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THE ROLE OF MALTESE AND ENGLISH IN MALTA

By J. AQUILINA

(The text of a talk with some later additions given at the British Council on the 10th April, 1970)

IN 1934 I gave a talk on Anglo-Maltese Culture at the British Institute. At that time, Malta was still a British Colony; the British and the Maltese were both close to the challenge of a common enemy against whom later on they fired their guns together in the same direction and for the same purpose. That purpose was the defence and victory of Democracy.

The main point of my talk then was the creation of a Maltese culture out of the heritage of Malta and England, two islands with so much in common in spite of many differences which, I am afraid, have grown more serious since the enactment of some recent British legislation which involves the Christian conscience in acts of condemnation, rejection and resistance. At that time, most of us were still too colonial-minded to think that it would ever be possible for Malta to survive without a strong Power to back our economy. We had to choose between continued membership of the British Empire (now imaginatively replaced by the Commonwealth) and of the Fascist-Nazi Empire.

Faced with this momentous choice, when hostilities started in earnest, marked by an abrupt transition from a cold war of words to a real hot war of continual bombardments, the Maltese fought bravely on the side of Britain. They would have fought on the side of Britain even if at that time they had Malta's eventual independence in mind. The independence which Malta obtained in 1964 created a new constitutional status, mainly regarding the direct exercise of executive authority, which was transferred to Maltese hands. The colonial Civil Servants from Downing Street

packed up, and our Civil Servants took over, unfortunately with a mentality still steeped in the 150 year old stale tradition of colonial service. History shows that constitutional and mental reforms do not always keep pace, because, unfortunately, the latter very often lag behind. Post-war Malta is now not only an independent nation, she is also a member of the British Commonwealth owing allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen like the other members of the British Commonwealth. Malta has two official languages which are, or anyhow should be for teaching purposes, a first and second language. Many Maltese can be bilingual or trilingual, but there is no doubt that Maltese is otherwise everybody's first home language. The few exceptions do not form a rule and certainly have no right to break the rule or expect others to break the rule for them.

Every small country needs one of the few world languages. Luckily, British rule in Malta brought with it the English language, not without strong opposition from those who, in the early years, would rather have Italian instead as Malta's official language.[1] Time has proved the wisdom of those who, reading the signs of the times, insisted on the teaching of English along with Maltese. This is as it should be though there are still embarassing anomalous situations, such as the exclusion of Maltese as an official language in the Royal University of Malta,[2] a situation comparable to the similarly arbitrary situation in the Church which in 1936 declared Italian the official language of the Curia. Appendix 6 of the Diocesan Synod dealing with parish priests' reports to be submitted to the Archbishop every January enjoins that these be written in Italian. I understand that the Curia now receives also reports in Maltese, but the law is still there completely out of context with the Constitution of the country and the recent liturgical reforms of Vatican Council II.

The subject of my talk, as announced in the press, is the creation of an Anglo-Maltese culture. If you think that I am digressing because I have not yet touched on the subject, may I please tell you that I do not think I am doing so. I am still introducing the subject which is largely linguistic against the pre-war and post-war background without which one cannot understand the ambiguous relationship existing formerly between Italian

[1] The question of the official status of Italian was raised recently in *Corriere della Sera* of November 24, by Paolo Monelli. Are the Neo-Fascists, a growing party in Italy, going to resuscitate Mussolini's claim that Malta is Italian *terra irredenta*?

[2] The University Council has since made Maltese and English the two official languages of the institution. But this decision will come into force as law when the relevant change is made in the University Ordinance.

and Maltese and now between English and Maltese in our schools and society largely due to lack of balance in the planning of school syllabuses as well as lack of foresight as in the case of the University Ordinance of 1947 which was drawn up by the last of the U.K. colonial civil servants who made English the only official language of our *Alma Mater* and left us with a minor Language Question on our hands. Do you realise the implications of this for independent Malta? Under the present, still unamended Ordinance, any member of the teaching staff who speaks Maltese at any official University meeting, or uses it in official correspondence, technically acts illegally because he violates the said Ordinance. But it gives great pleasure to many of us to break the law (how can one respect a foolish law?) by occasionally speaking Maltese, observing, however, the etiquette of personal courtesy when we have a mixed board, generally including our English colleagues.

Both English and Maltese have an important role to play as languages in the creation of an Anglo-Maltese culture. Languages are vehicles of ideas. One can therefore understand that the social role of these two languages in Malta has to be well defined to prevent first of all encroachment and conflict where there should be harmony, and disintegration where there should be integration. Not the muddle-headed amateur but the well-trained linguist is qualified to define co-ordinated areas of Maltese and English in our Country. This would necessitate expert planning without which the two languages in Malta would drift and encroach on each other to the great detriment of linguistic co-existence. In normal circumstances, one would assume reliable knowledge of what a language means to us. Unfortunately, the situation has been obscured by the anti-Maltese tactics of pressure groups both inside and outside Malta and also by the adverse effect on the people's language as a result of both the State and the Church using a foreign language for official purposes for several centuries now. We still suffer from the hang-over of this centuries' old intoxication of benumbed common sense showing a great deficiency of that reasonable measure of patriotic feeling one expects from a self-respecting people.

A similar frame of mind obtained in Italy at the time of Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) who shocked his friends when he decided to write the *Divina Commedia* not in Latin but in Italian or the *Volgare*, as it was called at that time. There were several other countries that suffered the same language inhibition which in Malta strengthened the foundation of illiteracy, disgraceful ignorance even of our history, and of our language, which has always been freely used for all sorts of human purposes sometimes wisely

and sometimes unwisely.

Not to know a foreign language is not necessarily disgraceful, especially if one speaks other languages. There are millions of monoglots in the world, but not to know one's own language is the height of folly. This may sound platitudinous, and so it is. However, the folly of this mental attitude was not seen by the Heads of some of our public schools, some of them foreigners who not only did not teach Maltese, and thus caused students seeking admission to the University to pay for supplementary private tuition, but punished them when they caught them talking Maltese among themselves. I wonder what other self-respecting government could have tolerated this situation without challenging it, especially when the policy-makers were non-Maltese. Would the French or the British government, or indeed any self-respecting government, have suffered foreigners to degrade the people's national language in this way? Courtesy has its limits beyond which discourtesy begins, and discourtesy is reprehensible or punishable according to its degree of gravity. In every act of discourtesy is implied what in law is known as *animus iniuriandi.*

As a result of this anti-Maltese complex, we inherited an illiterate or semi-illiterate society which made an earlier growth of literature practically impossible. Saint Isidore who lived in the 7th century was a much wiser man than some of the 19th and 20th century educators that laid down our educational policy. In his work *Etymologies* he wrote:

'Though a knowledge of all languages is difficult for anyone, still no one is so sluggish that, situated as he is in his own nation, he should not know his own nation's language. For what else is he to be thought except lower than the brute animals? For they make the sound that is proper to them, but he is worse who lacks a knowledge of his own language.'

Language consciousness is the evidence of self-respect without which no country can earn the respect of other countries. An important point is this: A country's language derives its right not merely to survive, but also to flourish, not from the number of people that speak it (numbers make crowds), but from its own nature as a living document of the people that inherited it from their ancestors and in their turn transmitted it to posterity. It is surely by a similar principle that one can defend the autonomy and right to independence of small nations like Malta and Cyprus vis-a-vis the self-glorifying and self-advertising Great Powers like the U.S.A., Russia and China and one time empires whose gargantuan appetite often swallowed up smaller nations in the past. For this and other reasons the

argument of physical smallness does not hold water. It is the 'spirit' that makes us great and not sheer territory.

What is the linguistic position in Malta today? Malta has had its own home-made language of Semitic parenthood for a good number of centuries. We can use our language partly for closer communication with the East, and partly with the West from which we have inherited a large number of words of Mediterranean parenthood, generally Old Sicilian and Italian. This twofold admixture is the product of our geographical position so close to Europe and Africa, which has conferred on us a precious linguistic and national identity of our own. To be able to cross over a bridge between Europe and Africa is no mean advantage. That advantage is our Maltese linguistic privilege. Only a fool can throw away the key to two worlds and feel happy after. A fool's happiness is pathological. And pathological also is the self-complacency of a nation that is insensitive to insult.

So far the key to the East, the rising Arab world, has been tried only in our University tentatively through the Department of Maltese where classical Arabic is a compulsory subject for those who read for B.A.(Hons.) Maltese. Let us not underestimate the fact that there is a Maltese language precisely because there is a Maltese people and that one could no more drive a wedge between the two and keep the nation alive than one could drive a nail into a man's heart without killing him.

Malta's official language pattern is based on two complementary considerations, one which regards Maltese as a national language because it is our first home language, and another which regards English as a second language enjoying the status of a world language that enables us to keep the lines of communication open with the English-speaking world – a large portion of humanity. To those who love this language for a less mercenary reason, English is above all the key to one of the greatest literatures of the world.

English is for us an immensely useful historical heritage of which we are all proud. What some of us regret is not the time devoted to English in our schools, but the very little time devoted to the teaching of Maltese.[3] There are strange things we do not like such as our children being made to pray in English when they could pray more naturally in their native

[3] The number of Maltese teaching lessons has now been increased – there are new signs of language values and what one might describe as 'an improved sense of proportion'. Maltese is slowly coming into its own in Government and public schools – a question of time.

language (our theologians have no doubt about the Almighty being conversant with Maltese!); to memorise English nursery rhymes which grew up in a different social climate when we have so many beautiful nursery rhymes that are a beautiful heritage of child-lore which Malta shares with other Mediterranean countries. We disapprove also of the use of English in the official correspondence of Government Departments where the Maltese are concerned.

As Maltese in Malta is still a living language, one therefore could hardly compare it to the revival of Gaelic in Ireland or Hebrew in Israel. It is, like the people that speak it, a historical continuum. An important fact to bear in mind here is that the role of Maltese in our Society is comparable to that of English in English Society. All other languages are second, third, etc. but never a first, language. The problem of bilingualism and sometimes trilingualism has not yet received scientific treatment in our Teachers' Training Colleges.

History is not merely a record of dated or undated events; it is also the document of the language spoken and its speakers. How about the small number of Maltese families that speak English only at home, and the few who, harking back to the pre-war times, still speak Italian? All I can say of these families is that though they have opted out of Malta's linguistic heritage, they have not thereby released themselves from Maltese communal responsibilities. Their choice of a foreign language, generally for social purposes and on social occasions only such as cocktail parties (showing off class snobbery) etc. goes against the grain of an independent nation proud of its ethnic identity.

In Sliema where a few such families congregate more than anywhere else, one often hears what one could describe as pidgin Maltese, made up of an ill-assorted admixture of so-called English and so-called Maltese, a hotch-potch unworthy of educated people.

Our problem at the moment is one of national identity, looking for Malta's Soul (our minds are its mirror) and being able not only to recognise it when we see it, but having found it, (some are taking too long), let it spur our newfound freedom of self-expression to greater heights than we could reach when we were a colony and Malta had no mirror of its own soul to look in. If I can borrow an idea from Proust's famous book, *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* we Maltese (some of us anyhow, those who care) are in search of the time we lost in endless squables about our National Identity blurred by insidious anti-Maltese propaganda at home and abroad which, for a long time, like a distorted mirror showed the wrong picture of our country, its people, and our ancestors. We must now

patiently gather the broken pieces of our nationhood one by one, as one picks up and glues together the pieces of a shattered chandelier. To do so successfully, we have to remove the many artificial obstacles that are retarding national self-consciousness.

When Malta became independent, I wrote two signed articles in two local papers which at that time, to some of my jubilant compatriots, may have sounded not sanguine enough for the occasion. In these two articles I said that we had won the first round, but that we could celebrate real victory only when we had won also the second round. The first round was the declaration of Malta's sovereignty in 1964, the second round was going to be more difficult, for it meant the shedding of a colonial mentality and attitude which, in the course of centuries, undermined, and often destroyed, some of the sterling qualities of Maltese character. By a colonial mentality, I understand a mentality that lacks initiative and originality because it has been conditioned to rely on a higher authority to do the work for it – spoon-feeding as a step-mother spoon-feeds another woman's baby. It also indicates a mind so awed by the prestige of the foreigner that it ended by losing faith in itself.

Some of us are finding it difficult to restore the true image of Maltese national identity because it was brutally battered and disfigured especially by foreign Fascist propaganda and mouthpieces, who for many years propagated the image of Malta as *terra irredenta*. Long before the Fascists, such propaganda was insidiously inserted into our party politics by Italian refugees during the period of the *Risorgimento*, who escaped to Malta and abused our hospitality by indulging in pro-Italian politics. We do not like anyone to tamper with our dismembered body politic while we are trying to reconstitute it. No one must stand in our way, openly or secretly, to prevent the re-creation of a truly Maltese Nation as seen by the Maltese poet, Ġorġ Pisani:

Malta fil-Lsien u l-Qalb, Malta Maltija.

Piecing the broken fragments of Malta's soul together is not going to be easy. But we are not disheartened, for we know that one cannot work miracles in a few years of independence. There was a time when Malta meant nothing more to the outside world than a coaling station of the British Empire which, like the frequent reference to Gibraltar as the Rock, petrifies the personality of the people dehydrating them of their flesh and blood, turning them into non-entities.

Our Maltese identity suffered incalculable damage not less by the identification of its history with that of the Order of St. John as if this

was a Maltese Government or any less foreign than other foreign governments before and after. One of the reasons is that too many books have been written about this over-written period dazzling with shining armour, and very few about the Maltese themselves. But where is the history of the people of Malta? I mean, the real people and not their rulers.

Excessive nationalism is reprehensible because, by its nature, it leads to the contempt of others. The Second Great World War showed us what harm unrestrained nationalism can do, but no nation can survive without a certain amount of self-respect. That is why we who write books or articles for the press are trying to find a place for it in our national education and public life. Can anybody blame us or call us to order for doing so? Only a thorough reform of retrograde mental attitudes in our Primary and Secondary schools can hasten the day of victory to which we who believe in Malta are looking forward. A great deal of dead wood will have to be removed for the way to such a victory is still cluttered with it. Victory will certainly come one day. I am not pessimistic. Post-war Malta is slowly realising that she has a soul of her own which we must save before it gets hopelessly dimmed. *Din l-Art Helwa* has saved many historical edifices from profanation or destruction. Our task today is to save not only our physical heritages in stone, soil, bastions or castles, but also our *soul* intangible and invisible but nonetheless not less real than bastions and fortresses without which we are lost like children that do not bear their parents' names.

I have noted with pleasure that *Din l-Art Helwa* has received the wholehearted support of a large number of some of the British residents of whom I understand there are about 4,000 on the island. I have not checked this figure; I give it as it was given to me. One notes also with no less satisfaction the interest of some of these residents in Malta's customs and traditions and also our afforestation programme. At the moment I have in mind 'The Men of Trees' who are trying to make Malta look much greener where it was left bare and barren by those who did not care for our country's landscape.

This is one side of the picture. It is no use trying to hide the other side by ignoring the fact that the additional increase in our population from abroad, through the new residents, who are very welcome not only for the economical reasons which induced the Government to bring them here, but also because we are by nature a hospitable people, has also to a certain extent, upset us in many ways disturbing our economic pattern. Speculators with a talent for quick money-making started buying land in such large quantities and at such fabulous inflated prices, that many

feared that in a few more years there would be not much free unsold land left for us Maltese. The tourist industry, depending on an influx of incoming and outgoing holiday-makers, has also upset the social pattern of our country. To attract tourists we had to pay a heavy price. Luckily, Malta has not yet been suffocated completely. Her soul is still there to save, nurture and treasure.

I now quote a relevant passage from the introduction of a recently published poem *The Maltese Rhapsody* by my friend Dr. George Zammit to show that my apprehension is shared also by others.

This is what he says:

> 'Now that independent Malta is undergoing such a radical change and is taking her stand as a highly attractive tourist centre, with such resulting innovations as big, towering hotels, night spots, the opening of new roads entailing the demolition of quaint, old-world nooks and corners so strongly characteristic of our Islands, it is time one took a look round in search of what remains that distinguishes Malta and Gozo from the anonymous mass of tourist centres scattered over the globe... I am afraid too much that is so deep-rootedly and intimately ours, and which therefore gives our Islands a distinctively national colour, is being ironed out or ruthlessly destroyed. Too many houses and other buildings, with their characteristic architecture, with their picturesque wooden or stone balconies supported by intriguingly sculptured stone brackets, are being pulled down, sometimes substituted by ungainly, soulless monstrosities in concrete. Too many winding lanes and blind alleys, so quiet, so old-world, so sweetly peculiar to our towns and villages, with the vine or pomegranate peeping cheerfully over the white-washed wall of the frontyard, with the external staircase sunnily leading from the vine-festooned, geranium-decked yard to the loggia and the *għorfa* so dear and precious to the frugal peasant are being razed to the ground for the sake of widening a road or opening a new piazza. Picturesque gardens and orange groves, ancient dwellings, street shrines and corner niches have been sacrificed to this craze, and not even fortifications and churches have been spared.'

Malta has not been suffocated by the smoke of heavy industries yet. Gozo had a narrow escape when the survival of its wonderful landscape was threatened with destruction by a cement factory. Though this disturbance of the *status quo* was perhaps inevitable, I always felt that, unless somebody softened the impact of the foreign ethnic group on the native one, a time would come when it would not be easy to reconcile the

two communities to the new situation. The new social reality is mirrored in two types of advertisements published in the same local papers: one, advertisements of expensive villas generally in the open country in the more sought-after areas beyond the average income or savings of the Maltese and another, advertisements of flats for working class people and many middle-class families who are not in the run for easy money-making. I know the new residents in Malta are not to blame for this;they buy what their money buys. It is up to the Government to solve the problems which are created by its own economic policy for us Maltese.

I feared for some time that the ethnic isolation of a small affluent society living in villas and a native population living in flats in crowded areas while hundreds of unmarried young men and women still have to wait hopefully for their chance of a little house or some small flat which they cannot afford because of the artificially inflated price of land, and the exorbitant key money they have to pay to the landowner would one day drive a wedge between the native residents and the new residents. The situation is still serious. I repeat this is not the fault of the new residents, for it is once more a case of Government policy providing the brake to curb speculators' excesses in order to normalise social and economical situations between the more economically affluent new residents and the Maltese.

Some regard British residents as an economic investment. I am not an economist, but I am interested in the general uplift of the island. I regard British residents as an intellectual reservoir of brains fed by many years of experience in the higher responsibilities of British social life or former British colonies before they settled in Malta. I fear far too many of them live apart from the rest of the Maltese community. Does this isolation do them any good? Those of a more adaptable temperament who mix with the local people have set the right example, because by doing so they not only uncongeal their personality and enrich themselves, they also enrich us. The fact that already so many new residents are coming forward to enjoy and share common experiences with us, shows that the 4,000 strong body of new residents represent a precious intellectual capital which is bound to enrich Maltese life. I know that many of these new residents, products of their own secularist society with some of their laws entirely repugnant to us Maltese, can represent a principle of disintegration of our Christian moral values; but surely this is a healthy, mind-provoking challenge that some of the British residents may have brought us with them if ever they will make up their minds to argue with us about our differences? It is a challenge that we have been long facing

in the books we read and the picture we see in our cinemas. Those who fear this challenge because they don't know the answer had better brush up their principles, and if they really believe in them, gladly enter the arena in their defence whenever their cherished beliefs are challenged or questioned.

The answer to a new challenging situation is not running away nervously from one another, in order to live cosily in our ivory towers, but finding ways and means of coming closer to collaborate and, if necessary, to discuss and debate situations of common interest. This is not only desirable but also possible, provided we shall respect the feelings and sense of national honour of one another and stop any attempt by misguided people at encroachment on social and educational areas that belong to our language by which we can describe ourselves as Maltese and feel to be really masters in our own home.

I must now write a post-scriptum to my talk. *Il-Moviment Qaumien Letterarju* has started a campaign in favour of the Maltese language precisely to prevent this encroachment on the areas that belong to Maltese which (excuse me if I am being repetitive) gives us our nationality and our ethnic identity. These young promoters of the campaign have stirred our national conscience. Unfortunately, some misinformed or ill-intentioned, people have imputed ulterior motives to them. One scared correspondent in a local paper stated that their intention is to cut us off from Europe, to integrate us with the Arab World as agents of the Afro-Asian Movement! Nothing could be more outrageous than this vile imputation. The promoters of the campaign are personally too well educated to propose the exclusion of the use of the English language or any other foreign language in Malta, so long as this does not encroach on the place that is due to our National language. It is not they who are disturbing linguistic co-existence, but those wielders of administrative powers who are continuing to relegate Maltese to an inferior status in Government departments and in our social life.

Calling peoples names to express emotional disagreement has become very fashionable in our violent times. In Italy and France, for instance, rebel students scrawl insults on the walls of the Universities describing the University authorities as Fascists. Progressive elements in dictatorial countries are described as Imperialists or Capitalists. This is the feverish pulse of the times.

The young promoters of the pro-Maltese campaign have one very good intention, that of establishing the proper contexts for Maltese as our own

National language, and for foreign languages which we need for many purposes but which are not part of our National identity and ancestral heritage. That is the logistics of the language campaign today.

The future of a truly independent Malta depends on the right feeling and clear thinking of the younger generation who are publicly expressing their dissatisfaction with the present colonial mentality of some of the older generation. When the older generation fails to lead, the younger generation has no choice but to assume the leadership in its stead, and that briefly is the new Maltese History in the making.

LANGUAGE AND LAW

By G. MIFSUD BONNICI

I

IN introducing a subject as complex as 'Philosophy of Law', I must first attempt to clear up certain difficulties of terminology.

The term itself 'Philosophy of Law' needs clarification. We use it here in the sense it is used on the Continent and it is convenient to note its common usage: Filosofiae juris; Filosofia del Diritto; Philosophie du Droit; Philosophie des Rechts; Filosofia del Derecho; Filosofia de Direito; Filosofia dreptului. The difficulty arises when we consider English practice. The term has not been traditionally used and although it now occurs more often, English writers still call Philosophy of Law by some other name. Unfortunately there is no uniformity in the use of other terms. The traditional 'Jurisprudence' is being used less often but it has been replaced by the use of terms which are chosen according to the personal preference of the author.[1] Thus when, in a recent work we read 'the book provides a brief review of some of the more urgent problems which the Idea of Law will be called upon to tackle' it is clear that Lloyd is using 'The Idea of Law' to mean Philosophy of Law in the continental sense.[2] He uses earlier, 'philosophy of Law' but abandons it for a personal preference. Even his use of capital and small letters for the two terms is significant. Similarly, Friedmann, prefers the term 'Legal Theory' and uses it to cover all that makes up the History of Philosophy of Law, when he writes 'It is therefore, inevitable that an analysis of earlier legal theories must lean more heavily on general philosophical and political theory, while modern legal theories can be more adequately discussed in the lawyer's own idiom and system of thought'.[3]

The position is clearly unsatisfactory. There is perhaps no other branch of knowledge where the name of the study itself is subject to personal preference and choice. This causes, not infrequently, bewilderment and confusion especially among non-English students and scholars.

[1] For the meaning of 'Jurisprudence' itself see Dias, R.W.M. – 'Jurisprudence' London 1964 Chapter 1. Introduction pp. 1-16. He concludes thus 'In short, the word "Jurisprudence" means whatever a person wants it to mean' (p. 4)!

[2] Lloyd Dennis – *The Idea of Law* London 1964. Preface. p. 10.

[3] Friedmann, W. – *Legal Theory* – London 4th Edition 1960. p. 4.

II

At the root of all that has been said above lie the fundamental differentials which divide the Western World into two juridical cultures – the Continental and the Anglo-Saxon. These differentials blossom forth in language. When we are dealing with concepts we may pass unnoticed differences of substance because we readily assume that the concepts we receive are the same as, or at least correspond to, the concepts with which we are familiar. We receive them usually at second hand, in the language which we normally use. It is only when we know the other language well that we realize, at first hand, that the difference sometimes is not merely linguistic.

Continental culture has inherited from Rome two different concepts expressed by two different words, closely linked but separate and distinct – 'jus' and 'lex'. All continental languages maintained this distinction and have two words to express each of these concepts as 'diritto' and 'legge' in Italian, 'droit' and 'loi' in French and so on. English expresses both concepts by the single word 'Law'. Or does it? Did English juridical thinking in fact distinguish the two concepts? Of course the difficulty is soon overcome when 'jus' is translated as Law and 'lex' is translated as Positive Law. But in point of fact one doubts whether any English writer does keep in mind this distinction for long, or constantly and meticulously uses both terms. But even if they do, we are still in the wood; for how are we to deal with the further distinction between what in Italian is known as 'legge' and 'legge positiva'? The use of 'Statute' helps, but, again, it has not been generally adopted and in the land of Common Law it creates difficulties in another respect.

The same thing happens when we have to deal with another fundamental concept – Right. All the major continental languages use one word to cover the two concepts which in English are expressed by the two words Law and Right. This is Diritto, Droit, Recht, Derecho. Continental writers distinguish the two meanings of the same word by referring it to the object (Law) or to the subject (the person and therefore, Right). Thus, to take Italian as our example 'Diritto' in the objective sense means what in English is Law, while 'diritto' in the subjective sense means what in English is Right. The trouble starts, however, when one hurridly translates 'Diritto' as Law, according to the procedure and in the sense we mentioned in the preceding paragraph, and then proceeds to talk of 'Law' in the objective sense and 'Law' in the subjective sense (right), which is sheer nonsense for the English 'Law' has no objective and subjective senses. The word 'Law' is never used in the 'subjective sense'

at all; for that, there is the word 'Right'.

Until very recently this was one of our typical disorientations, Indeed, we have been unfortunate enough to be caught in the vice of the word-concept relationship. We have a continental juridical culture which we strain to express in the English idiom. We have to fit concepts into a language which has other concepts and therefore appropriate words to express those concepts but not others. We are not alone anymore. We are not in fact amazed, to read the following in a recent translation of Giorgio Del Vecchio's 'Philosophy of Law': 'Distinction between objective and subjective Law. It is an easy matter to clarify at this point, two distinct meanings of the word 'right' which are closely connected to each other.'[4]

We observe here that not only 'Law' is being given an objective and subjective sense but even 'right' has now acquired two distinct meanings. This is incomprehensible (or at least 'technical') to anyone who is unfamiliar with Italian and who therefore is blissfully unaware that both 'law' and 'right' in that passage are simply 'Diritto' and 'diritto' in the Italian original.[5]

III

One seems to detect at this stage of our itinerary an objection with which we have become quite familiar in our everyday life, in similar situations. This is usually formulated as follows: Granted that all this is so, is it all that important? After all, it is merely a question of words:

'What is a name? that which we call a rose.
By any other name would smell as sweet'[6]

Poetry is indeed a terrible adversary. In its beautiful garb of powerful mnemonic effect it can make the false appear to be true. Moreover, it has a unique vitality. Verses such as these, which are dependent for their true meaning on the whole context, because of their aesthetic quality, acquire an autonomous and independent life of their own and are so transmitted by mere repetition. It is in this autonomous form that they stick to the memory.

We do not wonder why Plato was so distrustful of poetry. The Sophists

[4] Del Vecchio, Giorgio – *Philosophy of Law*. The Catholic University of America Press. Washington 1953. p. 280.

[5] All this has so far been limited to the field of Philosophy of Law, wherein jurists are tending more and more towards a common conception of problems and solutions. Fortunately there is very little point in trying to translate into English, continental works which deal with 'civil law' doctrines. The potential confusion there is naturally greater. The results will be far more pathetic.

[6] Shakespeare – *Romeo and Juliet* – Act II. Scene II.

of the Athens of his time, showed how fantastically easy it is to quote a line or two of Homer or Hesiod to prove, or disprove, any thesis which is in discussion. Plato had no alternative. He had to eliminate poetry from his educational programme for the Guardians of his Republic.[7] Poetry being beautiful, vital and memorable, soon acquires a character of *authority*, irrespective of its content.

In point of fact, we are here face to face with a simple problem of communication. In the lines just quoted from Shakespeare the term 'rose' is of no importance for two persons who, in each other's presence smell the same flower. Here the problem of communication is resolved through the sensation of smell and language is hardly necessary. The term acquires relevant importance when one of the factors in the picture changes; when the parties are not together, or they wish to communicate on the past or the future or they wish to establish the identity of the flower or one of them happens to have influenza and unfortunately, cannot smell.

We need not linger on this digression. If we were to insist on an analytical demonstration of why the problem of words and terms and meaning and connotation is of the greatest importance and significance we would be labouring the obvious. Incredible though it may seem, however, the obvious has been ignored, and sometimes completely forgotten over and over again in the cultural history of the West. More and more scholars have come to realize that we have received false ideas about ancient, medieval, and sometimes even later thought, simply because a term was wrongly 'translated' from the original. This would be the beginning of a whole series of wrong transmissions – all based on the initial distortion. The distortion in fact continues to deteriorate still further the more it is mishandled and when we receive it, not at second or third hand, but sometimes even at fourth or fifth hand, we get a completely wrong picture.

We have reached the point today of having to repeat the original untranslated word or term to capture once again the true meaning which it originally had. Time and labour have had to be expended on the rediscovery of that which should have never been lost in the first place – a sheer waste of time and scholarship. One natural reaction to the chaos which is created by the mishandling of ideas whether in translation or in transmission has been that of returning over and over again to the original. It would be foolish not to be distrustful. But this process cannot with reason be carried on systematically. Sheer volume renders it impossible. Scholars must trust scholarship. Otherwise the frightening limitations will cripple every attempt towards that global vision which is so

[7] Plato – *The Republic* – III – 377 – 398.

necessary in the present stage of our culture. Scholarship cannot do without its own code of ethics.

IV

We have now to consider the truth of the proposition, that word or term and concept are sometimes inextricably linked. This may be better restated perhaps as follows: Some words or terms are essentially tied up with a group of connotations and accordingly cannot be translated. In translation, words and terms have to be changed. Quite frequently translators fall into the trap of searching for the equivalent 'words' confidently expecting that this word-substitution will work out by itself the miracle of communicating the same concepts which are expressed by the original word. Werner Jaeger gives us a typical illustration of what we mean: It is impossible to avoid bringing in modern expressions like *civilization*; *culture*, *tradition*, *literature* or *education*. But none of them really covers what the Greeks meant by *paideia*. Each of them is confined to one aspect of it; they cannot take in the same field as the Greek concept unless we employ them all together.[8] It follows that we cannot find a substitute for the Greek word; we do not have any equivalents; it is untranslatable. It has to be taken over lock, stock and barrel. The truth is that language should be primarily considered to have an eminently cultural value and content. All languages would be equal and therefore interchangeable if all cultures were equal. This manifestly is not the case.

Languages are interchangeable when they can be referred to the same cultural context. Words and terms which express simple basic concepts have their equivalents in other languages because simple basic concepts are common to all cultures. Words and terms which have the complex and sophisticated connotations of a higher culture do not have their equivalents in the language of a lower culture. This explains the continuous 'borrowing' of one language from another. Words, like water, flow from a higher to a lower plane.

Sometimes the matter cannot be explained by the vertical plane of 'higher' and 'lower' cultural content however, but rather by the horizontal one of simple difference in cultural development on parallel lines which, however, do not coincide. Here again words and terms may not have their equivalents and a literal (word for word) substitution is completely useless and one can only fall on a definition or description in another language of the word or term of the original language.

[8] Werner Jaeger – *Paideia*: Vol. I.
Translated from the German Edition by Gilbert Highet, Oxford 1954. Preliminary Note.

V

Having sought to establish these premises we can now apply them to the field of Law.

Law constitutes Society and maintains it in being. The language of Law therefore in every society has always a particular and intimate cultural significance. This is why what has been observed above applies especially to the problem of translating juridical terms and concepts. A masterful testimony of this is given by Ernest Barker which merits a lengthy quotation. Barker translated parts of Gierke's 'Das Deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht' (The German Law of Associations). At the end of what has already become a famous introduction to Gierke's text, Barker writes of the problems which he came across in the translation. 'It has proved difficult, and indeed impossible, to put Gierke's thought into an English style which would seem natural and easy to English readers... I cannot be sure that I have rendered faithfully the exact sense of many of the German terms. Here once more, I may quote some words of Maitland: 'The task of translating into English the work of a German lawyer can never be perfectly straight forward. To take the most obvious instance, his *Recht* is never quite our Right or quite our Law'. I confess that I found Recht even more difficult than Maitland suggests. Not only does it mean something which is neither exactly our Right nor exactly our Law; it also means something which is like our 'rights' and yet not exactly the same. *Recht* to the German writer is not only something 'objective' in the sense of a body of rules (either natural or positive) which is in one way or another obligatory; it is also something 'subjective' in the sense of a body of rights belonging to a person or 'Subject' as his share in (or perhaps we should rather say his position under) the system of 'objective' Right. If *Recht* was thus troublesome, *Naturrecht* and its adjective *naturrechtlich*, were even more so. Maitland was so much troubled by the adjective that he inserted the English term nature-rightly. I found myself shy of that term, and I have translated Gierke's *die naturrechtliche Gesellschaftslehre* as the natural law theory of Society. But I know that I have not exactly hit the mark. As Maitland says 'a doctrine may be *naturrechtliche* though it is not a doctrine of Natural Law nor even a doctrine about Natural Law'.

To meet such difficulties, I have put the German equivalent in the text, by the side of the English word wherever I thought that the reader would like to know what it was, and I have added an explanatory footnote wherever I thought that it was necessary. But that is far from solving all difficulties. A word in one language has a variety of connotation, which it may not have in another. *Gesellschaft*, for instance, means both Society

at large and the sort of particular society which is a partnership or company or *societas*. Our English 'society' will not do the same work; and I have had to translate *Gesellschaft* differently in different places,' and after giving further examples, Barker observes that 'to distinguish their shades of meaning, and to find their English equivalents, is as delicate a matter as the matching of fine colours'.[9]

That passage bears out many points we have touched upon. One point needs special emphasis. English and German are two languages which have particular linguistic affinities besides a common lineage. They both belong to a common West European civilization. And yet the difficulties in translation persist in the field of Law because they serve different legal cultures. The linguistic affinities are completely irrevelant when we have to deal with different legal concepts. Translating Gierke into Italian or French, in fact, would be a comparatively easy task, for German, Italian and French serve to express the same juridical concepts; they all serve or express a common legal culture.

Barker's testimony is clear enough and strong enough to make us realize that the difficulty is not one which can be brushed aside or ignored. Nor can it be classed as of secondary importance. It is rather basic and radical. Its roots lie in the differences in legal cultures. To think that a unity can be achieved by linguistic substitutions is not only superficial but idiotic. It is in fact attempted by those who consider language to be a mere convention rather than a cultural-social instrument of fundamental importance.

VI

The difficulties we have been discussing seem to have their origin in language or rather in the variety of languages, but it would be more correct to say that they arise because of the variety of cultures. In our case, the variety of juridical cultures. We have already noted that the difficulties encountered by Barker would not be encountered by a French or Italian translator of Gierke. The English-German linguistic affinities are not as relevant as the Franco-Italo-Germanic juridico-cultural affinities.

If therefore, one is aware that it is not so much the language that matters as the culture, one's perspective must be adjusted to a new angle of looking at the problem of translation. If a given culture A has a given concept B expressed by the term C and we are set the task of translating

[9] Ernest Barker – *Natural Law and the Theory of Society 1500-1800 by Otto Gierke* – Translated with an Introduction by Ernest Barker. Cambridge 1950. 1 XXXVIII-XC.

the concept, we must first examine whether the other culture D has in fact any affinities with culture A. The greater the affinity, the greater the possibility that concept B is possessed also by culture D which, therefore, must have a term F to express the concept B; the first two factors, – culture and concept being constant and connected, the third – the term – being variable and different. Most translators tackle the problem linguistically concentrating on the variable third factor and achieve a false correspondence at the top without any roots at the base. Even when the variable thirds are almost identical – as Right and *Recht* in Barker's quotation – this only serves to complicate the problem precisely when it appears to have solved it so completely.

VII

To some it may well seem that we are labouring the obvious. Unfortunately it is not so. Only those who have had actual experience in the field have been faced with evidence enough to thrust forcibly upon them the acuteness of the methodological problem and its widespread implications. Allott, describing his researches on African Law, testifies to it as follows: '... does X customary law have a word for "law"? Our first problem is to decide what this question means. The naive notion that one must seek exact one-word equivalents for each word in the English language must be dismissed. Perhaps what the inquirer wishes to know is whether the language has a term which performs some of the same functions as the English word "law" that is, refers to the same phenomena. Pick up any book on jurisprudence and you immediately find that English-speaking jurists are by no means agreed on what are the characteristic phenomena to which the English word "law" refers; how, then, is one to discover both the corresponding phenomena and their collective "name" in the X language?

'We started off on a quest for the equivalent of an English word. Perhaps this was an approach from the wrong end. Let us try to explore the same field from the opposite direction by examining the vocabulary of the X language in what we would call legal contexts, and by seeing what items this contains and what their function is. Among these items we may well find a set of terms which refer to the practices of the people, the body of rules to which a court appeals when deciding a case, the commands of a ruler, and so on. Terms of this sort in Sesotho were investigated by myself in conjunction with Professor Westphal and Basatho informants.

'The primary requirements for investigation was that the terms should be used in and refer to, legal situations. This having been established –

at least provisionally – the terms were then investigated in collocation. The terms selected, which could all be roughly described as nouns, might be the subject or object of verbs, in other words of processes, and they might be combined with adjectives or other nouns, and so on... At the same time the futility, or at least the irrelevance of the original problem demonstrated itself. Sotho is almost as rich in terms of this type and in their combinatory possibilities as English; this richness would be lost by any crude attempt to set up one-word parallels between Sotho and English. At the most there was a partial convergence of function between particular Sotho and English terms, for example between Sotho "malao" and English 'law' or between Sotho "mokhwa" and English 'custom'.[10]

VIII

We can now conclude these preliminary remarks by tentatively formulating the propositions that we have arrived at:

1. The problem is mainly one of culture and not simply and solely one of language.

2. Literal Juridical translation from one language into another is only possible if both languages serve the same juridical culture.

3. Transmission between two different juridical cultures is only possible if one culture adopts the actual terms used by the language of the other culture.

Having arrived at these propositions, we must finally strike a note of warning.

In proposition 1, we have stated that the problem is *mainly* one of culture. Sometimes the problem is further complicated by the fact that although both languages serve the same juridical culture there remains the unsurmountable linguistic obstacle which touches the bed-rock, inherent differentials which lie deeply buried in the complex reality of the varieties of language. Thus although, as we have said, German and the Romance Languages serve by and large similar juridical cultures, the scholar can suddenly be confronted with this sort of difficulty: '*Il parlare di verbi modali tedeschi in una metalingua romanza è fonte di complicazioni. Giustamente Georg Simmel ha assimilato uno dei verbi modali, il* Sollen, *ad un modo di pensare come il futuro o il passato, come il congiuntivo e l'ottativo. Il modo di pensare germanico, espresso nel Sollen, trova nelle lingue romanze un'espressione completamente diversa. Per esprimere un comando o un desiderio molto forte – cioè per rendere il senso di un imperativo – le lingue romanze ricorrono al futuro ottativo*

[10] Allott A.N. *Law and Language* University of London 1965. pp. 25-27.

(*Heischfuturum*): *là dove in tedesco troviamo un* Sollen, *le lingue romanze presentano un futuro* (o *anche un presente*)' and comparing the translations of the Decalogue in the romance languages with the german translation, it is noted that '*là dove il tedesco usa il* Sollen, *le traduzioni romanze usano il futuro*'.[11]

[11] Losano Mario G. – *Per un 'analisi del "Sollen" in Hans Kelsen'* in *Rivista Internazionale di Filosofia del Diritto* Anno XLIV. Fas. III. 1967. pp. 548-549.

CICERO AND MALTA

By JOSEPH BUSUTTIL

(I)

58 B.C. was certainly not the happiest year in Cicero's eventful life. His arch enemy Clodius, on being elected Tribune in October of the preceding year, proceeded to take vengeance on the Orator for having given evidence against him in 61 B.C. Clodius, however, was merely an instrument in the hands of Caesar who wanted Cicero removed from Rome so that he could move safely to his Transalpine Province.

In the first months of 58 B.C. Clodius carried a general resolution, a *plebiscitum*, to the effect that any one who had put Roman citizens to death without trial should be 'forbidden fire and water', i.e. exiled. Cicero, who during his consulship in 63B.C. had had the Catalinarian conspirators executed without trial, recognized the meaning of the resolution. Towards the end of March, on the advice of his friends, he left Rome and headed for Vibo in Bruttium, where his friend Sicca had an estate.

Cicero thought of moving South to Sicily and Malta.[1] For this reason he contacted Vergilius, the *propraetor* of Sicily and his brother's friend.[2] Vergilius, however, refused to offer him a refuge as an exile, possibly not to incur Clodius's anger.[3]

In April, word reached Cicero at Vibo that Clodius's resolution had become law and that it was emended to the effect that he was not allowed to live anywhere within four hundred or more miles of Italy. This again put Sicily and, of course, Malta out of the question. He travelled to Brundisium and from there to Thessalonica where he lived at the house of his friend Cnaeus Plancius.

In his defence of C. Plancius in 54 B.C. Cicero states that he had wanted to take asylum in the Province of Sicily because that island was more than a second home to him and because it was governed at the time (59-58 B.C.) by Caius Vergilius. When one examines the various letters written by Cicero and sent to his friend Atticus and to others in the course

[1] Cf. Pro Cnaeo Plancio, XL, 95: Siciliam petivi animo, quae et ipsa erat mihi sicut domus una coniuncta et obtinebatur a C. Vergilio; Cf. Also Ad Att. 111, IV.
[2] Cf. Pro C. Plancio, XL, 95: Quocum (Vergilio) me uno vel maxime quum vetustas tum amicitia, cum mei fratris collegia tum rei publicae causa sociarat; Cf. Ad. Fam. 11, XIX: Caius Vergilius, propinquus tuus, familiarissimus noster.

of the year 58 B.C. one detects the real reasons behind Cicero's choice.

It is clear that Cicero was really afraid of some attempt against his life. In a letter to Atticus of April 13 he writes that he had left Vibo so that Sicca, his host, might not perish with him.[4] When Atticus asked him to spend his time of exile at Epirus Cicero replied that Epirus was close to Achaia and that Achaia was full of bold and determined enemies.[5] Writing to Terentia, his wife, in November 25 he confesses that he had wished to live in some uninhabited spot where Piso, his dreaded enemy, would not find him and where soldiers would not come.[6]

In Malta he would have felt safe. He had many friends and would not have been surprised by some assasin sent by Clodius or others.

In the letter sent to his wife of November 25 Cicero says that he had visited Dyrrachium because that city was near Italy.[7] In another letter to Atticus he expresses the same ideas.[8] In other words he wanted to go to some place from where he could keep an eye on what was going on in Italy. In Malta Cicero could have received all the news about Rome and especially about the election campaigns. Perhaps he could also somehow have influenced the outcome of the elections from there.

Vergilius, of course, refused him permission to settle in Malta and so he went to Thessalonica instead.[9]

(II)

Almost nine years had elapsed since Cicero's banishment and in the meantime he had been called back. Clodius was dead. For a second time he found himself in the same predicament and for a second time he thought of retiring to Malta.

On January 11 58 B.C. Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon and the Civil War ensued. Seven days later the Consuls and the Magistrates fled in panic to join Pompey who had abandoned Rome on the day before. Town after town fell into Caesar's hands and on March 17 Pompey sailed to Dyrrachium followed by many Magistrates and by the army.

[3] Cf. Pro C. Plancio: XL, 96: nihil amplius dico nisi me in Siciliam venire noluit.
[4] Cf. Ad Att. 111, IV: Statim iter Brundisium versus contuli ... ne et Sicca, apud quem eram, periret.
[5] Cf. Ad Att. 111, VIII: in Epirum non essemus profecti, quod et Achaia prope esset plena audacissimorum inimicorum.
[6] Cf. Ad Fam. XIV, 1: Ego volebam loco magis deserto esse in Epiro, quo neque Piso veniret nec milites ...
[7] Id: Dyrrachium veni, quod et libera civitas est, et in me officiosa et proxima Italiae.
[8] Cf. Ad Att. 111, XIV.
[9] Cf. Id. 111, IV: et quod Melitae esse non licebat.

Cicero was in a dilemma as to what course of action he ought to take and time and again he asked his patient and faithful friend Atticus to help him out of his peculiar situation.[10] On more than one occasion he wrote to him saying that he would not follow Pompey in his flight;[11] and yet he felt somehow that he could not let down his former champion.[12] Caesar wrote to the Orator asking him not to take up arms against him; and his friends Balbus and Oppius entreated him to remain neutral. Still he wavered. On April 16 Caesar wrote again to try to hold him to some sort of neutrality after getting Curio to work on him orally and Caelius in writing.[13]

In the meantime Caesar had returned to Rome from Brundisium and, after leaving the command of Italy in the hands of Antony, turned against Spain where he was faced by the greatest military danger.[14] He also sent Curio to secure Sicily and its corn-fields. On April 19 he was already at Marseilles on his march to Spain.

Atticus advised Cicero to observe the strictest neutrality and to mark time.[15] His daughter Tullia beseeched her father to wait for developments in Spain before reaching a decision.[16] Cicero gave in to his family's 'tears' and decided to go to Malta and wait there for the outcome of events in Spain.[17] He had already discussed this possibility with Curio and the latter took kindly to the idea.[18] All he needed in order to leave for Malta was Antony's permission.[19]

Antony's answer was not late in arriving. In a letter to the Orator Antony explained that there was no apparent reason why Cicero should absent himself from Italy once he professed to be neutral; furthermore,

[10] Cf. Ad Att. VII, X; VII, XIX; XX, VII; VII, XXI.
[11] Cf. Ad Att. VII, XXIII; VII, XXIV; VII, XXVI.
[12] Cf. Ad Att. X, VII: Mea causa autem alia est, quod beneficio vinctus ingratus esse non possum.
[13] Cf. Ad Att. X, VIIL; Ad Fam. 11, XVI; Ad Fam. VIII, XVI.
[14] Cf. M. Gelzer, Caesar, Trans. by P. Needham, Oxford, 1968, p. 204.
[15] Cf. Ad Att. X, VII: Ergo in hac contentione neutrum tibi palam sentiendum est et tempori serviendum est.
[16] Cf. Ad Att. X, VIII: Cum ad me semper mea Tullia scribat orans, ut, quid in Hispania geratur, expectem.
[17] Cf. Ad Att. X, 9: Melitam igitur, opinor, capessamus dum quid in Hispania. Melitam igitur, deinde quo videbitur. Lacrimae meorum me interdum molliunt precantium ut de Hispaniis expectemus.
[18] Cf. Ad Att. X, VIIL: Cum Antonio item est agendum ut cum Curione Melitae me esse velle, huic civili bello nolle interesse. Eo velim tam facili uti possem et tam bono in me quam Curione.
[19] Ibid.

Caesar had expressly forbidden Antony to let anyone leave Italy.[20] All the same Antony was prepared to let Cicero write to Caesar for permission.[21] Some of the Orator's friends informed Cicero that his enemies were urging Antony not to let him depart from Italy.[22]

Nevertheless Cicero was determined to leave for Sicily and was already making secret preparations to escape in some cargo-ship.[23] He was still bent on going to Malta.[24] He was worried as to whether he should take his children with him.[25] He wanted at all costs to reach Sicily. Little did he know that Curio had already succeeded in grabbing that Province without a fight in April 23; and he still laboured under the impression that the Sicilians had rallied round his Pompeian friend Cato.[26]

Curio himself wrote later to inform him that Sicily had fallen into the hands of the Caesarians. On this account he accepted Balbus's advice, and apparently Atticus's, and decided not to go to Malta.[27] However he managed to leave Caieta on June 7 and eventually reached Pompey's camp at Dyrrachium.

[20] Cf. Ad Att. X, 10: Qui se medium esse vult, in patria manet, qui proficisitur, aliquid de altera utra parte iudicare videtur ... partes mihi Caesar has imposuit, ne quem omnino discedere ex Italia paterer.

[21] Id: Ad Caesarem mittas censio et ab eo hoc petas.

[22] Cf. Ad Att. X, XV: Qui (Servius) etiam Antonium confirmasse dicitur, ut me impediret ...

[23] Cf. Ad Att. X, 10: X, 11; X, 12; X, 12a; X, XV; X, XVI; X, XVIII.

[24] Cf. Ad Att. X, 9.

[25] Cf. Ad Att. X, II: De pueris quid agam? parvone navigio committam?

[26] Cf. Ad Att. X, 12: Sicilia petenda. Sit modo recte in Hispaniis. Quamquam de ipsa Sicilia utinam sit verum: Concursus Siculorum ad Catonem dicitur factus, orasse, ut resisteret, omnia pollicitos.

[27] Cf. Ad Att. X, XVI: Cato, qui Siciliam tenere nullo negotio potuit, Syracusis profectus ... ut ad me Curio scripsit; Cf. Ad Att. X, XVIII: Ex Balbi autem sermone, quem tecum habuit, non probamus de Melita.

I RAPPORTI CULTURALI ITALO-FRANCESI NEL SETTECENTO ALLA LUCE DELLA CRITICA MODERNA

di JOSEPH M. BRINCAT

Lo spirito critico che pervase il pensiero europeo nel secolo XVIII, con tutto il fervore combattivo per o contro le nuove idee, si riflette nella vasta produzione di prosa polemica alla quale indulsero non solo i maggiori letterati illuministi, ma anche i più pedantici aspiranti all'ambito titolo di 'philosophes'. Voltaire e Baretti, Rousseau e Parini, Montesquieu e Alfieri, hanno lasciato pagine dense di vivaci e taglienti polemiche personali, estetiche e sociali. In realtà pochi resistettero alla tentazione di provare quel certo gusto mordace, che era anche una moda, in un secolo incomparabile per la fioritura della satira, dell'ironia, del sarcasmo e dell'invettiva. A proposito di queste polemiche letterarie 'qui ponctuent tout le siècle', riportiamo una precisazione di H. Bedarida, che le vede essenzialmente come 'querelles entre nations plus qu'entre personnalités determinées'.[1] Questa osservazione viene giustificata dal fatto che la polemica più duratura e di risonanza più larga fu senza dubbio la questione dell'egemonia francese.

Il fenomeno del 'francesismo', che penetrò non solo nel campo della letteratura ma anche e soprattutto nei più svariati aspetti della vita sociale, ebbe naturalmente i suoi accesi propagatori, il cui entusiasmo provocò in altri violente reazioni. Ricordiamo il marchese Caracciolo, ambasciatore di Napoli presso la corte di Luigi XVI, che nel 1776 esprime la propria ammirazione per la capitale francese in un opuscolo dal titolo piuttosto eloquente: 'Paris, le modèle des nations étrangères, ou l'Europe française'. Dall'altra parte, non è difficile trovare lamenti, anche tinti di una certa amarezza, come questo di Ludovico Muratori, dal Capitolo XLI della *Filosofia Morale:* 'E noi buoni italiani, scimie ridicolose, corriamo a copiare le metamorfosi loro, e tutte le lor mode, come se fossero calate dall'alta corte di Giove'. Giudizi simili sono frequentissimi nella letteratura dell'epoca, ma bisogna anche non dimenticare

[1] H. BEDARIDA-PAUL HAZARD – *L'Influence française en Italie au dix-huitième siècle.* Paris, 1934, pp. 116-117.

che, se per forza di semplicità grafica essi fanno tanta impressione, specialmente perché vengono da penne italiane, queste citazioni 'tipiche' appartengono a quel genere di frasi sentenziose che si prestano facilmente all'interpretazione più o meno equivoca quando sono riportate fuori dal testo, o meglio dallo spirito del testo originale.

Le opere maggiori, i tanti opuscoli e giornali, e le innumerevoli fonti private e pubbliche del Settecento dimostrano che in questo secolo gli scrittori francesi prendono un atteggiamento decisamente superiore nei confronti dei loro colleghi europei, mentre questi ultimi, specie gl'Italiani, non ancora rassegnati a vedersi sfuggire il primato rinascimentale, sono preoccupati per la difesa del proprio orgoglio nazionale. Non è il caso di ripresentare qui gli argomenti infuocati dei vari Boileau, Rapin, Bouhours, Pozzi, Mazza, Orsi, Baretti, Parini e Alfieri, perché non possiamo pretendere di proporre una nostra soluzione ad un problema cosi complesso come quello dell''Europa francese' del Settecento. Riteniamo non privo di interesse il tentativo di vedere se, a distanza di due secoli, i critici più autorevoli della prima metà del nostro secolo, italiani e francesi, abbiano portato nuova luce sulla questione, e se siano riusciti a far cadere del tutto i pregiudizi nazionalistici dell'epoca, e dell'Ottocento, secondo lo spirito moderno degli studi comparatistici.

A proposito del fatto che il tema stesso, prima ancora del modo di ripensarlo e di rivalutarlo, fu sempre compromesso da elementi nazionalistici, è rilevante che Antonio Porta, disegnando le origini degli studi di letteratura comparata, le trovi proprio nel secolo XVIII, quando 'ciascuna nazionalità raggiunse piena consapevolezza e maturità'[2] e quando 'le opere letterarie accolsero ed espressero anche le aspirazioni e le concezioni proprie allo spirito ed alla storia di ciascun popolo, di ciascuna nazione europea.' Egli continua precisando che 'Da questa complessa evoluzione ebbe origine la critica comparativa fra le letterature moderne, dapprima necessariamente con significato nazionalistico, cioè mirava ad affermare il primato di un'opera e di un popolo sull'altro, ed a liberarlo da servitù ed idolatrie letterarie straniere...'[3] Troviamo perciò che Giulio Natali rintraccia la polemica letteraria nella cospirazione anti-italiana promossa dal Boileau che cercò 'di liberare la Francia dell'italianismo, cercando di persuadere l'Europa dello scadimento dell'Italia,' e giustificando cosi la reazione italiana.[4] Constatiamo

[2] A. PORTA – *La Letteratura comparata nella storia e nella critica* – Marzorati, Milano, 1951. p. 13.
[3] ibid. p. 14.
[4] G. NATALI – *Il Settecento*. Milano, 1929, 5a ediz. 1960. p. 493.

che Ugo Benassi parla del sentimento nazionale 'assonnato ma non già spento', ricordando come lo stesso Mazzini sosteneva che l'indipendenza letteraria sarebbe stata il primo passo all'indipendenza politica.[5] Dall'altro campo vediamo la teoria del 'risveglio' italiano interpretata dal Brunot come dovuta 'en grande partie aux reproches et aux outrages des Rapin, des Boileau, des Bouhours'.[6] E questa teoria, basata sulla tesi del Maugain, che riteneva che gl'Italiani avrebbero riconosciute giuste queste critiche, viene confutata dal Natali che insiste sull'indirizzo tradizionale preso da questo 'risveglio', ribadendo che gl'Italiani 'ricorsero all'esempio dei loro grandi antichi e si proposero di emulare gli orgogliosi stranieri'.[7] Il sovracitato Antonio Porta risolve la questione facendo appello all'inesorabilità di quella che chiama 'l'idea di progresso tipicamente europea', cioè quel fenomeno della successione storico-culturale che vede 'la creazione continua di ordini superiori, sempre superati, cui ciascuna stirpe arreca il contributo e che formano la civiltà del mondo'. Egli aggiunge che questo concetto critico era ignoto alle civiltà antiche. Ma se noi passiamo alla considerazione dei vari punti di vista dei critici che abbiamo scelto, troviamo che, se la critica del Novecento riconosce alla Francia la sua posizione come centro d'irradiazione della cultura europea nel secolo decimottavo, in margine all'affermazione generale abbondano giudizi, osservazioni e precisazioni diverse e contrastanti.

Cominciamo con una efficace personificazione rappresentata da Paul Hazard che spiega con mirabile semplicità la chiave dei rapporti italo-francesi nel Settecento: 'Lorsque le Courtisan italien, après avoir joué son rôle de maître et de guide, avait pris sa retraite, l'Honnête homme lui avait succédé'.[8] Scomparsa la figura del Cortegiano, l'Italia si ritira dalla ribalta del palcoscenico europeo per prendere il suo posto sullo sfondo accanto alle altre nazioni meno gloriose. Nuova protagonista è la Francia: 'Au centre le pays qui donnait plus qu'il ne recevait, dont la langue offrait aux peuples divers le moyen de communication qu'ils

[5] U. BENASSI – *Una guerra letteraria italo-francese del secolo XVIII.* ('Giornale storico della letteratura italiana'. Vol. LXXXIII 1° semestre, 1924. Torino. sezione 14.

[6] F. BRUNOT – *Histoire de la langue française des origines à 1900.* Paris, 1934. Tome VIII, lère partie, p. 121.

[7] NATALI op. cit. p. 584.

[8] P. HAZARD – *La crise de la conscience européenne 1680-1715.* Bouvain, Paris, 1935. p. 333.

désiraient, dont la pensée éblouissait...'[9] Superiorità assoluta; nessun'altra nazione poté gareggiare con essa.

Questa superiorità il Sorrento la vede cosi: 'L'uomo francese tende con tutte le forze a voler sorpassare gli altri popoli, è uomo *moderno*, il più moderno dei moderni, e prende risolutamente la via dell'antitradizionalismo; esso si considera l'uomo per eccellenza, e la Francia vale quanto e *anche più* della stessa Roma antica.'[10] Accentua ancora di più il complesso di superiorità del popolo francese: 'Fu considerato degno del nome di uomo, fu proclamato popolo eletto, quell'uomo e quel popolo che si sottoponessero alla dea Ragione: il resto non degnato di uno sguardo, o buttato via come massa di cenci, o distrutto.'[11]

Questi due contrastanti giudizi sullo stesso tema sono le premesse della nostra discussione. Ma andiamo avanti e vediamo come spiega questo fenomeno il Sorrento, in termini più precisamente culturali: 'Effettivamente la Francia cerca di mettersi a capo del mondo dal 1750 alla fine del secolo. Nella seconda metà del secolo la viva lotta filosofica diviene eccessiva e infine pretenziosa. Allora si diffonde l'idea della egemonia intellettuale francese in Europa, appoggiantesi sulla grande letteratura del secolo precedente, che è trasformata dalla filosofia o scienza moderna ed è divenuta più che mai strumento di propaganda.'[12] Ne indica il punto culminante nel celebre concorso bandito nel 1783 dall'Accademia di Berlino e vinto da due persone, il più rinomato essendo il Rivarol, poi ne spiega la decadenza, incolpando gli estremisti: 'l'egemonia francese da intellettuale diviene puramente politica e militare (Napoleone esce dal seno della Rivoluzione armato di spada imperiale), e i fari del Rinascimento mandano gli ultimi abbaglianti sprazzi di luce.'[13] In questo modo viene provvocata la reazione delle altre nazioni: 'la Rivoluzione precipita gli avvenimenti e favorisce la resistenza alla Francia.'[13] A confortare questa tesi, cita Hazard che ha spiegato la reazione italiana concentrata nel periodo napoleonico, poi sottolinea il paradosso che 'La Francia intellettuale, nel medesimo tempo che proclamava a gran voce la sua egemonia, si andava esaurendo e si incamminava essa stessa verso nuove vie, quelle del Romanticis-

[9] P. HAZARD – *La Pensée Européenne au XVIIIe siècle*. Paris, 1946. p. 234.
[10] L. SORRENTO – *Italiani e Spagnuoli contro l'egemonia intellettuale francese nel Settecento*. Milano, 1924. pp. 17-18.
[11] ibid. p. 30.
[12] ibid. p. 37.
[13] SORRENTO op. cit. p. 41.

mo...', un movimento spirituale, ci tiene a precisare, 'étranger alla Francia.'[14]

Un altro critico italiano, Ugo Benassi, condivide questa opinione del complesso di superiorità dei Francesi nel secolo decimottavo. Nella sua presentazione dell'articolo *Una guerra letteraria italo-francese del secolo XVIII*,[15] rivela come, sia 'nel pieno fervore di quell'illuminismo, che fu opera precipua dell'ingegno francese', sia nel prolungarsi, 'sebbene con una fioritura assai meno rigogliosa delle precedenti, (del) primato culturale della nazione *sorella*, ci fu ripetutamente espresso da Parigi, a proposito e a sproposito, il disprezzo europeo delle cose d'Italia.'[16] E prosegue dando sfogo al suo sdegno verso i suoi compatrioti che si associavano allo straniero nel culto del cosmopolitismo e del francesismo.

Dal canto suo, Giulio Natali, nel suo lavoro monumentale e sistematico *Il Settecento*, giunge ad una constatazione che è precisamente l'opposto dell'affermazione del Sorrento. Egli ritiene: 'Prima dell'Ottantanove, insomma, l'Italia non dovè molto alla Francia: qualcosa le diede e non soltanto a lei... La vera preponderanza francese comincia, come prova lo Hazard, nel 1796, quando cala dall'Alpi l'esercito dei *liberatori*. Allora la letteratura e l'astratta filosofia francese diventano popolari in Italia; la lingua francese già stata la lingua dei *belli spiriti* diventa la lingua dei patriotti e degli eroi; e chi parla o scrive italiano, usa un barbaro gergo gallo-italico'.[17]

Polemizza apertamente contro l'affermazione generale dell'egemonia francese: 'Concludendo, non accetto la tesi *francese*, sostenuta non soltanto da molti francesi, dal Villemain al Pingaud, ma anche da molti italiani, dal Ferrari al Pivano: il Settecento italiano essere il secolo della *filosofia* francese; esserci svegliata l'Italia soltanto dopo la rivoluzione di Francia.'[18] Neppure accetta interamente la tesi *moderata* del Gioberti, cara agli storici tedeschi avversi alla Francia rivoluzionaria, per cui 'la rivoluzione francese interruppe il movimento indigeno riformatore'. Afferma invece, che 'in verità la rivoluzione non interruppe anzi rese possibile la ripresa e il compimento del moto civile italiano,

[14] ibid. pp. 42-43.
[15] Nel 'Giornale storico della letteratura italiana'. Volume LXXXIII, 1° semestre, 1924.
[16] ibid. p. 56.
[17] G. NATALI op. cit. p. 335.
[18] ibid. p. 335.

paurosamente abbandonato dai principi cosiddetti riformatori', perché 'quando le riforme furono sospese, infuriò la reazione.'[19]

Con la sua posizione decisa e coraggiosa, col suo 'ardente desiderio di restituire all'Italia un secolo della sua storia (un secolo nel quale, a giudizio dei più, la nostra nazione sarebbe stata nel costume, nel pensiero, nell'arte, una provincia anglofrancese)',[20] come vede l'influsso francese in Italia il Natali? Soprattutto tende a limitarlo a ciò che è negativo: a proposito delle manie per i costumi stranieri, spiega che, se la stampa e i viaggi rinnovarono la cultura italiana, 'il contatto con le nazioni straniere determinò anche, se non la degenerazione, lo snaturamento dei nostri costumi.' 'Il passaggio dal sussiego spagnuolo alla leggerezza francese fu effetto non soltanto della libertina letteratura francese, ma anche del malo esempio delle corti borboniche, le quali, messo sul trono l'adulterio, pervertirono la pubblica morale'. Poi limita questo pervertimento alle classi signorili, assolvendo le popolane. Interessante è l'altra sua osservazione, che 'l'influsso francese nelle idee e nei costumi fu salutare su la parte sana e colta della nazione, in quanto controbilanciò l'influenza austriaca che sempre più s'estendeva.'[21]

Ferdinand Brunot si occupa soprattutto del campo linguistico, e per spiegare l'interesse italiano alla lingua francese presenta due ragioni: la politica, poiché Luigi XIV 'tenait une si grande place dans la conduite des affaires européennes, que tout chef d'Etat avait un interêt vital à choisir ses ministres et leurs secrétaires, ses ambassadeurs et leurs collaborateurs dans une élite qui comprît, parlât et ecrivît le français'; e la moda, ovvero il fascino mondano di Versailles: 'Or pour rendre la ressemblance plus complète, il faut aller jusqu'à parler qui est en usage à Versailles.'[22] Lasciamo a parte i suoi giudizi sulla situazione culturale in Italia, e notiamo che ponendo in confronto le conquiste del latino e del greco da un lato, e quelle del francese e dell'inglese dall'altro, il Brunot fa un'osservazione importante: 'Le règne de notre langue... a été plus modeste. Elle ne prit la place des autres que dans certains milieux assez restreints et pour certains usages.'[23]

Nel suo proposito di 'donner une énumeration et une appréciation suc-

[19] G. NATALI, op. cit. p. 336.
[20] ibid. dalla *Prefazione alla 2a ediz.*, p. VI.
[21] ibid. p. 60.
[22] F. BRUNOT – op. cit. p. 121.
[23] ibid. *Avertissement* p. vi.

cincte des principales études ainsi abordées et menées à bien', ovviamente facendo riferimento a lavori apparsi prima del 1934, H. Bedarida presenta come poli opposti della questione, da una parte il Villemain, che ritenne il Settecento italiano come 'un simple reflet du siècle de Louis XIV finissant, de Louis XV et de Louis XVI',[24] e dall'altra 'M.G. Natali qui, dans son beau livre *Il Settecento* a repris, en les poussant parfois à l'extrême, des considérations qu'il avait exposées souvent dans les revues',[25] segnalandone soprattutto i capitoli che affermano l'indipendenza e l'originalità del movimento culturale italiano.

A proposito del ruolo intermediario della Francia fra la cultura anglosassone e quella italiana, si chiede se 'les Italiens, croyant goûter une saveure originale, anglaise ou allemande, n'ont pas retrouvé un certain goût français qui leur plaisait'.[26] Per conseguenza conclude: 'la France a offert aux Italiens les productions venues du Nord, par elle traduites; par elle depouillées de leur saveur locale, jugée excessive; par elle ramenées aux *usages communs* de l'Europe'.[27] Questo aspetto indiretto aumenta il peso dell'azione francese nell'Italia del Settecento: 'Ainsi presentée, l'action de la France apparait comme considérable. Dans l'Europe du XVIIIe siècle, où son hégémonie s'est exercée a des degrés divers, l'Italie a representé l'un des pays les plus largement accessibles à sa langue, à sa pensée, à son art.'[28]

Alla fine del suo studio, il Bedarida trova la concluzione solomonica: 'Ni dépendance complète à l'égard de la France; ni primauté absolue, congénitale, définitive.' Ma poi non può non aggiungere la precisazione che il Settecento assimila l'influenza francese, che prende come guida insieme con la tradizione dei suoi avi. E, a proposito di questo influsso, asserisce: 'En somme une influence si évidente, et manifestée par tant d'éclatantes preuves, qu'il serait puéril de vouloir la nier'. Tuttavia, ripensandoci, cerca ancora il compromesso, rilevando che trattandosi di un paese come l'Italia, tale influenza 'aboutit à un regain de force'.[29]

Un altro rappresentante della critica francese che non si può ignorare è Louis Reau, che il titolo del suo volume lo prende in prestito dal sovracitato opuscolo del marchese Caracciolo. Infatti, egli inizia subito spiegando il motivo di questo prestito, difendendo la buona fede, la

[24] BEDARIDA-HAZARD op. cit. p. 111.
[25] ibid. p. 111.
[26] ibid. p. 108.
[27] ibid. p. 107.
[28] BEDARIDA-HAZARD – op. cit. p. 111.
[29] ibid. p. 121.

sincerità dell'ambasciatore napoletano, e vedendoci una testimonianza inconfutabile della superiorità culturale della Francia nel secolo decimottavo: 'En bon citoyen du monde, il se défend de vouloir rabaisser les autres Européens pour élever les Français sur le pavois. Il se borne à constater, comme tous ses contemporains, l'hégémonie culturelle de la France de son temps'.[30]

L'egemonia francese, afferma il Réau, è 'un *fait historique* qu'il serait puéril ou même absurde de contester'. La 'véritable royauté intellectuelle et artistique' della Francia è altrettanto valida quanto il dominio della civiltà e dell'arte italiana del Rinascimento. Il Réau non trascurerà i limiti di questa predominanza francese che, ammette, 'comme toutes les hégémonies, a été partielle et éphemère', ma ripete che, anche se vi fosse il dominio commerciale e coloniale dell'Inghilterra, 'La France domine sans conteste dans le domaine culturel, par le rayonnement de sa langue, de sa littérature, de ses arts et de ses modes'. E questo lo spinge all'affermazione più audace, cioè che il secolo di Louis XV, così poco avvincente nel campo militare, 'mérite plus encore que le siècle de Louis XIV, comme on l'a répété souvent depuis Michelet, de porter dans l'histoire de la France moderne le titre de Grand Siècle'.[31]

D'altro canto, il Réau insiste sulla spontaneità del riconoscimento corale degli stati europei verso la nazione guida dell'Illuminismo: 'Jusqu'à la fin de l'Ancien Régime, la langue, la littérature, l'art français se sont répandus à travers l'Europe sans violence et sans prosélytisme, par la seule vertu d'un consentement universel'.[32] 'Il faut bien convenir que la propogande officielle, publicitaire et spectaculaire, insistante ou discrète, persuasive ou coércitive, n'a joué aucun rôle dans l'incomparable rayonnement de la civilisation française au Siècle des Lumières qui est, dans toute la force du terme, un phénomène spontané.'[33]

Conclude, mostrandosi d'accordo con il Sorrento, ritenendo che furono le pressioni politiche e militari, anche se dopo un breve periodo di affermazione, a provocare la reazione nazionalistica delle singole nazioni, causando la rovina intellettuale della Francia: 'Dans la mésure où elle s'appuyait sur la préponderance politique et militaire, l'hégémonie cul-

[30] L. REAU – *L'Europe française au siècle des lumières*. Paris, 1938. (Ristampa 1951) p. 1.
[31] REAU, op. cit. p. 3.
[32] ibid. pp. 313-314.
[33] ibid. pp. 314-315.

turelle de la France est entrainée dans ce désastre.'[34]

* * *

I brani che abbiamo riportato più avanti servono a dimostrare che dal punto di vista che ognuno dei critici prende a proposito della semplice enunciazione del tema, e già possibile percepire una gamma di aspetti, argomenti e toni vari. Se si volesse approfondire la sinossi nei particolari, analizzando i volumi consultati in una conveniente sistemazione secondo i campi e gli aspetti culturali manifestatisi con maggior vigore nel Settecento, si otterrebbe una visione più chiara di come appare ai vari critici la posizione dell'Italia nei confronti della Francia illuminista nel quadro europeo. Sarebbe anche possibile trarre una ricostruzione storica del periodo con particolare riferimento agli influssi esercitati, subiti e ricambiati dall'una all'altra cultura nazionale nei vari rami artistici e generi letterari, la quale permetterebbe di porre in confronto le opinioni contrastanti dei critici e i motivi che le ispirano. Il presente studio, però, non ha potuto offrire altro che uno sguardo fuggevole sul tema in modo generico. Data la vastità dell'argomento, ammettiamo che la bibliografia è tutt'altro che completa, anche se abbiamo cercato di non lasciare fuori almeno quei volumi riconosciuti come i più autorevoli. Per concludere il nostro lavoro, allora, riteniamo più utile esaminare le posizioni dei vari critici consultati, tentando di vedere se sia possibile accomunarli in gruppi secondo le affinità o diversità che palesano, e di tracciare infine una linea di svolgimento che può essere indicatrice di tutta una situazione culturale.

Un tentativo di sintesi che tracci un profilo storiografico della critica della prima metà del Novecento deve tener conto di una premessa fondamentale. Si osserva infatti che le opere generali francesi hanno una prospettiva più ampia, perché in esse l'Italia è una sola parte dell'Europa dominata; per conseguenza l'attenzione dell'autore viene necessariamente divisa fra tante sezioni quanto sono le nazioni considerate. Dall'altra parte, i critici italiani si limitano a studiare solo i rapporti fra Italia e Francia. Questo fatto fa nascere l'impressione che i Francesi appaiono più o meno condiscendenti, mentre gl'Italiani sembrano piuttosto polemici. È un atteggiamento, per così dire, condizionato, che ambedue le parti ereditano dalla critica dei due secoli precedenti.

Per facilitare la nostra sintesi riproduciamo la seguente tavola che ci permette di collocare ciascuna opera nel rispettivo decennio del ven-

[34] REAU, op. cit. p. 388.

tesimo secolo, ma che ci dice anche, a prima vista, se l'opera è italiana o francese, e se tratta complessivamente il secolo oppure si limita ad approfondire certi temi singoli.

1917 P. VAN TIEGHEM – *L'Année Littéraire (1754-1790) comme intermédiaire en France des littératures étrangères.*
1920 C. DE LOLLIS – *Saggi di Letteratura francese.*
1924 L. SORRENTO – *Italiani e Spagnuoli contro l'egemonia intellettuale francese nel Settecento.*
1924 U. BENASSI – *Una guerra letteraria italo-francese del secolo XVIII.*
1929 G. NATALI – *Il Settecento.* (5a ediz. 1960).
1934 F. BRUNOT – *Histoire de la Langue française. Tome VIII. Le français hors de France au XVIIIe siècle. Première partie.*
1934 H. BEDARIDA – *L'influence française en Italie au dix-huitième siècle.*
1935 P. HAZARD – *La crise de la conscience Européenne au XVIIIe siècle. Tomes I & II.*
1938 L. REAU – *L'Europe française au siècle des lumières.* (ediz. 1951).
1946 P. HAZARD – *La Pensée Européenne au XVIIIe siècle.*
1947 C. PELLEGRINI – *Tradizione italiana e cultura europea.*
1948 C. PELLEGRINI – *Relazioni tra la letteratura italiana e la letteratura francese.*
1951 A. PORTA – *La Letteratura comparata nella storia e nella critica.*
1954 C. ROSSO – *Moralisti del 'bonheur'.*
1956 L. RANGO – *Prospettive di Letteratura europea.*
1961 B. MIGLIORINI – *Storia della Lingua italiana.*
1961 PH. VAN TIEGHEM – *Les influences étrangères sur la littérature française (1550-1800).*

Dal primo sguardo ci si accorge di tre divisioni, che corrispondono, grosso modo, la prima agli anni venti, la seconda agli anni trenta, la terza all'ultimo dopoguerra. È il caso di ripetere la premessa cautelativa che la nostra lista non pretende di essere esauriente e dunque incontestabile. Comunque, può essere significativa, offrendoci indicazioni abbastanza rappresentative ed attendibili. Ad esempio, la notevole assenza di nomi italiani nella seconda parte, dove brillano invece i nomi più autorevoli della critica francese di letteratura comparata. Nella prima parte vediamo la critica italiana d'ispirazione nazionalistica, specie con Sorrento, Benassi e Natali. Nella terza parte abbondano lavori dedicati a singoli argomenti che non sono del tutto pertinenti al nostro compito. Numerosissimi sono i titoli che troverebbero posto in

questa sezione; ricordiamo infatti quanti abbiamo lasciato fuori, sfogliando le bibliografie, dal momento che a noi interessava soprattutto l'aspetto complessivo delle influenze reciproche e bilaterali. Per questi singoli temi rimandiamo alle bibliografie più aggiornate incluse in appendice ai volumi più autorevoli apparsi recentemente, oppure al grosso annuario della P.M.L.A. statunitense. Non mancano del tutto, comunque, buoni lavori generali, anche se sono di natura necessariamente sintetica, come quelli di Pellegrini, Rango, Migliorini e Philippe van Tieghem.

Considerando ciò che abbiamo riportato da Sorrento, Benassi e Natali, constatiamo subito che lo scopo comune a tutt'e tre fu chiaramente quello di rivendicare i diritti italiani al riconoscimento europeo di un sostanziale contributo alla cultura settecentesca. Essi combattono l'opinione generale nata dalla evidente forza espansiva della cultura francese, nell'ombra della quale s'ignorava l'operosità del genio italiano, che se in realtà poteva non esserle eguale fu certo rappresentata come inferiore a quel che era effettivamente. Il Sorrento accentua la vanità del senso di superiorità dei francesi nel Settecento, indica il debito del movimento francese al Rinascimento italiano, dà rilievo all'estremismo nell'opposizione alla religione, rivela la decadenza che sbocca nella Rivoluzione, e rappresenta la Francia, verso la fine del secolo, sotto l'influsso di un movimento straniero (il Romanticismo). Il Benassi rievoca 'la più notevole guerra letteraria italo-francese' come una nuova conferma 'a parer mio, non poco persuasiva, di quella verità che è di tanto interesse per la nostra storia letteraria e politica', volendo attestare nel secolo XVIII, 'pur nella sua seconda metà e all'infuori dell'Alfieri e prima della Rivoluzione, la persistenza ininterrotta del sentimento patriottico italiano.'[35] Il Natali si sofferma su tutte le iniziative italiane, mettendo in rilievo il valore di quelle che si manifestano ancora in germe per fiorire dopo nel tempo, e accentua sempre, con minuziosa attenzione, le origini italiane di rielaborazioni francesi reimportate come novità assoluta in Italia (il femminismo, i salotti, il giansenismo, la commedia borghese, la tragedia, la filosofia moderna, ecc.). Inoltre egli segnala scrupolosamente la continuità della tradizione italiana o latina, come fa, ad esempio, per gli epigoni di Galileo e per la satira. I contributi di Sorrento, Benassi e Natali sono intesi principalmente a ribadire che anche in questo secolo il genio italiano non dormiva.

Dal canto loro, i comparatisti francesi degli anni trenta insistono

[35] BENASSI, op. cit. pp. 54-55.

decisamente nel professare la propria obiettività, la loro libertà da pregiudizi nazionalistici. Il Brunot propone che bisogna prendere 'non pas le ton de l'extase sentimentale, mais celui de l'histoire critique'.[36] E in effetti troviamo che egli mantiene il suo proposito, perché non esita a segnalare i limiti della diffusione della lingua francese, e riconosce le manifestazioni artistiche della reazione italiana. Si può notare, comunque, un po' di emozione quando considera le accuse 'non seulement méticuleuses mais partiales'[37] rivolte alla lingua francese, e il misogallismo di un Maffei, il *Raguet* del quale gli pare 'insipide', e 'enfin et surtout Alfieri, qui n'arriva à aimer l'Italie qu'en se dégoûtant successivement des autres nations'.[38] E piuttosto discutibile, invece, la piena oggettività di un giudizio che ritiene il Goldoni, il Metastasio, il Maffei, l'Alfieri e il Parini 'plus ou moins disciples de nos grands auteurs', e che poi afferma che 'on n'exagère pas beaucoup en disant que l'Italie est alors intellectuellement une sorte de prolongement de la France'.

Henri Bédarida procede con equanimità anche quando passa in rassegna i pareri della critica italiana antecedente al 1934 sul tema dei rapporti italo-francesi del Settecento, e altrettanto giusta ci pare la sua conclusione che l'influenza francese in Italia non è passiva perché 'aboutit à un regain de force'.[39] Nella presentazione al volume di Louis Réau, Henri Bon dichiara che 'le présent volume, comme tous ceux de *l'Evolution de l'Humanité*, rélève d'une histoire conçue comme science, et l'objectivité y veut être absolue'.[40] E lo stesso Réau afferma che studierà anche il fermento di simpatie e antipatie nazionalistiche del secolo 'avec le même souci d'objectivité, en nous appuyant sur de multiples témoignages recueillis dans les deux camps, d'où le lecteur pourra tirer aisément les conclusions, sans qu'il soit nécéssaire de les souligner'.[41] Tuttavia un linguaggio più emotivo si riscontra, anche qui, dove parla del *misogallismo* dell'Alfieri, 'dont la prose est comme un vin mousseux qui aurait tourné en vinaigre'. Poi, quando aggiunge che 'toutefois quand on lit les mémoires de ce farouche ennemi de la langue française, on se demande jusqu'à quel point il est sincère, tant il a été marqué dans sa jeunesse par l'empreinte de cette France abhorée', non si sa bene se dubiti della sincerità dell'Alfieri oppure voglia essere

[36] BRUNOT, op. cit., *Avertissement*, p. vii.
[37] ibid. p. 126.
[38] ibid. p. 137.
[39] BEDARIDA-HAZARD, op. cit. p. 121.
[40] REAU, op. cit., *Avant-propos*, p. V.
[41] REAU, op. cit. p. 33.

ironico. Comunque, nella pagina seguente, egli rivela come controfigura ideale il Cesarotti, ammirando il modo in cui questi riuscí, nel *Saggio sulla filosofia delle lingue*, a trovare 'un libéralisme linguistique qui écarte à la fois les abus du francesismo et le rigorisme intolérant des puristes chauvins'.[42]

Il lavoro monumentale di Paul Hazard, caratterizzato dal tono entusiastico che egli pone nel ricostruire l'ambiente culturale europeo dal 1680 alla fine del '700, è di un'ampiezza e di una profondità che sono state universalmente riconosciute come il frutto più equilibrato che la storiografia francese abbia saputo produrre in materia.

A questo punto siamo costretti a riconoscere che il nodo della questione si scoglie qui, cioè nella contrapposizione dei critici italiani degli anni venti a quelli francesi degli anni trenta. Nel periodo post-bellico, infatti, sembra diminuito l'interesse per ogni sorta di polemica di timbro nazionalistico. Negli anni cinquanta e sessanta è cospicua l'inferiorità numerica di lavori che si occupano di rapporti internazionali in modo complessivo. Abbiamo consultato con profitto le opere sintetiche di Carlo Pellegrini, Luigi Rango, Bruno Migliorini e Philippe van Tieghem, e abbiamo trovato che essi additano gl'influssi esercitati o subiti reciprocamente da Italia e Francia con la massima disinvoltura. Si destreggiano fra questi rapporti evitando ogni sorta di allusione preconcetta. Lo stesso si può dire della moltitudine di lavori che si concentrano su singoli aspetti, anche nel campo della letteratura comparata, senza preoccupazioni di orgoglio nazionale. Per conseguenza si può affermare che l'era della critica nazionalistica è ormai superata, e ci si ricorda del vecchio sogno del Brunetière, precocemente annunziato nell'orazione inaugurale del congresso della 'Histoire Comparée' svoltosi in seno all'Esposizione Internazionale di Parigi nel 1900. Il celebre comparatista sottolineò la necessità di indagare le grandi correnti letterarie comuni all'Europa, dimostrò le insufficienze e la fallacia dello studio letterario limitato da concezioni nazionali, e specialmente volle, mediante questa fraternità spirituale ed artistica preparare le vie a più alte comprensioni e collaborazioni internazionali. Presentemente questa concezione che apparve utopistica, superati i duri colpi inflitti dai totalitarismi politici ed anche da opposizioni estetiche, come il noto atteggiamento del Croce, sembra finalmente realizzarsi, sicché è lecito concludere con A. Porta, con riferimento al quadro politico di oggi, che 'la letteratura fu tra le maggiori forze creatici dell'Europa.'[43]

[42] ibid. p. 34.

[43] PORTA, op. cit. p. 58.

COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION

By C.H.R. HANSEN

OLD IDEA:

BEFORE commenting at any length upon the practicality of Comprehensive Education, I feel that a brief recapitulation of the Educational scene before and immediately after the last war would perhaps be helpful.

At the outbreak of war, public education in England had a clear tripartite organisation: Infants, Elementary and Secondary. From the first to the second there was automatic transfer, but parents had a reasonably free choice as between one elementary school and another in their neighbourhood. Entry into the third form of education, however, depended upon what was known as 'The Scholarship Examination'. If a child were successful, the parents were given a short list of secondary schools serving their area, and they were free to state their preference, though this did not necessarily ensure entry to a particular school. That depended on the number of applications as against the number of places available. Hence some secondary schools were able further to select their entrants. This happened at the tender age of eleven years.

But already the process of selection had been, in some cases, started at the age of seven, when, because an elementary school had acquired a reputation for good scholarship results, or go-ahead methods, it became sufficiently popular to need a waiting-list of names of children whose parents sought entry to the elementary school for their children, as soon as they entered the infants' school. In fact, in London, provision was made officially for this in the Admission Register of the Elementary Schools.

Those children who did not succeed in gaining entry to a secondary school remained in their elementary school until the age of fourteen. In some Authorities, however, there were what were called Higher-Top Schools where children remained until they were fifteen or sixteen.

In London, on the other hand, there were two further avenues of more advanced education, to wit the Central Schools and the Trade Schools. This, indeed, applied to certain other Authorities; but London was the pioneer of the Central Schools. The means of entry to these last two types of school was different. To the Central School, the child could go at eleven, as second best to the secondary school. This often resulted in a Central School acquiring such a reputation that it could attract most of the 'near-misses' from the local secondary field, and so produce public results examination of a high order. The writer knew one, for instance, which

included Latin, French and Spanish in its curriculum. The second avenue, other than a Secondary School, the Trade School recruited its entry at the age of thirteen, by what was known as a Trade Scholarship, and offered a three years' vocational course in, for example, building, or engineering or garment-making, or instrument-making etcetera. The aim of these courses was apprenticeship into Industry at the age of sixteen, as opposed to the Central Schools whose products tended to go into Commerce or the lower ranks of the Civil Service.

This, then, was the general pattern at the outbreak of World War Two.

But for years there had been developing plans for modifying this system, plans which were postponed until the end of the war. The 1944 Act, however, advertised the shape of things to come. So, with the creation of two forms of education, Primary and Secondary, and with the break remaining at eleven, the sub-divisions of 'Modern' and 'Grammar' were created to distinguish between the old Elementary and Secondary. In those Authorities which had developed Central and Trade Schools, the Trade School was re-named Technical, and the term Central disappeared, though such schools retained their reputation in their neighbourhood while bearing the title 'Modern', a name which early began to fall into desuetude.

This dichotomy of Secondary education led in many cases to the unfortunate situation where Modern schools copied the grammar schools' type of organisation; that is to say that a child entering a Modern school was allocated to a form, IA or IE as the case might be according to the marks he had obtained in the general examination for transfer from the Primary schools, an examination known as 'the eleven-plus'. These poor creatures were subjected to a full specialisation system, which of course, produced negligible results; added to this was the impact of acute teacher-shortage, which led to the most extraordinary positions; and for little people whose I.Q.s spread from barely 100 down to 70, the whirligig of being subjected to having their lessons from a series of untrained and unskilled teachers resulted in disaster. The writer recalls an instance where really backward pupils followed a time-table something like this:

Period 1: English – from a really broad Scotsman.

Period 2: Science – from a Pakistani, who did try, but had not the faintest notion how to make contact with the children.

Period 3: History – from a Viennese who taught English History after the school of prewar Vienna on the Danube. Again a hard-worker, but backward boys had some difficulty in reading notes written on the blackboard in German script.

Period 4: Religious Knowledge – from a Chinese, who was sincere enough, but in talk almost incomprehensible.

Period 5: Mathematics – from an Indian gentleman, whose idiom in English was, to say the least, quaint.

Add to all this a 'resting' actor or two, an out-of-work television cameraman, an Arab whose main qualification to teach English was a translation of the Koran, and an assortment of people who thought that to teach meant standing, or preferably sitting, before a group of children, and doing very little else.

Small wonder that later some schools were faced with delinquency and misbehaviour.

Side by side with this sad development from the 1944 Act was the steady working out by the then London County Council of their London Plan which envisaged over the years the creation of large 'neighbourhood' schools by amalgamating existing smaller secondary schools. The development of this imaginative conception had had to be modified from time to time by restrictions imposed as a result of British financial crises. Nevertheless, in spite of financial stringencies, great schools like Kidbrooke, Mayfield, Holland Park, all with *ad hoc* buildings, have come into being, and ranging in size from 1,000 to 2,000 pupils. And these great schools, by their enterprise, vision and energy have conferred upon the term 'Comprehensive' a dignity and prestige which will permanently endure in Education in England.

NEW CONCEPTS:

As experience grew, it became clear to many people that the old system of specialisation after the pattern of the Grammar School was completely ineffective for backward children; and in this connection let it be said, except where the large schools, as they were called, had a substantial 'grammar' stream, or had incorporated a well-established grammar school, the number of backward children tended to predominate.

In theory the Comprehensive, or Large School, was by regulation obliged to admit as nearly as possible an equal number of pupils from each of the five grades of ability from the top 20% to the bottom 20% of mental ability among the population. In some areas this worked well; in others there were no top 20% and no second 20%.

London broke down its child population into seven ability groups, not five, in order to try to get a more balanced spread; but the writer knew of one large school of 1,250 boys and girls, where in one year the poor Head was faced with an entry of 60% from grade 7! What sense does 'streaming' make in a situation like that? What use would specialisation be to those children? Even the rest of the entry did not rise above low average intelligence. This school was of course, in a particularly difficult neighbourhood, where problems of immigration were added to those of the general

depression of the district. On the other hand, and in another area quite close to the above school, yet an area also beset with dire social problems, two well-known schools were to be united; one an old-established grammar school, called secondary before 1944, and the other, a Central School with a high reputation for the last sixty years. This latter had diversified its curriculum after 1944 and had included some technical work. The combination of these two well-established and high-standard schools should make the heart of the new Headmaster rejoice. Even so, the new school will technically be obliged to recruit a 'balanced' intake; but the demand will be so great from the better quality that the lowest category of ability will no doubt be represented by its minimum possible number. In theory, the absorption of the grammar school into the Comprehensives should mean, because of the condition of balanced intake, that there should be a release of a number of more able pupils to be absorbed by the other large schools of the neighbourhood, whose lumps will thereby be leavened. Here again, however, a problem will be created in that the more able will be hopelessly outnumbered by the backward; and the Heads will have the almost hopeless task of finding adequate staff for a minority of able children, whose distant future might well be adversely affected.

In this matter, we are brought up against one of the serious difficulties of Comprehensive education. With the operation of the regulation that schools must, as far as possible, recruit a balanced intake of ability range, very popular schools have to face the odium of rejecting able pupils, purely on numbers. This can cause serious nervous reactions in some cases both in pupils and parents, and may even affect the relations between a primary school Head and the large school Head. Always, however, the parent has the right of choice, and can, if he or she is sufficiently determined, insist on the child's going to the school of the parents' first choice Naturally, such a situation can cause a great deal of embarrassment all round; but the writer has had experience of parents exercising this right both to his advantage and disadvantage!

One of the problems which has come to be clearly recognised is that of the young child of eleven who has come from the intimate and very personal atmosphere of a small primary school, and finds himself suddenly in a huge, strange world of violent giants. If, in addition, he is suddenly subjected to a kaleidoscopic changing of teachers at the end of every period, and has to move along long and unfamiliar corridors, with streams of large children, all apparently knowing what to do and where to go, he may tend to lose all his self-confidence and courage, and often fails to benefit from the stimulus of his new environment.

Modern thought, therefore, in secondary education leans strongly to the abolition of specialisation in the first year, and rather to the creation of

groups such as the child had in his primary school, where there was frequently a wide range of ability within the class of which he was a member. If this situation can approximately be reproduced in the secondary school, the child benefits from the increased sense of security in that he feels he has a familiar person, in the leader of the group, who will, in general, always be in the same place and who has a personal and steady interest in him. As it was attempted in the writer's school the first year tutor groups were larger than the normal form of thirty, and this gave more flexibility of teaching staff.

Since the groups were of mixed ability, those in the highest or next to highest ability grade hived off to academic lessons with specialists timetabled for the work. The bottom ability grades viz. 6 and 7 stayed with their tutor, or leader, whose business it was to see that, with as varied a scheme as could be devised, he or she worked to improve the reading ability upon which all else in education hangs. Here, of course, the Head of the Remedial Department gave constant and detailed help. The middle or average grades also moved out to lessons with other teachers, but here the work had no special examination aim, and the children were encouraged to do as much individual work as they were capable of. When all were together for certain periods of the day, the tutor's duty was to assist the children from the specialist classes with their work, or to conduct certain group activities, or to continue coaching the backward children as might be most expedient.

From this system flowed certain clear advantages: first, the backward pupils had an anchor and a steady firm environment; secondly the bright ones had the stimulation of varied environment; thirdly, most of the group frequently met members of the school outside their own group, and this tended to give a stronger sense of 'belonging'; fourthly, the less able were stimulated by having the brighter ones doing their work around them; and lastly all had a 'father' or 'mother' figure in their tutor.

With the advent of the large schools, this need for the smooth absorption of the youngest children is more and more coming to be recognised.

POEMS

By J. AQUILINA

ON THE NEW MIDI-MAXI LOOK

The fashion designers have decreed
That the skirts of the women of every nation
Shall be longer by twelve inches or more
(not morality but greed
Dictated this more expensive creation).

So mini-skirts are out:
No more free shows of beautiful thighs.
Disappointed Don Juans fill the air with angry sighs.

10.ix.70 – Paris – Boulevard Raspail

UNHAPPINESS

Bored by the sight of sprawling crowds of men
In noisy cities where cars suffocate
The breathing of free movement, ruthless fate,
Rushing about like werewolves from a den,
I fled the city to find peace, but then
I felt so sad I thought I should await
Till He returned from His divine estate
To bless the city knowing not how and when.

It was a long, long wait in the drugged cities –
Paris and London, Moscow – everywhere
He is despised, black-listed and unwanted:
Yet they are all contented – A thousand pities!
Where He is not, the Demon of despair
Prompts Crime except where Faith survives undaunted.

11.ix.70 – Paris – Boulevard Raspail

Roses

(To Madame M. Galley who on my visit with my wife to Paris sent a bouquet of Roses to our room No. 207 in Hotel Cayré Boulevard Raspain)

What better greeting than a bunch of roses
To bid us welcome to your country, France?
A rose is joy as it opens and closes
In its full fragrance – long, ecstatic trance.

We pray your life be happy like a rose,
As sweet and unperturbed in its fixed stance.
We are all like roses that open and close
In one brief Season under the Gardener's glance.

Fresh roses cheer the tired, world-weary eyes
Reviving garden sites and flowery banks,
A Rose in its own fragrance lives and dies:
For your sweet thought, my wife and I give thanks.

16.ix.70 – Paris

On My Way To Vienna (AZ 256)

The visible perpendicular distance between Earth and Heaven
That cuts us off up here beyond the flight of birds
Is removed and joined by the wings that the mind has given
To Man, the adventurer, looking for new worlds.

But the invisible distance between God and Mankind
Beyond where birds tire of flying, beyond the fastest 'plane,
Baffles us, dazzling our eyes, leaving us blind
Till it drowns and carries us away like cyclonic rain.

But as Time and the Sun, life-givers, return after the deluge,
And of the wreckage that was leave not a scar or trace.
So God coming forward to meet us up here, offers us refuge
Within the shelter of His Arms hugged by His Love and Grace.

17.xi.70 – Park Hotel – Baden-bei-Wien

Over The Alps

The snow-flaked, white-topped Alps,
Under the farthest blue light sky
Breathe and heave with streams of sunlight
Pouring down
Rhythmically
Like the psalm
Of the Universe
On an altar blaze of worship
In late November –
A long procession of white-cowled friars
Absorbed in the contemplation
Of God and the valleys round His House
The benediction of mystic altitude
Uninterrupted,
Clean, unpolluted and undisturbed
By the traffic of man,
Just the zoom of an aeroplane here and there.
Listen! No tramping of human feet,
Only the wind, the Breath of the Paraclete.
Listen again!
I hear a voice crying inside me:
'What is that?
A shadow
Moving across the Alps?
Does anybody know?'
Does anybody listen?
They shout (the loud voices inside me, unheard);
Halt!
Who goes there, white-footed ghost,
Flitting across the Alps?
And a voice, another voice!
(Within me? Outside me? I do not know)
Replies: This is the Shadow of God
Walking invisible in ecstatic silence
Contemplating His own masterpiece
The tremendous Alps –
His own glacier domain
Far from the palaces of government
The intrigues of their courts,

And the cities of man.
The eyes follow the Shadow,
The Cosmic Soul
Of the mountains and valleys
Throbbing with ebullient vitality –
Creator of mountains and valleys.
The white-capped Alps
And of all things visible and invisible
Beyond Matter and Spirit,
Beyond Time and Mind,
Beyond Life and Death,
Moving steadily on
Wrapt in His invisible essence
Towards His Own
Absolute Self.

17.xi.70 – Baden Bei Wien

PARIS

This is the city that was built by Kings,
Louis Quatorze, and others older still,
Great Saint Louis whose name time cannot kill
Though Time and Tide obliterate many things.

The Age of Faith made Paris. Time still rings
With chants in Sainte Chapelle, with prayers that fill
The Gothic arches of Notre Dame until
The mocking mob its Reign of Terror brings.

Ten days in Paris, a visit to Versailles
And Chartres Cathedral with its famous glass
La Conciergerie and *Malmaison*, have left in me
Together with rose gardens in French style,
The image of a people proud and free:
Palaces, boulevards, tall trees and grass.

19.ix.70 – Paris

WOMEN

God made beautiful women for our admiration,
Or would the Preacher say for our edification?
Whatever His purpose (a matter of theological speculation)
If we just stop at that, and cool off temptation,
We shall win the hard prize of etemal salvation.

19.xi.70 – Baden-bei-Wien

NIRVANA

Man's heart exhausts itself by its Desire.
We spend our short life wishing this and that;
Which, once attained, we soon think dull or flat,
Not the same thing, more like painted fire
Lacking the flame that burns until we tire
Only to change the wish – Desire, a cat
For ever hungry chasing a lean rat,
A lizard scurrying up and down a spire.

Here at Baden-bei-Wien, in my warm room
I fancy my NIRVANA, the final act
Of all those chasings that torment the mind.
Our lives are thin threads woven on the Loom
Of Time – the Cloth true stuff or artefact?
Fear not the Sphynx. Move on! Look not behind!

20.xi.70 – Baden-bei-Wien

AT A V.C.'S COCKTAIL PARTY

The V.C.'s of Europe at a Cocktail Party,
Forgetting their worries (staunch pillars of learning!)
Found the time to relax, sipping orange juice
And, chuckling, forgot that their houses were burning.

20.xi.70 – Park Hotel – Baden-bei-Wien

AGE

Life is young
Full of song and fun;
Age creeps in unbidden
And crawls out unsung.

20.xi.70 – Park Hotel – Baden-bei-Wien

YOUTH

Youth has the warmth,
The frolic and fun
Of a woman in love
Burning with the *joie de vivre*
Of the Mediterranean sun.

20.xi.70 – Park Hotel – Baden-bei-Wien

EUREKA

(*Portuguese version by Dr. Jonas Negalha*)

– O que é a Verdade? – perguntou Pôncio Pilatos
ha quase dois mil anos.
Eis a pergunta com uma resposta:
– Pôncio Pilatos, não sabemos!
– Pode ela fazer sofrer a Consciência?
E êle lavou as mãos trêmulas.
Ninguém respondeu até Freud dizer:
– Verdade e Consciência ... são apenas glândulas.
Não ha mais Verdade nem Crime,
eis a Eureka do nosso tempo.

EUREKA

(*Spanish version by Dr. Jonas Negalha*)

– ¿Que cosa es la Verdad? – indagó
Poncio Pilatos hace casi dos mil años.
Eis aquí una pregunta con una contestación:
– ¡Poncio Pilatos, nosotros non sabemos!
– ¿Puede ella hacer sufrir la Consciencia? –
Y él lavó sus manos trémulas.
Nadie contestó eso hasta Freud decirnos:
– La Verdad y la Consciencia non son más que glandulas.
Eis aquí la Eureka de nuestro tiempo,
non hay más Verdad, non hay más crime.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE GERMAN STUDENTS

By HELMUT VIEBROCK

'TELL me how you deal with Shakespeare and I tell you who you are'.

THIS maxim which is a variation of the well-known saying 'Tell me with whom you converse and I shall tell you who you are', is calculated to stress the curious nature of a great work of art, particularly so, I feel, of Shakespeare's great dramatic work, in that it threatens to unmask the critic's prejudices, and to detect his shortcomings and limitations, by confronting him with his own interpretation, or, to put it metaphorically 'to hoist the Shakespearian enginer with his own critical petard'.

Why this should be so – if you agree that it *is* so – it is difficult to say. One is tempted to attribute it to the very same quality of dramatic poetry that made Shakespeare the playwright induce Hamlet his persona to explain to the players his instruments 'the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.' Now, a mirror is in itself a solid object, and yet it reflects, more or less faithfully other objects. Surely, Shakespeare's work is not a mere reflection of the world, but an interpretation of it; however, not in analytic terms, but in great synthetic figures and configurations. 'Shakespeare' – according to the German dramatist Friedrich Hebbel – 'is the world all over again'. (Shakespeare ist die Welt noch einmal').

Now, if this dramatic art has, more than other works, the quality of unmasking the critic, there must be in it some ultimate resistance to willful interpretation, some hard core, not just of meaning, but of testing meaning.

There is, on the one hand, transparency and lucidity, structural, textural, admitting the probing gaze into the very depth of its fabric; there is, on the other hand, concreteness, poetic opacity, – metaphorical, symbolical, preventing the searching eye from looking into the white truth which can only be looked at when veiled, as the sun can only be looked at through clouds. And as for the critic, he appears like a man who wants to look through a window-pane into a room and sees his own image reflected by the self-same glass the transparency of which admits his gaze.

There is, in Shakespeare, a rare, a unique mixture of transparency and opacity, the one being the condition of the other, and, both being the condition of whatever insight may be gained through it. The insight we gain is partly insight into our own minds, and it is now, by reversal of the maxim, true to say: 'Know yourself – nosce te ipsum – by trying to understand Shakespeare.'.

The hard core that resists any willful or arbitrary interpretation and unmasks him who attempts it, is simply: *the truth*. Obviously 'truth' is no object, no sack of gold hidden in the caves of Shakespeare's art, but the precious quality of the ever-renewed currency of the communication between that great work of art and a critically appreciative mind. There is one axiom that I would like to lay down, because it has proved a touchstone in my discussions with German students: namely that though a work of art, like a play of Shakespeare's, is a product of history, it also transcends its historical condition or 'matrix', and can only be fully understood if it is experienced again and again, as *immediately* as possible, irrespective of the fact that the reader's or the listener's position, or point-of-view, too, is historically determined, and that as a critic the reader and listener will have to bring all his critical powers to bear on his own experience. But it is the experience that has priority, for no critical reflection, be it ever so astute, can replace the full impact of experience. And it is never a detached object, a mere text, that the Shakespearean critic, as indeed any critic of poetry, criticises, but the whole play, as it is re-created and experienced by sensitive readers or appreciative listeners.

If these readers or listeners are German students, the enquiry into their attitude towards Shakespeare is equal to an attempt to describe their attitude towards imaginative literature in general and towards Shakespeare's dramatic poetry in particular. This involves us in a complex task, as it means criticising both the students and their object, Shakespeare. If I attempt, in what follows, to describe my own experience with German students confronted with Shakespeare, I offer myself, together with them, as an object of their criticism to you, and it will be up to you to draw conclusions as to whether there is anything particularly 'German' in their – or our – attitude.

You may have tacitly assumed, now, that I would talk about contemporary German students. I shall. I am committed to do so by the plural 'students' of the title of my talk. But when it occured to me that you would expect this, ladies and gentlemen, I wondered whether I should not play you a little trick, innocently pretending that what I had had in mind

were German students at different stages of the past up to the present. In fact, I came to the conclusion that before talking about the present-day attitude of students in Germany towards Shakespeare, it would be almost necessary to open up an historical perspective, in order to assess the possible reasons for both a certain contemporary peculiarity and a certain national quality of that world-wide phenomenon: the reception of Shakespeare at different times and in different countries.

Having decided, then, on a quick retrospect, I began to think about a German post-graduate student at Strasbourg, which is now in France, who, having recently been introduced by a slightly older theologian, mad about folk-poetry, became a most fervent admirer and propagator of Shakespeare in Germany. I am, of course, referring to Johann Wolfgang Goethe, allegedly the greatest German poet. Young Goethe, in concord with other young enthusiasts, and acting under the determining forces of his time and his personality, helped to marshal the way that the young German intelligentsia were to go in the years before the French Revolution, in what we call the period of 'Storm and Stress'.

In the evening of October 14th 1771, young Wolfgang Goethe, a handsome, high-spirited young man of 22, made a speech in honour of Shakespeare at his parents' home in Frankfurt on the Main, the place where I come from. The house is still there, or rather, it is there again, for it was completely destroyed at the end of the last war; but it was rebuilt and refurnished so exactly and so carefully that one seems to breathe the very air of a spacious baroque residence of a well-to-do upper middle-class family in the once prosperous free Imperial city of Frankfurt in the latter half of the 18th century. Goethe's short and fiery address to the party is a flourish, a fanfare, indicating that a great change has come about in Germany. Little is said in that speech about the Elizabethan age, or about Shakespeare the playwright, or the touring theatre-companies that had made the German public acquainted with more or less mutilated versions of Shakespearian plays; but much is said about a new evaluation of man, of nature, of society, in Germany, on the eve of a new era. With iconoclastic fervour, and a good deal of spirited arrogance, the young poet sets about to demolish aesthetic and moral conventions. Instead of a rational, enlightened, and optimistic concept of life, he serenely proposes a new tragic view and a Promethean, tragic vision of human existence, in a world when the great passionate individual soul has to endure the rage of fate.

Of Shakespeare's plays, young Wolfgang says this: 'His plots, to speak according to common usage, are not really plots, but his plays all turn

around the secret point (pivot), which no philosopher has as yet seen and determined, in which the peculiar quality of our self, the pretended freedom of our will, collides with the necessary course of the whole'. ('Seine Plâne sind nach dem gemeinen Stil zu reden, keine Plâne, aber seine Stücke drehen sich alle um den geheimen Punkt, den noch kein Philosoph gesehen oder bestimmt hat, in dem das Eigentümliche unseres Ichs, die prâtendierte Freiheit unseres Wollens, mit dem notwendigen Gang des Ganzen zusammenstö ßt.').

This bold analysis is certainly still Aristotelian, but it also reveals a new experience: the experience that through the discovery of Shakespeare, as Goethe puts it, he had recognised, he had felt, 'in the most lively manner, his existence to have been enlarged by an infinitude.' And when he bursts out rhapsodically: 'And I cry Nature! Nature! nothing has so much nature as Shakespeare's characters!' The magic word 'nature' is not now Rousseau's antidote to corrupt and corrupting civilization, but his own intuition of a living force, or active principle, that has all the explosive force of the Promethean fire. It is the confirmation of Goethe's change from Protestant pietism to a new stoic philosophy of self-reliance. It is also his breaking with 18th century bourgeois society in the name of nature; and Shakespeare was Goethe's 'presider' in this crisis. This attitude was *not* to last. But, in 1771, Goethe is the German graduate-student of the 'Storm and Stress' period, though, indeed, *un*representative in that he was the son of a well-to-do family, in a rich city, sheltered, at least socially and economically, from 'Storm and Stress'.

Twenty years later, on the 19th of June 1793, another German student, in Leipzig, which is now in Eastern Germany, a representative of the older generation of Romanic poets, Friedrich Schlegel, a student of languages and law, is writing to his beloved brother August Wilhelm about Shakespeare. He describes his emotions roused by reading *Hamlet*, who was to become the very epitome and symbol of the generation of the Romantics. He writes: 'The subject and the effect of this play is heroic despair, i.e. an infinite disintegration of the very highest powers. The reason of this inner death lies in the magnitude of his understanding (mind). Were he less great, he would be a hero. – It is not worth his while to be a hero; if he wanted to, it would be for him but an easy game. He surveys a countless amount of circumstances – hence his indecision. – If, however, one asks after truth in this manner, nature turns mute; and to such impulses, to so severe a searching, the world is naught, for our frail existence cannot create anything that would fulfil our immortal longings. The inmost core of his being is horrible nothingness (empti-

ness?), scorn of the world and of his own self.'

Friedrich Schlegel was the younger brother of August Wilhelm Schlegel, the famous translator of Shakespeare, together with Ludwig Tiek. It is the fate of Shakespeare's fame in Germany that the 'classic' translation for more than one century to come was to be made a Romantic poet. This is the reason why Shakespeare, whom the Germans also consider *their* poet, became known, not in his Elizabethan vigour and colourfulness, but in a slightly more sentimental and softer fashion.

It was August Wilhelm Schlegel whose 'Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature 'Coleridge found so congenial to his own ideas that with regard to Shakespeare criticism one may almost substitute the one for the other. When on May 10th, 1792, August Wilhelm Schlegel, the student, writes to his friend Tieck: '... I have perused *The Winter's Tale* still several times, and discovered many beautiful things in it; but I get more and more angry with the arrogant commentators who are as blind as moles, with their thoughtless parrotry ... that Shakespeare is a genius, but one lacking judgement ...', we think we hear Coleridge's voice in his chapter on 'Shakespeare's Judgement equal to his Genius.'

One may perhaps go so far as to say that Coleridge displays what he charges the Germans with: an excessiveness, a 'nimeity' or 'too-much-ness', at least in his passion for speculation and the planning and devising of systems. It is perhaps well to remark already now that the present-day attitude of the young German intelligentsia disproves the notion of a perennial national character: for emotional excess seems to have turned into strong rational restraint and profound scepticism that is suspicious of any unreflected emotion, as of any irrational behaviour, has replaced the former mystic or metaphysical bent of mind.

There can be no doubt that Shakespearean studies in Germany and an unflagging interest for Shakespeare on the German stage, received their strongest impact from these bright boys – and bright girls, like Dorothea Tieck, too – in the Pre-Romantic and Romantic days. And there can be no doubt that Coleridge carried this infectious Shakespeare enthusiasm, transformed into theoretical and speculative criticism, from Germany back to England when he returned from the Continent in 1799.

For the German students of Shakespeare, there were, in those days of classic and romantic idealism, two Shakespearian characters above all others that held them spell-bound: Hamlet and Romeo. But above all Hamlet. It is curious to reflect that Hamlet, perhaps the greatest individual dramatic character of the English Stage, should have become *one* of the great symbolic figures for the German mind, along with the other,

much more self-assertive and wordly one: Goethe's Faust. Hamlet has, next to the everlasting Faust, always had a peculiar fascination for the German mind, possible because Hamlet's conflict between thought and action has always been taken by Germans to symbolize Germany's historical dilemma as a frustrated nation. When a Swiss critic, Walter Muschg, 1964, gave an address to the Shakespeare Society with the title 'Germany is Hamlet', he was referring to this tendency to consider Shakespeare's tragedy of the mind an allegory of Germany's national fate.

Now, 'the national character' is largely a fictitious, and hardly a verifiable thing that can be proved scientifically. But in spite of all due cautionings, it has a way of asserting itself, especially when it can be described in terms of recurrent attitudes in the course of ever-changing history.

With regard to Germany and the history of the German nation, one of the most reliable historians, in my and many people's opinions, Golo Mann, a son of Thomas Mann's, the novelist's, has tried to grasp the peculiar character of the history of the German nation in the past. In his book on German history of the 19th and 20th centuries he says: 'He who becomes absorbed in the history of the German nation, easily gets the impression of an unquiet life in extremes at some time; idea and reality stand wide apart, as during the time of the medieval empire, when the German Kings and Roman emperors, as they called themselves, fought for a phantastic empire, far exceeding the boundaries of the language, whilst Germany itself disintegrated into an infinite number of small territories. At some time we see the nation raging against herself, celebrating a long orgy of self-destruction, as at the time of the 30 Years' War (1618-48). At some other time, German characters attain to the greatest hights which men have ever touched, whilst at the same time dim mediocrity determines the general public tone. From a political quietness Germany turns to an excited political activity, from colourful variety to radical uniformity; she rises from impotence to aggresive power, relapses into ruin, works herself back again with incredible quickness to new hectic prosperity.' The gist of this analysis is, with regard to the turn of the 18th to the 19th century, when Shakespeare became popular, that it was a time of great spirits in a world of dim mediocrity and political powerlessness, a time when poetic genius and political power were at the farthest imaginable distance from one another. For this period, Hamlet might indeed be adopted as the fit national symbol.

The curious thing, however, is, that in the German version of *Hamlet*, as it was produced in 1776 in Hamburg, Hamlet did not die in the end,

but – as in the old Teutonic saga of Saxo Grammaticus – ascended the throne, a feat that, more surprisingly, heightened the play's success with the German youth: 'The fact that this melancholy dreamer and misanthrope eventually obtained the crown, made him the idol of an agitated youth torn between sentimental 'Weltschmerz' (melancholy) and aimless activism.' (Muschg, Germany is Hamlet.Sh.Jb. 1965, p. 35). Goethe repeats in his great autobiography *Fiction and Reality* (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*): 'Hamlet and his soliloquies remained phantoms haunting all young people's minds.' And a poor Swiss cloth-weaver and writer, Ulrich Bräker, apostrophises Hamlet with the words: 'You have not yet uttered anything German, but I guess your meaning, perhaps you were not able to explain yourself more clearly.' One might almost gauge from these words that he thought if Hamlet could only have had the German language at his disposal, he might have expressed himself more clearly, thus averting T.S. Eliot's verdict and many a clever conjecture. I am afraid Bräker thought too highly of the German language. One thing, however, is certain: Hamlet's character has undergone a change with the translation, and this change is due to the peculiar structure of the German language, or, for that matter of the English language. This becomes obvious when investigating the syntax of the famous soliloquy 'To be or not to be' (which I figured out is in Maltese Tkun jew Matkunx). I would ask permission, ladies ang gentlemen, to quote a part of it, because it bears directly on my subject:

> To be, or not to be – that is the question;
> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
> And by opposing end them? To die, to sleep –
> No more; and by a sleep to say we end
> The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
> That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
> Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
> To sleep, perchance to dream. At, there's the rub; ...

Have you noticed that this passage contains twelve infinitives with the preposition 'to'? I do not know whether an Englishman is aware of the strong teleological tendency of this preposition 'to': suggesting a trend, a purpose, a directedness of action towards a goal. Compared with this purposive and dynamic infinitive, or verbal noun, the German infinitive 'sein' or 'Nichtsein' is static, meditative, metaphysical. The accumulation

of twelve static infinitives instead of dynamic ones in the German translation makes for a marked transformation of an impetuous, though speculative speech and character to a less active and more contemplative one. In other words: much of Hamlet's transformation into the dreamer is due to German Grammar. If today, German producers engage translators to make new translations, one of the reasons is to get away from the oppressive tradition of a romanticised Shakespeare.

Let us continue and conclude our historical survey: Since the time of the Congress of Vienna in 1815, where, after Napoleon's defeat, restorative political decisions vanquished hopes of democratic progress, the feeling that Germany's history was fatally doomed began to spread. Those who saw in romantic enthusiasm and emotional idealism a danger for Germany, discovered ambiguous traits in Hamlet. This turning of the tide came to a peak when on the eve of the July Revolution of 1830 in Paris, a young German poet, Ludwig Böme, a republican, dismissed Hamlet as a self-centred egotist unfit for political action. Hamlet, he said, had studied at Wittenberg, the university of Protestant theology, and heavy German philosophy had incapacitated him for life.

This break with Hamlet was the signal for the fight of 'Young Germany' around 1848 against the romantic cult of Shakespeare. The tension between dream and action, philosophy and politics had become a public, a national characteristic. The young German revolutionaries, the democratic-minded students of 1848, were themselves torn between words and actions. Their magniloquent metaphors already indicate the failure of the German bourgeois revolution of 1848, when in St. Paul's at Frankfurt, the first German national assembly met and adjourned. More and more, Shakespeare's Hamlet turned into a symbol of the futility of the struggle for democratic freedom. In a poem from the pre-revolutionary days of 1848 by Ferdinand Freiligrath, entitled 'Hamlet', the equation Hamlet = Germany is fully articulated:

> Germany is Hamlet. Serious and silent
> Within his portal every night
> Walks buried liberty
> Beckoning to the men on guard.
>
> Deutschland ist Hamlet! Ernst und stumm
> In seinen Toren jede Nacht
> Geht die begrabne Freiheit um
> Und winkt Männern auf der Wacht.

We may say, then, that given the European situation of the French

Revolution of 1789 and the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848, Shakespeare had been an idea of rousing force during the former, and a symbol of depressing frustration during the latter. In each case he was a significant symbol.

Then follows the long period of Shakespeare's domestication by the philologists. It was the youth of the early 20th century, the 'Youth Movement', that rediscovered Shakespeare as a living force. But the Youth Movement around 1900 had as Max Kommerell, a brilliant German scholar and poet has put it, the character of pathetic helplessness, doomed to perish – it had in the first world war the form and ending of a children's crusade. It seems that there were only two types of 'leader' available: the intellectual aristocrat of the Stefan George type, and the ruthless demagogue whose name I hate to mention.

Given the unbalanced course of our history, as Golo Mann has described it, and given the particular responsibility and burden of two World Wars and Nazism, shouldered by the older generation, the young Germans of today adopt a particularly harsh attitude towards their own country's past and present. Born after the war, not personally guilty of its horrors, though tied by national and personal ties to the older generation which they consider responsible, the young people protest not only against war, authoritarianism, social oppression and injustice under an outwardly streamlined and superficially prosperous civilization, but also against a cultured heritage, which has been accumulating under political forms of aristocratic and bourgeois government, and which, according to them, is tinged, if not soaked, with the repressive spirit of inequality and dominance of one class or group over another. For what I shall say now, I would like to be understood as relating my own experience with a small, but very articulate group of students, and a larger, but more moderate, more or less progressive students in the English department. There is a third group of students very quiet, but serious-minded students, who believe the allegation of the reformists to be mere uncritical consumers.

Of the 600 students of English at Frankfurt – we consider this number small compared to other departments in other universities – I would venture to say that though perhaps only 5% belong to the active reformers, the majority of students would sympathize or side with them in all questions where students' representation is the issue, though they would not go the whole length with them when the political change of established institutions is the aim. All students, however, share one common attitude: profound scepticism of everything 'established', particularly so, as far as traditional views, doctrines, beliefs and schools of thought are concerned.

The small articulate and aggressive group of radical reformers, who interpret the academic corporation according to the economic model of employers and employees, and who take their tools from Marxism and the study of sociology, consider the study of Shakespeare mainly as the task of unmasking the repressive spirit of Tudor ideaology or Tudor myth which, according to their belief, Shakespeare could not help absorbing and reproducing. An interpretation of Shakespeare in terms of the history of ideas, or, as they would ironically say 'eternal values', would provoke derision with the militant group, and would make others feel uneasy. At its most radical, 'criticism' is an a-priori suspiciousness of anything 'affirmative', this word being used in a derogatory sense. Appreciation, as Coleridge understood it, would be viewed askance as 'affirmative'. The following statement of a pamphlet, betraying very intelligent minds at work, is characteristic for this radical attitude: 'Incessantly, official literary criticism harps on 'general humanity', on 'freedom', or 'spirit' (Geist), on 'Nature' etc., and by the aid of such categories, purified (indeed) from historical connotations, tends to glue together innumerable isolated facts which enter, reified, into its positivistic inventory.' It is only fair to say that the kind of criticism described is a bad type of criticism and even the caricature of a bad one.

Scepticism, of course, is a healthy antidote to gullibility, and in so far it must be accepted as a possible safeguard against political, ideological and academic pied pipers or seducers, unless, alas, excess of scepticism may blind people's eyes just as much as too much credulity. Distrust of normal reactions may assume proportions that vary from the ludicrous or amusing to the frightening, when it extends to the more habitual or spontaneous reactions and to the subconscious mind, when it is thought the right critical attitude to show, at every moment, controlled reflections of one's own reactions. To laugh about Falstaff, would betray, according to the lore of the radical reflectionist, a lack of rational control. So a young girl asked very seriously, when my assistant laughed about some of Falstaff's preposterous nagging: 'Why do you laugh? Would you please reflect your laughing?' This is what Keats did, in his beautiful sonnet 'Why did I laugh tonight', and he added, as you know, 'No voice will tell'. He was sadly unreflective – think of his preposterously unreflective statement on the 'Negative Capability', which he also attributed to Shakespeare! – Fortunately there are quite a few students who still laugh obligingly if the professor cracks his jokes.

If scepticism is an attitude that all German students share, more or less, there is another common trait that bears on the study of Shakespeare.

This is their interest in society in history and the changing basic attitudes.

There is a marked opposition to formal aesthetic criticism or mere structural analysis, that now appears to have been coeval with the period of reconstruction after the war. What was a veritable liberation and revelation twenty years ago in Germany, the development of an unrefettered aesthetic approval, after twelve years of proscription and revilement, in terms of a crude nazist ideology, and what has often developed, unfortunately, into a mere matter of self-sufficient routine, almost an industry, seems now drawing to a close. This need be no cause for anxiety unless the new historico-sociological trend should forget the achievement of the 'New Criticism', by now aged: that a work of art in order to yield meaning to an extrinsic enquiry, must first have been understood as what it is: not a fact, but an artefact.

The majority of students are well trained in structural analysis, but their inclination is towards the historical dimension of literature again. They are interested with regard to Shakespeare, in the history plays and their divergence from the sources and historical facts, if ever historical facts are ascertainable. The larger group of students would, on the whole, agree with the smaller group that, as philosopher Walter Benjamin has put it, 'Knowledge of literary works handed down through history ... cannot abstract from their historical conditions'. They would, however, disagree with the statement that this knowledge is determined by the forms of social domination, and of the state of development of the economic productive powers as well as by the ideology in the service of this domination and by the state of philosophical thought and science which depend on the state of productive powers'. But they would be intensly interested in social, economic and political questions with regard to, say, *Richard II*, or *Henry VI*.

The test in my seminar on Shakespeare was made with *Henry VI*, and *Richard II*. In *Henry VI*, a very early play, there occur the scenes of the rebel Jack Cade of Kent, whose rebellion was beaten down and was eventually killed by Alexander Iden, the model citizen of Kent. Investigations into the historical situation, based on the reading of primary sources of historiography, such as the *Annals of the time of King Henry VI. A.D. 1450*, brought to light a document entitled 'The complaint of the Commons of Kent, and causes of their assemblies on the Blackheath.' Of the 15 items of grievances which constitute a vivid picture of the economic and social state in 15th century Britain, Shakespeare has only one or two referring to political grievances. It was of great interest to the students to learn that what is afterwards said of Richard II., that he *farmed*

the Kingdom, is already voiced by the men of Kent in complaint No. 9:

> 'Item, the sheriffes and undersheriffes let to farme their offices and bailiwickes, taking great suertie therefore, the which causeth exortions doone by them and by their bailiffes to the people.'

This and similar documentary evidence was eagerly accepted as the true reflection of the time of serfdom under a feudal system with a weak monarchic centre, while Shakespeare's play became to them suspect as a selective and biassed presentation of history by a dramatist subservient to Tudor ideology and Tudor myth. I pointed out, emphatically, that even Jack Cade turns 'under the handes of Master Shakespeare', from a ranting villanous rebel into a pathetic and tragic human being, a hunted man, who is trapped at last, in a garden – symbol of order! – and killed like a ferocious animal. With regard to *Richard II*, the main point of interest was – *not* the dilemma of a king's falling short of his royal image as long as he held his office, in order to live up, and die up, to it after having been deprived of it, – but the question of legitimacy and the right of rebellion, and again, the conflicting standards of right and justice involved. Therefore the scene before Flint Castle, with Bolingbroke both pleading and threatening, became the crucial point of interest for them. In short, it was those scenes where attitudes clash, and here, even the minutest linguistic or poetical detail mattered, as when Bolingbroke charges Northumberland with a message to the king which is, up to a point, a declaration of loyality and petition of rights. You remember the scene in the third act:

> Henry Bolingbroke
> On both his knees doth kiss King Richard's hand,
> And sends allegiance and true faith of heart
> To his most royal person; hither come
> Even at his feet to lay my arms and power,
> Provided that my banishment repeal'd
> And lands restor'd again be freely granted;
> If not, I'll use the advantage of my power
> – ...' etc.

This 'If not' and the ambiguous strategy of the display of arms – 'our fair appointment' – but the simultaneous observance of silence – 'without the noise of threat'ning drum' – was far more interesting than the poetry of Richard's speeches, because the students felt that *this* was reality, this was the way things happen. And more interesting than almost

any other character was, for them, the Duke of York, between the parties, loyal to the office, though not to the man. It is power and the fear of abuse of power that worries them, and along with the abuse of power, all forms of oppression. They might, on this account, identify themselves with Hamlet. But the Brecht-born principle of alienation, which is in opposition to any kind of romantic identification and empathy, and the decline of hero-worship and cult of personality make them see Hamlet in a new light. They do not admire him. They do not admire. It is no longer Hamlet the soliloquist that impresses. It is Hamlet engaged in discussion, in argument, in a verbal duel. It is the subtle testing and probing of a dialogue between Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the spies, that catches their fancy, a repartee like the following: Take this one as an example (II, 2):

HAM.: ... But, in the beaten way of friendship
what make you at Elsinore?

ROS.: To visit you, my Lord; no other occasion.

HAM.: Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you; and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come, deal justly with me. Come, come; nay, speak.

GUI.: What should we say, my Lord?

HAM.: Why, anything. But to th' purpose: you were sent for,
and there is a kind of confession in your looks,
which your modesties have not craft enough
to colour; I know the good King and Queen have sent for you.

ROS.: To what end, my lord?

HAM.: That you must teach me ...

It is probably this apprehension of traps and snares laid everywhere – even when there are none – that creates such an interest in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the twin-spies, and it is this interest that may have induced Tom Stoppard to experimentally blow up the two flat characters to life-like stature, though hardly to roundness, only to reveal their hollowness – fit symbol for the danger of a man becoming a mere function: the danger of de-humanisation. Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead*, in a fascinating production at Frankfurt fascinated the young people. It left the elderly patrons rather dumbfounded. An old gentleman said, in Frankfurt dialect: 'I would have given the whole of it for a line of Shakespeare.'

Let me wind up:

It is an undeniable progress of contemporary criticism, I think, to ask the basic critic question: cui bono – what is the good of it, and whom does it serve? Shakespeare criticism, this vast and world-wide industry, like criticism in general, has become an organisation that the young find baffling, bewildering and frustrating. They also see that the world, in spite of its breathtaking technological development, still suffers from the same, or even worse, old curse as in former ages. It is understandable that in literature as elsewhere they should want to try for themselves what they can do with fresh intellectual vigour and uncompromised capabilities.

But – there is one great misunderstanding, that is equal to a serious and dangerous error of judgement: It is the idea that a work of art, a great literary and dramatic work of art, say Shakespeare's *Richard II*, or *King Lear*, or *Troilus and Cressida*, is an historical product that may be judged critically and distrustfully with a view to unmasking a repressive spirit of feudal or bourgeois ideology of the age hidden in the secret folds of its structure. Now, there certainly is the idea of an *hierarchical order* or *degree* in Shakespeare's *Troilus*, there is the idea of paternal *authority*, not to say *authoritarianism*, in *Lear*, and there is the blatant fact of *misrule* in *Richard II*; to reflect on this is both useful and necessary. But is that all? Is that really all Shakespeare can offer?

My answer is, of course,: No. It is, first of all, not enough, I think, to criticise without thoroughly absorbing and experiencing the whole play. A Shakespearian play is an historical *document*, to be sure, but, to use Warren and Wellek's expression, it is also and above all, a monument, and a living one too. As such it contains, not only an 'emancipative potential', but a vast 'human potential'; it is a vast sum of models of human behaviour, of the 'condition humaine', presented not 'affirmatively', but suggestively, probingly, questioningly, though all this in impressive figures and configurations of an archetypal quality.

It is not enough to remain critically aloof and exterior to Shakespeare; his work, though mediated by the means of his age, has to be met *directly*, again and again, with the preparedness to let one's own ideology or philosophy be questioned by the unmasking character of that great art.

I would go a long way with my progressive young German friends in some questions – but in this question of direct experience I would take a very firm stand: for you either take art and literature seriously *as* art and literature, or you consider it just as material or documentary evidence. In the first case it stops being a mere *object* for criticism, and becomes

itself a subject, a critical force, not only fit to unmask the critic, but fit to open his eyes for what it is to be a genius with an imagination with which to conceive a world of vast significant actions and situations showing in vast symbolic figures, what it is to be a man (or a woman) exposed to the contending powers of fortune and nature. A colleague of mine in Hamburg, charged by a student under the name of Henry V to have misrepresented Shakespeare as not misrepresenting history, said, and I agree completely: 'The great poet does not know more details than the historian, but he gains from them, by his gift of intuition, a picture that is more universal, stressing at the same time the essential elements. He also forgets, in moments of poetic intuition, national, religious and social prejudices, from which historians usually suffer'. Some German students would deny this. But I think they will only do so, because we, i.e. the officially appointed custodians, are not always capable of clearly and fully explaining why it is that Shylock, e.g. has turned 'under the handes of Master Shakespeare' into a tragic figure, why the comic simpletons of *Henry IV* or *Henry V* turn, under those hands, into human beings with all the pathos of their exploited position in life.

It was quite an experience to see *Henry V* performed by the British Old Vic in Germany some time ago. One might have asked: What have we Germans in the 1960ies got to do with that British warrior King making war in France? But it so happened that 'the people' came out so powerfully, showing that they had human potential in them which a sensitive producer will bring out without doing violence to the play. The King, however, came out powerfully, too, as a man burdened with a heavy responsibility.

The question is: will Shakespeare continue to be read, produced and discussed essentially undistorted, as much in the future as he was in the past? If he is, the future society will resemble, let us hope, not in its shameful shortcomings, our present society in its interest in the value of the human individual as the raison d'être of society. If not, not. At any rate, Shakespeare may serve the German students of today just as much as a mirror as he has served all his former critics as a mirror. 'Tell me how you deal with Shakespeare, and I tell you who you are' should read 'Tell me whether you will take Shakespeare with you into the new century, the 21st, when the world is due to come of age, or not, and I will tell you whether, in my view, life in that age will be worth living, or not.'

MALTESISCHE IMPRESSIONEN

Von WALTER KUCHER

DARF der Verfasser seine Eindrücke gelegentlich eines Studienaufenthaltes auf den Maltesischen Inseln im Winter 1967/68 wiedergeben, so erfolgt dieser Bericht aus der Sicht des Kulturhistorikers und Ethnologen und zugleich im Zusammenhang mit den Erfahrungen einer Reise nach Tunesien im Herbst des Jahres 1967.

Mag auch der kulturvergleichende Aspekt den vorliegenden Darstellungen nicht als eigentlicher Arbeitsansatz zugrundeliegen, so ergibt sich dennoch fast selbstverständlich ein 'In-Beziehung-Setzen', das zu einer schärferen Profilierung der Problematik führt. Damit ist es auch dem Verfasser möglich, seine Betrachtung Maltas in einen grösseren kulturgeschichlichen Zusammenhang zu rücken.

Die kulturhistorische Bedeutung des Maltesischen Archipels erhellt bereits notwendigerweise aus der geographischen Situation der Inseln. Hier liegt einer der Falle vor, wo geophysisische Gegebenheiten den Lauf des Geschichtlichen entscheidend vorbestimmen. Sie tragen auch dazu bei, die gewohnten Proportionen und Masstäbe zu verändern. Diese Verschiebung der Proportion kann als erstes eindringliches Erlebnis auf Malta angesehen werden.

Die beinahe ins Visionäre gesteigerte Grossartigkeit des Erlebens des Steins, das der Reisende zumal bei morgendlicher Ankunft im Grossen Hafen empfindet, geht weit über das hinaus, was der Schutz-und Bollwerkcharakter Vallettas und der der Drei Städte baugedanklich auszudrücken vermag. Hier ist schon vorweggenommen, was den Betrachter als ein Grundphänomen dieser Inselwelt erwartet: eine einmalige Vollendung aus dem Stein heraus, naturgegeben in der Kargheit der Inseln und zugleich auch von überraschendem Reiz. Keine Traumhaftigkeit, die etwa an Venedig denken liesse, sondern bewusste Wirklichkeit, dem Menschen durch Natur und Geschichte als Wirkungsmöglichkeit verliehen.

Die Einmaligkeit dieses Erlebens bewirkt auch in hohem Masse, dass sich der Reisende der starken Begrenztheit des Raumes nicht immer bewusst bleibt. Er spürt als eine der wichtigsten inneren Gesetzlichkeiten dieser Inselwelt, dass hier in grösseren Zusammenhängen gelebt wird. Die zentrale Bedeutung Maltas, die sich dem Fremden vor allem durch das Medium Valletta unmittelbar mitteilt, ist so mehr als ein geographisches Phänomen. Sie lässe die Bildung eines Kosmos begreiflich erscheinen, dessen letzte Wesenskräfte aus einem grossen maritimen Raum bezogen

werden. Doch ist Malta Weite und Enge zugleich. Schon die Insularität verbürgt, dass dieser Kosmos auch nach eigenen Gesetzen lebt und seine Charakterzüge als unverkennbar 'maltesisch' angesehen werden müssen.

Nun ist diese maltesische Welt nicht einheitlich; sie zeigt sogar überraschende Gegensätzlichkeiten: das Bild ineinander übergehender städtischer Siedlungen wechselt mit dem Blick auf Räume, die beinahe den Eindruck der Verlassenheit wecken, sieht man von verstreuten bäuerlichen Gehöften ab; so vor allem im Westen und Südwesten Maltas. Es scheint keinen eigentlichen Uebergang zu geben, nur starkes Abgesetztsein, überbetont durch die Enge des Inselgebietes und die Stadtähnlichkeit der meisten agrarischen Siedlungen.

Der konservative Instinkt eines in seinen alten Lebens-und Wesensbezügen beharrenden Bauerntums lässt erkennen, dass die oben erwähnte Gegensätzlichkeit auch zeitlich beträchtliche Tiefe gewinnen kann. Mögen auch die gesamten Lebensäusserungen dieses Bauerntums die 'Atmosphäre' schaffen, die dem Fremden so sehr entgegen kommt, Sprödigkeit und anscheinende Reserviertheit der Natur verstärken noch den Charakter des Altertümlichen. Dass diese Natur aber erobert werden will und kann, zeigt ihre für maltesische Verhältnisse erstaunliche Fruchtbarkeit.

Zu welcher Kontrastwirkung Wesensunterschiede in ihrem Stimmungsgehalt erhoben werden können, erweist sich an dem drastischen Schnitt, der zwischen der alten und neuen Hauptstadt Maltas besteht. So ist Medina von Valletta nicht durch elf Kilometer, sondern durch elf Jahrhunderte getrennt.

Kontrastwirkung auf so knappem Raum ist für den Fremden zunächst verwirrend; sie erschwert ihm die Wahl eines richtigen geistigen Standortes. Auf der anderen Seite wieder bedeutet eine derartige Gegensätzlichkeit erhöhten Aussagewert und verstärkte Kommunikationsfähigkeit. Enge ist auch Verklammerung. So führt diese Verklammerung des Verschiedenen letztlich zur Einheit. Die Vielgesichtigkeit Maltas löst sich in Harmonie auf. Zum Extrem erhoben, könnte man vielleicht sogar von einer 'Alterslosigkeit' Maltas sprechen.

Alterslosigkeit dieser Art erwartet den Fremden auch auf Gozo. Zwar sind Malta und Gozo durch Natur und Schicksal auch ungleiche Schwestern; doch ist ihr Verhältnis nicht durch Gegensätzlichkeit bestimmt. Man müsste vielmehr von Ergänzung und Vertiefung sprechen. Von Ergänzung im Sinne der natürlichen Ausstattung, von Vertiefung in dem Sinne, dass auf Gozo, der durch doppelte Insularität sich mehr selbst Ueberlassenen, jene ursprünglicheren Schichten greifbar werden, die erst allein das Seelenbild Maltas erkennen lassen. Zum anderen erfahren die eigenlichen Lebenslinien der Inselwelt auf Gozo markante Akzentuierung. In der 'Primitivität' des Bauern-und Fischerlebens auf noch kleinerem Raum tut

sich allenthalben noch etwas von dem kund, was man als das ewige Wechselspiel zwischen Mensch und Natur in seinen elementarsten Bezügen deutet.

Ob Gozo wirklich die Insel der Kalypso ist, mag ruhig dahingestellt bleiben. Wichtig ist allein, dass Gozo sie sein könnte, dass es noch heute mythisch-legendenhaften Seinsgrund erspüren, dass es Geheimnisse erahnen lässt. In diesem Sinne mag gerade Gozo-auch über alle Verschiedenheiten hinweg-der Lotophagen-Insel Djerba wesensverwandt sein.

Dass Odysseus Kalypso und damit auch Gozo verlassen hat, scheint der Lieblichkeit und dem Zauber der Insel keinen Abtrag zu bringen. Denn man muss sagen, dass auf den Maltesischen Inseln viel Mühe an den Menschen gewandt worden ist. Der Mensch ist durchaus das Mass der Dinge. Die Kleinheit der maltesischen Welt und ihre Geschlossenheit haben den Sinn für natürliche Ordnung erhalten und so auch eine 'wohltemperierte' Atmosphäre geschaffen, die als hervorstechendster Zug des gesellschaftlichen Lebens angenehm auffällt. Dieser Umstand bewirkt es auch, dass trotz des Lebens so vieler Menschen auf kleinstem Raum nicht das Gefühl einer 'Bedrängung' oder 'Beklemmung' entsteht. Selbst im unruhigen Valletta ist dem Menschen noch alles zugeordnet.

Die überaus grosse Zusammenballung der Bevölkerung in Valletta und den umgebenden Städten scheint nicht nur historische und sozialökonomische Gründe zu besitzen. Sie leitet sich vielleicht auch aus einer Art 'innerer Sammelfähigkeit' des Zentrums her, aus einer bannenden, zwingenden Kraft, deren Wurzeln weit in der Vergangenheit liegen.

Ohne auf prähistorisch-archäologische Gegebenheiten im näheren einzugehen, scheint es doch der Fall zu sein, dass Malta in sehr alter Zeit das dominierende Heiligtum des Mittelmeeres gewesen ist; man könnte sagen, dass dieser Eindruck durchaus gegenwärtig ist. Wer zur abendlichen Stunde die inneren Teile des Landes abfährt und die beleuchteten Kuppelkirchen erlebt, verspürt noch etwas von der magischen, zwingenden Gewalt, die dieses alte Malta als Kultstätte des Mittelmeeres gehabt haben muss.

Die grossartigen megalithischen Tempelanlagen der Inselwelt erweisen sich schon in ihrer Reife und Vollendung als einzigartige Ausstrahlungspunkte. Mit ihnen beginnt eigentlich jenes früher geschilderte 'Erlebnis des Steins' als tragender Grund jedweden Erlebens überhaupt. Reife und Vollendung der Sakralanlagen und der ihnen noch zugehörigen künstlerischen Hinterlassenschaften legen wohl auch die Vermutung nahe, dass hier ein grösserer kulturhistorischer Zusammenhang mit möglicherweise weitreichenden ozeanischen Beziehungen erwartet werden kann. Zumindest könnte mit einer entsprechenden Verlängerung in den atlantischen Raum gerechnet werden.

Zu gross erscheinen fast diese Weihestätten für die Inselwelt; die räumlichen Ausmasse mancher maltesischen Kirchen schon könnten dem Fremden die Ansicht vermitteln, dass ein fast ins Ueberdimensionale erhobener Bauwille ein bezeichnender Wesenszug von Angebinn gewesen wäre. Unbestritten bleibt jedoch die aussergewöhnliche Dominanz der religiösen Kulturkomponente. Hier ist eine Kontinuität greifbar, die den markantesten und 'nationalsten' Charakterzug der Malteser offenbart: eine einmalig tiefe Religiosität.

Mit welcher Intensität Religiöses Grundsätzlichkeit der matleseschen Kultur ist, teilt sich in der reichen Fülle der Kirchenbauten, im Glanz ihrer Ausstattung, und besonders im stetigen, fast aufopfernden Bemühen um kirchlich-religiöse Dinge mit. Auch der Emigrant bleibt in dieser Orientierung seiner Heimatkirche fest verhaftet.

So wird noch einmal der Weg zu einer Zeit freigelegt, in der sich die Aktivität vollends im kultisch-sakralen Bereiche erschöpfte. In diesem Sinne gewinnt auch das, was an Resten verklungener Epochen in die Gegenwart reicht, an neuer Lebendigkeit. Zu welcher Leidenschaftlichkeit aber sich die Wirksamkeit religiöser Strukturprinzipien steigern kann, zeigt sich für den Fremden vor allem in der erregenden Atmosphäre der Festas.

In Anbetracht des früher Gesagten ist es so wohl auch nicht anzunehmen, dass die Träger der Tempel-Kultur auf den Inseln vollkommen vernichtet worden sind; zumindest blieben gewisse Bestände erhalten, die so das Fortleben bestimmter Charakteranlagen ermöglichten. Einmalige Gastfreundschaft und Liebenswürdigkeit, Verbindlichkeit überhaupt, wie sie weiterhin die Malteser auszeichnen, könnten wohl auch einer geistig-seelischen Umwelt mit entstammen, die einer religiösen Metropole ersten Ranges und einem damit verbundenen Handelszentrum entsprach.

Die musealen Einrichtungen Maltas und Gozos sind für den Fremden recht anziehend; sie bringen ihm nochmals nahe, wie schwer das Gewicht der Vergangenheit ist, und welche Ueberfülle an Fundmaterial selbst auf kleinstem Raume vorhanden sein kann. Zugleich wird offenbar, dass sich auch die Herkunftsfrage des maltesischen Menschen einer wissenschaftlich eindeutigen Klärung entzieht. Neben Sizilien und dem östlichen Mittelmeer-Gebiet wird wohl auch Nordafrika als mitentscheidende Basis für Wanderungen angesehen werden müssen. Bereits die grosse Nähe Afrikas spricht dafür; geologisch mag das einstige Vorhandensein einer Landbrücke von Sizilien über Malta nach Nordafrika als erwiesen gelten.

Die Kulturbeziehungen zwischen Malta und dem östlichen Mittelmeer und darüber hinaus in den Mittleren Osten dürften recht alten Datums sein. Die Kulturbeziehungen zwischen Malta und Nordafrika sind es nicht minder; wie weit nordafrikanischer Einfluss sich auch in der sizilianischen

Provenienz maltesischer Kulturhinterlassenschaften deutlich macht, wird noch festgestellt werden müssen. Jedenfalls wird auch mit einem alten ethnischen Substrat für die Maltesischen Inseln aus Nordafrika zu rechnen sein.

Eine ungewöhnliche Konstanz des maltesischen Charakters scheint dem Verfasser typisch zu sein, eines Charakters, zu dessen originärer Entfaltung auch durch Zeiten der 'Ruhe' genügender Spielraum verblieb; trotz vielfachster fremder Zuflüsse tritt als wesenhaftes Element, durch die Insularität gefördert, eine erhebliche 'Eigenbestimmtheit' hervor.

Gewisse Uebereinstimmungen in Psyche und Volkskultur scheinen zwischen Iren und Maltesern zu bestehen: sollte hier etwa eine gemeinsame megalithische Grundkomponente mit wirksam sein?

Phönizisch-Punischer Einfluss mag stärker und nachhaltiger gewesen sein, als manchmal angenommen wird; so kann auch für die punische Zeit eine relativ dichte Besiedlung des Gesamtarchipels erwartet werden. Sicher bestanden rege Kontakte zwischen Puniern und Einheimischen. Manche Eigenschaften-seemännische Begabung, Handelsfreudigkeit, kommerzielles Geschick-erfuhren durch das Phönizisch-Punische eine betonte Verstärkung. Im Kulturganzen erweist sich dieser Einfluss als überaus tiefgehend. Wichtig bleibt wohl auch für diese Zeit die Hereinnahme afrikanischer Volkselemente.

Zeichnet sich die römische Zeit auf den Inseln auch durch reiche Kulturblüte, günstige Wirtschafts-und Handelsentwicklung aus, so scheint sie sich dennoch mit der Rolle eines Zwischenspiels zu bescheiden. Möglicherweise könnte in diesem Zusammenhang jene bereits erwähnte innere Verwurzelung Maltas im östlich-mittelmeerischen und nordafrikanischen Raume einige Bedeutung gewinnen. Doch sind in dieser Phase die Inseln Glieder eines mächtigen und ganz entscheidenden Kulturraumes, von dem sie wesentliche Impulse erhalten. Enger wird die Verklammerung mit Europa; auf anderen Seite wieder werden die Beziehungen zu Afrika neu verstärkt.

Höchste religiöse Aufgeschlossenheit und Feinnervigkeit der Malteser geben der neuen Heilsbotschaft des Apostels Paulus entscheidende Tragfähigkeit für grundlegende spätere Entwicklungen.

In diesem Zusammenhang etwa könnte die seit jeher unterschätzte Rolle von Byzanz mit seiner Devise 'Einigkeit durch Glauben' einige Bedeutung gewinnen.

Das Phönizisch-Punische war es auch, das die Festsetzung der Araber auf den Inseln erleichterte; diese Vorarbeit mag es gewesen sein, die arabischen Kultureinfluss zu einer erheblichen Festigung führte und seine nachhaltige Wirkung erst ermöglichte. Man kann sich des Eindrucks kaum erwehren, dass dieser Kultureinfluss weit über die Zeit der tatsächlichen

Beherrschung des Archipels wirksam gewesen ist. Man denke lediglich in diesem Zusammenhang an die schon durch praktische Erwägungen araberfreundliche Einstellung des normannischen Königshauses und seiner Nachfolger, dann an die weitgespannte Handelspolitik der Aragonesischen Krone im Rahmen ihres 'Western Mediterranean Common Market' mit ihren speziellen Wirtschaftsanliegen in Nordafrika.

Lebendigste Erinnerung an Nordafrika vermitteln dem Fremden wohl 'Begegnungen' mit der maltesischen Sprache, geht man besonders vom Gehörseindruck aus. Ebenso überraschend wird wohl auch der entscheidende Einfluss der arabischen Sprache in der Gebung der Ortsnamen sein.

Sehr eindrucksvoll zeigt sich die Prägekraft 'arabisch-orientalischen' Kultureinflusses in der Architektur mancher städtischer und vor allem der dörflichen Siedlungen. In Ausdruckswert und Stimmungsgehalt sind hier in gleicher Weise Mensch, Siedlung und Landschaft umfasst.

Freilich bleibt das weitgehende Fehlen arabischer materieller Hinterlassenschaften eine nicht zu übersehende Tatsache. Auf der anderen Seite wieder mag der früher geschilderte 'orientalische' Charakter im ländlichen Raum den Eindruck beträchtlichen Alters und einer doch weitgehenden Konformität und Geschlossenheit wecken, die möglicherweise weitere Schlüsse erlauben.

So kann auch durch insulare Verhältnisse begünstigt, in arabischer Zeit eine erhebliche Vereinheitlichung des Volkskörpers erreicht worden sein: es wird wohl mit nicht unbeträchtlichen biologischen Zuschüssen zu rechnen sein. Ferner muss wohl die Tatsache berücksichtigt werden, dass sich ein wesentlicher Teil des maltesischen Arabertums aus berberischen Volkselementen zusammensetzte.

Bei der Frage nach den vorarabischen Einflüssen schon, müsste das alte Berbertum mit seiner ursprünglichen Verhaftung im altmediterranen Kulturraum überhaupt mehr zu Rate gezogen werden. Vielleicht ist es auch nicht ganz abwegig, zu behaupten, dass durch das auf Malta vertretene Berbertum der arabischen Epoche auch noch irgendwie eine Art partiellen Rückgriffes auf alte gemeinsame Kulturelemente erfolgte, was einer Integration entgegenkam. In der psychischen Grunddisposition altmaltesischen und altberberischen Charakters tritt manches Verwandte auf.

Vielleicht wäre es in diesem Zusammenhang auch interessant, den kultur-und sprachpsychologischen Aspekten nachzugehen, die eine Vergleichung des Verhältnisses beider Völker zum Punier-und Römertum eröffnet.

Die grosse Zäsur, welche die Kulturentwicklung auf den Inseln später durch die enge politische und geschichtliche Verklammerung mit Sizilien erfährt, mag eine Schicksalhaftigkeit bedeuten, die jeden historischen Zufall ausschliesst. Freilich bleibt auf Malta ein Eigenleben erhalten

das noch einmal die starke Abhebung des Kulturganzen vom sizilianischen Raume betont. Doch ist die entscheidende Weiche gestellt. In diesem Sinne besitzt auch die Flagge des Hauses Hauteville, die heute Maltas Nationalfahne ist, deutlichsten Symbolwert.

In den weiten Wirtschafts-und Kulturbeziehungen der Aragonesischen Krone ergibt sich auch für Malta eine Fülle neuer Anknüpfungsmöglichkeiten. In diesem Zusammenhang werden die Beziehungen zu Nordafrika besonders wichtig.

Wie weit Romanisches die feste Basis der 'Internationalität' des Johanniter-Ordens bildet, ist vor allem an der kunstgeschichtlichen Betrachtung der Ordenszeit zu sehen. In Valletta schufen sich die Johanniter-Ritter das glanzvollste, in den Drei Städten vielleicht das eindringlichste Zeugnis ihres Wirkens. Ist Valletta Pracht und Verklärung des Errungenen, so spricht sich in den Drei Städten das ganze Ausmass der Aufgabe aus; in der Strenge und Kargheit Vittoriosas etwa werden noch einmal jene Willensentschlossenheit und unbedingte Glaubenstreue des Ordens offensichtlich, zugleich die ganze Schwere der materiellen Voraussetzungen des Kampfes. In diesem Sinne mögen die Drie Städte auch noch 'maltesischer' als Valletta sein.

Der Reisende, der Malta besucht, wird sehr oft seine Eindrücke in der Hauptsache oder sogar allein aus der Hauptstadt beziehen; dies mag ein Nachteil sein, denn Malta ist mehr als Valletta. Doch bleibt Valletta das Sinnbild, ein Sinnbild von steinerner Grösse und architektonischer Schönheit. Diese reife Kunst einheimischer und fremder Meister verbürgt nicht allein die Stellung Vallettas als Kunstzentrum; sie belegt auch deutlichst, welches Interesse die gesamte christliche Welt an Malta genommen hat.

Wie anziehend die geistig-seelische Atmosphäre Vallettas mit ihrer erstaunlichen Vielfältigkeit kulturellen und gesellschaftlichen Lebens ist, wird jeder Besucher wohl dankbar empfinden. Vielleicht mag gerade aus dem Bewusstsein des Geleisteten, des Gesichertseins heraus und seiner Ueberhöhung in eine glanzvolle Form künstlerischer Gestaltung, jene innere Gelöstheit entstehen, die einer Art 'Gemütlichkeit' so nahe kommt.

Vielleicht auch wird in der grandiosen Architektur der Ordenszeit noch einmal jener einmalige Bauwille offenbar, dieses Drängen nach monumentalen Erscheinungsformen, das ein Grundzug des Maltesischen ist. Man könnte sagen, dass Eigenart und Wesen Maltas den Boden entsprechend vorbereiteten.

Die Verbindung mit dem englischen Geltungsbereich hat Malta bis in die Gegenwart hinein auch die Weite der Erlebnismöglichkeiten erhalten und den Weg in die moderne Gesellschafts-und Wirtschaftswelt geöffnet; zugleich sind nun dem vielfältigen Wesensbild der Inseln neue und spez-

ielle Züge des Europäischen zugegeben.

Wie sehr jedoch Malta 'maltesisch' ist, wird wohl letztlich entscheidender Eindruck jeden Besuchers bleiben. In diesem Zusammenhang auch wird man sagen müssen, dass das grösste und bleibendste Erlebnis eines Aufenthaltes auf den Inseln der maltesische Mensch ist.

Denn schon in der Natur der Insel als eines schützenden Hafens mag das vorgegeben sein, was sich dem Besucher als schönstes Geschenk Maltas offenbart: nämlich überraschende Aufnahmebereitschaft.

Es ist eine Aufnahmebereitschaft zugleich im Raume des Geschichtlichen, dargetan an der reichen Fülle der von aussen kommenden Bereicherungen für Kultur und Wesen des maltesischen Menschen. Doch hat ein stetiger Beharrungswille es verstanden, diese in ihrer Gesamtheit so schwer wiegenden Einwirkungen entsprechend zu verarbeiten und sie schliesslich in einen abgerundeten und geschlossenen Bilde darzustellen.

Geschichtliches ist so dem Malteser selbstverständlicher Lehrmeister. Duldsamkeit und Toleranz etwa wuchsen aus dieser Vertrautheit. Als sehr wichtig mag in diesem Zusammenhang die charakter-und geistprägende Kraft des Lebens in grösseren Zusammenhängen angesehen werden müssen. Eine sehr gelungene innere Harmonie könnte auch zu jener Heiterkeit führen, die den maltesischen Menschen auszeichnet; weniger scheint das Klima dafür verantwortlich zu sein.

Aus physisch-psychischer Veranlagung und zweifacher Kulturerbschaft ist Malta ein naturgegebener Vermittler; in diesem Sinne mögen auch die Fragen 'Was ist europäisch?', 'Was ist afrikanisch oder orientalisch?', nur sekundäre Bedeutung besitzen. Wichtig allein bleibt die Verhaftung in beiden Bereichen, und die Fähigkeit, daraus gesteigerte Wirkungskrafte zu gewinnen.

Inwieweit die Zukunft Bild und Wesen des Maltesischen Archipels verändern mag, lässt sich natürlich nicht sagen. Doch eines wird man mit Recht behaupten können: der Fremde wird nie fremd auf diesen Inseln sein und der Abschied wird ihm immer schwer fallen.

THE RANSOM OF THE PEASANTS

(A Dramatic Poem in Five Acts and a Tableau)

By A. CREMONA

(Translated by MAY BUTCHER *from the Maltese Original).*

Act IV

On the horizon at the foot of the hills, the morning is beginning to lighten, giving a bluish tinge to the dawn. But the splendour of the light which dispels the darkness is as yet slow in coming forth altogether from the wrappings of night. Beneath the sky, the earth with her tangled verdure of field and valley lies silent and shadowed with broken-hearted grief; it is as though she were mourning even yet for those peasants who had left her desolate and who, in other days, used to appear each day at dawn, setting forth to cultivate her, happy and contented. Amid all this poverty, beneath the weight of sorrow, Matti's cottage is seen solitary in the silence of the morning. The first rays of the sun break forth and strike upon it. Rożi and Betti appear coming down the field-path with kerchiefs on their heads, each is carrying a basket of fodder, their heads are bent earthwards and they walk slowly towards the farmhouse. Kozzi follows them, her eyes scanning the slopes of the hills. Rozi goes into the field behind the cottage, in a scared way she examines every nook and cranny, comes over to the cattle-pen to peer through the wooden gate, goes up the steps and listens at the door of the upper room. Betti stops to wait for Kozzi.

ROŻI: [*comes down*]
I hear nobody: of the upper room,
the door is shut and likewise the gate
of the cattle-pen. I think Zolli's eyes
have deceived her.

BETTI: Yesterday, at sunset,
she saw two persons coming down into
the field and she said they were enemies
crouching behind the wall.

KOZZI: Zolli has eyes
like a hawk. They have not deceived her,
I tell you. If it was not the enemy,
they were our own militia-men.

BETTI: Others said
that some of the enemy were seen
coming up from Gnejna.

KOZZI: If it were
the enemy, that is a sign of grave
danger, all hope is gone – Let us go
into the cattle-pen and give a look
to the animals.

[ROŻI *and* BETTI *open the wooden gate and go into the pen, taking the baskets of fodder with them.* KOZZI *remains in the doorway*].

KOZZI: [*to* BETTI *as she enters*]
Pass through the courtyard
and search every nook. Do not open, Betti,
the outside door. For the water am I
coming.

[*She catches up the pitcher and goes to fill it at the well. Suddenly she lets go the rope and stops to look in the direction of the locust-tree: she runs to the door of the cattle-pen and speaks in a low voice*].

Come upstairs into the upper room
and do not show yourselves now. Call Betti!
Rożi, call Betti in from the courtyard!
Under the tree are the guards of Don Carlos
lying asleep ... do not make a sound! ...

[*as she shuts the gate, she looks back terrified and goes to the well to listen*].

ENZO: I find this damp night air cold. This bed
of leaves and tree-roots feels to me as though
one's bones were being pierced by thorns ...

GUERRINO: That wine
we had last night was really good.

ENZO: When I closed
my eyes, with my head upon my mantle,
I felt the wine mounting up and I dream
even yet of the weeping maiden's face

and of the impassioned look of our master.

GUERRINO: That old raven Xandra went to Don Carlos
to fill him up with empty tales. I tell you
Rożi, her mother and father have left
for Imdina.

ENZO: Better with the Spaniards
of Cordova than a slave of our master.

GUERRINO: This time, my friend, the bird has escaped
from the snare. Curse the black eyes of the maids
of the Island and to hell with our masters!
I shall not see Colubrina in Seville,
unless I clip that swallow's wings tonight.

[KOZZI *quickly moves away, hurriedly opens the gate of the cattle-pen, shuts it behind her and conceals herself*]

GUERRINO: [*jumps over the wall and enters the courtyard of the farmhouse.* ENZO *appears behind him*].
I thought I heard a sound.

ENZO: It was the noise
of a door, closing.

GUERRINO: It was a slam.

[*A door is heard opening within the cottage. Then complete silence*].

ENZO: Doors are being opened. Did you hear them,
Guerrino? –

GUERRINO: They have come in through the door
which opens on the valley road. We have been recognised.

[*flings open the gate of the cattle-pen to go in and immediately* KOZZI *appears on the threshold with a basket in her hand.* GUERRINO *and* ENZO *stand staring without a word*].

GUERRINO: We were just thinking of you.
Tell us, what are you about at this hour
in the stillness of this cottage?

KOZZI: Anni
sent me to feed the animals for her.

GUERRINO: And where is she? And old farmer Matti,

where is he and where is his daughter?
Since yesterday our master has been making
enquiries about these people and to look
for them he has sent us here and to find them
without delay, because he feared that they
by the enemy had been carried off.
All night, round about the fields,
have we been on guard. Can you give us news?

KOZZI: I do not know for certain where those two
old people with their daughter are concealed.
This morning I saw Anni in the Valley,
for she was on her way to me; she said:
Kozzi dear, go to the cottage for me
to feed the animals. I am afraid
to do so.

GUERRINO: I do not believe that you
are telling the truth. Tell us at once, Kozzi,
do not prevaricate and remember
our master wishes, from the enemy,
to set the peasants free.

ENZO: Not a word of truth
will you ever get from the lips of this
devil of a hag.

GUERRINO: I do not wish to swear in vain but this time,
I tell you, if I do not bring this bird
into the snare, my hands will be cut off
and with them shall I also lose my tongue.

ENZO: Out of the corner of my eye, I saw
that old woman listening. She has not moved
from the wooden gate of the cattle-pen.
GUERRINO: We will go in, and, every corner search.

[*The Guards go into the cattle-pen. After a little,* KOZZI *appears peeping from behind the wall of the path and comes towards the farmhouse; she listens, she closes the gate of the cattle-pen and hurries up the steps of the upper room. She knocks very softly at the door and calls through the keyhole*].

KOZZI: Rożi and Betti, come, do not delay! [*silence*]
O Rożi and Betti, open to me,

it is I, Kozzi, I have come for you;
some people have come into the cottage.
[*listens*]
Yes, it is I, Kozzi, open the door.

[*The door is opened and* BETTI *appears on the terrace, trembling and terrified, she catches hold of* KOZZI*'s hands*].

BETTI: I am terrified, I feel too weak to stir.

KOZZI: Where is she, tell me, where have you left Rożi?

BETTI: By the door of the courtyard, I left her.

KOZZI: Alone?

BETTI: Xandra was talking to her.

KOZZI: Saw you naught of the guards in the cattle-pen?

BETTI: I saw nothing.

KOZZI: I did not see Xandra here,
I think she came from the valley road.

KOZZI: My children, I would
tell you willingly without a trace of fear;
for your master I have a great respect.
Anni left her cottage in my charge, for
she and Matti to Imdina had to go.

GUERRINO: In Wied il-Ġnejna do you think
at this hour she would be?

KOZZI: I am going
to Zolli's house.

GUERRINO: Hurry up and do not
delay, Gawdenz is waiting for the girl
Rożi at the master's house: he has come
with news of her Pietru.

KOZZI: What news has he?
Gawdenz come! What did he say of Pietru
and Ġanni and about the enemy?

GUERRINO: This evening Gawdenz arrived secretly
at the house of our master Don Carlos:
he could scarcely speak, he was alone,

it seems he had escaped. The enemy
had come in from Aħrax at Melliegħa
and reports tell of a fierce battle there.
Of Pietru and Ġanni I know nothing,
Kozzi. It is said the foe's ships also
have been seen in Wied il-Għajn.

KOZZI: I will run
to tell Zolli and find those old people.

[KOZZI *moves away, stands looking back and disappears*].

ENZO: The hag has vanished. Do not wait, Guerrino,
for the girl.

GUERRINO: With the tidings of Gawdenz,
has she gone. What do you think, Enzo?

ENZO: I think that Kozzi has made fools of us!

XANDRA: Leave it all to me.

GUERRINO: Only beware of that poisonous Kozzi!

XANDRA: Leave it all to me, go!

[GUERRINO *and* ENZO *envelop themselves in their black mantles from head to waist, they pass into the field-path, glance to right and left and descend to the valley*].

ROZI: Where are the guards?

XANDRA: They have gone, Rożi darling. Those Berbers
are coming, it seems, and, I am not joking.
danger will come with them.

ROŻI: Where is Betti?
I see her nowhere. The door is open
of the upper room.

XANDRA: Where did you leave Betti?

ROŻI: She went into the upper room, I left
Betti there.

XANDRA: Alone?

ROŻI: Alone, I left Betti.
I hear no sound from her. Go and see, Xandra.

[XANDRA *climbs the steps on tiptoe and looks inside the upper room. She shuts the door and comes down again*].

XANDRA: She is not there?!

ROŻI: Not there?

XANDRA: Listen Rozi,
let Betti be for the present; listen
to what I have to tell you ...

ROŻI: No, I will not.
I want to see Betti and, without Betti,
I will not move from here.
Xandra, let me go and find Betti.

BETTI: As soon as she saw us through the gate-chink,
she shouted to Rożi who opened to her.
Then I went up the steps to hide.

KOZZI: [*gravely*]
The guards
have been here: they came to tell us Gawdenz
has come alone from Mellieha
with news for Rożi. I think that those guards
are secretly engaged by the master.
What did Xandra say?

BETTI: I was crouching in
the upper room, terrified, alone. I
at first heard nothing of what Xandra said
but I thought Rożi's voice said: 'They left us
our cottage with the animals: I came
to feed them'. Then I heard Xandra saying ...

[*Noise of doors opening and a confused talking of people inside*].

GUERRINO: Let us go out, because the enemy
approach and it is for them we came to watch
to-night.

KOZZI: The voice of Guerrino.

[BETTI, *covering her head with a kerchief, catches hold of* KOZZI's *hand. The two go down the steps and stealthily take flight towards the field-path. They disappear.* GUERRINO *and* ENZO *come out of the cattle-pen.* XANDRA *is between them, – presently* ROŻI *follows, very bewildered.* GUERRINO *grabs* XANDRA *by the arm and draws her aside. He whispers hurriedly to her*].

GUERRINO: Take her
down into the valley. Tell her Pietru
is waiting for her there and that Gawdenz,
with news of the Militia, has escaped
to the master's house.

XANDRA: Betti has gone.

ROŻI: Gone?!

XANDRA: Yes, that girl has gone,
do not hope to find her; she fled, I think,
when the guards came in.

ROŻI: I want to get to her,
I want to get to her because I am alone
and the road makes me shudder.

XANDRA: Do not be
afraid, Rożi, I am coming with you.
But, first of all, listen to what I say.
Now that those guards have gone I can explain
everything to you. Do not leave Pietru
waiting for you down there in the valley.
He asked me to come and let you know, so
I brought you the tidings immediately.
Coming from Pwales, he arrived in these parts;
all night had he walked with a lamp in his hand
and, from Aħrax, came running to see you
before returning to rejoin the fight
ere his comrades from Naxxar assemble
on the Mosta Road to await the foe
on their way up to attack Imdina.

ROŻI: [*looking at her in bewilderment*]
You saw Pietru and he spoke to you?
You saw him? saw Pietru? Xandra, how was that?

XANDRA: I am telling you the absolute facts.
Rożi, believe me. As I was going down
into the valley, I noticed Pietru
early in the morning coming up
in the direction of this cottage.
I said to him: 'Do not go there, Pietru;
those guards are spying round this whole district;
hide in the cave; to Rożi am I going
now and will tell her about you'.

ROŻI: And what
had he to say about the enemy?
How did he come alone? What brought him here?

XANDRA: What brought him here? The desire to see you
for, daily, death is present to his eyes.

ROŻI: Pietru is brave, and I tell you never,
never does he see death before his eyes.
Into a blazing fire without a thought
would he fling himself, first for this Island
and secondly for me. I know Pietru.
In his heart Death and I are bound up with
the thought of our ransom. I know Pietru.
The wind that would catch the thought of his mind
must be swifter than terrified horses
in flight ...

XANDRA: That boy is like a lightning-flash.
To see him is to say: 'God bless him!' His eyes
with the light of enthusiasm shine
and the fury in his flushed face, without
a word from you, speaks to you and kindles
a responsive fire. Had you seen him,
Rożi, had you seen him, you would have said:
'Truly, in giving me this lad, Heaven
has given me cause to rejoice!'

ROŻI: Xandra!
But one word only will I say to him,
only this: 'To the attack go forward
and only think of Rozi when you fall.
For if you should die, you die with Rożi
and dead will be this heart which knows not how
to live without you'.

XANDRA: The time is passing
and I am afraid those guards will come back.
Let us go, Rożi my love.

ROŻI: My mother
I left with Zolli.

XANDRA: Do not be worried.
I am taking you to Zolli.

ROŻI: Without Betti?

XANDRA: Betti went with Kozzi. [*looks back*]
I see two peasants
coming out of the cave.

[*She seizes* ROŻI*'s hand and leads her to the field-path. Both of them peer out over the fields on each side as they proceed, until they disappear*].

GAWDENZ *and* ĊIKKU *appear in the distance coming along, they jump over field-walls, look about cautiously and then approach the farmhouse.* GAWDENZ *stays at the end of the field-path while* ĊIKKU *comes on ahead to listen at the gate of the cattle-pen, he slowly climbs the steps and knocks at the door of the upper room. He listens. Silence. He comes down the steps and calls out to* GAWDENZ.

ĊIKKU: I do not hear
the sound of a living creature; within
this cottage, there is not a single soul.
I would say that, with their daughter Rożi,
the two old people have just this moment left.

GAWDENZ: Those were women, the two whom we first saw.

ĊIKKU: Those two were women and came from the valley;
their heads were covered and their gait hurried,
as though they were avoiding being seen.

GAWDENZ: I think by this time Pietru has arrived
with the others on the Mosta Road
beyond the Bay of Bur Marrad from whence
the enemy are climbing to attack.

ĊIKKU: Throbbing with apprehension is my heart
for those unhappy . . .

GAWDENZ: They are nowhere here!

ĊIKKU: We shall have to go to Kozzi.

GAWDENZ: Let us take
this lane that leads to Fomm ir-Riħ, because
a while ago I saw the guards descend
into the valley close at hand and they
were spying round in all this neighbourhood.

[*They set out on the way and disappear*].

[KOZZI *and* BETTI *come out from the path looking terrified and go towards the cottage. The girl* BETTI *is weeping*].

KOZZI: Do not cry, child!... I hear no further sound
of those guards. Rożi is in the upper
room or in some hiding-place. Tell me where
you left Rożi with Xandra.

BETTI: I left her
in the yard. Xandra and Rożi were talking
together alone.

KOZZI: No one else with them?

BETTI: No one else.

KOZZI: Nor did you hear the guards' voices
when I called to you? when I said: 'Open!
I have come to fetch you both, open the door.
I have come for you, because people
have entered the cottage!'

BETTI: Breathless with terror,
I remained there crouching in the corner.
All I wished was Xandra to avoid.
I only heard her say to Rożi: 'Where
has your mother gone? Why are you alone
here, Rożi? Come away! the enemy
are near.' And nought else did I hear her say
to Rożi, save the words 'Come on!' Then,
after a short silence, I heard confused
sounds as though, unexpectedly, people
had come upon them and, at that instant,
I heard you knocking at the door, saying:
'Open the door, it is I Kozzi!'

[KOZZI *remains grave, without a word*].

BETTI: To go upstairs I am afraid, to call out
I am afraid, because those murderers
are hidden somewhere hereabout, I fear.
Leave me not alone. I will come with you.
Together we will go upstairs to see
whether Rożi be not in the upper room.
Leave me not alone.

[KOZZI *goes to look in the cattle-pen, peers about to right and left, goes up the steps to the upper room with* BETTI *clutching at her skirts; she listens at the door, knocks again and again. No answer,* KOZZI, *disappointed, comes down the steps and does not speak,* BETTI, *without a word, bursts into tears.*

XANDRA *approaches the farmhouse with an enquiring look. She perceives* KOZZI *and* BETTI, *strengthens her resolution and goes up to them*].

XANDRA: Standing here: one grave
the other tearful, what is this I see?
And why are you until now alone here?
Do you from one moment to another
await destruction by the enemy
or that this unhappy roof upon you fall?
Go back to your homes, and your things, collect.
Warn Anni and Matti to go at once,
to flee from here. Don Carlos has proclaimed
that, on their way here, are the pirates now;
from the Coastal Commandant he learned this,
it is said, as well as from Gawdenz.
Before sunset will they be upon us.
I am going to let Pedro know and
then, to Hal-Tartarni, upon the ass
will I ride off with my possessions
to my old friend's house. Betti seems tearful;
you, Kozzi, why are so serious?
Let us go, my sisters, let us go.
Come on, Kozzi, and bring Betti with you.

KOZZI: Betti will not come. Betti will not come.

XANDRA: But what is the matter with her? These tears,
what is the reason for them?

KOZZI: Because she
left her friend behind her. Can you not say
whether you have seen Rożi? Those eyes of yours
which always love to spy out everything
around this neighbourhood, tell us whether
this unhappy girl you have not seen. At dawn
this morning you were watching with the guards
over this farmhouse, for very precious
to your heart is this home of Matti's and,

from the enemy, as though it were your own,
you wish to guard it. A little while ago
you were seen with Rożi. Tell me, Xandra,
when did you go out with Rożi and where
have you left her?

[XANDRA *stands looking as though she were astounded.* DUN SIDOR *is seen coming down from the field-path in conversation with* GAWDENZ *and* ĊIKKU. *The Old Servant of* DUN SIDOR *is holding the reins of the mule laden with sacks full of articles.* ZOLLI, MATTI *and* ANNI *are walking behind them, with heads bowed*].

XANDRA [*looking back, sees all the people coming. Terrified and scarcely able to speak*].

Kozzi my dear, I saw
Rożi alone in the yard of this cottage
when I informed her of the advent
of the pirates and of their ferocity;
then I advised her to leave and go back
to her mother, but her mind was set on
seeing Pietru on his way to Mosta
and, Kozzi my dear, in fear and trembling
I accompanied her to the bottom
of the valley on the way to your house.
Of the rest, Kozzi, I know nothing, nothing,
because after that Pedro came to me
in terror and said that we must fly.
I am going, Kozzi dear, I am going.
Trust in God, even as do I, that He
may free us this time from all this danger.
Take everything with you. I am going.
May God bring us home safely and protect us.
We will pray, Kozz, we will pray. [*leaves hastily and disappears*].

KOZZI: Soft-tongued,
soft-tongued is this Xandra but deceitful
is her heart to no small degree. This devil
of a woman asks me to trust in God.
I trust that God may deliver Rożi
from your claws at length, O you evil soul!...

BETTI: [*as she looks back*]
Down the path are coming Pietru's comrades

towards us; Ċikku, Gawdenz and Dun Sidor,
behind them, with my mother, come Anni
and Matti but I do not see Rożi
with them ...

KOZZI: Say nothing about Rożi yet,
let us see what has become of her,
for those old people will die of grief
before we ever reach Imdina ...

BETTI: My very blood is running cold, I have
no strength to talk. Believe me. I would wish
the earth might swallow me before I stand
in front of that poor father, that poor mother.
Tell me what am I to say to them?

KOZZI: Be quiet, Betti, and control your tears
as best you may. We will pray to God,
Great Father of Compassion; we will trust
in Him, my child, we will trust in Him.
He will bring us comfort at the last...

[BETTI *hides her face; almost bursts into bitter weeping. She restrains her tears with an effort.* GAWDENZ *and* ĊIKKU *join them with* DUN SIDOR].

GAWDENZ: A fishing boat from Għawdex saw the galleys
of the Berbers nearing Qawra Point
and the boat turned round upon its course,
rowing back again that the news might thus
be brought to us ...

ĊIKKU: A Sicilian vessel,
with all sails set, came into the bay
of Wied il-Għajn and told of five war-galleys
which had encircled it. The force of the wind
drove them towards Bur Sqallin.

GAWDENZ: The enemy
disembarked at once and in the darkness
of the night they found the open doorway
of our coasts.

DUN SIDOR: And no further news has reached us
of these Berbers? Does no one from Sicily
know anything of how these sea-robbers

have fallen upon us? has there been no word
as yet of assistance from the King?

GAWDENZ: That Kemmuna, which should have been our strength
and bulwark to defend us from the foe,
is today swarming with the enemy.

ĊIKKU: How many blows have we not fearlessly
had to face up to unarmed, in our hands
nought but stones as weapons. How many foes
have we not fought hand to hand: at our feet
we threw all who came to slay; finally
their overwhelming numbers conquered us.
Men, houses, cattle, farms, the growing crops,
trees and orchards, all were burned and pillaged.
How, from Mellieħa descends the foe
and by destruction is his passage marked,
by ravished homes, by looted flocks and herds,
all who oppose his path are wounded, slain
with firearms or, by the shining steel
he carries in his hand, are menaced,
to the mountains they, by fear, are driven.
We have left our dead behind us, we come
to unite ourselves with those of Mosta
that we may block the passage of the foe.

[ANNI, MATTI *and* ZOLLI *draw near to listen enthusiastically to the words of* ĊIKKU.

DUN SIDOR, *with bowed head, stands thoughtful,* KOZZI *and* BETTI *remain apart behind everyone. Silence falls*].

DUN SIDOR: Let us go over to the capital,
my children, let us go away from here;
because the enemy is in control.
We will collect our things and the cattle.
Our lives, my children, we must think of now,
within the bastions we shall be besieged
by the enemy before tonight.

ANNI: [*tearfully*]
There, in the upper room, all is collected.
Go, Gawdenz, take them, load them on the mule.
I have not the heart to go in there myself
and see, dismantled, that unhappy room.

GAWDENZ: Ċikku is bringing out the animals
and we will escape from here at once.
In companies, from Pwales and Balluta,
the laden peasants are all coming thence ...

MATTI: That I should be compelled to leave my home
in my closing years; how harsh this parting
is, alas, how harsh! I had desired here
to close my eyes where I had opened them,
in this dear nest in which as child I grew,
cottage of happiness and lifelong love
which, by tears, never had been stained. Ah why,
from the sheltering home in my old age, now
must I flee? ... It seems as though the curse
of all sinners is about to fall on thee.
Faultless, dear house, faultless I fly from thee!
All thy doors have been left open to the foe
That these thy cruel lords, who maintained thee but
that, by thy wealth, their wallets might be filled
and thy sons be left behind to starve.

[ĊIKKU *goes into the cattle-pen and leads out the animals, some sheep, a calf and a mule, waters them and ties them up. He loads the mule with full sacks which* GAWDENZ *hands out to him from the upper room, while* ANNI *assists him with tear-filled eyes*].

MATTI: [*is seated on a boulder in thought; he raises his head and looks about all round him as though he had become aware of something*].
And Rożi, where is Rożi? –

KOZZI: Old Matti
is raving over his daughter Rożi!

MATTI: [*rises like a man in bewilderment and with an angry look*].
Rożi! I want Rożi, tell me where she is,
tell me where my daughter is! Where is she?

[*Everybody stands looking, without knowing how to answer*].
Everyone is silent, every mouth shut
and nobody is able to answer me?

ANNI: [*with a cry of fear*]
Rożi!...

MATTI: I call to Rożi because you,

my friends, leave me unanswered. Tell me,
somebody tell me, where is she?

[ANNI, *bewildered, runs up the steps, goes into the upper room, comes down again, goes into the cattle-pen and, beside herself with grief, stops in front of* KOZZI, *trembling all over.* KOZZI *clasps both her hands.* BETTI *bursts into violent weeping*].

KOZZI: Rożi is lost!

END OF ACT IV

The Blouse

Just the one blouse I made. I'm no good really:
I'm all thumbs, the needle's much too short
and the thread gets grey and tangled,
I don't know why.

The seams are different sizes,
the sections different lengths, untidy,
I don't know why.
Still, it looks pretty enough, from a distance.

It's sleeping now, its body blue and crumpled.
Of course it's clean, – it's been well washed.
It looks very pretty, at least it'll do
for God:

He looks at things from a very great distance.

(From the Finnish of Aila Meriluoto:
included in *Pahat unet*, 1958.)

Track

Two o'clock at night: moonlight. The train has stopped
way out in the plain. Far off, points of light in a town,
Shimmering cold on the horizon.

Like someone fallen so deep adream
he can never remember where he's been
when he returns to his room.

Or like someone fallen so very ill
That all his days become shimmering points, a cluster,
cold and faint on the horizon.

Two o'clock: bright moonlight, few stars.

(From the Swedish of Tomas Tranströmer:
included in *Hemlighter pä vägen*, 1958.)

Philip Riley

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