

HYPERION

A Journal of Melitensia and the Humanities

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RETURN MIGRATION TO THE MALTESE ISLANDS IN THE POSTWAR YEARS

E.P. DELIA

It is commonly held in Malta that return migration in the post-war period has been practically negligible. This impression seems to have prevailed also in government circles and is implicit in the reports of foreign economic advisers to the Malta Government. Policies on migration have been consequently reduced to strategies on attracting and encouraging emigration; policies on return migration are conspicuous by their absence although some constraints on the economic activity of migrant returnees were introduced in 1977.

The question of return migration is critically relevant for the formulation of demographic and economic policies in the Maltese Islands. An unpredicted high return migration would disorientate projected government plans for social and productive investment and render unattainable the desired rate of growth of employment. Yet, despite the obvious importance of this factor, no attempt has been made to estimate the flow of return migration since the War. Indeed official statistics tended to under-estimate grossly the number of migrant returnees until 1974, when a change in the definition of a 'return migrant' was introduced.

This paper assesses the extent of the return migration to Malta and Gozo up to 1974, that is, during the years when official data register a very low incidence of Maltese migrant returnees. It comments on Maltese migration statistics and derives an estimate of the net return flow. Some implications for economic planning of the results obtained conclude the paper.

The Department of Emigration, established in 1921 to guide prospective Maltese emigrants and assist them in their difficulties abroad, started compiling information on the number and characteristics of the migrants from the Maltese Islands. Since the end of the War and the introduction of the Emigrants' Passage Assistance Schemes in 1948,¹ the Department has provided a virtually complete record of Maltese emigrants to all major destinations except the United Kingdom. This has been assured by the fact that potential emigrants have all the benefits

1. Restrictions on passage assistance by the Malta Government were introduced in August 1980.

to gain by registering with the Department; and the governments receiving the emigrants have generally collaborated very closely with the Department's officials. Information on registered emigrants is currently produced giving the sex, age, occupation, marital status, location, sponsorship, and country of destination.

In the case of Maltese migration to Britain accuracy of recording migrants was introduced by the Commonwealth Immigrants' Act of 1962. Before then the entry of Maltese was virtually unrestricted so that no administrative control, and therefore no record, was required at the Maltese end. Besides, the passage cost was not so high as to deter independent movement. The controls introduced by the Act gave the Department a more active role in the migration process.

Data for emigration to Britain pre-1962 tend to underestimate the true flow of the emigration of Maltese to the United Kingdom. Moreover, they do not include girls who married British servicemen and joined them in England; or Maltese seamen who go and join ships in the United Kingdom; or contract workers who take up seasonal employment in Britain. However, the circular nature of Maltese migration during the fifties and the sixties would render any estimate, other than the official, as reliable a guess as any other.

Data on emigration from the Maltese Islands can therefore be used and interpreted with confidence. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for the data on return migration. Up to 1974 a return migrant was defined as "an emigrant who returns to Malta within two years of departure". This definition was too narrow and covered only those emigrants who failed to settle down in their country of adoption. Since 1975, the data on migrant returnees have included all the emigrants who return to Malta with the intention of remaining here independent of their length of stay abroad. It is superfluous to point out that, for this reason, the data on return migrants up to 1974 are not comparable to those following 1974².

Return migrants are classified by their number, sex and country of last permanent residence which, in most cases, could be identified with the former country of adoption. Returnees who re-emigrate and do

2. Certain comments about the intention of returnees given in the Department's reports are confusing. They leave the reader uncertain as to what is meant exactly by a return migrant as distinct from a visitor. Data on return migration was based "on the declaration of the returning migrants themselves at the time of landing in Malta as to whether they intend to remain or not". Yet, "the most reliable and first-hand information is available to the Department to the effect that the overwhelming majorities of these returnees go back to their receiving countries — in some cases, after a stay of only a few days in Malta. *Report of the Department of Labour, Emigration and Social Welfare, 1966, page 16.*

not book their passage through the Department are not included in the official statistics; those who register are included as "migrants returning to adopted country". However, their characteristics (sex, age, skill, and locality) are not given separately from the general distribution of all emigrants. This means that while it is possible to estimate the first-time emigrants, by deducting the number of returnees to adopted countries, it is not possible to find out who are the Maltese emigrating for a second time.

Of course, a decision to re-emigrate should not disqualify a person from being included in the emigration data for a given year. If migrants return with the sole intention of collecting their families, as seems to be suggested by H.R. Jones,³ they would probably say so. The emigration selection procedures take some time and any emigrant who intends collecting his family would be wise enough not to lose avoidable time, and income, in Malta. If emigrants return for this purpose then it is reasonable to assume that they would remain abroad for two years, at least, and avoid having to refund the cost of the first passage which in all probability would have been financed under the passage assistance scheme. For this reason it is more plausible to hold that those emigrants who returned within two years of emigrating, and were recorded in the official migration statistics up to 1974, did so either because they felt inadequate to fit within the socio-economic structure of the adopted countries, or because they had received incorrect information on the employment situation in Malta. On finding different conditions from the ones they were led to believe, they returned to the country of adoption. The elasticity of migration of returnees in response to changes in the socio-economic conditions in Malta would probably be greater than that of the first-time emigrants. The fear of the unknown tends to fall in inverse relation to one's successful settlement, even for a short period, in another country.

An approximate estimate of the total number of Maltese migrant returnees and the net migration movement from the Maltese Islands may be derived in one of three ways:

1. By comparing the number of registered emigrants in a period to the expected differences between actual population at the beginning and at the end of the period. The difference would represent the number of persons "missing" from the population. An adjustment to the statistic thus obtained would have to be made to account for the inclusion in Maltese population data of the wives and children of the U.K. Services personnel stationed in the Islands.

3. Huw R. Jones, *Modern Emigration from Malta*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, November 1973, page 104.

2. By comparing the total number of registered emigrants to a country of destination with the census data for Malta-born residents in that country. With the exception of the United Kingdom data, which would include the children born in Malta of British personnel with the Services, persons registered as Malta-born in the countries receiving Maltese emigrants could be assumed to be Maltese.

3. By comparing the Maltese emigration statistics with the data on passenger movements for Maltese nationals. The latter set of statistics include independent, unregistered emigrants, Maltese females married to British servicemen, and Maltese sailors. This exercise is not as simple as one would expect. Maltese data on passenger movements are recorded by country of departure or destination. So return migrants who travel to Malta via Rome or London would be registered as coming from Italy or the United Kingdom rather than, say, from Australia. This system of data collection produces a close similarity between the data on emigration and on passenger movements to Canada, the United States of America and Australia, the three countries that attracted the greater number of postwar Maltese migrants.

The natural increase of the Maltese population for the three periods indicated below is estimated to have been:

Period		
1949 — 1956	:	49639 persons
1958 — 1966	:	39121 persons
1968 — 1974	:	22916 persons

The population estimates, based on the official censuses, for the years included were:

Beginning of 1949 (based on 1948 census)	:	308929 persons
Beginning of 1958 (based on 1957 census)	:	319957 persons
Beginning of 1968 (based on 1967 census)	:	317026 persons
Beginning of 1974	:	317980 persons

The persons missing from the population are estimated at:

Period		
1949 — 1956	:	44,607 persons
1958 — 1966	:	40,969 persons
1968 — 1974	:	16,096 persons

a total of 101672 persons for the period 1949 — 1974.

The data for missing persons have to be adjusted to account for the movements of the non-Maltese population. Information is available on both the total population of the Maltese Islands and on the Maltese population for the years after 1968. Over the period 1968-1974, the Maltese population averaged 94.3% of the total population of the Islands. If it is assumed that this rate was reflective of the Maltese component throughout the postwar period, and if it is also assumed that the composition of the missing persons corresponded to that of the total

population, a tentative estimate of missing Maltese persons may be derived.

Period		
1949	— 1956	: 42064 persons
1958	— 1966	: 38633 Maltese
1964	— 1974	: 15178 Maltese

Migration statistics suggest that Net Migration for the same periods was:

Period		
1949	— 1956	: -51156 persons
1958	— 1966	: -40999 persons
1968	— 1974	: -20493 persons

Data on Net Passenger Movements (Maltese nationality) for the three sub-periods give the following distribution:

Period		
1949	— 1956	: -41196 persons
1958	— 1966	: -33222 persons
1967	— 1974	: - 7792 persons

The above data do not however reveal an interesting phenomenon: while data on net migration suggest a net outward balance throughout the period 1949 — 1974, the data on net passenger movements indicate that a net **inward** flow was registered in 1968, 1969 and 1970. Net inward movements amounted to 489, 1065, and 146 persons respectively in those three years. This means that the population growth rate exceeded the rate of natural increase through a positive inward movement.

Table 1 combines the three sets of statistics.

Table 1
Missing Maltese Persons, Net Migration and Net Passenger Movement
1949 — 1974

Period	Missing Maltese Persons	Net Migration	Net Passenger Movement
1949-56	42064	-51156	-41196
1958-66	38633	-40999	-33222
1968-74	15178	-20493	- 7792

Source: Estimated from data in Annual Abstract of Statistics (Central Office of Statistics, Malta), sections on Population and Passenger Movements.

Net migration data give an emigration balance of 112,648 persons during 1949-1974; net passenger movements statistics suggest an outward balance of 82,210 Maltese — a difference of 30,438 persons from net migration. About 30,000 Maltese returned from settlement abroad in excess of those suggested by the migration statistics.

A different approach adopted to estimate return migration yielded a return flow in the region of the 30,000 obtained above. If it is assumed that no return migration occurred since 1945, and if registered second-

time emigrants are considered as non-returnees,⁴ the population in the Maltese Islands in 1974 would have been 292,206.⁵ The actual population in 1974 was 317,980; that is 26,000 more than that estimated.

Return migration must therefore have been between 26,000 and 30,000 more than the recorded 12,771; total returnees amounted to between 38,000 and 42,000. Government statistics would suggest that all returnees re-emigrated, for the total number of emigrants who declared they were returning to the adopted country was 12,307 between 1951 and 1974. Since the two official estimates of returned migrants and second-time emigrants practically cancel out we are left with the non-recorded returnees (the missing persons) of about 30,000.

Total registered migrants between 1951 and 1974 were 117,791. If net return migration, that is, return migration less second-time emigration, was about 30,000, then net emigration would have been 87,700 or 74.5% of the gross flow. This would suggest a rate of emigration loss of about 25%.⁶

The official population censuses in the countries receiving Maltese emigrants are also useful in estimating the emigration loss. The 1971 censuses for Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand record 77,230 Malta-born persons distributed as follows:⁷

Australia	53,681
Canada	9,225
United Kingdom	16,000 ⁸
New Zealand	324

Source: Australia Census 1971, Bulletin 4, Table 1.

Canada Census 1971, Vol.1.3, Table 34.

New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, 1971, Vol. 7, Table 4.

United Kingdom Census 1971, Country of Birth Tables, Table 4, page 144.

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4. If the registered returned migrants are excluded, the population in 1974 would have been 279,899.
 5. This implies that the births and the deaths registered do not include any returned migrant in the death statistics or their children born in Malta in the birth data. Using the statistic in footnote 4, and deducting it from the 1974 actual population, we obtain a difference of 38081 returnees.
 6. In a study on *Settler Loss and Gain in Australia*, C. Price concludes: "Leaving aside the early postwar settlers, the loss rates after some ten years of settlement work out at 30 for British, Italian, and Maltese settlers, nearly 40 for Dutch and German settlers, and about 20 and 25 for Greeks and Yugoslavs". See, Immigration Advisory Council Committee on Social Patterns, *Inquiry into the Department of Settlers from Australia: Final Report, 1973*, (Canberra, Australia Government Publishing Service, 1973), Appendix C.
 7. The population census for the USA does not classify Maltese as a separate category. They are included with the residual general category "All Other European".
 8. This statistic is derived from the U.K. Census, 1971, as follows: Persons born

The statistic 77,230 should be compared to the 87,700 estimated above. If it is assumed that the majority of Maltese who emigrated to countries other than the four referred to went to the USA, then the Malta-born population in the USA would have numbered about 10,000 in 1971.

The flow of returned migrants from Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom can be ascertained, in a very general manner, by comparing the Maltese migration statistics with the respective censuses. The comparative data are given in Table 2.⁹

Table 2

Estimated Rate of Emigration Loss from Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom

Country of Adoption	(1) Registered Emigrants	(2) Return Migrants	(3) Net Mig.	(4) Census 1971 (Rounded)	(5) Missing Persons (1-4)	(6) Rate of Emi. Loss
Australia	72,778	6,781	65,997	53,680	19,098	26.24
Canada	15,618	1,395	14,223	9,230	6,388	40.24
United Kingdom	28,722	3,792	24,930	16,000	12,722	44.29

The overall emigration loss for Australia, Canada and Britain amounts to 38,298 persons, representing 32.6% of total registered migrants. This rate of emigration loss for the three countries is higher than the net rate of 25% obtained previously. The difference could be interpreted to suggest that the emigration to the USA and elsewhere, though much smaller in size compared to that to the three countries considered, has produced a higher rate of settlement.

Return migrants who settled in Malta and Gozo amount to between one fourth and one third of total emigrants in the three decades after the war. If this past trend continues, the probability that a Maltese emigrant would resettle in Malta lies between 0.25 and 0.33.

Such a relatively high rate of return raises several important issues for public policy makers. First, there arises the question of whether Maltese emigrants should be considered a potential or extended component of the Maltese labour force. Public Authorities in Malta appear to have adopted the view that once an emigrant leaves these Islands, he or she is lost permanently to the labour supply. This tacit assump-

in Malta whose parents were born in the New Commonwealth numbered 12295. There were 4390 persons born in Malta whose parents were born one in the British Isles and one in the New Commonwealth. The first category fits Maltese emigrants; the second the children of Maltese married to U.K. citizens. This gives a total of 16390; we rounded the estimate to 16000.

9. Table 2 omits those Maltese living in the respective countries before the War. The Australian Census of 1933, the last to be held before the War, records 2782 Malta-born persons. The U.K. census of 1931 gives a probable total of 1250 Maltese.

tion probably survived because of the peculiar manner in which return migration was defined up to 1974. However, if one in three emigrants could be expected to resettle in Malta, the labour force may increase by an equal amount. Of course, some of the returnees would retire completely from work, while married women may not seek employment outside the home. But the labour force would be increased by the migrants' children who were born abroad. Indeed if the latter were to exceed the returnees who abstain from search for work or who remain at home, the actual labour supply in Malta would be greater than indicated by data on return migration as presently defined.

Secondly, future policies on migration will have to explicitly consider the role of return migration. A neutral migration policy similar to that announced in 1977 — zero net migration —¹⁰ would critically depend for its attainment on the return migration flow. Under such a policy emigration would become dependent on return migration, in which case the number of annual emigrants cannot be established unless a target for returnees is set. The alternative will be to set return migration equal to emigration. But government may find it relatively easier to regulate emigration through the termination of the passage assistance scheme, for example, rather than control return migration. Besides, while the characteristics of emigrants are known in advance, those of migrant returnees are only discovered after they arrive in Malta; being of Maltese citizenship, Maltese emigrants have their right of freedom of movement guaranteed by the Constitution. A policy on return migration is therefore expected to be more difficult to implement if it is to be beneficial both for the migrants and for the non-migrant population.

It would be helpful for a sound migration policy if this aspect is raised in the demographic census scheduled to be held this year but which probably would be postponed to next year. The number of migrant returnees could then be established in a more definite manner.

To sum up, return migration to the Maltese Islands since 1945 has been relatively high. It is estimated that up to 1974, total return migration has been about 42,000, giving a net return migration of 30,000 and representing an emigration loss of at least 25%. The phenomenon of return migration can only be ignored to the detriment of economic and manpower planning in Malta. Preferably a policy on migrant returnees should be explicitly stated after further study of the issue.

10. *Development Plan for Malta 1973-1980 Supplement* (Malta, Office of the Prime Minister, October 1977), page 52.

SEASONAL VARIATIONS ON SOME MEDITERRANEAN THEMES

Jeremy Boissevain

"Social life does not continue at the same level throughout the year, it goes through regular, successive phases of increased and decreased intensity, of activity and response, of exertion and recuperation" (Mauss 1979: 78-79).

"The sea's climate, with its own clearly defined seasons, regulates Mediterranean life into two phases, year in, year out, sending the Mediterranean people by turns to their summer then to their winter quarters" (Braudel 1972: 246).

Many writers have attempted to link climate to social behaviour.² The French, perhaps because their country embraces such diverse climates — but perhaps also because they have a penchant for grand theories — have given this interesting subject considerable attention. The ideas of Mauss and Braudel have been particularly significant. Mauss (1904) examined the impact of seasonal variation on the social life of the Eskimo. He showed how the starkly contrasting summer and winter seasons are accompanied by equally distinct patterns of social behaviour. While the details of this difference need not concern us here, the seasonal variation of social behaviour he demonstrated does. Braudel (1949) reworked this theme in a specifically Mediterranean context. In his classic study of the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II he demonstrated that the economic, social and political life of Mediterranean societies in the 16th century was strongly influenced by the seasons. Winter was a time of hardship and rest. In contrast, summer was a period of hyperactivity. Four centuries have passed since Philip II

1. These preliminary thoughts were formulated in March 1981 while I was Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex and presented to the Third International Congress of Studies on Cultures of the Western Mediterranean, Djerba, Tunisia, 3-9 April, 1981. I am grateful to Dirkjan Beukenhorst, Inga Boissevain, Joe and Theresa Friggieri, Dymphna Hermans, and Maja Maur for discussing the weather with me.
2. Among others Montesquieu (1748); de Staël (1800); Taine (1865); Durkheim (1897); Huntington (1924); Markham (1947).

reigned. During this period man has become more independent of seasonal constraints. In what measure has this independence affected the relation between seasons and social behaviour in the societies on the North shore of the Mediterranean?

The climate of Mediterranean coastal areas is characterised by two distinct seasons. A long, hot and exceedingly dry summer extends roughly from April to October. The first rains in September herald the arrival of the raw, wet and stormy winter season, which lasts from November through March. The break between the two seasons, often announced by a sudden, violent deluge, brings much the same excitement as the onslaught of the monsoon in Asia. It signals in dramatic fashion the transition between two social seasons. Braudel described winter in the 16th century Mediterranean as a standstill. It was a period during which there was little traffic. Many ships were laid up between October and April to avoid the fierce winter storms. Travel and commerce were thus severely restricted. During these months the agricultural cycle required minimal labour. Winter was a period of introversion and limited communication. It was also a time of hardship. The extreme discomfort of winter life in houses built to withstand heat rather than cold, with lofty ceilings, draughty windows and tiled floors, must be experienced to be understood. Winter was a time of harsh poverty as food and energy supplies dwindled (cf. Chambers, 1979). It was also a period when quiet diplomatic negotiations and planning took place. Since transportation was limited by storm at sea and floods and mud inland, piracy, revolts and military expeditions were also severely restricted. Winter was thus a time of consolidation, introspection, hardship and peace.

Summer, in contrast, brought renewed activity. April was perhaps the busiest month. Ships were fitted out and military expeditions prepared and sent forth. Above all, in societies heavily dependent on both agriculture and trade, crops and commerce demanded increasing attention. Late ploughing took place in April. Then followed a succession of harvests: grain, figs, grapes and olives. At the end of summer the ground had to be ploughed again before winter rains made the soil too heavy to work. Summer with its warm weather and abundant food supply was also a period of feasting. Patron Saints were honoured and weddings celebrated. Such celebrations were also traditional times of courtship. The tight social control characteristic of small inward-looking communities relaxed somewhat in summer. The celebrations and much of the daily round of business and domestic activities took place outdoors, in public. With no rain to interrupt them, people who met accidentally in public, spent hours in conversation. Summer was a time of intense transaction with travellers from near and far. But summer was also the season of piracy and war. Braudel noted that most major

Mediterranean battles, governed as they were by the movement of men across water, occurred in the summer, when the sea is often as tranquil as a pond. Summer was a period of work, travel, celebration, and war, of activity and relaxed conversation.

It is significant that for the North European, if not for the local, the summer semester became stereotypical of the Mediterranean world. The feasting, dancing, swimming and singing in summer became familiar through the writings of North Europeans who rarely stayed longer than September³. The winter season, no less typical of the Mediterranean, remained largely under-reported and, therefore, unfamiliar to the northerner.

There have been many striking technological and political-economic developments since the age of Philip II. Transport technology has reduced to a lake what was once a vast, almost limitless sea. It can be crossed now at any time of the year. Airports have replaced harbours as the most important communication centres. Marseilles, Barcelona, Genoa, Venice and Ragusa have ceded pride of place to Madrid, Rome, Belgrade and Beirut. Telephones, radio, television and teleprinters link cities to their hinterlands, and northern Europe to the Mediterranean world. Communication that took months in the 16th century has become a matter of minutes. Even the constraints of climate have been softened by new sources of energy applied to heating, air conditioning, irrigation.

The Mediterranean world has entered into a more intense symbiotic relationship with north-west Europe. The industrialisation, urbanisation, even the labour relations and climate of northern Europe now directly affect the lives of millions around the Mediterranean. The rapid industrialisation of Europe was made possible by the reserve army of Mediterranean labourers that surged northward following World War II. Economies of scale have brought industrial concentration, urban overcrowding, conveyor belt specialisation and environmental pollution in the north. Growing protest about these conditions is providing some relief for many. This has included both the right to holidays away from work and the financial means to enjoy them. During the past 15 years virtually all north European workers have become able to take a two to three week break to charge themselves physically and mentally. The need to escape, to recover increases as the pressure for higher productivity continues to mount. It is in this sense that northern Europe and the

3. A random selection of travellers to Malta and Sicily, for example, demonstrates their preference for the summer: Brydone (1776) travelled from 14 May to 1 August, 1770, De Non (1790) from May through September, 1778 and Melon (1885) from 10 April through 11 June, 1884. Only De Borch, (1782) visited the islands in winter. Perhaps for this reason he disagreed sharply with some of Brydone's observations.

Mediterranean world are becoming increasingly interdependent. The north European, whether executive or manual worker, searches for as complete a change as possible during his annual holiday. He prefers rural to urban environment, agrarian to industrial surroundings, sunny, warm weather to his habitual cool cloudy climate. Above all he looks for a sociable, gregarious lifestyle to contrast with the reserve of his customary social surroundings. Because the Mediterranean in summer offers these contrasts, over one hundred million visitors swarm into the region annually. They spend upwards of US\$7 billion (Boissevain 1979). Paradoxically, many of the same attributes that forced Mediterranean labour into northern industry — the ubiquitous sea, the hot, dry summers, the rough terrain, the primitive rural technology and the agro-pastoral setting — are now attracting tourists. For centuries these conditions were responsible for much of the region's relative poverty. They have now become major economic resources.

Have these sweeping, radical developments fundamentally changed the traditional pattern of summer activity and winter standstill that Braudel noted?

Summer by the Mediterranean is still characterised by great activity. From June through August the new tourist harvest takes place. In three months an important supplement to (if not the entire annual) income must be gathered from summer visitors. To do this locals often work 18-hour days, seven days a week for 14-16 weeks. Many must use stimulants to keep going (Hermans 1980, Stott 1979). A 22-year old waiter in Cambrills described the experience:

Your income for a whole year is there waiting if you work like crazy for those three months. Fine, you don't look forward to it; you have no life for those three months; you take pep-pills but are still so exhausted you can hardly see straight.

...when it's finally September and a bit less hectic, you're too tired to go out or enjoy the weather. Often I'm sick; not really sick but lifeless and tired and not interested in anything. That can last weeks — and then it's winter again! (Hermans 1980: 103, 104).

During summer there is not only an exaggerated movement into the region — there is travel within it and out of it. If they can afford it, Mediterranean urbanites and, increasingly, people from rural towns and villages move to the mountains and seaside to escape summer heat. They also travel to the north of Europe. Growing affluence is increasing (summer dispersion of Mediterranean peoples away from their normal places of residence.

Communal rituals are becoming more intense in summer. Traditional folklore events and the joyous celebration of community patron saints are not only prime tourist assets. More than ever they serve as

symbols of community identity for the indigeneous minority flooded by waves of strangers. In Malta, if not elsewhere, the scale of such celebrations is growing (Boissevain 1981). Winter festas are being shifted to summer. This is done as much to provide entertainment for visitors as it is to protect the growing treasure of decorations from winter storm damage. Secular entertainment has also intensified. Night clubs, restaurants and discos have sprouted all along the Mediterranean. Built ostensibly for foreign tourists, they cater increasingly to locals.

Escalation of summer entertainment and long hours of work away from family control heighten the traditional summer relaxation of moral standards. The holiday influx of hordes of unattached, provocatively dressed north European girls with more flexible sexual morals are turning the erotic dreams of countless Mediterranean machos into reality. Mediterranean women are under increasing pressure to relax their own stricter sexual codes or virtually to lose sight of their men until winter (Boissevain 1979; Hermans 1980; Scott 1979).

The increased work load and the flux of outsiders has reduced interaction between locals. Those over 30 are too involved with their exhausting work to socialise. The younger ones use their greater energy after work to communicate with tourists. The pressure of work has also altered traditional patterns of summer leisure. Those involved in the tourist harvest have no time for family meals, siestas, beach outings, fishing expeditions and conversation in the cool of the evening. These were once important components of the "Mediterranean" way of life.

Many summer visitors are not foreign. They are migrants returning from the north to celebrate their annual holidays at home. To the locals they are very special. They are neighbours and kinsmen who must be welcomed home and feasted. Family prestige depends upon the lavishness of such hospitality. Summers, when hospitality can take place outside, in public, is thus also the season during which duelling for prestige is most pronounced. Money carefully saved during the rest of the year in summer flows like water. Summer is a time for spending, winter for saving.

Despite increased technology that has made it possible to travel almost instantly between Mediterranean countries at all times of the year, most people still move in the summer. They do so not solely for pleasure. Many travel for war. Summer is still the time of Mediterranean coups and invasions. All major military acts in the Mediterranean area since the 1943 Allied summer invasion of Italy have taken place from April through October (Steinberg 1979):

1948 May	War erupts in Palestine
1952 July	General Nguuib seizes power in Egypt
1956 June	British and French attack Suez
October	Israel invades Egypt

1965	June	President Ben Bela of Algeria deposed by Colonial Boumédienne
1967	April	King Idris of Libya deposed in coup
	June	Military coup in Greece
1969	September	Six day war between Israel and Egypt
1974	April	Portuguese government overthrown by Military
	July	President Makarios overthrown by military coup. Turkey invade Cyprus
1980	August	Libyan warship threatens Maltese offshore oil operations.

The list can, and alas in future will, be extended. Armed military violence is still as much a summer activity as it was in the 16th century.

Summer by the Mediterranean thus still embraces the work, travel and celebration that characterised it in the age of Philip II. But in tourist zones these characteristics are becoming grossly distorted, dissonant.

More than before, winter is the period during which Mediterranean societies repair the ravages of summer. Many people take months to recover from the summer work frenzy, from the tidal wave of visitors, from the exhausting demands of pleasure. As the wave recedes, traditional social rhythms are re-established. Social control tightens as neighbours become visible once again. Church-going becomes more pronounced and the movement of girls more carefully watched. Interaction between locals increases as they rediscover each other during evening promenade and in cafes. In town, locals again stage operas, plays and exhibitions for each other. Communal and personal bonds are consolidated and tightened. As in the past, winter is still a period of standstill, of rest and peace.

Thus despite sweeping developments, the seasonal variation of behaviour is today just as pronounced as it was in the 16th century. If anything it has become more extreme. Technology and political-economic developments have not changed the underlying realities; they have exaggerated them. But there has been a change of another order. Increasingly numbers no longer welcome summer as a release from the idleness and hardships of winter, as a time of joyous celebration. Winter now provides release from summer. For many the winter standstill, not the summer frenzy embodies the quintessence of Mediterranean life and culture. But perhaps it always has. Braudel notwithstanding, it seems likely that Mediterranean artists, architects and scientists were most active and creative after September's oppressive humidity and before the onset of the debilitating heat of summer.

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IL-POEŻIJA MALTJA: DAK LI JINBIDEL U DAK LI JIBQA'

Il-Polemika bejn it-Tradizzjonalisti u l-Modernisti

Joseph Vella

"Il-poeżija moderna, jekk tista' tissejjaħ poeżija, neħhiet il-metrika kollha. U meta tneħhi l-istanza, ir-ritmu u r-rima, x'jibqa' mill-poeżija?"

"Il-fatt li Dun Karm, li ta' qabilna sejhulu l-Poeta Nazzjonali, kien qassis, għaliġa ma setax ikun poeta, għax kien ippreġudikat."

Il-pubblikazzjoni ta' 'Linji Godda'* fl-1973, ħamsa u għoxrin sena wara l-ewwel ħarġa ta' 'Il-Muża'+ taq spinta għall-polemika, li għadha sejra, dwar il-valluri intrinżiċi, is-siwi letterarju, artistiku u filosofiku tal-Poeżija Moderna vis-à-vis dawk tal-Poeżija Tradizzjonali. Dawn li ġejjin huma ftit riflessjonijiet fuq din il-polemika u l-effetti li qed tħalli fuq l-istudenti.

IT-TIBDIL ONTOLOĠIKU

It-tibdil ontoloġiku fir-realtà fenomenali hu fatt daqs kemm hi l-identità jew il-kontinwità ta' l-istess esseri. Dan il-paradoss li tant ħawwad l-ewwel filosfi griegi ħoloq żewġ pożizzjonijiet: tezi-antitezi. Heraclitus isostni li kollox jinsab fi stat ta' tibdil, filwaqt li Parmenides u sħabu ta' l-iskola eleatika, jaffer maw il-moniżmu metafiziku. Il-verità, kif sew qal Aristotile, hi fis-sintezi ta' dan il-paradoss inerenti fil-permanenza u t-tibdil bħala żewġ karatteristiċi ta' l-istess realtà ogġettiva. Minn din is-sintezi tibdil-unità jirrizulta d-dinamiżmu kollu li jinsab fid-dinja. Id-dinja mhix haġa statika, iżda proċess attiv li bih il-materja tiehu l-forma biex tiperfezzjona lilha nfisha. Dan il-proċess kosmiku hu kontinwu, u n-natura ma tagħmel xejn għal xejn għax il-ħlejjaq kollha kullimkien huma inter-nament formati biex jilħqu l-perfezzjoni tagħhom.

* *Linji Godda*, Mitt Poeżija ta' Llum b'kummentarju kritiku minn Peter Serracino Inglott. Malta, KKM, 1978.

+ *Il-Muża Maltija*, Antoloġija ta' Poeti Maltin miġbura minn Ġuże Aquilina. L-ewwel Edizzjoni, Malta. Aquilina, 1948.

Dan il-fatt paradossali tar-realtà fenomenali kien meħtieġ li nsem-muh biex nifhmu li kull tibdil, anki t-tibdil uman, ikun dak xjentifiku, ekonomiku, politiku, soċjali, reliġjuż jew letterarju, hu dejjem riżultat ta' dan it-tibdil ontoloġiku, għax jekk aħna, kollha kemm aħna, nikbru u ninbidlu minn għewwa, anki minn barra ma jistax ikun li nibqgħu l-istess. Anzi hu minn dan id-dinamiżmu ta' tibdil li nħolqot il-letteratura bħala espressjoni tal-ġmiel, għax la l-manifestazzjoni tas-sabiħ tinbidel, jinbidlu wkoll il-forom estetici tal-letteratura.

IT-TIBDIL FIL-POEŻIJA

Għalhekk it-tibdil letterarju (poetiku f'dan l-artiklu) hu essenzjali għax naturali, u min jipprova jwaqqfu jkun qed imur kontra n-natura nfisha. Iżda ma ninsewx ukoll li dan it-tibdil letterarju hu karatteristika waħda tar-realtà li hi wkoll kontinwità. U min jeħodha kontra t-tradizzjoni bħala xi ħaġa anakronistika u għalhekk mhix aktar meħtieġa fid-dinja moderna, ikun qed jiżbalja xorta waħda. It-tradizzjoni, isimha magħha 'traditio = trans-do', hi l-qofol ta' din il-kontinwità għax tghaddi l-għerf tal-poeżija mill-bidu sal-lum, hekk kif it-tradizzjoni lhudija għaddiet il-Kodiċi możajka, it-tradizzjoni nisranija għaddiet it-tagħlim ta' Kristu, u kif it-tradizzjoni islamika għaddiet is-sunna ta' Mohammed, minn generazzjoni għal oħra.

Għalhekk m'għandniex nagħtu l-impressjoni kerha tat-tradizzjoni billi niġbru l-poeti tal-imġhoddi kollha flimkien taħt l-isem ta' tradizzjonalisti/imitaturi li identifkaw il-kreazzjoni ma' l-imitazzjoni. Mhux il-modernisti biss jemmu fil-kreattività, għax minn dejjem eżistew poeti ispirati u alura kreattivi. Wara kollox jekk inħarsu mis-sens etimoloġiku tal-kelma 'kreazzjoni' Alla biss kien 'kreattiv' għax kien Hu l-ewwel kawża ta' l-eżistenza ta' kulma hawn. L-ewwel poeta kien 'kreattiv' għax ipprova 'jimita' l-ġmiel tan-natura fi stil personali tiegħu li għażlu minn poeti oħra, huma wkoll imitaturi tan-natura. Bil-kliem 'stil personali' jew 'oriġinali' rrid nifhem li filwaqt li n-natura tirrepeti lilha nfisha l-hin kollu fiċ-ċiklu naturali tagħha, il-bniedem, bħala xebh t'Alla l-Hallieq, għandu l-potenzjal li jkompli l-opra kreattiva t'Alla, għax kapaċi jinkarna b'mod kreattiv l-arċitipi eterni tal-Ġmiel, tat-Tjubija u l-Verità fi ħsibijietu, kliemu u egħmilu, jiġifieri fix-xogħlijiet artistici tiegħu kollha. Hawn qiegħda l-inspirazzjoni kreattiva, id-dinamiżmu tal-poeta fl-imitazzjoni tiegħu tan-natura. U b'hekk nisgħu nitkellmu fuq 'imitazzjoni oriġinali', żewġ kunċetti li għall-ewwel jidhru jeskludu 'l xulxin.

IMITAZZJONI ORIGINALI

Dan l-isem kien ħareġ bih Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585), il-mexxej tar-riforma poetika-franċiża li kienu sejħulha 'La Pléiade'. Infatti l-vrus poetici ta' Ronsard ifakkruna f'Pindaru u f'Orazju għax hu kien jemma li kien meħtieġ timita lill-Klassiċi biex tikteb poeżija sabiħa, iżda dawn il-vrus jesprimu wkoll sentimenti veri u personali tiegħu. L-oriġinalità (jew l-emanċipazzjoni) ta' Ronsard qiegħda fiż-żewġ sentimenti profondi li kien

iħosshom jispirawh: l-imħabba lejn in-natura u l-imħabba lejn Marie, tfajla tal-kampanja.

Boileau wkoll żamm l-istess teorija ta' Ronsard għax kien iġid li l-materja ta' l-arti hi n-'Natura Umana', u li l-poeta għandu jfittixha bl-os-servazzjoni diretta tal-bniedem, iżda kif il-Griegi u r-Rumani kienu ġa fis-sruha din in-natura b'perfezzjoni kbira, kien jaqbel li l-poeti jistudjawhom u jimitawhom. Iżda din l-imitazzjoni, kompli jgħid Boileau, m'għandhiex tkun skjavitù plagġjaristika imma imitazzjoni oriġinali, personali, fis-sens li l-poeta jesprimi idea wara li jkun fassha u ġarrabha hu fil-kuxjenza tiegħu.

IL-POLEMIKI LETTERARJI

Meta l-baħar jitqalleb irid iż-żmien biex joqgħod. Hemm bżonn li kull tant jitqalleb biex ma jintinx għax fl-ilma qiegħed iġixu biss insetti żgħar u perikolużi. Il-ħut b'saħħtu jfittex il-faħel. Iżda meta jerga' joqgħod il-baħar il-perspettiva tiċċara u kollox jieħu postu kif għandu jkun.

Fid-dinja minn dejjem kien hawn polemiki letterarji. Biex insemmu waħda biss, tant kienet f'arxa u qalila fi Franza l-ġlieda bejn il-moderni u l-klassiċisti, 'la querelle des Anciens et des Modernes', li damet sejra aktar minn tletin sena u f'liet f'arxa enerġija bla bżonn. Dak li kien meqjus bħala haġa essenzjali għall-poezija mill-klassiċisti kien imwaqqa' għaċ-ċajt mill-modernisti, u viċi-versa. Fis-saħna ta' l-irjus il-perspettiva ġusta ntilfet għax l-aċċidentali deher aktar importanti mill-essenzjali. Fil-fatt Molière, Corneille, Racine, Bossuet, La Fontaine, kienu kbar mhux biss għax kienu ispirati mill-klassiċi griegi u rumani, iżda aktar għax kienu kbar huma nfushom. L-imitazzjoni wehdedha ma tagħmlekk kbir jekk m'għandekx il-kreattività, l-oriġinalità, l-inspirazzjoni personali tiegħek biex timlieha.

Iżda fil-mumentu koroh tal-polemika, jista' jigri li l-abjad jibda jidher mhux biss griż iżda iswed. Infatti l-imitazzjoni tal-klassiċi li tant dawlet imħuħ kbar fis-seklu sbatax fi Franza bdiet titqies bħala superstizzjoni mill-modernisti tas-seklu tminax u l-awtorità tar-raġuni bdiet titqies bħala preġudizzju. Il-progress f'ha post it-tradizzjoni, u l-independenza u r-relattività f'ha post l-awtorità. L-istorja tirrepeti ruħha b'mod differenti, iva, iżda tirrepeti ruħha xorta waħda, għax anki f'Malta l-polemika letterarja tas-sittinijiet għaddiet mill-istess toroq. Minħabba li l-poezija maltija għadha sigra żgħira u li minn twelidha sa ftit snin ilu libset libsa waħda, konna drajnjeha din il-libsa u identifikajna l-poezija mar-romantiċiżmu. Għax ġenerazzjoni wara l-oħra trawmet fiha u fiha biss, konna f'isbna li biss fl-imitazzjoni tat-tematika u l-istilistika 'dunkarmjana tista' tgħix u tikber il-poezija maltija. Min-naħa tagħha din il-mentalità magħluqa ta' difiża ma riedet lanqas tara d-dekadenza tar-romantiċiżmu malti, li kien riżultat tal-mewt tal-poeti kbar u tat-tibdil soċjali, politiku, ekonomiku u edukattiv li sar f'Malta f'dawn l-aħħar għoxrin sena.

Iżda sakemm tibqa' f'ha soċjetà, l-inspirazzjoni poetika ma tmut qatt. L-għajta tal-Modernisti tas-snin sittin kienet għajta ta' protesta kontra dak kollu li kien nobbli u essenzjali għall-poezija romantika. Ir-reazzjoni,

isimha magħha, dejjem tkun ħarxa u s-soċjetà maltija ma kenitx ippreparata għaliha u ma laqgħethiex. Minflok li rtiraw, il-Modernisti ziedu fil-volum għax kienu jemmnu li dak kellha tkun it-triq tal-poeżija futura maltija. U f'dan kellhom raġun. Poeżija li m'għandhiex eġruqha aktar fil-qiegħ tal-ħamrija soċjali, m'hi poeżija xejn. U fejn kien l-impenn soċjali tal-poeżija romantika li baqgħet tinkiteb wara s-sittinijiet?

L-INDIPENDENZA TA' L-1964

L-indipendenza ta' l-1964 kienet data storika anki għal-letteratura tagħna. Mal-ħakma kolonjali mietet ukoll l-awtorità tat-tradizzjoni u ta' l-istituzzjonijiet maltin u flokhom daħlet l-indipendenza tal-ħsieb ħieles minn kull irbit soċjali, ekkleżjastiku u letterarju. Hu fatt li m'hemmx vera indipendenza nazzjonali mingħajr maturità soċjali u kull maturità tesiġi responsabbiltà. U min twieled, għex u xjaħ rajh f'idejn ħaddieħor, mhux lakemm tkissirlu l-ktajjen tal-ġasar u timbuttah fil-ħelsien. Il-maturità soċjali tiegħu ż-żmien u kien hemm periklu il mill-kolonjalizmu imperjali l-poplu malti jgħaddi faċilment għall-kolonjalizmu ġdid, dak tat-turiżmu, tal-permissività, tal-flus, tal-progress xjentifiku, tad-drogi, vjolenza u sess.

Għalhekk il-patrijottizmu ideali, li serva tant tajjeb bħala centru ta' qawmien u identità nazzjonali f'idejn ir-romantiċi, sar aljenazzjoni soċjali wara l-Indipendenza. Kien meħtieġ li l-poplu malti jemanċipa ruħu minn din l-aljenazzjoni biex isib il-vera tifsira tač-ċittadinanza maltija mibnija fuq valuri li għandhom jifthuha maż-żmien biex tingħaqad mas-solidarjetà kosmopolita. Izda kien meħtieġ li l-punt tat-tluq ta' dan l-iżvilupp tal-poeżija patrijottika jkun l-Ideal li għannev G.A. Vassallo, Dun Karm u r-Romantiċi sħabhom.

Għalhekk mhux sew li mmaqdru 'l dawk il-poeti ta' qabilna għax faħħru 'l ommhom imżebilha kif kienet fl-injuranza ta' wliedha. Kif ukoll mhux sew li nakkużawhom b'nuqqas ta' sincerità meta għannev il-Fidi ta' missirijietna. Hafna mill-poeti romantiċi, anki fuq il-kontinent, kellhom viżjoni platonika-nisranija tad-dinja. Kienu jittrattawha bħala simbolu biss ta' xi iħaġa li hi infinitament aktar sublmi. Id-dinja tagħna kienet għalihom xbieha finita ta' dinja oħra metafizika li ma tidhirx. Għalihom il-VERU u s-SABIH kienu assoluti għax jeżistu oġġettivament fid-dinja eterna, filwaqt li r-rifless tagħhom kien jidher fil-veru u s-sabiħ li l-poeta kien jara madwaru f'did-dinja u jesprimihom biex minnhom kien jittraxxendi għall-Għajn ta' kollox. Ir-rifless, bħala partecipazzjoni, jeżisti oġġettivament ukoll għalkemm fuq livell ta' eżistenza anqas, u għalhekk l-ideat tal-veru filosofiku u tas-sabiħ artistiku m'humieħ soġġettivi biss, m'humieħ relativi bħalma jgħallmu r-relativizmu u s-soġġettivizmu li huma karatteristika ta' ħafna mill-mentalità u l-poeżija moderna.

Dak li jagħmel l-arti u l-filosofija possibbli hu l-fatt li l-Infinit jesprimi r-rifless tiegħu fl-ispazju u ž-żmien. Meta jieqaf dan ir-rifless, jieqfu wkoll l-arti u l-filosofija, u tibda l-kontemplazzjoni eterna ta' l-Infinit. Għalhekk, l-għanja tal-poeta, bħala 'Habbar tas-Sewwa u mera tas-Sbuħija', ma tmutx,

izda tibqa' tgħix għal dejjem. Dan kollu mhux illużjoni klerikali tal-poeta nazzjonali, bħalma forsi jaħsbu xi wħud mill-modernisti. Ma ninsewx li marromantiċiżmu kien sar qawmien reliġjuż fl-Ewropa kollha. Hafna bdew japprezzaw il-Kattoliċiżmu u l-wirt kulturali u artistiku tiegħu. Chateaubriand kiteb 'Le Génie du Christianisme' bħala innu tal-ġmiel nisrani, u kważi rromantiċi ġermaniżi kollha spiċċaw jammiraw il-Medju Evu. Li r-reliġjon mhix ċerimonji u ritwali biss, jifhimha l-bniedem umli u sempliċi wisq aktar minn xi wħud mill-modernisti li fl-insistenza esaġerata biex jinqatgħu mit-tradizzjoni reliġjuża fholqu relazzjoni Alla-bniedem li hi aktar umana milli divina.

Ta' min isemmi li poeta kontemporanju bħal m'hu Daniel Massa rnexxielu jagħraf jagħti f'haġġa ġdida lill-wirt tradizzjonali ta' sentimenti reliġjużi biex joħloq poezija kreattiva ta' elementi tradizzjonali u talent personali.

IL-ĦSIEB ANALITIKU U SINTETIKU

Illum l-illużjoni materjalista li tqis l-elementi ta' l-analizi aktar reali minn dawk tas-sintezi hi komuni f'hafna. Infatti l-ħsieb analitiku jittirjonfa kullimkien, fil-letteratura, lingwistika, psikoloġika, filosofija u teoloġija. Naturalment, dan l-istudju analitiku jipprova jillibera l-oġġettività billi jikklarifika l-elementi kostitwenti tar-realtà, bħalma jagħmel l-eżistenzjaliżmu meta jidhol fl-irqaqat partikulari tad-dinja moderna u jdawwal l-istrutturi ta' l-eżistenza umana. Izda dan l-istudju analitiku u eżistenzjalista, sew bħala prinċipju kif ukoll bħala metodu, jista' jwassal f'sitwazzjoni b'konsegwenzi serji f'hafna, għax joħloq separazzjoni artifiċjali bl-insistenza esaġerata fuq l-individwu u b'hekk jipperikola li jeqred il-viżjoni sintetika tar-realtà oġġettiva.

Dak li f'hafna drabi jinteressa l-poeta modern, influwenzat kif inhu mill-psikoloġija analitika u l-filosofija eżistenzjalista, mhux aktar il-bniedem universali, jiġifieri, il-bniedem bħala bniedem, izda aktar il-bniedem bħala individwu, bħala Mario, Albert jew Raymond. Għalhekk, għalkemm dak li l-poeta modern jikteb fil-poezija fuq id-dubji, in-nuqqas ta' fidi, u l-ambigwiżità fil-pożizzjoni reliġjuża tiegħu, jista' jifta' dawli interessanti u meħtieġ fuq il-bniedem maqbud wahdu kif jinsab f'dinja mħawda, dan it-tluq eżistenzjalista, minħabba l-istess insidenza ta' koncentrazzjoni individwali, jista' jfarrak u jatommizza r-realtà antropoloġika u metafizika.

Dan l-istudju eżistenzjalista jonqsu prinċipju ieħor li bih il-bniedem jerga' jsib l-unità ta' l-univers u l-għaqda bejn il-Hallieq u l-ħlejjaq. U dan il-prinċipju sintetiku nsibuh fil-poezija 'Il-Jien u Lilhinn Minnu' fejn Dun Karm, ispirat mill-filosofija u t-teoloġija Tomista, jistudja l-bniedem bħala bniedem, il-bniedem universali, fir-relazzjoni tiegħu m'Alla l-Hallieq. Xi wħud mill-poeti moderni, influwenzati mit-teoloġija tal-hekk imsejha 'Death of God Theology' jixtiequ jinqatgħu mill-istrutturi tradizzjonali reliġjużi, hekk kif it-teoloġi ta' din it-teoloġija jixtiequ jinqatgħu mit-teoloġija tradizzjonali għax jaħsbu li hafna minnha kienet saret astratta u sterili. Il-punt

tat-tluq tar-reflessjoni teoloġika tagħhom huwa s-sentiment ta' l-assenza ta' Alla fil-bniedem modern biex fl-aħħar iġhidu li joħolqu 'l Alla veru eżistentjali u konkret fil-bniedem Ġesù. Jiġifieri, kemm dawn il-poeti, kif ukoll dawn it-teoloġi, jitolqu mill-bniedem biex jippruvaw isibu 'l Alla mentri r-realtà hi l-kuntrarju għax it-tluq irid jibda mill-Għajn ta' kollox, u allura b'hekk jinholq dijalogu bejn il-bniedem kredenti (jew is-soċjetà li temmen) u l-univers, kif insibu f'San Tumas fi żmien il-Medju Evu u fi Pierre Teilhard de Chardin fiż-żminijiet tagħna. Infatti wiehed jistaqsi jekk mingħajr l-inflwenza tal-fidi tagħhom f'Alla setgħux San Tumas u Teilhard jaslu, il-wiehed għall-konverġenza bejn ir-rivelazzjoni u l-metafizika, u l-ieħor għal dik bejn ir-rivelazzjoni u x-xjenza.

L-IDENTITÀ'

L-għajta li toħroġ mill-ġrajja twila umana mhix l-inċertezza tal-jien-naf-li-ma-nafx kif tagħtina x'nifhmu l-poezija moderna, iżda l-esperjenza pożittiva tal-jien-naf-iżda-naf-ftit-wisq, l-esperjenza tal-kuxjenza umana li għadha m'akkwistatx l-identità kompleta tagħha issa, imma b'daqshekk mhix 'tfarrik' biss. It-tfarrik ta' l-identità individwali mhux xi skoperta moderna. Adam, l-ewwel bniedem, wara l-waqgħa għadha wkoll minn dan it-tfarrik morali, kif ukoll għadha Dun Karm fid-"dalma kbira" li hašsha "tostorlu l-kif u l-għala ta' kull ma hu". L-identità tiġi, kif sew qal il-filosfu daniż Kierkegaard, fid-deċiżjoni fundamentali reliġjuża tagħna li tgħaqqad, bħal katina waħda, il-fohoq tat-tfarrik ta' hajjitna mifruda fiż-żmien u fl-ispazju. L-identità hi kisba personali akkwistata fil-fidi u t-tbatija u mhux xi natura umana lesta u mogħtija lilna minn qabel. Għalhekk f'dan is-sens l-eżistenza tiġi qabel l-essenza għax l-ewwel trid teżisti biex wara tikseb xi haġa. U dan l-impenn ta' l-identità jilhaq il-quċcata tiegħu f'din id-dedikazzjoni personali, għax fiha biss il-bniedem aljenat mit-tfarrik personali tiegħu jilhaq l-ogħla grad ta' intensifikazzjoni ta' għejxien u tifsir tal-ħajja.

Għalhekk iċ-ċertezza tal-pożizzjoni romantika tal-Jiena-Jien u d-dubju tal-poeti moderni fil-mistoqsija Jien-min-jien? huma żewġ uċuħ ta' l-istess verità ontoloġika. Il-mistoqsija u l-ansjetà huma karatteristiċi tal-bniedem, riżultat tal-limitazzjoni intelletwali umana. Id-dubju ta' l-identità u tar-reliġjon hašsu. Dun Karm ukoll fl-ewwel parti tal-'Jien' u Lilhinn Minnu' — jiġifieri l-parti tal-poezija mdawla biss mir-razzjonalizmu cartesjan. Dan id-dubju għelbu fit-tieni parti bl-intuwizzjoni pascaljana tar-Realtà li teżisti lilhinn mill-Jien. Hemm f'din il-poezija żvilupp psikoloġiku għax fiha niltaoqgu mal-ġrajja eterna tal-bniedem, bħala iben prodigu, imfarrak fid-dubju tiegħu meta jehodha kontra Alla l-Missier għax il-bniedem ma jistax jifhmu, imbagħad il-ġlieda twila tas-supervja umana f'pendlu ta' aċċettazzjoni u rifjut, sakemm fl-aħħar jiddi d-dawl tal-fidi li jimla sa l-anqas rokna ta' qalb il-bniedem fis-sejba ta' l-identità sħiħa tiegħu nnifsu fl-Infinità divina fejn il-kuntrarjetajiet tat-tfarrik kollu jinħallu mingħajr dis-tinzjoni f'Unità Waħda, kif sew iġhallem il-mistiċizmu tar-reliġjonijiet kol-

lha li jħares mhux lejn l-apparenza esterjuri (tfarrik) iżda lejn l-interjorità tar-realtà (identità).

IL-PSIKOLOĠIJA FIL-POEŻIJA MODERNA

Il-poeżija moderna ispirata mill-psikoloġija freudjana u jungjana tistudja l-bniedem maqbud fil-moviment kontinwu tal-libido mill-inkonxju għall-konxju tiegħu u viċi-versa. Din it-trasmutazzjoni tal-libido permezz tas-simbolu għandha eġhruqha fin-natura umana u ilha teżisti mill-bidu taċ-ċiviltà. Il-konxju hu l-quċċata żgħira ta' l-'iceberg' psikoloġiku uman. Dak li jinsab maħżun fil-ġuf profond tal-inkonxju personali u kollettiv iġhinna nifmu aħjar il-ħsbijiet, ix-xewqat u l-eġħmejjel tagħna. Hi din id-dinja inkonxja li l-poeta kontemporanju jixtieq jikxef biex jifhem aħjar lilu nnifsu. Din ix-xewqa u dan l-istudju tad-dinja psikoloġika jidhru fl-analiżi dettaljata tal-imħabba/mibegħda, fin-nuqqas ta' komunikabilità bejn il-bnedmin f'dinja mimlija meżzi ta' komunikazzjoni, fil-ħolm bħala prodott spontanju tal-'psyche', u fit-tama mimlija ansjetà u biża' tat-theddid, li bihom hi mimlija l-poeżija moderna. Il-poeta modern jistudja wkoll il-ħajja sesswali espressa fl-inkonxju kollettiv bħala 'anima' u 'animus', jiġifieri l-element femminil u l-element maskil li jinsabu rispettivament fir-raġel u l-mara u li jgagħluna naġixxu kif naġixxu.

Minn dan l-istudju psikoloġiku l-poeta modern qed jipprova jsib fh innifsu ċentru ġdid (dak li Jung isejjalhu 'The Self' li hu differenti mill-'Ego'), fejn jinħoloq bilanċ, armonija psikoloġika bejn il-konxju bil-valuri li rnexxiel jakkwista u l-inkonxju bil-vitalità u l-enerġija tiegħu. Dan iċ-ċentru jgungjan jixbah ħafna l-kunċett Hindu ta' Atman, Purusha, u Brahman; jixbah ukoll il-kunċett ta' Tao fil-filosofija ċiniża tas-seklu tlieta u erbgħa qabel Kristu, imfisser tant tajjeb minn Lao Tzu u d-dixxiplu tiegħu Chuang Tzu. Mit-Taoiżmu, Jung ha wkoll l-ideat ta' 'animus/anima' mfissra fix-xbieha ta' 'Yang/Yin', żewġ qawwiet li jinsabu f'kull wieħed minna.

Meta jsib dan iċ-ċentru psikoloġiku, il-poeta kontemporanju jittama li jkun sab l-identità personali tiegħu, għax jaħseb li l-inkonxju kollettiv jista' jiffa' daww ġdid li jgħaqqad it-tfarrik li jhossu ġej mill-konxju tiegħu. F'din is-sinteżi tal-konxju/inkonxju, f'din l-armonija ta' oppożizzjonijiet psikoloġiċi jittama li jsib lilu nnifsu jew aħjar l-identità tiegħu li tant ilu jfittex. U għalhekk bħalma Dun Karm sab l-identità tiegħu fl-għaqda tal-Jien u Lilhinn Minnu, fl-unjoni tar-Raġuni u l-Fidi, hekk ukoll il-poeta modern jaħseb li jista' isib l-identità tiegħu permezz ta' l-unità psikoloġika.

Kemm Dun Karm kif ukoll il-bniedem modern, it-tnejn fittxu li jsibu l-unità mit-tfarrik. Id-differenza qiegħda li Dun Karm fittixha fir-realtà oġġettiva tad-dinja spiritwali li tittraxxendi l-'psyche' umana kif inhi mifhuma mill-psikoloġija moderna, filwaqt li l-bniedem modern ħafna drabi maqtuġh minn din ir-realtà spiritwali jhoss ruħu magħluq, bħal f'gagġa, fir-realtà inferjuri ta' 'psyche' u materja. Għalhekk l-identità li, b'ħafna taħbit, xi wħud mill-moderni jaħsbu li jistgħu jiksbu, tista' tkun prekarja jew illużorja.

SINTEŻI POETIKA

Dan ix-xebh ta' l-identità bejn Dun Karm u l-poeta modern jista' u għandu jwassalna f'xebh ta' sinteżi oħra, dik tal-poeżija tradizzjonali u l-poeżija moderna. Fit-tematika u l-istilistika ta' dawn iż-żewġ fergħat tal-poeżija maltija, il-poeti huma differenti għax differenti huma ż-żminijiet li għexu fihom, iżda l-ispirazzjoni hi l-istess u għalhekk waħda.

Diffiċli ħafna tiddefinixxi x'inhi l-poeżija, daqs kemm hu diffiċli ħafna tgħid x'inhi l-arti. Il-ġmiel aħjar titpaxxa bih fl-intimu tiegħek milli tiddefinixxi, għalkemm min iħossu u jarah fih u barra minnu jista' jfissru kif jaf hu, jiġifieri bil-mod jew stil personali tiegħu. F'dan is-sens hemm min iġhid li l-istil hu l-poeta.

Wiehed jifhem ukoll il-protesta qawwiya tal-poeti moderni żgħażaġ tas-snin sittin meta ħaduha kontra l-versifikaturi romantici-sentimentali li identifikaw il-poeżija ma' l-istanza, ir-rima u r-retorika. Dawn il-versifikaturi kitbu biss proża (u proża fqira wara kollox) irrimata, u qatt ma jmisshom deħru fl-ebda antoloġija studjata mill-istudenti tagħna fl-iskejjel. B'hekk seta' nħoloq kriterju letterarju żbaljat ta' x'inhi l-vera poezija. Iżda li tħalli l-kurrent tal-protesta jkaxkar miegħu anki dak li hu tajjeb, kif jagħmel min jagħti x'jifhem li l-poeżija maltija bdiet issa, hi mentalità żbaljata wkoll u tista' tagħmel ħafna ħsara lill-istudenti. Dun Karm kien u jibqa' l-Poeta Nazzjonali għal ħafna raġunijiet, iġhidu x'igħidu l-modernisti.

Il-poeżija hi simbolu, metafora, tixbih, u n-nuqqas tiegħu kien il-kawża prinċipali tad-dekadenza tal-poeżija romantika. Għalhekk għamel sew il-poeta modern meta raġa' sab ir-ruħ ta' l-ispirazzjoni poetika. B'hekk għamel il-poeżija aktar impenjattiva, aktar intellettuali, għax it-tifsira tas-simbolu hi infinita u taċċetta aktar minn fehma waħda. Is-simbolu poetiku modern hu konċiż ħafna għax iżomm biss il-kelma ewlenija. Iżda meta l-poeżija tkun sensiela waħda ta' simboli mdaħħlin wiehed f'wiehed tistħajjilhom ħajt mibni apposta mill-poeta biex iżommok barra mid-dinja ġewwijnija tiegħu. Dan jagħmel il-poeżija moderna diffiċli biex tifhimha, u t-tort mhux dejjem tal-qarrej. Naf li l-ġmiel tal-poeżija m'għandux jinqered bl-insistenza tal-qarrej biex jiddissektja u janalizza kull vers. Naf ukoll li l-oskurità fil-poeżija moderna hi fiha nfisha mera tad-dinja psikoloġika mħawda u mfarrka tal-poeta modern. Iżda l-problema qiegħda f'idejn l-għalliem li mhux dejjem isib għajnuna, lanqas minn għand dawk stess li kitbu l-poeżija. L-istudenti wkoll jindunaw li l-kobor tal-poeżija lanqas qiegħed fil-ħafna 'gimmicks' ta' xi wħud mill-modernisti. Il-poeti kbar ta' 'Linji Godda' jinsistu fuq is-simbolu wisq aktar milli fuq il-forma tipografika tal-kliem u l-vrus.

Il-polemiki johlqhom min għadu jgħix fl-artificcjalità taċ-ċirkumferenza. Infittxu ċ-ċentru taċ-ċirku fejn tinsab l-għajn ta' kull ispirazzjoni poetika.

'MACBETH' AND THE CONCEPT OF MULTIPLE FUTURES

C. CARUANA CARABEZ

"Time and the hour runs through the roughest day" says the Thane of Glamis in Act I Sc. 3; time, and the nature of time, is of vital importance in any attempted comprehension of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. The central dilemma of the play is intimately bound with time, and the relationship between the Present and the Future may be regarded as the mainspring of the plot.

Before discussing this central dilemma it would be best, however, to establish logical notions concerning the nature of time, because indolence, custom and carelessness often combine to produce treacherous conceptualisations composed of half-truths and inaccuracies. Shakespeare's mind was obviously and remarkably free of such habitual or sloppy thinking, and it is therefore up to the intelligent reader to clarify his ideas if he is to share at all vividly the dramatist's vision.

Although Einsteinian physics have furnished us with new terminology such as 'continuum' and 'the fourth dimension' by which to discuss time, it cannot be said that this has altered, to any significant extent, the popular vision of time which has been extant for centuries.¹

To the common mind, time is some kind of straight line having three significant points called Past, Present and Future respectively, along which human life progresses in one direction only. Although (up to the present) this irreversible directionality seems indisputable, the other elements constituting the popular vision outlined above are at worst inaccurate and misleading and at best simplistic.

It is first of all apparent that we always exist in what we call 'the Present'. If the concept of Time as a straight line may be temporarily

1. The concept of linear Time was born with Christianity, since the Creed does not admit of recurrence and everything in it is aimed at a particular point: The Last Day, the end of the world. Galileo Galilei, in his *Discussions and Demonstrations* (1638) promoted the theory that time was a geometrically straight line and not a circle. Isaac Barrow (1630 1677) the English mathematician, also considered it as an essentially mathematical concept having the sole attribute of length. It is of uniform parts, and may be regarded, as either the addition of contiguous points or the progression of a single point. See Johannes Von Buttlar, *Journey To Infinity*. (Glasgow, 1975).

utilised for the sake of clarity, then the 'now' is somewhere along the line and the Past would consist of discarded 'nows'. A minute lying in the Future is transformed, by the processes of life and consciousness, into a minute of the Present; when these particular sixty seconds are lived and experienced they become part of our Past. We cannot, however, re-experience them, nor can we experience prematurely others which lie in the Future. One of the basic laws of Nature apparently states that we are prisoners of the Present.

One other obvious fact concerning the subdivision of Time into these three parts is that only the Present may be called a point along the 'line' of Time. The Past has a magnitude it shares (one hopes) with the Future, but not so the Present. Even as we say 'now', that 'now' belongs to the Past. This may be trite, but it is nevertheless necessary since it enables us to conceive Time as being composed of two relatively large areas called 'Past' and 'Future' with a point (possessing, by definition, no magnitude) called 'the Present' dividing them.

Although Past and Future share a kinship of magnitude, they are not at all alike in nature, and it is the Present and the Past which exhibit similarities of nature. We are in more or less complete possession of the salient facts of our Past (what we call memory) and we usually comprehend what we may term 'the present situation'. Not so the Future, which is uncertain and unpredictable, more or less tantalisingly unknown.

If, once again, the over-simple conception of time as a straight line may be used, it should be observed that in spite of the delicate differences between Past, Present and Future, each point along the 'line' is bound to preceding and succeeding ones by causality. The Present is therefore the result of Past causes, as the Future 'is', broadly speaking, of Present ones.

The mysteriousness of the Future is due to the fact that it (the Future) relies, for its resolution into a particular Present, on two sets of causes, one known and the other unknown. The first set of causes is nothing else but our decisions, taken presently and intended to produce a Future situation.

Unfortunately, things have the habit of not happening according to plan, and this is where the second set of causes, the unknown ones, are seen to operate. These sets of causes may be collectively termed 'the random factor'² and they constitute the haphazard element in our life. They cause people to believe in good or bad luck, to gamble, or to believe in prophecy and fortune-telling. Divine Revelation aside, our acknowledgement of our ignorance and the helplessness of our plight

2. For a more detailed discussion of this random factor see Arthur Koestler, *Roots Of Coincidence* (New York, 1972).

must be one of the strongest roots of Faith and Religion. The random factor lies beyond logic or logical prediction. No amount of forethought could predict the (usually) banal slip-ups which could wreck any sophisticatedly-planned project. Only super-human or supernatural intervention may render the random factor scrutable, if, that is, one is given to trusting such 'voices'. It is already apparent that this discussion impinges directly on 'Macbeth'.

Before dealing with the play itself, one final and supremely important conclusion must be drawn and this concerns the question of whether it is at all correct to visualise time as a linear entity. Let us, for a moment, imagine a man walking not in a straight road, but in an ample square, traversing it. He will consciously avoid static obstacles such as lamps, benches or stationary groups of people. This would correspond to decisions taken wilfully and consciously concerning our future. Our hypothetical pedestrian cannot sit down and, previous to crossing the square, make a plan of it and chart an ideal route. Or he may, but he could not possibly follow that planned course. His hat may be blown off his head and he would have to chase it, or he may be called over by a friend. Rather than an ideal and pre-plotted line, his progress would be an unpredictable and meandering one, having only a general and indeterminate aim. The angles of deviation from the planned course cannot possibly be predicted since they result from the random factor.

There is no need to resort to complicated probability studies to infer that for each individual there exist at least two Futures: One wherein he realises his aspirations and one wherein he does not. Both are equally possible. These constitute two extremes, and to anyone occupying a point he chooses to call 'The Present', 'The Future' is not a single 'thing', but a complex of possible directions, much like the lines fanning out of the centre of a geometrical protractor.

This somewhat overlong preamble was necessary precisely because the Future and its nature is of central importance in Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', and the play requires the elimination of habitual simplistic assumptions concerning the terminology of Time which may be present because semantic tyranny causes the mind to 'swallow' ideas whole rather than to 'chew' them. Any reading of the play which ignores the fact that Macbeth has a number of possible futures to choose from is condemning the reader to a determinism which Shakespeare seems actually trying to eliminate from the universe of his play. The central pathos in 'Macbeth' lies in the fact that the protagonist is most of the time acting as a determinist in a universe based on free will, a pathos arising from the voluntary enslavement of the mind to a vision of the universe which is but an illusion. The tragedy lies in the belated confirmation of the fallaciousness of such a vision.

One complication which is raised by 'Macbeth' is that however much we empathise or identify with the protagonist we are completely separate from him. What sort of future was he envisaging and possibly striving for before his fateful meeting with the witches in I,iii? Was this in any way altered by the witches' words or was his aspiration consonant with their predictions, his resolve being strengthened by their words? Or, conversely, was his personal conception of the future so different that their words inflamed his mind precisely because they suggested a new world of possibilities?

The evidence offered by the text is quite conflicting. According to what we learn of Macbeth in I,ii, he is a brave, selfless man who has brilliantly engineered and executed the annihilation of two attacking forces. He was fighting for Duncan the man as much as for Duncan the king; he was safeguarding both the office and the person of the King. We are presented with a case of apparently absolute loyalty. Moreover, Duncan's own words in I,iv, 14-21 and 54-58³ confirm this, although we should keep in mind that Duncan is a poor judge of character (cf. I,iv, 11-14). Macbeth's own horror at the realisation that murder has come quite spontaneously into his mind after the witches' words is, however, indicative of a more disquieting possibility. The thought of murder is gratuitous at this point (I,iii) because the witches had merely told him he would become king, and Scotland's throne was elective, not hereditary. Although it is debatable how far Shakespeare understood the details of the elective process as expressed in his sources, one cannot ignore the possibility of his having understood them. Why then should he think of murdering Duncan? Could not Duncan die, as all men do, and thus make way naturally for Macbeth, who would be an obvious choice? The only reason for this could be that the idea of eliminating a weak king and clutching his crown had always swum as a half-formed monster in the murky depths of Macbeth's subconscious. He was as responsible for this as a sick man for his virus, but it was there, and it surfaced when the words of the witches stunned his conscious mind, allowing a primitive subconscious to assume control. The cover had been kicked off the hell-hole, and the demon came out.

One very important assumption which must be made at this point concerns the weird sisters' knowledge of the future. If the witches did not know the future they were certainly excellent psychologists. They must have known that if a man is told he has a promising future he would strive to realise it, gaining great energy in his attempt from his belief that nothing can go wrong because all is fated to succeed.

In a fatalist's universe there can be only despair or an assurance which is nearer to smugness than self-confidence. Macbeth exhibits these

3. All references are from the Arden Edition of *Macbeth* (ed. K. Muir), 1973.

extreme feelings throughout the play, according to whether any 'revelation' promises for him ease or duress.

If Macbeth seems to accept the witches' prophetic powers as a fact, it seems that Shakespeare takes pains to establish a universe which is not deterministic. Why else would he have created Lady Macbeth, or at least endowed her with her particular character? It is safe to assume that Macbeth, on his own, would not have killed Duncan; this is more of a platitude than a hypothesis, but Lady Macbeth is there to act upon her husband's will. There can be no will or willing in a deterministic universe; the fact that she has, as main function, the influencing of another mind's decisions implies that the universe of the play is not deterministic. It could be argued that believing in the possession of a will is the last illusion in a deterministic universe, but why should Shakespeare attempt to express such profound cynicism when irony (that issuing from the contrast between a protagonist who believes in a deterministic universe and a universe which is not) proves to be so much more fruitful and meaningful? There is every reason to believe that Macbeth's vacillation, his evaluation of possible courses (I,vii) and his acceptance of causality and morality are due to a transient awareness of things as they are. How can a man concern himself with morality in a deterministic universe? Heaven and Hell, as the terminal 'loci' of mortal life, are only possible through a premise of free will. Yet Macbeth reverts to fatalistic vision time after time, whenever his interpretation of the witches' words seems favourable.

What is far more interesting is his sudden refusal of determinism in III,i:

For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace,
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common Enemy of man,
To make them Kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
And champion me to th' utterance!....." (III,i, 65-71)

The interpretation of the last two lines is crucial. Henry Cunningham, the editor of the original Arden 'Macbeth' which appeared in 1912, felt that Macbeth was here asking fate to be his champion in the defence of his royal title, but this is nothing but a pathetic misreading of the text. The more correct interpretation would be that wherein Macbeth challenges fate to 'combat', a fight to the finish (cf. "to th' utterance!" — from French 'a oultrance'). In prosaic terms, Macbeth is unhappy with the revelation concerning Banquo's issue and is going to attempt to change destiny.

How can a fatalist believe he can change his destiny? Should we understand that Macbeth forfeits his faith in a deterministic universe

when events seem to assume an unfavourable turn? Such a 'swing', from one extreme position to the other is in itself indicative of the instability of his character. The murdering of Duncan has unshackled him morally, and he has no certainties left.

Macbeth's belief in the wiches, re-affirmed time after time, indicates his fatalism. This fatalistic frame of mind, congenital or derived, aids his downfall immensely, because it hinders him from thinking. Had he reflected better, he would have realised that there is no such thing as 'a future' but in fact several possibilities.

It is now appropriate to consider what Macbeth failed to do, and review these possibilities.

Broadly speaking, Macbeth had three possible futures. It has already been pointed out that when the witches tell Macbeth he would become King, in I,iii, he immediately thinks of murder, and this, being completely gratuitous, implies the pre-existence of a temptation toward an illicit wrenching of Duncan's crown. This is not improbable, since Duncan was a weak king who could not even fight his own wars. Yet it would not have been amiss for Macbeth to harbour a desire for the crown. Scotland's throne was elective, and Macbeth, through his prowess and courage, would surely have been elected with general approval on Duncan's death. This does not amount to treason but rather to reasonable expectation. In fact, it would have happened had not Duncan forestalled everything by pronouncing his successor in III,iv, 35-39. This declaration made it most improbable for Macbeth to obtain the crown, because Malcolm was a youth. Although Duncan's intention was not spontaneous (he must have harboured dreams of dynasty, as Macbeth and Banquo do) his declaration is, and must be considered as, a random factor which alters the 'direction' chosen by Macbeth when he declares, in II,iii, 144-145:

If Chance will have me King, why, Chance may crown me,
Without my stir.

It is immediately apparent from the above that two Futures already seem possible:

- (a) One future is that wherein Macbeth becomes King; without illicit intervention after Duncan's natural death.
- (b) Another possibility is that wherein Macbeth kills Duncan after Duncan renders the first possibility most improbable by unexpectedly declaring his son successor.

There is, however, a third possible future which has to be considered as well. This is one wherein Duncan dies a natural death and Malcolm — or someone else — becomes King. Macbeth would live on as a possibly embittered man of high status whose royal aspirations have never been realised because his sense of honour and loyalty had restrained any dangerous passions. For such a future to become actual

there could be neither a Lady Macbeth nor the witches.

Macbeth's wife and his supernatural confidantes are the two factors which, apart from Macbeth's own character, influence most the realisation of his particular and unpleasant progress through life. Lady Macbeth belongs to those factors which one may call predictable. Macbeth is, unlike Duncan, not a poor judge of character, and could sum up his wife's character as accurately and succinctly as she could sum up his own in I,iv, 16-30. Had Macbeth been a deeper thinker he would have been able to assess how inflammatory his account of his meeting with the witches would prove to be for her, as well as to predict her reaction.

The witches cannot be classified thus; they belong, together with Duncan's declaration of his son's succession, or his decision to sojourn at Macbeth's castle, to the realm of the random. Naturally, their appearance was a pre-calculated event, pre-calculated that is, by 'someone'; but Macbeth could never, by any amount of logical thought, have predicted their appearance on the heath.

In plainer terms, the "supernatural soliciting" of the witches is unsolicited. The intriguing question is, at this point, what would have happened had the witches never appeared. We have to assume that in such a case the dormant (or subconscious) ambitions of the Thane (and his wife) would never have 'awakened'. Which, then, of the three 'Futures' considered above would have been most probable? The first possibility, we may recall, is that wherein Macbeth becomes king without resorting to murder. This was probable, except for Duncan's declaration about his successor. This is apparently unconnected with the appearance of the witches, and may or may not have taken place irrespective of them. This 'future', then, is only possible, and not probable, depending not on Macbeth but on Duncan.

The second 'future' was that which is actually realised in the course of the play, i.e., the accession to the crown through murder. Without the appearance of the witches this would have been most improbable. There would have been no stimulus to trigger off such violent passions in the Thane and his wife.

The last 'future', that wherein Macbeth never becomes king because Malcolm succeeds his father is, of course, the most probable one, since as has been pointed out earlier, Duncan's decision to appoint his son successor was sudden in its declaration, not in its formation. It amounts, after all, to a neat piece of legal loopholing by which the elective procedure is rendered inoperative. Added to this is the fact that it was customary for kings to resort to nomination. Premeditation is always present in cases of such great import. It is safe to assume that Duncan would, in any case, always have declared his son successor to the throne. In other words, the 'future' wherein Macbeth never becomes

king was always the most probable one, all things remaining equal.

This throws much light upon a vexed question which is not, however often put: did the witches really know the 'future'? This is not the same as to ask whether they were human or supernatural. I have never harboured any doubts about Shakespeare's intention to depict them as creatures of the Devil. Their provenance is clear. But this raises another question: Does the Devil (as conceived by Shakespeare) know the 'future'? Not necessarily, it seems, in 'Macbeth'. What the Devil seems to possess is not prescience but science, or intelligence.

Macbeth must have known that it was most probable that he would never become king and must have resigned himself to it because it was so probable. He had his ambitions but he kept them under tight control. Granted this, at the precise moment when the witches announce to him that he would become king they must have been lying. As things were up to that point he would not have become king because Duncan had already intended his son to succeed him. Because the lie was palatable Macbeth believes it is the truth, and acts fatalistically to make it come true. The Devil does not know the 'Future': he only has to work at making the one he wants to happen. The Devil, indeed, "lies like Truth"!

There is no doubt that the witches constitute the most influential element of the play, since their unexpected appearance sets off a train of events which causes the most improbable of three possible futures to be realised. Because their words are attractive he gives them credence, and reneges his faith in the ennobling concept of Free Will. Out of this original sin, which transforms him into a pagan, issue all the other more obvious ones. In his mistaken belief in a unique Future lies the seed of his tragic end, and Shakespeare again demonstrates how fatal it can be to confuse appearance with reality.

APPUNTI SU 'POLIKUSC'KA'

Gerard Bugeja

Il racconto 'Polikusc'ka' vuole essere la testimonianza della presa di coscienza da parte di Ignazio Silone delle condizioni sociali tristissime che assillano gli abitanti, specie i contadini del suo paese natio. Questo processo era già iniziato anni prima ed è riscontrabile in 'Visita al carcere' nell'episodio del carcerato in cui lo scrittore riconosce il cafone che gli ha regalato in precedenza il sigaro. Il bisogno di una rigenerazione sociale è sentito dall'autore come un imperativo categorico kantiano: sulla scia degli scrittori utopisti marxisti di questo secolo — quali Bloch¹ e Kolakowski² — Silone, non facendo nessuna distinzione fra gli ambiti etico e politico, morale e sociale, propone una ristrutturazione della vita associata, sentita anche come un'esigenza religiosa. Il verso evangelico "Beati gli assetati di giustizia" può essere assunto come il 'Leitmotiv' non solo di questo racconto, ma di tutta l'opera siloniana: non c'è possibilità di vero rinnovamento senza la presenza del Cristo Redentore che indossa "un lungo camice rosso".

Colpisce infatti in 'Polikusc'ka' il fatto che la sete per una concordia umana e sociale da una parte e l'esigenza morale dall'altra si alimentano a vicenda: si può etichettare perciò la filosofia di Silone come un socialismo religioso — con i limiti vistosi³ ma pure con l'inesauribile carica utopica, che insieme sono parte integrante di tale indirizzo. Quando il suo amico Lazzaro gli rileva — e rivela — l'ipocrisia della gente istruita e colta che

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1. Bloch Ernst, *Karl Marx*, Torino, 1972. Di questo filosofo marxista che non si è riconosciuto mai in nessun regime comunista, va sottolineato il socialismo utopico, da contrapporre a quello scientifico. Dal libro qui citato si consiglia la lettura attenta dell'introduzione a cura di Remo Rodei, che sintetizza per sommi capi la filosofia di Bloch. Si nota che la posizione di Bloch dissidente dalla cultura ufficiale non si scosta molto da quella di Silone, che si distaccò pure dal partito comunista.
 2. Kolakowski Erwin, *Il marxismo e oltre: responsabilità e storia*, Cosenza, 1979. Come Bloch e Silone, anche questo scrittore polacco lancia dure accuse contro i mezzi immorali impiegati dai *leaders* comunisti per raggiungere i loro fini politici. Secondo Kolakowski la massima machiavellica che il fine giustifica i mezzi non si addice al vero comunismo perchè il fine comunista non sarebbe solamente di carattere politico ma anche morale.
 3. Il limite più vistoso sembra essere costituito dal fatto che alcuni utopisti non tengono presente la Realpolitik; cioè, le reali circostanze politiche e sociali.

tiene nascosta ai contadini la notizia dell'esenzione di alcune tasse, Silone non ci può credere; ci deve essere qualcosa che non funziona; e si chiede come mai questa ingiustizia sia stata possibile. Il giovane quindicenne sente che le cose devono cambiare. Questo giovanile anelito verso un mondo migliore, questo ingenuo ma certamente genuino, attaccamento ad una concezione fondamentalmente ottimistica della natura e della materia (dalla 'natura naturans' di Spinoza allo sguardo in avanti di Benjamin⁴, che alla concezione positivista del progresso come di un processo lineare e inevitabile oppone la coscienza dell'unità messianica della storia come "tempo-ora" o "tempo messianico") sottende la raccolta dei racconti di testimonianza di "Uscita di sicurezza".

L'attenzione dello scrittore è rivolta alla maniera in cui alcuni abitanti, i cosiddetti compagni, giudicano la classe politica; i capi "fanno la guerra" per sterminare la gente; allo stesso modo in cui causano le varie epidemie. Tali osservazioni sono la propaggine diretta di una società che è stata per lunghi secoli calpestando, violentando, sclerotizzata da una serie interminabile di dominazioni straniere. Per la gente dell'Abruzzo anche il neo-formato stato italiano sarebbe un governo straniero perchè non conosce i loro reali bisogni⁵. Da ciò deriva la sfiducia nel governo da parte dei contadini, per i quali il Risorgimento non ha portato nessun cambiamento sociale: l'unica classe vittoriosa è stata la borghesia agraria che si è incamerata i beni dei Borboni e della Chiesa.

I cafoni ribelli nutrono rancore non solo verso la classe politica, ma anche colta. I membri di questa classe istruita sfruttano l'ignoranza dei contadini. Non sono solo gli esattori delle tasse che ingannano i cafoni, costringendoli a pagare imposte inesistenti, ma anche il pretore che fa perdere la causa alla povera sarta, la quale ha sporto querela contro un "galantuomo" che l'aveva abusata aizzando il cane contro la sua persona ('Uscita di sicurezza' pp. 63-4). Il pretore, sebbene sia stato testimone oculare del fattaccio, assolve il padrone: il che costituirebbe un'ulteriore prova della tesi marxista per cui le idee riguardanti concetti-base (come quelli relativi alla giustizia) sono l'espressione della classe dominante. Il pretore infatti scusandosi con un ragionamento storto e mistificatorio, si lamenta che egli, nella sua qualità di magistrato, non doveva lasciare prevalere i suoi sentimenti egoistici.

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4. Benjamin Walter, *Tesi di filosofia della storia* in *Angelus Novus*, Torino, 1962, pp. 72-83.
 5. Che il governo italiano non conoscesse i reali problemi del Mezzogiorno è dimostrabile da due leggi promulgate, l'una dalla Destra, e l'altra dalla Sinistra storica. Con la prima si abolirono le linee doganali interne; il che favorì la grande industria del Nord a scapito di quelle del Sud; con la seconda si attuava il protezionismo economico, che fu di beneficio per il Nord ma di detrimento per il Sud perchè la Francia, per ripicca, bloccò l'importazione del vino del Sud. Per la problematica sul Mezzogiorno si consulti: Milanese e Palleschi, *La questione meridionale*, Brescia, 1978.

Un'altra figura interessante è quella del parroco che vive un cristianesimo superficiale. Questa figura è illustrata due volte: in 'Polikusc'ka' abbiamo un parroco (odiosissimo) che sta addirittura dalla parte dei padroni perchè ordina che si suonino le campane proprio nell'ora della riunione della Lega dei contadini; mentre nel racconto 'Uscita di sicurezza' vediamo uno che con enfasi insegna ai bambini che "ciò accade fuori della chiesa non 'lo' interessa", denuncia l'involuzione che ha subito la Chiesa dal momento in cui decise di fare il compromesso con lo Stato: non più forza rivoluzionaria, come ai tempi di Cristo e nei primi secoli del cristianesimo, ma consorteria privilegiata e corrotta incapace di diffondere il messaggio evangelico, uno dei meriti del quale consiste proprio nella convivenza pacifica e giusta che si esplica nella sfera 'sociale'. E' questa carica latente nel cristianesimo che sarebbe riuscita a sopravvivere per mezzo delle azioni degli 'eretici' quali Giardona Bruno o Tommaso Munzer, che si sprigiona dai racconti di Silone.

Lo scrittore abruzzese censura l'alienazione che sta alla base del comportamento di gran parte della classe istruita, come pure di quella letteraria. I prodotti letterari che venivano apprezzati in quel torno di tempo avevano un carattere alienatore. Primeggiavano fra questi le opere di Gabriele D'Annunzio, alla retorica e polita artificiosità delle quali si contrapporranno i romanzi di Silone dal tono grigio e scialbo ma ricchi di una profonda e sincera umanità. E' particolarmente significativa la scelta di un racconto di Tolstoj ('Polikusc'ka') da parte di Silone perchè indica la strada che imbrocherà lo scrittore quando comincerà a scrivere. Silone si accorge del fatto che uno dei meriti della narrativa tolstoiana che verrà elaborato dal critico ungherese Gjorgy Lukasc⁶ è costituito dal reciproco influenzarsi di ambiente e personaggio, che trova il suo artistico sbocco nella "descrizione dell'essenza interiore dell'uomo, che si sviluppa sotto l'influsso dell'ambiente sociale." (Questa è la posizione che prende la RAPP⁸ nei confronti di Tolstoj). A questa posizione sottende la concezione per cui l'arte sarebbe valida proprio perchè permette ed esige un processo d'immedesimazione da parte del pubblico. Tolstoj stesso era convinto dall'influenza esercitata sui sentimenti; le parole di Plechanov⁹ che rispecchiano le idee dello scrittore russo non lasciano dubbi sul fatto che "su questa capacità degli uomini di essere contagiati dai sentimenti di altri uomini si fonda l'attività artistica".

Putroppo, mentre Silone racconta ai cafoni il 'Polikusc'ka' tolstoia-

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6. Lukasc Gjorgy, *Reportage oder Gestaltung*, parte I, "Die Linkskurve," n.7, p.23, Berlino, 1932.
 7. Kul'turnaja revoljucija i sovremennaja literatura in "Na literaturnom postu", luglio 1928, nn.13-14.
 8. Rapp è la sigla per l'associazione russa degli scrittori proletari russi operante a partire dagli anni venti.
 9. Plechanov G.V., *Kunst und Literatur*, p.361.

no, i contadini abruzzesi comprendono a malapena la ragion d'essere del racconto, limitandosi a cogliere soltanto fenomeni di superficie. Certamente rimane esclusa a loro la tipicità del racconto: cioè, non s'accorgono del fatto che la struttura psichica del racconto dipende da fattori materiali, ossia sociali ed economici. I cafoni non si rendono conto del fatto che la tragedia di Polikusc'ka è causata precipuamente dalle particolari condizioni sociali (sfruttamento dei servi della gleba): e che tramite l'abbattimento di questa struttura sociale si doveva cominciare la lotta. Da questo punto di vista, il tentativo di sensibilizzare i contadini sui problemi sociali tramite il racconto tolstoiano fallisce. Bisognava trovare altre tecniche narrative per interessare i contadini?¹⁰

A prescindere da questa problematica, questo primo contatto diretto di Silone con i cafoni è stato molto importante perchè si è reso conto delle condizioni poverissime (non solo fisiche) da cui era difficile uscire. Egli diventa conscio del fatto che l'impegno dello scrittore può riscattare questa gente dimenticata da tutti. Anche se, come si è già rilevato, il suo tentativo di educare i cafoni fallisce, egli è convinto che è quella la strada da seguire. Quando Silone comincerà a scrivere (il suo primo romanzo è 'Fontamara'), cercherà di utilizzare parole semplici e una sintassi la meno complicata possibile, così da farsi capire.¹¹ Sembra che lo scrittore sia ossessionato dalla paura di non farsi comprendere: si ricordi come egli e i cafoni non si sono potuti capire; come il direttore del collegio romano non lo capisce, e lui non comprende i colleghi dello stesso collegio ('Incontro con uno strano prete'). E' questa difficoltà di comprendere gli altri un sintomo di un male esistenziale? Non direi, perchè, egli è fondamentalmente ottimista e nello stesso racconto ('Incontro con uno strano prete') si sente felicissimo che con Don Orione egli abbia potuto stabilire un rapporto amichevole e fruttuoso: i due si

10. Sulla maggiore o minore efficacia di certe tecniche narrative si è discusso molto nell'ambito delle discussioni sorte in Germania negli anni '30, (e che si possono consultare nelle riviste quali "Internationale Literatur", "Neue Deutsche Blätter" e "Das Wort"). Un gruppo attorno a Lukasc sosteneva il punto di vista che l'esigenza di "interessare un numero possibilmente largo di strati di lettori, poteva essere soddisfatta nel migliore dei modi con le tecniche narrative tradizionali del XIX secolo, con il realismo di un Balzac o di un Tolstoj...; Benjamin e Brecht rifiutavano tali concezioni come politicamente inefficaci e artisticamente improduttive. Essi argomentavano che contenuti rivoluzionari, esposti nelle forme tradizionali... non intaccano affatto la formazione sociale capitalista" da Gallas Helga, *Teorie marxiste della letteratura*. Roma, 1974, p.16).

11. D'Eramo Luce (in *L'Opera di Ignazio Silone*, Milano, 1976, p.569) rileva che "Possiamo dire che il problema della relazione tra la letteratura e la vita, e quindi della funzione della cultura, è stato forse il primo da lui affrontato sin da quando a diciassette anni leggeva Tolstoj ai contadini. L'immagine di quel ragazzo, che riuniva i cafoni analfabeti per discutere assieme a loro le pagine di Tolstoj, è emblematica di tutta la ricerca dello scrittore".

sono capiti. Se con Don Orione riesce a farsi comprendere fino al punto che negli anni seguenti diventerà per lo scrittore l'ideale con cui si misurerà e in cui s'identificherà tramite il personaggio Pietro Spina in 'Vino e pane', in questo racconto Silone sceglie come compagno¹² Lazzaro con cui stabilisce un rapporto fruttuoso. La lezione che gli viene insegnata è che in certe situazioni ci si deve per forza ribellare: ogni altra azione è complicità; o ci si ribella o si è complici. Lazzaro sceglie la strada della rivoluzione: e la sua azione non viene infiacchita da nessuna debolezza umana. Nè le pettegolezze della gente di un piccolo paese di provincia, nè le rimostranze del parroco basate troppo sul dogma e poco sulla fede lo distolgono dal suo proposito di portar avanti la lotta.

Silone nell'arco di tutta la sua vita non verrà mai meno all'ideale della vita associata: il suo socialismo, come ha sostenuto uno studioso americano, non è un sistema effimero basato sulle cause e gli effetti contingenti della storia ma un amalgama di valori permanenti.¹³

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12. Silone stesso sostiene che non occorre essere pessimisti ma ottimisti mediante la scelta dei compagni adatti. In questi primi racconti di *Uscita di sicurezza* sembra che questa costituisca un tema costante.
13. "Keep of the Flame", *Time*, New York. 22 nov. 1963; adespota.

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