130), while the grammar of the poems combines “durative and iterative imperfectives” with “unique elements of the textual world” (Novak-Popov 2003: 145). In the paradox of time, in his awareness of existence as caught between life and death, transience and infinity, man is revealed as a being who is both transcendent and free: inherently free to choose. This freedom (“an intoxicating duty”, a frequent syntagm in Kocbek’s lyric poetry and narrative prose; also referred to as “rapt carefulness”) enables creati-

vity, which is why the channelling of human activity into the pre-set doctrines of an ideological system results in an inauthentic existence. In the 1930s, the expression of such freedom — freedom grounded on neither rationalism nor intuitivism — found a vehicle in the legacy of expressionist poetics and its thematisation of chaos. The personalistic view, however, with its emphasis on co-existing opposites, sees chaos as alternating with order: “Chaos was order and order was chaos again” (Kocbek, *Collected Works I*: 276).

The expressionist poetics conveyed Nietzsche’s anthropology with an irrational ecstasy of idea and style — a quality characterising the apprehension and articulation of man’s historical existence, which is metaphysically uncertain, anxious, and enthusiastic. Existentialist literature, on the other hand, articulated the sense of a metaphysical collapse and paradoxical existence with a more rationalist essayism in narrative prose (long and short) and drama. Rationalist articulation was practised by Kocbek mainly in his essays, but it should be noted that he wrote long stretches of essayist prose in the form of a diary. And since the diary is an emphatically confessional genre (as, for example, in Sartre’s *La Nausée* (1938)), since it is the articulation of an emerging existence, it is the narrative counterpart of lyric personal confession. Through his diaries and lyric poetry, then, Kocbek maintained the ecstatic irrationalism of man’s existence as a person. It is true that, influenced by Guardini’s view of opposites, he rejected pure irrationalism, arguing that it should be balanced with reason to achieve a particular existential condition. This condition, according to Kocbek, emerges in moments of trial as an “inner concentration” (“concentration” in Guardini’s sense of self-control). Still, it was the irrational dimension of this “inner concentration” that launched the Slovenian reception of existentialism and personalism, with Kocbek as one of the forerunners.⁶ It provided a contrast to the abstract philosophical systems underlying both idealistic and materialistic ideologies of the time. And it was through this irrationalism that Kocbek consolidated the Slovenian reception of existentialism. The

⁶ “Drunk with change I lie on the ground, / pressing my brow against the earth. I tremble /.../ I hear, the whole earth is turning /.../, a new intoxication comes from the rocking, bringing us to a halt. // Then we rise and begin running again, /.../ after you, o tirelessness of man, the ultimate / love of a frightened heart. We ask / no mercy, we must only hold each other tight, / my comrades, and never let go” (*Collected Works I*: 76).

personalistic individual actively and responsibly fulfils his or her dynamic transpersonal essence, which is love, by participating in historical action. Realised actively and consciously, this essence raises man beyond his natural origin to transcendence. Yet the physical sensuality and the individual emotionality of the self are indispensable as well, since it is by them alone that man exists through vivid personal experience, as a "part" in contrast to and balance with the community as a whole. Kocbek's essay *Thoughts on Man (Misli o človeku, 1936)* calls metaphysical dualism into question: the spirit exists not as an abstract system, but as joined to materiality. The person is thus revealed as Guardini's "Sein in Spannung", as being caught in a tension between three possibilities: "between material incarnation, divine transcendence, and the community" (Vasič 1984: 69). To neoThomist philosophy, which dominated the Catholic Church at the time, Kocbek's personalistic anthropology was unacceptable, while the dynamic and "revolutionary" social commitment demanded by his personalism proved equally unacceptable to the authoritative ideology of political Catholicism, which aimed at preserving a static order.

The Slovenian reception of existentialism came to be seen as a problem as early as in the 1930s, both by the ideology of political Catholicism and by the communist ideology with its so-called Marxist aesthetics. While political Catholicism attacked Kocbek's essays, communism opposed his lyric poetry.

In 1935 a modern-Catholic cultural magazine, *Home and World (Dom in svet, XLVIII, no. 3, pp. 113–17)*, published Kocbek's essay *To One of the Narrow-Minded (Enemu izmed ozkih)*, addressed to the rigorous Catholics gathered in two ideological youth groups.⁷ Kocbek's essay insists that "religious truth" is a matter of personal religious search rather than obedience to Church authority; that is, it

⁷ One group, led by Lambert Ehrlich, a professor at the Ljubljana Faculty of Theology, committed itself during World War II to temporary collaboration with the German occupying forces, with whose help it hoped to destroy the pro-communist Partisan movement in Slovenia. "The question whether collaboration, which in many respects concludes the ideological and political manoeuvring /of political Catholicism .../, resulted more from a general pattern in the development of European political Catholicism or from a distinctive development in Slovenia /.../ has to remain open" (Pelikan 1997: 140–41).

objects to retreating “from the individual *existentia*” into “*essentia*”. “We all perceive the inner connection between a conservative turn to the right and a restriction of man’s freedom /.../. The younger generation /... seeks refuge/ in an alluring semblance of external order, from corporative Christianity to conservative fascism.” This article “was the first explicit /.../ expression of an essentially apolitical idea to which Kocbek would remain committed — the idea that an open, courageous, and responsible ‘personal experience of fate’ was more important than a presupposed ‘ideational order’: that untrammelled creativity and spiritual freedom were more productive than scholastic dogma” (Inkret 2004: 23). Kocbek’s apology for a responsible free existence sparked off an extensive polemic both against its author and against the magazine (Catholic but modernised) which had published it. Aleš Ušeničnik, the then leading ideologue of political Catholicism, replied in an article entitled “On Statics and Dynamics” (“O statiki in dinamiki”, published in the *Time* (*Čas*) magazine, September 29, 1935, pp. 302–305). Drawing on neoThomist philosophy, Ušeničnik confronted the open existence with the static (eternal) truths of the Church (an apriori faith, fidelity to the Church). But the conflict between Kocbek’s religious existentialism and the ideology of political Catholicism did not end here; the increasingly critical political circumstances added fuel to the flames. In 1937, *Home and World* (*Dom in svet*) published another essay by Kocbek, entitled *Reflections on Spain* (*Premišljevanje o Španiji*). This essay criticised the attitude of the Catholic Church, which responded to the Spanish civil war by siding with Franco’s dictatorial party rather than with the democratically elected republican government. The Francoist side likewise enjoyed the direct support of the totalitarian Nazi and fascist ideologies. In this respect, as well as in the stratification of the social system, the ideology of political Catholicism came particularly close to fascist totalitarianism; the latter, of course, is incompatible with evangelical Christianity and the existentialist free choice of the individual. While a number of Slovenian Christian intellectuals took Kocbek’s side, the Church responded with a denunciation pronounced by Rožman, the Bishop of Ljubljana, and with indignant, polemic articles in the Catholic papers. “The campaign against Kocbek was continued even at public gatherings, whereas others who worked for *Home and World* (*Dom in svet*) were persecuted less openly /.../, by various forms of pressure and harassment” (Dolenc 2003: 55). The

Church authorities finally closed the magazine and disbanded the organisation *The Academic Eagle* (*Akademski Orel*), which gathered together modern-Catholic intellectuals. The first attempt to block the Slovenian reception of existentialism was thus made by the ideology of political Catholicism.

The second attempt came from the communist ideology, that is, from the Slovenian Marxist critic Ivo Brnčič, who attacked Kocbek's lyric poetry. Because of its religious dimension, he condemned it in the Liberal magazine *The Ljubljana Bell* (*Ljubljanski zvon*) in 1935 as an individualist mystic speculation. According to him, it expressed the crisis of the bourgeoisie instead of fulfilling its social function: that is, instead of portraying contemporary man as subject to the materialistic forces of class struggle.

After this double ideological attack, Kocbek founded his own literary journal *Act* (*Dejanje*)⁸ in 1938. Its personalistic orientation was conveyed both through the title and through the publication of the most eminent Romance existentialists in translation, religious and non-religious ones: Mounier, Maritain, Rougemont, Blondel, Lacroix, and Bergamin, as well as Mauriac, Bernanos, Malraux, and Saint-Exupéry.⁹

A further instance of ideological attempts to block the Slovenian reception of existentialism is the reception of Kocbek's personalistic commitment during World War II. In 1942, Kocbek joined the leading Slovenian anti-fascist, predominantly communist organisation, the so-called Liberation Front. He did so as an anti-fascist, and also because he believed that communism was to play an avant-garde historical role (Prunk 1986: 617) in constructing the political and economic condi-

⁸ The name of Kocbek's journal (*Act; Dejanje*) engages in a "dialogue of critical agreement" with the name of Mounier's magazine *L'Esprit*, shifting the weight of man's transformation to concrete historical action. This action required personalists to enter into a dialogue with the ideologies which attempted to reform society during World War II. Kocbek justified this (temporary) consolidation by arguing that "dictatorship was essential to any revolution, even a spiritual one, in order to neutralise and chain the forces of evil". Still, his essay on Mounier (1957) suppresses the fact that his personalistic model had briefly (until he joined the resistance in 1942) "sought a *modus vivendi* with the Vichy French State" (cf. Grdina 2005: 149–50).

⁹ These authors are considered by French literary historians as precursors of existentialism belonging to the "littérature de l'entre-deux-guerres" (Brunel 1986) or the "littérature de l'inquiétude" (Rodrigues 1988).

tions for a personalistic, ethical reform of man (cf. his paper *The Foundations of a Joint Liberation Struggle — Temelji osvobodilnega sodelovanja*; read at a Liberation Front meeting in 1941). In the eyes of the Slovenian Catholic Church, this made Kocbek a renegade.¹⁰ The communists, on the other hand, appointed him as a member of the Executive Committee of the underground Yugoslav wartime government headed by Josip Broz Tito. Thus they used him as a representative of the Christian socialists, and as living proof that atheistic communism was willing to collaborate with the Christians. To employ existentialist terms, they used Kocbek, a free person, in his social and ideological role, thus robbing him of freedom as an authentic possibility of human existence. In the era when Yugoslavia was still internationally considered a potential democratic country, Kocbek, as an eminent advocate of ideological pluralism, held the position of the Minister for Slovenia in the Yugoslav government in 1945–46; from 1946 to 52, he was also Vice-President of the Presidium of the National Assembly of Slovenia. It was in the following years that the rift between Kocbek's existentialism and the communist ideology struck with full force, resulting in a drastic block to the Slovenian reception of existentialism.¹¹ The Party's tolerance of its personalistic

¹⁰ Despite the lack of direct influence, recent Slovenian research into Kocbek's vision of Christianity has discovered parallels with the left-wing Latin American "liberation theology" of the 1950s: "promoting the role of laypersons in the Church, an active life of faith, an emphasis on evangelical action rather than mere contemplation /.../, reliance on Marxist methods for the achievement of social and religious goals and a more just society" for the socially oppressed masses. The emphasis is on those parts of the Bible (particularly the Book of Exodus, with its tale of the Israelites' departure from Egypt) which may be interpreted as God's active intervention in the history of mankind to liberate the oppressed. The liberation theology was censured by Vatican authorities for using Marxist methods in its social commitment (cf. Koncilja 2004).

¹¹ As opposed to a developing and free existence, open to the world, Kocbek recognises in the new communist ideological structure "a self-contained logical whole /.../ with a police state, with outrages committed by primitive and brutal rulers and activists /.../, with terrorised masses and demoralised intellectuals /.../, and above all with a demoniac monstrosity arising from perverse atheism and anti-human Satanism. /Cultural functionary Boris Zihel .../ is attacking precisely those who value humanity above the ideological scheme" (Kocbek 1952: 70).

companion ended with the second congress of the Liberation Front in April 1951, when Kocbek again confronted the ideological regime with his personalistic vision of socialism: "Liberation must be turned to freedom /.../ Excessive discipline and a constant state of siege under the pretence of historical necessity mean nothing but a desperate step backwards, into untruth, into mystifications and monstrous technical Sisyphean labours, such as the people of the Soviet Union are undergoing." After this, the government of the Communist Party of Slovenia decided that Kocbek would have to be politically suppressed (Prunk 1986: 620). The official explanation offered, however, was the mistaken ideology of Kocbek's literary work.

The autumn of 1951 saw the publication of Kocbek's short-story collection entitled *Fear and Courage* (*Strah in pogum*). Contrary to the conventions of socialist realism and to the communist ideology, it portrayed the dilemmas of a committed intellectual and of his tragic free decision to join the historical anti-fascist struggle and communist revolution. Self-sacrifice for the collective good was presented in the light of a personalistic, religious sacrifice, rather than in the materialistic light of the class struggle. The Slovenian literary critics, who were neutral in theory but intimidated in practice, rejected the characteristic existentialist structure of Kocbek's short stories on aesthetic grounds: since the stories address existentialist issues, they are characterised by essayism or reflective dialogue rather than by descriptions of the narrative action. The communist totalitarian state struck against Kocbek in all fields as defined by Althusser's systemisation of the state ideological apparatus (Althusser 2000: 70–71) except the religious: as a rival of the dominant communism, the Catholic religious and political ideology secretly supported him in this case. He was suppressed in the field of education (the ban on publishing original texts excluded him from the canon of Slovenian literary history), in politics (he was expelled from all his public offices), professionally (he was not allowed to appear as a writer or politician), through informational and cultural practices (he was banned from publishing original texts under his name). The state interfered even with his private family life, placing him under surveillance. The ideological critics wrote about his "betrayal" of the struggle for liberation and the revolution, since he presented the revolutionary and the collaborator, the communist and the priest alike as facing the same human dilemmas and deserving the same compassion. Kocbek's

Diary cites a review by the most influential Slovenian literary critic of the 1930s, Josip Vidmar, who had been President of the Slovenian Presidium in the Yugoslav socialist government in 1945 (*The New Magazine — Nova revija*, 1952, no. 1): “I am firmly convinced /.../ that the book is negative and that it leads to a harmful assessment of the struggle for national liberation” (Kocbek 1952: 84). Uneducated crowds were organised to protest against Kocbek’s literature at public meetings¹² without being in the least acquainted with it. On broad hints from the authorities, Kocbek laid down his political functions in 1952: “I knew that I had done something as pure as fire, that I was once again the young protestant of the old days who had merged for good with the social revolutionary” (Kocbek 1952: 47, 49, 97). In Kocbek’s personalistic vocabulary, to be a revolutionary is to be open to the authentic experience of being, and the target of “protestantism” is the closed ideological system which transforms people into inauthentic roles in a totalitarian society. Kocbek retired and henceforth appeared in public only as a writer and essayist — that is, when he was allowed to do so, for the authorities systematically blocked the reception of existentialism. This is evident from the treatise “Existentialism and Its Social Roots” (“Eksistencializem in njegove družbene korenine”, published in the magazine *Our Time — Naša sodobnost*, 1953, nos. 1, 2, pp. 2–18 and 106–31). Authored by Boris Zihrl, advocate of Marxist aesthetics and head of the cultural-ideological establishment, the treatise analyses the so-called “bourgeois” class foundations of existentialist philosophy and literature. The list of authors includes Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir, Soeren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, and Gabriel Marcel, while the Slovenians are represented by — Edvard Kocbek.¹³

¹² Kocbek notes in his *Diary*: “Little Annie was saying how workers from several firms and shops had been called to a meeting and reproached for not reacting to Kocbek’s short stories.” Or: “A female acquaintance/ told the news that a newspaper editor came to the activists of my Bežigrad constituency last Monday (January 14), demanding that the voters should write me a letter of protest” (Kocbek 1952: 31, 44).

¹³ Personally, Kocbek protested against being understood as an existentialist, since in 1952 the concept of existentialism was associated in France and the whole of Europe primarily with its atheistic variant, and more specifically with Sartre’s philosophy. “I am even more repelled by existentialism than by dialectical materialism ... even Zihrl charges me with Sartre and /... talks/

The existentialism of Kocbek's literary works and essays belonged to the theistic Christian variant, which was perceived as a double adversary in the communist regime: as religion and as existentialist individualism, both utterly incompatible with the communist ideology. He was consequently banned from publishing in Yugoslav magazines under his own name for almost ten years, and the argument adduced was taken precisely from Zihrl's treatise: "The interests of the true progress of our social thought call for a principled ideological battle against existentialism and similar subjectivist and individualist phenomena ..." (cf. also: Gabrič 1995: 28–29, 34, 37). In fact, after the suppression of the Catholic intelligentsia, philosophical and literary existentialism was practically the only dissenting current of thought with any public impact. Therefore the communist cultural policy closed two literary magazines, *Word* (*Beseda*; 1951–57) and *Perspectives* (*Perspektive*; 1960–64), which openly supported the Slovenian reception of existentialism by publishing translations from the French or original Slovenian texts. Kocbek was given awards and punishments in turn, depending on his civic obedience or disobedience. In 1964 he won the most prestigious Slovenian literary award for his lyric collection *Dread* (*Groza*), which depicts the wartime Partisan struggle in a modernist manner. In 1974, however, he came under fire again because of an interview for *The Gulf* (*Zaliv*), a Slovenian magazine published in Italy. In the personalistic spirit of transcending the revolutionary terror, he had revealed the truth about the extrajudicial mass killings of civilians and political opponents which had been ordered by the Yugoslav government in 1945.

To summarise: the Slovenian reception of existentialism reveals a shift in thematic emphasis. In the clash of conflicting ideologies, great importance came to be attached to the individual's historical action. Historical action was often understood to include artistic expression, in Malraux' sense of "anti-destin" (*Les voix du silence*): a work of art, after all, transcends man's destination for nothingness, the absurdity of his existence, and represents the highest act of his "condemnation

about 'Kocbekese' as a pessimistic and idealistic tendency ..." (Kocbek 1952: 59). Yet even the pre-war Sartre (*La Nausée*) describes a blend of humanism and existentialism which matches Kocbek's personalistic stance: "A so-called 'left-wing' humanist considers it his first duty to preserve the human values; he belongs to no party because he will not betray what is human."

to freedom".¹⁴ The same view is expressed in the committed writings of Kocbek, both belletristic and political, but as a Christian existentialist he stops short of professing man's abandonment to nothingness. What he does profess is the individual's uncertain, dynamic relation to metaphysical transcendence, which is revealed exclusively through his free, non-final choice of acts. Freedom of choice to act is an expression of revolt in the sense of Camus' *L'homme révolté* (1952): it is an individual moral revolt against the absurd relation between man and an indifferent, destructive cosmos. In the Slovenian reception of existentialism, the metaphysical role of the indifferent and destructive cosmos appears to have been transferred to the ideologically structured social system: such a society represents itself as a (fictive) transcendence and abolishes the freedom of individual existence by fixing it in a social function. If man, as a dynamic existence, accepts his fixed social role, he lives in a Sartrean "mauvaise foi": that is, he lives as an inauthentic existence similar to the Sartrean "être-en-soi" ("being-in-itself") — an insentient object —, thus confirming his absurdity. The only relative transcendence of the absurd lies in man's moral revolt, that is, in his consistent and conscious realisation of the absurd and thus of his own metaphysical freedom, which is established through a responsible choice of actions. By consciously realising the absurdity of existence, personalist Kocbek resisted the absurd relationship to the destructive ideological social system, as well as the ideological attempts to annihilate his existence in an inauthentic social function. Kocbek's moral revolt was expressed in his committed historical action, both through literary works of art and through political resistance. Other Slovenian existentialists took both courses as well, joining the anti-fascist Partisan troops and producing committed anti-communist existentialist literature after the war (V. Zupan, P. Kozak).

In short, the distinctive feature of the Slovenian reception of existentialism is the transfer of the absurd relationship to the relation between man and the ideological social system. This transfer is indirectly expressed in one of Kocbek's most chilling lyric poems, *Microphone in the Wall*. He wrote it at a time when even his private

¹⁴ "The greatest mystery is not that we are abandoned to chance between the vastness of matter and the stars, but that we are able to create, in our dungeon, images within ourselves strong enough to deny our own nothingness" (Malraux: *Les Noyers de l'Altenbourg* — *Walnut Trees of Altenburg*, 1943).

life was monitored with bugging devices. The horror of the situation is conveyed by the inverted relationship between the poet and the microphone: the poet is an "etre-pour soi" ("being for-itself"), but as he becomes the object of surveillance, he is placed in the ideologically monitored and controlled social function of an "etre-en soi" ("being in-itself"). The microphone, on the other hand, is an "etre-en soi" ("being in-itself"). But when it is established as a metonymy for the society/ideology, it begins to function as a subject. That is, it functions as a human consciousness which is constantly negating/nihilating itself, but never reacts to this self-negation because it is in fact unconscious. It is the poet's only partner in the dialogue, but a mute and destructive one. This textual and actual situation preserves the order of the absurd relationship between man and the soulless "cosmos" — the totalitarian society — but at the same time turns it upside down. Thus the absurdity is doubled, while existential anxiety in this "chaosmos" deepens into man's mortal terror.

We are finally alone
 You and I,
 But don't even think
 Of taking it easy or resting
 For your work is just now starting.
 You will listen to my silence
 Which is loquacious
 And draws you to the depth of truth.
 Listen carefully now,
 You beast with no eyes or tongue,
 Monster with ears only.
 My spirit talks without voice,
 Shouts and screams inaudibly
 With joy to have you here,
 You Great Suspicion,
 Hungering for me to reveal myself.
 My silence is opening books
 And dangerous manuscripts,
 Lexicons and prophets,
 Ancient truths and laws,
 Stories of loyalty and torture.
 There is no way you can rest,
 You have to swallow this, gulp it down

Though you are already choking
And your ear is exhausted.
You are unable to interrupt me
Or say anything in return;
My time has arrived
And I insult you, curse you,
You impostor, poisoner,
Desecrator, slave, satan,
Machine, death, death.
You swallow your shame
And are condemned to listen
Not to speak,
Because you are a monster
With only ears
And a bellyful of treason;
No tongue or truth,
You are helpless, can call me neither weakling
Nor powerful,
Cannot utter words like "grace" or "despair",
Shout to me to stop
Though you are burning with slavish rage.
I greet you, crippled creature,
Am glad you are here
Immured day and night,
You cursed extension of the Great Suspicion,
The diabolical belly of inhuman force
Which is so feeble that it shudders day and night.
Now you evoke my power
My unified an undivided power,
I cannot plant someone else
In my place
I am who I am –
Restlessness and searching,
Sincerity and pain,
Faith, hope, love,
Your magnificent counter-suspicion –
You never can divide me,
Make me your double,
Catch me
Lying or calculating.
You'll never be the executioner of my conscience,

You don't have a choice
 But to swallow my joy
 Or, at times, my sadness.
 You, my enemy,
 My infertile neighbor
 So different and inhuman
 Unable to break loose
 To become insane or to commit suicide.
 I can tell
 I wore you out,
 Your tail is between your legs
 But this is only an outline
 Of my revenge:
 My true revenge
 Is a poem.
 You will never know me,
 Your ears have no light,
 Will be hushed by the passage of time
 While I am a tongue-flame
 Fire
 That will never cease to burn
 And scorch.

The poem translated by Sonja Kravanja

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La recepción del existencialismo en Juan José Arreola

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Adentrarse en el mundo de la interpretación de los microrrelatos de Juan José Arreola es una labor, además de apasionante, hartamente complicada. En primer lugar por la densidad formal y de contenido de cada texto; por otra parte por la bibliografía publicada sobre la obra del autor al que nos referimos la cual no deja de ser limitada y que, en muchas ocasiones, realiza un incursión que peca de superficial en la exégesis del corpus arreolano. Son muchas las interpretaciones que se perfilan sobre algunos de los textos, hasta el punto de que, en ocasiones, parecen inagotables o laberínticas. Sin embargo, parte de la crítica coincide en destacar el carácter existencialista de muchos de los relatos y según nuestra modesta investigación pensamos que se trata de un juicio acertado a la hora de establecer un sentido.

Para analizar por este camino la narrativa de Arreola deberíamos hacer un estudio de los principales postulados del existencialismo, no obstante, debido a la extensión de este trabajo, solamente mencionaremos las ideas fundamentales que aparecerán en los textos que analizaremos del autor mexicano. Para ello nos hemos ayudado de la obra de Régis Jolivet (Jolivet 1970) y de la síntesis que Gemma Roberts (Roberts 1973) realiza de la misma en su estudio sobre la narrativa española de posguerra. Para Gemma Roberts es básica la definición de existencialismo de Jolivet como

el conjunto de doctrinas según las cuales la filosofía tiene por objeto el análisis y la descripción de la existencia concreta, considerada como el acto de una libertad que se constituye al afirmarse y no tiene otro origen u otro fundamento que esta afirmación de sí misma. (Roberts 1973: 9).

El postulado fundamental para todo existencialista es que “el existir es elección, optar por ser o no ser un individuo”(ib. 14). Efectivamente dentro del sistema existencialista se considera que la toma de contacto con la existencia no se realiza según el racionalismo, por medio del pensamiento, “sino en la situación concreta que implica un acto libre de decisión, en donde la vida individual se pone en juego” (ib.).

A partir de este primer punto se deriva el segundo tema común a los filósofos existencialistas: la existencia es libertad. Roberts recuerda al respecto la afirmación sartreana de que *el hombre no es otra cosa que lo que él se hace* viendo la concordancia con la idea de Kierkegaard de *la subjetividad radical del existir*.

Como consecuencia se podrá deducir que la existencia humana es un continuo hacerse, no se trata de una idea atemporal y a-espacial. Del hombre mismo dependerá aceptar sus posibilidades de ser y por lo tanto de llegar a ser o no ser. Este hecho en el ser humano provoca, lógicamente, angustia, concepto fundamental y común en el sistema filosófico existencialista. De hecho Søren Kierkegaard analiza dicho concepto en su obra *El concepto de la angustia*, el cual se diferencia de otras sensaciones, como el miedo, pues la angustia:

surge de la condición misma de la existencia humana como ser finito y limitado; es la expresión de la revelación del sujeto existente como libertad, como posibilidad, es decir, como algo que no es nada todavía (ib. 15).

La angustia obliga a cada ser humano a ver su existencia como algo que debe realizarse, paso a paso, a golpe de decisiones. El hecho de que el hombre construya de este modo su vida, su existir, nos conduce al concepto de Heidegger, que ya se vio germinar en Kierkegaard, de existencia auténtica o la enajenación de ésta. La enajenación de la existencia puede producirse, según Kierkegaard, “por disolución de la personalidad en lo infinito, como ocurre con el panteísmo, o con los sistemas idealistas, pero que también se produce por una pérdida total del yo en lo finito” (ib.), como en la vida moderna en la que el hombre se convierte en un número más de la sociedad perdiendo así su autenticidad personal. Respecto a la enajenación del yo, Heidegger piensa que el “Dasein” puede librarse gracias a la angustia:

El existir auténtico, la posesión de uno mismo, sólo se lleva a cabo en el estado de angustia que me descubre a mí mismo como un "ser-para-la-muerte (ib. 16).

Llegados al tema de la muerte se podrían encontrar sus diferentes matices según cada pensador, no obstante, y es lo que a nosotros nos interesa, aquélla se encuentra dentro del sistema existencialista como característica fundamental de la existencia concreta: su finitud.

Otro de los temas importantes dentro de la filosofía existencialista, en concreto de Jean Paul Sartre, es el concepto de la mirada, que trata el tema de la libertad y la existencia del otro, pues consideramos que es un sistema de relación clave en algunos de los cuentos y microrrelatos más importantes de Arreola. Recurrimos nuevamente al trabajo de R. Jolivet para presentar la semblanza de los puntos concretos de esta filosofía existencialista:

"La mirada que otro, como tal fija, sobre la parte del mundo en la que yo estoy, me constituye como cosa del mundo y me exterioriza a mí mismo: su mirada determina una disgregación de mi propio universo y un reagrupamiento de las cosas en torno a él" (Jolivet 1970: 224).

De esta manera nos hallamos ante dos realidades, dos interpretaciones del mundo que se enfrentan; el *otro me mira* queriendo trascender mi transcendencia, interviniendo y anulando el mundo que organizo desde mi punto de vista.

Así pues, aquí nace el motivo de mi angustia al sentir mi mundo amenazado por la mirada del otro, y viceversa: "Él y yo somos dos libertades que se enfrentan y tratan de paralizarse mutuamente con la mirada" (ib. 229). De este modo se realiza un juego de hostilidades que nos hacen pasar del yo — objeto (yo cosa) al yo — sujeto (yo libertad).

Algunas citas entresacadas de testimonios de Juan José Arreola y de entrevistas que concedió, nos hacen ver la cercanía de su visión del mundo con las mencionadas ideas del existencialismo, los textos que comentaremos más adelante lo confirmarán igualmente. En concreto, de la entrevista que realizara Emmanuel Carballo (Carballo 1965) hemos escogido dos fragmentos que se orientan hacia esta línea de interpretación:

En todos los textos he tratado de expresar mi versión de una serie de aspectos de la conducta personal. El drama es para mí, como para tantos artistas y pensadores, estar en el mundo, querer ser algo y parar en otra cosa por las contingencias que ocurren en la vida (...) Lo repito: he tratado de expresar fragmentariamente el drama del ser, la complejidad del ser y estar en el mundo (Carballo 1965: 377)¹.

Más adelante, en la misma entrevista, comentando los temas que trata en su obra afirma lo siguiente:

Todos, quizá, pueden resumirse en el drama del ser individual, el drama del ser aislado, como sucede en "Autrui". En este texto el tema llega a sus últimas posibilidades: el drama lo constituye el hecho de que el hombre está solo, pese a estar rodeado por los demás seres (*autrui*, en francés, es el otro). Al hacer un ademán, tropezamos con el ademán ajeno. Se trata de la acotación de nuestro espacio vital por parte de nuestros prójimos, que nos ciñen hasta que nos dejan reducidos a la cápsula física de nuestro cuerpo. El único espacio de que disponemos verdaderamente es el espacio de nuestro cuerpo. Y por eso, este hombre que pensaba en cosas grandes se pudre dentro de su cápsula. Se le pudre el yo. Es el drama del egoísmo. (Ib. 388–389)²

A Juan José Arreola se le acusó en ciertos círculos de ser un autor que se movía más en el mundo de la fantasía que en el terreno de lo humano, pero sin duda se trata de juicios primarios y de quien no ha profundizado en la lectura de este autor pues en él no hay prácticamente nada que no remita a un problema de la existencia.

Hechas estas primeras aclaraciones para introducir y situar nuestro estudio podemos pasar a comentar un primer caso: *El prodigioso miligramo* (Arreola 1997: 99–106), una de las narraciones que nos

¹ Es necesario destacar la cercanía de esta afirmación de Arreola con el concepto de vida auténtica de Kierkegaard y Heidegger, al referirse a ese drama del ser inacabado.

² En este caso debemos destacar la cercanía de su afirmación con el conflicto de la *mirada* planteado en la filosofía existencialista por Jean-Paul Sartre.

puede servir de ejemplo a la hora de explicar la recepción del existencialismo en Arreola. En él se nos cuenta cómo una hormiga, mientras realizaba el trabajo común de recolección de alimentos junto a sus compañeras, halló y recogió un *prodigioso miligramo* que transportó hacia el hormiguero. El autor no nos ofrece información alguna que nos aclare la naturaleza y las características de ese *prodigioso miligramo* que dará a la crítica un amplio abanico para la interpretación. La citada hormiga, que contaba con cierta fama de extravagante por la "sutileza de sus cargas y por sus frecuentes distracciones" (ib. 99), chocó con la objeción de cada una de las inspectoras para poder introducir su carga en el hormiguero, hasta que la autoridad decidió confiscarlo y, en prevención, encerrar a la hormiga en una celda mientras la justicia se ocupaba del asunto. La hormiga protagonista se enfrenta a las instancias jurídicas en defensa del valor de su hallazgo ante la oposición de aquéllas. El resultado es una historia que se repite: reclusión, diagnóstico de locura y, tras la muerte de la hormiga, en su celda, la sacralización del miligramo y de la hormiga misma, creándose entorno a su tumba y al miligramo una suerte de devoción que deriva en religión oficial. Inmediatamente se desarrolla un fenómeno de paranoia que conlleva la búsqueda de otros prodigiosos miligramos y la concesión de prebendas y honores, en vida, a las hormigas que encuentran objetos similares al *prodigioso miligramo*. La situación degenera hasta el extremo de que casi toda la comunidad se lanza a la búsqueda de prodigiosos miligramos sean o no de calidad, a la exención de trabajos, otras a la colección, compra y venta, y robo, de tales objetos, mientras que la santificada hormiga y el adorado miligramo original caen en el olvido. Consecuentemente el hormiguero, a la llegada del invierno, se encuentra sin los medios necesarios para subsistir. Otro hormiguero vecino se hará cargo de su alimentación a cambio de un día poseer el miligramo con el cual se contagiará de la misma epidemia de insania que afectara al primero.

Son varias las interpretaciones que se han realizado sobre este cuento, uno de los más crípticos a nuestro modesto entender. Para Bertie Acker (Acker 1984: 78) este cuento sería una imagen de cómo el egoísmo personal, que no tiene en cuenta el bien común, puede desencadenar una anarquía que destruye el orden social. Jerry Newgord (Newgord 1978) hace un estudio más profundo destacando las características del hormiguero, que semeja a un estado autoritario donde es imposible la crítica hacia el sistema; destaca, además, la

corrupción de sus funcionarios o la ineficacia de las instituciones para resolver problemas no previsibles. Observa también que no sólo el sistema es blanco de la crítica arreolana sino también las hormigas mismas por la degeneración que sufren guiadas por la ambición, la pereza y el egoísmo, olvidando el objetivo del bien común. Hace también Newgord un intento de interpretación del miligramo, el cual podría ser un símbolo del “hallazgo del arte... el oro, un ideal, la verdad última, la clave del universo.” (Newgord 1978: 532).

Por otra parte Carmen de Mora recuerda el valor como modelo de sociedad que ha tenido siempre el mundo de las hormigas desde las fábulas tradicionales, al tiempo que observa la contradicción de este tipo de sociedad autoritaria que llega a adorar aquello que previamente condenó. Continúa su incursión afirmando que “*El prodigioso miligramo* es un alegato contra uno de los males por excelencia de nuestra sociedad; la voluntad de posesión que nuestro autor asocia a la idea de destrucción” (Arreola 1997: 25); también deduce que es detestable el liderazgo para Arreola y para los que con él opinan que “cada hombre debe ser capaz de conducirse por sí mismo”(ib.).

De gran interés resulta la conexión que De Mora hace de la sociedad representada en esta narración con la existencia inauténtica del hombre “reducido a la despersonalización... la *multitud* de Kierkegaard y el *das man* heideggeriano” (ib.). Esa sociedad en la que prima la imitación, el automatismo –las hormigas tras la sacralización de la víctima del sistema, se lanzan a la insania de la búsqueda de miligramos hasta el extremo de perder la razón y dar al traste con la sociedad-, y la posesión como supremo valor: “Arreola se rebela contra esta errónea manera de entender el mundo, contra “la primacía de la categoría del tener sobre la del ser”, sin percatarnos de que en esa obsesión es el propio individuo el que se pierde” (ib.), al igual que se pierden las hormigas.

Por nuestra parte, opinamos que, el comienzo del texto, en el que se representa el enfrentamiento de la hormiga contra la autoridad es un ejemplo del tema sartreano de la mirada del otro, que nos cohibe, nos aprisiona y puede llegar a destruirnos. De hecho, la desaparición de la protagonista se lleva a cabo por una organización del mundo diferente a la suya, tal y como podremos observar en el siguiente ejemplo.

Autruí (Arreola 1972: 111–112) es uno de los textos de Arreola más llamativos y comentados. No obstante, pensamos, la crítica no ha profundizado mucho en su interpretación. Este texto, escrito en forma

de diario por la víctima de Autrui, muestra el progresivo confinamiento del protagonista hasta su definitiva destrucción.

Lo que podemos ofrecer a partir de la bibliografía que manejamos podría resumirse en los siguientes puntos: Ángel González Arauza (González Arauza 1968) y José Ortega (Ortega 1983) presentan el caso de Autrui como una huida del protagonista ante su desdoblamiento personal. Consideran que se trata de un fracaso en el enfrentamiento del hombre consigo mismo, no con el otro. Así se expresa el primero:

el hombre busca su reflejo, cree encontrarlo y por él cree justificarse. Mas desgraciadamente el reflejo se le escapa; algo tiene que impide que el hombre pueda asirse a la "verdad" que tan penosamente se ha construido y que cree haber hallado tan certera. (González Arauza 1968: 104).

Parece ser que el crítico nos remite a Heidegger y Kierkegaard, a su concepto de vida auténtica, que es un tema que, según se puede observar, Arreola tiene bastante presente. En términos semejantes Ortega afirma que

el problema del innominado personaje constituye un caso extremo de enajenación, ya que no quiere ponerse en contacto con lo "otro" para evitar la responsabilidad que provocaría el contacto con esa proyección de su mismidad. Creándose ese "alter ego", esa personalidad esquizoide cuyo doble lo encarna el perseguidor, renuncia a su libertad por no poder asimilar esa parte del "yo" que podría conferirle una plena identidad. (Ortega 1983: 55).

Otras interpretaciones se sitúan más en la línea de las declaraciones vistas arriba del mismo Arreola. Son el caso de Bertie Acker y Paula R. Heusinkveld (Heusinkveld 1986). Acker interpreta el cuento desde la temática del libre albedrío; nos indica que el protagonista acorralado por el otro se arredra y es incapaz de levantarse contra el enemigo. Opina igualmente que éste es "el destino de cada uno. Todos estamos limitados por las circunstancias hasta el momento de la muerte." (Acker 1984: 94).

Paula R. Heusinkveld observa la simbología del texto en el que encuentra imágenes muy negativas para expresar la causa de "la

infelicidad existente en el mundo: la inhabilidad del hombre de acercarse al prójimo y el aislamiento que de ello resulta.” (Heu-sinkveld 1986: 49). Añade que al igual que “Sartre, Beckett, Kafka y otros, Arreola ha colocado a su anti-héroe dentro de un espacio cerrado para mostrar gráficamente el confinamiento del hombre dentro de ciertas limitaciones... El cuento reafirma el “dictum” de Sartre que “el infierno son los otros”, e insinúa el dilema paradójico que resulta: el hombre no es capaz de comunicarse con su prójimo, pero tampoco es capaz de vivir solo y feliz” (ib. 49–50), lo cual “implica que la enajenación del prójimo es devastadora para el ser humano, y que causa aún más angustia que la falta de libre albedrío o aun la mortalidad humana.” (ib. 50).

En *Libertad* (Arreola 1972: 91) un narrador, que posiblemente ejerce de escribano, un oficio gris como el de muchos personajes de Kafka, nos cuenta cómo su intento de proclamar la independencia de sus actos, queda en un mero ridículo intento, a pesar de que en él no se apaga el rescoldo de la rebeldía. Un retrato bastante elocuente de esa personalidad a medio hacer, en la que tanto insiste nuestro autor y que refleja las teorías de Kierkegaard y Heidegger sobre la vida auténtica que Juan José Arreola interpreta así en su entrevista con Emmanuel Carballo:

El hombre es un callejón sin salida. Es decir, un conflicto irresoluto e irresoluble entre el animal y el ángel. Entre el animal y al ángel debería existir el hombre, pero como se encuentra más cerca de uno o de otro, no llega a existir plenamente, se queda en proyecto. Estamos a un paso de ser hombres, pero nunca damos ese paso. (Carballo 1965: 397).

Batalla perdida, personas en continua construcción sin una meta definida al tiempo que inalcanzable. Ésta, al parecer, podría ser la conclusión a la que podríamos ir acogiéndonos, según el material que hasta ahora hemos presentado. Una visión negativa del panorama de la existencia humana, una ausencia de soluciones esperanzadoras. No obstante al culminar nuestro trabajo demostraremos que no se puede deducir esta idea como tesis definitiva ya que otros textos de Arreola confirman una visión más positiva. Pero veamos antes otros ejemplos en la línea actual.

El converso (Arreola 1997: 164–168), como la mayoría de los textos de Arreola posee una densidad temática abrumadora. Ciñéndo-

nos, sin embargo, al perfil de investigación establecido, nos podemos centrar, en opinión de Bertie Acker, en los temas de la libertad y la mirada, tal y como los planteara Jean-Paul Sartre. En este texto encontramos al protagonista, Alonso Cedillo, describiéndonos su peculiar situación: practicante de la doctrina quietista se dedicó a propagar esta heterodoxia tanto en vida como una vez caído en el infierno, ganando muchos adeptos incluso entre los diablos que ejecutaban las penas a los condenados. Pero Dios pone fin a tal galimatías planteándole la opción de rehacer su vida, y renegar de su postura, o permanecer en la condena eterna.

Nos encontramos ante una situación dada, *determinada*, por Otro, en este caso por Dios, el cual supone, valga la expresión, *la mirada* con mayúsculas. Él, que todo lo ve, encarna en este cuento al Otro, al que amenaza al yo, desde su organización de la realidad, cosificándolo y anulando su cosmovisión. Así pues, nuestro personaje, se halla ante un mundo diseñado y establecido para él. No se trata en este caso de enfrentarse a un semejante, a un ser humano con el que se podría competir de igual a igual, sino que ha de enfrentarse a una desigual batalla, como criatura ante el Creador. A pesar de sus dotes piadosas, que en el lector podrían inspirar conmiseración, Dios interviene interrumpiendo su apostolado demostrándole lo equivocado de su actitud:

Entre Dios y yo todo ha quedado resuelto desde el momento en que he aceptado sus condiciones. Renuncio a mis propósitos y doy por terminadas mis labores apostólicas. El infierno no podrá ser suprimido; toda obstinación por mi parte será inútil y contraproducente. Dios se ha mostrado en esto claro y definitivo, y ni siquiera me permitió llegar a las últimas proposiciones. (Arreola 1997: 164).

Para Bertie Acker la propuesta de decisión que Dios plantea al protagonista podría ser la clave de la composición por su cercanía al existencialismo del citado autor francés:

Se conforma a su precepto de libertad individual, una libertad terrible y total, para que el individuo se cree espontáneamente frente a cada situación en particular, tomando completa responsabilidad de sus decisiones y aceptando las consecuencias de sus actos sin vano remordimiento. (Acker 1984: 61).

Como hemos apuntado en nuestras palabras preliminares el tema de la libertad es una de las ideas centrales existencialistas y, en este relato, aparece con indudable claridad. No obstante Arreola, acierta al apuntar Acker, introduce un elemento que contradice la filosofía sartreana: el determinismo. Efectivamente en Jolivet (Jolivet 1970: 238–239) observamos cómo para Sartre el hombre o es libre o está determinado, él cree en la libertad del ser humano para crearse a sí mismo lo cual choca radicalmente con la predestinación. El protagonista de este texto de Arreola puede elegir entre dos caminos que él no ha elegido, que le han sido impuestos. Incluso, hacia el final de la narración, Cedillo reconoce que su situación es un caso que “comprueba la predestinación” (Arreola 1997: 168).

Pensamos que se trata sin duda de una reelaboración arreolana consciente, o no, de estas filosofías, dejándonos de nuevo ante un protagonismo evidente de la mirada del otro como amenaza, como imposición, como ocurre en varios de los ejemplos que estamos comentando.

Para finalizar esta incursión en *El converso* mencionaremos un segundo plano de actuación de la mirada, en este caso sí se trata de un enfrentamiento entre iguales: Según enuncia el mismo protagonista, tendría que ser fácil la decisión que Dios le plantea si no dependiera de la vigilancia a la que se vería sometido, por parte de un segundo, el compañero de orden fray Lorenzo, en caso de aceptar retractarse. Dios le ofrece volver a la vida al momento justo anterior a recibir sus órdenes menores, le deja en la tierra nuevamente, pero bajo la vigilancia del citado fray Lorenzo que será quien se encargue de seguir sus movimientos y de guiar sus pasos — hecho que amarga y desespera profundamente al protagonista. Arreola utiliza imágenes muy evidentes que pueden confirmar esta interpretación que realizamos en torno a la mirada³.

³ Bertie Acker también reconoce el valor de la mirada en este microrrelato: “El concepto de la mirada es una de las principales contribuciones de Sartre a la filosofía moderna, y una idea que le debe gustar a Arreola, pues él escogió una cita del poeta mexicano Carlos Pellicer como las palabras introductorias de *Confabulario*, palabras que sugieren vivamente las emociones de la mirada sartreana: ‘... mudo espío mientras alguien voraz a mí me observa’. Cada vez que se menciona a Fray Lorenzo también se nombran o implican sus ojos: ‘cada una de mis acciones deberá desnudarse ante sus ojos’; más adelante, ‘y el orgullo, que no se rompió en los potros, irá a doblarse ante sus ojos

En el relato *Una reputación* (Arreola 1997: 180–182) observa Carmen de Mora (ib. 44) cómo un hombre que viaja en un autobús urbano se ve convertido en *caballero* una vez que cede su asiento a una mujer. El sentido de la palabra *caballero* poseerá una doble dimensión: la de gentilhomme, educado, de modales intachables y la de caballero andante de la literatura de caballerías. Este hecho que podría parecer trivial adquiere otra dimensión si nos fijamos en el mismo inicio de la narración. El personaje afirma que la cortesía no es precisamente su principal virtud, actúa en este caso por un impulso y desde ese momento se ve envuelto en una espiral que lo va elevando a la categoría de caballero, lejos de ser éste un objetivo propuesto por sí mismo. Conforme avanza la historia va cediendo asientos a las distintas señoras que suben al transporte público. De este modo va adquiriendo una imagen y una responsabilidad que las mujeres *observan* con beneplácito mientras que los hombres le *miran* con sorna. Estamos justamente como en el caso anterior ante el tema de la mirada, un mundo organizado para nuestro personaje, y ante el determinismo, una situación que él no ha elegido.

Arreola además utiliza irónicamente una serie de imágenes y expresiones propias de los libros de caballerías que ofrecen ese aire de misterio y predestinación a una situación absurda en la que nace un innominado caballero andante, en unas circunstancias tan triviales como un simple viaje en autobús, y no a lomos de un corcel. Veamos: la *dama* a quien ofrece primero su asiento tenía “un vago aspecto de *ángel anunciador*” (ib. 180). Ésta agradece efusivamente el gesto y con su reacción llama la atención de algunos usuarios del autobús. El protagonista se convierte en el centro de ciertas *miradas*. El individuo, con cierto rubor, acepta su gratitud y, seguidamente, un puesto que queda libre cerca de esta señora y espera que todo continúe de modo normal. Sin embargo la cosa no queda ahí: “Pero ese día *me estaba destinado misteriosamente*. Subió al autobús otra mujer, sin *alas* aparentes” (Ib.). Ante el miedo de quedar mal con la primera beneficiaria de su caballerosidad vuelve a levantarse y a dejar libre su asiento, *con reverencia*, de manera que casi todo el pasaje es ya consciente de la presencia de un verdadero caballero. La siguiente ocasión, de mayor envergadura pues se trata de una mujer cargada de

cruelles’; y finalmente, ‘luego, frente a la reja, con su linterna en la mano, observándome, distingo a fray Lorenzo’. (Acker 1984: 62–63.)

paquetes y con dos criaturas, es denominada por nuestro *Bayardo* como una *nueva prueba*, que le lleva a un alto grado de compromiso con las personas que van a bordo de modo que llega a sentirse francamente agobiado:

Mis compromisos con el pasaje habían aumentado de manera decisiva. Todos esperaban de mí cualquier cosa. Yo personificaba en aquellos momentos los *ideales femeninos de caballeridad y de protección a los débiles*. La responsabilidad oprimía mi cuerpo como una *coraza* agobiante, y yo echaba de menos una buena *tizona* en el costado. (Ib. 181)⁴.

De este modo el señalado pasajero permanece en el autobús, incluso dejando atrás su parada, pues se siente responsable de todo lo que pueda ocurrir si se baja: cualquier hombre podría propasarse “con alguna *dama*, cosa nada rara en los autobuses, yo debía amonestar al agresor y aun *entrar en combate* con él” (ib. 1997: 181). Por otro lado temía también la posibilidad de que una vez que bajara del transporte se produjera una burla tremenda por parte del pasaje masculino.

Como vemos pues, no se trata de un auténtico caballero, como él mismo anunciaba al comienzo de la narración, simplemente ha asumido un papel impuesto por *el otro que lo mira* y espera de él un determinado comportamiento. Un claro ejemplo de cómo la organización del mundo del otro nos convierte en objetos, de cómo la vergüenza actúa en nosotros duplicando nuestra imagen, la pública y la privada.

Finalmente, como suele suceder en la narrativa de Arreola, todo culmina sin transcendencia alguna, rodeado de circunstancias anodinas, tal y como comenzó: nada de señales mágicas o entornos adecuados a la novela de caballerías que se podrían esperar:

Descendí en una esquina desolada, casi montaraz, sin pompa ni ceremonia. En mi espíritu había grandes reservas de heroísmo sin empleo, mientras el autobús se alejaba vacío de aquella asamblea dispersa y fortuita que consagró mi reputación de caballero. (ib. 182).

Este último episodio cargado de humorismo puede servirnos de introducción a la coda de nuestra propuesta. Una transición entre la

⁴ El subrayado es nuestro.

visión desesperada de la realidad, propia de la literatura existencialista (como sucede en los ejemplos anteriores que hemos traído a colación), y la salida vitalista y positiva que se vislumbra en otra parte de la producción arreolana.

El siguiente texto, sin contar con una postura excesivamente jovial, sí supone, a nuestro modesto entender, un quiebro ante la ausencia de horizontes, un posicionamiento en pro de la vida y de la liberación del laberinto que representaría una actitud existencialista.

El silencio de Dios (Arreola 1997: 169–175) supone una original versión de Juan José Arreola sobre el motivo tan común de la ausencia de respuesta a las plegarias del hombre dirigidas a Dios. A partir de unas coordenadas kafkianas y, en ocasiones, cervantinas, el autor nos presenta a otro innominado individuo, en una situación de desesperación, dirigiendo una carta al padre celestial sin esperanza de ser escuchado:

“no tengo destinatario para mi mensaje de naufrago. Quiero creer que alguien va a recogerlo, que mi carta no flotará en el vacío, abierta y sola, como sobre un mar inexorable.” (Ib. 169).

Deja sobre su mesa una carta abierta dirigida a Dios, ante “*los ojos que lo ven todo*” (ib.)⁵. Hace un recorrido de su vida en ella afirmando la dificultad que encuentra a la hora de realizar el bien, que, no obstante, siempre ha sido su objetivo. Expone los escollos ante los que se encuentra el que pretende obrar correctamente, en concreto en su caso que aparece tocado por una sombra fatídica de determinismo. El narrador —escritor de la carta— afirma que ha llegado a encontrarse en un callejón sin salida:

“Perseguido por días veloces, acosado por ideas tenaces... He retrocedido desde la infancia, aplazando siempre esta hora en que caigo por fin.” (Ib.).

Aunque reconoce humildemente que no debe ser el único que ha atravesado estas circunstancias, que posiblemente otros hayan pasado por este trago, da cuenta de no haber tenido contacto con ellos haciendo más angustiosa su situación por la soledad:

⁵ El subrayado es nuestro.

Cerca o lejos debe haber otros que también han sido acorralados en noches como ésta. Pero yo pregunto: ¿cómo han hecho para seguir viviendo? ¿Han salido siquiera con vida de la travesía? (Ib.).

Continúa su carta dejando constancia nuevamente de su humildad al aseverar que reconoce que no va a llegar a obtener lo que tantos han deseado, incluidos personajes de altura como sabios y santos: *las claves de la vida*; sus pretensiones no apuntan tan alto: “Mi necesidad es breve y personal. Quiero ser bueno y solícito unos informes. Eso es todo” (ib).

Dentro del panorama existencialista en el que navega a la deriva nuestro protagonista podemos reconocer en él a una persona de acción, de carácter, dentro de su modestia, con su opción de vida, con su decisión tomada (*quiero ser bueno*). Lejos de lo que se pudiera esperar, para el hombre con una vida auténtica, con una vida elegida, pero, como tal, en continua formación, de nada le sirve prácticamente esta elección. Ciertamente no hay nada a lo que amarrarse, se siente bamboleado por los embates del temporal, hasta el extremo de empezar a acusar en él mismo los síntomas del cansancio, de la duda, de andar errado pues, todo lo que ha realizado hasta el momento, desde que optó por actuar tal y como actúa, no ha llegado a buen término. No obstante está preparado para todo, si realmente no estuviera programado, predestinado, para hacer el bien le dolería aceptarlo, pero lo haría: “soy capaz de aprendizaje” (ib. 170), afirma.

Al protagonista lo podemos contemplar como una suerte de desdichado antihéroe de tintes quijotescos. Una vez que se ha inclinado por uno de los dos bandos (el bien y el mal) reconoce que ha elegido el más débil (el bien), según hiciera Don Quijote. Y al igual que el hidalgo manchego saldrá siempre malparado:

Aquí está el resultado de nuestra alianza: Hemos perdido todas las batallas. De todos los encuentros con el enemigo salimos invariablemente apaleados y aquí estamos, batiéndonos otra vez en retirada durante esta noche memorable. (Ib. 171).

A raíz de aquí hace un canto de decepción en el que otorga al ser humano una imagen negativa, mientras que salva al resto de seres de la creación:

*Ve*o a los hombres en torno a mí, llevando vidas ocultas, inexplicables. *Ve*o a los niños que beben voces contaminadas, y a la vida como nodriza criminal que los alimenta de venenos. *Ve*o pueblos que disputan las palabras eternas, que se dicen predilectos y elegidos. A través de los siglos, *se ven* hordas de sanguinarios y de imbéciles; y de pronto, aquí y allá, un alma que parece señalada con un sello divino (...) *Miro* a los animales que soportan dulcemente su destino y que viven bajo normas distintas; a los vegetales que se consumen después de una vida misteriosa y pujante, y a los, minerales duros y silenciosos. (Ib. 172).

El protagonista se esfuerza por comprender, por interpretar el mundo, por leer en la naturaleza las señales de Dios, de unirse al cosmos, pero no lo consigue:

Espío y trato de ir hasta el fondo, de embarcarme al conjunto, de sumarme en el todo. Pero quedo siempre aislado; ignorante, individual, siempre a la orilla. (Ib.).

La respuesta de Dios llega y con ella la visión de Juan José Arreola que apuntábamos más arriba, si bien no en clave de humor pero sí dejando atrás el trampantojo del sistema existencial, que se manifestaba de manera exasperante en el caso de *Autruí*. Dios invita a nuestro personaje a que contemple el mundo con su relajado modo de mirarlo. Si la carta de Dios comienza con un tono muy frío va cobrando, no obstante conforme avanza, un tono más paternal y realiza una apología de la filosofía oriental, de la que gusta Arreola sacar a colación en ciertas ocasiones, ya sea en las entrevistas que concedió como en algunos de sus textos. Expresa que por un mal uso de la libertad los hombres han destruido más de lo que Él mismo podía imaginar. Exhorta al desesperado remitente a dejar de pensar tanto en sí mismo y que se fije más en los temas que habría que considerar más importantes: el dolor en el mundo especialmente en las víctimas más inocentes. Insiste en uno de los temas clave del existencialismo que tratamos: la libertad. Parece que con ella nos hemos puesto el listón muy alto, tal vez nuestro hombre y nosotros mismos, no seamos el ejemplo que Kierkegaard o Heidegger habían propuesto, no somos o no tenemos que ser, para alcanzar la felicidad, el superhombre que retratará Nietzsche. Se puede pasar por el mundo aceptando la vida tal y como se nos presenta, podemos vivir

observando, en una actitud contemplativa, sin tener como meta la intervención constante en cada una de las circunstancias de la vida que, al fin y al cabo, sería una fuente de conflictos por nuestra visión del mundo frente a la del *otro*. Dice Dios en su carta:

Si tú tampoco puedes soportar la brizna de libertad que llevas contigo, cambia la posición de tu alma y sé solamente pasivo, humilde. Acepta con emoción lo que la vida ponga en tus manos y no intentes los frutos celestes; no vengas tan lejos.

Aboga con más interés por la realización de un trabajo manual que, con el esfuerzo que conlleva, evite a la mente divagar en toda esa serie de filosofías y enredos que muestra el protagonista en su carta. Seymour Menton observa en esta respuesta de Dios el tema *Il faut cultiver notre jardin* que Voltaire presenta en *Cándido*, obra en la que se hace una alabanza del trabajo en detrimento de la filosofía (Menton 1964: 11). En concreto el cuento dice:

yo me buscaría una colocación de jardinero o cultivaría por mi cuenta un prado de hortalizas. Con las flores que habría en él, y con las mariposas que irán a visitarlas, tendría más que suficiente para alegrar mi vida. (Arreola 1997: 175).

Tras la impresión que produce el tono oscuro de la carta que pone el protagonista sobre la mesa y la inicial frialdad de la respuesta de Dios se vislumbra finalmente un atisbo de esperanza y armonía en los pasajes finales que hemos referido. Así podemos interpretar que, en ocasiones, Arreola se desvincula del existencialismo, idea que ya apuntara en su momento el profesor Seymour Menton. Refiriéndose a *El guardagujas*, posiblemente el cuento más conocido de nuestro autor, el crítico estadounidense, con cuyas palabras cerramos nuestro trabajo, afirma:

su punto de vista no deja de ser mexicano; por cuanto que, en vez de una filosofía de la desesperación, aboga más bien porque nos subamos al tren de la vida, libres de la preocupación acerca de cuál ha de ser nuestro destino ulterior. (Menton 1964: 11).

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Choosing Influences: Problems of Reception in Creating a National Theatre

JAAK RÄHESOO

Like all national movements of the 19th century, the Estonian national awakening cherished cultural originality, putting a high premium on local traits. The guiding light, at least in theory, was Johann Gottfried von Herder's idea of a unique national spirit informing all artistic expressions of a particular people. The birth and flowering of that spirit was invariably imagined to have taken place somewhere in the distant past, and later periods were usually treated as times of contaminating foreign influences that had brought about the disintegration of a once harmonious and unified national culture. Only remnants of the former glory could still be salvaged from folklore. So a wide-spread campaign of recording Estonian folk-songs and stories indeed put together one of the largest folkloristic collections of Europe.

But in most practical matters slogans of national authenticity remained somewhat empty. The monument of the whole movement, the epic *Kalevipoeg* (1857–61), was primarily an individual creation of its "compiler", Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald. And in general the new poetry of the national awakening did not use the old alliterative technique of folk-songs. Instead, it adopted the common European rhymed forms. In music composers subjected folk-tunes to Romantic harmonies which largely determined the character of their renditions. In visual arts painters could only marginally apply the decorative patterns of folk-art. As to the Estonian-language theatre, started in 1870 by the poetess Lydia Koidula and quickly spread by amateur circles all over the country, it simply imitated the local Baltic-German professional troupes, as primitive folk-games and rituals could hardly have provided enough dramatic material. Most of the repertoire were

adaptations of pretty mediocre German melodramas and comedies of the period.

The founding of the first two professional theatres, the Vanemuine in Tartu and the Estonia in Tallinn, both in 1906, put the problems of national character and foreign influences into a new perspective. That change in theatre co-incided with a wider cultural transformation seeking new horizons. The latter was most consistently represented by the literary and artistic group Noor-Eesti (Young Estonia), which tried to overcome the cultural backwardness and provincialism of Estonian life by approaching the very latest trends in Europe, which at that time usually passed under the name of Neoromanticism or Symbolism. These efforts were supplemented by a resolute turning away from hitherto dominant German and Russian influences. Eyes (and often feet) were now directed towards what were regarded as the real centres of cultural development in Western Europe, particularly towards France and the capital of international avant-garde, Paris. But another source of inspiration was provided by the almost-neighbouring and also relatively small nations of Scandinavia, whose arts had recently moved from the obscurity of the periphery into the light of European attention. These re-orientations in Estonian intellectual life were supported by rapid urbanization and growing social differentiation, including the appearance of a much more numerous and more sophisticated intelligentsia. Creating a national culture now became a more conscious effort, somewhat resembling a Modernist "project". Well-informed comparisons with similar (and usually earlier) processes in other countries were supposed to lead to rational solutions of one's own problems. That attitude was perhaps best seen in the so-called "language renewal", which discarded former Romantic ideas of natural linguistic growth and proposed a number of radical "functionalist" reforms.

In theatre, the carefully planned building of a professional structure was primarily exemplified by the director of the Vanemuine, Karl Menning (1874–1941), a former critic who had briefly studied directing under Max Reinhardt in Berlin. Indeed, no other Estonian director has worked so systematically, with a long-term view, and no one else has had the same dictatorial powers as did Menning in the first eight years (1906–14) of the professional existence of the Vanemuine. This "master-builder" position and attitude was something he shared with the Noor-Eesti. In other respects, however, he

opposed many of the views of the latter. The best exposition of Menning's ideas comes from his article "Ten years of Estonian theatre", a retrospect summary written in 1916.

Menning's main aim was always to follow the national character. This was not a political tenet, as it would have been with outright nationalists, but rather an artistic necessity. In his view everything (recently) borrowed and imitated would always remain artistically second-rate. Menning did not search for a national character in some distant and hypothetical past, as national romanticism had done earlier, but concentrated instead on the actually observable features of everyday reality. What united him with the more conservative nationalist circles was a preference given to village life over urban conditions. But again Menning did not stress the moralistic virtues usually attributed to the land-bound existence in conservative ideologies. For him it was sufficient to note the richness of human types and ways of behaviour that had accumulated in the Estonian peasant society over many centuries (often, quite admittedly, by way of long-time cultural borrowings), as opposed to the recently-formed and still shallow urban customs.

Menning has usually been called the foremost proponent of realism in Estonian theatre. But in itself realism was not a dogma for Menning. He readily conceded that realistic and what he called "idealistic" tendencies seemed to be in constant fluctuation throughout the ages, and that the turn of the moment in European arts again tended to move away from realism. Nevertheless, if professional theatre was to be built on national character, realism with its keen interest in observable behaviour was clearly in a favoured position. Once professional acting had been firmly anchored to what were natural reactions for the Estonians, it could proceed to more stylized forms of theatre. But for the present, in Menning's view, realism was the order of the day for the Estonian theatre, and the key words of critical appreciation were "authentic", "genuine", and "real".

Menning once said that ideally his repertoire would consist 90% of Estonian plays. That may have been a polemical exaggeration, as the percentage would be dangerously high even for great nations with long theatrical traditions and a vast treasury of national drama. In reality Menning had mostly to stage translations, but he tried to choose them in accordance with what he saw as the relative nearness to Estonian mental habits and outward customs. Practically he

continued with a heavy reliance on German plays, which took up 68% of all translations, Scandinavian authors coming next with 15.5%. Little remained for the rest of the world. Socially Menning preferred plays with lower or middle class characters, whose background was easier for the Estonian actors and spectators to grasp. Masters of the new realistic drama — Ibsen, Björnson, Hauptmann, Sudermann — formed the nucleus of his repertoire. Older classics (and verse drama in general) were only to be approached at a later stage, when the national style and professional abilities of the company would have been strong enough to resist the temptations of empty posturing and pompous rhetoric. And it was Menning's firm belief that these classics would equally have to be filtered through Estonian characters. King Lear should be based on an old Estonian farmer, he used to say, and he pointed to the marked differences of interpreting Shakespeare in the English, French, and German theatrical traditions. Menning also opposed sending young people to foreign acting schools, as that would cut their roots and natural development. So the recently-founded Estonian professional companies had also to function as training grounds.

It was usual at the time to see the Estonia and the Vanemuine in contrasting terms. The former was called an actors' theatre and the latter a director's theatre. Actually the Estonia simply followed a more haphazard and happy-go-lucky attitude. Everything — world classics, modern drama, Estonian plays — was attacked in a trial-and-error spirit, the actor-managers being mostly interested in star roles for themselves. But it is worthwhile noting that the most famous actor of the Estonia, Paul Pinna (1884–1949), was constantly described as having a totally un-Estonian character. His expressive mimics and gesticulation, his quick talent for improvisation were said to remind one rather of a Frenchman or an Italian. That "foreignness" by no means hampered his popularity among spectators of all classes. In that time of rapid change many people probably saw him and some other "exotic" actors and actresses of the Estonia company as symbols of their own latent emotional possibilities, now that they had escaped the restrictions of village life. It was a time to assert one's individuality, even if it differed from the sociological average.

Chaotic as the repertoire of the Estonia was, the sheer force of cultural inertia again made translations from the German to outweigh all others. Estonian plays, however, were much less conspicuous than

in the Vanemuine, although it was characteristically the Estonia that first successfully staged the drawing-room dramas and comedies of Eduard Vilde, whose urban milieu had rather looked suspicious in Menning's eyes.

On a theoretical level it was finally the Noor-Eesti that proposed an alternative model to Menning's rootedness in national character. I would call that model "relatively free combination of foreign influences". It was not a phrase used by the Noor-Eesti itself, and the idea seems to have been only dimly present in the minds of its spokesmen. We must also stress the word "relatively": no one ever expected the process to be governed by pure chance. There was always the clause that we would only choose things that suit us, but the qualities which made something suitable were left to one's own intuition, so they could vary from person to person in a much wider degree than in Menning's model. The Noor-Eesti consistently described Estonian intellectual conditions as too narrow and down-to-earth. Their ideal was a thorough knowledge of European culture that would have radically widened the range of possible choices, however distant and strange some of them might have seemed at first glance. Anyway, they saw Estonian culture as primarily a thing of the future, not of the past. All the riches of folklore, for example, were only one strain to be used in weaving that future pattern that would also include frank and open borrowings. Vague as such ideas were, they again and again came up in the Noor-Eesti publications of the period from 1905 to 1915, including the collection of essays *Teatri-raamat* (Theatre Book, 1913).

These two models — of rootedness in one's own national character, viewed as something sufficiently unified and stable, or of creating a new culture in the process of relatively free borrowings — have remained the basic frameworks for later developments. Different periods have leaned either on the one or the other, although in general the force of changes, including the present globalization, has favoured the Noor-Eesti model. In addition, significant approaches to the national character in the last thirty years or so have again distanced themselves from immediately observable realities, as these clearly bear the marks of recent traumatic upheavals. The countryside of the Soviet half-century or of today obviously had/has little in common with that of Menning's time. The search for roots has once again moved to distant and hypothetical past. Geographically it has tended

to connect Finno-Ugric peoples with Siberian, American Indian, and Far-Eastern cultures. So the most memorable theatrical manifestations of that approach, as some of Jaan Tooming's productions in the 1970s or a recent version of Veljo Tormis's "Estonian Ballads" by Peeter Jalakas, also look as pretty free combinations of local and foreign (even exotic) elements. In actual practice the differences between the two models have thus been blurred.

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Karl Menning's writings can best be found in a selection of his articles, *Kunstiviha on niisama püha kui vaimustuski*, published by Eesti Raamat, Tallinn 1970. The Noor-Eesti publication *Teatri-raamat* (1913), since long a rarity, was reprinted in facsimile by the Estonian Theatre Union (*Eesti Teatriliit*) in 2002.

Baltic Drama in the European Context: End of the 19th Century, Beginning of the 20th Century

BENEDIKTS KALNAČS

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, processes in the development of the drama genre were taking place in the Baltic area; they reflect events elsewhere in Europe. For the first time Latvian, Estonian, and Lithuanian literature was contemporary and comparable in a broader cultural space, while preserving significant differences. The aim of this article is to look at the causes of these differences and to note their manifestations by analysing several significant preconditions of the development of Baltic drama.

One of the main characteristics of drama in the Baltic area at the turn of the century is its short historical experience. The beginning of drama and theatre in Latvia and Estonia is the late 60s and early 70s when the first plays by Ādolfs Alunāns were staged in Riga, and in Estonia Lydia Koidula prepared productions of her dramatic work with Tartu amateurs where the story motifs make use of localisations of German sources. Koidula's first play *The Cousin from Saaremaa* came about by modifying the German author Theodor Körner's farce *The Cousin from Bremen* (Nirk 1970: 94; Rāhesoo 1999: 26).

In this early stage, drama cannot be separated from the processes of creating the theatre, and an essential task of the theatre, besides entertainment, is educating the public. What seems to be the paradox of the generally naive and sentimental plots being used quite frequently for serious purposes can be explained by the relationship of theatre and drama to the national movement which was active in the second half of the 19th century. The motif of several plays of this period is a society which is increasingly polarised according to

nationality. An example is Alunāns' drama written in 1888 *Who Were Those Who Sang* with the contrast of Latvian peasants and Baltic Germans which is exacerbated by the love story used in the plot of a Latvian girl Skaidrīte and the estate owner, Count Konrad. The combination of 19th century realities and folklore material used in the work are characteristic of the national movement ideas of the period: "nationalism has meant the mobilization of the past and of traditions for the sake of future and modernity" (Toraine 1995: 137). In the history of Lithuanian drama, a similar role is played by the romantic dramas of Aleksandras Fromas-Gužutis. "They feature motifs of love for the homeland, heroism, nobility of spirit, strong passion and tragic love" (Vanagas 1997: 88). The amateur theatre movement at the end of the 19th century is significant not only for its work with play texts, but also because its activities served as a means for organising legal gatherings to discuss social and national ideas.¹ This phenomenon has a special significance in Lithuania where due to the special repressions of the tsarist regime, the establishment of a more or less professional theatre was hindered. Instead, since approximately 1885, a significant role is played by the so-called "secret Lithuanian evenings". "In an artistic sense they are naïve, primitive, amateur concerts (choir, dances, recitations, "live pictures", performances), but from a political aspect these modest peasant performances are extremely significant" (Aleksaite 2002: 186).

A second tendency is linked to a much deeper and more thorough acquaintance with the Western European cultural strata. This process follows with no displacement in time, because Baltic drama, just as culture in general, attempts in an extremely short period of time to compress together potentially extensive strata of earlier aesthetic experience. Skaidrīte Lasmane stresses that "duplication of the new testifies to the density and intensiveness of change, to a radical acceleration in development" (Lasmane 1999: 175). Furthermore, these are not insoluble contradictions with the earlier process of forming a national awareness, because the ideology of nationalism and a national state is initially a conviction of the limited circles of

¹ Under the watchful eyes of the tsarist bureaucracy and Baltic German oligarchy the national movement could not take political forms but had to channel itself into cultural activities. At the same time these activities provided new forms of social intercourse and solidarity for the emerging nation. — Rähesoo J. *Estonian Theatre*, p. 26.

intellectuals under whose influence “an ethnically or territorially related group of people are united by a national idea” (Bula 2000: 350).

One of the central influences in the process of the emergence of a new aesthetic awareness in the Baltic area at the turn of the century was still that of the German culture. One of the pivotal points in the Europeanization of Baltic culture was the translation of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s dramatic poem *Faust* by Rainis published in 1898. This publication is outstanding from the aspect of the inheritance of world culture values, enriching the resources of the Latvian language as it draws nearer to the means of expression of another language, and also as a significant impulse of modernising and Europeanising culture. This work of Goethe’s is one of those texts which in contrast to the previous stable system of opposition in Baltic culture, raises the idea of a changing world. “..at a time, when that which is new is not doubted as a value, when nothing remains and must not remain the same, change itself, movement, circulation is recognised as being eternal — the magnificent circles of development” (Lasmane 1999: 176). But no lesser a role can be attributed to this titanic work in the crafting of Rainis’ dramatic realisations and skills.

The relationship of Rainis’ first drama *Fire and Night* to the structure, motifs and characters of *Faust* is stressed repeatedly in literary theory (Hausmanis 1999). Rainis, as one of the most prominent authors of Baltic drama at the turn of the century is closely linked to the cultural experience of Europe and the whole world. Both in poetry and plays, Rainis frequently recreates “old songs” into “new sounds”. The swift changes in aesthetic currents, which are reflected in European literature of the time, gain more visible manifestations in Rainis’ creative work only during World War I, when in a number of his texts a potential similarity can be seen with the expressionist tendencies of art at the time (Kalnačs 2001). In general, in Latvian as well as Estonian and Lithuanian drama, the tradition of classical philosophical tragedy becomes current in the second decade of the century (and often even later). This can be seen in a number of examples, including the work of Vydūnas and Vincas Krėvė.

At the same time, traditional story motifs remain important. At the turn of the century the social contrasts and typically shown individuals in rural settings, which are already apparent in the dramas of Alunāns

and Koidula, are joined by a detailed presentation of personal experiences in the social environment. A typical example in Latvian drama are the plays of Rudolfs Blaumanis, where the starting points can be found in the works of authors from the realism period of German literature — Ludwig Anzengruber and Peter Rosegger. In Estonian literature, Eduard Vilde's dramas are notable, and in Lithuanian writing the work of Antanas Vilkutaitis, especially his best comedy *America in the Bathhouse*. The city also becomes a significant setting in reflecting the trends of German naturalism in the 1890's, and a notable display of current social conflict is Aspazija's drama *Lost Rights*, written by one of most outstanding Latvian romantic female poets.

It is notable that the strong weight of tradition can also be seen in the productions of German theatres functioning in the Baltic area. For example, an analysis by Tiina Aunin shows that the most often performed author at the German theatre in Tallinn was Friedrich Schiller, followed by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and only in the third place in terms of number of productions was Gerhard Hauptmann, the most popular representative of German modernist drama at the turn of the century (Aunin 2002: 382).

On the other hand, at the beginning of the 20th century, the wish to reveal the potential of symbolism in literature can also be seen both in the key texts of writers (the *Dzelme* group in Latvia, New Estonia — *Noor-Eesti*, the Lithuanian writers and theorists Juozapas Albinas Herbačiauskas and Sofija Čiurlionienė–Kymantaitė), in the sources of opinions (a significant role in the emerging symbolic drama is played by the opinions of Friedrich Nietzsche, Henrik Ibsen, Stanisław Przybyszewski), and in literary works. Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš' drama *Tragedy*, which contrasts an artist's ideal existence with his everyday circumstances, is written at the beginning of the century as well as Edvards Vulfs' one-act plays and Čiurlionienė-Kymantaitė's symbolic plays. Oskar Luts' one-act plays, such as *The Spirit of Lake Ūlemiste* and other works are written in the second decade.

The contrast of two trends in the turn of the century European culture was especially escalated by the brand new concept of utilitarianism manifested in the accentuation of the usable value and ease of perception of a work of art. The German critic Julius Meier-Graefe stressed that attempts to subject a work of art to everyday values, in essence, transform its deeper meaning. "In these days, the

pure work of art has been brought into immediate contact with everyday life; an attempt has been made to transform it utterly, to make it the medium of the aesthetic aspirations of the house, whereas this function belongs properly to the house itself and the utilitarian objects in it. We have tried to popularize the highest expression of art, something only significant when applied to the loftiest purposes, something, the enjoyment of which without a certain solemnity is inconceivable, or, at least, only to be attained in moments of peculiar detachment. We have succeeded merely in vulgarizing it." (Meier-Graefe 2000: 530). The processes which Meier-Graefe applies firstly to the visual sculptural arts emerge in the theatre and drama as well as a wish to polish the set constructions of a well-made-play, to improve the technical possibilities of the stage and to use them for commercial purposes, by attracting as broad an audience as possible.

Polarisation in the higher and lower (popular) genres of art is promoted by an individual's contradictory reaction to the urban and industrial environment which becomes the determining factor at the turn of the century. An exhaustive analysis of current processes was provided already at the turn of the century by the German sociologist Georg Simmel, who pointed out that the individual's reaction to the new reality is twofold. On the one hand, the industrial manufacturing rhythm dictated by modern technology downgrades the possibilities of personal expression and renders individuals similar, makes them into machines whose movements are regulated by qualities of the outside world. On the other hand, the potential for independence of action for the individual, which in the welter of the modern city has seemingly lost its individuality, in comparison with the former small local environment has paradoxically become much larger. In a situation where he is not constantly hounded by many curious pairs of eyes, the behaviour and choices of the individual are potentially much more determined by his own will (Simmel 2000). These dilemmas of choice also influence the action models of the individual as a perceiver of art. On the one hand, he becomes a consumer incapable of resisting primitive offers; on the other hand, a deeper perception of art is often a means of filling personal spiritual space. In this sense, art strives to verify its independence and opposes society's tendency to render its usage totalitarian.

The situation in the Baltic area in this sense differs considerably from that in Western Europe. Elsewhere a stable cultural paradigm

exists which in the experience of previous centuries is balanced with the material aspirations of humanity; at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, when under the influence of industrialisation the process of manufacturing material values swiftly accelerates, art strives to occupy an independent, autonomous position, and in the quest for new expression it often turns to primitive, non-industrialised cultures and their experience. In the Baltic area there is no ready, accepted social space and stable structures which art can oppose. In the situation in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania at the turn of the century, art still fulfils the function of creator of society and nation. Baltic art reacts to social events in ways as different as the philosophical drama of Rainis or August Kitzberg's social drama *Caught in the Whirlwind*, which reflects the events of the 1905 uprising. In this context it attracts the greatest attention because the audience does not differentiate whether the essence concerns the transformation of the concept of classical art or a new radical aesthetical quest.

“The recently emancipated Estonian peasants and urban working classes avidly took to the forms of European “high culture” which were being hurriedly introduced by the tiny group of nationally-minded intellectuals” (Rähesoo 2000: 105–106). Although contradictions surface amongst the new intellectuals themselves, and the socially more radical artists are in opposition to the activists of the original period of national awareness creation, their aims are essentially related. The situation changes only partially when the younger generation announces its sovereignty at the beginning of the century. Although on the one hand, as stressed by Jaak Rähesoo, “with the Young Estonia movement and its stress on change on novelty we have a typically Modernist situation where only a small elite is able to keep with the accelerated pace” (Rähesoo 2000: 111), change and development are concepts which the audience have already become accustomed to with the swift influx of classical literature into the Baltic area. Here we can remember the effect of *Faust* translated by Rainis. And like Rainis, the young Estonian and Latvian writers of the next generation in their personal destinies (repressions, fleeing as refugees) still feel a close link to the social processes, and in Lithuanian culture this is further accentuated by the lengthy struggle against a ban on printing.

The specifics of the Baltic area at the turn of the century create a situation where the elsewhere polarised stress upon the useable value

of art and the fight for cultural autonomy, which it is contrasted with, are not radically set apart. An aesthetic compactness emerges that forms a characteristic feature of the whole region. This aspect is especially pointed out in recent research where the genesis of European modernism is looked at in a broader geographical context. On the one hand the fact that cultural globalisation at the beginning of the modernism period significantly expanded the experience of European writing and culture, is stressed (Brettell 1999; Rähesoo 2000:113). On the other hand, the specific characteristics of the formation of new cultures creates preconditions for the manifestation of a much more gradual and more moderate modernism, when very differing influences come together.

One of the essential examples of Baltic drama at the turn of the century from this point of view is the Estonian author August Kitzberg's drama *Werewolf* (1912). In the play where the action takes place in the first half of the 19th century in an Estonian peasant homestead and its surroundings, all four previously mentioned trends of development are apparent. Firstly, it is a sentimental romanticised love story between three people who have grown up in the same family — the Tammar farm owner's son and two foster daughters, one of whom, Mari, is industrious, obedient and virtuous, while the other, Tiina, the daughter of a werewolf sentenced to death, is passionate and unpredictable. As responsibility, to which he is urged by the family, and emotions, which bind the young man to Tiina, collide, a tragic conflict is unavoidable. Secondly, the philosophical aspect of the play is closely linked to its fabric of folkloric ideas, and pagan perception of a human's ability to change into a different being — a werewolf — as a threat to a stable, established order and identity. Thirdly, the social motifs in the play are notable as descriptive of the repressed peasant environment which dominated at the beginning of the 19th century and which indirectly from the author's point of view are contrasted with the still current social and national contradictions of the beginning of the 20th century. And finally, the reproaches directed at Tiina, that just as her mother she is serving the dark forces, are typical of the contrast of standardised thinking and a unique personality which is significant in art at the beginning of the century. In Kitzberg's drama, the sovereignty of a personality is one of the highest values, and at the same time it needs to be viewed within the context of other processes and artistic and social ideas.

Several of Rainis' plays are suitable for a similar analysis on several different levels, especially the drama *Blow, wind!*, also written in 1912.

The Estonian literary expert Epp Annus stresses that the nationally oriented intellectual circles of the 19th century "established the mythical space of a nation, a lost period of perfection in the past" (Annus 2000:117). At the same time one of the cultural dilemmas of Europe at the turn of the century according to Meier-Graefe is the disappearance of the mystical dimension of art, losing its religious roots, which leads to the profanation of art (Meier-Graefe 2000: 54–55).

In the Baltic culture, as several different processes take place almost simultaneously and the conceptions of several generations are fused together, the search for the mystical, irrational layer of revelation takes place simultaneously in the consciousness of the individual and the newly created spiritual space of the nation. This could be one of the most significant starting points in reviewing the specific artistic features of drama in the Baltic area at the turn of the century.

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Rezeption des antiken Mythos im dramatischen Werk von Heiner Müller

ELENA SHEVCHENKO

Heiner Müller (1929–1996) ist einer der bedeutendsten und meistgespielten deutschen Dramatiker des 20. Jahrhunderts, in dessen Werk antike Sujets einen besonderen Platz eingenommen haben.

Müllers literarische Leistungen wurden mit zahlreichen Preisen ausgezeichnet: Heinrich-Mann-Preis (1959); Erich-Weinert-Medaille (1964); BZ-Kritiker-Preis (1970 und 1976); Lessing-Preis (1975); Mühlheimer Dramatikerpreis (1979); Georg-Büchner-Preis (1985); Hörspielpreis der Kriegsblinden (1986); Nationalpreis 1. Klasse der DDR (1986); Kleistpreis (1990); Europäischer Theaterpreis (1991); Theaterpreis der Stiftung Preußische Seehandlung (postum 1996).

Heiner Müller ist einer der wenigen DDR-Autoren, deren Werk die national und ideologisch bedingten Rahmen sprengte und internationalen Ruf erwarb. Er ist auch der einzige ästhetisch innovative Dramatiker, den die DDR hervorbrachte. Die Forscherin seines Schaffens G. Schulz betont:

Die Bedeutung seiner Texte für das Theater und für die ästhetisch-theoretische Diskussion in Ost und West besteht darin, dass er die steril gewordene politische Aufklärungsästhetik mit einer an der literarischen Moderne orientierenden Formensprache konfrontiert. Durch die Verbindung von politischer Reflexion und avantgardistischer Textur stellt sein Werk eine überzeugende Alternative zur Beliebigkeit einer "post-modernen Ästhetik" dar (Metzler 1994: 624–625).

In seinen ersten "Produktionsstücken" befasst sich Müller unter Brechts Einfluss mit den Problemen des sozialistischen Aufbaus in der DDR. Er schreibt die Dramen *Der Lohndrucker* (1956), *Die Korrektur* (1957/58) und *Die Umsiedlerin oder Das Leben auf dem Lande* (1956–61) mit zugespitzter Konfliktkonstellation und verknappter Sprache. Wegen des Aufführungsboykotts vieler Stücke wandte sich Müller jedoch mehr und mehr antiken Vorlagen, und zwar den Dramen von Aischylos und Sophokles zu, die er parabelhaft neu gestaltete. Er greift zur Parabel, wie auch andere DDR-Dramatiker dieser Zeit. Im Gewand antiker Stoffe werden jetzt die Probleme des Sozialismus an der Macht, des Verrats an der Revolution und der Unmöglichkeit des Einzelnen, sich aus der Gewaltgeschichte herauszuhalten, in verallgemeinernden Modellen entworfen. Die Antiken-Bearbeitungen bedeuteten einen gewissen Wendepunkt in Müllers Werk. Thematisch und dramaturgisch war das ein wichtiger Schritt. An die Stelle der direkt-realistischen Darstellungsweisen des DDR-Alltags in den "Produktionsstücken" traten nun Gestaltungen mythischer und geschichtlicher Metaphern. Aus der spezifischen Synthese von Elementen der Gegenwartsstücke und den Dramen historischer Symbolik erwuchs dann der eigentliche Stil der Dramen Müllers, wie er sich später in anderen Stücken niederschlug. Bemerkenswert ist, dass der gegenwärtige und der antike Stoff zwei thematische Linien in Müllers Dramatik darstellen, die sich parallel wie zwei Ströme in einer Bahn entwickeln und füreinander aktivierende Felder bilden.

Zum antiken Stoff wandte sich Müller vor allem in folgenden Dramen: *Philoktet* (1958/1966), *Herakles 5* (1966), *Ödipus Tyrann* (1967), *Prometheus* (1969) und *Der Horatier* (1969).

Philoktet ist die erste von Müllers Antiken-Bearbeitungen, die auf der gleichnamigen Tragödie von Sophokles basiert. Bei Sophokles steht der Widerspruch zwischen dem praktischen Ziel und der moralischen Pflicht im Vordergrund. Der kalte Pragmatismus ist in der Gestalt des Odysseus verkörpert. Ohne Erbarmen verlässt er seinen treuen verwundeten Feldherrn Philoktet auf der wilden Insel Lemnos, weil er ihn im Kampf gegen Troja nicht mehr gebrauchen kann. Wenn sich die politische Situation aber ändert und er wieder Philoktets Hilfe braucht, kommt er auf Lemnos zurück, versucht, mit Lüge und Heuchelei an Philoktets Wunderbogen zu gelangen, um danach sein Opfer zu vernichten. Für seine gemeinen Zwecke benutzt

er den jungen unschuldigen Neoptolemos. Philoktet verkörpert dabei die heroische Unbeugsamkeit, Neoptolemos — Edelmut und Offenherzigkeit.

Wenn der Konflikt bei Sophokles im moralischen Bereich liegt, ist er bei Müller mit der Konzeption der Geschichte verbunden und hat einerseits eine allgemeinphilosophische, andererseits politisch-ideologische Bedeutung. H. Müller versetzt die Akzente, verschärft Situationen und Charaktere, ändert einige Handlungsstränge und das Finale und stellt die Beziehungen von Odysseus, Philoktet und Neoptolemos als ein universelles, überzeitliches Modell dar. “Die Handlung ist Modell, nicht Historie”, schreibt Müller in seinem Essay *Drei Punkte. Zu PHILOKTET* (Müller 1998: 26). Er gibt auch den folgenden Kommentar ab:

...Jeder Vorgang zitiert andere, gleiche, ähnliche Vorgänge in der Geschichte, soweit sie nach dem Philoktet-Modell gemacht wurde und wird. Der Kessel von Stalingrad zitiert Etzels Saal...Die Reflektion der Vorgänge durch Figuren, gedanklich und emotionell, hat ebenfalls Zitatcharakter (ib.)

In Odysseus, Neoptolemos und Philoktet sieht Müller typische Teilnehmer des historischen Prozesses: “einen schlauen Staatsmann”, “einen unschuldigen Mörder” und “ein Opfer” (ib.130). Der Dramatiker spricht davon, dass jeglicher Widerstand der Persönlichkeit im Zweikampf mit der Macht zum Scheitern verurteilt ist, dass menschliche Geschichte in die Geschichte von Manipulationen ausgeartet ist:

Mit ihm (Odysseus — E. S.) geht die Geschichte der Völker in der Politik der Macher auf, verliert das Schicksal sein Gesicht und wird die Maske der Manipulation (ib.).

Sophokles wusste nicht, wie er den Konflikt zwischen der politischen Notwendigkeit (für griechische Truppen hiess es Sieg über Troja) und der Gerechtigkeit lösen kann. So griff er zum verbreiteten dramaturgischen Trick, dem *deus ex machina*. Diese Rolle spielt im Stück der vergötterte Herakles, der seinem alten Freund Philoktet verschreibt, nach Troja zu gehen und mit seinem Wunderbogen zum Sieg der Griechen beizutragen. So gelingt es dem Herakles, Philoktets Widerstand zu brechen, ohne Neoptolemos Hände mit dem Blut beflecken zu lassen. Das Schiff mit Odysseus, Neoptolemos und

Philoktet hält den Kurs auf Troja. Damit endet das Drama von Sophokles. Müller ändert das Finale. Dem Odysseus gelingt es, Neoptolemos zum Mord zu verführen, und Philoktet stirbt an seiner Hand. So wird Neoptolemos zu einem "unschuldigen Mörder", zum Instrument der Macht. Müller zeigt damit, dass ein optimistischer Ausgang unmöglich ist. Die Macht hat immer das letzte Wort. Dabei demonstriert der Autor den sogenannten "historischen Pessimismus", der ihm öfters vorgeworfen wurde. Er verstand es, "ohne Hoffnung" auszukommen und, so Schulz, "anstelle hochfliegender Entwürfe eine bis zum Zynismus illusionslose Erkundung der Wirklichkeit zu formulieren" (Metzler 1994: 624). Anhand des antiken Mythos zeigt Müller, wie die Machtmechanismen in allen Zeiten funktionieren und welches Schicksal die Persönlichkeit unter den Bedingungen einer Diktatur trifft.

In der Aktualisierung antiker Mythen, der Aufdeckung von wiederkehrenden Elementen und der Herstellung von zahlreichen Parallelen besteht die Besonderheit von Müllers Arbeit mit antiken Stoffen. Nicht zufällig beginnt *Philoktet* mit dem folgenden Prolog:

Darsteller des Philoktet, in Clownmaske
 Damen und Herren, aus der heutigen Zeit
 Führt unser Spiel in die Vergangenheit
 Als noch der Mensch des Menschen Todfeind war
 Das Schlachten gewöhnlich, das Leben eine Gefahr.
 Und dass wirs gleich gestehn: es ist fatal
 Was wir hier zeigen, hat keine Moral
 Fürs Leben können Sie bei uns nichts lernen.
 Wer passen will, der kann sich jetzt entfernen...
 (Müller 1983, 119)

Der Darsteller von Philoktet trägt eine Clownmaske und kann sich mit Recht über das Geschehen und die Zuschauer amüsieren. So klingt in der folgenden Passage eine unverhohlene Ironie:

Damen und Herren, aus der heutigen Zeit
 Führt unser Spiel in die Vergangenheit
 Als noch der Mensch des Menschen Todfeind war
 Das Schlachten gewöhnlich, das Leben eine Gefahr (ib.)

Es ist klar, dass die Gefahren, denen der Mensch ausgesetzt wird, sowie die Schlachten und der Kampf um die Macht nicht zur Vergangenheit gehören, sondern in unserer Zeit ein noch größeres und fataleres Ausmass gewonnen haben. Der Autor braucht die Vergangenheit vor allem, um die Gegenwart zu verstehen. Der "historische Pessimismus" und Fatalismus sind dabei gleich am Anfang angegeben: "Und dass wirs gleich gestehn: es ist fatal... (ib.)."

Ausserdem verrät der Prolog Müllers Enttäuschung von der Tradition der Aufklärung:

Was wir hier zeigen, hat keine Moral
Fürs Leben können Sie bei uns nichts lernen.
Wer passen will, der kann sich jetzt entfernen... (ib.)

Somit gewinnt der Prolog eine Schlüsselbedeutung. Selbst die Tatsache, dass der Dramatiker den Darsteller von Philoktet mit der Clownmaske versorgt, hilft Philoktets Rolle zu verstehen. Auf der historischen Schaubühne ist Philoktet ein Hofnarr, der die Wahrheit schreit, aber weder sein eigenes Schicksal noch die grausame und ungerechte Weltordnung ändern kann. Müller setzt den erhobenen tragischen Charakter des Helden von Sophokles herab und macht seinen Philoktet zu einem erbosten, verdächtigen, gehetzten Opfer. Dieses "Opfermodell" trägt einen universelleren Charakter, ist leicht zu erkennen und ruft eine Menge Assoziationen und historische Parallelen hervor. Auch Odysseus, der bei Müller noch zynischer und gewissenloser als der von Sophokles ist, wird vom Autor als Modellfall betrachtet.

So zeigt die Kollision von *Philoktet* vor allem das aus Müllers Sicht klassische Verhältnis der historischen Kräfte auf der Welt-schaubühne, und die Skepsis des Autors in Bezug auf den historischen Fortschritt kommt in diesem Drama besonders stark zum Ausdruck.

Neben dem weltanschaulichen enthält *Philoktet* aber auch einen konkret-historischen Aspekt. In Gestalt des amoralischen, pragmatischen, brutalen Odysseus, der seine ehemaligen Kampfgefährten zynisch loswird, treten ganz deutlich Stalins Züge hervor. Für die Möglichkeit einer solchen Interpretation spricht Müllers Drama "Germania 3", das 1996 im wiedervereinigten Deutschland geschrieben wurde, wo der Autor auf die allegorische Sprache verzichtet und die Sachen bei ihren Namen nennt. Der ungeheuerlich zynische

Monolog von Stalin, wo er Hitler als Trumpf im Kampf gegen eigenes Volk bezeichnet, könnte auch von einem Odysseus stammen:

Hitler, mein Freund von gestern. Bruder Hitler.
Verbrennst du meine Dörfer. Das ist gut.
Weil sie dich hassen, werden sie mich lieben.
Deine Blutspur wäscht meinen Namen weiss.
(Müller 1996: 13)

Die Erwähnung der Leichen, die “den Weg in die lichte Zukunft” bedecken, klingt auf der einen Seite als Zitat aus *Philoktet*, auf der anderen legt sie die blutige Wahrheit der Geschichte des Sozialismus dar:

Weil sie der Boden sind, den wir begehnen
Auf unserm Weg in deine lichte Zukunft. (Ib. 10)

Hinter der Figur Philoktets stehen in diesem Kontext sowohl Stalins Kameraden, die von ihm Repressalien ausgesetzt wurden, als auch andere zahlreiche Opfer. In *Germania 3* kommt Müller auch auf das Motiv des “unschuldigen Mörders” zurück. So betrachten hier zwei russische Soldaten die Sachen eines toten Deutschen, fast eines Kindes. In seinem Stiefel finden sie ein Gedichtbuch von Friedrich Hölderlin, in seiner Tasche — ein Foto, wo er lachend vor den sieben Partisanen am Galgen steht. “Vielleicht hat er geglaubt an ihre Lügen”, — meint dazu Empedokles, den Müller ebenfalls in sein Drama einführt (ib.17).

Der Kampf um Troja ist seinerseits eine politische Allegorie des Kampfes für den Aufbau des Kommunismus, wobei dem grossen Ziel zuliebe zahllose Opfer gebracht und die Gesetze der Menschlichkeit und Moral verletzt wurden. Dieser Aspekt des Dramas ist mit der Wirklichkeit der UdSSR und auch der DDR verbunden, das heisst mit dem Problem des Verrats an der Sache der Revolution, der Kluft zwischen Theorie und Praxis des kommunistischen Aufbaus und allgemein mit dem Problem der Macht bei einem totalitären Regime.

Herakles 5, ein kurzes Satyrspiel zu *Philoktet*, behandelt die fünfte Arbeit des Herakles — die Ausmistung des Augiasstalls. Philosophisch gesehen, ist das ein Stück über die Entwicklung der Zivilisation, die unvermeidlich mit der Produktion von Mist begleitet wird; über die Emanzipation des Menschen beim Arbeitsprozess und

nicht zuletzt ist es ein satirisches Stück über die "Arbeits — und Zivilisationshelden". Auf der zeitaktuellen Ebene geht es hier um die Umweltverschmutzung. Diesem Problem ist nur Herakles gewachsen, der im Stück als Symbol des werktätigen Volkes und gesunder Gesellschaftskräfte auftritt. Die Natur zu beherrschen bedeutet, laut Müller, sie zu erkennen und ihre Gesetze nicht durch Gewalt, sondern durch Weisheit für sich arbeiten zu lassen.

Mit der Bearbeitung des *Ödypus Tyrann* von Sophokles in der Übersetzung Friedrich Hölderlins (1967) findet Müller wieder große offizielle Anerkennung. Ein Jahr später erwacht auch im Westen (durch die Aufführung des *Philoktet* in München) das Interesse an ihm, vorerst als dem sprachgewaltigen Bearbeiter antiker Stoffe. Müllers *Ödypus Tyrann* ist mit den Antikenbearbeitungen *Philoktet* und *Horatier* durch den Ödipus-Kommentar verbunden, in dem Müller seine Deutung des Ödipus-Stoffes formuliert. In *Philoktet*, *Horatier* und *Ödipus* steht der Umgang mit der Wahrheit zur Debatte: in *Philoktet* — das Problem der taktischen Lüge; in *Horatier* und *Ödipus* — die historische Wahrheit angesichts der Verstrickung des Handelnden in seine grausame Vorgeschichte. Müller folgt ziemlich genau Hölderlins Übertragung, erlaubt sich aber einige geringfügige Änderungen, wodurch er die Fabel von der Weisheitssuche und Bewältigung der Vorgeschichte in einen politischen Kontext bringt. *Ödipus Tyrann* enthält auf der einen Seite eine philosophische Allegorie der Selbsterkenntnis. Auf der anderen Seite befasst sich das Drama in parabelhafter Form mit solchen konkreten Fragen wie dem Auseinanderbrechen von Theorie und Praxis des Kommunismus, dem Widerspruch zwischen Wissen und Wirklichkeit, dem Umgang mit der Wahrheit, der Erkenntnis und "Überwindung" der eigenen blutigen Geschichte von Kommunisten sowie mit dem Problem der Verantwortung. In Müllers Interpretation wird Zar Ödipus zum Symbol des Kommunismus, der die Augen gegenüber der eigenen tragischen Geschichte öffnet und seine Schuld an den begangenen Verbrechen gesteht. Dabei gibt der Autor keine eindeutigen Antworten, sondern bietet verschiedene Varianten der Auffassung an. So ist die Selbstblendung des Ödipus, laut Müller, einerseits als Kleinmut und Flucht vor der Wahrheit, als Niederlage des Wissens zu verstehen. Andererseits aber ist die Selbstblendung für den Dramatiker eine offene Perspektive, eine neue Seite der erkannten Geschichte der kommunistischen Bewegung. In der Gestalt des

Ödipus, die zum Symbol der Selbsterkenntnis des Menschen in der Antike geworden ist, sieht Müller ein ähnliches Beispiel. Genauso wie Ödipus muss der Kommunismus die Geschichte der eigenen Gewalt erkennen, um daraus die Kraft für die Selbstkritik zu schöpfen und also das alte Sehen zu zerstören.

Der Horatier wurde im Herbst 1968, nach dem Prager Frühling und seiner Niederschlagung geschrieben. Im Drama *Der Horatier* spricht Müller über überzeitliche Kategorien: Unmöglichkeit, das Vollbrachte wiedergutzumachen; Verantwortung und Strafe. Der konkret-politische Aspekt beinhaltet aber auch die Fragen nach den unnötigen Opfern im Laufe des Klassenkampfes, nach der Verantwortung für die genommenen Leben. Diese Fragen werden im Zusammenhang mit der Hauptfigur des Horatiers gestellt, (dessen Prototyp auch hier Stalin ist), der ohne Notwendigkeit den schon besiegteten Gegner und die eigene Schwester getötet hat, die ihm die Schuld an dem grausamen, sinnlosen Mord gab. Das Volk ehrt ihn als Sieger und richtet ihn als Mörder. So verleiht Müller dem Volk die Fähigkeit, mit der Erkenntnis der widersprüchlichen Wahrheit zu leben. Die Stimme des Volkes ist die Stimme des Autors, die Stimme der marxistischen Kunst, vor der eine fast irrealer Aufgabe steht: sich mit dem Triumph des Siegers und Mörders Horatier/Stalin abzufinden. Stalin hat Hitler besiegt, den sozialistischen Staat verteidigt, war aber dabei ein Massenmörder, der einen unnötigen Terror entfesselt und auf solche Weise das Gesicht des realen Sozialismus grundlegend geändert hat. Indem Müller von der demokratischen Besprechung der Tat des Horatiers spricht, kritisiert er deutlich die Unmöglichkeit einer offenen Diskussion im sozialistischen Staat, wo die leitende Partei willkürlich ihre Fehler und ihren Missbrauch im Laufe des kommunistischen Aufbaus entweder in die Öffentlichkeit bringt oder verschweigt und verleugnet. So behandelt Müller das Problem des Guten und des Bösen, das die Revolution mitbringt, das Problem der unvermeidlichen Grausamkeit im Laufe des Kampfes, der Gewalt und des Verhältnisses zur Gewalt seitens des Volkes und der Intellektuellen sowie das Problem der marxistischen Kritik.

In der Arbeit des Dramatikers an dem antiken Mythos fallen also zwei Linien auf: konkret-historische und philosophische. Indem Müller die Handlung seiner Dramen in die Antike verlagert, betrachtet er auf der einen Seite die ihn interessierenden gegenwärtigen Probleme (Leben unter der Herrschaft des Sozialismus und jeglicher

Diktatur als solcher, totalitäre Macht und totalitäres Denken, Natur des Nazionalsozialismus und Stalinismus, Verhältnis des Individuums zur Notwendigkeit, Verhältnis von Intellektuellen und Macht u.a.) Auf der anderen Seite versucht er, den archetypischen Charakter antiker Sujets und Figuren aufzudecken und somit gewisse universelle Verhaltensmuster unter den Bedingungen der Unfreiheit und Gewalt zu zeigen. Deswegen setzt er antike Mythen, die in den Dramen von Aischylos und Sophokles dargelegt wurden, gewissen Transformationen aus. Infolgedessen gewinnen Müllers Stücke einen tiefen philosophischen Sinn; hinter konkreten Konflikten treten tragische Kollisionen, globale Probleme der menschlichen Geschichte, vor allem der Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts hervor.

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Cultural Universals or Transmission? European Inter-Ethnic Reception of Folk Literature¹

ANNA BRZOZOWSKA-KRAJKA

World-wide folkloristic and ethnological research points to existence of universal folk ideas which, in spite of their undergoing manifold modifications in concrete milieux and regional cultures, remain significant elements of European community, stable parametres of European mentality, different from Arabic, African, or Asian. Cultural differentiation of European sub-regions was caused mainly by various specific ways of structuring these ideas within a culture.

Although cultural phenomena develop according to their environments, affinities between those coming from different geographical regions may prove to be historically connected. This relationship was noticed as early as the 19th century by the German and Austrian proponents of the theory of "Kulturkreislehre" (F. Graebner, W. Schmidt, W. Koppers), as well as by diffusionists who aimed at reconstructing movements of culture through the investigation of culture clusters ("Kulturkreise") which spread from one common centre. The nineteenth-century linguistics validated the theory about the common, pre-Indoeuropean origin of almost all European languages, in agreement with the findings of the famous American anthropologist of German origin, F. Boas. On the basis of his field research into the dissemination of folktales, he asserted that the appearance in two regions of a certain tale consisting of the same combination of motifs (elements) is always a result of diffusion, dissemination from one centre (Bronner 1986: 65–66).

¹ This text is based on Brzozowska-Krajka 1999.

Research into the geographical expansion of folk motifs and tales — tracing proto-forms and archetypes of investigated texts through paths of their distribution, filiation, and migration on a European and world scale — was also conducted by the Finnish School. The comparative historical-geographical method, as represented by its exponents, proved to be very fruitful and inspiring, although it was also strongly attacked (like the diffusionist theory was criticized by functionalists). The pioneering systematization of folk prose by A. Aarne (on Finnish material and collections of German folktales by the brothers Grimm and Danish folktales by S. Grundtvig), combined with the later contribution by S. Thompson, created a representative world-wide index comprising motifs of folk literature (Thompson 1932–1935). Based on the system worked out by Aarne-Thompson, analogous national catalogues followed, articulating the textual continuity of European and non-European supra-ethnic and supra-national phenomena. At least a few of such classifications can be mentioned, the widely-scattered motifs of which confirm validity of the diffusionist theory of European folklore: for example the studies based on the folklore of Latvia (Šmits 1925–1931), Russia (Andrejew 1929), Bohemia (Tille 1929–1937), Germany (Bolte, Polivka 1913–1932), Norway (Christiansen 1958), Ireland (Cross 1952), Turkey (Eberhard, Boratov 1953), France (Huet 1923; Sébillot 1904–1907), Sweden (Utley 1960) and Poland (Krzyżanowski 1962/63).

Structuralist investigations of culture initiated by the Russian formalist Propp (1928), contributed to a search for the strata on which the European cultural community exists. He introduced a fundamental distinction between the fixed model (comprising stable types of events and characters) and its changing and multifarious realizations. He applied this distinction in his world-famous publication on Russian fairy-tales: he structuralized their immense treasury into a pattern of 31 constant types of events which appeared in a fixed order and which were enacted by a set of fixed characters. Propp's method led to perceiving texts of culture in a double perspective: as comprising certain constant modelling features (manifestations of a community, of universal and irrational primitive logic), and manifold realizations and attributes, the shapes given to these patterns by local cultures through individual and collective worlds of imagination. This type of research by Propp and his followers made it possible to discern what is common behind the façade of what is colourful, local and varied.

Thus, a substantial change of direction in research into folklore and culture consisted in the shift from content-based typologies (the taxonomy of the Finnish School) to structural typologies. Semioticians, theoreticians of literature and folklore who developed Propp's approach, created generative grammars of texts (C. Lévi-Strauss, R. Barthes, A. Greimas, T. Todorov, C. Bremond), each of which held a certain set of norms and conventions common to a class of works ("genotyp"), irrespective of their differentiation through individual, unique features ("fenotyp"). The development of structuralism in the direction of generativism made it expand beyond the boundaries of folkloristics and turned it into an interdisciplinary theory, functioning in many branches of the humanities.

A comparative study of themes and motifs in European folk literatures reveals strong and plentiful affinities, forming culture clusters which either develop independently in different milieux or spread from one common centre. The wandering status of folk ideas on the European territory is also very clearly manifest in many genres of folklore: in tales recording folk beliefs, in songs, riddles, proverbs, and especially magic fairy-tales. In particular, the ontology of magic fairy-tales is based upon some fundamental paradoxes: as expressions of folk fantasy they may be created *ad infinitum*, although the number of their motifs is limited; most of them are world-wide, and at the same time express intense peculiarities of the given ethnos (the brothers Grimm/Bolte-Polivka paradox) (Czistow 1990: 86). European fairy-tales form a distinct type, differentiated within the particular regions and natural traditions of the continent.

Comic tales belong to genres most adaptable to the new ethnic milieux. Hence, texts of this genre from traditional and contemporary Polish folklore were chosen for a comparative analysis of wandering motifs. Analytical samples were taken from comic tales produced by one of the most conservative Polish ethnographic groups — the Tatra highlanders. They inhabit the region near the southern border of Poland, 100 kilometers south of Cracow, which was a geographical and cultural enclave, almost completely isolated until the beginning of the 20th century. The traditional, centuries-long isolation of this area caused those embodying its ethnic culture to view everything from their perspective, cherishing a strong conviction about the originality of this ethnic culture and literature. The theory of wandering folk ideas poses numerous questions, including those concerning the nature

of origin and mechanisms of cultural regularity in cultural analogies, which seem to be genetically independent.

Even a cursory glance at comic texts from the traditional Polish folklore discloses their regional uniqueness (for example of their Silesian variation, as revealed by Simonides [1984: 27–66]) as well as those features they share with texts produced by other European and non-European national communities: ideas and schemes woven round migrating motifs and plots, adapted to local conditions. Most of the comic tales considered here are either attributed to Sabała (the famous Tatra highlander teller of yarns from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century) or are anonymous texts put down at the time by collectors of folklore. Ideas presented in them are not new, yet their local originality cannot be denied. For a long time editors of folk material from this region have been stressing this complete local originality as manifesting a tendency to mythologize this realm of culture, regarded as a relic of the Old Polish culture.

Exemplification is furnished by Sabała's famous tale "On devil" ("O diable") — in two variants put down by B. Dembowski (*Wista* 1892: 144–145) and Stopka (1897: 80–82). In this tale, a man cursed his field (which had poor yield) and ordered it "to go to the devil." After that, the field gave amazingly good yield. When the man wanted to reap it, the devil turned up and claimed the field and the crop as his. When the farmer protested, they decided to settle the conflict by means of a bet: the field and the crop would go to the one who rode to the field on a stranger creature. The devil rode a horse with flowers painted on its skin, whereas the man rode his naked wife — and won the bet. She looked extremely strange to the devil who viewed her as having her tail in the front part of her body and her hair in its rear. "On devil" is based on a pattern very popular in the folklore of all Europe, recorded both in Aarne-Thompson's motif-index of folk tales (AT 1091) (Aarne, Thompson 1961) and in the collection of Bolte and Polivka (vol. 3, p. 355–63). T. Brzozowska's extensive commentary (Brzozowska 1969: 130–131) also includes it in a large group of comic tales about a man's bet with a devil ending in the devil's defeat by the smart man. One can presume this kind of tale arose from the reaction to numerous stories about the biblical Satan-tempter against whom only prayer could succeed. In its later developments this kind of tale came to stress more the ingenuity of the human partner in this contest: his bright ideas of worsting the demon (Simonides 1981: 10).

Man's powerful, though stupid adversary, often defeated, assumes in comic tales various shapes according to different cultures: he is a devil in Poland, an evil wizard in Russia, Merkury among Western Slavs, and a giant or ogre in Celtic culture.

Comic tales of this kind are believed to originate almost exclusively in the Middle Ages, their earliest versions date from the 13th century. They were created mostly on the territory of Europe, and only occasionally they were derived from oriental or ancient folklore. The comedy "Mięsopest," from 1622, is the oldest Polish text making use of this motif. In his motif-index of Polish folk-tales, J. Krzyżanowski lists 28 variants of this tale (type 1030: A devil cheated during a division of crops) from all over Poland. Its many variants were also recorded in Belarus (in the systematization compiled by L. Baraga it appears as the sub-category T 1920 H) (Baraga 1978: 238). The particular versions of this tale manifest varying degrees of decency, depending on whether they were told to men only or to both men and women. Typically, this comic tale was told among men — hence it contained vulgar expressions and had strong, "masculine" humour.

Another tale, about "a man who 'danced out' death," is about one who, by means of dancing, cheats Death out of taking his life. Thus, it is not a "dance macabre"² but a "dance of life": proving victory of a clever man over Death and her superhuman forces, preventing her from fulfilling her duty. This text constitutes another specimen of migrating motifs as it contains a section about death as a chum from a complex folk-tale popular all over Europe. Its first recorded version comes from Iceland, from before 1339. The subsequent years brought its short story variants in Italy and comic-dramatic ones in Germany (Bolte, Polivka 1913–1932: vol 1, 377). Its most numerous folk records come from Scandinavia and Germany. This tale was also popular among Slavs (Krzyżanowski lists its 25 variants).

Similar connections with European folk texts are discernible in the tale about "the sleeping army," known not only among Tatra highlanders but also all over Poland (it has over 50 Polish variants). It is based on a belief in the existence of fully armed, sleeping knights in

² The iconographic source of this symbolic construction, widespread in the Medieval Europe, is the "Dance Macabre" painted by Bernt Notke in 1430/1440–1509, located in the St. Anthony's Chapel of the St. Nicholas (Niguliste) Church in Tallinn, Estonia.

the Tatra mountains. The belief is that they will arise when the proper time comes, to fight and win independence for the Tatra region and Poland. Occasionally, one of the knights visits a village blacksmith in order to get the knights' horses shoed. For this service the blacksmith is allowed to take particles of metal which, under certain conditions, change into gold in the real world. It is an international folk-tale (legend), connected mostly with caves and personalities of grand kings and commanders. It was especially popular among Celtic and Romance peoples in the cycle of tales about king Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, as well as the legends about Charlemagne or the Song of Roland; in Germanic literature it was connected with Emperor P. Rotbart. After the Middle Ages this legend became widespread all over Europe.

The tale about a golden duck, swimming in a secluded cave, which laid a golden egg once a year (in order to get it one had to overcome extreme difficulties) appeared in the folklore of western and southern Poland and was sometimes merged with this legend. It is known in German folklore, from where it was probably transferred to Poland. Great popularity of this motif in Polish folk tradition resulted from its permanent topicality when Polish national identity was politically endangered: according to a Polish legend, the sleeping army will rise when the appropriate time for their supernatural intervention comes.

The idea of creation of a woman from a dog's tail, originating in the rabbinical tradition and used in the 14th century by H. Sachs (*Der Hundsschwanz*, 1557), is quite popular in the folklore of northern Europe and South Slavic nations. The Tatra highlanders' version of this motif took the form of a comic tale "How Jesus created woman," which belonged to the group of aetiological tales (referring to folk anthropogenesis).

A Polish scholar Klinger (1921) pointed to existence of migrating motifs of classical origin: he noticed a group of tales related to the afore-mentioned aetiological ones which, too, presented a folk vision of man: for example the tale "How Jesus created man." The story about animal characteristics in man, in various periods of his life, belonged to those very well-known in Europe, originating in Aesop's fables. Its Latin version was recorded in the 16th century, in the 17th and 18th centuries it took the form of literary fables. As evidenced by J. Bolte, J. Polivka (vol. 3, p. 290), it exists in the folklore of south European nations: Italy, the former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Bohemia,

and in Lithuania. In the folklore of Polish Tatra highlanders this fable took the genre shape of a comic tale. This was connected with the inferior role of woman in this community, despite the cult of the Virgin Mary, so crucial to Polish Catholicism.

Many similar examples might be offered — all of them testifying to existence of a Pan-European community of folktale motifs. Some of them were based on beliefs widespread in European culture, for example those concerning nymphs — half-demonic creatures, living above waters or in forests, hideous, noisy at night, vengeful, assailing girls and women, especially those fresh from giving birth, exchanging their children for changelings. Analogous features were believed to be displayed by forest, water, and mountain demons, as indicated by Thompson (in his classifications: F 232.2; F 460.1,2; G 123) — mostly on the basis of Germanic, Scandinavian and Finno-Ugric material. The earliest European mention of demons with long breasts appears, according to Krzyżanowski (1962/63: vol. 1, 12), in G. Basile's *Il Pentamerone* (1634–1636), one of the fundamental collections of European fables.

The foregoing argument is meant to reveal one of the basic methodological principles of the research presented here: the opposition of the domestic, the original, the unique v. the repeated or archetypal. It is obvious that the Polish highlanders' comic tale is a specific variation of this type of tale, as is the Silesian comic tale (Simonides 1984: 27 and others). The features determining the uniqueness of the Polish highlanders' comic tale include primarily: social-historical determinants (allusions to the regional history and legends), the characters' milieu, location of places of action, and dialect as the basic language system and a part of the local cultural heritage. These attributes contribute to depiction of local color and give domestic character to all plot patterns.

Methodology of interpretation of intercultural points of resemblance begs consideration of the Galton problem (Naroll 1973): to what extent cultural affinities are brought about by diffusion taking place under circumstances of cultural contact and inter-cultural communication,³ and to what extent they result from cultural parallelism, independent development of cultures. Oral comic tales are highly

³ Andrejew 1927: 296. As claimed by Andrejew, the same kinds of sources make possible independent creation of very similar tales in different places.

diffuse. They are not under any taboo, they censure departures from the natural order. Their schemes of plot, imagery and ideas are highly adaptable to another system of culture, even an extremely closed one. However, a further question arises as to whether these fixed formulae (matrices of folk imagination) create universal models of the human mind, albeit within a concrete cultural community, representing a definite system of norms and values and stable patterns of thought (cf. for example W. Wundt's investigations and search for the proto-fairy-tale).⁴ This question is asked primarily by ethno-psychologists and those conducting comparative investigations of ethnic consciousness, images and stereotypes. How should the Galton problem be solved? What direction should its further explorations take?

The ideas presented here merely sketch out one essential perspective: that of the tradition of folklore. When viewed from the contemporary Polish point of view the phenomena discussed here become more complex, presenting new research problems — especially those of the relationship of repeated and unique features under the pressure of mass culture, the growth of education, cultural unification, the opening of enclaves, the development of new social classes, and other transformations within the traditional social make-up. These new research problems also comprise the relation of folklore to fakelore (folklorismus) and tourism, folk kitsch, the circulation of texts of this kind, and the relationship of this transformed circulation to the relationship between typical and individual characteristics. Questions and problems like these might be multiplied. They also appear within the framework of new Europe. Integration of comparative research opens broad perspectives for interpretation and integration of the European commonwealth, perceived in the manifold genres of folklore which communicate common ideas, fusing seemingly much different European communities.

I hope my argument has confirmed the existence of a Pan-European stock of folk motifs, universal folk ideas, stable parametres of the European mentality (assuming various shapes, attributes in various local cultures). These motifs, ideas, have proliferated for centuries, have wandered all over the continent, cementing its diverse nations and communities. These processes resulted in creation of a treasury of

⁴ According to Wundt, the same psychological foundations made similar mythical fairy-tales created by various nations. See Wundt 1912: 267 — quoted after Honti 1931: 16–18.

values, a Pan-European cultural heritage, common cultural roots. At present they constitute a strong and well-grounded force of European integration and amalgamation — powerful enough to counterbalance forces of disintegration and fragmentation.

I hope my presentation reveals that reception of folklore is different from the reception of literature in a number of ways. In folklore, the reception of a skeletal plot or tale often leads to its creative reproduction by a talented bard or teller for his/her audience (see the mechanism of creation/reception of folklore as defined by A. Lord, M. Parry, V. Propp, and others). Folk motifs and ideas wandering Europe-wide have been crossing all political/national/ethnic borders. In particular, a division into West European folklore and East European folklore has never existed: this political division was introduced only a few decades ago, whereas the Pan-European community of folk motifs and ideas has had a centuries-long existence. And, what is more important, this community has eliminated the division between “we” and “the other”/“the foreign.” In the process of Pan-European proliferation of folklore discussed here the essence of “we” and “the other” is indeed the same: its individual manifestations constitute different concrete, detailed performances of essentially the same skeletal plot or tale. In the course of this proliferation, foreign folk motifs and ideas have been turned into familiar ones, they have become domesticated in familiar ethnic-cultural spaces.

(Translated by Wiesław Krajka)

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La recepción del *Quijote* en otros novelistas: algunas calas de poética diacrónica

ÁNGEL GARCÍA GALIANO

Propongo hacer una pequeña reflexión sobre Poética diacrónica de la ficción narrativa atendiendo a la recepción del *Quijote*, es decir, de cómo fue leído (interpretado) en distintas épocas y paradigmas. Partiendo de su particular intuición, es decir, de cómo relee Cervantes la propia tradición (Apuleyo, Boccaccio, Ariosto, el *Lazarillo*, el *Guzmán de Alfarache*, etc.) y continuando con el caso ejemplar de Avellaneda, cuya interpretación del texto cervantino es estrictamente contemporánea, prescriptivamente aristotélica: lo lee como una parodia, y como tal lo imita, sin ver en ningún momento el final de un paradigma (el de la aventura) y el inicio de otro (el de la subjetividad), pasando por el caso francés del *fou* y del *Quichote matamore*, en que nuestro hidalgo es usado como icono de la España hegemónica y tridentina, o la explicitud cómplice de Fielding en su prólogo al *Joseph Andrews*, que funda la lectura realista del texto cervantino y que abre las puertas de la novela moderna.

Por último, atenderé brevemente la irrupción de la intuición voluntarista de Schopenhauer, su tesis del mundo como voluntad y representación, que origina sin duda un nuevo horizonte de interpretaciones en el “yo sé quién soy y sé que puedo ser” cervantino, que tanto resuena en Unamuno.

Porque, en efecto, si hoy ya nadie se escandaliza de la *boutade* crítica que afirma la influencia de Borges en la *Comedia* de Dante, esto es, en la lectura que hacemos de Dante a través de los comentarios e iluminaciones del escritor argentino, del mismo modo se acerca a la obviedad decir que hay tantos *Quijotes* como receptores *influyentes* del mismo han existido. Llamo a tales, arrojando su sentido al de H. Bloom (*La angustia de las influencias*), a los que han

favorecido una lectura significativa del texto, para lo cual se exige siempre (según la conocida tesis de Tomachewsky sobre el origen de los géneros literarios), de una cierta continuación paradigmática, esto es, aquellas lecturas del texto que han generado una disposición, una manera de ver el libro, que se puede verificar, por ejemplo, en otras novelas, obras de teatro, ensayos, ilustraciones, cuadros, películas, etc.

Ya no hay duda de que el origen de la genial intuición cervantina descansa en la *Poética* de Aristóteles, cuyos comentaristas italianos y españoles, Minturno y Pinciano, por citar los dos mayores, eran de lectura obligada para alguien tan apasionado por la poética de la ficción como Cervantes, algo que bien demuestra en sus prólogos o en capítulos canónicos, como el del donoso escrutinio o el de las conversaciones con el canónigo, al final de la primera parte (capítulos 47 y 48).

En efecto, en su *Poética*, el estagirita afirma que la imitación de la realidad se puede efectuar de manera dramática o narrativa, y que los objetos de esta mimesis, altos o bajos, originan, respectivamente, la tragedia y la epopeya, por un lado y, por otro, la comedia y... la parodia, género del que no da más señales y que queda a modo de casilla vacía del sistema, presto a ser rellenado por alguien capaz de imitar narrativamente las hazañas del héroe común, definición, si reparan, bien cercana de la que ofrece Sartre para vestir ese género proteico y difuso que aún hoy denominamos novela y al que otorgamos como fecha de nacimiento el día en que la imprenta de Juan de la Cuesta estampó los primeros ejemplares del *Ingenioso hidalgo*, a principios de 1605.

Que se tardara dieciocho siglos en dar con la fórmula de aquello con lo que se topó Cervantes al releer toda la tradición a sus espaldas es sintomático del proceso de *configuración* (Mimesis II según el diagnóstico de Paul Ricoeur) que conlleva una hazaña tamaña, la cual pasa, entre otras cosas, por fundir dos tradiciones narrativas incompatibles entre sí, la griega y la cristiana, pues que difieren tanto en la concepción del tiempo, como en la disposición de la trama o la invención y desarrollo de los caracteres. Cuando algún crítico habla de que el *Quijote* es la primera novela cristiana, creo que apunta a esto que aquí expongo, es decir, no tanto a la ideología de la novela, como a la cosmovisión y estructura formal de la misma, pues funde en un solo marco dos actitudes narrativas tan diferentes como la que nace de la *Odisea* y deriva hacia la novela griega, *El asno de oro*, o, en la

Edad media, los libros de caballerías (género cuya evolución culmina en el *Orlando furioso*, de Ariosto), y la que remite sus orígenes a los libros épicos de la *Biblia* hebrea (que exigen una interpretación lineal y causativa de los hechos), y se consolida como género confesional y de la subjetividad en las confesiones de *Agustín* de Hipona, tal y como supo leerlo Petrarca en su fundamental *Secretum*.

Y es que lo que hoy denominamos novela moderna implicaba graves y no siempre fáciles ajustes en la cosmovisión del hombre occidental, tal y como tienen escrito y analizado magistralmente el ya citado Ricoeur, o también Bajtin y Auerbach. Para empezar, como digo, se habían de fundir los dos ciclos narrativos tradicionales, el judeocriostiano y el grecorromano, con su diferente organización estructural, dispositiva, temporal y estilística, fruto de una encontrada y casi incohonestable concepción del universo, del dios, del tiempo y del hombre, por tanto. En segundo lugar, la canónica *Rota Virgilioi*, con su exaltada y férrea diferenciación de estilos, que no deja de ser sino una glosa romano medieval de la configuración dual aristotélica, a la que se añade ese estilo medio, a mitad de camino entre el sublime y el vulgar, debe agrietar sus cuadernas al asumir la Literatura de Occidente que un personaje *vulgar* pueda protagonizar narrativamente una situación trágica, o que, en una misma obra, se cumpla el imposible retórico de que señores y criados (por decir) se imbriquen en una sola trama que, a todas luces, necesariamente, habrá de ser tragi-cómica: tal el caso, genial y explícito, de la así llamada *Tragico-media de Calixto y Melibea*, desde cuyo título orgulloso enuncia tácitamente su autor, Fernando de Rojas, la convicción de que no se puede ser un gran escritor sin una coherente y explícita poética de la ficción¹.

Cervantes advierte todo este *movimiento* genotextual, repara en la destrucción de la teoría de los estilos que propicia la *Celestina*, y advierte, sobre todo, la quiebra en el sistema diegético occidental que propicia un narrador como Lázaro de Tormes, que osa relatar su propia historia de paria, de mendigo, fundiendo, no ya dos estilos contrapuestos e impermeables, como hizo Rojas, sino dos maneras canónicas de narrar, a saber:

¹ Orgullo a todas luces renacentista, el mismo que también reconocemos en Cervantes o cualquiera de sus discípulos, desde Fielding — como veremos — a Torrente Ballester.

- la griega, cuyo modelo estructural él toma de *El asno de oro*, de Apuleyo: siervo de muchos amos, metamorfosis del protagonista desde la ignorancia ávida y astuta hasta la sabiduría del *sofós*, utilización episódica de las fábulas milesias (Luciano de Samosata, a quien declaradamente imita) y apelación formal al tiempo de la aventura como organizador cronotópico del relato.
- la cristiana, cuyo modelo explícito de confesión es la obra maestra de Agustín de Hipona, del que subraya el anónimo autor del *Lazarillo*, no sólo la circunstancia de narrar ante un interlocutor excepcional (Dios, Vuesa Merced) los hechos significativos de la propia vida, sino la organización completa de la trama a partir de esa escritura dialógica, relatada desde el final con objeto de poder *dar cumplida cuenta* del caso. Un caso que, para su mejor y cabal comprensión, habrá de ser expuesto “desde el inicio”, con una estructura *ab ovo*, que, como es sabido, infringe todas las normas canónicas de la retórica académica sobre la configuración temporal de los relatos: *in medias res* para la ficción, y *ab ovo*, para la historia, según la tipología de Juan de Garland, al contraponer la *Res gesta* frente a la *Res ficta*, tal y como contemporáneamente a la escritura de esta genial obra se enseñaba en las clases de Retórica, sin ir más lejos, de la Universidad de Salamanca, a la ribera del mismo Tormes en que dio a luz este excipiente genial de la novela moderna.

A todo ello, hemos de añadir que el tiempo de la aventura (el cronotopo del camino) se modula y tensa, ya en el *Lazarillo*, desde una incipiente subjetividad, fruto de la necesidad de *explicar* el caso para justificarse. En efecto, esta lectura interpretativa², desde el final, genera una tensión en la estructura que, como ya advirtiera Claudio Guillén hace décadas (1957, pp. 264–279) provoca que los episodios “milesios” de la fábula sean inintercambiables en la trama, por la sencilla razón de que el personaje ha evolucionado psicológicamente con las sucesivas aventuras, es decir, se ha producido algo impensable, o casi, hasta entonces: un aprendizaje. El carácter deja de ser *patético* (en el sentido griego) para atisbarse en él ya claramente las bases, el fundamento, del personaje *realista* (Beltrán Almería: 2002, pp. 192 y ss.)

² Literalmente, judeocristiana, soteriológica, porque la correcta hermenéutica del texto te salva, *id est*, te justifica.

Pero hagamos, antes de continuar, una precisión de relativa importancia. Cité antes a Tomachewski y su conocida *Temática*, allí se advierte de que la aparición de un nuevo género literario exige de dos genios, el que inventa tal estructura *nueva*, al poner sobre el tablero desconocidos procedimientos constructivos, o mezclar de manera diferente los ya existentes (por mejor decir), y el continuador, que percibe como tal la novedad, es decir, que deslinda esos procedimientos constructivos del texto y los convierte en iterables³. Dicho de otro modo, sin la forma de leer el *Lazarillo* que propuso con su propia obra Mateo Alemán no habría novela picaresca, y, me atrevo a llevar esta argumentación un poco más allá: sin la perspectiva con que Cervantes leyó el *Guzmán de Alfarache*, tampoco habría nacido la novela moderna⁴.

¿Cómo leyeron sus contemporáneos el *Quijote*? Parece que no fueron tan perspicaces como el propio Cervantes lo fuera con el *Guzmán*, o Mateo Alemán con el *Lazarillo*, por no hablar de la genialidad de su anónimo autor al leer *El asno de oro* a la luz de las *Confesiones* y, de ese modo, fundir indisolublemente los dos moldes narrativos previos, subvirtiendo no solo la unidad de estilo, cosa que ya hizo la *Celestina*, sino activando para la ficción narrativa un modo de interpretar desde la subjetividad los hechos, actitud esta que, a todas luces, representa la gran revolución de la prosa de arte renacentista. Piénsese que, en cierta medida, lo que se está inventando en España para con el género narrativo lo lleva a la práctica Montaigne en el ensayo, casi en los mismos años, de la misma forma que, siglos antes, ya lo hubiera probado Petrarca para la *invención* del yo poético moderno en su *Canzoniere* y, desde un punto de vista ideológico, en su fundamental *Secretum*, no en vano un *diálogo* entre el propio Francesco y su maestro Agustín.

Por fortuna, no necesitamos hacer cábalas de cómo fue leído por sus contemporáneos el *Quijote*: disponemos de un ejemplo soberano

³ Desactiva su carácter de idiolecto discursivo para advertir en ellos rasgos de género y, por tanto, su virtualidad estructural, repetible.

⁴ Aunque, para ser más fieles aún a la verdad, aunque menos a Platón (*Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*, Cervantes en este caso), el final feliz de esta génesis narrativa no habría derivado en lo que hoy conocemos como "novela", de no ser por la *lectura* que hicieron los narradores ingleses (Fielding, Sterne) del propio *Quijote*, como veremos enseguida.

para tal efecto, la réplica insidiosa y mezquina, pero literariamente apasionante, que significa el *Quijote* apócrifo de Avellaneda.

En efecto, la revolución que propiciara el *Lazarillo* no fue comprendida por sus contemporáneos, no es casual que el *Guzmán* diste casi medio siglo de su "modelo" y que, en cambio, el anónimo continuador del *Lazarillo* de 1555 sólo viera como molde estructural del mismo la metamorfosis apulética, que cumple o cree cumplir con el superficial expediente de convertir en pez al pobre aprendiz de pícaro.

Avellaneda tiene muy mala prensa en la historia literaria española porque nadie puede evitar leer su obra sin el prejuicio de haberse "aprovechado" de la fama del ingenioso hidalgo, no ya para imitarlo y plantear una secuela, con mejor o peor fortuna (lo cual, en el sistema imitativo de la época era perfectamente plausible, ¿o acaso alguien acusa a Ariosto de haber "plagiado" a Boiardo, o haberse aprovechado de su fama, por continuar la historia del furioso y enamorado Orlando?), sino para insultar soezmente a su creador en un prefacio que rebosa bilis por los cuatro costados: recuérdese la defensa que de sí propio ha de hacer el pobre manco de Lepanto en el prólogo a su segunda y verídica parte.

Pero, dicho esto, si se compara el ingenio de Avellaneda, no con Lope, Quevedo o Cervantes, sino con autores de cordada contemporáneos, como los que urdían textos como *La pícara Justina*, el *Estebanillo González*, o la *Vida del escudero Marcos de Obregón*, reconoceremos, si no nos ciega la inquina, que ni en las sutilezas de la prosa ni en los rudimentos mínimos del ingenio, el apócrifo odiador del cautivo en Argel les va a la zaga ¡ni mucho menos! Sucede solo que al pobre Avellaneda lo juzgamos desde el *Quijote*, es decir, desde el nuevo paradigma que ha contribuido a inventar la genialidad narrativa de Cervantes, y en cambio, al resto, los comparamos entre sí, vale decir, como estirpe más o menos lograda de una tradición picaresca, esto es, paródica, cuyo marbete goza de un prestigio insobornable merced a libros como los citados (*Lazarillo*, *Guzmán*) o su obra maestra, *El Buscón*, de prosa insuperable, incluso para el propio Cervantes. Y esa es la trampa, a mi juicio, y la venda que puede cegar a cierta crítica.

Leído sin inquina, en cambio, Avellaneda nos proporciona pingües datos de cómo se entiende la ficción poética en el momento en que esta cambia de paradigma, es decir, podemos saber cómo leían sus

contemporáneos la obra maestra de Cervantes, y advertimos que no podían deslindarla del paradigma antiguo, en el que prima la trama sobre el personaje (que no evoluciona, fijado como está en el *tipo*, encarcelado “psicológicamente” por una concepción no lineal del tiempo, y por el carácter patético que le corresponde, propiciado también por la unidad de estilo), en el que el cronotopo del camino (Bajtín 1989: 303 y ss) invita a tejer las aventuras como intercambiables entre sí, desde el punto de vista de la secuencia narrativa, y el estilo, como es lógico, *sólo* se recibe al dictado del modelo paródico cuya lectura prefigura el tema.

Dicho a la pata la llana, lo que vemos a lo largo de toda la novela es a un don Quijote loco sin remedio, y a un Sancho patán y tragaldabas, sin fisuras, de una sola pieza, sin relativismos modernos, dialogismos psicologizantes, perspectivismos, polifonías o metaliteraturas de tipo alguno. Se acabó el baciyelmo, “al pan pan y al vino como locos”, que diría ese Sancho soez y regoldante. Y así se leía el *Quijote* en la España barroca y desengañada que tanto le dolía a su creador. Escribámoslo ya: con una lectura tal no puede nacer paradigma narrativo alguno de la modernidad literaria.

Tuvo que pasar más de un siglo, ser traducido al inglés y al francés con notable suceso, ser *leído* desde Aristóteles y no desde la Edad Media, tal y como hace Fielding en su *Joseph Andrews*, o Sterne en su *Tristram Shandy*.

Elijo a Fielding, como botón de muestra, porque en su prólogo, orgulosamente, hace una poética explícita de la ficción narrativa, glosa del título, que reza como sigue:

La historia de las aventuras de Joseph Andrews y de su amigo Mr. Abraham Adams escritas a imitación de la manera de Cervantes autor del Quijote.

El prefacio del autor, de sobra conocido, es una paráfrasis de la *Poética* de Aristóteles en lo concerniente a la definición de este género *nuevo*, que inventa Cervantes y del que Fielding se jacta en ser su primer continuador en lengua inglesa⁵.

⁵ De esta guisa quiere el novelista concluir su prefacio: “Después de separar a *Joseph Andrews* de las novelas sentimentales y de las parodias y haber dado unas someras indicaciones (porque no era mi intención ir más allá) **sobre este género literario todavía inédito en nuestra lengua**, dejaré al lector de buena voluntad que compare la obra con mis observaciones...” La negrita es mía. (Henry Fielding: p. 9.)

Veamos brevemente la base de su argumentación: al igual que el drama, también la épica se divide en trágica y cómica. Y cito: “Una novela cómica es, por consiguiente, un poema épico-cómico en prosa; y difiere de la comedia de la misma manera que el poema épico se diferencia de la tragedia (...) se diferencia también por utilizar a seres humanos de baja extracción (...) pero, aunque me he servido a veces de la parodia en el estilo, **la he excluido por completo de los personajes y sus sentimientos**”(Fielding 1978: 4).

Acaba de nacer el realismo literario, eso que durante dos siglos largos hemos denominado como novela por antonomasia. Esa es la *lectura* que, a través de Aristóteles, hace Fielding del *Quijote* cervantino. Y, precisamente, advierte que se aparta de los componentes paródicos, es decir, lo contrario que Avellaneda, que los refuerza hasta lo grotesco, porque “no existen en realidad dos géneros literarios más diferentes que la comedia y la parodia; esta última consiste en la exhibición de lo monstruoso y lo anormal, y nuestro regocijo nace de lo absurdo, como cuando se atribuye un comportamiento distinguido al ser más vulgar o *è converso*; en la comedia hemos de limitarnos exactamente a lo natural, **de cuya acertada imitación deriva su placer el lector sensible.**” (Ib.)

Voilà. Obsérvese cómo hace hincapié en deslindarse del género parodia, para lo cual remite como precepto a la Poética, y como canon al *Quijote*, de quien se confiesa orgulloso imitador, ya desde el título. O lo que es lo mismo, más de cien años después de su publicación, al menos en Inglaterra, el *Quijote* no sólo no se ve como un texto paródico más o menos al uso, sino que se advierte como el origen de eso nuevo y moderno que Fielding llama poema épico-cómico en prosa, Sartre la tragicomedia del hombre común, y nosotros **novela** por antonomasia, decimonónica o realista.

En esa misma y decisiva época, en Francia no andaban muy lejos de idéntica percepción a propósito de la ficción, pero no así entre los lectores contemporáneos de Cervantes, o, para ser más precisos, de la segunda mitad del XVII, cuando lo que está en juego es la hegemonía europea entre ambas coronas y se “usa” al *Quijote*, como icono, para ejemplificar modélicamente el carácter de “lo español”, diversificado significativamente en dos actitudes,

– la del *fou*, el rancio caballero loco y entrometido, víctima de sus propios delirios de grandeza.

- el *Quischote matamore*, síntesis genial del hidalgo conquistador con ínfulas (al modo de la *Kermesse heroica*, para entendernos rápidamente) y el Santiago Matamoros de la iconografía imperial de la época, que en el resto de Europa debía sonar a algo cercano a un militar inquisidor, en la más rancia estirpe de los esbozados por la incipiente leyenda negra, que vio en este “Quijote” a todo un icono perfecto para su propaganda antiespañola.

Adviértase con todo que esta utilización extraliteraria del mito, del icono quijotil, tridentino y oscurantista, solo podía ser fruto de su extraordinario éxito, como demuestran las traducciones y ediciones francesas del siglo XVII, así como las imitaciones, secuelas y utilizaciones del tema o la figura en la literatura gala de la época (Sánchez Tallafigo 2004: 297 y ss.).

Debo ir terminando, por eso, citaré apenas la tan conocida “lectura romántica” (Schelling, Schiller, Schlegel, etc.) de la lucha entre el Ideal contra la prosaica realidad (Close 2005) para llamar la atención, al paso, sobre la lectura voluntarista de Schopenhauer que, tamizada, filtrada a su particular y fideísta manera, deriva en la versión que del Quijote inventa Unamuno.

El mundo como voluntad y representación (García Galiano 2006), don Quijote no sólo *sabe quién es*, sino que sabe que puede ser “los doce pares de Francia y los Nueve de la Fama”, cuya proclama se puede leer, también, como explícita poética de la ficción.

Unamuno ve en don Quijote al caballero de la fe, al converso, no es casual que lo equipare a otro hidalgo, el vasco de Loyola, que al revés y en paralelo al de la Mancha, dejó las armas por la milicia divina, fruto también de una conversión propiciada por la lectura de ciertos libros. El escritor bilbaíno quiere ver en *su Quijote* a un ser autopoético, creador y ensanchador de su propio nombre y honra, con el fin de prolongar en el espacio y el tiempo su propia personalidad a fin de *no morir del todo* (Unamuno 1984: 164). Para él, la clave no solo narrativa, sino ontológica, del hidalgo está en esa declaración perfecta: “Yo sé quien soy”⁶, que funda la modernidad desde el imperio de la voluntad: “y sé que puedo ser”⁷

⁶ Y añadido yo, parafraseando (con temor y temblor) al escritor bilbaíno, también el *Quijote* tiene una lectura metafísica. Casi todos los personajes de la obra asumen distintas personalidades a lo largo de la misma, su protagonista, el loco discreto manchego, llega a decir algo que ya nunca más nadie ha osado proclamar “yo sé quién soy”. Su voluntad de ser le lleva a

Subrayemos por último, dada su modernidad, la pertinencia de esta observación: “Es que creo que los personajes de ficción tienen dentro de la mente del autor que los finge una vida propia, con cierta autonomía, y obedecen a una íntima lógica de que no es del todo consciente ni dicho autor mismo”, que, como nadie ignora, anticipa alguna de las intuiciones más geniales del propio Unamuno narrador, en este caso apuntando a la raíz misma de su novela *Niebla*.

Decía Ortega, con estricta maldad y no poco de verdad, que Unamuno “ha tenido el secreto de hacer sobre el libro más simpático del universo... el libro más antipático y repelente de la tierra” (Ortega 1974: 336); pero es que el catedrático de Salamanca nunca habló o escribió sino de sí mismo, un sí mismo que quería eterno e imposible, y desde esa lectura fáustica interpretó al generoso hidalgo de la Mancha.

A nosotros nos interesaba, en este recorrido a vuelapluma sobre la recepción del *Quijote* en algunos escritores, porque con Unamuno culmina la lectura individualista y psicologizante de un libro que, si es un clásico, lo es, también, porque ha sido capaz de ir más allá, siempre, de cualquiera de sus interpretaciones. Sucede que a nosotros, lectores y críticos involucrados en poética diacrónica de la ficción narrativa, el *Quijote* se nos presenta como la quintaesencia, el modelo perfecto para calibrar en un autor o una época su propia conciencia narrativa. *More* apotegmático, que es una forma bien breve para

interpretar toda la realidad desde la imaginación caballeresca a la que ha consagrado sus horas... esa “locura” ingeniosa le lleva a ver castillos donde ventas, y gigantes donde molinos... y le lleva a realizar mil disparates que luego son el regocijo y la chanza de todos. Pero la pregunta larvada que subyace a lo largo de la obra es: “y tú, ¿quién eres?”, vale decir, ¿desde qué lugar inamovible, irreductible para ti, construyes tu mundo pensado de realidades interpretadas? Así, al genial “yo sé quién soy”, le nace, como réplica, la pregunta cumbre de la conciencia en forma humana, “¿quién soy yo?, ¿soy este cuerpo, este pensamiento, estos deseos, este lugar en el que vivo, estas opiniones, estos anhelos, este miedo, esta memoria...?” Y al cabo, el baciyelmo, que inventa la Modernidad: “esto que para ti es bacía, para mí es yelmo, y para otro será otra cosa”.

⁷ Lástima que Unamuno no viera en ese verdadero manifiesto de la modernidad una suerte de enmienda o relectura relativista (volitiva) a la proclama o definición de sí mismo que hiciera Yahvé ante Moisés, en el famoso episodio de la zarza (Ex., 3, 14), cuando se autoproclama “Yo soy quien soy”.

concluir, podría invocarse algo así como “dime cómo lees el *Quijote* y te diré cómo escribes”. Vale.

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Centres and Peripheries? The Augustan/Counter-Augustan Dialectics

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The following discussion revolves around the belief that the relationship between the so-called literary 'centres' and literary 'peripheries' should be rewritten as a dynamic and dialectic relationship not between centres and peripheries, but between different literary conceptions and different literary manifestations. And I say different literary conceptions and different literary manifestations because the terms 'centre' and 'periphery' are neither rigorous nor desirable: the elaboration and sanctification of unnatural centres and the subsequent 'castration' of literature programmes at university results in senseless exclusions and manipulations and, consequently, in an impoverished approach to literature. The magic of literature surpasses alienating dichotomies. Literature consists in the capability of creating alternative worlds. As Hillis Miller has pointed out, "a literary work is not [...] an imitation of words of some pre-existing reality but, on the contrary, it is the creation or discovery of a new, supplementary world [...] This new world is an irreplaceable addition to the already existing one" (2000: 18). Every literary work, every 'peripheral' text, contains an irreplaceable message. The theoretical validity of the dichotomy centre/periphery is obscured by the reality of a constellation of alternative literary worlds: worlds in a dynamic and perpetual dialectics.

The term 'centre' is the synonym of an attempt, of an aspiration to centrality which, even when sanctioned by prestigious theorists, can never acquire the status of a universally accepted reality. The artificial construct behind the dichotomy centre/periphery revolves around the conscious creation of a centrality myth: the myth of the exclusive validity or social usefulness of certain literary ideals. The writers

confined to cultural margins will take creative delight in deconstructing the validity of this centrality myth, which they may depict in their works as strange, authoritarian or dehumanised. The dialectics begins. The peripheral may emerge as an unconscious attempt at escaping from official straitjackets or take the form of a conscious fictional or meta-fictional attack on these artistic principles.

I intend to analyse how the notion of a 'literary centre' was constructed in eighteenth-century English literature, explaining the reasons why it can be considered a powerful myth. I shall also highlight the vitality and the significance of those literary manifestations which the ideologists constructing the myth had dismissed as unimportant or aesthetically inferior. The eighteenth-century notions of 'centre' and 'periphery' were fictions originated in the Augustan conception of literature. I have chosen the Augustan ideology as an example of 'intended cultural centre' because the Augustan writers literaturised their aspirations to cultural centrality in a very special way. However, in spite of their desires, the most outstanding cultural truth was not the existence of an unquestioned Augustan centre but, rather, the reality of an extremely productive Augustan/counter-Augustan dialectics benefiting, for its diffusion, from the increasing importance of the press and the printing culture in eighteenth-century England.

Why have I described the Augustan centrality as a powerful myth? From my point of view, the power of a 'centrality myth' depends on some different factors, and the Augustan managed to combine them all, strengthening a *corpus* of aesthetics beliefs whose validity would be perpetuated in time: in his 1916 work *The Peace of the Augustans: A Survey of English Literature as a Place of Rest and Refreshment*, George Saintsbury deliberately ignored the complexity of the eighteenth-century literary scene, proclaiming the exclusive excellence of the Augustan literary ideal. Saintsbury, among others, contributed to eternalise the validity of the Augustan myth in such a way that in 1987 Nussbaum and Hall felt compelled to deepen into the project of a 'new eighteenth century', the 'new' comprising all the literary manifestations that theorists like Saintsbury had previously silenced.¹

¹ Nussbaum and Hall's project was aimed at creating "a theoretical context designed to broaden and sharpen our perspectives on the period and its critical tradition as well". The 'new' readings presented in their book intended to

The first important factor is the social importance of the ideologists constructing the centrality myth. The Augustan considered themselves as part of a brilliant *elite* who would never surrender to the 'mercenary' writing practices of Grub Street.² Sir Joshua Reynolds, founder of the Royal Academy, tried to keep the notion of cultural excellence away from the incursions of popular culture and anti-classicist creativity. Samuel Johnson managed to monopolise the prestigious journal *The Rambler*, which was issued twice weekly in London between 1750 and 1752, each issue containing a single anonymous essay. Although 208 periodical essays appeared, all but five were written by Samuel Johnson. Johnson's intention in this project was that of a moralist aware of his duty to make the world better, making it conform to the Augustan beliefs. The Augustan literary ideals also found an appealing vehicle for expression in the verbal wit of Alexander Pope, described by his contemporary Joseph Warton as "[...] superior to all mankind" (1974: iii). The Augustan authorities deified the 'imperial' John Dryden, a prestigious literary authority credited with having introduced the "myth of English poetic invincibility" (Kramer 1993: 56). They also imitated Dryden's method of literary imperialism, which "approximate[d] the complicated dealings of an imperial power with its vassal states, ranging from brute conquest to the more subtle strategies of denigration and replacement of the invaded culture" (ib. 55).

The second factor is the existence of a glamorous context where authoritarian ideals can be strengthened and acquire the status of universal rules: the Augustans, inheritors of the culture of patronage and surrounded by influential politicians and nobles, monopolised the most select *coteries* and the most brilliant scientific societies. These places became aseptic environments where the ideologists immunised themselves against several contemporary 'epidemics', such as the explosion of popular culture, the rising materialism of an incipient consumer society, the fervent cult of exoticism, and the manifestations

"[...] supply a more inclusive view of the period than those which are limited to the dominant culture alone" (1987: 3).

² The term *Grub Street* was taken from a real street and applied to many of the writers of the popular press. The new demand for writers meant that some of them were far from talented. Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift, among others, considered the literary practices of Grub Street a threat to enlightened ideals, serious literature, and good taste.

of unrestrained enthusiasm,³ such as those represented by John Wesley's cathartic Methodism or the violent street riots, palliatives of an eighteenth-century society seething with discontent. The Augustans built an imaginative city of life (Fussell 1965: 189) by discarding the social and artistic materials which contradicted their stable rules.

The third important factor revolves around the writing practices of the ideologists, who should justify their aspirations to cultural supremacy and foreground the benefits derived from subscribing to their literary beliefs. The Augustans were subjected to a policy of extreme self-consciousness of their normative status. Their critical comments were "[...] nearly always prosecutorial or defensive in function" (Trolander and Tenger 1996: 318). They frequently resorted to the semantic field of impurity to describe the creations of 'deviant' counter-Augustan writers. William Spalding, for instance, considered that novels, with their dangerous incursions into uncontrolled fancy and romance, had brought about an unfortunate change: literature seemed to be "[...] leaving the aisles of an august cathedral, to descend into the galleries of an [...] ill-ventilated mine" (qtd. by Howes 1958: 166). The Augustan self-consciousness implied activism, an activism synonymous with blindness: blindness because it refused to acknowledge that the artistic ideals of the classical past — which the Augustans had characterised as sublime — could not be readily imposed on a radically new society. The 'blind Augustans' deliberately ignored the richness of the eighteenth-century literary scene and considered that those cultural practices which did not fit into the Augustan canon should be silenced or considered marginal creations originated in a pernicious enthusiasm. The aggressiveness of the Augustan activism is metaphorically contained in the military status assigned to the literary rules, which in his *Essay on Criticism* (1711) Alexander Pope had described as necessary weapons against disorder.

The fourth factor is related to the social prestige of the beliefs sustained by the 'dominant' literary group. Eighteenth-century society should internalise the usefulness of the Augustan cosmovision, an aim

³ In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) John Locke had defined enthusiasm as something which "takes away both reason and revelation" (that is, normative principles) "and substitutes in the room of them the ungrounded fancies of man's own brain, and assumes them for a foundation both of opinion and conduct" (1959: 430).

which could only be achieved through the presentation of an appealing ideal: the Augustans asserted that the acceptance of their ethical and artistic beliefs would bring stability to a society experiencing the transition from the 'old' to the 'new' world, a society which had also evolved from a seventeenth century marked by civil wars, regicide and revolution. It was necessary, thus, a return to stability, a return to the values of a peaceful and fruitful past which the Augustans had identified with classical Rome. The Augustans tried to update its cultural significance in the hope of getting rid of contemporary evilness. Their myth of stability was covered with a utopian aura: it was possible to perpetuate the validity of past ideals, making eighteenth-century society accept them for peace's sake. Accordingly, the creative communions with the new or, more specifically, the cult of literary innovation, should be severely restricted. When Laurence Sterne published his 'subversive' *Tristram Shandy* Samuel Johnson asserted that its fame would not last. Since according to the Augustans eighteenth-century society was corrupted, literature should become a vehicle of redemptive assistance, that is, "man's relation to literature and art [should be] primarily moral and only secondarily aesthetic" (Fussell 1965: 9). The Augustans could not justify a literary aesthetics of pure pleasure: rather, structures of authority (the literary rules) had to be established in order to control every possible manifestation of corrupted individualism and unrestrained enthusiasm.

Some of the eighteenth-century writers who opposed the Augustan rules, based on an ethics of creative restraint, may not have thought of themselves as counter-Augustans. However, there was a distinctly clear counter-sensibility whose members never considered themselves part of the cultural periphery because, according to them, the intended literary centre was based on artificiality, and consequently, could never be 'central' to human concerns. In *On the Standard of Good Taste* (1757) David Hume asserted that a writer belonging to a distant past could not have the same expectations about life and art as a writer living in the eighteenth century (2001: 486). "Is a man to follow rules, or rules to follow him?" (2003: 253), Laurence Sterne wondered in *Tristram Shandy*. The counter-Augustans started to popularise the idea that the artistic code of the Augustans was cold and dehumanised. In his *Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English Poets* (1779) Samuel Johnson had praised John Dryden because he had "found English literature brick and left it marble" (1984: 724).

'Brick' could be taken as a Johnsonian metaphor designing the unrestrained literary treatment of natural emotions, a metaphor for 'unpolished' passions. 'Marble' would represent the artificial remodelling of these natural materials according to the universal rules dictated in the aseptic world of the official coteries. In the 1990s Northrop Frye wondered what, perhaps, many of the counter-Augustans had already wondered in the eighteenth century: what happens when a writer 'runs out of marble'? (1990: 161), that is, what happens when s/he gets tired of reducing the complexity of life to fixed stereotypes? Frye's answer is clear: the Augustan sublime succeeded in "[...] expressing meaning instead of merely throwing words in the direction of meaning", and, consequently, "literature [was] moving towards a dead end" (ib. 162).

The counter-Augustan sensibility, which emerged as a reaction against the unnaturalness of the Augustan *ethos*, found a new context which welcomed its central belief: that literature should take its materials from the plurality of vital manifestations, including those which contradicted universal rules. This new context was the result of a process of cultural democratisation encouraged by a sensibility of openness towards the voices of those people who, traditionally, had not been able to take on leading roles in eighteenth-century culture. Therefore, the literary canon was now expected to give shelter to their beliefs and open new paths of aesthetic representation for their ideas. The glamour of the official coteries gradually came to be identified with artificiality and *closure*. The traditional cultural centres — such as the brilliant *coteries* of the court, gathered around a *maecenas* — were giving way to the sociability of the 'pleasure gardens' and the coffee houses, renewed environments where the most heterogeneous ideologies and artistic beliefs could engage in productive exchanges. The Augustan/counter-Augustan dialectics progressed: the Augustans started to recognise the de-stabilising strength of those literary constructions which they had deemed peripheral, betraying in their texts an anxiety over this emerging public sphere, controlled by the new forces dominating the literary marketplace (Trolander and Tenger 1996: 311).

Another factor favouring the development of the counter-Augustan sensibility was the emergence of a social market keen on consuming the cultural products engineered within this new climate of cultural democratisation or de-centralisation. This market would, in turn,

widen the scope of their peripheral validity. Whereas the apostates of classicism were proclaiming the validity of their sublime worlds, disconnected from contemporary vulgarity, the Bartholomew's Fair in London, the neuralgic centre of the popular culture, became one of the most representative cultural events of the British Isles. A market industry of cheap books (*chapbooks*) had also developed: through them, street booksellers provided easy access to 'peripheral' literary worlds, such as those represented by popular literature and forbidden romances. The 'periphery' could also rely on the existence of effective means of diffusion of their cultural productions: contrary to the Augustan emphasis on didacticism, the literary policy of Grub Street contributed to institutionalising the ideal (opposed to the Augustan didacticism) that culture should be a question of giving people what they desire, rather than of telling people what they should desire. The counter-Augustan environments increasingly gained ground, and even among the most conservative Augustans we can appreciate shy attempts at recognising the validity of counter-Augustan attitudes: Samuel Johnson, for example, welcomed Mary Wollstonecraft as a contributor to his *Analytical Review*. Wollstonecraft was the authoress of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) and an emblem of the instability and discontent hidden under the mythical peace of the Augustans.

The eighteenth-century literary scene witnessed the emergence of a dialectics which showed the invalidity of the opposition 'centre' and 'periphery'. Whose was the strength, or the centrality? Of the brilliant prestige and the 'supernatural' wit of the Augustans or of a new literary reality, the product of the natural evolution of artistic beliefs and symbol of the adaptation to the cultural needs of eighteenth-century society? The dialectics comprised two different literary attitudes towards the reality of eighteenth-century society: while the Augustans preferred to take shelter in their secure marble buildings, the counter-Augustans decided to assume the risk of 'contamination' and take the materials for literary representation from a society possessed by a materialistic fever and immersed in slavery trade or labour exploitation, a new society which certainly provided meaningful evidence for a corrupted human nature. However, in assuming this risk of contamination, the counter-Augustan sensibility endowed the function of literature with a new lyrical character: literature should be a vehicle for 'exploiting' the richness of life, even if it was corrupted.

If literature embraced the plurality of vital manifestations, it would become closer to real life, emerging as a symbol of vitality and dynamism. The counter-Augustans believed that literature should abandon the scholastic confinement to which classicism had condemned it. They encouraged a sensibility of faithfulness to life, thus literaturising its beauties and its cruelties. Samuel Richardson, for example, admitted the controversial issue of prostitution as the material for literary representation. When in the third edition of *Clarissa* (1751) he coined the lyrical term 'magdalen' to refer to the prostitutes, he was counter-attacking the Augustan belief in the corruption of human nature. Richardson encouraged a change of attitude towards these innocent women whom the conservative moralists, under the auspices of the Society for the Reformation of Manners (1690), had literaturised as little more than promiscuous monsters.

The Augustans believed that the transmission of moral values should be closely allied with literary expression. Since corrupted human beings were in need of redemptive assistance, the Augustans devoted their texts to portraying 'aseptic' worlds and 'aseptic' patterns of human behaviour. By 'aseptic' I mean 'unwilling to acknowledge the complex human interaction between virtues and weaknesses'. They operated, thus, a dramatic reduction of human complexity in their texts. The counter-Augustan spirit, attacking this idea in defence of a faithful attachment to human life, is personified in Oliver Goldsmith's *The Traveller* (1765). As a traveller immersed in a metaphorical journey away from a dehumanised conception of literature, Goldsmith complained that within the "frigid zone" which the Augustans had turned life into, he could not find his "happiest spot" as a writer (1966: 251). In this search for happier creative environments the recreation of primitivism became an important counter-Augustan topic. Primitivism signalled a return to the literary cult of those natural emotions suppressed by the Augustan ethics of restraint. Among the primitive heroes, we distinguish the "emotional primitive or man of feeling" (Frye 1990: 169) who would give way to the bulk of sentimental literature, "the melancholy primitive" (ib. 169), anticipating the Romantic movement, or Robinson Crusoe, "alone on his island and transforming it into a replica of what for him was his real world" without the interference of any universal rules (ib. 170).

Guided by the desire of creative self-fulfilment, counter-Augustan writers explored in their writings every facet of eighteenth-century life, welcoming its so far unexplored otherness with optimism. The apostates of sentimental literature intellectualised this optimism, basing it on one of the forbidden fantasies of the period: the fantasy that man was innately benevolent and that the progress towards a better society was possible. The physiological language employed in the sentimental texts can be read as a metaphor for an extreme attachment to the complexities of the human condition. The 'man of feeling', committed to exploring the sensuality of life, became the new literary hero: virtue no longer consisted in moral restraint, but in experiencing the pleasures of being truly human. Although in his *Essay on Man* (1733–34) Alexander Pope had sanctified a "great directing mind of all" (1993: 2269)⁴ and persuaded his Augustan followers that creative identity meant artistic sameness, the sentimental writers were composing their texts according to the principle of 'sentimental translation' by means of which real life was immortalised in the literary text without any ideological intermediaries other than the personal beliefs of the writer. The counter-Augustan ideal became, thus, inseparable from individuality and creative independence.

The transition from these sentimental declarations of independence to the re-activation of the cathartic function of literature — the opposite of the Augustan emphasis on moral restraint — was easy. The movement towards literary catharsis reflected the counter-Augustan belief in the vitality of literature: vitality as a synonym for dynamism, change, mutability, and adaptation to very different emotions and sensibilities. The counter-Augustans highlighted the uselessness of fossilising literary messages in past mentalities and set out to fight against those contemporary socio-cultural normalities which they considered alienating. Texts started to be considered social palliatives: in this spirit, the African writer Ignatius Sancho literaturised the miseries of slavery, and the scandalous memoirists, "destitute women who defied cultural expectations of the female" (Nussbaum 1987: 145) took up the pen for the first time to defend their character and leave aside their marginalisation as women writers. The Magdalen Hospital, a *locus* for repentant prostitutes expelled from the brilliant

⁴ See Bowman Piper's *Reconcilable Differences in Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (1999). He analyses the search for that authoritative 'mind of all' which Alexander Pope immortalised in his *Essays*.

Augustan society, became a new literary centre around which not only novels, but also classical genres such as the elegy and the epic poem would flourish.⁵ The counter-Augustan catharsis also embraced the recreation of the mysterious and the gothic, gigantic metaphors for a desire to escape from imaginative repression, from the aseptic marmoreal spaces.

Catharsis could be interpreted as the result of a natural but unconscious reaction against the Augustan ideals. One of the most interesting counter-Augustan modes was, though, the literary immortalisation of the consciousness of being part of a subversive sensibility. Laurence Sterne created two novels — *Tristram Shandy* (1759–1763) and *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768) — aimed at denouncing the Augustan artificiality and the subsequent impossibility of its becoming a cultural centre universally accepted. In fact, Sterne described the fictional material of his novels as a vehicle,⁶ that is, as the means to deconstruct the Augustan rigidity. His two novels, subsumed under this counter-Augustan project, betray the intensity with which the Augustan/counter-Augustan dialectics was being lived at the time.

Yorick, the character unifying Sterne's counter-Augustan project, metaphorically died in *Tristram Shandy* because the rules of the hypercritics⁷ had killed his 'subversive' vitality. However, the rebellious side of Yorick was kept alive within the character of Tristram, a writer who keeps on fighting against the formal rigidity of the Augustan by inserting in his novel blank chapters or apparently meaningless scrawls until he manages to resuscitate Yorick in his second novel, *A Sentimental Journey*. Yorick resuscitates because in the *Journey* he feels at ease as a writer. He can do his own sentimental translation, that is, he can immortalise life in the text according to his individual beliefs and his artistic preferences. Sterne made sure that

⁵ For a detailed account of the sentimental significance of the Magdalen Hospital see chapter 5 in Ellis (1996).

⁶ Laurence Sterne did not hesitate to consider his *Sentimental Journey* as a 'vehicle' (1984: 31). In one of his letters he also used the word 'vehicle' to characterise his first famous work, *Tristram Shandy*: "Tomorrow morning, (if Heaven permit) I begin the fifth volume of Shandy — I care not a curse for the critics — I'll load my *vehicle* with what goods *he* sends me, and they may take 'em off my hands, or let them alone" (Sterne 1967: 140, my italics).

⁷ The Sternean denomination for the Augustan critics.

his *Sentimental Journey* could be read as a metaphorical journey of liberation from the Augustan constraints, a journey away from the periphery. Although the Augustans had condemned Sterne's experiments, the public welcomed their supposedly peripheral values: the first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy* were published in London on January 1760 and Sterne was so successful that the novel went into four editions within that year. J.C.T. Oates refers to some curious anecdotes related to the 'scandalous' social success of *Tristram Shandy*: a painting of a race-horse named Tristram Shandy, by George Stubbs, was exhibited in the catalogue of the Society of Artists for 1762. Between 1760 and 1800, the Free Society of Artists exhibited more than thirty paintings, drawings, and engravings of Sternean characters and incidents (1968: 29). Even three reputed English composers — Thomas Billington, William Carnaby, and John Moulds — wrote songs based on Sternean themes which had a considerable vogue (ib. 30). In Germany, societies of sentimentalists did honour to the characters of *A Sentimental Journey*, and Yorick's fictitious grave was set up in a park near Hanover (ib. 23). Sentimental travellers imitating Yorick's liberating philosophy soon infected the literary panorama. Sterne, the Anglican priest who kept his real life so close to his texts that he decided to sign his sermons under the name of Yorick, had left the cultural periphery and entered the eternity of immortal writers.

I have not been able to find any meaningful evidence sustaining the hypothesis of a well-established literary centre and a non-influential periphery in eighteenth-century English literature. The reality hidden under the terms 'centre' and 'periphery' was a powerful myth: there was simply a dialectic opposition between different literary sensibilities, and I have presented the Augustan/counter-Augustan dialectics as an example. This dialectics, which comprised a fight between the aspirations to orthodoxy and the delight in subverting authoritarianism, contributed to enhancing the richness of the eighteenth-century literary scenario. Rather than classifying the different literary productions and the critical debates generated around them as central or peripheral, we should enjoy their distinctive individuality, and think of them as contributors to this richness.

Every 'central' or 'peripheral' text is an irreplaceable addition to the sensibility and the identity of a period. The Augustan and the counter-Augustan ideals concealed different responses to the

vicissitudes of a century which was experiencing the transition towards a new world. The counter-Augustans were romantically greedy for experiencing unbounded creativity and, accordingly, took the risk of contamination with the heterogeneous complexity of life. The utopian Augustans chose instead to erect marble buildings with their windows closed to the 'ugliness of life' but, like the counter-Augustans, they also considered literature a vital tool, a magic instrument of survival and escapism. Whenever the alienating *cliché* centre/periphery is imposed, the brilliancy of the literary phenomenon is dramatically obscured. Moving freely from one sphere to another, finding the valuable in both the centre and the periphery, displacing the centre to make it become peripheral and *vice versa* is, and will always be, a source of intellectual enrichment and infinite pleasure.

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English Enlightenment as Reflected in Russian Criticism of the Second Half of the 20th Century

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At the turn of the 20th century Russian criticism started actively to revise and re-evaluate the period of Enlightenment, as well as everything connected with this notion. It was first and foremost connected with the political changes, which occurred in Russia at the end of the 20th century. New ideological directions determine new interpretation of literary epochs. The utmost difficulty was presented by university courses, which are traditionally academically conservative and less subjected to changes and experiments than some other educational structures. It is especially true for the so-called memorial courses — Antique Literature, Middle Ages, The Literature of the Enlightenment. The titles themselves define the content of the period and its established characteristics. Many generations of students graduated from the university with established notions of these periods.

The problem of revision of these courses is very complicated indeed and requires the efforts of many scholars therefore within the framework of my talk I will concentrate on one aspect only — the English novel of the Enlightenment as perceived and interpreted in Russian educational literature.

The literary epoch is usually based on the three whales — periodisation, philosophic background and artistic trends. This principle will be preserved in this talk.

It is common knowledge that the ideas of the Enlightenment originated in England, mainly due to historical circumstances. Traditionally all the textbooks connect the epoch of Enlightenment with bourgeois revolutions, which took place in England and France and

became the chronological frame of this epoch. And since any revolution brings about radical changes, the 18th century is automatically described as the epoch of crisis. A new approach to this epoch, which perceives it as a period of relative stability: political, economical, social and cultural found its reflection in the recent educational publications, for example, in the Children's Encyclopedia Avanta (Энциклопедия для детей 2000: 561) but not in the university textbooks.

When characterizing English Enlightenment Russian scholars seem to be still under the spell of Soviet ideology according to which every scholarly and the more so educational edition should be based on Marxist methodology. As a result, every aesthetic phenomenon is interpreted from the viewpoint of its ideological utility, social progressiveness or on the contrary, as reactionary and anti-progressive and therefore not worthy of attention. Thus ideological criteria were put far above the aesthetic ones, which resulted in the underestimation of certain writers or even whole trends. Therefore the general characteristics of the 18th-century English literature was determined by the overlapping thesis that art and literature in particular were serving the interests of the bourgeoisie or in some way were reacting to the bourgeois reality. The Enlightenment was considered as a pure ideological movement, which had prepared the bourgeois revolutions in Europe. This presumption forms the background for the periodisation of the period and its philosophical basis.

Traditionally the characteristics of its philosophical background are confined to the confrontation between materialism and idealism, at the source of the latter was the teaching of John Locke — sensualist and materialist. Therefore the 18th century is viewed as a period of the predominant development of rational sensualism with the absolute value of reason, whereas it is known that the philosophers who founded the basis for the philosophy of Enlightenment (Locke and Leibnitz) built their theories rather on the polemics with the main theses of Descartes. That means that the philosophers of the Enlightenment kept warning people about the limitations of human reason. Therefore it is hardly possible to speak about the literature of Enlightenment as glorifying the power of human reason and its boundless abilities. But in the textbook we read: "Reason was proclaimed to be the utmost criterion of evaluation of the world, and the most powerful weapon of changing it. Engels wrote: 'Everything

had to be brought before the judgement of reason and either justify its existence or be denied it'. (История зарубежной литературы 18 века 1991: 10). Therefore the realism of the Enlightenment in the textbooks is taken for granted, whereas modern philosophers and historians contradict this. (See, for example, Баллестрем 1999; Гадамер Г.Х. 1988; Реале, Антисери 1996). The main achievement of the Enlightenment thinking was the discovery of new means and forms of philosophizing, which found their reflection in the new type of philosophic fiction.

Thus the Enlightenment was an ideological and philosophical movement the content and goal of which cannot be reduced to political changes only. The absolute majority of the Enlighteners tried to avoid extremes. Therefore the deism characteristic of this epoch was not just a secular form of religion but also a form based on compromise. This allows us to speak about the Enlightenment not as about a political ideology but first and foremost as about a new mentality and intellectual liberation of an individual. The philosophy and moral of the Enlightenment are not a system of instructions, but speculations and recommendations, calling for a tolerant attitude to other opinions.

The established periodisation is based on the traditional opposition of sense and sensibility. In the textbooks three periods are singled out: early Enlightenment (up to the 1730s), within which the realism of Enlightenment originated, mature (1740–50s) and late Enlightenment, which lasted till the 1790s. According to these stages the leading artistic trends are singled out, which are declared to be *Enlightenment classicism*, *Enlightenment realism* and *Sentimentalism*. The novels of Defoe and Swift were removed from the general characteristic of the early period, as the predominant artistic trend in the English literature of the beginning of the 18th century was said to be classicism, and the genre of the novel did not fit into its framework.

The works of Defoe and Swift are analyzed in separate chapters, based on the biographical principle, which in itself is quite appropriate for textbooks. But the question of their belonging to a certain aesthetic system remains open with the exception of the statement that Defoe was the founder of the realistic novel of the new time.

The flourishing of the English novel is considered to be connected with the Enlightenment realism. Here we find such names as Richardson (the psychological novel and the novel of family life),

Fielding (the comic epic) and Smollett (the social novel). The general basis for the novel of the Enlightenment is considered to be Locke's thesis, according to which the fate of an individual depends on himself.

The literature of the late Enlightenment is traditionally connected with the intensive development of sentimentalism, the most distinguished representatives of which are considered to be Goldsmith and Sterne, who were guided in their works by the ethical concepts of Um, who suggested subordinating morals not to sense but to sensibility, which testified to the crisis of the Enlightenment realism.

The epoch of Enlightenment ends in England with the *Gothic novel* of Radcliffe, Walpole and Beckford, which marked the period of pre-Romanticism. According to the textbooks this genre continues the traditions of the realistic novel of the Enlightenment, of Richardson and Fielding in particular, being inferior to it in the description of life but having the advantage of a deeper psychological analysis. The main achievement of the pre-Romantic novel is claimed to be the overcoming of the antihistoricity typical of the Enlightenment. Lately this viewpoint has been successfully contradicted by N. Pakhsaryan in her article 'Ирония судьбы' века Просвещения: обновленная литература, демонстрирующая 'исчерпанность старого'? (*Зарубежная литература второго тысячелетия* 2001: 69–116).

Summarizing all the afore-mentioned we may come to the following conclusion: according to the textbooks all English literature of the 18th century is automatically referred to as *Enlightenment literature*. The term widely used in scholarly and educational literature is that of the *Enlightenment novel*, which is based on rationalistic philosophy, criticizes the bourgeois society and believes in the possibility of the improvement of human nature. However, modern scholars distinguish between the Enlightenment and non-Enlightenment literature of the period. Within the latter we find the erotic novel, the popular novel, (when we see the use of the plots and genres of philosophical prose, the non-Enlightenment socio-psychological novel of rococo or sentimental novel). Here as well we should mention the 18th-century libertine literature, which contradicted the Enlightenment moral code. Besides, the Enlighteners themselves were cautious about using the term *novel*, which they mostly attributed to the medieval romances, picaresques and antique love stories. Today the Enlightenment literature includes the neoclassical poems of Pope, the philo-

sophical prose of Swift and Defoe and the 'petty bourgeois' or 'tearful' dramas of Steele and Fielding. But of course the most interesting and innovative genre of the period was the novel. The genre itself was just in the germ and was interpreted as 'news' (Михайлов А.В. 1997: 411). The flourishing of the novel meant the aesthetic acceptance of the narrative about modern life.

The novel tradition of the Enlightenment is widely recognized in Russian literary criticism, which is reflected in the study courses and curricula. It is believed that it was through the English Enlightenment novel that this genre approximated the 19th-century realistic novel. Meanwhile, as Pakhsaryan justly points out, the notions '*Enlightenment novel*' and *the novel of the epoch of Enlightenment* are incorrectly identified, while the development of the genre of the novel in this period did not coincide with the evolution of Enlightenment ideas and, as mentioned before, the genre itself was not included in the genre system of the period and formed with it controversial relationships. The main concern of the novel of that time was the freedom of genre and not its convenience for expressing Enlightenment ideas. The main achievement of the novel of this period was the acknowledgement of this freedom and not the 'progressive' ideological content, and not even the 'true-to-life depiction of reality', which are first and foremost mentioned whenever the poetics of the Enlightenment novel is discussed.

Nowadays it is customary to distinguish two types of the 18th-century novel — the *rococo novel* and the *sentimental novel*. At the beginning of their development the poetic of both types was joint if not synthesized, later they would divert and form independent types of the novel. In both types the main thing becomes not the reflection of reality but its perception. The innovative character reflects itself in the playing with 'novelistic traditions'. The 18th-century novelists are not only overcoming 'bookishness', but are trying to analyze the correlation of this bookishness and the real. Henceforth the atmosphere of an informal chat. Easy talk with the reader is of great importance for the novel of the new time. It becomes the poetological principle which determined the prevalence of the first person narrative or (as in Fielding) the third person narrative with endless authorial digressions and speculations about the events described, as well as things having no connection to them.

The freedom of genre is to the utmost reflected in the process of 'plunging into the space of intellectual and emotional reflectivity' which is generally characteristic for the 18th century. (Свидерская 1996: 292).

If we take into consideration this concept, the traditional picture of the Enlightenment novel's evolution will look quite different. First, we should have in mind that the novel genre was in the state of formation throughout the whole of the 18th century, and we cannot talk about any definite canonical genre characteristics. None of the 18th-century authors was a professional writer, and their works could be rather qualified as experimental attempts to give a new view of reality. The first interpretations of this new view of the world and the individual were given in the works of Defoe and Swift. Their most famous novels are not just reflections of reality and human fate, but rather artistic reflections of different rational schemes of human existence. Therefore they can be justly attributed to philosophical prose, although their initial philosophic theses are diametrically opposite.

The search and analysis of the correlation of art and reality, life and fiction may be observed in the middle period of the English Enlightenment in the works of the outstanding authors — Richardson, Fielding and Smollett. Traditional educational literature attributes to them the highest achievements of the Enlightenment realism (the term itself should be understood as reflection of reality from the view point of its compatibility or incompatibility with the ideal of the Enlightenment, which in its turn contradicts the notion of realism). In the textbooks the analysis of the works of these authors is usually reduced to their ideological content directed against bourgeois reality, criticism of the social order and morals which deform human nature. The greatest shortcoming of such an approach from the viewpoint of modern scholarship is the absence of a serious analysis of artistic principles which determined the deeply innovative poetics of the novel as a new genre. As a rule the scholars used to limit themselves to the analysis of the composition of the novel and the type of hero, whereas the real face of a literary epoch can be identified only through an aesthetic approach. Thus, for example, we don not find in the textbooks the analysis of the plots, but just the statement that in the 18th century the novel plot was substituted by 'a real story', which in its turn enables the authors to attribute these novels to the Enlightenment realism.

Meanwhile the analysis of the plot gives different results. The creative activity of the three afore-mentioned authors develops within the course of identical artistic search characteristic of the epoch: the essence of human nature and the adequate form to reflect this essence. The indisputable leaders in this triad were Richardson and Fielding who were in a certain sense opponents and creators of two different traditions within which the further development of the West-European novel would take place: the novel of adventure (the open road novel) and the novel of character (the psychological novel). Smollett's achievements are usually more modestly evaluated.

At first glance Smollett, like Fielding, seems to be developing the traditions of the 'open road' novel founded by Cervantes. Anyhow, Smollett's view of human nature is different from that of Fielding, who generally shared the optimistic prognosis of Locke and Shaftesbury. Smollett was more close to the pessimism of Hobbes and Mandeville, who perceived the individual first and foremost as an egoistic creature. Therefore in his novel *The History of Peregrine Pickle* he developed not so much Cervantes's tradition but rather the tradition of the picaresque, which was closely connected with the poetics of the baroque. Here we can draw a parallel with Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe*, where the author managed to achieve a particular dramatic and even tragic tension of the conflict caused by the unsolvable interior contradictions of the main characters. On the one hand in Smollett's works we can trace the influence of these dramatic contradictions, but on the other hand he is strongly influenced by the dynamics of the intrigue found in Fielding. The action of the novel unfolds itself rapidly. The main feature of the protagonist is evident from the very beginning — it is his desire to enjoy life at the expense of others as well as his unscrupulous striving for leadership. Eventually it becomes clear that this character lacks motivation as his behavior is not the result of the artistic logic implied but is fully determined by Hobbes's philosophical thesis. Quite enigmatic and unmotivated remains in the novel the pathological hatred of the mother towards her son, as well as the strong affection that Comodore Tranion feels for the boy.

In the modern realistic novel the quantity of the events has qualitative results, due to which we can usually trace, when analysing the plot, the sequence of the situations which produce essential changes either in the characters of the heroes or in the general world

picture. We cannot find this in Smollett's novel. The endless adventures and tricks of the protagonist do not add much to his character, which is mainly based on the egoistic wish to satisfy all his needs. This selfishness and vanity increase as he becomes older, though Peregrine is not devoid of generosity, the feeling of justice and honour. The expansion of the space (the action is shifted from rural England to continental Europe — France and Netherlands) does not result in any artistic generalization: there he gets involved in the same whirlpool of endless adventures. During his travel Peregrine meets different people and the novel involves more and more characters belonging to different classes and professions. Smollett makes an attempt to give pictures of social vices, but these pictures, unlike the dynamic plot, are extremely static. We may get the impression that giving these contrasting pictures the author tried somehow to provide motives for the protagonist's behavior and therefore his character. Thus the man and his life are presented here as a logical sequence of events and actions limited exclusively by the selfish ego of the hero. At the end of the novel Peregrine realizes that life is much broader than his ego. Being confronted with the similar but more powerful egos he finds himself at the very bottom — in prison, and it is due to those people whose feelings and interests he ignored that he gets out. It is hard to give any philosophical explanation for this denouement.

The traditional elements of the plot structure of this novel, such as exposition, moments of complications, climax and denouement, are either shifted or absent. This results in the difficulty to define and characterize the conflict. Social vices exposed by Smollett are shown rather as the products of human nature as such than the results of the nonsensical organization of the society. Evil can be met at all levels of the social structure as its main pivot is individualism and egoism. These qualities become characteristic of the world picture created by the author in his novel. He is not hiding his own attitude to what is happening, though by introducing separate stories and creating the afore-mentioned static pictures he tries to achieve objectivity.

Smollett's aesthetic searches were very much in tune with his time. His works are characterized by the interaction of realism with parody sometimes bordering on sharp grotesque. In the plot itself we find reminiscences of Fielding and Richardson. Besides, Smollett creates a chaotically baroque world, where one mosaic picture is rapidly overlapped by another. It is the author who is in search of the moral

ideal, not his hero, and finally this ideal is embodied in the inhabitants of the 'fortress'. If at the beginning this company provoked laughter by their incongruity, then at the end of the novel, as Peregrine's coldness and hardheartedness grow, the old Tranion and his company arouses sympathy and affection. Thus Smollett joins the tradition of creating funny, touching, queer people who are alienated from the world of egoistic interests and vanity.

Another important aesthetic principle of Smollett's art is its playful quality. Play interjects all the levels of the novel beginning with the 'innocent' games of Peregrine as a child and finishing with the speculations about theatre and the arts. In a classical novel the main drive of the plot is the development of characters through time. In Smollett's novel the main principle of organizing the plot is theatricality: each character is playing his/her part, changing masks depending on the circumstances. Smollett is a master of the dialogue and his dialogues, not less expressive than those of Fielding, by far surpass his authorial narrative.

And finally another important feature which is also determined by the peculiarities of the plot structure: it is the absence of a unifying *chronotope*. There are images of the road, castle, home, tavern, parish, a foreign country, but there is no integral artistic space, and as a result — no poeticizing of the world as such. Therefore we see that Smollett's novel *Peregrine Pickle* is closer to the rococo tradition and rather questions the Enlightenment ideology than follows it, though trying to give examples of 'human natures' which are capable of self-sacrifice and disinterested devotion, but such examples are scarce and are not socially determined. The afore-given example testify to the fact that the works of the three major English novelists of the mature Enlightenment need revising both from the viewpoint of their belonging to a particular artistic trend as well as from the viewpoint of their aesthetic principles.

Sentimentalism occupies a very special place in English literature, the highest achievements of which are traditionally connected with the last period of Enlightenment (Sterne, Goldsmith, Mackenzie). So far sentimental literature, beginning with the Graveyard school of poetry and ending with the novels of Stern, has been interpreted as the crisis of the so-called Enlightenment rationality. So actually it was opposed to all the preceding literature of the century. Meanwhile the sensitive character of Sentimentalists is not devoid of common sense. In our

opinion the sentimental novel should be regarded as a further stage in the development of the genre of the novel without subordinating it to the development of Enlightenment ideas. This novel revealed new perspectives in reflecting the internal world of an individual, exposing its complexity and ambivalence. It was exactly within the confines of the English sentimental novel, Sterne's in particular, that new aesthetic principles were germinating which later paved the way for new artistic systems.

By way of a conclusion I would like to underline once more that the 18th-century English novel is waiting for its objective disinterested evaluation. And modern educational literature needs not only reassessed views and approaches but also the reflection of the polemics which is going on concerning different established and canonized statements.

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Relatives or Strangers? Ch. Dickens and G. K. Chesterton about America

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The problem of national self-identity can be approached from various perspectives. Its reflection in literature and writer's position on the topic gives us facts sometimes different from the sociological or political analysis. The process of self-identification of the Americans as a new nation opposed to the Old World of native Britain, the view of the British on the USA culture form an interesting topic for investigation. Some aspects of the problem have been widely disputed among scholars. (Abbot 1999, Barczewski 2000, Roth 1995) In this paper we concentrate on one example of gradual forming of British-American national mythology. We are going to speak about two British authors expressing their views on America: Charles Dickens and G. K. Chesterton. Our choice of material is not accidental: the two writers did a lot in developing and forming of British national stereotype; their "Englishness" is obvious and much talked about. Both of them had a great interest in America, visited the country and wrote about it, thus forming the American stereotype among their compatriots. We shall base our speculations mainly on their travel notes about their lecture tours to the USA: *American Notes* by Dickens and *The Sidelights on New London and Newer York* by Chesterton.

Dickens' impact on Chesterton's creative individuality was very strong. The latter himself often assumed the importance of this influence and tried in many ways to stress his connection with the Victorian classic. Thus, in his *Autobiography* he proudly mentions that one of his relatives inspected British prisons together with Dickens. Most probably we can speak about certain correspondence in their creativity. Maybe this resemblance allowed Chesterton to write

an excellent book about Dickens highly praised by critics all around the world. All this makes even more interesting to compare their views on American culture and to specify the images of the USA created in their essays. The fact that both writers visited actually the same places in America (New York, Washington, Boston, Philadelphia.), the routes of their tours nearly coincided, gives more basis for comparative analysis of the texts. With an interval of a hundred years English writers saw and described the same parts of the USA. Dickens visited the USA in 1842 and after that published his *American Notes*, the book which was widely admired and severely criticized both in Britain and America. The American critics felt insulted by the condescending tone of the *Notes* and even though later the author tried to apologize, the situation was quite unpleasant. The book is written in the traditional form of travel notes. It is a journal of the author's journey around the country enriched by his critical and positive comments and speculations about American prisons, slavery, schools, hospitals, farmers, etc. His follower and disciple Chesterton also went to lecture in the USA. He was there twice — in 1920 and 1930. As a result there appeared two books of essays: *What I Have Seen in America* (1922) and *Sidelights on New London and Newer York* (1932). The latter is not a traditional travel's journal in its form, but a collection of essays explaining and exploring the inner life and essence of the American civilization, an attempt to compare the Old and New Worlds, tracing their congeneric origins. Actually it consists of three loosely connected sections. The first one is dedicated to the follies of contemporary London, thoroughly Americanized and demoralized; the middle — and the best — section contains his American impressions and speculations about the country in comparison with its ancestor — the Old World; the third is made up of a number of essays speaking about different aspects of human life. We shall concentrate on the first two parts. It must also be mentioned here that in his interest in America Chesterton must have been, at least to some extent, influenced by Dickens. Writing his famous biography of Dickens (1911) he paid special attention to Dickens' travels in the USA and expressed his own attitude to the country.

It has become a commonplace to consider that Dickens rejected America and that America in its turn rejected his *American Notes*. His definitely negative attitude to some American institutions and phenomena, especially his very critical approach to the lack of copyright

produced the indignant reaction of the local press. In his book *Ch. Dickens* Chesterton writes that the writer came to the USA ready to love and accept the country:

He was quite prepared to be pleased with America. He would have been pleased with it if it had not been so much pleased with itself ... His admiration did not change because America changed. It changed because America did not change. (Chesterton 1906: 99)

It's hard not to agree with this notion when reading *American Notes*. At first Dickens was open and eager to enjoy the new strange world. In Boston everything seemed to him much better and beautiful than in England: the air was pure and transparent, the customs offices were polite, the passers-by — friendly, doctors and teachers at the Perkin Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the blind were real miracle workers, the prisons were clean and almost cosy. Though the trains seemed awful and dirty to him, the relations between the passengers charmed the British gentleman, especially the chivalrous approach of men to women (this American quality Dickens highly praised throughout the book). But as the traveller came closer to New York the country seemed to split into two parts. On the one hand he saw charming corners more like some wonderful fairy tale land, where even human sufferings and mischievous deeds seemed to be something bright:

We were now in a narrow channel, with sloping banks on either side, besprinkled with pleasant villas, and made refreshing to the sight by turf and trees. Soon we shot in quick succession past a lighthouse, a madhouse (how the lunatics flung up their caps and roared in sympathy with the headlong engine and the driving tide!), a jail, and other buildings; and so emerged into a noble bay, whose waters sparkled in the now cloudless sunshine like nature's eyes turned up to heaven. (Dickens 1912: 86)

On the other hand he describes dirt and filth, eternal and endless, the pigs that were walking in herds around Broadway among fashionably dressed ladies under bright parasoles:

They are the city scavengers, these pigs. Ugly brutes they are, having, for the most part, scanty brown backs, like the lids of old horsehair trunks, spotted with unwholesome black blotches. They have long, gaunt legs, too, and such peaked snouts, that if one of them could be persuaded to sit for his profile, nobody would recognize it for a pig's likeness. (Ib. 94-95)

Though Dickens acknowledged that being a large city New York possesses all the bad qualities of a huge town, where good and evil always come together, his negative attitude to the surroundings does not change much when he describes lesser cities — Philadelphia, Washington and Cincinnati. This irritation with something subtle and elusive, unclear for the writer himself, breaks out even in the lines where he does not mean any criticism and keeps to his usual generally ironic tone. This is how Philadelphia is described:

It is a handsome city, but distractingly regular. After walking about it

for an hour or two I felt that I would have given the world for a crooked street. The collar of my coat appeared to stiffen, and the brim of my hat to expand, beneath its Quakerly influence. My hair shrunk into a sleek short crop, my hands folded themselves upon my breast of their own calm accord ... (Ib. 106)

In Washington the motif of dirt starts anew:

As Washington may be called the headquarters of tobacco-tinctured saliva, the time is come when I must confess, without any disguise, that the prevalence of those two odious practices of chewing and expectorating began about this time to be anything but agreeable, and soon became most offensive and sickening. (Ib. 121-122)

Now the author is irritated by the food served on boats and in hotels, eternal filth, lack of comfort: in short everything which would not be noticed by an experienced traveler who feels sympathy for the country he explores. Step by step the motif of dirt starts to dominate the whole narrative:

In all modes of travelling, the American customs, with reference to the means of personal cleanliness and

wholesome ablution, are extremely negligent and filthy; and I strongly incline to the belief that a considerable amount of illness is referable to this cause. (Ib. 168)

In this scenery of bogs, dirt and spits the positive impressions, such as a charming episode with a young mother going to Cincinnati to meet her husband, are nearly lost. Purity of love and youth becomes overshadowed by general filth.

This world of a new civilization is juxtaposed to the mighty and beautiful nature. Together with the author we are carried away by the power of the Niagara in sprays of which all routine problems are lost and in its thunder we hear the call of eternity.

The last chapter of the book is different from the others, though it clearly reveals the writer's approach. It can be regarded as a separate article in which the author severely criticizes the institution of slavery. Dickens comes to the conclusion that to a great extent it lies at the basis of the state regime.

Shall we cry shame on the brutality of those who hamstring cattle, and spare the lights of Freedom upon earth who notch the ears of men and women, cut pleasant posies in the shrinking flesh, learn to write with pens of red-hot iron on the human face, rack their poetic fancies for liveries of mutilation which their slaves shall wear for life and carry to the grave, break living limbs as did the soldiery who mocked and slew the Saviour of the world, and over legends of the tortures practised on each other by the pagan Indians, and smile upon the cruelties of Christian men? Shall we, so long as these things last, exult above the scattered remnants of that stately race, and triumph in the white enjoyment of their broad possessions? Rather, for me, restore the forest and the Indian village; in lieu of Stars and Stripes, let some poor feather flutter in the breeze; replace the streets and squares by wigwam; and though the death-song of a hundred haughty warriors fill the air, it will be music to the shriek of one unhappy slave. (Ib. 256)

These lines are full of pain and indignation. In the same part Dickens reveals one more ugly feature of American democracy. He calls it an absolute distrust to everybody and everything, or, as he quibbles, an absolute trust to all kinds of gossips.

...you no sooner set up an idol firmly, than you are sure to pull it down and dash it into fragments: and this, because directly you reward a benefactor, or a public servant, you distrust him, merely because he *is* rewarded; and immediately apply yourselves to find out, either that you have been too bountiful in your acknowledgements, or he remains in his deserts. Any man who attains a high place among you, from the President downwards, may date his downfall from that moment; for any printed lie that any notorious villain pens, although it militate directly against the character and conduct of a life, appeals at once to your distrust, and is believed. (Ib. 296)

It is obvious that in his judgements Dickens is snobbish and arrogant, being proud of his belonging to the old world. He even does not try to overcome his British prejudices. He constantly compares the USA and Britain but never makes any links between the states and does not take into consideration the fact that the USA was Britain's descendant. America for him is divided by a deep abyss from the Old World. Even when Dickens admires and praises some of the American achievements — its penitentiary system, Philadelphia fountains, hospitals and asylums — he is constantly feels his British superiority and looks at Americans in a condescending manner. This makes clear why American readership felt so much abused by his book. Like most of his liberal compatriots and contemporaries Dickens hoped that the USA would develop the ideals of British democracy. But when he arrived in the USA he realized that it was not the Utopia he dreamt of and instinctively started to reject its mode of life. Chesterton tries to explain:

The first instinct was to look across the Atlantic to where lay a part of ourselves already Republican, the van of the advancing English on the road of liberty. Nearly all the great Liberals of the nineteenth century enormously idealized America. On the other hand, to the Americans, fresh from their first epic of arms, the defeated mother country, with its coronets and county magistrates, was only a broken feudal keep. (Chesterton 1906: 95)

It seems to him that Dickens appeared to Americans as a remnant of this keep, that is why they considered his behavior defiant.

For Chesterton himself, long before he visited the country, America was Britain's continuation, the state wrought by Englishmen and thus the continuation and integral part of English culture. In 1905 in the essay *The Fallacy of The New Nation* he wrote:

America does not appear by any means as particularly fresh or untouched. She appears with all the weakness and weariness of modern England or of any other Western power. In her politics she has broken exactly as England has broken up, into a bewildering opportunism and insincerity. In the matter of war and national attitude towards war, her resemblance to England is even more manifest and melancholy. (Chesterton 1969: 265)

In *Sidelights* Chesterton criticized the condescending tone of Dickens' *American Notes*. He noticed that false patriotism and national complacency which the writer makes fun of when speaking about Americans were not the less his own features typical of any Englishman.

Above all, the genuine Englishman attacks a sin that is not merely American, but English also. The eternal, complacent iteration of patriotic half-truths; the perpetual buttering of one's self all over with the same stale butter; above all, the big distant enemies, or the very urgent challenges to very distant enemies, the cowardice so habitual and unconscious that it wears the plumes of courage — all this is an English temptation as well as an American one. (Chesterton 1970: 108)

All Chesterton's references to America are full of sympathy and deep tolerance, and he was enthusiastically welcomed in the USA. In all the cities where he lectured he gathered large audiences, universities awarded him with honorary titles and celebrated his visit. Chesterton's kindness and mild humour won all hearts. As his wife joked after their American tour of 1920, "I did not know I was the wife of a great man until I came to America." (Pearce 1997: 254) The *New York Evening Post* wrote: "His basic kindness is infectious; his vast mirth appeals to many hearts. Few English authors could have been more certain of an affectionate welcome." (Ib. 255). But in spite of all this warm

reception it would be false to say that he loved the country with all his heart.

His second American tour in 1930 was not less successful. Chesterton wished to visit the country once more and was really delighted when it became possible. This second lecture tour appeared to be more important than the first, not by chance it was widely reflected in his later writings. He described it in detail in his *Authobiography* and impressions of it were generalized in the *Sidelights*. But wherever he wrote about this American journey Chesterton was deeply self-ironical and much less critical of the country than after his first visit. For example, this is how he describes one of the episodes in the *Authobiography* (at the moment of writing Chesterton was in his sixties and very fat):

...my last American tour consisted of inflicting no less than ninety lectures on people who never did me any harm; and the remainder of the adventure, which was very enjoyable, breaks up like a dream into isolated incidents. An aged negro porter, with a face like a walnut, whom I discouraged from brushing my hat, and who rebuked me saying, "Ho, young man. Yo's losing yo dignity before yo times. Yo's got to lok nice for de girls. (Chesterton 1986: 310)

Sometimes he is embarrassed by the American lack of education and intelligence, but at the same time it is obvious that the same impression he could have got in any part of the world:

An agonizing effort to be fair to the subtleties of the evolutionary controversy, in addressing the students of Notre Dame, Indiana, in a series on "Victorian Literature", of which no record remained except that one student wrote in the middle of his blank note-book, "Darwin did a lot of harm." I am not at all certain that he was wrong; but it was something of a simplification of my reasons for being agnostic about the agnostic deductions, in the debates about Lamarck and Mendel. (Ib. 310)

But even here the self-irony is obvious. Chesterton was an ardent opponent of Darwinism and knew well that in his criticism he was sometimes too sophisticated and violent.

Speaking about the *Sidelights* we must mention that its peculiarities are first of all based on the author's approach and message. First of all it is an analysis of the present situation and development of the author's idea that every nation has its roots in other national character and history. The USA is the continuation of British culture and the ideas of the French Revolution, nourished by Puritanism. All this explains the composition of the book. The first part is dedicated to the life of London in the 1930s, the young generation of Britons, which was, as Chesterton confessed, strange and obscure and alien for him. The second part describes the New World, unknown, strange and alien in the traditional meaning of the word. Thus the author's target is not a juxtaposition but comparison of the two cultures. To reach it, as he wrote in the foreword to the book: "In judging the Rising Generation, in judging the New World, I have tried to avoid the least suggestion that the judge himself is not in danger of the judgement." (Chesterton 1970: VII)

The essays in *Sidelights* differ much from Dickens' *American Notes* due to their genre form. They are by no means travel notes, a journal, concrete impressions and episodes are rare. Generally they present an attempt to think over, understand and summarize some peculiarities of American life and thus find features common and different between two national archetypes. At the same time, Chesterton always sees Dickens as his interlocutor in the discussion. He develops some of his predecessor's ideas and tries to explain some of the American features described in *American Notes*. We have already mentioned Dickens' hostility to the phenomenon which he defines as constant mutual distrust to each other. Chesterton gives an explanation of the fact:

There is nothing the matter with Americans except their ideals. ... The real, natural Americans are candid, generous, capable of a beautiful wonder and gratitude; enthusiastic about things external to themselves; easily contented and not particularly conceited. They have been deliberately and dogmatically taught to be conceited. They have been systematically educated in a theory of enthusiasm, which degrades it into mere egotism. The American has received as a sort of religion the notion that blowing his own trumpet is as important as the trump of doom. (Ib. 83)

To Chesterton's mind the USA was nothing but a wonderful utopia of British democratic dreams which should have been brought to life by the first settlers from Britain, but was destroyed by absolutely false doctrines. The state was planned as an agricultural country of farmers who dreamt of obtaining freedom in the vast spaces of Northern America. But the dream materialized in the opposite way: the main position was occupied by urban civilization. The writer's religious views influenced his attitude to the USA. Being a converted Roman Catholic Chesterton does not agree with Puritanism and associated the drawbacks of modern America with the peculiarities of their religion. Puritanism is the religion of the urban middle class and it were the Puritans who built the USA. Britain was the source of American culture and the writer stresses that the Americans are not to be blamed for this fallacy. Thus we see that his concept of the history of the USA was quite utopian.

Comparing American and British imperial policies Chesterton emphasizes similarity and propinquity.

It was not the conception of life outlined in the Declaration of Independence that was wrong; it was the thousand things that have come in since to perplex it; and many of them have come from England and from Europe. The great Revolution failed to attain those high levels of equality and luminous justice to which its first promise had pointed; not because Americans were wrong to resist a German called George the Third, but because they continued to revere a Frenchman called Calvin, a Scotchman called Macaulay, an Englishman called Herbert Spencer, and all the rest of the dreary Whig and Puritan and industrial rationalism of what we call in England the Victorian Age. ... America, instead of being the open agricultural commonwealth for which its founders hoped, has become the dumping-ground of all the most dismal ideas of decaying epochs in Europe from Calvinism to industrialism. (Ib. 201)

The Americans and English are related, in his opinion, in their optimism, but if in Britain it is the basis of radicalism and therefore of inner independence, in America it brings to extreme dependence on their false rules. They would become free, states Chesterton, only when they got rid of their slavery of permanent smiles.

Though Chesterton's attitude to the USA was to a great extent influenced by Dickens it was mainly formed by his own conception of national character. Actually in all his essays concerning the USA Chesterton carries on a constant dialogue with Dickens. If the latter always juxtaposed Britain and America never taking into account deep root connections between the two states, considering snobbishly that the USA is an absolutely alien country, for Chesterton it is a nation formed by his compatriots, and as such — a part of British culture.

As it follows from his writings that he believed that every nation was formed step by step and kept in its mentality all impacts of the cultures that had come into contact with it during its history. That is why American civilization cannot be regarded in isolation of the British one. While criticizing Dickens for his condescending tone, Chesterton spoke only about Britain as the source of the USA, not taking into account the Dutch or the Spanish. Eager to express his deep respect for the New World Chesterton still remains an Englishman sure of the superiority of his nation. He saw a definite danger in the retroactive process of the Americanization of the Old World. He jested in one of his poems:

Might not Americanization
Be best applied to its own nation?
.....
There will be quite a large attendance
When we Declare our Independence.
(Chesterton 1995: 21)

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Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered: The Reception of Virginia Woolf's Feminist Writing in Estonia

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There are few authors whose critical reception has undergone such a dramatic shift as Virginia Woolf's who has been transformed from a minor modernist stylist into a feminist figurehead and pioneer of gender subversion in the past fifty years (e.g., cf. Allen 1954: 351 and Marcus 1981 or Bowlby 1997). By now, her oeuvre and life have spawned something of a Woolf industry that the author, with her ambivalent attitude towards public recognition and a fear of "settling into a figure" (Luckhurst 2002: 2), would probably have been critical of. Nowadays accepted into the most stringent versions of the Western canon by critics as conservative as Harold Bloom (1994: 403–415), Woolf is one of the few modernists who are being read by scholars as well as by "common readers" all over the world, even reaching near-bestseller status and Hollywood re-imagining (Daldry 2002). She has indeed been canonised by the high-brow establishment but also embraced by the general public who has been entranced by the drama of her life and/or the topicality of her politics.

Yet, Woolf, as any other author, speaks in a different language when translated into different cultural contexts. The present paper seeks to analyse the reception of Woolf's feminist work in Estonia, a country that is (re)discovering modernism and feminism, the two key paradigms of analysing Woolf, after a forced Soviet hiatus, excited about the first and cautious about the latter. Of the two, the focus will be on the reactions to feminism, a commonplace in Western academia, but a new arrival in Estonian public discourse. Thus, after briefly introducing shifts in global reception of Woolf and the specificity of

the Estonian context, the article will study the framing of Woolf's texts and their feminism in the fore- and afterwords of the published Estonian translations that define the author and help shape the responses of the readers.

Woolf herself dismissed the word "feminism", possibly in a wartime suspicion of ideological -isms of any kind (Woolf 1966: 137). However, the bulk of her work, especially her passionate yet lyrical polemic *A Room of One's Own*, other essays (most famously "Professions for women"), diary and letters, testifies to her strong commitment to the critique of the patriarchal society and an active engagement with a project of social reform that would be called feminist today. The same sentiment can be found in her novels, from the questioning of the idealised Victorian family in *To the Lighthouse* to the gender subversion in *Orlando*. She is acutely aware of the possible critical reading of her feminist (or womanist?) stance, as after memorably describing a woman writer's need to kill "the angel in the house", the culturally prescribed feminine role, in order to write, she acknowledges that "men would be shocked" by such acts of free female self-expression (Woolf 1993: 1989). Indeed, her feminist texts were not always understood even by her friends, both male and female, not to mention more sceptical readers, and this misreading and misunderstanding by both fans and critics has continued to this date, with Woolf's project itself frequently lost in translation.

Woolf's position in the literary canon has been established by her modernism, initially as a lesser Proust or Joyce, of late as a major innovator in her own right. In most countries, as Luckhurst (2002: 8) demonstrates, her arrival coincides with that of modernism, be it in the 1920s-1930s, as in Western Europe, or in the second half of the 20th century in the socialist and post-socialist Eastern Europe. Estonia is no exception as the first text by Woolf to be published was *To the Lighthouse* in 1983. In keeping with the situation in other Eastern European countries, in Estonia, too, Woolf was seen as a representative of the modernist aesthetic that challenged the canonical socialist realism compulsory in the local literary scene, her radical edge disguised as a "humanism" (cf. Wicht 2002: 107). The alterior space of modernism stood also for the alterior intellectual space of the West, unattainable to the people behind the Iron Curtain (ib. 109). The ambiguity that characterises Woolf's writing suited the ambiguity of

intellectual existence in Eastern Europe and made her a beguiling literary example.

Many scholars (e.g. Brosnan 1997: 2) have argued that there are three phases in the reception of Woolf in the Anglophone academia: first as a novelist and modernist, second as an essayist and feminist and third as a diarist and letter writer. The Estonian public has not had access to Woolf's diaries or letters, and none of her many biographies has been translated. Thus the Estonian "Woolf" only speaks the language of modernism and feminism, although local literary scholars have done important work in all three directions. The present article will pursue the feminist line, in the belief that it is the feminist Woolf that has had the greatest public impact in Western Europe and North America, but also in post-socialist countries such as Poland (Terentowicz-Fotyga 2002: 143).

The fate of Woolf's texts has been rather varied in different European countries, although there is a general tendency to follow the three stages of Woolf reception that have prevailed in the English-speaking world. While modernism was contentious in Eastern Europe, feminism posed a problem in several Western European nations. Thus, whereas the full text of *To the Lighthouse* was published in French before English, Woolf's feminist texts were initially found to be culturally untranslatable there (Luckhurst 2002: 9). Only two European nations have started their dialogue with Woolf through *A Room of One's Own*, the Spanish in 1936 and the Icelanders in 1973 (Luckhurst 2002: 10). However, it was the feminist texts that marked her as an outsider in the 1930s that made her popular among academic and "common" readers in the aftermath of the feminist movement in the 1970s, even if the relationship between Woolf's work and its feminist commentators has not always been easy (Moi 1985: 2–8).

Although the situation need not be as dire as claimed by Harold Bloom, who fulminates against "current critical maenads" in an attempt to reclaim Woolf as "a more distinguished novelist" (Bloom 1994: 405), it can nevertheless be argued that nowadays the frame of feminist reading has become near-compulsory in the Anglo-American academia and thus Woolf reception "has to cast off the feminist burden of the 1970s" to embrace texts and perspectives other than the feminist ones (Luckhurst 2002: 12). This new canonical reading has constructed a discursive "Woolf" no less binding than the previous

ones it sought to deconstruct and which, as Bloom has pointed out, misunderstands Woolf's primary concerns:

She would have had them battle for their rights, certainly, but hardly by devaluing the aesthetic in their unholy alliance with academic pseudo-Marxists, French mock philosophers, and multicultural opponents of all intellectual standards whatsoever. By a room of one's own, she did not mean an academic department of one's own, but rather a context in which they could emulate her by writing fiction worthy of Sterne and Austen, and criticism commensurate with that of Hazlitt and Pater. (Bloom 1994: 408–409)

Bloom is certainly unfair to feminist literary scholars in his overly general and unreferenced attack but he points to the shift in academic vogue that has resulted in a deluge of studies exploiting various feminist paradigms. Woolf's feminist convictions were certainly more firmly established than Bloom would concede (demonstrated, for example, in her letters (e.g., Woolf 2003: 126, 427) or biography (e.g., Rosenfeld 2000: 12, 97), but she does not easily fit the mould of a radical political theorist into which she is frequently placed. Indeed, Woolf's feminism was less of a fixed ideological stance and more of a singular and intuitive response to the world. She is frequently angry at the wrongs of patriarchy, especially when it comes to women's education and intellectual freedom, and presents her cogently argued political stand for a more egalitarian world, yet does so without ever abandoning her poetic sensibilities and unique literary expression. In the words of Natania Rosenfeld (2000: 6), she represents "unabashed commitment to politics *through* an aesthetic practice". Thus, to Woolf from an exclusively political perspective is impoverishing and even misleading, or, to return to Bloom (1994: 408), "to be solemn about Woolf, to analyze her as a political theorist and cultural critic, is to be not at all Woolfian". The same argument, although from a very different ideological angle, is presented by Toril Moi (1985: 8) who demonstrates how several Anglo-American feminist critics such as Elaine Showalter have misread Woolf's feminist project that is more radical than a narrow liberal feminist perspective would allow.

Woolf always saw herself as an outsider, excluded by her gender, feminism and anti-imperialism, and even called for the founding of a society of outsiders in her essay *Three Guineas* (Woolf 1966: 106–

113). The multiple outsider status becomes a key to deciphering her life in a recent biography (Rosenfeld 2000). Ironically, in today's academia she is transformed into a primary insider, quotable and exploitable for a multitude of critical and theoretical schools. However, either as a canonical modernist or a feminist martyr, she makes a poor statue because of her ambivalence and fluidity. As she keeps on slipping away from her scholarly followers, there seems to be a need to define and fix her anew in each publication.

One of the loci for such containment or framing can be found in the fore- and afterwords of her texts. The notion of framing is here used in the sense suggested by Erving Goffman (1979: 1), as a formalised simplified stereotypical positioning that defines the actors' alignment in the situation and predicts their behaviour. In the given context, the frames used to define Woolf not only align her with regard to certain philosophies but also predicate the readers' reactions to her work, of necessity suggesting a preference for certain readings and excluding others. The "canonical" frames of defining Woolf in academic and non-academic contexts have been Bloomsbury, modernism, feminism and madness and they are echoed in the Estonian context as well, however grudgingly (Rähesoo 1997: 259). Yet not all of the frames are equally positioned in the Estonian context. For example the Bloomsbury legend the biographical glamour of which engulfs Woolf's writing in many countries has had relatively little currency here. Other angles, above all the feminist one, have not found easy domestication due to our historical circumstances.

Estonian public discourse has been markedly suspicious of feminist ideas that have become a commonplace in the Western academia and public debate. This is somewhat surprising in a country that has been extremely eager to adapt itself to the demands of the global marketplace. As demonstrated in earlier research on cultural transmission, the adoption of new mores has been highly selective, with the values and ideas most readily accepted belonging to the sphere of American-style business-centred worldview that lays a heavy emphasis on individualism and achievement (e.g. Vogelberg 1999). Consequently, the "soft" postmaterialist values associated with the Nordic social model have been backgrounded to date and issues related to gender have been marginalised, and, when associated with feminism, stigmatised (cf. Põldsaar 2002).

Yet, despite the suspicion, topics related to feminism and gender in general have been passionately discussed in Estonia and received considerable media attention, even if primarily a hostile one. This is in an interesting contrast to the situation in Poland where the increasingly patriarchal face of post-socialist society has led to the rise of a feminist movement that has also received Woolf as an inspiration, in the words of Aneta Górnicka-Boratynska, as central as “John Stuart Mill is for today’s liberals, Freud for psychoanalysts and neo-psychoanalysts, or Nietzsche for the postmodern critics of culture” (Terentowicz-Fotyga 2002: 143). In Estonia Woolf has remained a literary luminary, not a social icon. Estonians are, on the one hand bewitched by feminism but also bothered about its (possible) effects, and this makes most reactions bewildered. This confusion is likely to have informed the choices of the authors of the fore- and afterwords of translations who have had to position Woolf with regard to feminism, a key aspect to understanding of her work, without creating negative connotations this worldview is likely to evoke in an Estonian context.

Virginia Woolf has been cemented into the literary canon in Estonia as one of the most influential authors of the 20th century. Her most important works have been translated into Estonian: *To the Lighthouse* (*Tuletorni juurde*, 1983; re-issued in 2005), *A Room of One’s Own* (*Oma tuba*, 1994 and in a selection of Woolf’s essays in 1997), *Orlando* (1997), *Mrs Dalloway* (*Proua Dalloway*, 1998), *The Waves* (*Lained*, 1999). Despite the general scepticism towards feminism, two of the translations are either overtly feminist or have a strong feminist subtext. What more, the feminist classic *A Room of One’s Own* has been published twice and it was actually this text that opened the new wave of publications in the 1990s.

The present analysis will compare the fore- and afterwords of the translations of Woolf’s modernist and feminist texts. The corpus of reviews, excluding brief promotional texts by the publishers, was too small to allow for an adequate comparison with the techniques of framing used in the translations. All translations of Woolf have been provided with fore- or afterwords which contextualise the work and thereby define it for the Estonian reader. Most of the texts have also been published in the same series, Loomingu Raamatukogu, which makes the frames of reference used comparable and allows for generalisations on the positioning of Woolf and her feminism.

The first text to be published in Estonian, *To the Lighthouse* (*Tuletorni juurde*, 1983), has a thorough afterword by Malle Talvet (Woolf 1983: 148–152) that touches upon the general themes of Woolf reception listed above: formal experimentation (the word “modernism” is conspicuous by its absence; cf. Wicht quoted above), Bloomsbury, feminism and madness/suicide. Moreover, the opening paragraph celebrates the multiple layers in Woolf’s work and points out that her legacy has found different readerships, with literary scholars and women’s rights campaigners mentioned explicitly. Thus, the myth appears on the first acquaintance with the author and colours future encounters to the extent that the same tropes re-appear in other afterwords and newspaper reviews (e.g. Hella 1997, Kaldmaa 2005). Talvet’s introduction, as is to be expected, spends most of its bulk on the discussion of Woolf’s style and formal experimentation, but also to the introduction of all of her key works, a necessity in a situation where only a few people had access to foreign literature. Although Woolf’s person and personality are mentioned discreetly, the focus stays firmly on the work which is treated in a balanced manner. The narrative avoids the temptation of the romantic vision of the author consumed by her quest for the perfect form. Even the reference to Woolf’s suicide is sensitive, embedded in the context of discussing her last works. Although modernism is never mentioned explicitly, feminism is. It can be hypothesised that feminism was less of an ideological enemy than modernism and could be evoked explicitly, while modernism had to be hidden under other labels. As an instance of framing, Talvet’s afterword seeks to expand the reception of the author, not contain it in a narrow context, in its focus on the discussion of form that does not compel the reader to accept a vision of the author but directs them to engage with the texts themselves.

The afterwords to the later translations of modernist texts, *Mrs Dalloway* (*Proua Dalloway*, 1998) and *The Waves* (*Lained*, 1999), both by Riina Jesmin, are shorter (around one page) and more uneven, both in the selection of material and its presentation. Thus, despite its minimalism, the afterword for *Mrs Dalloway* (Woolf 1998: 173–174) focuses on the biography of the author, suggesting, among other things, that there is a link between the suicide theme in the novel and Woolf’s own history of mental disease. A cursory reference is made to love between women, but only to suggest that this could have been

caused by childhood sexual abuse. Not only is the association somewhat debatable, but the general angle chosen places Woolf's complex novel into something akin to tabloid frame. By framing the novel through the more sensational aspects of the author's life, the afterword invites the readers to interpret it in a biographical mode that is detrimental to the appreciation of the formal and philosophical undertones of the text.

The afterword for *The Waves* is marginally longer and stays more focused on the text at hand, with just a brief detour into the context of writing where references are made both to Woolf's vocal feminist engagement in the period and her friendship with Vita Sackville-West, two themes that have interested feminist critics as well (Woolf 1999: 205). Owing to the nature of the work discussed, gender issues are not highlighted and the majority of the text refers to the formal side of the novel, from its focus on rhythm and sensory perception to intertextuality. The references are presented in a fragmentary manner and, rather bizarrely, the reader is warned about the complexity of the work. Yet, the afterword frames the novel through the image of waves, rather than biography, although the lack of cohesion does not suggest a coherent discursive strategy.

In general, then, the modernist texts in Estonian translation do not follow the traditional four labels for the discussion of Woolf's novels, although they accompanied the first translation. The later versions are cursory and hurried, reflecting the shift in Estonian publishing culture in the late 1990s, and this cannot lead to far-reaching conclusions about social attitudes. Although references to feminism are shunned in the later texts, they are nevertheless not silenced. However, it might also be worth mentioning that the covers of the later translations, differently from the 1983 *To the Lighthouse*, are illustrated by the famous 1902 portrait of the young Virginia Woolf that frames the texts through the romantic representation of the personality of the author, who would have been considerably older during the time of writing of any of the works, as the fragile lady from the ivory tower of Bloomsbury rather than a socially aware thinker.

The feminist texts, for obvious reasons, demonstrate a greater awareness of gender as a central facet of Woolf's work. The first edition of *A Room of One's Own* has a very short foreword by the translator Malle Talvet, with the majority of the text dedicated to explaining the material reasons for Woolf's taking up the essay form,

her circle of interests and her general essayist tone. The text is notable for its lack of personal details of Woolf's life. The question of feminism and Woolf receives but passing notice. It is acknowledged that the text has become a classic of women's liberation but the main emphasis shifts away from the point. To quote: "Here Woolf, indeed treats the theme that had haunted her before — that of the difficulties that women — especially women writers — face in the world governed by men. However, what is equally important to her is the question of artistic creation, literary work, form and style."¹ The author of the preface shifts the focus not to this text as a key to feminist thought but, rather, makes a case for the argument that Woolf has dedicated herself to the plight faced by any author, regardless of his/her gender. To illustrate further: "She proves her main claims, that a writer who is bound by hatred and worry cannot create anything that is of lasting value, with such subtlety and wittiness that we have to admit with inevitable admiration that her — androgynous? — mind has managed to synthesise her anguish into a beautiful and balanced piece of art." That is, the political edge and agenda of the texts, as well as the influence it had had both for activist and academic feminism, remains unmentioned or unmentionable. Woolf appears as primarily a novelist who took some time off to write "easier" pieces to "guarantee a small regular income". Thus, in this framing feminism appears as a digression from her main concerns, rather than a serious commitment.

The reasons for the muting of a feminist content may be many. This could be an attempt to shield the author from stigmatisation with feminism, especially in the context of the time of publication, the beginning of new Estonian independence when talk of women's rights still bore a strong association with the forced pseudo-equality propagated by the Soviet government. Thus, the first introduction of feminist Woolf into Estonia does not present it as a strongly feminist text and makes no references to its iconic status in the Western women's rights movement and feminist criticism.

There is more explicitness in the afterword to *Orlando* by the translator, Riina Jesmin. The text is longer but here, too, the emphasis is on establishing Woolf as a central novelist of the modernist period. However, this afterword also uses the almost compulsory references to

¹ All translations of the Estonian texts in the paper are by Raili Põldsaar.

the life and social surroundings of Woolf, mentioning not just the importance of her illustrious Victorian background and the Bloomsbury circle but also her mental breakdowns and suicide, three central tropes of Woolf definition. The text also contains an explicit reference to Woolf's feminism, although only in passing. The subversive gender aspect of *Orlando* itself does not get extensive treatment. Instead, the text is described as a light-hearted prank, a brief respite from Woolf's "more worthy" work. Rather unexpectedly, more attention is dedicated to the ancestors of Vita Sackville-West, the inspiration behind the book, (three paragraphs) than to the shifting gender identity of the protagonist (one paragraph) (Woolf 1997b: 200). The brief paragraph on androgyny mentions that the "relationship between men and women" (ib.) was one of the favourite themes for Woolf but the wording does not hint at the possible political angle of the interest. Also, here, as well as in the previous case, the focus shifts onto the fact that Woolf's main concern is literature or women and literary creation. Thus, the frame of reference in Estonia was very different from that in the West where it would have been almost inconceivable to write about *A Room of One's Own* without placing it in the context of the feminist movement or *Orlando* without reference to queer theory. Both exclusion from the free marketplace of ideas for almost half a century and suspicion towards socially engaged political stances created by the Soviet regime play their part in this significant gap.

In this context, the third text, the afterword by Jaak Rähesoo (1997: 258–278) to the collection of Woolf's essays published in 1997, is the more unique, with its twenty pages of thorough treatment of Woolf's life and times. What is more, the text is very aware of the context of reception of the works and centres the discussion on how the reception of Woolf's work is bound to differ considerably in Estonia and in the English-speaking world. Rähesoo does not dwell on the Estonian side, but, rather, seeks to explain the traditional Western frameworks of modernism, Bloomsbury, feminism and insanity, in order to liberate the text from the weight of interpretation and allow it to breathe on its own. Ironically, as pointed out by Ene-Reet Soovik (1997: 93–94), by doing this he also imports the limiting frames into the Estonian context. It is noteworthy that feminism is given an equally thorough and balanced view as the by 1997 much less "dangerous" modernism. Naturally, here, too, considerable attention is given to the literary form of Woolf's polemic, its poetic ease and

elegance, but this is not done at the expense of politics, even if, once again, the attempt to deny previous criticisms helps perpetuate them. To quote: "For a polemical work, her book is remarkably free of shrillness; there are frequent flashes of irony but it is calm and self-confident" (Rähesoo 1997: 271). Yet, in this interpretation feminism is not a side interest for Woolf but a firm set of political beliefs expressed throughout her work. What is more, the text also acknowledges that the criticism provided by Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* but also the much more critically lambasted *Three Guineas* has continued topicality, even if some of her hypotheses have been questioned, and the discussion is framed with awareness of the Western feminist Woolf boom.

This treatment of Woolf's oeuvre does not create a single frame to contain her work but offers a multiplicity of them and, in addition, attempts to shed light on the whole process of defining an author's work through a set of (possibly limiting) designations. It also brings her feminism to the Estonian reader in a calm and thorough manner. In this, Rähesoo differs from the frame of reference provided by E. M. Forster in his lecture soon after Woolf's death where feminism is dismissed as "a very peculiar" aspect of Woolf's work, something to be acknowledged for style but not for politics (Soovik 1997: 94). Rähesoo breaks the previous nonchalant attitude towards feminist agency that had prevailed in Estonia this far but without uncritically borrowing from Western feminist critics. He expands the number of available frames by placing feminism firmly into the local Woolf reception, with the new frame accentuating the work, not overshadowing it.

The critical essays published in daily press and literary journals exploit frames mentioned above, mostly in a manner that celebrates Woolf and her work, modernist or feminist. Most critics who have reviewed feminist literary texts have been congenial to the feminist project to the extent that is surprising in the general sceptical tone of the Estonian public discourse with regard to feminism (cf. Terentowicz-Fotyga 2002: 147). Yet the reviews do not alter the positioning of Woolf as a modernist who also took an interest in feminism. Although Woolf's best known feminist texts have been translated, they are not presented so much as feminist texts with continuing social relevance but as works of a great author that convey the social turbulence of her times. Woolf is thus rendered invulnerable

from the stigma of feminism by her established stature as a leading modernist author of acknowledged complexity, as well as her subtle use of language. The Estonian Woolf, in short, is more discreet both when it comes to her personal life and her political engagement than her Western academic alter ego, and has more lives, free of potentially constraining weight of theorisation into a single frame. The feminist framing could prove counterproductive in the Estonian situation and alienate the readers. In the present ambiguous situation, the bewilderment about the feminism of her work may turn into bewitchment with her whole oeuvre and its idiosyncratic vision of social engagement.

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Feminist Consciousness amongst Early Chicano Writers

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Traditionally, Chicana literary production has always been silenced. During the colonial period Chicana voice was relegated to a second place or simply silenced and ignored. The reasons are to be found in that gender, as well as social class and race, always negated women's access to literature. As a result of that, their autobiographical voices have been barely published. (Male) hegemony is mainly based on the absence of women as a historical subject: as it is narrated in Italo Calvino's *Le Città Invisibili* (1972),¹ women are the object of men's desire and as a result they only exist when they are absent.

To this sense, it is important to emphasize that by the end of the nineteenth century not only were Chicanas active in creating an early literary tradition in English but also in articulating a female space of their own. It is precisely by this time that we can find the Chicana writer already building a literary foundation for future generations, challenging the authenticity of a monolithic Chicano voice and by so doing, reclaiming a subject position. Nevertheless, there still exist disagreement on defining the term Chicana amongst contemporary Chicano criticism. On the one hand, in the introduction to the book *Esta puente, mi espalda: voces de mujeres tercermundistas en los Estados Unidos* (1988), Cherríe Moraga and Ana Castillo offer a definition of the "Chicana" as: "mujer de ascendencia mexicana que radica en Estados Unidos y promueve el mejoramiento de su raza"

¹ Italo Calvino's text offers a wonderful metaphor for women inclusion/exclusion in history. To this sense, the city of Zobeide acts as a masculine subject of women's control and marginalizing. Women are identified with "nature" and confronted with "culture".

(Moraga 1988: 131). On the other hand, it is important to point out that some critics such as Genaro Padilla considers "Chicano" as a quite recent term to be considered when relating to men and women from the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Instead, he decides to make use of the term Mexican American since he considers it more appropriate for providing an accurate representation of the society during that period. Taking as a *startum* point Eliu Carranza's definition of the term "Chicana" as it appears in her article "The Gorkase Mirror" (*The Chicanos: Mexican American Voices*, 1973), we believe that the term *Chicano* (and *Chicana*) refers to any Mexican American who consciously takes an active role in rebelling against oppression and the subordinate status given to him/her by a racist society.

Following Alvina E. Quintana's definition of the term from her book *Home Girls* (1996), we also believe that:

The term Chicano had evolved not so much from shame as from resistance to a belief system in which Americans of Mexican descent are categorized as second-class citizens, as "minorities" . . . Clearly, it was a matter not of shame but of rejection . . . to resist by fashioning and identity they could call their own. (Quintana 1996: 8)

It is precisely after 1848 when we attest to the emergence of a Chicana narrative that confronts and subverts the new abusive situation that originated by the end of the 19th century. The first English speaking Chicana writer, Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton, appears to be the first author to make use of the term Spano-American or *hispano-americano*. In her second novel, published in 1885, *The Squatter and the Don*, Ruiz de Burton uses this term for the first time:

The treaty said that our rights would be the same as those enjoyed by all other American citizens. But, you see, Congress takes very good care not to enact retroactive laws for Americans, laws to take away from American citizens the property which they hold now, already, with a recognized legal title. No, indeed. But they do so quickly enough with us — with us, the Spano-Americans, who were to enjoy equal rights, mind

you, according to the treaty of peace. (Ruíz de Burton 1995: 65)

However, we may point out that the term *Chicano* or *Chicana* emerges in the field of literary criticism during the seventies. In 1965 the so-called Chicano Renaissance Movement institutionalised Mexican-American literature and as a result of that, this literature has always been considered a quite recent cultural production and the consequence of an ideological project. The main topic of early *Chicano* literature of the sixties and seventies was the search for identity, for a “multicultural identity that recognizes trust in oneself” (Rendón 1971: 23). As Manuel de Jesús Hernández-Gutiérrez in his book *El colonialismo interno chicano en la narrativa chicana* (1994) explains,

La producción literaria de esta nueva clase intelectual reflejará una realidad singular en cuanto a visión histórica, cultura y valores, esto la califica como “nacional” con relación a las otras literaturas del mundo. [...] La diversidad se establece a pesar de que predomina como tema “la búsqueda de la identidad”: qué es ser chicano y qué es lo chicano. (Hernández-Gutiérrez 1994: 11)

To this sense, in his article “U.S. Latinos: Their Culture and Literature” (1992), Marc Zimmerman exposes that: “Chicano, as opposed to Mexican literature, begins to emerge in the Southwest even in the nineteenth century and on into our own time” (22).

Moreover, in *Chicano Manifesto: The History and Aspirations of the Second Largest Minority in America* (1971), Armando B. Rendón comments on the fact that it was soon after the Alamo Battle in 1836 when the conflicting relations between the US and Mexico began (Rendón 1971: 18) Ten years later, in 1846, the US attacked Mexico in order to seize Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas and Utah. Finally, and as a consequence of the Treaty of *Guadalupe Hidalgo* (signed by both parts on February the second, 1848) the Anglo-Americans were able to own both an enormous land extension and a hybrid or *mestiza* culture.² As Rendón argues, the

² Here we are including Articles X and IX from the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo signed in 1848. The American government later eliminated Article X, which created laws for letting Mexicans keep their lands: “All grants of land made by the Mexican Government or by the component authorities, in

territories previously appertaining to Mexico, and remaining for the future within the limits of the United States, shall be respected as valid, to the same extent that the same grants would be valid, if the said territories had remained within the limits of Mexico. But the grantees of lands in Texas, put in possession thereof, who, by reason of the circumstances of the country since the beginning of the troubles between Texas and the Mexican Government, may have been prevented from fulfilling all the conditions of their grants, shall be under the obligation to fulfil said conditions within the periods limited in the same respectively; such periods to be now counted from the date of exchange of ratifications of this treaty: in default of which the said grants shall not be obligatory upon the State of Texas, in virtue of the stipulations contained in this Article.

The foregoing stipulation in regard to grantees of land in Texas, is extended to all grantees of land in the territories aforesaid, elsewhere than Texas, put in possession under such grants; and, in default of the fulfilment of the conditions of any such grant, within the new period, which, as is above stipulated, begins with the day of the exchange of ratifications of this treaty, the same shall be null and void." (Del Castillo 153)

Article IX originally established the rights for Mexicans to become American citizens, however, this same article was later modified by the American government: "The Mexicans, who, in the territories aforesaid, shall not preserve the character of citizens of the Mexican Republic, conformably with what is stipulated in the preceding Article, shall be incorporated into the Union of the United States, and admitted as soon as possible, according to the principles of the Federal Constitution, to the enjoyment of all the rights of citizens of the United States. In the mean time, they shall be maintained and protected in the enjoyment of their liberty, their property, and the civil rights now vested in them according to the Mexican laws. With respect to political rights, their condition shall be on an equality with that of the inhabitants of the other territories of the United States; and at least equally good as that of the inhabitants of Louisiana and the Floridas, when these provinces, by transfer from the French Republic and the Crown of Spain, became territories of the United States. The same most ample guaranty shall be enjoyed by all ecclesiastics and religions corporations or communities, as well in the discharge of the offices of their ministry, as in the enjoyment of their property of every kind, whether individual or corporate. This guaranty shall embrace all temples, houses and edifices dedicated to the Roman Catholic worship; as well as all property destined to it's [sic] support, or to that of schools, hospitals and other foundations for charitable or beneficent purposes. No property of this nature shall be considered as having become the property of the American Government, or as subject to be, by it, disposed of or diverted to other uses.

consequences of this Treaty are equal to those experienced by Native-Americans (Rendón 1971: 20). Even though the American government promised to respect Spanish and Mexican culture as well as their properties and civil rights, in effect, that never happened. Instead, Mexican lands, properties, language, culture and civil rights were violated and the damage was never repaired.

It is precisely during this period that California women (of Mexican descent) were displaced and marginalized, and on numerous occasions, objects of violence and abuses. At the same time, and because of them being part of a conquered nation they also experienced the violence aimed at Mexicans in general. In relation to this, it is important to draw attention to Josefina of Downsville.

In their book *La Chicana/The Mexican American Woman* (1979), Alfredo Mirandé and Evangelina Enriquez comment on how Josefa became the first Mexican-American woman to be lynched during the California gold rush (Mirandé 1979: 30).³ She refused to be raped by an Anglo-American miner, Fred Cannon, who as a result of this

Finally, the relations and communication between the Catholics living in the territories aforesaid, and their respective ecclesiastical authorities, shall be open, free and exempt from all hindrance whatever, even although such authorities should reside within the limits of the Mexican Republic, as defined by this treaty; and this freedom shall continue, so long as a new demarcation of ecclesiastical districts shall not have been made, conformably with the laws of the Roman Catholic Church." (Del Castillo 150)

Article IX modified by the North American senate in 1851: "The Mexicans who, in the territories aforesaid, shall not preserve the character of citizens of the Mexican Republic, conformably with what is stipulated in the preceding article, shall be incorporated into the Union of the United States and be admitted at the proper time (to be judged of by the Congress of the United States) to the enjoyment of all the rights of citizens of the United States, according to the principles of the Constitution; and in the mean time, shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty and property, and secured in the free exercise of their religion without; restriction." (Del Castillo 155)

³ Alfredo Mirandé and Evangelina Enriquez, in their book *La Chicana/The Mexican American Woman* (1979) narrate the tragic story of the chicana "Josefina" de Downvielle. They also offer at the same time a description of the situation of the Mexican people during the XIX century colonial period.

incident died.⁴ Josefa's resistance to be raped should be viewed as a conscious act of auto affirmation and liberation. It is in this independent act of confrontation and struggle that we are able to find the beginning of the *Chicana* subject as a conscious, autonomous and coherent identity.

In her 1993 article "Memory, Language and Voice of *Mestiza* Women on the Northern Frontier: Historical Documents as Literary Text" Antonia Castañeda related another similar story:

Women's words and actions, as recorded in court cases, belie the image of Spanish and Mexican women as passive, submissive victims so common in the American travel literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The counter-image is particularly evident in the most celebrated California case placed before the ecclesiastical court: Eulalia Calis' suit for divorce from her husband, Pedro Fages, governor of the Californias. She was taken to Mission San Carlos, where she was kept incommunicado in a locked and guarded room. She was excoriated from the pulpit by Father De Noriega, who threatened her with shackles, flogging and excommunication if she continued with her suit. (Castañeda 1993: 271-72)

Castañeda explains the fact that Eulalia Callis's actions overthrew a whole system of values that traditionally has placed women in a subordinate position. Not only did she accused her husband of infidelity but also by so doing, defended her own honor and birth rights.

⁴ Mirandé and Enríquez offer a description of Josefa's last moments as narrated by a journalist from the *Pacific Star*: "At the time appointed for the execution, the prisoner was taken to the gallows, which she approached without the least trepidation. She said, while standing by the gallows, so I was informed, that she had killed the man Cannon, and expected to suffer for it; that the only request she had to make was, that after she had suffered, that her body should be given to her friends... This request was promptly complied with [and] she extended her hand to each of the bystanders immediately around her, and binding each an "adios señor" [sic], voluntary ascended the scaffold, took the rope and adjusted it around her neck with her own hand." (Mirandé 1967: 71)

Eulalia Callis as well as many other *Chicanas* tried to break with those already established power relations that place women as passive subjects within society. As we previously argued, if culture and history (both men's products) are based on the absence of women it is convenient to ask if women can finally enter Zobeide, be part of that masculine dream and what is more, one day become the protagonist of that same dream.

Unfortunately, Chicana's situation drastically worsened after 1848. However, it is precisely in this period, that we are able to witness the emergence of a narrative voice in search of a new identity and revealing *Chicana's* rejection of the traditional role imposed on women by patriarchal constraints. Although some of these women fail in their attempt to build their own identity, it is clear that the representation of the *Chicana* subaltern serves as a revolutionary ideology that ultimately enables these women to search for their identity. They can be recognized as the 'founding mothers' of a new generation of *Chicana* women in that they directly confront and question nineteenth century *Chicana* subordination.

Contrary to most contemporary *Chicano* criticism, and following some *Chicana* critics such as Tey Diana Rebolledo, we believe that *Chicana* feminist literary tradition has its origins in that cultural production of the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century and not in the work of Estella Portillo Trambley which was published by the middle of the 20th century. It was in the north of Mexico, or what is nowadays the US Southwest where *Chicana* women started a self-fashioning process. It is important to point out that pioneer *Chicana* writers such as Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton (by the end of the 19th century) or Jovita Gonzalez (first half of the 20th) as well as other writers, explored the damage provoked by those labels and stereotypes that had traditionally been imposed on women by cultural norms. In her 1995 book *Women Singing in the Snow*, Tey Diana Rebolledo describes these labels as:

The very labels that cultures use to restrict and limit women's activity-socially and intellectually. Women are so silenced that they are left to speak only with their eyes. (Rebolledo 1995: 72-73)

Although we cannot negate the very existence of a series of negative labels imposed on Chicano women by the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, however, there existed a number of early

Chicana authors during this same period of time. After 1860 there appeared a number of diaries, memoirs, oral histories, correspondence and at least two novels written by California women. These cultural productions have been kept at the Bancroft Library in Berkeley, the California State Library in Sacramento, The Californian Historical Society Library in San Francisco and the Huntington Library in San Marino. Although there appeared to be one hundred narratives written during that time, however, only fifteen of them were produced by women. Some *Chicano* and *Chicana* critics such as Rosaura Sánchez, Beatriz Pita, Genaro Padilla, Francisco Lomelí and Antonia Castañeda have started to recover many of these early narratives. In the book *My History, Not Yours: The Formation of Mexican American Autobiography* (published in 1993), Genaro Padilla argues that:

the gap between women's representation by men and women's self representation is not only disparate but often directly at odds: men remembering wives, daughters, sisters as domestically devout, cheerfully obedient, and unconcerned about men's political and business dealings before 1848, then as "necias y vanidosas" after; women, however, seldom seating themselves in the domestic sphere but remembering rather their work in the world... (Padilla 1993: 114)

As Genaro Padilla comments, there existed a big gap between patriarchal representations of women and that offered by *Chicana* women themselves. In the Bancroft collection, we can find narratives written by *Chicanas* that directly confront Chicano patriarchal system from a gender perspective. As Luis Leal establishes in his article "Mexican American Literature: A historical Perspective" it is during the so called "Transition Period" (from 1848–1910) when *Chicano* literature originates. It is during this period of time that we assist to the beginnings of the confrontation between two different cultural worlds. As Padilla explains:

Before life in the new regime could be rebuilt, the terror of the American conquest had to be reconciled. Such global social rupture led to a destabilization of individual and collective life that, in the discursive realm, required a form of verbal restoration of the community within which the individual had identified his or her very locus of meaning...The remembered (pre-Ame-

rican) past was sustained in vulnerable suspension against the rolling displacements of 1848 society... Autobiographical narrative, twined to social and cultural history, therefore, served the reintegrative psychic and social need for sustaining an idea of the past and for fixing a version of history within a cultural text that would mark presence in the face of erasure. (Padilla 1993: 16)

The *Chicana* is confronted with a three-fold oppression in that her gender positions her in the universal subjugation that comes from being female. Not only were *Chicanas* active in creating a literary tradition in English, but they were also consciously pursuing the creation of a female space, one that articulated the concerns particular to the minority women. As Tey Diana Rebolledo points out in her article of 1989 "Las escritoras: Romances and realities", before the Chicano Renaissance there exists a "culture of silence" that prevents Chicano authors from being studied. It is during this time that we find the early *Chicana* authors: María Cristina Mena (b.1893); Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton and her two novels *Who would have thought it?* (1872) and *The Squatter and the Don* (1885); Jovita González (lived between 1904–1983) with her two novels *Caballero: A Historical Novel* (recovered and published in 1996 by Limón) and *Dew on the Thorn* (1997 also by Limón) and finally, Josefina Niggli (b. 1910) and her books: *Pointers on Playwrtiting* (1945), *Pointers on Radio Writing* (1946), *Mexican Village* (1945) and *Mexican Folk Plays* (1945) where we find the plays *Tooth or Share* (1935), *Red Velvet Goat* (1936), *Sunday Costs Five Pesos* (1936), *Azteca* (1936), *Soldadera* (1936), and *This is Villa* (no date). These four early *Chicana* authors wrote in English. As Tey Diana Rebolledo points out:

Not only were *Chicanas* active in creating a literary tradition in English, but they were also consciously pursuing the creation of a "female space", one that "articulated the concerns particular to the minority woman". Treviño focuses on three women: Mena, Niggli and Jovita González, the best known, (at least until recently) of the early *Chicana* writers who wrote in English. (Rebolledo 1989: 24)

Jovita González appears to be the first writer to talk about *Chicana's* subordination, oppression and submission. According to Rebolledo,

both Jovita González and Josephina Niggli comment on topics such as national identity and frontier crossing. At the same time, some of the feminine characters within their novels represent the figure of the *mestiza*, the topics of alienation and race. Although Jovita González consciously approaches topics related to *Chicanos's* socioeconomic problems in her two novels, however, Josephina Niggli does not confront these issues at any time within her cultural production.

On the other hand, there exist a second group of early *Chicana* authors who wrote between 1940 and 1950. In their books we find a mixing of cultural traditions, family customs, and social history along with their personal narratives. These writers are: Nina Otero Warren and her novel *Old Spain in Our Southwest* (1936), Cleofás Jaramillo and *The Genuine New Mexico Tasty Recipes: Old and Quaint Formulas for the Preparation of Seventy-five Delicious Spanish Dishes* (1939), *Sombras del Pasado/Shadows of the Past* (1941) and *Romance of a Little Village Girl* (1955); Aurora Lucero White-Lea and her book *Literary Folklore of the Hispanic Southwest* (1953); and finally Fabiola Cabeza de Baca Gilbert's *The Good Life: New Mexico Traditions and Food* (1949) and *We Fed them Cactus* (1959).

Rebolledo points out that these authors were "not only describing the loss of their lands and culture, but also they were actively resisting culturally defined roles for themselves and for all Hispanic women" (Rebolledo 1989: 202). Therefore, it is necessary to study the work of these authors in order to obtain a description of the oppressive situation that *Chicanos* in general suffered after the legalized robbery of their lands by the US. In direct relation with this we may quote a paragraph taken from Fabiola Cabeza de Baca's novel *We Fed them Cactus* (1959):

The land which he loved had sucked the last bit of strength which so long kept him enduring failures and sometime successes but never of one tenor. Life so cruel and at times so sweet is a continuous struggle for existence-yet one so uncertain of what is beyond fights and fights for survival. He is gone, but the land which he loved is there. It has come back. The grass is growing again and those living on his land are wiser. They are following practices of soil and water conservation which were not available to Papa. But each generation must profit by the trials and errors of those before them; otherwise everything would perish. (Rebolledo 1989: 209)

In this novel, the tragedy of Hispanics living in New Mexico is represented by the interrelation between land and the father's life. The loss of land productivity is parallel once again to the seizing of Mexican land by the US. However, this is not the only novel of the time to comment on this topic. By the end of the 19th century, the *Chicana* writer Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton had already approached in her two novels (*Who Would Have Thought it?* and *The Squatter and the Don*), the socio-political situation of the Chicanos living in what is now the US Southwest. Her two novels are a direct description of Californian life during that time. In her book *My History Not Yours* (1993) Genaro Padilla argues:

life in a stable social world was difficult enough for women. Their narratives make this plain. But what they also make plain in partnership with the men's narratives is that the American takeover was a trauma that entirely disrupted life for everyone-notwithstanding patriarchal constraints, gender misrelations, social class stratification. (Padilla 1993: 148)

It is important to emphasize that not only can we find a *Chicana* author that publishes in English between 1872 and 1885 but, it may be also possible to find other authors of this same period. Ruiz de Burton's literary production is crucial in that it reconstructs the beginning of American Imperialism and also shows the beginning of *Chicano's* cultural production as a marginal ethnic group with its subsequent economic, political, cultural and linguistic subordination.

By 1980, *Chicana* feminist critics started to increase their political participation within the Renaissance *Chicano* movement (between 1960 and 1970) and to fight against traditional gender roles imposed to them by both *Chicano* and Anglo-American patriarchy. However, there appear to be several early *Chicana* authors that were writing prior to the *Chicano* Renaissance movement and that directly contributed to the creation of an early *Chicano* cultural production. They represented their own experiences as well as exhibited an awareness and concern about the socio-economic problems affecting *Chicanos* during that period. They were pioneers in recording the history of their people in the Southwest.

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El cosmopolitismo literario-cultural de Octavio Paz

JANUSZ WOJCIESZAK

El tema de esta aportación debe su origen a una lectura —de hace ya más de veinte años— de la tesis doctoral de Michel Berveiller, dedicada al análisis del cosmopolitismo en la obra de Jorge Luis Borges. El crítico francés, después de hacer un recorrido por cientos de autores del mundo entero que dejaron su huella en los textos borgianos, llegaba a la conclusión (no sin antes destacar —siguiendo a Etiemble— “la perfección del espíritu cosmopolita” del prestigioso autor argentino) de que en este caso se trataba de una característica que podría definirse como un cosmopolitismo esencialmente literario (Berveiller 1973: 502). Al hacer estas afirmaciones Berveiller explica que para él el cosmopolitismo significa no tanto ni ante todo una pretensión a una cultura universal, sino más bien una actitud de curiosidad, apertura y simpatía hacia obras creadas en el seno de otras naciones, actitud acompañada del deseo y del talento de comprenderlas (ib.6).

Las constataciones mencionadas nos sirven de punto de partida para reflexionar sobre uno de los aspectos más sobresalientes de la obra de otro escritor latinoamericano, Octavio Paz. No es nuestro propósito, desde luego, el ir reinvestigando las influencias extranjeras que se dejan percibir en lo escrito por el Nobel mexicano. Se trata, simplemente, de un intento de comprensión de mecanismos que condicionaron la presencia de tantos autores y obras en la trayectoria artística de Paz. La hipótesis previa es la siguiente: si en Borges se viese el cosmopolitismo fundamentalmente literario, Paz lo completaría en cierto sentido haciendo gala de un cosmopolitismo literario-cultural. Este se nota con más evidencia en su obra ensayística la cual va a constituir el principal marco de referencia de nuestras reflexiones.

Ahora bien, como suele ocurrir con frecuencia en las ciencias humanas, la cuestión de la terminología forma parte sustancial del problema tratado. El hecho es que la noción de cosmopolitismo ha conllevado a veces –sobre todo a partir del siglo XIX– connotaciones negativas aludiendo a una posición un tanto superficial de falta de arraigo en lo propio. El cosmopolitismo en esta acepción no sólo contrasta obviamente con el nacionalismo o localismo, sino además, viene contraponiéndose al universalismo que –para algunos– parte de lo propio para que éste constituya una base sólida de lo universal. Sin olvidarnos de estas matizaciones y sin descartar la validez de los argumentos que utiliza Ricardo Gullón (1989: 223) a favor de la categoría de universalismo (tanto más que en los textos de Paz habrá referencias constantes a este vocablo y otros de la misma familia — universal o universalidad) hemos optado, no obstante, por usar el concepto de cosmopolitismo, puesto que –de acuerdo con lo que decíamos aludiendo a la definición de Berveiller– nos parece que en Octavio Paz la idea de la necesidad de dialogar con otras culturas, de abrirse a otros con el objetivo de preservar las diferencias como condición indispensable de la convivencia humana va relegando con el tiempo a segundo plano la búsqueda de lo universal común. Además, al preferir el término de cosmopolitismo creemos evitar posibles confusiones con el tantas veces rechazado por Paz el falso anhelo universalista a la uniformización. Sea como fuere, serias dudas terminológicas en cuanto a una clara y precisa diferenciación de ambos conceptos permanecen y seguramente no ayudan a despejar dudas las opiniones de Rita Guibert o Mario Vargas Llosa, entre otros más. Guibert, en el prólogo a su harto conocida entrevista a Paz, lo califica de “poeta cosmopolita (tanto por su obra como por su estilo de vida) de fuertes raíces mexicanas, que está en busca de la verdad universal” (2003: 400). Una valoración parecida se trasluce de las palabras del novelista peruano, escritas a raíz de la muerte de Paz: “Octavio Paz, poeta y escritor abierto a todos los vientos del espíritu, ciudadano del mundo si los hubo, fue asimismo un mexicano raigal” (1998: 14). Así que –de acuerdo con estas interpretaciones– lo cosmopolita, el hecho de ser ciudadano del mundo, no obsta para que lo propiamente mexicano se manifieste en Paz a todo momento. Incluso hay quienes opinan que este continuo vaivén entre lo universal y lo local, manejados con mucha destreza, vuelve la obra de Paz más atractiva (Chavarrí 1979: 95). Cabe, entonces, preguntar por el porqué

de esta relación tan estrecha recurriendo a lo que podría llamarse la cosmovisión paciana, es decir, tratando de explicar como el cosmopolitismo (universalismo) de Paz que va tan íntimamente unido a lo local, resulta ser una consecuencia lógica de su visión del hombre y del universo.

Es bien sabido que desde los inicios de su trayectoria artística Paz alude constantemente y hace vueltas a un puñado de preguntas que versan sobre el sentido de la vida, el destino del hombre, los límites del conocimiento humano, el origen y la naturaleza del universo. Los escritos juveniles del autor, recogidos por E. Mario Santí en *Primeras letras (1931-1943)*, constituyen ya una buena muestra de esa inclinación particular de Paz hacia las preguntas fundamentales. Todas ellas quedarán reducidas posteriormente por él a una sola: “¿cuál es el sentido de mi vida y a dónde voy?” (Paz 1993: 126)¹.

El tenor de las consideraciones de Paz permite afirmar que a pesar de toda la carga retórica la búsqueda de una posible respuesta a tal interrogante se ha ido transformando en un acicate más poderoso de las deliberaciones del autor. Es de notar la perseverancia y vehemencia con las cuales Paz afronta este desafío dando a entender que expresa no sólo su propia preocupación, sino también perplejidades que desde siempre han acompañado al género humano. Paz como si intentase generalizar la experiencia individual y hacerla universal. El horizonte de “mi vida”, la experiencia subjetiva, la hace compartir por cualquier miembro de esta generación del fin —para usar la sugerente expresión de Abel Posse— que tras haber perdido la dirección imprescindible vive momentos de desorientación (Posse 1997: 9-15). Así pues, en la autoreflexión de Paz el afán por conocer el destino de la existencia personal, al fundirse con el anhelo de penetrar los destinos que el futuro depara para la humanidad en su conjunto, viene

¹ Huelga recordar que en la tradición filosófica la versión probablemente más conocida de las preguntas fundamentales ha sido formulada por Kant en su *Crítica de la razón pura* y *Cursos de lógica*: “¿qué puedo saber?, ¿qué debo hacer?, ¿qué me es permitido esperar?, ¿qué es el hombre?”, aunque en el fondo —agrega inmediatamente Kant— “las tres primeras preguntas se refieren a la última” (por no disponer a mano de la versión española de la obra de Kant sigo la traducción de Elsa Cecilia Frost, *Las categorías de la cultura mexicana*, México, UNAM, 1990, p.19). Desde luego Kant no fue el primero en acentuar dicha problemática. Para percatarse de la importancia de esos desvelos habría que remontarse a la Biblia, Confucio, Buda, Platón...

a reflejar el estado de crisis de la conciencia finisecular. De esta manera Paz determina el campo de sus mayores inquietudes dando a la vez una marca eminentemente filosófica a toda la obra que se convierte por lo mismo en una búsqueda continua de un(os) instrumento(s) inequívoco(s), capaz de tranquilizar la alteración de la conciencia escindida.

Es importante resaltar, por otro lado, que el afán por conocer a sí mismo, por ahondar en la esencia misma de la condición humana y del mundo en derredor —siendo una facultad connatural al ser humano (el gran representante del conceptismo español, Baltasar Gracián, aludía en el siglo XVII a esa propensión aforísticamente — “Nacemos para saber y sabernos”)(Gracián 1997: 227–228) — supone en la concepción de Paz un cuestionamiento de la identidad personal tal como se la había concebido tradicionalmente. Al asumir la idea machadiana de la heterogeneidad esencial del ser Paz llega a afirmar el carácter ilusorio del yo que escapa a cualquier tentativa de delimitación firme y concluyente. Para el autor mexicano la persecución del espacio interior, equivalente búsqueda de “la sustancia de mi ser” (Paz 1988: 105) tiene que pasar irremediamente por el tamiz de la Otridad.

La idea de la Otridad constitutiva del hombre, la convicción de que “somos otros sin dejar de ser lo que somos y que, sin cesar de estar donde estamos, nuestro verdadero ser está en otra parte” (Paz 1986: 266) no sólo incluye el más allá, lo trascendente o el bretoniano “ailleurs”, sino que engloba también al Otro — seres humanos que siendo distintos no dejan de formar parte consubstancial de lo Mismo. De ahí que, al proclamar la necesidad de acudir a lo/el otro para conocer al desconocido que el hombre es Paz se vea obligado —por así decirlo— a declarar al mismo tiempo la inexorabilidad del diálogo con los otros como lema fundamental de su obra. En el discurso pronunciado en Francfort, en 1984, confesó: “Escribí y escribo porque concibo a la literatura como un diálogo con el mundo, con el lector y conmigo mismo — y el diálogo es lo contrario del ruido que nos niega y del silencio que nos ignora” (Paz 1990: 81). De esta manera llegamos a uno de los aspectos más característicos del cosmopolitismo paciano. Su constante interés por dialogar con poetas, artistas, filósofos e historiadores procedentes de otras culturas, con su modo de pensar y sentir distintos, viene a ser consecuencia del empeño con el cual tiende a explorar la esencia de la condición humana inexplicable sin el horizonte del otro.

Son legión los interlocutores con los que Paz entra en diálogo para enriquecer su propia experiencia. Sin embargo, las influencias principales pueden reducirse a las siguientes áreas culturales: precolombina, española, americana, europea y oriental (Ruiz de la Cierva 2000: 178). Cada una de estas culturas aportó algo sustancioso a la cosmovisión de Paz haciendo modificar sus juicios sobre cuestiones que discutía. Numerosos y detallados estudios que se han hecho al respecto demuestran fehacientemente que sería imposible interpretar y entender la obra de Paz sin referencia al surrealismo, al budismo Zen, a la literatura clásica española, a Heráclito etc. etc. No obstante no es, como decíamos, nuestro propósito el ir reconstruyendo y evaluando la importancia y función de estas influencias en la obra paciana. Convendría tal vez más constatar —por muy ingenuo y poco académico que suene— que los mecanismos que provocaron la curiosidad de Paz por determinadas culturas o autores se deben principalmente a condicionamientos biográficos — la rica biblioteca de su abuelo, el ambiente anarquista juvenil, los viajes relacionados con el trabajo en el servicio diplomático (sobre todo Francia y la India) o, en otras palabras, a la circunstancia en que lo había tocado a Paz nacer y vivir. El contexto mexicano, variante particular del contexto latinoamericano, por representar una cultura periférica que —al decir de Alfonso Reyes “llegó tarde al banquete de la civilización”— no pudo menos sino fortalecer las aspiraciones cosmopolitas de Paz. El ya citado Ricardo Gullón habla sin más de “reacción contra el provincianismo y el espíritu tribal de los hispanoamericanos” (Gullón 1989: 228). Por otro lado —dicho sea de paso— no deja de ser interesante que ha sido frecuente en la tradición ensayística la idea de la síntesis de culturas como rasgo identitario de la cultura latinoamericana. La vocación universalista sería, desde esta perspectiva, una nota inmanente de lo latinoamericano, consecuencia de la complejidad del proceso histórico.

Existen, sin embargo, otras facetas de la afición de Paz al diálogo que acaba convirtiéndose en el principio rector de su escritura y a la vez un instrumento más adecuado del acercamiento a la realidad. En primer lugar cabe mencionar que el diálogo, acompañado de la autoreflexión, del soliloquio, que en cierto sentido también es una forma del diálogo, son características definitorias del ensayo como género. Huelga destacar que el ensayo, tal vez mucho más que otras formas literarias, se basa en el diálogo interminable del autor con el lector, que las afirmaciones del ensayista son más bien sugerencias a discutir, a completar. En el ensayo

apenas se pretende ofrecer verdades definitivas a creer. Al resaltar el carácter dialogal del ensayo José Luis Gómez-Martínez afirma muy lacónica y acertadamente: "Nada hay en él seguro" (1992: 60). La falta de precisión y la duda le son inherentes. El ensayo, en vez de imponer soluciones a aceptar, propone variantes a escoger, preguntas a reflexionar.

En segundo lugar, la idea del diálogo, no está de más repetirlo, es la vía principal para suavizar las consecuencias desastrosas de la crisis de la civilización. Paz subraya que la crisis es, entre otras razones, resultado de un proceso de abolición del diálogo en nuestra época. El autor mexicano proyecta esa suposición a nivel muy general reparando en la relación entre dos signos: el cuerpo y el no-cuerpo, lo material y lo espiritual. Lamenta la supresión de lo espiritual como síntoma de la evolución inquietante de nuestra cultura (Paz 1993: 199). Esta actitud la relaciona con algunos aspectos de la economía del mercado. El mercado se ha vuelto otro Dios de nuestra época. Pero es "un ciego mecanismo" cuyos objetivos se reducen a producir más y consumir más. Producimos para consumir y consumimos para producir — un círculo vicioso. En este sentido el triunfo del mercado equivale al triunfo del nihilismo y conduce a la masificación de hombres y pueblos. Paz a cada caso nos advierte de los peligros que la humanidad corre al aceptar sin poner reparos las reglas del juego consumista. El dominio de las leyes intransigentes del mercado constituye una amenaza enorme para la convivencia del hombre con la Naturaleza, con el cosmos. El poder del mercado significa una especie de idolatría de las Cosas, adoración de lo cuantificable y medible. La Razón instrumental, pragmática y materialista, se impone en todas las esferas de nuestra existencia. La tecnificación del mundo, cada vez mayor, hace pensar en una nueva clase de esclavitud que Paz califica de altamente peligrosa. Las sociedades se han vuelto "desalmadas", esquivando la gran tradición humanista de las épocas precedentes.

Desde luego la problemática de la crisis en la obra de Paz rebasa los límites estrictos de nuestro tema insertándose en un debate multifacético sobre la crisis de la modernidad. Haciendo, pues, caso omiso de toda una serie de cuestiones al respecto, fijémonos en algunas propuestas de Paz en cuanto a un posible cambio de las tendencias criticadas. Es en este marco donde se manifiesta, una vez más, la importancia que el autor otorga al diálogo con otras culturas, la característica más llamativa de su cosmopolitismo. Por ejemplo, abogando por el redescubrimiento de la

unidad primordial del hombre con la Naturaleza, con el cosmos, el autor mexicano se vale de la comparación entre la actitud de las civilizaciones precolombinas y la nuestra. Constata la superioridad de las culturas precolombinas que veían la naturaleza, junto con el hombre, como una parte integral del orden cósmico. Era el dominio del *sacrum* en que el hombre participaba y que a la vez iba creando. Era su obligación y el fin supremo. Sería conveniente, opina Paz, si no rescatar tal cual aquel modelo -tarea imposible- cuando menos inspirarse en él para repensar nuestro convivir con el medio natural (Paz 1993/1994: 27-29).

Paz, por supuesto, no cree en la posibilidad de una resacralización de la naturaleza. El mundo antiguo del *sacrum* en la naturaleza, de los bosques y de las fuentes, pobladas de dioses y semidioses (díadas y náyades) sufrió un proceso de desacralización y es irre recuperable, debido -según lo interpreta Paz- al cristianismo y a la ciencia moderna. “El cristianismo le retiró al mundo su aureola divina: la naturaleza fue naturaleza caída, como el hombre (...) La Edad Moderna desacralizó la naturaleza (...) La naturaleza dejó de ser un teatro de prodigios para transformarse en un campo de experimentaciones” (Paz 1993: 156-157, 194-195).

La apertura hacia el cosmos implica la apertura hacia la Transcendencia, hacia alguna forma del Absoluto. Es que la condición humana -no es Paz el primero en señalarlo- entraña un perpetuo “huevo”, “hoyo”, “vacío”, “sed” de algo que siempre se nos escapa y que sin embargo no nos cansamos de buscar y rebuscar (Paz 1990: 149). El restablecimiento de los lazos fraternales con el Cosmos supone, por lo tanto, el reconocimiento de la unidad perdida del hombre, la constatación de la comunidad fundacional de los seres humanos con las plantas y con los animales, con todo el mundo natural. El hombre, con su conciencia escindida, su visión fragmentaria del universo promovida por el auge del espíritu moderno, encuentra en el pensamiento ecologista una vía de recuperación de la identidad original que tanta falta le hace en esta época de transición e incertidumbre.

Las ideas que acabamos de resumir no son sino variantes de una postura fundamentalmente dialógica de Paz. Como decíamos para Paz la comunicación con lo Otro/el Otro -un deber ineludible de nuestras sociedades- involucra tanto una actitud favorable y comprensiva hacia otras culturas e ideologías, como la disposición y capacidad de aceptar otros individuos en su diferente modo de pensar y comportarse. “En el diálogo está la salud”- argumenta de modo categórico (Paz 1986: 300).

Este postulado que reaparece continuamente en los textos pacianos tiene, además de las razones anteriormente mencionadas, otra justificación en el ámbito de la concepción del autor. Es que Paz rehusa cualquier forma de la sociedad uniformizada. La uniformidad es comparable con la muerte del espíritu, provoca su petrificación, y, de este modo, conduce a la extinción de la humanidad. "Vida es pluralidad, muerte es uniformidad. Al suprimir las diferencias y las particularidades, al eliminar a las civilizaciones y culturas distintas de la occidental, el progreso debilita a la vida y favorece a la muerte. El ideal de una sola civilización para todos implícita en el culto al progreso y la técnica, nos empobrece, nos mutila" (Guibert 2003: 470).

De lo que llevamos diciendo se desprende fácilmente, pues, que para Paz el diálogo con otros es condición indispensable de la pluralidad y ésta, a su vez, siendo manifestación de la diversidad, se vuelve constitutiva para la universalidad como tal. El hombre en la visión de Paz es un ser plural, así como lo son también las sociedades y culturas. El hombre es hombres y la cultura es culturas. La humanidad no puede prescindir de esta pluralidad. Para preservarla, condición indispensable para alcanzar la pretendida universalidad, es necesaria la tolerancia y el reconocimiento de la particularidad de cada uno. Obviamente, en su ardiente defensa de la diversidad Paz se enfrenta a los presupuestos ideológicos imperantes desde hace siglos que son expresión visible de lo que suele definirse como el espíritu del sistema que termina por destruir a lo Otro. Paz contrapone en este contexto la auténtica universalidad a la universalidad abstracta. Mientras la primera "consiste en reconocer la existencia concreta de los demás y aceptarlos, aunque sean distintos a nosotros", la segunda "aspira a la abolición de los otros". (Paz 1989: 44).

Entonces, como puede observarse, Paz no oculta su repudio al sistema, a todo intento de sistematización. Sostiene que para reflejar la realidad en toda su riqueza es imposible recurrir únicamente al discurso racional, sistematizador y hegemónico. El monólogo de la razón mutila a la vida privándola de elementos (p.ej. emociones, sentimientos) que no se dejan encerrar en conceptos reduccionistas del discurso científico. No obstante, Paz de ninguna manera quiere negar el papel del conocimiento racional. Se opone sólo a tratar la razón "como una diosa" en vez de ver en ella "un método (...) un camino hacia el conocimiento" (Paz 1993: 208). Para Paz, que sigue aquí la línea de pensar trazada por su gran maestro en el arte de ensayo, Ortega y Gasset, es menester conciliar la razón y la vida, la tradición occidental y la oriental, no sólo porque la

razón pura se ha mostrado incapaz de superar ciertos límites, sino también para no caer en la esterilidad sistematizante del espíritu geométrico (Paz 1986: 245). Así que Paz, asumiendo el legado del racionalismo, se niega a quedarse atrapado en él, y recurre a otras tradiciones, para ir conformando una cosmovisión reconciliadora. De esta manera la actitud cosmopolita lo lleva a rechazar la lógica tradicional que se rige por dos leyes inmutables: la de la no contradicción y la de la identidad.

Para rescatar la unidad del universo, perdida a consecuencia de las pretensiones egocéntricas del hombre occidental, Paz se apropia de la antigua idea de la correspondencia o analogía universal que actúa en varios niveles de su obra: “Analogía: transparencia universal, en esto ver aquello” (Paz 1988: 137). Como hizo notar Manuel Benavides esta convicción extrarracional de la unidad de todo lo existente transforma la escritura de Paz en un interminable juego de correspondencias en el cual el principio de relación acaba sobreponiéndose a todo (Benavides 1979: 11–13). A veces da la impresión como si a Paz le importase nada más relacionar, apelar a los sistemas de asociaciones, en detrimento de lo racional. Viendo la realidad desde esa óptica nuestro autor se sirve del procedimiento que para algunos investigadores constituye la clave de la escritura de Paz operando en todos los planos. Se trata de la idea paciana de conciliación de los contrarios. Esta poética siendo una forma de “ver las tradiciones con las que dialoga” y “una forma de pensamiento” (pensamiento binario) es asimismo una forma de entender la realidad (Ulacia 1999: 394–398). Por otra parte cabe indicar que esa manera dicotómica de ver e interpretar el universo no es, en última instancia, sino una manifestación de lo que podría llamarse pensamiento poético. Si no recuerdo mal, Paz usó por primera vez este concepto en una reseña escrita en 1943 donde se refería –aludiendo al problema de la intransparencia de la realidad- a la visión directa del mundo por los presocráticos (Paz 1988: 247). En la época posterior Paz ha vuelto a esa concepción abrigando la esperanza de que en el futuro el pensamiento poético (que participa de lo religioso y es, por ello, otro tipo de conocimiento, en clara oposición al conocimiento científico) sirva de vehículo salvador para poner en relación los elementos dispersos del mundo fragmentado con el Todo².

² Debe señalarse, sin embargo, que la primera en elaborar este concepto fue la filósofa y poetisa española, María Zambrano cuya influencia (que Paz reconoció) se deja notar fácilmente en los textos del autor mexicano. Consúltese al respecto, y a título de ejemplo, María Zambrano, *Filosofía y poesía*, México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1973.

El que Paz vea el mundo bajo el prisma de la analogía universal, el que se alimente de ideas, derivadas de tradiciones culturales aparentemente (o realmente) irreconciliables, vuelve sumamente complicado cualquier intento de valoración académica. Ajustar a fuerza la interpretación del ideario de Paz al molde de los rigores académicos significaría sin más violar la esencia constitutiva de esta labor creativa. La irreverencia asistemática con la cual Paz va construyendo su cosmovisión hace pensar en un poeta-ensayista-artista que al fin y al cabo no quiere demostrar nada. Prefiere quedarse en la esfera de la contemplación desinteresada, suspensión de juicios que caracteriza “ese estado dichoso de la imparcialidad contemplativa a que han aspirado todos los sabios” (Paz 1990: 131–132). Henos aquí ante un peregrino de las civilizaciones (Fuentes), escritor de cultura ecuménica (Barreiro-Saguier), una especie de Montaigne mexicano (Edwards) que —después de hacer un inquisitivo recorrido por todas las culturas del mundo— llega a la conclusión de que la verdad que tanto anhelaba sigue siendo un ideal inalcanzable para los humanos, que hay que conformarse con la suerte de un viajero en busca constante de su destino. La ensayística filosófica de Paz parece desembocar en una afirmación nada novedosa, pero tan característica para la conciencia finisecular — la verdad tiene carácter procesual, es un continuo devenir, un peregrinaje como la vida misma. ¿Será demasiado aventurado constatar que el cosmopolitismo de Paz, su apego al diálogo ininterrumpido con otros, de poco le sirvió para llegar en este viaje a un punto de llegada seguro? Lo cierto es que su largo itinerario el escritor mexicano lo sella con “la postulación del silencio como única posible expresión” (Santí 1997: 323).

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***Mundus Senescit: the Antichrist,
Last Judgement, Revelation and Entropy
in *The Name of the Rose****

ANDREI VASILENKO

Umberto Eco's renowned novel is set in the fourteenth century, the period that was totally obsessed with the coming of the Antichrist and the end of the world. The characters of *The Name of the Rose* manifestly express a growing awareness of the universal degradation, of the fact that the world has entered the state of irreparable dilapidation characteristic of old age, which is neatly summed up in the popular mediaeval cliché *mundus senescit*. Abbot Abo when welcoming William of Baskerville and Adso of Melk in his grandiose abbey, in November of 1327, gives an eloquent speech on the miserable state of the sinful world: "Because of mankind's sins the world is teetering on the brink of the abyss, permeated by the very abyss that the abyss invokes. And tomorrow, as Honorius would have it, men's bodies will be smaller than ours, just as ours are smaller than those of the ancients. *Mundus senescit*" (Eco 1998: 36). A similar feeling is articulated by Adso himself, many years later, as he commences to write the tragic story about the six days he had spent at the doomed abbey: "In the past men were handsome and great (now they are children and dwarfs), but this is merely one of the many facts that demonstrate the disaster of an aging world" (ib. 15). We might suppose that the old Adso's views of the state of the creation are much more pessimistic than those of the abbot, not to mention the attitude of his younger self, Adso the novice. The aged doddering monk scribbling his sad narrative in the cold scriptorium at the abbey of his native Melk has witnessed and managed to survive an event of truly apocalyptic proportions: the Black Death which devastated the

mediaeval Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century. William of Baskerville, by the way, also fell pray to this horrible pandemic, unable to resist the onslaught of the disease despite his impressive knowledge of medicine and natural sciences.

The apocalyptic tone of the *Name of the Rose* is in many ways predicated upon the concrete historical events and the activities of certain personages, and that is why it is important to paint at least a general picture of the religious and political background of the novel. Some events in the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth century perfectly explain the pervasiveness of apocalyptic anxieties voiced in the text. One of the culprits of such a dire condition is Joachim of Fiore whose ghost looms over the drastic events witnessed by the Benedictine novice Adso. The Calabrian abbot divided the history of the Church into seven *tempora*, represented by the patterns of sevens in Revelation, that were concordant with a more general tripartite division of history into three stages: the ages of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The seventh tempus corresponded to the fully established status of the Holy Ghost after the defeat of the Antichrist (Daniel 1992: 80, 85). Joachim's teaching revived the common interest in the Millennium, and proved to be one of the major influences on the shaping of the apocalyptic discourse in the later Middle Ages which is, among other things, an important subject matter of Eco's masterpiece. Joachim prophesied about the appearance of spiritual men who would confront the cohorts of the Antichrist at the end of the Age of the Son. The firm establishment of the third age after the decisive battle between good and evil would prove to be a blissful Millennium permeated by the purity of the Holy Spirit. This doctrine was readily embraced in the middle of the thirteenth century by the Franciscan Spirituals who had seceded from the conventual wing of the order because of the property issue and in Norman Cohn's (1990: 109) words "disinterred Joachim's prophecies". When the Franciscan order in violation of the behests of its founder started accumulating property and thus reneged on the principles of poverty and mendicancy, a smaller part separated from it and announced that they were the "spiritual men" predicted by the Calabrian abbot, the pure monks who were destined to herald the coming of the third age.

The ideas of Joachim were not exclusively confined to religious orders as many lay persons welcomed them and interpreted them in

their own way. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries witnessed a proliferation of various heretical movements that were eager not only to enter the Millennium which promised liberation from their wretched present situation, but were also ready to expedite its coming. Another event, crucial for the understanding of *The Name of the Rose* is the death at the stake of the notorious Fra Dolcino in 1307. Dolcino was the leader of the millenarian revolutionary movement who called themselves Apostolic Brethren or *Apostolici* and propagated the ideas of poverty and the end of the world in a most radical manner. This controversial figure's importance for Eco's text cannot be underestimated, for the name of the great heretic crops up in the narrative almost as often as the word "Antichrist". The apocalyptic views of Dolcino were much more radical than the Franciscan Spirituals' contemplations on the imminence of the coming of the third age. The Apostolic Brethren, who created a sort of revolutionary millenarian republic on the Bald Mountain and, later on, at Monte Rebello, were "ripe" enough for rushing the advent of the cherished epoch of purity and bliss. When referring to the heresy of Fra Dolcino within the context of *The Name of the Rose*, Lois Parkinson Zamora (1988: 42) makes the following observation: "The growth of apocalypticism as a revolutionary ideology is dramatized by Eco in his narrative focus on the heretical Fra Dolcino and his Apostolic Brethren. Fra Dolcino was perhaps the first to make the conceptual leap from preaching apocalyptic ideas to advocating armed insurgency".

The deformed tatterdemalion Salvatore perfectly illustrates the narrow-minded psychology of an average member of a heretical sect at the time. Such "simple" people when united into a band and promised celestial boons at the price of ideologically supported violence were the main perpetrators of the horrible crimes that justified the epithet "dark" so often attributed to the notion of Middle Ages. Salvatore had managed to become a member of almost all of the known heretical groups of the time, including the Apostolic Brethren of Fra Dolcino, before his conversion to the Benedictine monastic life. Very symptomatic is his involvement in the so-called Shepherds' Crusade that took place seven years before the events at the abbey and proved to be an epitome of millenarian violence and intolerance toward the other. Begun as a crusade against the Muslims of Palestine, this spontaneous movement made up of common people, most of whom were poor and hoped to enrich themselves in the Holy Land,

never made it to their final destination. Instead, they terrorised the south of France, pillaging the seigniorial castles and killing the Jews, who undoubtedly bore the brunt of their attacks: "The shepherds came to focus most spectacularly on the Jews, converting or killing Jews at Saintes, Verdun on the Garonne, and in the dioceses and cities of Cahors, Toulouse, and Albi [...]. Massacres are also recorded at Castelsarrasin, Grenade, Lezat, Auch, Rabastens, Montguyard, and Gaillac" (Nirenberg 1996: 45). David Nirenberg, who examines the Shepherds' Crusade in his study of the persecution of minorities titled *Communities of Violence*, asks a question ("Why did Shepherds attack Jews?" (ib. 46)) very similar to the confounded query made by Adso when the youth learns about Salvatore's participation in the above-mentioned pogroms: "'Why the Jews?' I asked Salvatore" (Eco 1998: 192). And Salvatore, a fictitious character who at this moment represents the quintessence of the poor followers of the self-styled prophets gives an answer both to Adso and the scholar which is very simple and utterly horrifying in its simplicity: "And why not?" (ib.).

Hans Kellner (1988: 18) maintains that "[t]he reality of the Apocalypse is taken for granted in the monastery of *The Name of the Rose*" and one can hardly disagree with his statement. The imminence of the end of the world is felt everywhere at the abbey. The apocalyptic discourse of the novel is primarily reflected by the imagery of Revelation that pervades the main place of action and haunts the minds of its dwellers. These images may be found in the magnificent and terrifying tympanum above the portal of the abbatial church which depicts the Final Judgement, and in the diverse illuminations of the Spanish apocalypses kept in the YSPANIA area of the library. We also come across numerous invocations of the Antichrist myth couched in the terms of John's book: in Abo's speech, in the subversive statements of Ubertino de Casale, in the warnings of the old man Alinardo which persuade William of the apocalyptic pattern behind the murders, and especially in the fiery sermon of the venerable Jorge delivered at the compline of the fifth day. Phrases from Revelation are carved above the doorways of the labyrinthine library and serve as the keys to the arrangement of its chambers which, as it turns out, corresponds to the representation of the world on mediaeval maps.

These instances of apocalyptic discourse occur in the novel which is ostensibly, even academically postmodern. In which way the

elements of mediaeval apocalyptic milieu get special treatment or even become radically transformed in the paradoxical and ambivalent environment of this postmodern text? First of all, it is important to point out that *The Name of the Rose* is a historiographic metafiction, a popular type of postmodern writing that may be defined as “fiction that is intensely, self-reflexively art, but is also grounded in historical, social and political realities” (Hutcheon 1988: 13). The self-reflexivity of the novel is established at the very outset by an anonymous Italian scholar, whom we shall identify with Professor Umberto Eco, who maintains in his preface to the novel that the text is a mediaeval manuscript written in Latin by a German monk Adso, later on edited and published in an altered form by Reverend Father Dom Jean Mabillon, which in its turn was translated into French by Abbé Vallet, which was finally translated by Eco himself during the voyage along the Danube at the turbulent time of the Prague events. The description of these babushka-doll-like transformations of the original manuscript make the reader aware of the fact that this novel is nothing but text, that it does not claim transparency and unmediated representation with respect to the reality depicted in it, which is something what we have become accustomed to call “realist fiction” would claim.

The self-conscious narrative of *The Name of the Rose* is explicitly apocalyptic and as some critics have noted, it may well have been titled the “Apocalypse of Adso” (Haft et al 1999: 177). Indeed, the very form of the narrative as if reflects the new views of the Apocalypse expressed by such thinkers as the late Jacques Derrida. We might suppose that the multilayered structure of the book ironically echoes a similar situation detected by the French philosopher in John’s Revelation which proved to be not the direct transmission of revelatory discourse from God to John the Theologian but was received through the angelic intermediary as a message. John, in his turn, forwarded this message to the seven churches. “[S]o many sendings, envois, so many voices, and this puts many people on the line” (1984: 26) remarks Derrida. Isn’t the “revelation” of the Benedictine novice Adso similar in this way to the apocalyptic “mail” sent to John? *The Name of the Rose* reaches the reader as a palimpsestic letter that has been modified at least three times: by Mabillon, Abbé Vallet and Professor Eco.

However, one can dub *The Name of the Rose* not only “The Apocalypse of Adso”, but also, and with equal success, *The Second Letter*

on the *Origin and Time of the Antichrist*. By virtue of his name the young monk may be associated with the historical Adso, the abbot of the monastery Montier-en-Der who lived in the tenth century and was the author of an extremely influential anti-hagiography of the Son of Perdition. Thanks to Jorge the uninitiated reader learns that the name Adso is not limited in its intertextuality to the obvious link with the Holmsean sidekick Watson: “‘You bear a great and very beautiful name,’ he said. ‘Do you know who Adso of Montier-en-Der was?’ he asked. I did not know I confess. So Jorge added, ‘He was the author of a great and awful book, the *Libellus de Antichristo*, in which he foresaw things that were to happen; but he was not sufficiently heeded’” (Eco 1998: 83). Thus we may distinguish at least three components of the character “Adso”, who combines some features of Conan Doyle’s Watson, especially at the moments when he admires the acumen and erudition of William of Baskerville, as well as those of John the Divine and his tenth century namesake.

To a certain extant Adso’s manuscript is a sort of treatise on the nature of the Antichrist understood not so much in the mythological terms as in terms of discourse and power. The seductive speeches of the Antichrist, paradoxically enough, are represented in the novel as the apocalyptic sermons of Jorge and the court judgement of the notorious inquisitor Bernard Gui. The said discourses profess a unilateral vision of the world which recognises the presence of only one truth. This outlook describes the world in binary oppositions of heresy/true faith and does not tolerate difference and ambiguity, the constituent parts of William’s philosophy. Gui and Jorge, the ardent opponents of the coming Antichrist, turn out to be the two allegorical beasts of Adso’s narrative: the former burns innocent people, the latter ends up burning the books he has been entrusted to keep. It is no wonder that, when Jorge gives a detailed description of the physical appearance of the Antichrist during his sermon in the abbatial church, William bitterly remarks: “It seems his own portrait” (Eco 1998: 403). The apocalyptic myth of the Antichrist is re-contextualised by the postmodern narrative of *The Name of the Rose*. While preaching about the coming of the Antichrist, and describing in gruesome detail the calamities brought about by his coming, the likes of Jorge and Gui themselves perpetrate the deeds worthy of the Son of Perdition. The real perdition for humankind should be looked for in the wish of a totalitarian system to control the discourse exemplified by Jorge’s

ardent attempts not to allow the subversive apologia of laughter gain readership and, consequently, wide circulation in the mediaeval discursive space, as well as in the desire to physically destroy the difference using the discourse of legal judgement. In fact, the trial of the heretics that results in accusing the poor innocent girl of witchcraft and condemning her to the stake together with Remigio and Salvatore, the former supporters of Dolcino, may be interpreted as a parody of Last Judgement preceding the apocalyptic destruction of the abbey in conflagration.

When describing the iniquities of Jorge and Gui the narrator of *The Name of the Rose* plays the role of a postmodern Adso antichristologist, but in the episodes like the admiration of the door of the abbatial church he resembles more John the Theologian who, possessed by the religious ecstasy, translates the vivid images of divine revelation into words. The object which provokes in Adso such an ecstatic reaction is another crucial manifestation of mediaeval apocalyptic discourse in the novel that undoubtedly deserves our attention.

The tympanum and the historiated columns of the portal that arrest Adso's attention are ingenious constructs whose origins are partially explicated by Eco in his *Postscript*. He specifically mentions three churches that have portals similar to the one depicted in the sext episode of the first day: the churches at Conques, Moissac and Autun (Eco 1994: 511). These churches are famous for their magnificent portals that had a tremendous influence on the development of apocalyptic iconography in monumental art. The tympanum of the cathedral in the novel combines the most prominent features of the carved ornaments crowning the doors of the said buildings. We might suppose that the figure of the Seated One and the tetramorphic group have been borrowed from the Cluniac Abbey Church of Saint-Pierre at Moissac, (for example, Jacques Le Goff (2000: 244) points to Moissac as Umberto Eco's main source) whereas the horrifying scenes of the punishment have been, most probably, inspired by the respective details of the Cathedral of St. Lazar at Autun and of the Abbey Church Saint Foy at Conques. The renowned art historian Emil de Mâle, when analysing the representation of the Last Judgement at Autun, writes about the feelings stirred by the grandeur of its tympanum, and his description, by the way, resembles the sentiment expressed by Adso in his testimony. Mâle (1924: 418) points out the dream-like quality of the carvings; the composition seems to be trembling, giving a super-

natural impression to the observer, taking full possession of his or her mind. Likewise, the view of the portal completely boggles the mind of the young monk, and he experiences a surreal vision that puts in motion the stone populace of the tympanum. However, the enumeration of the infernal beasts jostling below the arch testifies to the fact that the apocalyptic menagerie of the great cathedrals like those of Autun, Conques, or Moissac pales before the unbridled diversity of the abbatial church. Such an impressive catalogue of monsters may be sooner found in *The Book of Imaginary Beings*, a modern bestiary compiled by Jorge Luis Borges and Margarita Guerrero. The tympanum episode ideally exemplifies a postmodern revisiting of the mediaeval apocalyptic cultural landscape: the mediaeval portal is populated by mediaeval monsters that have migrated straight from the twentieth century bestiary of Borges and thereby have been deprived of their original innocence. The very enumeration of these creatures may serve as an index to the Borges and Guerrero book. The portal thus illustrates the main thesis put forth by Eco with reference to the postmodern attitude towards the past, according to which it "must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently" (Eco 1994: 530).

The chapter with the description of the portal is so captivating not solely because of the variety of images it portrays. The narrative itself is an object worthy of attention. In this episode we witness one of the several changes of the stylistic codes that occur in certain places of the book. The language employed by Adso to describe the splendour of the portal considerably differs from the way he narrates, say, the episode in which William tells the searching party where the horse Brunellus has strayed. The monk confesses that he was "dazzled" by the scenes of the Last Judgement and "plunged" into this vision (Eco 1998: 41), so the whole narration represents a prophetic trance on the verge of ecstatic delirium. However, this delirium is skilfully orchestrated, and has some instances of alliteration that belie the spontaneity of the expressive means used to describe the experience:

miracle of *consonance* and *concord* of voices among themselves dissimilar, a *company* arrayed like the strings of the zither, *consentient* and *conspiring* *continued cognition* through deep and inferior force suited to perform univocally in the same alternating play of the equivocal, decoration and *collage* of creatures

beyond reduction to vicissitudes and to vicissitudes reduced[...] (Eco 1998: 42–43, my emphases)

As Umberto Eco himself admits, such passages within the fabric of the text may be compared to arias between the recitative parts of an opera-buffa. They “imitate the solemn medieval rhetoric” (1994: 57) of such authorities as Suger or St. Bernard. The writer even shares with us his doubts as to the stylistic coherence of his book in which some parts, especially dialogues, remind one of Agatha Christie, whereas others resemble the pretensions writings of Suger (*ibid.*). Certainly, there is a tension between the “ordinary” parts of the text and those sections in which the narrative suddenly becomes overwhelmed with pompous metaphorical flourishes, with page-long sentences that challenge the reader’s comprehension by their sprawling and uncontrollable syntax and in which bizarre images and outlandish conceits are threaded one after another. In some parts of the vision Eco imitates the liturgical cadence of Revelation, whereas in others he uses and stunningly abuses what Ernst Robert Curtius (1991: 93) has called “the medieval style of accumulated enumeration”, as is the case with his cataloguing the satanic bestiary of the portal. The recurrent segues into these “arias” confirm the fact that *The Name of the Rose* is a complex intertextual collage, a text which self-consciously comments on its making by allowing the perceptive reader to unravel various stylistic strands it consists of.

Another locus of apocalyptic discourse that is equally important in terms of postmodern revisiting is the YSPANIA section of the maze-like library that hoards an outstanding collection of Spanish apocalypses, among which there are so-called Beatus manuscripts which deserve due attention.

Beatus of Liébana was a monk who lived in Spain in the eighth century. His major theological achievement was a twelve-volume commentary on Revelation that contained very bright illuminations whose predominant colours were red, yellow and blue. The style of these illuminations was subsequently borrowed by the Mozarabic illuminators of apocalypses that became widespread and extremely popular in mediaeval Spain. In the course of time, the manuscripts with commentary on Revelation adorned with illustrations that conformed to the canon set by Beatus of Liébana came to be known as the Beatus Apocalypses. For instance, the famous *Beatus de Saint-Sever*

produced in the eleventh century at the Abbey of Saint-Sever is a typical sample of an apocalypse belonging to this tradition.

The presence of the *Beatus* Apocalypses in the fictional universe of *The Name of the Rose* has provoked an interesting debate set down by the French critic Alexandre Laumonier. Laumonier (2000, 464–465) mentions one historian who has noted that the inclusion of these manuscripts in an abbatial library of Northern Italy at the beginning of the fourteenth century is historically incorrect and therefore it is an evidence of Eco's dilettantism. The French critic forcefully parries this assault, saying that there are no *Beatus* manuscripts in this part exactly because the abbey has burnt down. We would not question the competence of Eco regarding this matter, but would suppose that the presence of *Beatus* apocalypses in the library at the given period is not so much the circumvention of historical "truth" but rather a self-conscious gesture which points to the interests of Umberto Eco the scholar. As we know, Eco has written a book-length commentary on *Beatus* of Liébana's commentary on the Apocalypse which contains the respective illuminations. Thus, the inclusion of the *Beatus* manuscripts in the library is an ironic commentary of Eco the writer on the commentary by Eco the scholar on the commentary by the Iberian monk *Beatus*, which is another instance of the way the self-reflexivity of historiographic metafiction undermines the claim to veracity in portraying past events which is characteristic of historiographic writings proper.

Eco efficiently exploits the iconography of the *Beatus* apocalypse to convey the all-pervasive presence of apocalyptic expectations in the fourteenth-century Benedictine abbey. As we have noted, the colours of these illuminations are very bright and in the modern context would have been called psychedelic. It is precisely the illustration of a Mozarabic apocalypse featuring the red dragon and the *mulier amicta sole*, that is, the Woman Clothed with the Sun, which comes alive when Adso falls prey to the hallucinogenic herbs smoking in the lamp: "And suddenly I saw the dragon multiply, and the scales of his hide become a kind of forest of glittering shards that came off the page and took to circling around my head" (Eco 1998: 174). This experience further asserts the prophetic aspect of Adso as the receiver of revelations about the end of the world. Just like in the tympanum episode the young monk enters the state of trance, this time assisted

by the narcotic substance in the lamp, and witnesses the close presence of the devil symbolised by the many-headed dragon.

The text of Revelation has been chosen by William as the pattern for the murders committed at the abbey. But in the end, he comes to the bitter conclusion that there is no order behind the crimes and that the apocalyptic scenario is his own tenacious attempt to discern a neat structure where there is none. As Theresa Coletti (1988: 37) has observed:

The entire narrative of the *Name of the Rose* is symbolically shaped by a conflation of the two fundamentally historical patterns of Apocalypse and liturgy, which impose on the murder mystery expectations of order, closure, and correspondence that are not borne out. Like the (non)-patterning of the murders, these subversions of structured forms of history and cosmos defy the very premises of teleological order on which the narrative is ostensibly based. Thus the novel's foregrounding of apocalyptic narrative ultimately directs attention to the structured appeal of the narrative itself.

The deaths of the monks had various causes and not all of them were violent. There was, legally speaking, not one, but two perpetrators: the former librarian Jorge of Burgos and the current librarian Malachi. Jorge was the vicarious murderer of Berengar and the said Malachi who were exposed to the book he has poisoned without knowing for sure the intended victim. There was nothing personal in his diabolic strategy. Jorge was the potential murderer of anyone who would dare to read the text which in his view would shake the foundations of the Christian dogmatic world he was determined to maintain by restricting the access to the "incorrect" books of the library. He also killed the abbot Abo by trapping him inside the secret passage to the library. Malachi killed Severinus with an armillary sphere at the instigation of Jorge, and Adelmo committed a suicide. However, the pattern of Revelation is too seductive to admit its irrelevance to the apocalyptic events at the abbey. Jorge, the most ardent aficionado of last things, takes up the false notion of the Franciscan detective and infuses Malachi with fear before the horrors of the fifth trumpet so that the librarian, before dying from poison, transmits to William another false clue to the organising principle of the crimes. It turns out that this non-existent pattern is so appealing to the blind apocalypse enthusiast that

he recuperates it by deliberately subjugating his final evil deeds to the symbolism of John's Revelation. He devours the bitter poisoned manuscript all the time self-consciously quoting the verses in which John is commanded to eat the little book handed to him by the mighty angel. So, was there a pattern or not? The answer is both "yes" and "no", which is nothing out-of-the-way for a paradoxical postmodern text that enjoys unresolved contradictions. Although the deaths were not masterminded in conformity with the sequence of the angelical trumpets, by virtue of the signs produced by these tragic incidents they perfectly fit into the scheme suggested by the half-insane Alinardo. The conflagration which destroys the library proves to be the final episode of the bleak narrative about the end of the world unfolding in an anonymous Italian abbey.

Finally, let us consider in which way *The Name of the Rose*, a novel with a mediaeval setting, reflects the problems topical for the second half of the twentieth century that happens to be the period in which it was written. As such a consideration has already been carried by some scholars, we shall try to critically assess their ideas and come up with our known conclusions regarding this matter.

Brian McHale boldly states that the burning of the library may be construed as an example of "displaced apocalypse". In his view the conflagration which consumes the library "needs to be read not only in terms of medieval apocalypticism but also in the context of the postmodernist poetics of nuclear war" which is subject to "temporal displacement" in Eco's postmodern text (McHale 1992: 161). He also draws parallels between the library and the "juridico-literary archive" discussed by Jacques Derrida in the famous article *Not Apocalypse, Not Now*. By the "juridico-literary archive" the French philosopher has meant the accumulated knowledge of humankind recorded on paper which might be completely destroyed in a nuclear war, thereby rendering it meaningless: there will not be any record left to support the rightness of the cause professed by either side of the conflict. McHale makes an interesting point, taking into account the fact that Eco's novel was published in 1981, at a time when the cold war was in full swing and the nuclear one still loomed large on the horizon. It is difficult to judge whether the burning of the library is indeed an allegory of the nuclear war. But if it is, then such a reading would alter the context of the circumstances attending the conflagration. The triggering of a nuclear war requires the meddling of such an

apocalyptic obscurant as Jorge, there is no question about that. But the very possibility of such an advanced warfare is solely predicated on the inquisitive, well-meaning scientists like William of Baskerville who push technology ahead to satisfy their appetites for discovery. It is no wonder that both opponents seem to compliment each other, and that the intervention of William makes him the oblique culprit of the final catastrophe at the abbey: "His ill-timed attempt to seize the forbidden book from Jorge unwittingly implicates him in the destruction of the intellectual life he so deeply loves" (Coletti 1988: 174). The splitting of the nucleus was performed by the likes of William, who with the help of libraries penetrated into the mysteries of the world and made great discoveries. However, these discoveries were abused by the likes of Jorge who in fanatical pursuit of their goals were ready to destroy these libraries and the whole world.

Besides the contemporary obsession with the possibility of nuclear warfare, *The Name the Rose* seems also to touch upon entropy, a concept that stands for the increase of disorder in a closed system which, in the long run, will result in the heat-death of the universe. Entropy has become part and parcel of postmodern secular apocalyptic vision and prominently appears in the texts of such writers as Thomas Pynchon and William Burroughs. Carl A. Rubino (1985: 61) indicates that the chaos which reigns at the abbey consumed by fire is a primary example of the second law of thermodynamics according to which the entropy of a closed system will increase: "The great monastery, once so imposing as to appear almost eternal, is collapsing in flames, in a truly stupendous dissipation of heat and energy. William and Adso stand contemplating a splendid instance of the now famous second law of thermodynamics, the phenomena of dissipation and irreversibility, the arrow of time". Despite the dissipation caused by entropy, Rubino, alluding to the theories of the Belgian physicist Ilya Prigogine, asserts that entropy should be understood as a creative agent which brings about the change necessary for further development: "[t]he apocalyptic ecpyrosis that envelops the decadent world of the monastery is in this sense the "big bang" that gives birth to the Renaissance" (ibid.). Certainly, there is substance to this statement, although one may tend to think that the Renaissance became possible rather despite the burning of such libraries as described in *The Name of the Rose* than thanks to that. Without denying the creative potential of chaos advocated by the

Prigogine school, we would still emphasise the apocalyptic side of entropy and regard the destruction of the library as a miniature end of the world. By applying the category of entropy to Eco's novel we shall have once again to point out the unintentional detrimental activities of William. The Englishman arrives at the abbey shaken by the death of Adelmo as a mediaeval Holmes armed with the logic of Occam and the philosophy of Francis Bacon and intent upon catching the criminal and restoring the order. In other words, his primary mission is to decrease the chaos initiated by the unknown villain, which is corroborated by Franco Moretti when he states that the "detective must dispel entropy" (qtd. in Veeseer 1988: 105). What William does not take into account is that an artificial establishing of order can be achieved only at the price of the increase of entropy (Tanner 1971: 143–144). William sets about dispelling entropy by endowing the random deaths with the order based on the succession of the seven trumpets in Revelation. As a result of his activity the number of corpses increases, and, in the end, the whole abbey burns to the ground. An outstanding pictorial representation of such pernicious ordering is the graphic work of Maurice Escher with the telling title *Order and Chaos*. The Latvian physicist Edgars Siliņš (2002: 108) focuses on this work when discussing entropy, arguing that Escher has managed to create the most eloquent illustration of how any attempt to order the environment, to produce new structures results in the increase of chaos. The graphic shows a perfect geometrical figure as an embodiment of order surrounded by litter which signifies the heavy price paid for the creation of this new structure: the debris, the scraps and bits of matter left after the creation of the complex polyhedral object now clutter the space and thus augment chaos and confusion. Something similar happens at the abbey. An ironic illustration to the entropic potential of any ordering procedure is William's attempt to extinguish the insipient fire:

He seized a volume that seemed to him more stoutly bound than the others, more compact, and he tried to use it as a weapon to stifle the hostile element. But, slamming the studded binding on the pyre of glowing books, he merely stirred more sparks. Though he tried to scatter them with his feet, he achieved the opposite effect: fluttering scraps of parchment, half burned, rose and hovered like bats, while the air, allied with its airy

fellow element, sent them to kindle the terrestrial matter of further pages. (Eco 1998: 484)

William becomes an involuntary accomplice in the ecpyrosis that destroys the dearest treasure he finds at the doomed abbey: the library with its numerous volumes of forbidden knowledge. He is incapable to prevent the deaths of the monks, he is unable to save the library and he dies at the time of the greatest chaos and confusion of the later Middle Ages: during the Black Death.

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Hacia una poética de la cita: La recepción de Antonio Tabucchi en la narrativa de Enrique Vila-Matas

CRISTINA OÑORO OTERO

*Hablar en libro es leer el mundo como si fuera
la continuación de un interminable texto*

Enrique Vila-Matas.

Intertextualidad: ¿síntoma de la sensibilidad contemporánea?

En un estudio titulado *The poetics of quotation in the European novel*, el crítico literario Herman Meyer utiliza la expresión 'poética de la cita' para referirse a ciertas novelas, por ejemplo el *Quijote* o el *Tristram Shandy*, donde la intertextualidad condiciona estructuralmente los regímenes inventivo, dispositivo y elocutivo de la obra. Aunque su investigación se centra en obras clásicas, la expresión 'poética de la cita' se adecua perfectamente al tipo de planteamientos estéticos que guían la narrativa europea desde finales de los años setenta (cf. Meyer 1968).

La mayoría de los estudiosos de la novela finisecular coinciden en que la intertextualidad es uno de sus rasgos más significativos (cf. Pozuelo Yvancos 2004; Orejas 2003; Ceserani 1997); aunque se trata de un fenómeno tan antiguo como la propia literatura, resulta especialmente significativo el uso que hacen de ella los escritores contemporáneos. Asimismo, los objetivos (implícitos y explícitos) que la guían

son diversos de aquellos que orientaban las prácticas literarias de los autores clásicos. En líneas generales, podemos decir que mientras la *retractatio* y la 'imitación de modelos' se orientaban hacia la consagración de un prototipo¹, la citación contemporánea se dirige hacia la deslegitimación del proceso mismo de representación artística, como ha apuntado Linda Hutcheon:

[...] postmodern art like this uses parody and irony to engage the history of art and the memory of the viewer in a re-valuation of aesthetic forms and contents through a reconsideration of their usually unacknowledged politics of representation (Hutcheon 1991: 229).

El objetivo de este trabajo es estudiar la recepción de Antonio Tabucchi en la narrativa de Enrique Vila-Matas; sin embargo, antes de abordar los textos en los que encontramos referencias concretas al escritor italiano, hemos querido detenernos brevemente en algunas de las más importantes aportaciones teóricas que, desde los años sesenta, han tenido como objeto la intertextualidad. Por último, evaluaremos en qué medida es la intertextualidad un síntoma de la sensibilidad contemporánea.

Algunas aportaciones teóricas sobre la intertextualidad

Desde que Kristeva formulara el concepto de intertextualidad en 1967, fruto de sus estudios sobre la teoría bajtiniana del dialogismo y la novela polifónica, la bibliografía sobre el tema ha ido en aumento². La

¹ La idea de que en la Antigüedad, y hasta el Romanticismo, el poeta no innova, sino que imita un modelo ya consagrado hunde sus raíces en la teoría de la *inventio* que recorre el arte clásico desde sus orígenes. Según ésta, los materiales de un discurso no se inventan, sino que se encuentran en el almacén de ideas y temas — la tópica — que ofrece la tradición (cf. Curtius 1999: 109; Lausberg 1966-7: §260; Barthes 1982: 44). Se trata de la lectura retórica de la *mimesis*: el arte no sólo representa lo real, ya sea en la versión platónica de la copia o en la aristotélico-horaciana de lo verosímil, sino que imita (repite) el modo en el que ese real ha sido *representado* por poetas consagrados (Sófocles para el teatro, Homero para la épica, Virgilio para el género bucólico, etc.).

² El artículo se publicó originalmente en 1967 en el número 239 de la revista *Critique*, incorporado en 1969 a *Semiótica* 1 (edición española de 1978).

intertextualidad ha interesado desde entonces a lingüistas, semióticos, comparatistas literarios, teóricos del arte, etc. Interés que se ha visto ampliado, más recientemente, por el desarrollo de los 'sistemas multimedia' (cf. Fiormonte 2003). La avalancha de publicaciones pone de manifiesto las potencialidades críticas que surgen al descubrir — o constatar — que todo texto debe ser leído e interpretado a la luz de los (otros) textos, tanto pasados como futuros, que incorpora. En realidad, se trata de un término moderno para designar un mecanismo tan antiguo como la propia literatura, a saber, la presencia de un texto — literario o no — en el interior de otro texto. Antigüedad que, sin embargo, no resta originalidad a las palabras de Kristeva, con tanta repercusión posterior para la Teoría y la Crítica del texto literario:

[...] todo texto se construye como mosaico de citas, todo texto es absorción y transformación de otro texto. En lugar de la noción de intersubjetividad se instala el de *intertextualidad*, y el lenguaje poético se lee, al menos, como doble (Kristeva 1978: 190).

La multiplicación de publicaciones sobre el tema produjo numerosas confusiones y solapamientos en torno al término 'intertextualidad'; bajo este nombre encontramos trabajos donde se incluyen desde estudios sobre las relaciones que mantiene la obra de un autor con otro, hasta los que se centran en las vinculaciones entre diferentes sistemas de signos. Hubo que esperar a que estudios posteriores, como el de Genette, establecieran cierto orden y jerarquía entre los diferentes mecanismos que pueden ser designados como intertextuales. De hecho, en *Palimpsestos* (1989: 9 y ss.), Genette utiliza el término 'transtextualidad' — y no 'intertextualidad' — con el fin de no confundir bajo un mismo nombre los diferentes modos en que se relacionan dos o más textos. Allí, señala los cinco tipos de operaciones transtextuales que pueden establecerse en orden creciente de abstracción y globalidad: intertextualidad, paratextualidad, metatextualidad, architextualidad e hipertextualidad. A diferencia de Kristeva o Riffaterre, restringe la intertextualidad a la presencia efectiva de un texto en otro, pero abre la transtextualidad a todo un mundo de relaciones posibles: desde la que mantiene un texto con los otros textos de la obra (título, subtítulo, borradores, índices, etc.), hasta la que le une a la determinación de su estatuto genérico, pasando por relaciones de comentario, transformación e imitación.

Por tanto, dependiendo de los manuales consultados, nos encontramos con diferentes tipologías de los mecanismos intertextuales, pero también, y esto complica aún más el entendimiento entre unos autores y otros, nos enfrentamos a modos muy distintos de concebir la intertextualidad en sí misma. En el conocido volumen *Intertextuality*, Plett comienza su presentación distinguiendo tres grupos de investigación según las posturas teóricas adoptadas: progresistas (asimilados a los filósofos post-estructuralistas), tradicionales y anti-intertextuales. Los primeros consideran la intertextualidad como una herramienta para superar los estudios literarios ortodoxos; los segundos, como un medio para mejorar su propia metodología y terminología; por último, los anti-intertextuales, opuestos tanto a los primeros como a los segundos, no verían en la intertextualidad sino un nuevo nombre para el mecanismo greco-romano de la *imitatio auctorum* (cf. Plett 1991: 5 y ss.). A su vez, con el fin de esclarecer las distintas acepciones atribuibles al concepto, Martínez Fernández (2001: 10–11) propone dos visiones no excluyentes de la intertextualidad: la que la entiende como propiedad o cualidad de todo texto (texto = tejido de textos), y la que, desde una perspectiva más restringida, contempla la intertextualidad como la presencia efectiva en un texto de otros textos (marcados o no marcados) reducidos normalmente a citas y alusiones. Sea la intertextualidad una propiedad de todo texto, sea un fenómeno efectivo de co-presencia textual, lo cierto es que da lugar a una nueva concepción del texto que trae consigo el replanteamiento de la vieja pregunta sobre la naturaleza de la obra literaria.

Volviendo al artículo de Kristeva, el discurso que privilegia al estudiar el dialogismo y la intertextualidad es la novela, especialmente la novela polifónica, por tratarse de un género donde “la escritura lee otra escritura, se lee a sí misma y se construye en una génesis destructiva” (Kristeva 1978: 207). Debido a las características del discurso dialógico, que opera según una lógica de la analogía y la relación, la novela moderna resulta ser idónea para el cuestionamiento “de las estructuras mismas del pensamiento oficial, basado en la lógica formal”(ib.). De ahí que ésta pueda verse como un intento por ¿deconstruir? las estructuras del pensamiento occidental:

La novela y sobre todo la novela polifónica moderna, que incorpora la mempea, encarna el esfuerzo del pensamiento europeo por salir de los marcos de las sustancias idénticas causalmente determinadas a fin de

orientarse hacia otro modo de pensamiento: el que procede por diálogo (una lógica de distancia, relación, analogía, oposición no excluyente, transfinita) (ib. 219).

No sólo Kristeva intuía la conexión entre la intertextualidad y la crisis de las formas tradicionales del pensamiento identitario; Foucault o Derrida también la han señalado como uno de los fenómenos discursivos que pone en tela de juicio ciertas categorías teóricas, o 'formas previas de continuidad', como la de autor u obra:

Una novela de Stendhal o una novela de Dovstoievsky no se individualizan como las de *La comedia humana*; y éstas a su vez no se distinguen las unas de las otras como *Ulises* o *La odisea*. Y es porque las márgenes de un libro no están jamás neta ni rigurosamente cortadas: más allá del título, las primeras líneas y el punto final, más allá de su configuración interna y la forma que lo autonomiza, está envuelto en un sistema de citas de otros libros, de otros textos, de otras frases, como un nudo a una red. Y este juego de citas y envíos no es homólogo (Foucault 2003: 37).

La presencia en un texto de *otras voces*, que lo multiplican y diseminan, destruye conceptos como el de singularidad o individualización, abriéndolo a una pluralidad infinita de contextos de sentido. Así lo subraya Derrida al referirse a la citación, fenómeno intertextual derivado de la naturaleza iterable de todo signo:

Todo signo, lingüístico o no lingüístico, hablado o escrito (en el sentido ordinario de esta oposición), en una unidad pequeña o grande, puede ser *citado*, puesto entre comillas; por ello puede romper con todo contexto dado, engendrar al infinito nuevos contextos, de manera absolutamente no saturable. Esto no supone que la marca valga fuera de contexto, sino al contrario, que no hay más que contextos sin ningún centro de anclaje absoluto (Derrida 1989: 358).

En resumidas cuentas, la intertextualidad — ya sea como herramienta crítica o como práctica artístico-literaria — cuestiona profundamente las categorías teóricas tradicionales que han dominado el pensamiento occidental. Desde este punto de vista, uno de los conceptos modernos que entre en crisis es el de sujeto: éste deja de ser entendido como

sujeto *constituyente* de un discurso, para revelarse sujeto *constituido* por los discursos de *otros*.

De Vila-Matas a Tabucchi: itinerario de un viaje intertextual

La experiencia literaria de Enrique Vila-Matas ha tenido desde sus inicios un interés particular por los fenómenos intertextuales, especialmente por lo que él ha llamado en algunas ocasiones la *autoficción*:

Muchos años antes de que oyera hablar de *autoficción*, recuerdo haber escrito un libro que se llamó *Recuerdos inventados*, donde me apropiaba de los recuerdos de otros para construirme mis recuerdos personales [...]. El hecho es que con el tiempo aquellos recuerdos se me han vuelto totalmente verdaderos. Lo diré más claro: *son mis recuerdos* (Vila-Matas 2005: 25).

El género *autoficción* al que se refiere Vila-Matas consiste, fundamentalmente, en utilizar el material narrativo de otros escritores para construir sus ficciones y, a partir de ellas, su propia autobiografía imaginaria, tal y como subraya al inicio de *Recuerdos inventados*:

Como nada memorable me había sucedido en la vida, yo antes era un hombre sin apenas biografía. Hasta que opté por inventarme una. Me refugié en un universo de varios escritores y forjé, con recuerdos de personas que veía relacionadas con sus libros o imaginaciones, una memoria personal y una nueva identidad (Vila-Matas 1994: 10).

A pesar de que los ‘guiños intertextuales’ pueden parecer meros juegos académicos, lo cierto es que poseen profundas implicaciones filosóficas y estéticas que sería difícil desarrollar en el breve espacio de estas páginas. Digamos sencillamente que, hundiendo sus raíces en Borges y en Perec, el proyecto poético vila-matiano consiste en hacer de la literatura un lugar en el que pueda darse tanto una teoría literaria, como una lectura, siempre infinita e imposible, de toda la tradición precedente. Como señalábamos al revisar las aportaciones teóricas de Kristeva y Foucault, Vila-Matas rompe con conceptos tradicionales como el de singularidad o individuación, apostando por un tipo de

narrativa donde la citación literaria está fuertemente ligada a una concepción fragmentaria del mundo³. Desde esta perspectiva, el universo se convierte en un texto interminable, compuesto de ecos de otras voces.

Para crear su autobiografía imaginaria, uno de los escritores a los que alude con mayor frecuencia es Antonio Tabucchi, autor italiano citado en numerosos relatos, ensayos y novelas⁴. El inicio de esta “genialità antropofagica” (Tabucchi 2005: 227) lo encontramos en *Recuerdos inventados*, donde Vila-Matas toma el tablón de mensajes del Peter’s Bar, escenario tabucchiano que aparece en *Donna di Porto Pim*, para convertirlo en uno de los ejes estructurales del libro: los veintisiete pasajes que configuran el relato que da título a la obra son los mensajes que el narrador dice haber encontrado en el Peter’s:

Recuerdo que en mi viaje a las Azores entré en el Peter’s Bar de Horta, un café frecuentado por los balleneros, cerca del club náutico: algo intermedio entre una taberna, lugar de encuentro, agencia de información y oficina postal. El Peter’s ha terminado por ser el destinatario de mensajes precarios y venturosos que de otra forma no tendrían otra dirección. Del tablón de madera del Peter’s penden notas, telegramas, cartas a la espera de que alguien venga a reclamarlas. En ese tablón encontré yo una misteriosa sucesión de notas, de mensajes, de voces que parecían guardar una estrecha relación entre ellas por proceder del mundo de los

³ En un estudio en el que se dedica un gran apartado a la obra de Vila-Matas, Pozuelo Yvancos también relaciona la ‘estética de la cita’ con la crisis postmoderna de los grandes relatos y con cierta tendencia a visitar el pasado: “Los postmodernos han tomado la opción de escribir “al modo de”, de literaturizarse, de convencionalizarse, con la intención de deconstruir la imagen del pasado” (2004: 52).

⁴ La poética de Antonio Tabucchi también está fuertemente marcada por la intertextualidad y los juegos metaliterarios. En ocasiones, esta tendencia se expresa de forma explícita en el interior de sus textos, como en *En La testa perduta di Damasceno Monteiro*, donde leemos: “tutto questo [la letteratura], anche se a lei non sembra, forma una ragnatela, un sistema fatto di sotterranee congiunzioni, di legami astrali, di inafferrabili corrispondenze. Se lei vuole studiare la letteratura impari almeno questo, a studiare le corrispondenze” (Tabucchi 2002: 130). Sobre la intertextualidad en la obra de Tabucchi, véase Trentini (2003).

pequeños equívocos sin importancia de Antonio Tabucchi (ib. 7).

En *Donna di Porto Pim*, leemos:

«Peter's Bar » è un caffè sul porto di Horta, vicino al club nautico. È qualcosa a metà fra la taverna, il punto di ritrovo, un'agenzia di informazioni e un ufficio postale. [...] «Peter's» è diventato il destinatario di messaggi precari e fortunosi che altrimenti non avrebbero altro indirizzo. Sul bancone di legno del «Peter's» sono attaccati biglietti, telegrammi, lettere nell'attesa che qualcuno venga a reclamarli (Tabucchi 1983: 39).

Años más tarde, en su novela *El mal de Montano*, Vila-Matas vuelve al archipiélago de las Azores, haciendo viajar a esas islas al personaje protagonista; en este caso, el recorrido que emprende Rosario Girondo por los paisajes tabucchianos está motivado por la enfermedad literaria que le persigue desde las primeras páginas, cuyo síntoma más sobresaliente es contemplar el universo como si fuera una red infinita de textos interconectados⁵:

Si bien fuimos a las Azores en viaje de vacaciones, cada uno de nosotros tenía un motivo particular que añadir a la idea del viaje por el viaje. Yo fui también movido por la curiosidad de conocer el Café Sport del que habla Tabucchi en *Dama de Porto Pim* (Vila-Matas 2002: 172).

⁵ En la historia de la literatura existen numerosas obras en las que aparece el 'síndrome intertextual' que persigue a Rosario Girondo; siguiendo a Genette, podemos agruparlas bajo el término 'antinovelas': la lectura caballerescas del mundo por parte de Don Quijote o la interpretación del universo en clave gótica propia de la protagonista de *La Abadía de Northanger* de Jane Austen, serían algunos de los ejemplos más significativos. La locura o el delirio es el principal operador de este tipo de hipertextualidad: "un héroe de espíritu frágil e incapaz de percibir la diferencia entre ficción y realidad toma por real (y actual) el universo de la ficción, se cree uno de los personajes e "interpreta" en este sentido el mundo que le rodea" (Genette 1989: 187). Sin embargo, y a diferencia de la parodia, no se trata de una analogía diegética (no se relacionan dos relatos), sino meta-diegética (un personaje se identifica con un relato de ficción en el interior de la propia obra): "enteramente situada en el ánimo y el discurso del héroe, que la percibe no sólo como una analogía, sino como una identidad" (ib.).

Por su parte, Tabucchi responde a la invitación intertextual de Vila-Matas en “Strana forma di vita”, una de las cartas que componen la novela epistolar *Si sta facendo sempre più tardi*. El texto está relacionado con la narrativa de Vila-Matas en tres niveles diferentes: en primer lugar, “Strana forma di vita” toma el título de un viejo fado de Amália Rodrigues, como el mismo autor explica en el “post scriptum”, pero también es el título de un libro del propio Vila-Matas, publicado en España en 1997. En segundo lugar, el narrador de la carta se llama Enrique, por lo que parece que Tabucchi está respondiendo al juego de envíos iniciado por el escritor catalán en *Recuerdos inventados*:

Enrique, il tuo viaggio si è fatto un allegro vivace, da quando, ieri sera, prima di addormentarti, hai letto il libro misterioso che hai trovato per caso nel cassetto del comodino. [...] Quel libro aveva preso i miei ricordi, come se li conoscesse meglio di me, i ricordi della mia giovinezza, [...] i ricordi dei libri letti, delle persone conosciute, perfino di un viaggio che feci in un arcipelago che forse non esiste più [...]. E diceva: “Ricordo che nell mio viaggio alle Azzorre entrai nel Peter’s bar di Horta, un caffè frequentato dai balenieri, vicino al club nautico: una via di mezzo fra una taverna, un luogo di incontri, un’agenzia di informazioni e un ufficio postale (Tabucchi 2005: 168–9).

Sin embargo, el personaje que escribe la carta no representa a Vila-Matas, o no sólo; complicando aún más el juego de envíos intertextuales, al final de la epístola leemos:

Ho attraversato di ritorno quella stradetta di periferia, cercavo la rua Ferreira Borges, ma nessuno sembrava conoscerla, a un certo punto ho avuto l’impressione che mio zio Federico Mayol attraversasse una piazza sotto una pioggerellina fine che si era messa a cadere (ib. 170).

Estas frases remiten explícitamente a otra novela de Vila-Matas, *El viaje vertical*:

Por lo que he podido saber — y sé mucho —, el azar de las calles quiso que cuando Mayol, desafiando a una lluvia que había dejado de ser invisible y fantasmal,

salió del hotel para echar la postal en un buzón de correos, su sobrino Pablo, que venía de un intento fallido de vender su alma al diablo, se encontrara refugiado al amparo de un portal, en la Rua Ferreira Borges, cerca del Hotel da Bolsa, y viera de pronto pasar, como en un sueño raro, a su tío de Barcelona, alguien tan remoto en el tiempo como los escasos recuerdos que de él tenía (Vila-Matas 1999: 108).

Por lo tanto, los ecos se han multiplicado hasta el infinito. Veamos. Vila-Matas comenzaba tomando un escenario tabucchiano, el tablón de anuncios del Peter's de *Donna di Porto Pim*, como metáfora estructural de *Recuerdos inventados*. Más que una mera alusión intertextual, se trataba del inicio de un proyecto poético personal, la creación de una autobiografía imaginaria, que continuaría en novelas como *El mal de Montano*. Por su parte, Tabucchi aludía a *Recuerdos inventados*, citándose a su vez a sí mismo, en una de las epístolas de *Si sta facendo sempre più tardi*, firmada por Pablo, sobrino de Federico Mayol, protagonista de *El viaje vertical*. Pero aquí no acaba todo. En 2003, Vila-Matas publica un nuevo libro de cuentos, *Aunque no entendamos nada*, donde pone por escrito todo este itinerario intertextual:

Conté también que en 1994 publiqué un libro, *Recuerdos inventados*, donde decía que había encontrado en el tablón de madera del Peter's Bar (un café frecuentado por balleneros en las Azores y descrito por Tabucchi en su libro *Dama de Porto Pim*, una descripción que yo plagué descaradamente en mi libro de recuerdos inventados) una misteriosa sucesión de notas, de mensajes (Vila-Matas 2003: 20).

Además de resumir la larga relación que le une a Tabucchi, Vila-Matas añade un nuevo relato: *Los Tabucchi*. En él, y siguiendo una supuesta indicación de éste, Vila-Matas inventa un nuevo recuerdo:

El año pasado en Madrid, poco antes de la presentación en público de *Se está haciendo cada vez más tarde*, en la que debía participar yo, Tabucchi me propuso que inventáramos un recuerdo común: cuando él tenía diez y yo cinco años nuestras respectivas familias veraneaban en Cadaqués en dos torres, una al lado de la otra (ib. 21).

El texto continúa contando las aventuras que le sucedían de niño, cuando pasaba los veranos en la casa de al lado de los Tabucchi. Sin embargo, el final del recorrido intertextual no termina con la invención de una infancia común. En 2004, Vila-Matas publica “Mastroianni-sur-Mer”, incluido en *El viento ligero en Parma*. En este último relato, escrito en forma de conferencia, explica la influencia que tuvo sobre su propia obra *Sostiene Pereira*, novela de Tabucchi protagonizada en el cine por Marcelo Mastroianni:

En esos días estaba terminando de escribir una novela, *El viaje vertical* [...]. Para escribir la novela, muchas veces utilizaba como música de fondo la banda sonora de la película *Sostiene Pereira*. La música de Ennio Morricone describe magistralmente el ritmo lento de los movimientos de una conciencia que despierta (Vila-Matas 2004: 19).

Según leemos, Vila-Matas ha vuelto a relacionar una novela suya, ya citada por Tabucchi, con *Sostiene Pereira*, dando así una nueva vuelta de tuerca al juego de los ecos y los envíos⁶. De esta manera, culmina su proyecto autoficticio: es imposible distinguir la memoria biográfica de la memoria imaginario-literaria. Lo interesante de su propuesta intertextual es, en definitiva, su radicalidad, intencionalmente dirigida a destruir ciertas categorías — como la de originalidad — de las que comúnmente nos servimos para interpretar un texto literario. Para Vila-Matas, y para tantos otros escritores finiseculares, escribir es siempre escribir *con* o *a partir* de otros. Por ello, uno de los intereses particulares de su poética es llamar la atención sobre el proceso mismo de mediación literaria que toda obra supone.

⁶ Debido a limitaciones de espacio, en este trabajo sólo hemos podido comentar las citas y alusiones más importantes, pero existen otras: véase, por ejemplo, *Bartleby y compañía* (Vila-Matas 2000: 107), donde el narrador comenta el cuento de Tabucchi “Storia di una storia che non c’è”, incluido en *I volatili del Beato Angelico* (1987). Por otra parte, la obra de los dos autores sigue abierta, por lo que podemos esperar que en el futuro se den nuevos intercambios intertextuales entre ambas producciones literarias.

Hacia una poética de la cita

En *El posmodernismo o la lógica cultural del capitalismo avanzado*, Jameson señala que una de las consecuencias estéticas de la 'muerte del sujeto' es el desvanecimiento del 'estilo personal' característico del arte modernista (Joyce, Woolf, Faulkner). En su opinión, el arte postmoderno, ante el colapso del estilo propiciado por el modernismo, dirige su mirada hacia el pasado para imitar de modo azaroso — según la lógica del *pastiche* — estilos ya caducos⁷. El resultado es que la intertextualidad sustituye al pasado, propiciando una nueva relación con el tiempo: la historia se convierte en un conjunto de imágenes, textos y simulacros fotográficos (cf. Jameson 1999: 42 y ss.).

La subjetividad *textual* de la que nos habla Jameson puede interpretarse de diferentes modos; desde un punto de vista epistemológico, la sustitución del pasado por sus imágenes implica que el 'texto' ocupa el lugar de lo 'real': cualquier experiencia del hombre estará, por tanto, mediada textualmente. Por otro lado, desde un punto de vista literario, y tal y como anunciaba Kristeva, la intersubjetividad se ve progresivamente desplazada por la intertextualidad: la obra literaria deja de ser la expresión de un sujeto para convertirse en la dispersión de una textualidad.

Uno de los escritores en los que mejor se contempla el desplazamiento de la intersubjetividad por la intertextualidad es Georges Perec, al que Vila-Matas también cita en repetidas ocasiones. En *El viaje de invierno*, Degraël, personaje protagonista, descubre un texto — un palimpsesto diría Genette — olvidado por la historia de la literatura, en el que se

⁷ Según Jameson el debilitamiento del 'gran estilo' modernista lleva a la literatura postmoderna a lo que Barthes llamaba 'grado cero de la escritura', expresión con la que éste indica la progresiva retirada de la literatura hacia el espacio neutro del silencio. Si el arte clásico se caracterizaba por el uso estilístico de una lengua, que hacía de la literatura expresión privilegiada de las convenciones sociales vigentes, la poética moderna queda definida por una explosión de escrituras entre las que el artista se ve obligado a elegir. Mallarmé y, después de él, Camus serían dos de los ejemplos del grado cero, estado que conquista un nuevo modo de escribir, descrito por Barthes como transparente, en el que la literatura "está hecha precisamente de su ausencia; pero es una ausencia total, no implica ningún refugio, ningún secreto; no se puede decir que sea una escritura impasible; es más bien una escritura inocente" (Barthes 1973: 79).

leía: “la biblia de donde hubieran extraído lo mejor de sí mismos: Banville, Richepin, Huysmans” (Perec 2004: 25). Firmado por un desconocido Hugo Vernier, el libro contenía más de trescientos cincuenta fragmentos ‘citados’ después por autores como Verlaine, Mallarmé, Huysmans y muchos otros. Este Hugo Vernier sería “un poeta tan genial como desconocido que, en una obra única, habría acertado a reunir la sustancia de la que luego se nutrirían, tras él y a partir de él, al menos tres o cuatro generaciones de autores” (ib. 22). Al igual que Degraël, los personajes de Vila-Matas viven obsesionados por salvar ese único texto donde sería posible leer de forma concentrada toda la historia de la literatura. Sin embargo, el juego vila-matiano es aún más extremo que el de Perec: los personajes se identifican de tal modo con el relato amenazado que acaban convirtiéndose en él. El resultado es la construcción de una subjetividad *textual*, constituida por infinitas citas injertadas, síntoma de la sensibilidad de fin de siglo:

[...] sería a partir de aquel momento conveniente y necesario, tanto para el aumento de mi honra como para la buena salud de la república de las letras, que me convirtiera yo en carne y hueso en la literatura misma, es decir, que me convirtiera en la literatura que vive amenazada de muerte a comienzos del siglo XXI: *encarnarme* pues en ella e intentar preservarla de su posible desaparición reviviéndola, por si acaso, en mi propia persona, en mi triste figura (Vila-Matas 2002: 63).

En el caso aquí expuesto, la intertextualidad practicada por Vila-Matas da lugar a una doble comprensión de la escritura: como medio para conectar obras y autores, y como instrumento para crear una autobiografía imaginaria. De la intensa colaboración entre ambas surgen los recuerdos inventados, forma de memoria literaria que representa el verdadero proyecto poético de Vila-Matas.

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Tópicos del Seminario. 13. Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. 2005. ISSN 165-1200. (Dir. María Isabel Filinich). Under the title "Semiótica de lo visual" it contains articles by J.-M. Klinkenberg, P. Fabbri, A. Beyaert-Geslin, J. L. Calvino, D. L. Pessoa de Barros.

Tópicos del Seminario. 14. Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. 2005. ISSN 165-1200. (Dir. María Isabel Filinich). Under the title "Seducción, persuasión, manipulación" it contains articles by E. Altuna, G. Casasco, V. Ivanovici, V. Estay Stange, A. Carrique, E. Landowski, V. Cárdenas.

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The ESTONIAN LITERARY MAGAZINE, a collaboration of the Estonian Institute and the Estonian Writers' Union, is a twice-yearly publication in the English language, founded in 1995. Its aim is to introduce the past and present of Estonian literature. It publishes regular overviews of new literary works in Estonia.

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