inter litteraria

culture and nation at the turn of the millennium

culture et nation au seuil du troisième millénaire

cultura y nación en el cambio de milenio

kultur und nation an der jahrtausendwende

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The emblem of the 3rd International Conference of the EACL
(an India-ink sketch by Lembit Karu)

Introductory Note

The idea to continue the series of Tartu international conferences of comparative literature by dedicating a symposium to the issues of culture and nation emerged from a working meeting of the ICLA Committee of Cultural and Literary Identity, held under the presidency of Professor Rien T. Segers during the XV Congress of the ICLA in Leiden, in August 1997. For the suggestion of the title of the conference we are obliged to one of the members of the above mentioned Committee, the Canadian Professor Evelyn Cobley. In the course of the preparatory work for the conference we, the organizers, could feel a continuous friendly support by both the Committee led by Professor Segers and the ICLA Executive Committee presided by Professor Jean Bessière. The conference itself, held in Tartu from October 3 to 6, 1999, at its most brilliant moments of academic discussion and eloquence owed a lot to the lively presence of Professor Rien T. Segers and the Romanian Professor Monica Spiridon, member of the ICLA Executive Committee.

As the two preceding conferences of the Estonian Association of Comparative Literature, the last one, too, could only take place thanks to the generous financial support of the Estonian Science Foundation. Traditionally, the other important supporter of the EACL has been the Estonian Ministry of Culture. To both of them belongs our gratitude.

The present monographic issue of *Interlitteraria* gathers, first and foremost, the fruits of the conference. At the same time we are happy to add some valuable writing on relevant issues by scholars who for different reasons could not themselves be present at the conference.

It is hardly possible to give a résumé in a few lines of the great variety of thinking on culture and nation, developed in twenty-five articles by scholars coming often from utterly different parts of the world. Nonetheless, my impression is that a critical meditation from "borders" and "peripheries" prevails in our present *Inter-*

litteraria. The postmodern discourse has definitely shaken "big narratives" and inflated myths which until recently have guided the destiny of most nations. None of the "universal" truths appears too secure or defended at the present turn of the millennium — not even compassion, as Jim Hicks eloquently proves on the example of how the recent tragedy in Bosnia has been handled by those who manipulate information and our conscience. A great number of values cherished only until recently, have become de-semioti-sized, being apparently deprived of meaning, though, one must admit, the postmodern zero-sign we are facing in its unnumbered incarnations often proves to be just the frankest answer in a world that has been and continues to be crammed with lies and hypocrisy of those who rule it. (Cf. the essay by Anna Čakare).

Most national myths — likewise those of Romania or Estonia of the past have revealed their emptiness and can scarcely hope to feed nations any more in the turmoil of economic and info-technological globalization, with its new and powerful commercial idols, on the one hand, and the stubbornly persisting earthly misery outside the Utopian island for a handful of the rich, on the other. The above-said is convincingly demonstrated in the articles of Monica Spiridon, Jaak Rähesoo, Epp Annus, Piret Kruuspere, and others. The historical trajectory showing how nations and cultures, by different and diverging routes, have reached the present critical state, is wonderfully described from a sociological, a semiotical and a postcolonial point of view respectively, by Erkki Sevänen, Rein Veidemann and Tiina Kirss.

Though, what culture or nation of the world could claim that it is untouched by a colonial or a postcolonial remorse or unease of the colonizer or the colonized? What cultural area is free from the anguishing frontier with the Other? Even the very centre of the world "club of the rich" is hardly safe in our days. Its interior chaos and search for a temporal comfort in creating virtual utopias and dystopias is finely epitomized by Madina Tlostanova's article.

The Other seems to lie deep in the very human existence, unshakable, as modernizing processes, impulsed by the "centres", continue to flourish on the surface. Are nations really mere arte-facts of the mind — intellectual, imaginable or mythical projects, as some influential postmodern thinkers suggest? Judging from the

conclusions of the articles by Erkki Sevänen, Rein Veidemann, Johan Schimanski, Indrek Õis, Ene-Reet Soovik and Ángel García Galiano, they may yet appear as realities that go beyond the language, the defining signifier, and reveal their essence in a completely unpredictable way, by force of a sudden "explosion" — to use Yuri Lotman's term — that with a certain predictability is likely to occur on some (spacial or temporal) "frontier" of the semiosphere. Thus, the "leap" of Estonians, Finns, Latvians and Lithuanians directly from folklore to modernity (Rähesoo), and the mighty deconstructive effort of the Estonian theatre of the 1990s (Kruuspere), which, by way of irony (about irony), with its deep Estonian-rootedness, may still be interpreted as another phase in a majestic construction of a nation in the longer run of history. The image created by a great writer capable of listening to the manifold voices of the Other can shed light on the historical truth more objectively than the writing of those who by official power structures (the "Self") are employed to "construct history", as Thomas Salumets observes.

No previous issue of *Interlitteraria* has managed to describe Estonian culture and nation from their genesis to their postmodern condition so thoroughly as the present one. We may hope that by means of this collective effort, in which flashes of inspiring and original thought, as well as daringly new (and polemical) comparative perspectives are not rare, a section of Europe's until recently "obscure" periphery could become more identifiable, as looked at from "outside", than it has been. The Pole Tadeusz Kowzan and the Lithuanian Loreta Mačianskaitė, from the older and the younger generation of semiotic scholars, importantly complete the "Baltic vision" of this *Interlitteraria*.

Among the most influential postmodern currents that have awakened us to a dialogue with the Other in ourselves, have been feminism and gender studies. In this issue of *Interlitteraria*, too, these voices can be heard. However, they also demonstrate that the circle of "us" has remained, in practical terms, limited to a small particle of Western intellectuality, while the industrialist-industrious man-kind, or the technological *homo*, has pushed forward *his* truths and time, deaf to the cries of the Other. (Cf. the articles by Anna Botta and Raili Põldsaar).

The smaller the national area, the closer its borders — the source of a dialogue, according to Lotman — to its centre. Why not imagine Tartu international conferences and *Interlitteraria* as a forum for continuing a dialogue with the Other also in this particular section of the "border"? Let me mention that Estonian and Finnish are among the few European languages that do not recognize the "apartheid" of the gender category. The deep "invisible" layer of our culture, the immense treasury of folk-songs, was created mainly by women. No other European nation comes to mind, in whose "awakening" to an individual-reflexive conscience the main inciting role had been played by a woman poet, like Lydia Koidula (1843–1886) in the Estonian case. Thus, statistics often just expose one side of the phenomenon. Though, it is also true that under the modernist-centralist enthusiasm in the 20th century (thoroughly analyzed by Jaak Rähesoo and echoed by the statistics of Indrek Tart), a good deal of the original premise of a dialogue with the Other has been lost in Estonian culture.

A wider view of the processes of culture and nation — in the general context of comparative literary studies and literary history — can be seen in the articles by the Chinese-Australian Li Xia and the Spaniard Arturo Casas. They are both highly critical of the "mainstream" of comparative studies, which until now have almost exclusively been directed by Occidental and male centred attitudes. Nothing can be done to improve this strongly partial state of things in a fortnight. However, if the metatextual effort continues to carry its (self)critical accents and if in the rush to follow the fashionable trends emerging from the "centre" it does not forget the dialogical assets of the theoretical thought of a longer tradition (comprehensively alluded to by Arturo Casas), a gradual change may eventually take place. Naturally, a genuine "explosion" leading to a radically new quality in cultural studies dealing with the identity of a nation and culture, would need a considerably more active (than until now) inter-dynamics between mental-spiritual processes and sociopolitical and economic developments. With one of Europe's main borders entering the new millennium by a terrific scene of a mightier nation crushing by crude military force any search for identity of a smaller nation,

and the West turning its deaf ear to it, these hopes seem to be by far too fragile.

And yet the efforts to expand the zone of a genuine dialogue should continue. We would be happy if the forum offered by our Tartu international conferences and *Interlitteraria* could contribute to this dialogue also in the days to come. In September 2001 we hope to organize a conference on world drama and theatre, focusing on the inter-relations between the vanguard and the tradition. Before that, however, we plan to publish our third *miscellanea*-issue of *Interlitteraria* (6, 2001). The MSS should arrive by January 15, 2001.

Jüri Talvet,
Editor

"The Post-National Condition": On the Relationship Between the State, Nation and Nationalist Policy in the Present-Day Western World

ERKKI SEVÄNEN

Introduction

In the last two decades a considerable number of cultural and social theorists have suggested that we are now living on the threshold of a new historical era. In this new or "post-national" era, as they sometimes call it, we shall be obliged to bid a tender farewell to the old nation states and national cultures. The motivation for this would appear to be located in the process known as globalization or, more precisely, within in its present stage of development. As globalization continues, states will increasingly lose their economic, political and cultural sovereignty. The result of such changes will be that states will also gradually lose interest in maintaining their particular national cultures. As the functionalists might say, in a post-national world a strictly nationalist policy would be a "dysfunctional" matter which states could no longer allow to play a central role in their actions and institutions. In a post-national world, nationalist policies would, nevertheless, still exist, but their significance would be diminishing and they would no longer constitute progressive forces.

A number of theorists have also connected thoughts such as these with the concept of post-modernity, suggesting that nation states and national cultures belong to the era of modernity or classical modernity. This was an era that began in the 17th and 18th

centuries but, according to such theorists, it is an era which we are now leaving behind us. In the new or post-modern era, economic, political and cultural organizations are often multinational and function on a global scale. Furthermore, it has been supposed that Western countries and some Asian countries, notably Japan, have already moved into the post-modern phase, but as the globalization process continues other countries are also likely to move into this phase.

In the 1990s ideas such as these have been quite common in social and cultural theory and in popular essays. In the academic world, Zygmunt Bauman (1992; 1994), Anthony Giddens (1989; 1992) and E. J. Hobsbawm (1990) have been amongst their best-known proponents. All three of these theorists have suggested that in the more or less near future nation-states and nationalist policies will no longer be central political and ideological forces — or that both will have begun to constitute real obstacles to successful economic, political and cultural development. It is noticeable, too, that, with the enlargement of the European Union, similar notions have been adopted by many journalists and ordinary citizens in Western Europe.

Thus, in the course of this article I should like to examine these notions from a critical perspective. My initial reading of them, as will become clear later, is that to some extent at least they have tended to be exaggerations of reality. However, before we can deal with them properly and correctly, we need to define some of the basic concepts, namely: "Western states", "culture", "national" and "nation".

Definitions of Basic Concepts

When I talk about "the Western world" I am referring to a particular geographical area. Primarily, this area comprises Europe and North America. It is, of course, true that we cannot define Europe in an unambiguous way. In particular, it is difficult to say where exactly the borderline between Europe and Asia runs (Lepsius 1999: 201). But we do dare to say that Russia is only in part a European state and that the eastern parts of that country belong

properly to Asia. Another problematic example is Turkey. Although Turkey is a member of NATO and in the near future perhaps also a member of the European Union, many Western people regard it as a non-Western country. Likewise, it is also true nowadays that some areas in Australia, Asia, Africa and South America bear a great resemblance to the European and North American countries, but in the present connection I shall have to leave them outside my discussion for closer consideration at a later date. I will, however, refer to them in passing, and in relation to a few general remarks about the position of nationalism in the present world.

Secondly, the word "culture" has many possible meanings. In a traditional anthropological sense it refers to the way of life of a community or a social group. In an anthropological use the concept of culture can be said to have a broad meaning, for the way of life of a community contains its collective customs, manners, beliefs, traditions, rules and institutions. Here, however, I do not generally refer to "culture" in this broad sense. Rather, my reference will be to such mental things as literary and artistic traditions and collective values, identities, mentalities, habits of thought, symbols and myths. This meaning is clearly narrower than the traditional anthropological meaning, but it will help us to deal with the problem already outlined.

The third basic concept is "national". It is based on another concept, namely the idea of "nation". It is not easy to define concepts of this kind in only a few words. In general, though, it can be claimed that a nation is the kind of community or group whose members feel that they belong together, which provides them with a sense of mutual solidarity and belonging. This means, then, that, to some extent at least, they share the same kind of collective identity, which is termed their "national identity". A nation has also a name (for example, "the French", "the Germans", "the Russians", "the Estonians", "the Japanese", "the Chinese"), and its members believe that a certain place or area in the world is their home country or fatherland. A nation specifically inhabits that territory. If, however, a group or community does not live in its home country, then it is not a nation. In this case it has left its

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home country, and in its new country it usually has the position of an ethnic or national minority. (Smith 1991: 14–15, 40.)

When a group or community wants to be a nation, it wants to handle its own affairs, without the intervention of foreign rulers. For this purpose it requires its own political unit. In normal circumstances in the past, the state or autonomous territory has functioned as this kind of unit, which has given rise to our concept of the nation state. Traditionally, states in the West have been called nation-states. To be sure, this has not been a completely exact expression, since national minorities have formed a part of Western countries, with the consequence that the populations of these countries have not been as homogeneous as the concept of the nation-state seems to require (Connor 1991: 39–41; Finer 1975: 85–86; Tilly 1994: 35, 48). Nevertheless, Western states have attempted to be nation-states: their aim has been to make their populations culturally homogeneous (Robertson 1993: 69; Schudson 1994: 21–22). This aim has been pursued with the help of popular education, uniform school systems, and particular disciplines such as history, folklore, ethnology, philology and literary studies. In other words, Western states have traditionally attempted to create and maintain a collective national culture with the help of a cultural policy that has had a clear and strong nationalist dimension. In general, nationalist policy always wants to establish a political unit for a single nation — or if a nation already has its own political unit, nationalist policy tries to protect this unit and strengthen the collective identity of the nation as a whole.

It has been supposed that the bond between the Western states and nationalist policy is in the process of becoming weaker, and that these states will gradually lose interest in maintaining a collective national culture. If these predictions were to come true, they would lead to changes in literary and cultural studies. Traditionally, studies in this area have defined their object partly in terms of national concepts — "English literature", "French painting", "German music" — and in particular in the 19th and early 20th centuries they participated directly in the development of nationalist ideologies and national cultures (Brennan 1994: 52–53; Giesen 1991: 12; King 1991: ix). If nation states and national communities really are in the process of disappearing, these

studies will need to partly rethink the scope of their concepts and agendas.

My intention here is to interrogate these notions and suppositions — or rather, I intend to locate the actual limits of their boundaries. For this purpose my method will be to examine (i) the relationships between nation states, nationalism and modernity, (ii) the phenomenon of stateless nationalism, and (iii) the concept of multiculturalism. In the course of this investigation attention will also be paid to the differences that exist between the western and eastern parts of Europe. Although the article deals with the situation in the Western world, it will primarily consider this situation from the standpoint of the European countries.

Nation States, Nationalism and Modernity

Since the 1960s theorists in the field of nationalism have generally considered that nation states are products of the process of social and cultural modernization. Nation-states and nationalism started to emerge as mass phenomena in the late 18th century. From then on, the nation-state has constituted a norm in state-building, first in the Western world and later also further afield. Hence, Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt (1991: 37), Liah Greenfeld (1994: 491) and Alain Touraine (1995: 137–138) are correct when they write that there exists a close relationship between the nation state, nationalism and modernity. As Touraine (ib. 137) puts it, nationalism has meant the mobilization of the past and of traditions for the sake of the future and modernity. In its extreme forms (Nazism, fundamentalism) nationalism has been changed into an anti-modern phenomenon, but these forms have to be regarded as deviations from the predominant and pro-modern forms.

How can such phenomena be explained? Why have the nation state and nationalism had such a close relationship with modernity? This relationship can be explained with the help of political, cultural and economic reasons.

From a political perspective, it is significant that after the collapse of feudalism and societies based on the aristocratic estates the new brand of rulers could no longer establish their power on a

foundation made up of religious or metaphysical principles, or on dynastic traditions. Instead, they had to depend on the people; that is, they had to gain the approval of the ordinary people for their right to rule. The German historian Otto Dann (1991: 58–59), writes that after the French Revolution (1789) approval of this kind began to become an obligatory and necessary part of political culture. Within this new constellation nationalism was a tool that helped rulers to develop their relationship with the people. It also helped the people to identify with their rulers and to feel solidarity with their rulers, who were now seen as members of the same group — or national community — as the common people themselves.

Thus, from the late-18th century on, states and rulers in Western Europe were active in the development and maintenance of nationalism. As an ideology nationalism is a relatively systematic doctrine concerned with a particular national community and nationality. It speaks about the origins and history of the community. As a system of discourse and cultural symbolism, nationalism has created symbols which are shared by the members of the same community and which link them together.

This means that nationalism is at the same time both a political and a cultural phenomenon (Arnason 1994: 217, 230; Bennington 1994: 121). As a political phenomenon it has, in a crucial way, shaped modern political culture and its basic principles. As a cultural phenomenon it has developed collective traditions, myths, values and symbols. It is precisely within this cultural dimension that literature and the other arts, and the humanities have, in general, taken part in the development of nationalism.

It is also possible to explain the popularity of nationalism and the nation states from an economic perspective. The development of modern capitalism required extensive markets which extended well beyond local and regional boundaries. In the process, modern capitalism built up a structural pressure which required the formation of a national market area and a national community to make use of it. Benedict Anderson (1983) has pointed out that the new cultural production system also produced special effects on the development of national communities. He uses the word "print capitalism" for this new cultural production system, which

includes the modern press and publishing companies. Like the uniform school system, print capitalism standardized the written language and helped people to understand each other better. At the same time its products — the news, articles, novels — helped people to identify with their national community, since the products of capitalism viewed the world mainly from the perspective of a particular national community.

Hence, it can be argued that a close relationship has existed between the nation state, nationalism and modernity. It is obviously for this reason that some theorists have contended that the era of the nation states is now coming to an end or that the significance of the nation states is now diminishing fundamentally. Theorists of this kind also usually maintain that we no longer live in the period known as modernity or classical modernity. It is, however, important to distinguish between nations and nations-states. One can say that nation-states are products of the process of social and cultural modernization, but it should also be remembered that some nations are in fact older phenomena than modernity.

As Anthony D. Smith (1951: 58) has explained, many Western European nations derive historically, at least in part, from ethnic communities. An ethnic community is a group whose members believe that they are descended from the same tribe or from the same ancestors, in brief, that they stem from a common origin. This kind of belief is, of course, not necessarily based on facts, and, indeed, it is often extremely difficult to prove. For this reason one might equally well say that it is only a myth. Nevertheless, it gives the members of an ethnic community a strong collective identity which is termed their ethnic identity.

Smith (ib. 56–59; 1995: 38–41) and several other researchers (Carr 1994: 243–244; Dann 1991: 59; Ehrels 1991: 78–80; Gellner 1994: 33; Schilling 1991: 200–201) have emphasized that the concept of the nation was already in use in the Middle Ages. This concept was closely connected with ethnicity. In addition, at that time only nobles or other elite groups were accepted as true members of a nation or ethnic community. It was thought, for example, that only the English nobility actually belonged to the English nation or English ethnic community, while the common people, or

the "mob", were actually excluded from the nation. Despite this, however, it is possible to claim that as early as in the Middle Ages many Western European nations began to develop on the foundations of ethnicity and the nobility. According to Smith, this kind of concept of the nation developed especially in England, Scotland, France, Spain, Sweden and Poland.

During the Middle Ages countries such as the above-mentioned — except perhaps Sweden — were smaller and weaker than they are today. In the next phase of development, from the 16th to the 18th century, a group of a new kind of states formed in Western Europe. These states were territorially large, militarily powerful and politically centralised, and they brought local principalities under their control, usually by means of massive and brutal violence. Spain, France, Great Britain, Sweden (at that time Finland and certain Polish and Estonian provinces were also parts of Sweden), Prussia and, to a smaller extent, even Holland are good examples of this kind of state. Each of these strong states was built around a dominant ethnic group. In Spain, for example, the dominant ethnic group consisted of the Castilians, in Great Britain the English, and in Sweden the Swedes. Attempts were made to integrate other ethnic groups, or even assimilate them into the population of these states, yet none of the state populations were able to become fully homogeneous, and, as we have already seen, a number of strong ethnic and national minorities existed in Western European countries.

At this stage, the concept of the nation was still limited. In principle, only the nobility and other elite groups were accepted as members of the nations. Only they possessed full political and legal rights, and only they were real citizens of their states. The great majority of the population, the ordinary rural people, scarcely possessed any kind of national identity. Individual commoners had a strong sense of regional or local identity, but their national identity was weak or slight — or it was missing altogether. Following Charles Tilly (1975: 22–24; 1994: 35, 48), we can identify this as the phase of state-building in Western Europe. In contrast, the phase of nation-building began somewhat later, in the late 18th century. The Enlightenment philosophers, in particular, demanded that the scope of the concept of the nation should be

extended. In this respect, Denis Diderot and Jean-Jacques Rous-
seau were perhaps the most radical thinkers, since they identified
the nation with the people or population of the state. They de-
manded that the ordinary people should also be accepted as true
citizens of the state and as true members of the nation.

A historical analysis such as this shows that ethnic and national
identity are older phenomena than modernity, even if only a small
minority had a clear ethnic and national identity before the start of
modernity. Hence, one can conclude that the ending of modernity,
or classical modernity, would not necessarily bring with it the
disappearance of nationalism and national consciousness.

Nationalism without a State

Historical investigations can also show that the relative signifi-
cance of states is now really diminishing in Western Europe. In
this respect, Bauman, Giddens, Hobsbawm and their proponents
are certainly right, although they speak about this reduction in
general terms, offering no specific geographical conditions. The
traditional West European states have in fact lost part of their
economic, political and cultural sovereignty or independence. This
generalization holds true especially for the countries belonging to
the European Union, but it has, nonetheless, a wider validity, and
to a greater or lesser extent it also holds true for all Western Euro-
pean countries. Ulrich Beck (1997) has accurately claimed that, on
the one hand, nation states must nowadays share the global scene
and power with international and supranational institutions (the
United Nations, the World Bank, the European Union, NATO),
organizations (Amnesty International, Greenpeace) and other
movements. On the other hand, they must also function in a world
in which the wealth and power of the large financial companies
and concerns have undergone a manifold increase.

On an economic level, the use of the new technologies is
simultaneously a source both of wealth and of political problems
for states. Since many economic activities are nowadays dependent
on digital information technology, the flow of information between
different regions, countries and continents has grown to be

extremely rapid and fluent, so that states can no longer control all of the economic activities going on inside their own boundaries. In this sense, therefore, their economic sovereignty is diminishing. Needless to say, this kind of situation not only prevails in the Western European countries, but the other Western countries and non-Western countries tend to exist in largely the same kind of situation. (Lash & Urry 1994: 180–182, 319–322; Luhmann 1997: 24–25, 30–32.)

Political developments have taken a similar route. On the one hand, the Western European states have handed over part of their political sovereignty to the European Union, that is, to a supra-national political unit that is larger than any single state. On the other hand, in Western Europe the significance of smaller terri-torial units has grown. The regions and provinces can, in principle, maintain direct contact with each other and also with the European Union, and the constituent states of the Union have also supported this co-operation — as long as it is not incompatible with their own immediate interests (Albertin 1999: 329–330; Eder 1999: 166–168). In order to become more effective, the constituent states have had to act in this way: they have had to delegate part of their power to supranational and regional units. However, one of the consequences of this change has been that the strengthening of the regions has somewhat reduced their dependence on the states *per se*. Hence, Richard Münch (1995) can with good reason claim the consequence to be that the citizens of Western European countries now live somewhere between a "nation-state, regional autonomy and world society".

The European Union is primarily based on the principle of purposive rationality, since it has legitimized itself by means of arguments which emphasize its economic utility and efficiency (Lepsius 1999: 205). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the economy and the law will become the most uniform areas of social action within the European Union (ib. 220–221; Segers & Viehoff 1999: 45). Conversely, the members of the Union will gain more freedom in cultural matters. In principle, they could even practise a strictly nationalist cultural policy, although in reality this possi-bility has not yet come about — nor will it come about in the near future.

In earlier times, nationalism held a firm position in the public cultural policy of the Western European countries. Especially after the Second World War, these countries developed welfare state systems which took care of their citizens' economic and social security and their physical and mental health. Western European countries also created financial support systems for the arts and cultural services. At the time, politicians thought that it was, at least in part, the duty of the state and the local authorities to maintain a web of national cultural institutions and services (Bennett 1995; CPIF 1995). This web included art centres, museums, theatres, orchestras, libraries, broadcasting companies and several other cultural institutions. In addition, the politicians believed that the financial support systems would be able to rescue the national cultures of the Western European countries from the supranational or North American mass culture. Hence support systems like these also functioned as tools in nationalist protection policies developed by the states.

Since the 1980s, nationalist considerations have gradually lost their central position in the cultural policies practised by the Western European states, to be replaced, in part, by a neo-liberal doctrine which demands that cultural institutions should, wherever possible, be regarded as business activities (Rodgers 1989). In this sense many cultural institutions in Western European countries and cities have been converted into commercial enterprises which have to generate financial profits and tempt tourists to visit these countries and cities.

In these respects the links between nationalist policies and states have tended to weaken in Western Europe. But it does not follow from this that national cultures are nowadays cast adrift. First, one must notice that Western European states still want to keep their national cultures alive. Nationalist policies have not disappeared, although their meaning has somewhat diminished in the institutions of Western European states. And secondly, it is important to see that the institutions and practices of a civil society can also participate in maintaining national cultures and national identities (Billig 1995: 16, 37). Here the concept of a "civil society" refers, in the Hegelian manner, to the non-public social sphere. The public social sphere contains the institutions of the

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state and of the regional and local authorities, whereas the non-public sphere supplies a domain for the performance of citizens' own activities. To sum up, the citizens' own enterprises, associations and organizations belong to the non-public sphere.

It follows from this that national identity and national consciousness can, in principle and in practice, survive and flourish without direct support from the state. In this case they are maintained by the civil society. In the 19th century this kind of situation prevailed in certain Eastern and Southeastern areas of Europe and in various parts of Central Europe. The term which can be applied here is that of the phenomenon of stateless nationalism.

In the 19th century Eastern and Southeastern Europe was ruled over by three large, bureaucratic, multinational states, namely the Russian Empire, the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire (Turkey). These Empires had divided up Eastern and Southeastern Europe between themselves. During the 19th century a number of national liberation movements emerged within their borders (see, for example, Hroch 1968). But because these movements could not borrow from the multinational states already mentioned, they had to create their own associations, organizations, newspapers and journals. Although they tried to establish their own state or political unit, to begin with they had to act without any state or political unit. The result was the formation of national liberation movements in, for example, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania and Poland.

These examples show that national movements and national consciousness are able to survive, spread and flourish outside the state — and even in a situation in which the state tries actively to prevent their spreading. The cases of Eastern, Southeastern and Central Europe are also important in another respect. When in the 1980s the multinational states of the Soviet Union and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia began to lose their previous viability, a great number of nationalist movements began to emerge with surprising rapidity in their area. As we know, many of these movements later succeeded in establishing their own states. In the present situation these new states need to build up their institutions and strengthen their national cultures. To sum up, the relative significance of the state is by no means diminishing

everywhere in the Western world, and the bond between state and nationalist policy is not weakening in all Western countries.

Likewise, the political revolutions in the so-called "people's democracies" — Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary — were also national revolutions (Leggewie 1999: 191–192). In the late 80s and in the early 90s the centralized state system of the "socialist bloc" dissolved and its constituent countries were liberated from the domination of socialist parties and the imperial Soviet Union. Thus, in this sense political power was restored anew to the national institutions of those countries.

At the same time the former socialist countries were opened up to the rest of the world and to the capitalist world market. At the present moment many of them are in the process of joining the European Union. As a part of Germany, the former East Germany already belongs to this Union. Not long ago, in 1998, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and the Czech Republic (and also Cyprus) started to negotiate with the European Union with a view to joining the Union. If plans are realized, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Rumania and Slovakia (and also Malta and Turkey) will do the same during the year 2000 or somewhat later.

All this means that in the 1990s and on the threshold of the new millennium nation-building, globalization and Europeanization have all simultaneously characterized the situation in the former socialist countries — or at least in the majority of them. In these countries the ordinary people and the institutions of civil society were active in the realization of the political-national revolution, whereas the state apparatus had usually been controlled by socialists. But more recently the institutions of the state have also participated actively in the development of national symbols and identity.

The factors mentioned above — nationalism, globalization and Europeanization — also characterize the situation in the Western European countries (Münch 1999: 233). To be sure, there are a number of nationalist movements in Western Europe and North America, some of the most obvious examples of which are the IRA in Northern Ireland, Scottish nationalism in Great Britain, Corsican separatism in France, the Basque movement in Spain, and the nationalist movement in French-speaking Canada. All of

these movements have attempted to gain more political power and establish their own political institutions (Brubaker 1994: 49–52; Hutchinson & Smith 1994: 11). In addition, Western Europe is nowadays full of regionalist aspirations and hatred of foreigners or, to be more precise, for people who have migrated into Europe from Asia, the Arab countries and Africa. Although these two phenomena are unlikely to set up their own political units, they have often displayed a family connection with nationalism. In particular, hatred of foreigners has generally been a fixed aspect of the racist and ultra right-wing forms of nationalism.

In spite of such similarities between the Western European countries and the former socialist countries the position of nationalism seems to be different in the two areas. In the latter, the states have participated actively in developing nationalism, whereas in Western Europe the present-day forms of nationalism have mainly flourished outside the institutions of the states themselves. Gerard Delanty (1999: 278–280) goes so far as to suggest that in present-day Western Europe nationalism is mainly a system of values which is supported and maintained primarily by the civil society. Its most eager proponents are the above-mentioned nationalist movements and people who are afraid of globalization and Europeanization. In their *Nazioni sensa Stati* (1992) the Italian scholars Mario Diani and Alberto Melucci have also arrived at conclusions such as these.

Although the conclusions reached by Delanty, Diani and Melucci are, in my opinion, on the right lines, they need to be further specified. As such they are too general and unspecific. In this connection it is useful to distinguish between active and structural nationalism. Active nationalism is the kind of nationalism that is maintained by organized movements and purposive policies. Structural nationalism, in turn, is maintained by everyday social practices and by social and cultural structures. In the latter case, the constant structural features of social and cultural life tend to produce national mentalities and identities and national habits of thought. In a partially similar way, Anthony D. Smith (1991: ix, 73–74) has spoken about nationalism as a systematic ideology and as an attitude or mental orientation. This distinction parallels the distinction I have described here.

From this perspective it can be claimed that the relative meaning of actual nationalism is in the process of diminishing in the institutions of Western European states. Likewise, on this actual or purposive level the bond between the state and nationalism is weakening in these countries. But this generalization does not necessarily hold true for structural nationalism. The process of globalization and Europeanization has to some extent thrown open and pluralized people's cultural identity — in the sense that nowadays there are several groups or communities with which they can identify (Münch 1999: 235–236, 239–243). Nevertheless, nationalism may still be firmly anchored on the structures of Western European states and civil societies. As a cultural deep structure it has survived in Europe for over two hundred years, and some of its manifestations date back even further, to the Middle Ages. Hence, it is too early to say whether the current processes have changed these deep structures in a fundamental way.

On the whole nationalism is still a powerful phenomenon. When we are speaking about it on a general level, we should also take into account the nationalist movements that exist outside the Western World, most of them the result of colonial policies. The European colonial powers often created administrative territories highhandedly, paying no respect to local circumstances and tribal boundaries. In consequence, these territories first gained their independence and only then did they go on to recognise the fact that they were composed of multiple ethnic and national groups. Because groups like these tried and have tried to establish their own political units, we may conclude that the nation-state still seems to provide a norm for state-building.

Multiculturalism

I should like now to return to some of the ideas mentioned at the start of this article, which assume that the bond between states and their national cultures is currently weakening. It has also been said that one reason for this weakening is the phenomenon known as multiculturalism. Since the Second World War, and especially since the 1960s, the number of ethnic and national groups or mino-

rities has been on the increase in many countries. At the same time the phenomenon of multiculturalism has increased cultural diversity in those countries.

Hence, some social and cultural theorists are suggesting nowadays that in the conditions created by multiculturalism it is extremely difficult to establish a collective culture for the whole society or for the whole population of the state. Increasingly, societies are divided up into different subcultures and ethnic groups which attempt to protect their own group identity. In a case like this, a collective culture for the whole society may even be impossible.

It cannot be doubted that the phenomenon known as multiculturalism is real, and in many countries it has expanded the sheer amount of cultural diversity. In Western European countries the present-day boundaries between different cultures are often quite sharp, since there is an abundance of hatred of foreigners in those countries. Normally, this hatred has been racist in nature and, as I already suggested, it has been directed against people who are not Western in origin. In cases of this kind it would seem to be very difficult to form a collective culture that would include all of the different subcultures and ethnic groups. Yet it is equally important to see that national identity and collective values are nonetheless possible in a multicultural situation. The best example of this is the United States of America.

At the beginning of the 19th century the United States was still a relatively homogeneous country with some five million inhabitants. About three and a half million of these people were white, and in turn these white people were mainly British by origin. Another one million were of African origin and some half million Native American Indian. But by the start of the 20th century the ethnic situation in the United States had changed radically as a result of the immigration policy practised by the country. In the late 19th century the United States had started to receive immigrants from all over the world — mainly from European countries (Italy, Ireland, German, Austria, Russia, Poland, Spain, and the Scandinavian countries) but also from Asia and South America. The consequence of this policy was that the United States changed from being a British colony to being a multi-ethnic country (Sollers 1991: 542).

Collective or national identity in the United States is, therefore, not primarily based on ethnic identities or qualities. Such a basis would be impossible in practice, since the country as a whole is so ethnically heterogeneous. Instead, common or national values have to some extent been political in nature. The country has given all of its citizens equal and far-ranging formal rights of citizenship, and it has also granted its constituent states and local units a relatively large measure of autonomy. This, then, explains why different ethnic groups have stayed loyal to the political system that exists in the United States (Smith 1995: 107). They have not tried to establish their own political units because they have been able to maintain their own subcultures within the prevailing political system.

The North American model does not, of course, suit every country. Other countries have their own historical experiences, and relationships between different ethnic groups can be tense and strained. In these circumstances it might be extremely difficult to form a common culture that could unite different groups. To sum up, in the present multicultural and multi-ethnic situation the identities of nations cannot rest one-sidedly on ethnic qualities. Rather, identities like these need to be so large, general and fluent that they can contain several ethnic groups (Hall 1991: 44–45), otherwise the multicultural situation will lead societies into serious problems and conflicts.

It is precisely for this reason that the European Union has criticized the Baltic countries for their nationalist policies. It is a well-known fact that each of the Baltic countries has a Russian minority which does not enjoy quite the same citizenship rights as the dominant ethnic group. From the standpoint of the European Union this kind of policy is excessively ethnic and nationalist, and it carries with it the risk that the political relationships between the Union and Russia could be endangered. On the other hand, the Union has not always taken into account the fact that the Soviet Union tried actively to Russify the Baltic countries. Hence, in a certain sense these countries cannot be held responsible for the formation of their Russian minorities.

Conclusions

The position of nationalism is variable in the countries belonging to the Western world. For many reasons the bond between the state and nationalist policy or actual nationalism has weakened in Western European countries. No doubt, these states want and try to keep their national cultures alive, but in their cultural policies the significance of nationalist considerations or actual nationalism has somewhat declined.

This is not, however, the whole truth. On the one hand, the number of nationalist movements and phenomena has been increasing in Western Europe. On the other hand, many new states in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe are now constructing their own institutions and strengthening their national cultures. In addition, there also exist a great number of national movements outside the Western world.

In this sense, the nation-state still seems to be one of the norms for state-building. At the same time, one has to admit that the phenomenon of multiculturalism places states in a new situation, since they cannot construct their national cultures one-sidedly on ethnic identities. These national or common cultures must be so fluent that they can contain different ethnic groups, but they also need, as far as possible, to respect the individuality and peculiarity of each and every ethnic subculture. It seems that the safe and stable development of societies needs and requires this kind of policy.

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In Search of New Paradigms: Signposting Multiculturalism and Comparative Literature for a New Century

LI XIA

The last quarter of the twentieth century has witnessed profound changes, such as have not been seen since the previous global restructuring (industrial and economic) more than a century ago. Although some of the problems society is confronted with have been prophetically foreshadowed by artists, thinkers and visionaries, the speed with which these changes have taken place on a global scale in the past thirty years has made a fair and equitable translation of scientific and technological development into broad-based social benefit impossible. As a matter of fact, material and social circumstances for many millions from the lower classes (and entire countries and even continents) have alarmingly deteriorated and the economic disparity between the rich and the poor has intensified, the North-South Divide, for example (Thirlwall 1989). Unfortunately, it is not only the disparity in the distribution of wealth, but also worldwide discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, gender, class, language, culture, sexual preference and disability associated with it which causes grave concern.

While solutions to these issues must be found in the first instance on a political level, educational strategies are equally (or perhaps even more) important for the promotion of a fairer and more just and humane world in the twenty-first century. However laudable well-meaning expressions of goodwill and advocacy of democratic principles and respect and tolerance towards others

might be, they alone will have little impact on the *status quo*, locally and globally, as Bertold Brecht already pointed out convincingly many years ago in his play *Die Heilige Johanna Der Schlachthöfe (Saint Joan of the Stockyards)* (Brecht 1960). The main objective must rather be a sustained and educationally oriented promotion of critical self-consciousness and the individual's self-realisation as a social being in the context of dominant political and economic forces and all-pervasive ideological manipulation.

In the light of the global promotion of thoughtless leisure activities and anti-intellectual mindsets, such an undertaking will be very difficult. Also, the growing stranglehold, which free-market economists are gaining on educational institutions worldwide through privatisation and sponsorship, is bound to further complicate the situation. (The danger of forcing universities more and more on a commercial and entrepreneurial footing has been highlighted by the Australian Sinologist Pierre Ryckmans in 1996. Recent developments in Australia show that his warnings have been well founded. The commercialisation of education at the expense of the traditional university will have global implications. Cf. Ryckmans 1996). In the overall strategy of eradicating prevailing forms of discrimination in order to meet the challenges of a world of advanced technology, global demographic mobility and unfair distribution of resources, the study of cultural diversities will have to play a key role. While this is by no means a novel idea, past and present approaches will have to be reviewed and restructured, if we are to achieve a heightened understanding of human nature, race, class, gender and power relations, an understanding necessary for the search of social justice.

The interest in intercultural studies goes back to the early nineteenth century and gained momentum about the middle of the nineteenth century and was motivated primarily by intellectual curiosity. S. S. Prawer provides perhaps the most succinct historical overview: "When Latin lost its position as a 'universal' language, and growing nationalism divided Europe more and more, comparative literary studies assumed new functions: that of restoring a lost unity and universality, or that of enriching narrow native traditions by beneficial contacts with others. Increasingly, too,

comparatists looked beyond the Western world: to the Indian classics at first, with the German Romantics; to Arab, Persian and even Chinese literature, with Goethe; and in our own time to other far eastern as well as to African literary and oral traditions. As new and subtle methods of analysis and classification benefited literary studies of all kinds, comparisons across linguistic frontiers were used to shape (by contrast) a sense of native traditions, to alter (by example) the course of a particular national literature and to construct (with unrestricted width of reference) a general theory of literature" (Prawer 1973: 10–11).

The desire to look beyond Europe for cultural achievement and literary excellence was provocative to say the least in nineteenth century imperial Europe. The famous African writer Leopold Sedor Senghor highlights the attitude of European hegemonic thinking in his reference to Lord Macaulay's infamous dictum on Arabic and Indian literature and culture: "I am quite ready to take the Oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia" (Senghor 1968), and in his own experience as a student in a French school in Dakar. Unfortunately, cultural Eurocentrism still characterises the majority of studies in comparative literature today, a fact readily acknowledged by experts.

The experience of nationalism as a dividing and destructive force again generated a strong desire for unity among nations in the twentieth century. In the aftermath of the excesses of the nationalism and fascism of WWII, the need for international understanding and co-operation gained momentum, not only in Europe but worldwide, culminating in the foundation of international bodies designed to avert conflict between nations and to solve global problems on a political, economic and cultural level. The urgency of co-operation was further intensified by large-scale displacement of peoples during and after the war and massive population shifts from rural areas to industrial urban centres across state and even continental boundaries, which, in turn, contributed to the gradual loss of that ethnic and cultural homogeneity which has been promoted by the social sciences. As a consequence,

anthropological research into the post-war industrial society began to use the term "multicultural" in defining characteristics of social groups with diverse cultural backgrounds. However, most societies still defined themselves in terms of national identity, although their definitions hardly went beyond shallow generalisations and stereotypes. In practice, most Western societies in the post-war period considered themselves monocultural, and minority groups (or "the other") were expected to assimilate or assimilated voluntarily for economic reasons in order to gain access to the dominant culture. (The "White Australia Policy" is a good example outside Europe, although it is essentially a reflection of British conditions and attitudes). This situation was further aggravated by the legacy of Europe's colonial past, since an important sector of the population in France, Britain, the Netherlands, Portugal and Belgium had its cultural origin in former colonies, while other countries had considerable populations of "guest workers", refugees and immigrants who, with their families and children became new permanent settlers, willing to accept the risk of losing their cultural identity.

Parallel to the growing political integration of Europe was the resurgence of nationalism and ethnic identity. The voices of discontent became increasingly strident and at times led to violence. Such violence was often deeply rooted in history, as for example, in the Balkans, the Basque region and Northern Ireland. Also, at a time when acts of violence, discrimination and abuse of human rights resulting from cultural, political or religious differences were displayed by the media day after day, individuals were harmed globally by an uninhibited market economy in the name of economic efficiency. The desire for a more humane society gained momentum particularly among exiled intellectuals and young people dedicated to the quest for cultural diversity and social justice. Their efforts had considerable influence on the discussion of multiculturalism in the sixties and seventies. The establishment of "comparative literature" programs and intercultural studies as academic disciplines in the United States and Europe is closely related to it and to a large degree the result of social and ethnic exclusion and an "inward diaspora" (Steiner 1994: 7, Gossman and Spariosu 1994).

As a result, multiculturalism has become a topic of public discussion, being debated in the media and in the political arena, with varying intensity and outcomes ever since. As multiculturalism has been promoted and misused for many conflicting reasons and agendas and charged with widely differing meanings and connotations depending on the ideological point of view (eg. challenge to traditional, white, male European value systems in the eyes of conservatives), some of the more important ideological positions of multiculturalism must be defined in order to avoid the kind of misunderstanding that is still skilfully used by opponents of multiculturalism in the promotion of their own position and the creation of the illusion of social justice.

In the light of the burgeoning literature on this subject and the diversity of critical opinion, it will suffice here to refer to some of the models developed by experts in the field, be it from a historical, educational, political or philosophical perspective. (Sleeter & Grant 1994, Carby 1992). Peter McLaren has perhaps most succinctly characterised Western multiculturalism and identified five key ideological positions: conservative multiculturalism or monoculturalism, left-essentialist multiculturalism, liberal multiculturalism, pluralist multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism (McLaren 1994). A detailed discussion of McLaren's multicultural models can be found in Joel L. Kincheloe and Shirley R. Steinberg's outstanding study *Changing Multiculturalism* (Kincheloe & Steinberg 1997). Generally speaking, the first four models of multiculturalism are intrinsically flawed as they only partially, and in varying degrees, address the key problem areas of discrimination and deprivation, namely, race, class, gender, language, culture, sexual preference and disability.

Conservative multiculturalists or perhaps more accurately "monoculturalists" represent white, male, middle-class thinking with strong views on the superiority of Western patriarchal culture and civilisation (including religion). Poverty and social marginalisation is generally attributed to personal incompetence, insufficient motivation and lack of family values, and rarely to flaws in the dominant culture. Their favoured solution to problems associated with tensions between mainstream interests and minority groups is the "melting pot" or "assimilation" model which has

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been promoted in many Western countries until recently (eg. Australia). Unfortunately, it still has many supporters in white upper-middle class constituencies. Since in their eyes the roots of social failure and marginalisation are to be found primarily in the individual, no one else can be made accountable:

> White supremacy, patriarchy or class elitism do not exist in this construction and, as a result, no need exists for individuals from the dominant culture to examine the production of their own consciousness or the nature of their white, male or class privilege. Males, for example, do not have to consider their complicity in the patriarchal marginalisation of wo-men or examine the competitiveness, depersonalisa-tion and violence that many times accompany patriarchal domination. Since Western societies are superior to all others, the last thing needed is wide-spread reform (ib. 4).

The "common culture model" advocated by Western middle-class monoculturalists or conservative multiculturalists (backed up globally by the economic interests of multi-national companies) "in defence" of Western culture and traditions mirrors in many ways nineteenth century imperialism (colonialism) and has to be exposed as such. Inter-cultural studies and comparative literature are well placed to do so. However, present teaching strategies and methodologies must be reviewed and adjusted to the needs of the new century. The work carried out by critical multiculturalists (which will be discussed later in this paper) could assist in determining new critical directions, particularly with reference to an increased sociological and historical-political contextualisation of the discipline, an approach rejected by René Wellek and the "new critics" (Wellek 1953: 4).

While liberal multiculturalists reject the notion of white supe-riority embraced by conservative monoculturalists, their program-matic belief and commitment to universal "sameness" and "huma-nity" is just as dangerous since it distracts critical attention from the manipulative impact of political and economic interest groups on the construction of public consciousness. As a matter of fact,

the promotion of a feeling of impending multicultural harmony discreetly undermines critical efforts to discuss questions of racism, sexism, class-bias and economic domination by corporate and private wealth in support of the *status quo*. The notion of a strict separation of education and politics and "educational neutrality" is widespread in Western nations, particularly in universities and higher educational institutions. The strategy of "neutralising" the educational identity-forming process by isolating it from history and societal (particularly social) contexts, as widely reflected in the decontextualisation of cultural (literary) studies, is designed to blind (and numb) the critical mind to inequality and discrimination:

> At the end of the twentieth century, ideological and dominant cultural discursive power holds an exaggerated impact on the production of subjectivity. By ignoring the webs of power in which race, class and gender operate, liberal multiculturalism ends up touting a human relations curriculum that conflates white racism toward blacks with black racism towards whites (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997: 12).

Such ideological camouflage constitutes another important objective comparative literature will have to embrace if this practice is to be challenged. Also, much more attention will have to be given to the mass media, particularly to globally syndicated network television programs and their cultural domination and destruction of cultural and linguistic diversity (Adams 1999: 32). The right-wing liberal's belief that a fair and just society can be achieved by reason alone (the rationalist approach), cut off from social and cultural bonds and traditions, is cleverly designed to hide widespread discriminatory social practice in Western culture and a major obstacle to democratic multiculturalism and humane social diversity. The exposure of such practice must therefore become a major objective if comparative literature is to have social relevance at present and in the century to come. And since the electronic media, especially film and television, constitute a central role in the dissemination and promotion (or prevention) of liberal multiculturalism, comparative literature should carefully

consider inclusion of television material and film in its curricula and a sustained sensitisation of students in these matters.

Pluralist multiculturalism represents another important perspective of present-day Western multiculturalism. As it seems to reflect the mainstream notion of multiculturalism, it is often identified with some justification in the wider community as an exemplary model of multiculturalism. Although it has certain attitudes in common with those of liberal multiculturalism (e.g. Eurocentrism), it is essentially different insofar as it subscribes to cultural pluralism and diversity, and not to the belief of "liberal multiculturalists" in the universal sameness. The ideological model of pluralist multiculturalists, however, also has numerous flaws which are difficult to discover in the overall pursuit of race and gender differences and social diversity as highlighted by Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997: 15):

> In the context of the identity politics that have arisen in Western societies since the liberation movements of the 1960s, advocates of pluralism argue that democracy involves not merely the concern with the rights of all citizens but the history and culture of traditionally marginalised groups as well. Pluralism in such a construction becomes a supreme social virtue, especially in the postmodern landscape where globalisation and fast and dynamically flexible (post-Fordist) capitalism are perceived as pushing the international community towards a uniform, one-world culture. Diversity becomes intrinsically valuable and is pursued for its own sake to the point that difference is exoticised and fetishised.

Nevertheless, pluralist multiculturalism is anxious to dismantle prejudice by familiarising mainstream thinking with value systems and beliefs outside the dominant culture and experience, thus facilitating communicative exchange between marginalised groups and the mainstream majority. While activities such as reading the literature of minority groups (including the indigenous people), studying recipe books (this is also to a large extent the kind of multiculturalism promoted by the government, states and the

federal government in Australia) and preparing ethnic dishes, promoting interest and pride in ethnic customs, costumes and cultural backgrounds may be seen as an important first preparatory step in the development of multicultural literacy, they contribute little to the actual change of existing conditions, since the impact of the socio-economic forces on society as a whole is not addressed (ib. 16). It is therefore not surprising that pluralist multiculturalism has gained considerable intellectual respectability, while at the same time the social and material (educational) circumstances of marginalised groups are continuously deteriorating worldwide. But this is of minor relevance, as pluralist multiculturalism functions outside the socio-economic and political configurations, which is welcomed by those who ultimately determine the fate of nation states and societies. Pluralist multiculturalism acts to some extent as a successful and trusted organiser and facilitator of package tours to multicultural landmarks and tourist sites which generate interest, but without a lasting social impact:

> A multiculturalism that operates within these pluralist boundaries will always serve the *status quo* as an unthreatening construction that consumes the cuisine, art, architecture and fashion of various subcultures. In many ways pluralist multiculturalism castrates difference, transforming it into a safe diversity (ib. 17).

In contrast to the inclusive perspective of pluralist multiculturalism, "left-essentialist multiculturalism" concerns itself exclusively with the oppressed and marginalised groups, each group being considered on its own, for example, in women's studies, African studies, indigenous studies, gay and lesbian studies. The single focus on one particular form of deprivation or discrimination gives left-essentialist multiculturalist ideology a fundamentalist bias and alienates it from a broader democratic strategy for cultural diversity and social justice. Also, marginalised (and oppressed) minority groups are normally not in a position to break free and assert themselves in dominating cultures without assistance from sympathetic supporters from outside the group concerned. For that reason, a great deal of the very valuable work

carried out by left-essentialist multiculturalists does not achieve the desired result:

> Most oppressed groups in Western societies simply do not possess the power to shape political, social and educational policy without help. At the same time, the politics of authenticity allows unsympathetic outsiders to go unchallenged in their anti-democratic or problematic race, sexual preference and gender-related beliefs and activities (ib. 18, Gray 1995).

In the context of the different models of multiculturalism outlined so far, "critical multiculturalism" is without doubt the most significant one in many respects. It has its theoretical roots in the Frankfurt School and the works of Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Leo Lowenthal and Herbert Marcuse and their critical preoccupation with (economic and political) power and domination in the industrial society in the light of the German depression and the rise of fascism in the 1920s. (Cf. Kinchloe & Steinberg 1997: 23. White feminists are a particularly good example to illustrate the counterproductive exclusiveness of their critical strategy. Cf. Butler & Scott 1992). Critical multiculturalists learned from the works of the Frankfurt School that consciousness (identity) construction takes place predominantly in an ideological and social context and in material circumstances, that is to say, an individual's self-development as a social being is contextualised. It is therefore of paramount importance for the individual to understand the dynamic interplay between personal and social reality:

> An individual who has gained such consciousness understands how and why his or her political opinions, socio-economic class role, religious beliefs, gender role and racial self-image are shaped by dominant perspectives. (Arato & Gebhardt 1978, Connerton 1980, Jay 1973).

The prime responsibility for bringing this about, however, rests with education which must encourage students to critically exa-

mine all existing perspectives and "to reflect upon the contradic-
tions they uncover among them" (Kinchloe & Steinberg 1997: 23).
Critical multiculturalism is not prescriptive and regulative. Rather
it provides a framework of principles in which problems can be
critically dissected, analysed and discussed:

> When Western schooling is viewed from this per-
> spective, the naive belief that such education pro-
> vides consistent socio-economic mobility for
> working-class and non-white students disintegrates.
> Indeed, the notion that education simply provides a
> politically neutral set of skills and an objective body
> of knowledge also collapses (ib. 22).

Critical multiculturalism is thus also diametrically opposed to the
conservative white fundamentalist Christian mindset that promotes
an intolerant brand of monoculturalism with frightening success in
some Western countries. Since critical multiculturalism in many
ways draws upon the analytical methodology of cultural studies in
order to gain a deeper understanding of race, class and gender
dynamics in social contexts, comparative literature could be great-
ly enriched as an academic discipline by adopting some of the
principles and perspectives of critical multiculturalism, among
them the endeavour to be not only academic students of culture but
also initiators of social justice and change.

In order to identify aspects of critical concern with regard to the
educational effectiveness and social relevance of comparative
literature as an academic discipline, it is necessary to examine
some of its basic tenets and methodological practices. Fortunately
or unfortunately, there has never been (and there isn't at present)
general agreement as to the exact meaning of "comparative litera-
ture", used casually by Matthew Arnold in a letter to his sister in
1848 (Arnold used the plural form, i.e. "comparative literatures".
For a detailed study of this question, Cf. Wellek 1970, 1ff.). Argu-
ments about the scope, objectives, methods, and requirements of
comparative literature have characterised the discipline from the
very beginning. However, it cannot be the purpose of this paper to
try to trace the origin of these disputes and their development and
attempted resolutions past and present, as the observations pre-

sented here are oriented towards the future (Wellek & Warren 1949, Weisstein 1968, Prawer 1973).

Nevertheless, a few attempts to delineate and define comparative literature as a scholarly discipline will have to be considered as a starting point and the basis for the proposed changes and modifications. René Wellek's characterisation of comparative literature as "literary history on a super-national scale" identifies the suppression of provincial sentiments and narrowness of perspective as major hurdles (Wellek 1949: 50). As René Wellek's classic study is still widely used as a standard reference book in universities, his views still exert considerable influence. His almost exclusive emphasis on historical perspectives (influenced by Ernst Robert Curtius's *European Literature and the Middle Ages* (1948) raises serious concern, since this is still the dominant perspective of comparative literary practice at the expense of more relevant contemporary texts. The exclusive historicisation of comparative literature deprives the literary text (and the reader) of the immediacy of human experience as reflected in the text in order to keep it "safely" at bay in a neutral distance. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that the well-known contemporary German poet and writer H. M. Enzensberger accommodates poetry in a "museum" (Enzensberger 1964) "which echoes with the ghost-like presence of Catullus; in which one can find images that derive from Indian or Bantu poetry; in which there are reminiscences of Japanese haiku, the choruses of Greek tragedies, the verse of the Vedas or the Metaphysical Poets, the art of fairytales and that of madrigals." (ib. 13).

While Enzensberger's *musée imaginaire* contains voices from different cultures, traditions, and forms of artistic expression (including music), René Wellek's critical horizon and interest is essentially Eurocentric (Western) and mirrors another still widespread practice in comparative literature, which even a cursory glance at current research (periodicals included) will confirm. The same also applies to George Steiner's approach to comparative literature (Steiner 1994: 1–19). Eurocentricity and historical bias are two major problem areas which ought to be dealt with urgently in a review of comparative literature as a relevant and effective scholarly discipline for the twenty-first

century. Directly related to this matter is the process of canonisation of poets and writers. Also, the selection of worthy candidates for "beatification" (i.e. elevation to literary "sainthood") is rather narrow and predictably Western (Eurocentric) oriented and predominantly male. Edmund Wilson's famous study in imaginative literature entitled *Axel's Castle* (1954) is exemplary in this respect. It focuses on white male icons of the European literary culture and civilisation (W. B. Yeats, Paul Valéry, T. S. Eliot, Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Axel and Rimbaud) and includes no women except Gertrude Stein (Wilson 1954). Many scholars of comparative literature have followed Edmund Wilson's example and still do. Not only in major publications, but also in the daily lecture routines in universities worldwide.

The problem is even more conspicuous in one particular aspect of comparative literature, normally referred to as "world literature", a translation of Goethe's *Weltliteratur*, which is used here in a sense that has little to do with Goethe's vision of *Weltliteratur*. ("World literature" was used by Goethe to indicate a time when all literatures would become one. It is the ideal of the unification of all literatures into one great synthesis where each nation would play its part in a universal concert. But Goethe himself saw that this was a very distant ideal, that no single nation would be willing to give up its individuality (cf. Wellek 1949: 48f). Wellek also cites another use of "world literature", namely the "great treasure-house" of the classics such as Homer, Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare and Goethe, whose reputation has spread all over the world and has lasted a considerable time). This is a major area of research in which Western cultural and literary superiority is overtly demonstrated and class and gender bias openly displayed. For example, Karl O. Conrady has in his still widely marketed *Einführung in die Neuere Deutsche Literaturwissenschaft* a chapter headed *Weltliteratur*, in which he lists seventy authors: all European, all male, all white and not one woman (Conrady 1966: 130–133). A similar bias, though more subtle and balanced with some modest gender and non-Western representation, can be found in Gero von Wilpert's *Lexikon der Weltliteratur* and also in many other standard works of this kind (cf. Wilpert 1993). This volume lists well over 4,800 major works of "world literature" and more

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than 1,700 authors) and the most eminent literary scholars are not immune to such practice as Wolfgang Kubin has pointed out. Unfortunately, this trend also leads to serious distortion of cultural reality (Kubin 1985: 9–11).

The Eurocentric emphasis in the past and present paradigm of world literature requires correction since it perpetuates Western hegemonic thinking and domination on a cultural level. Moreover, the emphasis on "rationality" in Western thinking (at the expense of the emotional, intuitive and creative dimension in social relationships) and its uniquely monolithic mode (eg. religious monotheistic exclusiveness) is at odds with the fundamentals of human experience in other cultures. The imposition of Western (Eurocentric) norms therefore devalues non-Western cultures in order to supersede them eventually. Although the awareness of this problem is by no means new, the steady enlargement of the canon of world literature in favour of Western bias increases the urgency of corrective action which should involve a greater emphasis on differentiation at the expense of hierarchisation and on "contrastive" methodologies for the purpose of identifying and delineating "the other". Also related to this issue is the still widely used concept of the "nation state" as an essential building block in the world literature model and research associated with it. At a brief glance, such an approach seems to provide neat demarcation lines for the comparatist, but the concept is flawed and contrived in many respects and should also be reviewed together with the concept of "national literatures" as a matter of urgency (Clüver 1986: 14–24, Steinmetz 1985: 2–19, Jauss 1969: 44–56). Apart from the unashamed bias with regard to author selection (canonisation), there is still the vexed question of scope, method and objectives in studying "world literature", not to mention the role of "national literature" and "translation" in the overall critical strategies of comparative literature as a scholarly discipline and its potential of widening the student's understanding of human nature and social relationships.

In his "working definition" S. S. Prawer defines comparative literary study as:

> .... an examination of literary texts (including works
> of literary theory and criticism) in more than one
> language, through an investigation of contrast, ana-
> logy, provenance or influence; or a study of literary
> relations and communications between two or more
> groups that speak different languages (Prawer 1973:
> 8).

While the reference to "more than one language" is dismissed by the author more as a nuisance requirement (complicating parti- cularly the situation of bilingual authorship, as for example in the case of Samuel Beckett, and in diglossic situations), this aspect, nevertheless, has been discussed at great length by comparatists such as Claude Pichois, A. M. Rousseau and others ((ib. 9). How- ever, much more important is S. S. Prawer's definitive focus on "contrasts", "analogies", "provenance", "influence", "relations" and "communication", which has its origin in the very narrow and inflexible model of comparative literature advocated by the orthodox Paris School chiefly represented by Paul Tieghem, Jean- Marie Carré, Marius-François Guyard, Claude Pichois and André- M. Rousseau. It is not so much the historical domination of all facets of investigation promoted by French comparatists that is of concern, but the rather fuzzy and nebulous concepts of the proposed objectives and the positivistic insistence on factuality, that is, concrete, factual data (*rapports de fait*). As the historical dimension is predominantly one of locating authors and texts in a timeline and ordering them chronologically, the relevance and impact of the historical (social) background on the identity forma- tion process of individuals and groups received little or no attention. Comparative literature was to a large degree preoccupied with the diligent collection of often more than doubtful (i.e. con- jectured) data on influences, personal and textual affinities, spiri- tual relationships, folkloric themes and motifs and the spirit of the time. Also, the desire for "literary security" led to extensive efforts to discover and collect literary parallels, analogies and similarities without putting them into a larger social or cultural context.

The scholarly approach promoted by the French comparatists still has a powerful influence on teaching and research in present comparative literature, particularly in respect to the decontextuali-

sation of the study of literary texts from their social, political, economic and cultural background and issues such as race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability and "otherness". Admittedly, some progress has been made in this respect, but the advocates of comparative literature and multicultural studies and language departments have to co-operate much more closely and become focused if their disciplines are to have relevance and moral justification in the twenty-first century. In order to gain relevance, comparatists will have to abandon their ivory tower position of "pure" research (that is, research without socio-economic relevance and social orientation) in order to analyse the way it fits into a larger whole and how the insights (results) gained articulate with broader discursive and institutional contexts. Such a dialogue will be of crucial importance if Samuel Huntington's visionary prediction of political developments in the twenty-first century as *Clash of Civilisations* is to be taken seriously (Huntington 1996). The bleak picture Huntington paints in his book and in discussions in defence of his views worldwide has direct implications for all culturally and socially non-homogenous societies, that is, for most societies. However, the solutions offered by Huntington are retrograde and counterproductive, as they do not address the real problem underlying the socio-economic malaise and conflict. The fear of "otherness" prevalent in most societies and the hatred and marginalisation resulting from it, has its roots in ignorance and lack of understanding. For example, Western ignorance, prejudice and distrust with regard to Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Shintoism and their cultural traditions is frightening, and a major contributing factor to current problems nationally and globally. While solutions cannot be found instantly, a constructive dialogue between alienated cultures, a genuine opening up to the "other" or the "strange" and "foreign", will assist in overcoming social acrimony and conflict. A great deal can and ought to be done in this respect in the field of education, in human relations, intellectual and emotional sensitisation and strategies in cultivating legitimate concern, empathy and cooperation. Comparative literature is well placed as a facilitator and eminently qualified to turn Samual Huntington's predicted clash into a productive dialogue in Goethe's sense of cultural oneness.

Comparative literature must highlight culture (art, music, litera-
ture) as a living being that shapes the way people live, view them-
selves and understand the world around them. This will only be
possible if comparatists no longer focus exclusively on cultural
icons selected by minority representatives of privileged Western
"nation states" in order to seriously and constructively confront the
development of the electronic mass media which have produced
new ways of seeing (and manipulating) the reality people live in. It
will mean that comparative literature (together with multicultural
studies) must examine the values that audio-visual media produce,
market and distribute in the new culture of television, film, CDs,
computer networks, advertising and so on. Of course, this does not
mean that literary artefacts will no longer be studied. On the
contrary. But it also means that comparative literature as an
academic discipline will be conscious of the fundamental changes
taking place at present and ready to expand into the types of issues
to be studied and to join the struggle for social justice and a more
humane society of nations in the century to come.

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Problemas de Historia Comparada: la comunidad interliteraria ibérica[*]

ARTURO CASAS

La Historia de la literatura ha experimentado en el último tercio del siglo XX una demorada etapa de crisis muy seria que, con la salvedad de núcleos aislados e irreductibles en su metodología positivista, no sorprendió a casi nadie. Desde que los movimientos románticos alentaron en la Europa del siglo XIX una vocación por *lo nacional* y *lo popular*, fue un impulso corriente el de volcarse con focos y luces idealistas, a menudo inspirados en Vico o en Herder, hacia la localización de lo específico, hacia la hipóstasis esencialista de aquello que sobre la tradición común recibida por los distintos pueblos europeos matizaba la peculiaridad de un espíritu propio e inconfundible, a menudo sobrecargado aun por la nota de lo indeleble.

Los desarrollos de cariz formal-estructuralista, funcionalista-dinámico, estilístico, sociológico o semiótico propios de los dos primeros tercios del siglo XX anunciaron, ya sin espacio para la duda, que el viejo paradigma se agotaba. Este sólo pudo pervivir vinculado a aquellos sistemas literarios emergentes y periféricos que por motivos diversos retrasaron la historización de sus propios procesos

literarios y culturales, de manera que cuando al fin lo hicieron se inspiraron, a menudo miméticamente, en las pautas señaladas por las literaturas fuertes del continente. De todos modos, la inercia de determinados resortes institucionales de la literatura —la enseñanza sobre todo — sigue facilitando la pervivencia de llamativos anacronismos metodológicos.

Con la disolución de los objetivos y los mecanismos estructuralistas y con la imparable influencia de los métodos de inspiración empírica y sistémica, la historiografía literaria ha recobrado su interés por las relaciones entre los individuos y el medio social y político, ha problematizado su propia relación con el fenómeno literario en su vertiente semántico-pragmática (mundos, lecturas, hipertextos...) o con la Historia, ella misma en crisis de identidad en cuanto disciplina, en cuanto discurso y no menos en cuanto a su uso y funciones (Aullón de Haro 1994; Brown 1995; Gillespie 1995; Szabolcsi & Vajda 1993). La Semiótica de la Cultura, el New Historicism o la nueva Sociología literaria, en cada caso con sus respectivas herramientas de análisis, han recuperado la vieja preocupación de Tynianov, Jakobson, Bajtín, Mannheim, Mukařovský o Vodička por la interacción sociocultural, por la procesualidad y la heterogeneidad de los repertorios, o por las nociones de *cambio* y *conflicto* dentro del marco literario. Predomina así en nuestro tiempo, como todos sabemos, una vocación epistemológica hacia la dinámica de los sistemas, que por razones muy fáciles de comprender tira asimismo en favor del análisis de las relaciones intersistémicas y de las peculiaridades de los espacios fronterizos o de encuentro entre culturas y literaturas, introduciendo saludables dudas sobre la legitimidad de un protagonismo que hasta hace poco tiempo casi nadie discutía: el de la nación o, más en firme, el del Estado-nación identificado con una lengua/cultura/literatura única o al menos (pre)dominante, a veces — por añadidura — soporte y ariete de una proyección colonial continental o ultramarina.

La atención a zonas de cultura próxima, a *sistemas interliterarios* en el sentido dado a la noción por Naftoli Bassel (1991) — quien a su vez se inspira en trabajos anteriores de Dionýz Ďurišin y del Instituto de Historia y de Teoría Literaria de Bratislava —, o en general a marcos culturales *trans-*, *circun-* o *supra*sistémicos, se convierte en un reto sugerente e ineludible, aunque también propicio a una

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combinatoria de falacias y atajos oportunistas que aquí no habrá
espacio para perfilar con detalle. En cualquier caso, esa combinato-
ria a la que me refiero no queda al margen de las estructuras polí-
ticas y económicas del área geocultural investigada, ni tampoco de
las alternativas históricas (constitucionalistas o no) sobre la adjudi-
cación de la soberanía nacional, que en la Europa moderna fue
norma que recayese no en un ámbito social-comunal ni individual,
sino que trazase su fundamento en la preeminencia del Estado y en
los intereses de clase. Habrá quien piense lo contrario, pero las cosas
siguen siendo *así* ahora que doblamos la esquina del milenio, incluso
en la muy apaciguada Unión Europea. La idea imperante de lo que
sea la democracia continúa demasiado lastrada por la *hybris* o dese-
quilibrio en la toma de decisiones, tanto como por la falta de ejer-
cicio de una *isegoría* garante del acceso en pie de igualdad discursi-
va al espacio público y a los diversos foros políticos. A ello contri-
buye no poco el control de los medios de comunicación por aparatos
administrativo-estatales o empresariales.

En esta misma línea, creo que acierta José Lambert (1991 y
1999) cuando señala que los Estados occidentales, o más en general
las sociedades que los sustentan, siguen asimilando multilingüismo y
multiculturalismo a amenaza social y a inestabilidad política, y ello a
pesar de que ambas características serían en su criterio consustan-
ciales a toda sociedad humana. El problema radica, como también ha
observado Pierre Bourdieu, en que la pluralidad cultural se interpreta
como base contingente del cuestionamiento del sistema de valores
establecido:

> Every society tends to subordinate the non-political
> activities such as literature and language to its own
> purposes. This is why multilingualism and artistic
> pluralism is often regarded as a political danger.
> (Lambert 1991: 139)

Al mapa que se describe hay que sumar otra importante eclosión de
nuestro fin de siglo: en el marco de la sociedad *mundializada* se
multiplican los estudios comparatistas, aunque como hayan adver-
tido algunos eminentes especialistas (es el caso de Earl Miner y de
su orientación hacia la interculturalidad), sigamos sin saber en qué
consiste exactamente *comparar*, ni tampoco, con exactitud, qué

áreas de problemas resultan inconvenientes, ilícitas o sencillamente inanes como objetos de comparación bajo estricta perspectiva científica. Parece evidente que actitudes como la de Miner renuncian a privilegiar el breve radio de una circunferencia trazada desde la Europa más desarrollada, para atender en cambio la dialéctica Norte/Sur o la existente entre las culturas oriental y occidental. Hay en ello alguna concomitancia con los Estudios Culturales y Postcoloniales, ciertamente. De ahí surgen propuestas recientes como la de fundamentar unos Comparative Cultural Studies (Tötösy de Zepetnek 1999), tendentes al logro de una pluralización y una *paralelización* de los estudios literarios liberadas de toda imposición jerarquizadora, laudable propósito que en mi criterio peca de voluntarismo y no sé si de candor epistemológico, en especial cuando se trasladan los vectores puramente operativos y propedéuticos al marco de los objetos efectivos y contrastados de estudio.

A este último respecto, convendría tener presentes un par de inquietudes que están en el aire que respiramos. La primera, que me limito a nombrar, es la que se refiere a las implicaciones de la globalización, a las que desde luego no escapan las disciplinas humanísticas. La segunda, cercana a la anterior, la incorporaré desde presupuestos compartidos por numerosos estudiosos, que aquí voy a representar tomándolos de una formulación concreta debida al profesor húngaro Mihály Szegedy-Maszák (1997). Un trabajo suyo, de título muy expresivo, «National or Comparative Literary History?», tiene que ver con una paradoja incontrovertible, la de la marginalidad de las literaturas centroeuropeas (dejando aparte la alemana) en el contexto cultural que llamamos *Europa*. Ello arrastra una consecuencia que este teórico desaprueba: la de que bajo perspectiva comparatista toda literatura minoritaria o minorizada se ve reducida a la categoría de *réplica imperfecta* de las literaturas canónicas, de manera además que sus respectivas historias (y la propia actividad teórico-crítica y hermenéutica, cabe añadir) se observan en términos de desfase o *décalage*. Denuncia así que los desarrollos de canonización en las literaturas europeas son rígidos en exceso, al punto de que la marginación aplicada a determinadas culturas continentales resulta equiparable a la sufrida por áreas culturales no europeas (cfr. Bauer y Fokkema 1990; Didier 1998, con atención al capítulo «Les

grandes dates de la littérature européenne», 569–709). Apréciese que con estos presupuestos recuperamos lo dicho sobre la *hybris* y sobre la anulación de la *isegoría*, aplicada esta ahora a las literaturas nacionales:

> When we teach comparative literature in Central Europe, we tend to focus on works composed in English, French, and German. Italian, Spanish, and Russian play a less central role in the teaching and research of those who are not specialists of these cultures, and relatively few of us can cope with Scandinavian texts. Except for native speakers, hardly any literary scholar could claim to have a systematic knowledge of Czech, Hungarian, Polish, or Romanian works. In most European countries there are more specialists of Chinese or Arabic than of Finnish or Albanian. (Szegedy-Maszák 1997: 10)

Hasta aquí he utilizado la etiqueta *literatura nacional* sustrayén-dome a cualquier problematización sobre su exacto contenido, o sobre su pertinencia. Lo cierto es que hasta hace unos años existió un cierto consenso en seguir empleando esa expresión aun a sabiendas de que resultaba controvertida. El hecho era que más o menos se sabía de qué se hablaba al decir *literatura nacional*. Aun reconociéndose la diversidad de prácticas discursivas literarias y la heterogeneidad de hábitos de lectura en las diferentes clases sociales y capas culturales de la nación de referencia, se suponía que todo ello (subliteratura, canciones y relatos folclóricos o de base oral...) cabía en *lo nacional* y por ende era bastante sencillo contraponerlo a otros marcos nacionales próximos o alejados en lo geográfico, en lo etnocultural o en lo lingüístico. En tal sentido expone su concepción Naftoli Bassel (1991), y les diré que en líneas generales sus argu-mentaciones me parecen asumibles. Es muy operativa su definición del *sistema interliterario* como algo que no se crea por decreto sino «as the result of a prolonged historical coexistence of independent national literatures close to each other socially, culturally, or ethni-cally» (775).

En la actualidad, diríase que bajo el signo de la apelación a la diversidad y al mestizaje, han cambiado algo las cosas en relación

con la aceptabilidad del concepto *literatura nacional*. Aparecen
reticencias por parte de algunos teóricos. Otros son manifiestamente
contrarios a su puesta en uso, aun para la elaboración de estudios de
Historia literaria. Obsérvese que los hábitos no son los mismos
según qué país o qué zona geográfica se considere, o según el grado
de homogeneidad cultural de la nación de la que se hable, o según la
dependencia existente en relación con lo que González-Millán
(1995) describe como *nacionalismo literario*, para apelar con ello a
momentos de institucionalización discursiva deficitaria que someten
la literatura a las estrategias de legitimación de un ideario nacio-
nalista.

En José Lambert, por poner otro ejemplo, es apreciable la susti-
tución del modelo analítico *literatura de A* (o *literatura nacional*)
por el modelo *literatura en A*, denotando con *A* cualquier marco
político-administrativo que se quiera considerar (Portugal, Canadá,
Puerto Rico, Cataluña, Mónaco..., en cada caso con su especificidad
en lo tocante a las «fórmulas de cohabitación» vehiculadas). Si bien
Lambert advierte que trabaja sobre *prototipos* o *tendencias* relativos
tanto a las cohabitaciones político-literarias como a las lingüístico-
literarias, querría declarar, apartándome un poco de sus argumentos,
mis reservas sobre la conveniencia de limitar la fenomenología de
situaciones posibles a un esquema cerrado. No es fácil, por otra
parte, que, en sus propuestas sobre esta cuestión, los teóricos,
sociolingüistas y analistas logren abstraerse de la realidad cultural y
nacional de la que ellos mismos provienen. Otro tanto cabe afirmar
en relación con su personal adscripción epistemológico-ideológica e
incluso sobre claves de raíz sentimental y política ligadas a nociones
como *patria* o *comunidad de origen*.

En este orden, es corriente en España — diría incluso que mayo-
ritaria — la figura del intelectual que defiende con el mismo empeño
la resistencia de lo hispano frente a la asimilación de lo anglosajón
(en Puerto Rico o Nuevo México...) que ciertas restricciones a un
desarrollo normalizador de las culturas gallega, vasca y catalana (en
el ámbito de la enseñanza primaria y secundaria, por ejemplo). El
ángulo común de ambas actitudes se localiza en la preeminencia que
se viene a conceder, por activa o por pasiva, a valores y a normas
propios de un repertorio de cultura *española* entendida en sentido
ciertamente restringido. Como no podría ser de otra forma, los *media*

de proyección estatal son en España muy poderosos en la orientación de opiniones y sensibilidades, muy eficaces en la tarea de fortalecer «una forma de sentir el país» que ha progresado con lentitud si la comparamos con el desarrollo de los marcos legales a partir de la muerte del General Franco, en 1975. Los soportes más habituales de la restricción a las culturas periféricas entre quienes conforman opinión desde los *media* radicados en Madrid me parecen dos: una considerable falta de curiosidad intelectual y un silenciamiento de raíz estratégica (que, por supuesto, implica vectores comerciales y de otros órdenes). Ese *desinterés* algo prepotente en relación con culturas tan inmediatas cuenta sin duda con contrapuntos de signo contrario, tan activos como minoritarios.

Obsérvese que en el fondo de aquellas tomas de posición *homogeneizadoras* lo que se discute no es un asunto de base ética pendiente de los derechos civiles individuales, aunque a menudo se haya presentado de ese modo a la opinión pública. Bien al contrario, lo que se dirime es el signo de un empuje ideológico de base nacionalista — o panhispanista, como en el caso de un breve pero paradigmático escrito del narrador, politólogo y académico Mario Vargas Llosa (1998), de subtítulo no muy matizado — que reacciona frente a otro de naturaleza semejante pero de sentido divergente, imbuido este de una nota histórica peculiar, la de constituir una respuesta a un estado de cosas secularmente sentido como impositivo, represor y anulador de la cultura propia. Permítanme así mismo que declare mis dudas sobre lo que algunos presentan, y aun esgrimen contra quien convenga, como el único nacionalismo progresista posible en la España actual, el *nacionalismo europeo* (*sic*), tan intangible e indefinido como contradictorio e incluso potencialmente lesivo, en parámetros socioeconómicos y culturales, para las zonas fronterizas inmediatas (zona sur de la cuenca mediterránea, países de la vieja órbita soviética, la propia Rusia, Oriente Próximo...), pero no sólo para ellas. En el ámbito del comparatismo, pensadores como Étiemble, Adrian Marino o Desiderio Navarro han advertido de forma clara contra la tentación eurocentrista. No preciso añadir nada.

Cuando nos referimos a un posible intersistema literario hispánico hemos de tener presentes algunos condicionantes. El espíritu pactista-reformista de la Constitución española de 1978, que con-

templaba la pluralidad cultural y lingüística de las llamadas *nacio-
nalidades y regiones* bajo el control de la *Nación española* (arts. 2 y
3), se ha desarrollado en ese ámbito lingüístico-cultural de forma
insuficiente, acaso porque lo que Even-Zohar (1999) estudia como
planificación cultural o creación de nuevas opciones en un
repertorio sistémico — en un trabajo muy atento por cierto a la
evolución del polisistema gallego, con algunas conclusiones difíciles
de compartir — no se haya afrontado desde la confianza mutua ni
desde la convicción de que la pluralidad equivalga *de verdad* a
riqueza, como dice la letra del tercer artículo constitucional. El
problema de fondo, en este como en otros sectores de la realidad
española, estriba en el modelo de Estado pactado como salida a la
dictadura, con la opción por una multiplicación administrativa de
comunidades autónomas, diecisiete en la actualidad, que no se
compadece con el proyecto plurinacional a cuatro bandas que la II
República iba camino de legitimar antes de la sublevación fascista
de 1936, ni responde tampoco al anhelo federal o confederal defen-
dido desde diversas plataformas políticas, no sólo ligadas a los tres
nacionalismos periféricos (vasco, catalán y gallego) ni sólo a la
izquierda.

Aportaré algún dato sobre el desinterés y el silenciamiento antes
aludidos. Lo haré en lo fundamental, si me lo conceden, desde mi
propia condición de escritor y crítico gallego; también en cuanto
analista de las dinámicas políticas y socioculturales que han surgido
en el último cuarto de siglo.

La presencia de la literatura gallega en los suplementos culturales
editados en Madrid por los principales medios periodísticos (*El País*,
ABC, *El Mundo*, *La Razón*) es prácticamente nula. Galicia cuenta
con una población de 2'7 millones de habitantes. Tenemos en la
actualidad un mercado estable para la publicación en idioma gallego:
uno de cada veinticinco gallegos lee al menos cuatro libros en
gallego por año: las tiradas son comparables e incluso superiores a
las existentes en marcos lingüístico-poblacionales parejos (Freixanes
1999). Como observa Antón Figueroa (1992), es cierto que las con-
diciones de lectura sobre ese sector de la producción editorial siguen
estando determinadas en buena medida por hábitos de hipercon-
sciencia, reflexividad y militancia o simpatía nacionalista, si bien
comparecen ya signos nuevos de revisión deconstructiva y/o

paródica que se permiten actuar sobre la identidad nacional (Cochón 1998). Desde luego, una parte importante de lo que se publica hoy en Galicia supera el interés en principio exclusivamente local de lo destinado a explorar nuestro específico *problema* nacional, algo que — como todo país civilizado — tenemos una enfermiza tendencia a sobredimensionar. El tratamiento deparado por los periódicos madrileños a los autores que escriben en euskara o en catalán es semejante al que se acaba de apuntar, si bien en algunos de esos medios, y sólo en las ediciones repartidas en el País Vasco o Cataluña, aparecen encartes específicos sobre las literaturas vernáculas.

Al margen de todo ello, la dinámica de intercambios culturales y literarios entre Galicia, el País Vasco y Cataluña es asimismo de intensidad baja. Son escasas las traducciones entre las tres lenguas, a pesar de iniciativas como *Galeuzka*, foro rotatorio que reúne anualmente a escritores y críticos de las lenguas respectivas de esas comunidades y que ha celebrado ya quince encuentros tras la restauración democrática. Existen también otros proyectos singulares de puesta en diálogo de las tres culturas, promovidos desde distintas universidades, instituciones o asociaciones de críticos. En algunos casos se produce una apertura de horizontes hacia Portugal, con iniciativas como la publicación *Espacio/Espaço escrito* (diecisiete números) o la más reciente *Hablar/Falar de Poesia* (sólo dos), a menudo de inspiración iberista y muy dependientes de la fortuna de fenómenos literarios como la proyección internacional de Pessoa o Saramago (Gavilanes Laso 1999).

Las vías entre Galicia y Portugal son por razones históricas y lingüísticas obvias mucho más transitadas, sobre todo en sentido norte-sur, a pesar de la pervivencia de nuestra particular *questione della lingua*, que como demuestra Torres Feijó (1999) va mucho más allá de los marcos ortográficos y normativos para alcanzar una proyección intersistémica, con una alternativa de opciones —mirar hacia Madrid y el ámbito hispanoamericano o mirar hacia Lisboa y la lusofonía— que probablemente sea menos polar y más dóctil de lo que su interesante estudio deja ver (cfr., p.e., Monteagudo 1995). Entiendo que todo ello guarda algunos paralelismos con la también compleja peripecia histórica de Estonia y con sus propias alternativas, desde luego con intervención de lo que Jüri Talvet (1998) ha estudiado como *memoria emocional* de las naciones que suman a su

condición de periferia la de actuar como efectivos puentes inter-
culturales, en su caso con muy superior complejidad (hacia Suecia,
hacia Alemania, hacia Rusia, hacia Finlandia y Carelia, hacia
Polonia...), pero con un camino parecido de toma de conciencia
sobre la legitimidad de un uso literario de la lengua popular (desde
el «estadio *maakeel*» al «estadio *eesti keel*»).

Es un hecho significativo el que varias librerías gallegas ofrezcan
de modo permanente fondos portugueses. Algo semejante hacen
esporádicamente algunas editoriales del país. Hay que considerar
también la presencia de la revista *Agália* (con una cincuentena larga
de entregas) y las actividades de distintas asociaciones lingüístico-
culturales que promueven una convergencia con la norma orto-
gráfica portuguesa. Cuéntense en fin los debates que la Universidade
de Santiago de Compostela, con dirección del narrador Suso de
Toro, promueve desde 1998 en *Trasatlántico*, una asamblea abierta
además a las conexiones con escritores y críticos latinoamericanos
de expresión castellana y portuguesa, algunas de cuyas tomas de
posición han sido recogidas por Abuín González (1998).

Uno de los referentes principales cuando se trata de establecer
conexiones entre las literaturas nacionales del Estado es la *Historia
de las literaturas hispánicas no castellanas* coordinada en 1980 por
José Mª Díez Borque. No era tarea fácil justificar la articulación de
capítulos planteada en este grueso volumen, y creo que el coordina-
dor no lo logró en las páginas prologales que anteceden a la sucesión
de capítulos sobre literaturas hispano-latina de los siglos V al XVI,
hispano-árabe, hispano-hebrea, navarro-aragonesa, bable, vasca,
catalana, gallega y leonesa. Una distribución como esta no oculta sus
propios sesgos epistemológico y axiológico, tan legítimos como
cualesquiera otros, pero frágiles e impugnables en su concepción de
origen, no sólo por la atribución o la proporción de presencias sino
en particular por su opción yuxtapositiva, poco favorecedora del
diálogo interno. En consonancia con ello, esta *Historia* no-com-
parada ofrece apenas momentos aislados de análisis de cariz intersis-
témico, algo que tampoco llega a sustanciarse en el tratamiento de la
época medieval.

A este último respecto querría recordar las tesis de Alberto Var-
varo (p.e. 1995), entre otros, sobre la *globalidad no homogénea* de
las literaturas medievales del ámbito románico, a las que convendría

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abstenerse de aplicar retroproyecciones nacionales desarrolladas sólo a partir del Romanticismo. Sus puntos de vista sobre la conveniencia de conjugar análisis a alta escala con otros de lente más afinada me parecen incluso trasladables a períodos posteriores.

Intuyo que exactamente por ahí irían las bases de la propuesta de Jorge Urrutia (1997) sobre una concepción abierta y tetralingüe de la *literatura española*, bases que no siempre me parecen aceptables a pesar de los esfuerzos puntualizadores con las que se acompañan. Algunos de sus presupuestos históricos resultan inaceptables: ¿de verdad no hubo una política lingüístico-cultural uniformizadora por parte de la corona española antes del XVIII?, ¿no privilegiaron los Austrias y los Reyes Católicos, con el respaldo de la Iglesia Católica, el cultivo del castellano-español en detrimento de las otras lenguas peninsulares? Por otra parte, la fundamentación sociopolítica del proyecto de Urrutia en favor de la construcción de una cultura española *única* de naturaleza coinética es francamente escasa. A ese estado de cosas no se va a llegar a través del solo ejercicio de las voluntades individuales o de las disposiciones del Ministerio de Educación sobre la *conveniencia* de estudiar en la escuela y en los institutos *las otras lenguas*. Desde mi personal visión de nuestra actual realidad cultural y política, sería necesario ir más allá: a la Constitución, directamente; y a una organización del Estado acorde, de una vez por todas, con el carácter plurinacional de España.

Existen, por otra parte, proyectos muy recientes, en algún caso ni siquiera en marcha efectiva, que retoman la difícil tarea de proponer una historia comparada de signo *hispánico*, *ibérico*, *celtibérico*, *peninsular*, *peninsular-insular* o como quiera resolverse el intrincado reto de localizar un adjetivo de consenso que sirva para agrupar bajo perspectiva histórica [algunas de las convergencias y divergencias de] las literaturas escritas en castellano, gallego y catalán, con posible pero problemática extensión a las escritas en euskara y en portugués. Algo de ello comparece en dos proyectos de orientación distinta, ambos enfocados al ámbito educativo y financiados por la Unión Europea, *Euroliterature* y *Literary Education in Multicultural Europe*, con dirección respectiva de Daniel Apollon (coordinación general de José Lambert y Domingo Sánchez-Mesa) y Jean Bessière, actual presidente de la International Comparative Literature Association. Este mismo organismo ha encargardo a un grupo

de investigadores la coordinación de un nuevo volumen de la serie *A Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages*, centrado esta vez en el marco geocultural ibérico. Antes de terminar quisiera nombrar otra flamante iniciativa, el volumen *Literaturas de España 1975–1998*, dirigido desde Amsterdam por Andreu van Hooft dentro de la serie *Foro Hispánico* (1998). Encontrarán en él enjundiosas panorámicas de distintos especialistas, pero querría destacar ahora sobre todo el trabajo debido al propio coordinador del volumen, que lleva el título de «Una historia de historias: encuesta sobre historiografía literaria» (81–119), donde se suceden opiniones de treinta y ocho profesores, procedentes de veintiocho universidades, sobre una cuestión básica, la de cómo se podría dar forma y contenido a una Historia Comparada de «las tradiciones literarias peninsulares». Tendría interés entrar a ordenar y glosar con perspectiva crítica las contestaciones a esa encuesta, pero esa es tarea que en alguna medida ha resuelto ya Van Hooft.

De manera que, para concluir, me limitaré a plantear un esquema abierto de consideraciones atento estrictamente a los presupuestos metodológicos que una futura Historia Comparada de referencia ibérica podría someter a examen. Algunas de ellas provienen de argumentos ya introducidos en páginas anteriores. No todas pertenecen al mismo orden conceptual ni se sitúan tampoco en niveles parejos de relevancia disciplinar:

1. Por ser ineludibles los conjuntos de problemas ligados a las crisis de la Historia y de la Historia de la literatura, debieran manifestarse y argumentarse con algún detalle las respuestas epistemológicas correspondientes, siendo entre ellas tres de las más relevantes las tocantes a i) las implicaciones entre narración y construcción — tratadas a diversa luz por pensadores como Paul Ricœur, Hayden White, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Reinhart Koselleck, Hans Robert Jauss, Umberto Eco, Siegfried J. Schmidt o las diferentes escuelas constructivistas —, ii) las nociones de *cambio literario*, *proceso interliterario*, *desarrollo gradual* y *explosión cultural*, así como sus posibles leyes — Poética histórica de Felix Vodička, Escuela de Bratislava, Teoría de los polisistemas, Iuri Lotman y la Escuela de Tartu, Pierre Bourdieu, Colin Martindale... — y iii) la función social e institucional de la Historia de la literatura — New

Historicism, Cultural Studies, Semiótica filológica, estudios sobre ideología, nueva sociología, corrientes feministas, deconstrucción...

2. Por mera delimitación ontológica del objeto de análisis, debiera aclararse — en la dirección señalada por Clément Moisan o Eva Kushner — si la opción priorizada tendería hacia una *historia literaria* o hacia una *historia de la literatura*, la primera proclive a la descripción del campo literario en su dinámica y la segunda más tradicional en la atención a los componentes formales, genológicos, temáticos, retóricos, etc., también menos esquiva a la constitución de cánones o al ejercicio hermenéutico. Una alternativa es la búsqueda de un equilibrio entre ambas tendencias, que podría verse beneficiado por la asimilación de los métodos de la Semiótica de la Cultura y por la *mentalidad empírica* que Schmidt (1995: 266) sugiere a los historiógrafos literarios. No creo que fuese inteligente dejar al margen algo tan concreto como la historización de la conciencia literaria y de las poéticas explícitas e implícitas (Felix Vodička, Michał Głowiński). Ello convergería con una historia de la crítica y del pensamiento literario, que también debe tener su sitio en una Poética comparada (como, en general, la atención al resto de los *papeles de actuación* contemplados por la Teoría Empírica de la Literatura y a los *factores* constitutivos del polisistema literario en la concepción de la Escuela de Tel Aviv, acaso con especial protagonismo para el repertorio).

3. Sin salirnos del marco anterior, pero con una deriva metodológica más nítida, habría que discutir las nociones de *literatura nacional* y *comunidad interliteraria* (¿como *polisistema?*). En relación con la primera sería básico determinar cuántas literaturas nacionales existen en el espacio geocultural fijado, cuáles son, que ámbitos fronterizos dibujan y que flujos de comunicación y semiotización generan. También qué tipo de vertebraciones endosistémicas serían dignas de consideración: tal vez, la condición de insularidad (Baleares, Canarias, Azores, Madeira), o la definición de lo específico regional-dialectal sobre distintos criterios.

En relación con la segunda noción se me ocurre un número muy amplio de cuestiones. La fijación de los diversos ejes posibles y de las polaridades centro-periferia de esa comunidad interliteraria sería una de las primeras. Debiera hacerse, según entiendo, por combinación de claves diacrónicas y sincrónicas (recuérdese la posición de

Varvaro y de tantos medievalistas), de manera que — siempre en la perspectiva histórico-comparada adoptada — resultaría inadecuado hablar de la *literatura gallega* como un objeto unitario de estudio desde las cantigas medievales hasta el fin del segundo milenio. A esta luz, a nadie se le oculta que una de las dificultades mayores que debe afrontar una Historia Comparada es la periodológica: las épocas, los movimientos, las escuelas, las generaciones... no se exportan ni se importan fácilmente entre sistemas literarios. Ello se hace palmario en el dominio ibérico por la disparidad y la no congruencia de los respectivos procesos, habiendo incluso etapas históricas de disipación y *cese* de alguno de los sistemas en liza y otras dominadas por lo que algunos teóricos denominan *desarrollos acelerados*. En estas últimas etapas son habituales los plantea- mientos programáticos que la Escuela de Bratislava estudia como *complementariedad e implementación intencional* del sistema menos fecundo, surgidos de la voluntad de cubrir ciertos vacíos temáticos, genológicos o de otro tipo (Ďurišin 1995). Parece ineludible su consideración prioritaria.

Convendría fijarse además en otras asimetrías de ese intersistema ibérico: los lazos del sistema gallego con el portugués y en menor medida con otros del arco atlántico; el supuesto aislamiento del sistema vasco; las concomitancias y el flujo de simpatías habidos entre Portugal y Cataluña — y sus respectivos sistemas literarios, núcleos intelectuales, etc. — a partir de mediados del siglo XVII, muy marcados por sus respectivos procesos secesionistas frente a la España de Felipe IV y la política de homogeneización regional del Conde Duque de Olivares; la determinación de usos lingüísticos repartidos sobre bases tipológico-discursivas (así, en época medieval y sólo para el discurso poético, no para la prosa, la preeminencia del gallego en Castilla o del provenzal en Cataluña); la variabilidad de canonización y cultivo de los diversos géneros y archigéneros (con problemas como la ausencia de épica o la aparición tardía de la lírica o el drama según de qué dominios lingüísticos hablemos, la muy diversa valoración del par cuento/novela, el peso real de las supues- tas tendencias etnoculturales en favor de determinadas estéticas narrativas — al naturalismo o al realismo mágico, por ejemplo —, etc.); la propia extensión de los distintos dominios lingüístico- culturales (de fronteras y ramificaciones bastante complejas); la

práctica de la literatura en lengua castellana en Galicia, el País
Vasco o Cataluña (recuérdese la propuesta de Lambert a propósito
del esquema *literatura en A*) y la presencia de escritores bilingües —
biliterarios (Dionýz Ďurišin), *equipoéticos* (Claudio Guillén),
dualistas (George Steiner)... —, casi siempre con uno de sus dos
apoyos en el castellano, o algunos trilingües y aun tetralingües (el
caso más singular en la época contemporánea, flojo desde un punto
de vista poético, es el del lingüista catalán Miquel Ventura i
Balanyà, en la medieval tal vez el del excelente poeta, filósofo y
narrador balear Ramon Llull); el substrato arábigo-andalusí de una
parte de la literatura del sur peninsular; los grados de normalización
lingüístico-cultural en las distintas áreas; la representación literaria
de la diglosia y de las interferencias lingüísticas a lo largo del
tiempo; el papel regulador de los Estados español y portugués; la
centralidad normalizada de sus sistemas literarios correlativos; su
proyección histórica como potencias coloniales e incluso la pervi-
vencia de pequeños enclaves policulturales ligados a procesos
colonizadores o de otro tipo, administrados o no por los Estados
ibéricos (Gibraltar, Ceuta, Melilla, Andorra, Macao)...

Esa proyección faculta la posibilidad de una compleja ampliación
de la comunidad interliteraria ibérica a otras zonas del globo
(América, África y en muy menor medida Asia), en virtud del
carácter *policéntrico* del español y del portugués, en el sentido que
han dado al concepto lingüistas como Heinz Kloss, Michael Clyne o
Leslie Bodi. En este terreno habría que ocuparse del cultivo literario
de las variantes criollas y aun de la traslación a la escritura de los
sabires, códigos léxico-gramaticales mixtos caracterizados por su
función auxiliar y por un desarrollo limitado que surge de un
contacto interlingüístico.

Pero el impulso exterior de tal intersistema no ha obedecido sólo
a un modelo colonial. Debería considerarse el muy variable peso de
la emigración por motivación socioeconómica, clave sin ir más lejos
para comprender la historia de Galicia (su flujo emigratorio a
Latinoamérica entre 1900 y 1960 alcanzó la cifra de un millón y
medio de personas, cifra que supera la mitad de sus actuales
habitantes). También es muy relevante el fenómeno del exilio, en
distintos momentos y circunstancias históricas, desde la expulsión de
ciento cincuenta mil judíos a finales del siglo XV por los Reyes

Católicos, o de trescientos mil moriscos a comienzos del XVII por Felipe III, a los efectos de la Guerra Civil, con medio millón de exiliados en la primavera de 1939. Los núcleos de emigrantes y exiliados mantienen habitualmente durante generaciones el cultivo literario de la(s) lengua(s) vernícula(s) y establecen mecanismos muy variables de interconexión con la tierra de origen (y entre ellos mismos en su diáspora) y de radicación y diálogo con el intersistema de acogida, siendo corriente la generación de procesos de sincretismo.

De algún modo, todo lo que se ha expuesto en esta tercera acotación está sujeto, en la resolución historiográfico-comparada por la que se desee optar, a condicionantes axiológicos e ideológicos, así como a posibles escorzos y adscripciones nacionalistas de signo centrípeto o centrífugo, no necesariamente deslegitimadores del resultado final pero sí determinantes de la comprensión de la *interacción de las culturas* actuantes (Lotman 1996: 61-76). A este respecto, la aritmética es a menudo tan explícita como cualquier declaración de intenciones. La *Historia crítica de la Literatura Hispánica*, dirigida por Juan Ignacio Ferreras a finales de los años ochenta y publicada por la Editorial Taurus, sumó un total de treinta y cinco volúmenes (más otro de índices). Pues bien, el plan de la obra, meritoria por muchas razones, se abrió a las culturas periféricas peninsulares y se amplió a Hispanoamérica, dando como resultado un reparto que fue encomendado a reconocidos especialistas en cada materia: tres tomos para las tres literaturas periféricas de la Península Ibérica (catalana, gallega y vasca), seis para las literaturas hispanoamericanas y los otros veintiséis para lo que generalmente se conoce como *literatura española*.

4. Habría que precisar el lugar concedido en esa Historia Comparada a la(s) cultura(s) no oficial(es). Y, en el sentido aplicado por Wlad Godzich y Nicholas Spadaccini (1998), investigar la presencia de *lo masivo*, *lo elitista* y *lo popular*. En este marco uno de los aspectos primordiales — nuevamente complejo, ya desde la elaboración de Jakobson y Bogatyrev en 1929 — sería el de la oralidad y el folclore. Aquí se nos muestra uno de los enlaces ineludibles con la Antropología. Lotman ha demostrado en toda su producción, también en *Cultura y explosión* (1999), que las correspondencias entre la cultura, el arte y la literatura pasan siempre por la semiosfera

y por aquello de lo que tantas veces se olvidan los Estudios Literarios, nada menos que *la vida*.

5. Si de verdad se optase por una perspectiva comparatista carecería de sentido una ordenación secuencial-distributiva en la línea del volumen antes citado de Díez Borque, o en la de la *Historia crítica* dirigida por Juan Ignacio Ferreras, y habría que esforzarse por localizar otras alternativas reguladoras. Confieso ignorar cuáles serían las idóneas.

6. No serían menores los problemas atinentes a la canonicidad y al canon del sistema interliterario transnacional. Es ahora imposible trazar siquiera un mapa orientativo, pero este ganaría a buen seguro en rendimiento si tuviese presente la teorización sobre el campo literario debida a Pierre Bourdieu (1992). Una área importante de análisis, entre otras, sería la de las antologías. No abundan las que extienden su mirada sobre distintas tradiciones peninsulares, aunque alguna hay. Es reciente la de Rodríguez Cañada (1999), referida a la poesía del último decenio del siglo XX en las lenguas castellana, gallega, vasca y catalana.

7. Interesaría reservar un espacio para el estudio de las implicaciones entre la literatura y las artes plásticas, o entre aquella y la música. Son dos órdenes básicos cuando se investiga respectivamente (pero no sólo) la producción barroca y la medieval. Otro tanto habría que resolver en el marco literatura-cine para la época contemporánea. Al decir *un espacio* no me refiero a *unos capítulos* o *unos epígrafes* de distribución discreta; pienso, mejor, en la posibilidad de una interdependencia holística.

8. Algo semejante a lo anterior habría que resolver en relación con la Filosofía, la Estética y la Historia de las mentalidades.

9. Convendría dirimir a quiénes se destina básicamente el producto. Desde luego, también quiénes estarían en condiciones de afrontar el reto de escribirlo y qué clase de equipos se deberían constituir al efecto.

10. Por último, varias preguntas que no parecen impertinentes: ¿existen en el dominio peninsular(-insular) de los territorios administrados por los Estados español y portugués escritores/lectores/editores/críticos/historiadores/académicos/profesores/.../...con conciencia de pertenencia, adscripción o vinculación a una nombrada *comunidad interliteraria ibérica* que se sumaría a la conciencia

correlativa a su propio sistema inmediato de radicación y a otras posibles de radio más abierto o sesgado (atlántico, céltico, mediterráneo, románico, europeo, mundial...)? ¿En qué proporción se asume esa pertenencia/vinculación múltiple? ¿Con qué matices dependiendo de la procedencia lingüístico-cultural y socioeconómica de los individuos encuestados? Desde luego, la existencia como tal de aquella *comunidad* depende de las respuestas dadas a esta clase de cuestiones.

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Inventing Romania: Nationalism and Literature in the 20th Century

MONICA SPIRIDON

Over the last two decades, the idea of nation has been down-graded to a mere cultural artefact — "a product of invention and social engineering" to quote a referential book on the matter. (Confino 1997: 186) The so-called *cultural turn* in the study of nationalism essentially comes down to two things: a strong emphasis on the nation seen as an imaginary community, as a product of collective memory, and a special attention to the narrative devices involved in the projection of national spaces.

Although it is easy to agree on the fact that all identities are constructed — no matter how much it looks like a discovery — the issues at stake are **how, from what, by whom and for what this construction emerges.** (Castels 1997: 6–7). Nationality-building is in fact a construction of meaning, on the basis of a related set of cultural attributes. These attributes are granted priority over all other possible sources of meaning.

This paper will focus on a series of intermingling questions: How was Romanian identity represented? What images of a nation were proposed and fought over? How are we to understand the cultural milieu from which these images were generated? To put it briefly, I am more interested in national representations that in national self-consciousness.

The key issue regarding the debatable — and highly debated — condition of Romanian identity has been cast in an outstanding interrogation by the Romanian self-exiled writer Emil Cioran. Paraphrasing Montesquieu, his question sounds like this: *"Comment peut-on être Roumain?"* Unfortunately, as Matei Calinescu points

out in a later essay, Montesquieu does not also consider the case of a Persian asking himself: *How can one be a Persian?* (Calinescu 1983: 21).

As latecomers in the club of the European nations, the Romanians have overrated the stirring implications of the question: *How can one be what one is*? In order to touch the sore spot of the Romanian national idea, we should lay a strong emphasis on its status of an emotional Counter-reaction. In Romania, national identity emerged by way of compensation, as a retort to the unhappy consciousness of being a Romanian, epitomised by Cioran's question.

The deep reason of this collective insecurity — at once desire and doubt — was the mixed cultural heredity of Romanianness. The Western Roman linguistic legacy, on one side, and the Eastern Orthodox Christianity, on the other, have been the torn halves of the Romanian cultural identity. From a purely geopolitical standpoint, this rather confusing condition was the byproduct of both the marginal position of Romania, when reported to the European West, and of its interstitial placement between dominant imperial powers, either non-Latin, or non-orthodox. (The Ottoman Empire, The Habsburg Empire, the imperial Russia). As an outcome of this borderland position, the main arena of critical debates around the national landmarks has been dominated by two antipodes, generically identified as the Orient and the Occident.

In Romanian culture, the paradigmatic anxiety brought about by the obsession of identity, can be tracked down in various areas of reference. The collective perceptions of the national idea fostered conflicting ideologies, rhetorical devices and *topoi* of the social imaginary; fashioned literary histories and literary programmes; forged symbolic topographies and sites of memory.

Following Pierre Nora's distinction between history and memory (Nora 1989: 8) the career of the national idea in Romanian intellectual discourse could be divided into two distinct ages.

In the first half of our century, Romanian culture followed the French model and fostered narrative scenarios relying on a total overlapping of history and collective memory, in the evocation of deep, sacred national origins. This *holy memory of the holy nation* (Nora 1989: 11) — articulating the ideal unity of memory and

history — strongly emphasised (1) the unbroken national cohesion and progression since the beginning and (2) the legitimating function of the past. On the agenda of Romanian intellectual elites, genetic anxieties such as: *Where are we coming from?* and *Where is our symbolic cradle in Europe*? completely overshadowed the basic question: *Who we are?* On the level of mainstream perceptions, the epitome of the relationship Oneself /The Other was the implicit dictum: *Tell me where are you coming from, and I will tell you who you are* .

Especially after the First World War, when *The Greater Romania* emerged with the collapse of the empires, the process of nation-building and the intellectual arguments about identity had come to dominate the academic curricula at almost every level and in every particular discipline: history, philosophy, ethnography, literary history, art and so on.

However, one of the most highlighting representations of the nation, has been offered by national literary histories. Due to the above mentioned reasons, Romanian literary histories have been persistently assigned manifold strategic functions.

If beliefs about the origins and the evolution of nations often crystallise in the form of stories, only certain narrative *Master tropes* shape our conception of history. In the *History of Romanian Literature from Its Origins to the Present Times,* the *Master Trope* is cultural genealogy: the unbroken literary flow since remote and glorious origins. Seeking to emulate the old and prestigious Western literatures, the author, G. Calinescu, keeps a strategic eye towards projectively compensating the lack of a long standing, strong and impressive tradition of Romanian literature. He strategically shifts all canonical choices from their historical context onto a huge scene, erected by symbolic projection: cultural memory, where past and present overlap, if need be, and values get drawn to the merry-go-round of real or fictitious filiations.

A whole tradition of obscure forerunners and minor pioneers may come down to a single after-comer it does not actually produce but imply as an unknown of its equation. The time dynamics of literary history fits the profile of the Christian calendar. The qualitative grid overwhelms the chronological structure, symbolically reinterpreting and re-evaluating it. A correlation of the same

type as the slippery hermeneutics Northrop Frye discovers between *The Old* and *The New Testament* — the twin panels of the *Great Code.* If we look from the beginning to the end, from the past to the future, tradition comes out as a latency and — should we say? — as a utopia. Changing perspectives and moving over to the other end, we see the later segment — especially classic litera-ture and it mythical peak, the national poet Mihai Eminescu — acting backwards on the earlier one: revealing it, grabbing its deep meanings out of latency. The pre-classical writers gain a strictly relational value, not by what they effectively are, but by what they symbolically herald.

The fictional production that tailed after the overflowing talk about nation also displayed a retorting and messianic line of argu-ment. "The nation's biography" — Benedict Anderson notices — "cannot be written evangelically, down time, through a long procreative chain of begettings. The only alternative is to fashion it up time — towards Peking Man or King Arthur." (Anderson 1983: 204). Unfortunately in Romanian culture there are no Peking Men, King Arthurs or Round Tables. No legitimating narration going backwards would ever reach a dignifying forefather.

This is why in Romanian literature prestigious places, wor-shipped by popular memory, have been reckoned as national moulds. The result of these compensating projections would be pertinently described by Michel Foucault's notion of *heterotopia.* In some of his lecture notes, released just before his death, Michel Foucault contends with the *double illusion* of our spatial represen-tations. We mainly see spatiality either as purely mental (a con-ceived space) or, on the contrary, as empirical definable (a per-ceived space). Foucault's alternative bias emphasises the cultural ability of building simultaneously conceived, perceived and lived spaces: the heterotopias. "Heterotopias", Foucault concludes, "are something like counter-sites; a kind of effectively enacted utopias in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found in a culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality." (Foucault 1986: 24)

The *Master tropes* of nationalist literature were heterotopic spaces like Rome — the Western cradle of Romanian Latinity —

or Byzantium — the Eastern mould of Romanian Orthodox Christianity. In the wake of a growing anxiety about national identity, literature has persistently built *crisis heterotopias:* prestigious models — as a *Post-Byzantine Byzantium,* the *Forth Rome*, *Little Paris* — able to meet the requirements of legitimacy and to compensate the discomfort of being a Romanian. It is also noteworthy that this persistent topographical leaning had been closely intertwined with the persistent public concern over the Orient and the Occident, as alternative geopolitical and cultural horizons of Romanian identity.

The fact that in Romanian literature the *nationalist literary topoi* entailed familiar stereotypes is also certified by their rich parodical output. Re-writing — through parody, pastiche, irony — perpetrates a formula, a theme, a narrative option and validates their vitality. Through parody, nationalist topographies are irreversibly set up as products of the collective imaginary. As a reading contract with a well-informed reader, parody is the route through which the critical spirit and literary self-reflection meet fabulation.

The novelist Stefan Banulescu, among others, parodically contends with the stubborn aspirations of Romanian culture towards glorious genealogical patterns. His fictional world has been structured according to the principle of the endless repetition and conversion of haughty prototypes. In a novel called *The Book of Metopolis,* imitation itself has been turned into the central theme of the story. The events and the characters of the novel illustrate a peculiar type of existence, in quest of highly distinctive models. In the Danubian city of Metopolis, the main source of all patterns, the Model of all models is the imperial Byzantium, upgraded to the status of a genealogical myth.

The play *A Byzantine Masquerade,* performed with a big fuss in the city, is an astute *mise en abîme* of the passage of Byzantine archetypes into a mere repository of picturesque clichés and common places. According to some Romanian historians, Byzantium should be seen as an intellectual heritage that managed to survive through a long and eclectic existence (Iorga 1972). Matching up the Roman imperial form with the Orthodox Christian substance,

it eventually emerged as its own successor and, in a way, as its own copy.

The fervid and industrious concocting of copies and forgeries in Banulescu's city practically reduces the idea of cultural descent to a mere metaphor, if not to a straightforward lie. The very principle of modelling is thus put into question, the relation between arch-reality and its copies becoming virtually reversible.

*   *   *

The second age of the Romanian nationalist idea covers the last decades of communism and has its peak in the early eighties. The twenty years between 1944 — the Soviet take-over of Romania — and 1964 — Ceausescu's advent — should be seen as a tireless battle of Nationalism against Marxism. (Vederey 1991: 11). Nationalism eventually turned out to be the winner and National Identity stood up as the master cultural symbol, displaying highly structural properties. In this lap of time, literature, history, collective memory had performed their converging parts in an overarching explanatory scenario. The discourse about unity and continuity (*The Nation*) had overwhelmed the one about differentiation and change (*Marxism*).

During Ceausescu's dictatorship, the virtually hegemonic force of national ideology ended up in an aggressive complex of superiority called *Proto-chronism*. Its main cultural expression was a boastful rejection of any sources, models or forerunners, in almost all intellectual spheres, for the benefit of a paradoxical theory of local priority, allegedly ignored, because of the marginal status of Romania.

It is important to note that the same distressing question: *How can one be a Romanian?* should be posited as the ultimate source of Proto-chronism. This time, by way of compensation, being a Romanian becomes a privilege, a miracle and bliss. In Ceausescu's Romania, the so-called **pride of being born a Romanian** was the obsessive keynote of all official discourses.

In this second age of the national idea, the previous cultural harmony and unity totally collapsed. History and memory fell apart. The official national history relied on an integrated, dictatorial me-

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mory. A *memory without a past* — as Nora notices. (Nora 1989: 8) An unbridgeable gulf was growing deeper and deeper between it and the lively literary memory. The previous memory-nation, building sites of memory — *lieux de mémoire* — was the last occurrence of the joint venture memory / history.

National literary histories published in the eighties, for instance, readily gave way to a propensity to doubt, suspect and de-construct. The standards set by the predecessors are being thoroughly turned upside down. Literary historians like Calinescu had played the card of continuity and the tactics of the national *genus proximum*. Their successors lay a determined stress on the moments of breaking up, when major tectonic movements lead to salient renewals of the literary landscape. The new reference system automatically implies a secularisation of the terms Calinescu worked with. National canonical saints lose their halo and mythical dimensions and become plain professionals of literature. The title of the most highlighting and influential national literary history in the eighties is *The Critical History of Romanian Literature*.

As far as fictional output is concerned, the post-modern generation of Romanian authors tried by all means to counteract the take-over of memory by the official political and historical discourse. They triggered off a genuine criticism of nationalist paradigms, <u>undermining their ideological and aesthetic presumptions,</u> as well as their rhetorical devices. Along with the authors' growing scepticism concerning older national representations, fictional topographies get more contradictory and even confusing. Post-modern Romanian writers switch from the urban novel to the travel epic, which, in European literatures, had previously offered generous opportunities to the confederation between fiction and meta-literature.

The title of an original novel by Ioan Grosan, *A Hundred Years at the Gates of the Orient* mixes a twist on Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad* and a famous remark of Raymond Poincaré, on the Romania's position at the gates of the Orient: *"Que voulez vous, nous sommes ici aux portes de l' Orient, où tout est pris à la légère?"* (*We are here at the gates of the Orient, where everything is easy-going*). Moreover, in contemporary Romania, this

remark had become a stereotype excuse for various civic, moral and political deficits.

The chronicle of a round-trip journey from Romania to the pontifical Rome, in the early seventeen century, is a mere excuse to playfully re-read, re-write and re-live a hundred years of traditional literary stereotypes and of collective perceptions on national identity. Highly emotional clichés of interwar discourses — such as *"We, the Romanians, we are coming down from Rome "* are turned upside down or simply ignored.

Intellectually sophisticated and highly self-reflexive, the authors of the so-called generation of the 1980s, emphatically undertake some of the duties traditionally assigned to national literary histories. If Calinescu's monumental literary history was in fact a disguised fictional projection, in exchange, the post-modern authors are producing national literary history in the fictional garment, matched with fake critical commentary. *The Levant* — an heroic poem by Mircea Cărtărescu — follows the journey of a young poet by boat, in a balloon, or simply in dreams, from the Greek islands — the cradle and paradigm of the European civilization — to the Danube banks and then to Bucharest. In fact, Cărtărescu's poem thematically and stylistically rewrites the most important models of national literary histories, ritually glorified by the curricula. By means of pastiche, ironical deviation, paraphrase, quotation and erudite allusion, Cărtărescu stages a genuine comedy of literature, relying both on the huge repository of literary recipes and of the related critical commonplaces.

Authors like Grosan, Cărtărescu and the others redefine nationalist hypotheses as obsolete scenarios of cultural memory. They grasp an essential process taking place in contemporary Romanian literature: *the progressive retreat of nationalistic paradigms in discourse*. And, at the same time, they capture the passage of the arrogant national models and of their products into literary assets to be recycled .

* * *

Although the national idea — the so-called *Romanian-being-in-the-world* — has been made public through various intellectual

discourses (philosophy, history, music, ethnography, art) literature was the Master Discourse, the authoritarian voice in charge of the Great National Narrative. To be a cultural producer and especially a writer meant for a long-time in Romania to have a key role in defining the nation to itself and to the world.

In the early stages of nation building, Romanian culture operated mostly with essentialist assumptions. Firstly, the genealogical tracing of remote and dignifying origins. Secondly, the sophisticated processes of a genuine cultural translation: Rome or Paris meaning Bucharest, Orthodox and imperial Byzantium meaning Greater Romania and so on. Furthermore, like all small and peripheral nations — interested in tightly structuring their symbolic spaces — Romanian culture largely favored binaries like the Occident versus the Orient. On the discursive level, it ended up in an aggressive conceptual and rhetorical reductionism.

However, on the strictly literary level, the paradigmatic representations, sometimes symbiotic, sometimes rivalling, were more flexible, less clear than the historical, political, ideological ones, tending to engender a unique brand of *hybridity*. The concept of *hybridity* has been introduced by Homi Bhabha, against the containment of cultural difference and in order to account for the intellectual production of what he called the *liminal cultural areas*. (Bhabha 1990a: 211). "The process of cultural hybridity" — Bhabha concludes — "gives rise to new areas of negotiation of meaning and representation." In the 20th century, literature was perhaps the most accurate symptom of Romanian *cultural liminality*.

If we were to look for a typological denominator to define the evolution of national models in Romanian culture, we would find it in the tension between *ideological reductionism* and the *vocation of creative blend* with symbolic devices. It can be also figured as a restless flip-flop between anxiety and enthusiasm, between the fear of being forever stuck in a unique Model and the will to overcome all models, melting them to shape a rich (con)fusion of paradigms.

From a chronological vantage point, in the early age of Romanian nationalism, cultural discourses embarked upon its path succeeded in building an area of convergence and general overlapping. In a later stage, Ceausescu's national-communism broke up the cultural arena, turning it into a battlefield. In striking

contrast to earlier periods, literature emerged as a deviant discourse and as a powerful critical stance, assuming the sharp comment and even the theoretically articulated criticism of the traditional nationalism and of its prevailing stereotypes. As a matter of fact, at the turn of the millennium, Romanian literature entered the age of post-narrative and post-nationalist representations of cultural identity. Therefore the conclusion I would risk at this point is that, perhaps, in the millennium to come Romania is to be re-invented.

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The Formation of the Estonian Nation from the Semiotic Aspect

REIN VEIDEMANN

Generalising different discussions of nationalism, (e.g. Deutsch 1966, Gellner 1983, Smith 1995, Eley and Suby 1996) we can state that a nation is, foremost, a certain social-political representation of human groups or associations where national culture fulfils a connective or cognitive role. The notion of "nation" unites culture and politics into a symbiotic relationship. In the preliminary stage of the development of a nation the arguments of identity are drawn from culture. Culture itself seeks political protection from the state. During the development of a state, national culture is used to legitimate politics or to integrate society (nationalism as imperative) (Gellner 1994: 2208–2222).

Consensus has been reached concerning the historicity of nations, which, according to Gellner, means that nations, as well as states, are a possibility, not an inevitability, and that states have come into being without the help of nations (ib. 2226). This "possibility" was in its turn conditioned by the industrial revolution and by the accompanying Enlightenment and Romanticism in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries.

A group of people developing into a nation is considered to be characterised by ethnic, linguistic, religious and historical "concurrences, coincidences", in addition to which it belongs to a unified sphere of laws or under a unified central power (Sevänen 1999: 26). We can notice that such solidarity predominantly originates from the sphere of action and the spiritual sphere of the people. Or again, according to Ernst Gellner: "… nations are made

by people; nations are the handiwork of peoples' beliefs, attachments and inclinations." (Gellner 1994: 2227).

A nation as an imaginary unity has attracted more and more attention during the era of postmodernism, when the great narratives, proceeding from the Enlightenment (the myth of progress, the almightiness of science, etc.) are losing their earlier consolidating power. Economic, social and political convulsions, which played an important part in modernism, have given way to indeterminacy and occasionality of processes in the late 20th century. Together with the borders becoming vague, constant changes in the mode of existence and the transition to the information society, the role of indirect (mental) factors in creating the identity of man and groups of people is growing. The principles of unity could not be drawn from history and everyday reality any more. So it follows that the idea of belonging to any group of people, created on the basis of individual (and then collective) will, increasingly seems to become the constituting foundation of such a group. Benedict Anderson focuses in his book *Imagined Communities* (Anderson 1983) on an "idea" as a nation-forming foundation, observing a nation replacing the already eroded religion. If religion represented stability and certainty, giving meaning to the whole of human life (birth, sufferings and death), then, by the time religion had weakened, its place was filled by nationalism (Anderson, Scheff 1994: 278).

The imaginary quality of a nation, in its turn, allows us to treat it from the viewpoint of semiotics. This means that a nation is a sign system and a sign-bearing process. A "semiotic description" of a nation closely borders on the spiritual procedures centring around name, myth, image and symbol.

To describe the Estonian nation semiotically, we have to return to the year 98 AD. In this year the Roman writer and consul Publius Cornelius Tacitus wrote his book *De origine et situ Germanorum* (later known as *Germania*); in the last but one chapter of which he describes a group of tribes who were located between the Teutons and the Fenns and who were known as *aestii* (Lill 1998: 3). These tribes were located in the north-east and north of the River Vistula, the territory inhabited by Prussians, Lithuanians and Latvians. This fact has in different times been

used as an argument against the claim that the *aestii* could have been the ancestors of the Estonians and that therefore they could be treated as a proto-nation. On the other hand, their location in the immediate neighbourhood of the Fenns still allows us to suppose that at least some of these tribes became the ancestors of the Estonians some time later (ib.).

From the semiotic aspect, we are interested in the question whether *aestii* as a linguistic sign represents the tribes speaking that, i.e. the Estonian language.

Unfortunately, this question remains unanswered, as this period cannot be reconstructed (Sutrop 1999: 646). We could imagine — if only as a supposition — that *aestii* was the name the Estonians used to designate themselves (ib. 647), but it could as well have signified all Balto-Finnic tribes, because at the time when Tacitus wrote his *Germania*, the Balto-Finnic tribes and dialects were spreading into each others' areas, forming new mixed tribes (Wiik 1996: 587). Since before that time the ancestors of the Estonians had seriously and for a long time been influenced by Proto-Germanic and Proto-Baltic languages (ib.), we have a reason to suggest that these languages lent a name also to the tribes who were located east of their habitat (compare with Old English *east*, German *Ost, Osten, oster, östlich* = east, eastern and *estnisch, Esten* = Estonian, Estonians) (Raun 1982: 7). We cannot completely exclude the possibility that "the self-designation of Tacitus's *aestis* of that time could have been based on some other foundation (People of the Wild Boar? People of the Mother of Gods?) and they might have associated themselves with tribes who were linguistically rather far removed from them" (Arukask 1999: 672).

The unidentified state of the *aestii*, the fact that no one-to-one correspondence can be found with the bearer of the sign, contains a very strong semiotic potential. This is a sign that consists of a classical signifier (*aestii*) and signified (a certain tribe), but which lacks a referent (object) or, as a matter of fact, the object remains imaginary. As in the Saussure's tradition, the relationship of a signifier and signified in a sign is arbitrary (based on agreement, casual) then the conditionality of the referent increases this arbitrariness even more. To simplify: *aestii* is completely open to fantasizing, it is a thoroughly cultural phenomenon, an epithet or

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attribute, a cluster of freevalent characteristics — by no means a proper name, let alone a text. Below I will try to show how this attribute, this epithet becomes a proper name, a semiotic medium (a sign system) of one nation — the Estonians.

Thus, in the development of Estonia as a sign, *topos* preceded *logos*. From ancient Scandinavian sagas it appears that the present Estonia was known as *Eistland* already in the 7th century, five hundred years before the land was conquered by the Teutonic Order. The identity of, first, the locality and, second, the people originated from the Other (Annus 2000: 11). The names *Estonian land* and *Estonians* had been given to the inhabitants of this locality mainly by their western neighbours (Selirand, Siilivask 1996: 40), as, for example, the Finns, who live north of Estonia, have known Estonia and the Estonians more as *Viro* and *Virolaiset* up to the end of the 20th century. For the Latvians living in the south, up to the present day the fixed name *Igaunija* stands for Estonia. The reason for this is the same Otherness. For the Latvian tribes the first strange (other) tribes in the north were the inhabitants of Ugandi county, for the Finns, such strangers were the inhabitants of Viru county. For the Russians, the Estonians were *Tshuuds* (Viires 1998: 47). This is the *pars pro toto* transference. The primary unity on the level of the name was formed only in the 13th to 15th centuries, when the dominance of the Teutonic Order had been established in the area of Estonia (or, more strictly, in the Old Livonia). But even this unity actually contained a polarity in the form of Estonia and Livonia, which were administratively divided into three provinces under the Swedish dominion: the province of Estonia (Northern Estonia together with the island of Hiiumaa), the province of Livonia (Southern Estonia together with Northern Latvia down to the Daugava River), and the island of Saaremaa as an independent administrative unit. The "Baltic Special Order" — the law of self-government of the Baltic provinces that had become effective at the same time — "conserved" this polarity that later extended to the language plane for almost three centuries, and initiated the struggle between two languages — the Northern Estonian dialect and the Southern Estonian dialect — determining which of them would achieve the status of the unified literary language. The binary relationship

between Northern and Southern Estonia permeates the whole Estonian culture of this short period of time. Practically up to the mid-19th century the Estonians used a name *maarahvas* (*country people*) to refer to themselves (Saareste 1958: 257; Viires 1998: 48). This name, too, stems from *topos*: Estonians were the peasants — the serfs — who lived in the country, *saksad* — (the landlords, townspeople, who were mostly Germans) lived in the manors and towns.

The Reformation that swept over Estonia with an astonishing speed was the first among the powerful factors that worked towards widening the capacity of meaning of Estonia as a sign. Although the forced Christianisation of Estonians in the 13th century can be considered their birth trauma (Paul 1999: 43), still, Estonia was included in the unified European cultural space by this event. This inclusion fatally determined the mechanism of the development of the Estonians as a nation. The whole literary culture of the Middle Ages was based on the one and only text — the Bible. Thus, the translating of the Bible into Estonian (some literary evidence of this going back to the years 1525 and 1535) was, at the same time, the discovery of the language, and the self-discovery of the Estonians as a speaking nation inside this language. The Estonian Bible (the right of relating to God in one's mother tongue) was the first testimony of the emergence of Estonians as a nation.

Since the Reformation it is possible to follow the parallel courses of three processes, synthesised by the developing Estonian national narrative in the second half of the 19th century. All three had their own meaningful, "semiotic" contributions to make to the forming of the Estonian nation as an imaginary unit.

One of these processes was folk tradition (oral tradition, taboos, rituals), regulating everyday life and guaranteeing its continuity through norms and continuities. "Textually" the folk tradition can be considered as a text of traditions. The text of traditions (myths, folklore) influenced the collective consciousness all through the period before the emergence of literary culture. The basis for the unity of the identity was formed by a uniform way of interpreting the surrounding world, uniform customs or principles of organising life (for Estonians, for example, such a principle was a

long farmhouse including a barn, which formed the centre of cyclical life and which is considered "a product of a long-time local development" (Troska 1998: 282)). The text of tradition is essentially non-discreet and it opens and deciphers according to the mechanisms of isomorphism or homomorphism (Lotman 1990: 320). The mythology contained by the text of tradition "does not form according to the principle of a chain, as a text of fiction, but "wraps" itself in the way that resembles a head of cabbage, where each leaf repeats with certain variations all others" (ib. 321). The text of tradition thus manifests the cyclicity of time: "events do not progress linearly, they only repeat themselves eternally in a certain predetermined way, whereas the notions of beginning and ending cannot in principle be applied to them" (ib.). This circumstance has a cardinal importance in forming the national consciousness. The national consciousness draws its energy from the eternal repetition, *the eternal present* or *the future perfect* (Annus 2000: 89).

The second process is connected with the Bible (or more broadly, with the whole institutionalised religion) as a text that has shaped the Estonian national consciousness and national culture. Such a constituting meaning of the Bible has been acknowledged only recently (Paul 1999). Since a sacred text became the basis of the whole Estonian literary culture, it meant, above all, the sacralisation of the Estonian language. Writing was not a simple writing any more, it derived from the "Holy Writ". If one of the main propositions of Juri Lotman's cultural semiotics holds at all, then it seems to apply specially to Estonians: "A collective is given a text before it is given a language, and the language "is calculated" from the text" (Lotman 1990: 283). Contact with the Bible "as the mightiest linguistic authority" (Paul 1999: 53) formed a channel in the Romantic canon through which it was possible to reach the primeval sources of the nation and its childhood. Language became the "supporting pillar for posting the thesis of a cultural golden age" (Undusk 1995: 746). While the German cultural philosopher of the 18th century J. G. Hamann still referred to the Old Testament when identifying paradisal language and poetry, then J. G. Herder, who was under his influence — and who could well be considered the "godfather" of Estonian national

discourse (Undusk 1995: 577) — transferred this sacredness to the folk song as a kind of linguistic trace of a nation's childhood (ib. 676). Here we can see a vivid reflection of the Reformation-born intertextualisation: The rebirth of Christ — an eternal return (*der ewige Wiederkehr*) — is reprocessed into a total palingenesis in the Romantic canon; a belief in the one and only god and in the gospel is transformed into a belief in "the human soul, but also in the eternal rebirth of the cultural spirit always in a n e w form, just like it occurs in the kingdom of flora each spring" (ib. 678).

Besides making people aware of language and its background (space and history)[1], the text of the Bible had another important meaning. As "the Bible is not simply a text, but the metatext of Christianity" (Paul 1999: 17), translation and interpretation acquired a special meaning through it. Historical-critical study of the Bible has been considered to have been the undertaking of the Lutherans (Paul 1999: 143). Religious instruction in the Estonian language and church sermons trained the discursive thinking of the Estonians. Discussions about the meaning of the Word of God and the Bible exegesis widened into a discussion about the meaning of words and man himself. The Bible, its translation into Estonian (an Estonian version existed probably already at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries) (Paul 1999: 275), sermonising and teaching acted not only as a primer of the language, but also as a primer of culture. Besides being the amplifier of language, the text became important as a semiotic space (Lotman 1990: 287). The study of the Bible created the necessary preconditions for the dominance of logocentrism in the Estonian national discourse. The value of Estonia as a place, *topos*, lies in the usage of Estonian: this is the land that "speaks" the Estonian language. As an example we could

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[1]   The treatment of a language as a space, where proceeds the development of man and the whole nations, and which "represents" historical reality, can be seen as a semiotic interpretation of the language. When J. G. Herder talks about words as not only signs, but also as a plane of notions (Herder 1964: 68), then it is close to the notions defined by F. de Saussure as *langue* and *parole* more than a century later. Herder chose a sentence by Cicero, *Vocabula sunt nota rerum*, as the motto of one of his treatises (ib. 756).

bring Kristjan Jaak Peterson's poem "Kuu" ("The Moon"), written in 1819, which is often presented as an expression of the national discourse, where he demands the right of eternity for the language of just *this land* (i.e. Estonia).

The Reformation shaped the Estonians into the people of books, as "since the 16th century books have been an integral part of the cultural life of Livonia" (Paul 1999: 147). By the 18th century the culture of printing had become prevalent all over Europe, the Enlightenment was mostly related to the culture of writing and books (Darnton 1999), the habit of reading and the related circles of reading spread among the Baltic-Germans as well (Jansen 1993: 344).

The movement of the United Brethren (the Moravians), the peak of which fell into the 1730s and 1740s, played a special role in the development of the Estonian national discourse. The religious awakening, taking place in prayer houses or in peasants' homes made the religion "everybody's business", different from the institutionalised church, where the faith was mainly strange and enforced. This is the period when the new intertextualisation occurred. The old folk belief blended with Christian motifs or gave way to the legends of Christianity. Folk songs were replaced by a musical repertoire of German origin (Paul 1999: 63).

Although we have a reason to regard Lutheranism as, above all, the "German faith", the question remains why the Estonians adopted the cultural basis of this sign system (the "text" of Lutheranism), without being assimilated by Germans. A number of explanations have been offered (Kivimäe 1992, Undusk 1992, Jansen 1993, Karjahärm 1995), but the decisive factor here is the Baltic Special Order.

Although the Baltic Special Order left the Estonian peasants and the lower classes of townspeople without any rights, at the same time it also meant the establishment of a strict boundary between the two different nations — the Germans and the Estonians. There was no colonisation by German peasants and as such "the Baltic Special Order rather favoured the continuation of the Estonian people and the Estonian language" (Kivimäe 1992: 53). The situation became rather different in the 1940s, when the annexation of Estonia by the Soviet Union involved mass

immigration of Russians and other peoples of the Soviet Union, and a deliberate Russification of Estonia. The assimilation of the Estonians by the Russians both in the last decade of the 19th century and in the second half of the 20th century was successfully avoided due to the fact that the Estonians had already managed to establish themselves as a nation. By the 1940s the Estonians had already had experienced the statehood of their own.

The above-mentioned phenomena could semiotically be described by the text-inside-text model (Lotman 1990). The spreading of Christian texts caused a burst of culture all over Europe. Estonia experienced this burst twice, in the 13th and in the 16th centuries. In the 13th century the Estonians as a "barbarian nation" were included in the "textual world" representing the European civilisation. The complexity of all this caused setbacks and cognitive dissonances. To overcome or to mitigate these effects, a conscious or subconscious development of text strategies was begun, which at first helped to shape a collective identity (the development of the Estonian-language culture of writing, public education in the 17th and 18th centuries), and then, "to supply" this identity with a national ideology (the press, literature, the activities of various societies since the mid-19th century).

It is important to emphasise that the Reformation, the Enlightenment and Romanticism represented a burst of culture for the German occupants themselves as well. The majority of pastors working in Estonia in the 17th century had come from Germany, escaping the Thirty Years War. Their level of education was far superior to that of the local nobility, therefore the conflicts between ecclesiastical and lay powers were inevitable. The pastors "dared to consider themselves ordinary people and seek help from the authorities of state" (Masing 1999: 27). Therefore there were numerous occasions when pastors sided with the country people and encouraged the growth of awareness of the peasants (ib. 27–31). The Baltic-German text, the dominating text from the viewpoint of the Estonians, was at the same time a code text for the Estonians (a European text, a European paradigm). A code text is conceived as a certain meta-descriptional background or model which the texts, functioning in a culture, follow (Lotman 1990: 284–285). The cultural activity (*Kulturträger*) of the Baltic-

Germans directed at the Estonians in the 18th and 19th centuries should be discussed not so much as a humanist "moment of weakness" of the ruling people, an empathy towards the Estonians, but as the following of the newly established European cultural norms, which included the overall "awakening", "the state of enlightenment". The invasion of the Baltic-German text (especially via the religious awakening of the 17th and 18th centuries, and the shaping of the network of public schools) into the developing Estonian text brought the whole cultural plane into a "dynamic state" (ib. 293). This can expressly be seen in the searching for and motivating the name "Estonian" for the new textuality, where on the one hand, the conqueror (the dominating nation, the Germans) tries to signify an object (peasants, country people) with some special sign, and, on the other hand, the same object "grabs" the name, adopts it and opposes itself by this name to its "godfather". Such an adoption of an alien notion and turning it against the aliens themselves is quite a unique phenomenon in the semiotics of history. But the developing of the Estonians into a nation occurred just according to this model.

As I have already mentioned at the beginning of this article, the name "Estonia" was in the earlier documents used as *topos,* and to signify the Estonians as the inhabitants of this place. Henry of Livonia's *Chronicle of Livonia* tells about the province of Estonia (*Estonia provincia*) and its inhabitants (*Estones*) (*Chronicle of Livonia* 1982). "Estonia" is still a name of an object here. The sermon written by pastor Georg Müller on September 2, 1603 should be mentioned as the first written document, allowing us to suggest the use of "Estonian" as the signifier of a subject (i.e. which already contains the subject's self-consciousness as an "Estonian"). Müller, who was trained as a school teacher, but who under the circumstances had to preach in church, talked about the "mother tongue" (*Ema Kele kaas*), in this language he sang praise to God with his congregation. This testimony has been considered sufficient to show that at least Georg Müller sees himself as an Estonian (Masing 1999: 173), although he does not directly refer to himself as an Estonian.

J. G. Herder's anthology *Volkslieder* (1778–1779), which contains eight Estonian folk songs among others, has been considered

to be one of the initial impulses for the Estonian nationalism (Un-
dusk 1995: 578). Firstly, this meant that the national awakening of
the Estonians was initiated by the Germans, and, secondly that this
awakening initiated from the evaluation of history (from the
acknowledging of the right to history). Up to that time the
Estonians had been a nation without history. They lacked signness,
as the sign also contains memory. The publishing of folklore texts
meant the acknowledgement of this memory. "Estonia" that had up
to that time been used only as a local fiction had increasingly
started to obtain rhetorical (text-creating) content. For Herder and
his followers the "Estonian text" meant only an exotic savagery
(Jansen 1993: 295), the adoption of this term was seen as an
opportunity of enriching the European culture that had started to
rediscover itself through the Enlightenment. From the viewpoint of
Baltic-German culture it was like opening a window to let in fresh
winds, challenging the established cultural model; from the point
of view of the Estonians it was an opportunity of naming a nascent
identity. For the Baltic-Germans the discovery of "Estonia" as a
sign was greatly a parlour game in the 18th century, played
without an opposite player. The Estonians themselves were only a
fiction in this game. But the semiotic principle, according to which
the play of semiosis with the space outside the semiosis leads to a
qualitative change in the whole textual plane (Lotman 1992: 43),
changed the game into a real activity at a certain moment.
"Estonia" became the object of scientific perception in the acti-
vities of the Estonian Learned Society, founded in 1838. Already
before that time, in the years from 1813 to 1832, the role of the
first common forum of Estonian-German authors had been played
by a publication *Beiträge zur genauern Kenntniss der ehstnischen
Sprache*, edited by J. H. Rosenplänter (Undusk 1992: 649). The
idea of the Estonian Learned Society had been born among the
authors of the magazine *Das Inland*, founded in Tartu in 1836.
Although the materials published in this magazine still represented
the Estonians according to the stereotype of "uncivilised heathens"
(Talv 1992: 63), *Beiträge* and *Das Inland* were still important
channels in preparing the semiotic turn (from sign to text) of
"Estonia".

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This turn will forever be marked by two important manifestations. In 1839, at a meeting of the Estonian Learned Society, a Baltic-German intellectual Georg Julius Schultz-Bertram called for giving the Estonians an epic of their own, a text by which they could identify themselves as Estonians. Bertram's statement did not mean only the acknowledgement of the Estonians as a subject and "Estonian" as the subject name, but also the right of the Estonians to their own text (culture, history, art, literature, politics, social thought, etc.). In 1857 Fr. R. Kreutzwald brought this idea to life with his epic *Kalevipoeg*, which became the "sacred narrative" of the Estonian nation, "which swallowed the whole story of the Estonians from the beginning to the end into its symbols" (Undusk 1994: 149).

The newspaper *Perno Postimees* that started appearing at the same time with the *Proto-Kalevipoeg* (1857), and marked the beginning of continuous Estonian journalism, published in its first issue (June 17, 1857) the address by its editor Johann Voldemar Jannsen, beginning with the words "Terre, armas Eesti rahvas" (Good day, dear Estonian people). This very address can be considered the manifesto of Estonian national self-consciousness (Talv 1992: 61), starting from this very time we have a reason to talk about the beginning of the development of Estonian national narrative, which included, besides literary subject matter, also the interpretation of history, mythology, ideology and politics (Annus 2000). If *Kalevipoeg* meant the shaping of "Estonian" as a sign into a sign system (the "language" of the national spirit and the text that carries it), then *Perno Postimees* was the introducer of the national discourse, its first channel and medium. By the mid-19th century the Estonians had adopted the German-conjured fiction of "Estonian", "the Estonian nation as a fiction, fantasy" (Jansen 1998: 802), and turned it against the Germans during the following national awakening. Once again we found proof to the idea that even the greatest fairy-tales could become truth some day.

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Growing Up in Modernity: The Comparative Place of Estonian Culture

JAAK RÄHESOO

My thesis is that the most conspicuous characteristic of Estonian culture is its history's falling entirely within the period of modernity. The fact seems obvious enough, but usually it is mentioned only in passing. At least it has not been elaborated into an interpretative frame of reference. Before trying to take a step in that direction it would be useful to see what other frames have actually been applied.

Basically, attempts to define the overall character of Estonian culture in a wider context have taken either a geographic or genetic turn. The geographic approach has stressed Estonia's middle and purportedly mediating position between East and West. It is not a unique claim: the whole of Eastern Europe seems to share it. Both "East" and "West" remain pretty vague and mythic in this opposition, but the general assumption is that cultural mediation goes from west to east. The West is identified with "civilization", the East is "barbarity". Thus mediation also becomes a mission — a higher "meaning", an historic "role". An alternative role is that of a defensive bulwark: the barbaric East is not so much to be civilized as to be pushed back and contained.

In the case of Estonia the terms "East" and "West" become more specific. The East has always meant Russia, the West has historically been identified with Germany. The concept of a "civilizing mission" in its local variety has actually been taken over from 18th-century Baltic German ideology, as it sought an identity in the situation of being a somewhat special province of a new world power, the post-Peter Great Russian empire. The rising

Estonian nationalism, directed against the Baltic Germans, had initially little patience with this idea of a "civilizing mission". Rather, it questioned the civilizing role of the Germans as far as the Estonians were concerned. Some resentment of "Eastern barbarity" seems, however, to have crept into popular feeling during the decades of Russification in the 1880s and 1890s. "Eastern barbarity", now in the form of "Bolshevik barbarity", was certainly an important element in the ideology of the first period of independence from 1918 till 1940. But the dominant image of the time was the alternative one of a bulwark — as it was for the whole of Eastern Europe. The concept of a civilizing, Westernizing role within the Soviet empire seems to have been revived during the Khrushchev era when the mass terror of Stalinism was replaced by less brutal methods of suppression and there appeared some hope of gradual development towards a more open society. In hindsight one can say that this concept was now even more mythic and self-consolatory than it had been for the Baltic Germans in the tsarist empire. And the "mediating role" naturally lost any cultural significance as soon as the Baltic States re-established their independence in 1991. The only meaning Estonia's position between East and West has in cultural matters can be confined to the fact that her culture has developed under predominant German and Russian influences. It is a relatively passive role (thus hardly a "mediation" and "mission"), and the conscious intellectual effort of the last hundred years has been to diversify foreign influences.

What I shall call here the "genetic approach" has concentrated on our Finno-Ugric roots and seen the "meaning" and "mission" of Estonian culture in giving expression to an even wider subarctic mentality going all the way through Siberia to the American Indians. Instead of looking to the west, this approach has turned to the east; instead of trying to share European industrial civilization, it has sought spiritual inspiration from archaic hunters and fishers. Usually it has had to admit that modern Estonian "high culture" contains very few authentically Finno-Ugric or subarctic elements. Therefore out-and-out fundamentalists simply reject that culture as something alien and artificial. The majority of people, however, have shied away from such radicalism. Instead, they prefer to stress and cherish those few elements that do connect modern

Estonian culture with old folk culture. The result is that their importance has been exaggerated. We should note, first, that folk inheritance has been used at all only in some artistic fields (music, applied arts, poetry), while others (fiction, painting, sculpture, architecture) have practically nothing to show in this respect. There the so-called manifestations of national spirit are often purely individual fabrications. Second, even where authentic folk elements are used, they are thoroughly transformed by the overall context of modern art. Folk elements are either passive "material", which receives its meaning from having been given "form" in this "medium". Or they are purely outward signs of a nationalistic attitude, something like a national flag is in everyday life. One can, of course, always say that some Finno-Ugric spirit or mentality is moving within those borrowed forms and giving them a special flavour. Unfortunately this disembodied spirit is liable to acquire the mental features of those who look for it and serve as its prophets. Instead of tolerable agreement as to its nature, we have a number of quarreling sects, each accusing the others of heresy.

The "genetic approach" is generally past-orientated and sees the Finno-Ugrians as aliens in the modern world. This emotional attitude is shared by those who look for the essence of Estonian mentality and culture in the fact that Estonians have been living in their present territory for about 5,000 years, thus being one of the longest-settled peoples in Europe. Let's call it the "aboriginal" argument or approach. Now, it is theoretically possible that this sedentary way of life has indeed affected Estonian mentality, although so far no illuminating revelations have been brought forward on this ground. On the other hand, the concept of rootedness does not fit in with a number of prominent facts in recent Estonian history. It does not agree, for example, with the mass migration of Estonian peasants into various parts of the tsarist empire from the 1840s onward — almost from the moment when they got any right to move after the abolition of serfdom. Next, the mass exodus of World War II was a forced and painful move, but at least Estonian refugees proved as capable of adapting to foreign surroundings as any others. We can now observe a third wave of exodus which affects Estonia as much as the rest of Eastern Europe: it is an exodus of younger people to the West. And finally, the extra-

ordinary rapidity of change in the fifty-year period from the time of national awakening till the proclamation of national independence in 1918 would be quite inexplicable in terms of rootedness, traditionalism and conservatism.

It is this period — the period of the actual birth of the Estonian nation and culture — to which we should direct our attention and try to see it in a global context. All the approaches discussed so far have sought explanations from distant past — even the geographic approach, which treats the notions of East and West as age-old entities. In my opinion all these approaches are largely mythic and have been used more for rhetorical purposes than for really investigative aims.

In itself the rapid change of that fifty-year period has often given rise to wonder and pride. It, too, has been turned to mythic images, most often that of a sleeping giant (sometimes identified with the national hero Kalevipoeg) who has passed long centuries of slumber in the "night of serfdom", and then, suddenly awake, has rushed with feverish energy to make up for the lost time. The dominant rhetoric of Estonian culture has always been that of catching up with more developed nations.

What has been lacking, as I hinted in the beginning, is an elaboration of this simple observation of rapidity of development into an interpretative framework. For we should be quite conscious that this acceleration is not an isolated local phenomenon but a basic feature of the period of modernity — a period of successive bursts and rushes that have fundamentally changed our life and thinking. On the other hand, the fact of having grown up entirely in modernity is indeed an almost unique characteristic of the nations of Eastern Baltic on the European background. The Estonians share it only with their closest neighbours — the Latvians, the Lithuanians, the Finns. Nowhere else in Europe have people rushed directly from folklore to modernity, the only narrow bridge between these distant worlds being a Bible translation and a handful of purely practical or edifying tracts. Even the Balkan nations, living for centuries under the Ottoman yoke, had some previous medieval-type "high culture". The youth of a culture is, of course, a source of ambivalent feelings. One can take pride in the rapidity and thoroughness of change, but one can also feel

unease in the company of older nations. In some ways images of a bulwark or missionary of Western civilization or of Ugric prime-valism seem to have been more appealing. Though, coming to think of it, the formation of the Baltic nations could well serve as an example for some third-world peoples.

For the purposes of the present discussion I would put the beginning of the period of modernity into the second half of the 18th century. In a wider view it can well be moved back some 300 more years, to the days of the Renaissance, Reformation, and geographical discoveries, all of them signs of a turbulent rise of Europe. But for our aims it is sufficient to note that with the industrial revolution and large-scale social upheavals of the end of the 18th century that process of fundamental change clearly reached a new phase. In some ways Romanticism can be seen as its cultural reflection. Discarding the purportedly universal canon of Neoclassicism, the Romantic movement came to recognize the plurality and relativism of the world — a basic feature of moder-nity. Instead of a single hierarchy of esthetic values, a number of widely different "national spirits" and "spirits of the age" as well as a host of highly idiosyncratic "men of genius" filled the stage. Only on such a background, aided by certain ideas of Rousseau and Herder, could the first period of Estonian literature, that of collecting and re-working folklore materials, come into being.

It seems even more significant that the heyday of our national awakening co-incides almost exactly with a third, again visibly more accelerated phase of modernity whose beginning is usually put at around 1870. Our initial reaction to what happened then in Estonia and what happened in Western Europe may well be a heightened feeling of the backwardness of Baltic provinces. Even more so, probably, when we remind ourselves that the publishing of the national epic *Kalevipoeg* and of the first regular Estonian news-paper, the *Perno Postimees*, fall into the year 1857, which also saw the publications of *Les Fleurs du mal* and *Madame Bovary*, often seen as the beginnings of literary Modernism. But then the rapidity and completeness of the following changes look even more amazing. The recently emancipated Estonian peasants and urban working classes avidly took to the forms of European "high culture" which were being hurriedly introduced by the tiny group of nationally-

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minded intellectuals. The most conspicuous example is probably the theatre. It had practically no antecedents in peasant culture, but now amateur circles sprang up in almost every village.

At first there was indeed a considerable time-lag. Even the terms used to describe the process are often somewhat arbitrary or at least need significant reservations. These terms apply primarily to literature, as literature was the most important field of artistic activity. So it is customary to speak of the first half of the 19th century as our "time of enlightenment", although the kind of "enlightenment" we see in Estonia was mostly busy with pretty elementary popular education. The period from 1850 till 1880, the high time of national awakening, is described in literary terms as that of "national Romanticism". Its poetry, the leading literary kind of the time, was indeed often inspired by the Romantic poetry of the German anti-Napoleonic *Befreiungskrieg* of 1813, an example now ironically turned against the Baltic Germans. But while being consciously nationalistic, this poetry was not conscious of itself as Romanticism. Realism, the dominant trend of the end of the century, was the first Estonian literary movement to be conscious of itself as such. But that Realism, of Eduard Vilde and August Kitzberg, was typologically more akin to the Realism of Balzac and Dickens and Gogol than to its contemporary European masters. It is only with the Young Estonia (*Noor-Eesti*) movement of 1905 that the Estonian literature (and the other arts too now) more or less caught up with contemporary European trends, rushing headlong into the refined world of the still-fashionable Symbolism. This synchronization of cultural development went hand in hand with an extremely rapid modernization of all spheres of life.

So far I have used the term "modernity". Now I must also bring in that of Modernism". This, too, is a term of variable scope. I would use the wider variant which definitely includes Symbolism: in this view Modernism is a cultural expression of fundamental social changes which began around 1870. The term is also current in a more limited sense, sometimes specified as High Modernism. In that case its beginnings are put at around 1900. The choice of the one or the other is bound up with certain emotional dilemmas, because from the point of view of High Modernism Estonian culture certainly looks more backward and provincial. But my

choice of the wider definition is not determined by any wish to rescue the "honour" of Estonian culture or to combat any feelings of inferiority that the words "backward" and "provincial" are liable to produce. I believe both variants are heuristically valid: there are things that come to light with the one, and things that come to light with the other. The features brought out by the wider definition are necessarily of a more general nature. Indeed, they are so pervasive and so universally accepted by now, that we often fail to see their modernity.

The first characteristic to be pointed out is a heightened consciousness of change, of modernity itself. The generation of 1905 was certainly highly aware that they were living in a time of profound social, ideological and artistic repercussions. In the general European context these repercussions were seen as either progress and promise, or as crisis and threat. Like most of the oppressed peoples of the crumbling empires of Eastern Europe, the Estonians chose to greet social changes with hope. Now the Young Estonia group also enthusiastically embraced artistic and intellectual novelties, often with open contempt of Baltic German conservatism and provinciality. Their gravitation towards Paris was a symbolic gesture of allegiance to all that was new. It is not so important that their artistic preferences adhered to Symbolism, a movement already on the way out. Much more important is their acceptance of the idea that whatever their own tastes were, these were bound soon to be replaced by still newer trends.

The founders of Estonian culture in the 19th century, although as founders in a position of innovators, had either sought guidance from the "spirit of the nation", perceived as something immutable throughout centuries and best to be found in relics of distant past. Or they had tried to create a "standard", "normal" European culture, also imagined as something relatively stable, *a priori* given. The national epic *Kalevipoeg*, built of folkloristic materials according to a commonly accepted Greek genre model, well exemplifies both tendencies. With the Young Estonia movement the "spirit of the age" forcefully enters any discussions of the "spirit of the nation", making it a variable. The dominant rhetoric of Estonian culture, that of catching up with more developed nations, now acquires a new self-awareness and urgency, because

the whole of the modern world is seen as moving at an accelerated pace. The famous slogans of the Young Estonia, "Let's be Estonians, but also become Europeans" and "More of European culture" primarily call to efforts of reaching a "contemporary level". And that "contemporary level" is not regarded as something to be reached once and for all, but something permanently to be aspired to. The central artistic demand of the Young Estonians, that of "style", first and foremost means an inner coherence of a literary work. This coherence is supposed to receive its vitality from certain correspondences to the "national spirit" and the "spirit of the age". At the same time a measure of arbitrariness is already conceded: no style can fully express any spirit. Relativism and conventionalism are seen as part and parcel of cultural development.

The Young Estonia was decidedly a movement of the young. Coming after what was seen as a period of relative stagnation, the generation of 1905 saw itself as the forerunner of a permanent revolution, to borrow a phrase from political history. In a rapidly changing world the young were supposed to catch the "spirit of the age" more easily. Youth, novelty and originality became synonymous, and all were put a premium on. One consequence of that attitude was that from now on thinking in generational terms became common in Estonian culture. In the feverishly experimental atmosphere of the second decade of the century some younger members of the Young Estonia movement (those forming the group *Siuru*) already tried to establish their separate generational (or at least developmental) entity by discarding Symbolism and taking over the brand-new trends of Futurism and Expressionism. The generational model retained its force even at the time of a certain retreat of Modernism, for the "Neorealists" of around 1930 also saw themselves as in accord with a new turn of the "spirit of the age". And the afterword to the anthology *Arbujad* (1938) of a still younger group gives the generational model its final formulation. Final also because it was among the things that the Soviet occupation largely shattered. In the exile branch of Estonian literature there appeared a remarkable new generation of the late 1940s, but after that there came only a few isolated figures. In Soviet-occupied Estonia there was a strong revival feeling among the literary newcomers of the 1955–65 period, but that group

actually comprised two generations. And then again there followed a lull — almost to the early 1980s. What is worth noting is the rather panicky tone of the literary reviews of the time: the non-appearance of a new generation was seen as threatening to cut a vital link with the ever-renewing "spirit of the time".

In European intellectual history thinking in generational terms was not an invention of Modernism: it was introduced by Romanticism in the previous phase of modernity. Modernism quickened the pace of cultural generations and complicated the picture by seeing each generation as a field of competition for different groups and trends. In the context of a young and small culture like the Estonian one, still in its formative stages, the tasks of each generation have seemed something more objective, as if precluding the rivalry of alternative solutions. Whether they really were objective or mere rationalizations, will probably remain an open question. We should notice, however, that the heyday of the Young Estonia movement seems to have been more conscious of alternatives and arbitrariness than the following generations, who worked already in a time of a temporary retreat for Modernism. So the Estonian pattern may be both locally different from, and still conditioned by, the general history of Modernism.

"The spirit of the age" was something that the young were supposed to catch primarily with intuition, feeling, "nerves". But the age of Modernism has also seen an opposing tendency, which lays stress on rationality, scientific thinking, and self-consciousness. Never before have competing theories played such an active role in the arts. The rise of historical consciousness (the actual source of the concept of the "spirit of the age") and the spectacular development of historical scholarship during the 19th century have affected the artistic process itself. Initially histories of the arts confined themselves to the past, but the laws or regularities discovered there naturally gave rise to the temptation to guess the direction of present and future trends. And the artists themselves became acutely conscious that their fate was finally either to be included in or excluded from future histories. This has become an important and at the same time pretty incalculable factor of all artistic activity. One could put one's hopes on intuition, but one

could hardly escape the influence of current predictions, especially if they were supported by the weight of learned vocabulary.

Estonian culture, having entirely grown up in modernity, has from the beginning been a much more conscious effort than older cultures which came into being in more "innocent" times. From the Young Estonia movement onwards this effort has been even more systematic, following a "master plan" in the heads of a now better educated intelligentsia. But the vastness, mutability and complication of the modern world have at the same time increased doubts. Nevertheless, the metaphor of an "edifice" is a recurrent motif of our cultural debates. Perhaps the most conspicuous example of conscious "building" is the enormous unification and enrichment work in the field of the Estonian language, especially the ethos of the "language renewal" movement started by Johannes Aavik, which went so far as to replace the traditional plant metaphor (language as an "organic" growth) by that of a tool or machine (language as a human invention, entirely under the human will). The fifty years of Soviet occupation again seriously hampered these developments, as theoretical discussions were even more rigidly under surveillance than creative work itself. So the last ten years have witnessed a bewildering influx of Western theories. In general the growth of theory, initiated in the hopes of reaching some "objective" conclusions, has rather contributed to a feeling of inevitable "open-endedness" and subjectivism.

Another feature to be discussed is the relationship between the elite and the masses, or the avant-garde and the wider public. The usual attitude is to stress the democratic nature of Estonian culture, its grassroots character, the lack of any cultural class divisions. This attitude is not unfounded: it can be supported by numerous examples. At the same time it has tended to cover up the fact that the Estonian culture too has from its very beginning been riddled with inner divisions.

In its initial stages during the 19th century the thin layer of nationally-minded intellectuals was separated from the mass of people by its German-language education and often the use of German as their home language, as well as by its better economic and social status. Nevertheless the people accepted these half-alienated intellectuals as their leaders: a difference did not yet

grow into a conflict. And being largely guided, the new Estonian culture did not so much grow up from the roots as was "implanted" from above. The remarkable thing, as I said before, was the enthusiasm and ease with which the people appropriated these forms of "high culture".

By the turn of the century the intellectuals had grown in number, and the people had become much more differentiated both socially-economically and educationally. A stark contrast was replaced by finer gradations. Nevertheless, with the Young Estonia movement and its stress on change and novelty we have a typically Modernist situation where only a small elite is able to keep the accelerated pace and the "unenlightened" public lags clamorously far behind. A difference had widened into a conflict. The open hostility of the wider public, aptly symbolized at the start of the Modernist movement by court proceedings against *Les Fleurs du mal* and *Madame Bovary*, has from the turn of the century haunted the half-formed Estonian culture as well. For twenty or twenty-five years Soviet occupation temporarily levelled that opposition. The simplicities of "Socialist Realism" were too much even for the simplest tastes, so the first timid innovations in the late 1950s found wide support. But as soon as they became more radical and sophisticated in the early 1960s, the old controversy re-established itself. Even the fact that these innovations usually caused some official displeasure was not enough to allay the rumblings of "simple" readers and viewers, otherwise hostile to Soviet official-dom. This estrangement between the elite and the general public has constantly grown. Although the public has come grudgingly to accept the existence of modern art, it gladly uses any opportunity to ignore or sabotage it.

I have spoken of this division of tastes within the sphere of "high culture". But the picture is further complicated by the rise of "mass culture", which more or less co-incides with the rise of Modernism and may partly be a reaction to its esotericism. It is true that certain forms of mass literature appeared as soon as printing was invented, but they became a separate branch only in the 19th century. In music a distinct world of "light music" became prominent around 1870. And the specific 20th century art, the cinema, was born as a form of mass entertainment and only later

developed its "highbrow" variant. So the formation of Estonian culture has taken place within the framework of a general division into these opposing spheres. Curiously mass culture had until recently only limited influence in Estonia. Up to 1940 it was there, but a condescending attitude seems to have been so widespread that even half-educated people tried to distance themselves from it. In the Soviet system Western mass culture was excluded for ideological reasons, and the authorities were not quite successful in creating a version of their own. So it is only in the last ten years or so that we have seen a flooding of the market. The influence of mass culture is of course a much more complicated problem: I have barely mentioned it.

Certainly there were differences from the general European pattern in the workings of Modernism in Estonia. In older cultures Modernism was in many ways a revolt against the past. The young Estonian culture did not have enough of a past to be revolted against. (Although to a certain extent the decidedly conservative and provincial Baltic German culture seems to have functioned in that role.) So the retreat from Modernism in the late 1920s was more complete than in Western Europe. It was as if artists had only now time to fill in some of the background that had been visible in the rest of Europe. We can see it in all branches of artistic activity. In painting Symbolism, Expressionism and Cubism were followed by belated variations of Impressionism and Realism. In fiction a host of dogmatically Zolaesque naturalistic novels appeared. In poetry regular forms replaced the much more experimental verse of around 1920. Estonian music, perhaps least influenced by Modernistic tendencies, was largely developing along 19th-century lines. Again it will probably remain an open question how much of this retrograde development should be seen as inevitable, caused by the objective conditions of Estonian culture, and how much it was only one among many possible options. Any attempt of an answer should be formulated on the background of comparable developments in the whole of Eastern Europe.

There were signs in the late 1930s that Estonian culture was re-entering the Modernist paradigm. In Western Europe, indeed, Modernism came to be recognized as the mainstream of 20th-century art in the years immediately following World War II. For

Eastern Europe that road was blocked by Soviet occupation. But here the underground Modernism retained its spirit of opposition and was not turned into a new academicism as in the West. The fifty years of Soviet occupation are a crucial factor not only for the home branch of Estonian literature. They also affected the development of the exile branch, for the small exile communities quickly took up a highly conservative attitude, so characteristic of many diasporas throughout history. The picture somewhat differed according to which market an artist worked for. The exile painters, mainly orientated towards that of their adopted countries, soon switched over to more fashionable trends, while fiction writers, restricted to the exile readership, largely continued to exploit forms and subjects prevalent in pre-war Estonia. Poetry, which always has few readers and is thus hardly "marketable" anyway, took a middle road between painting and fiction.

One can endlessly debate whether growing up in modernity was good or bad for a young culture. Those who think it was bad usually refer to the cosmopolitan nature of Modernism, to its being centred in Paris or New York, which seems to work against local originality. But looking at the period of modernity as a whole, we can, on the contrary, see a gradual diversification of cultural geography. The late 18th century saw a revival of Germany, the 19th century brought in the powerful voices of Russia and Scandinavia as well as a host of small cultures in Eastern Europe, the 20th century has broken the long stagnation of Spain and Italy and added the presence of first North America and then of South America. Nowadays various countries of Asia and Africa have joined the global dialogue. All cultures have always received foreign influences, and periods of creativity have as a rule been those of active international traffic in ideas and forms. It is only a local colouring that usually distinguishes a grand period style in one country from that of another. Conversely, any strong local development will eventually contribute to national culture, even if by its very nature it has nothing specifically national about it. The Dutch group *De Stijl* or the Finnish school of the philosophy of logic are cases in point. The main justification of a small culture will in this view be not so much its outspoken originality, which in most cases turns out to be less original than is commonly assumed,

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but a greater intensification of cultural life. This could well be observed in the Soviet empire, which was full of administrative units (*oblast*) of the size of Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania.

In contrast to the widening of geographical horizons, the period of modernity has brought about a narrowing of temporal horizons. It is true that the past has never been studied so thoroughly and systematically. It is also true that the reproduction technologies of the 20th century have for the first time in history put the riches of visual arts and music to everybody's potential use, including that of specialists. But it still seems undeniable that the feverish development of the last 200 years has pushed the past further away — it is now an alien world. Concurrently these 200 years have been a time when contemporary developments almost immediately become objects of scholarly discussion and even enter school curriculums. In older cultures it is a sign of deep change. In younger ones like the Estonian culture it is rather a matter of necessity. When Estonian was made the language of comprehensive education and its literature became a school subject, contemporary authors immediately became its "classics" because there simply was not enough of past inheritance. The overall result is a certain levelling of difference between old and young cultures: the former are cut off from their past, the latter don't have any. This development, like everything else in the world, may have its drawbacks, but from the point of view of younger cultures it should at least diminish their feeling of inferiority. Everybody is "making it new" in the modern world.

There is, finally, the question of correspondence and dependence between the general course of history and that of culture. The period of modernity has seen unprecedented growth and enlargement. We are now acutely aware that the Earth is very small and overpopulated and its resources are limited. Are we perhaps facing a turn to constriction and restriction? And may it not direct the present trend of globalization of culture into the opposite way of dividing the world into autarchic units? As it will almost certainly mean mutual hostility, that perspective is more terrifying than any of the threats of globalization. I cannot help asking the question, but it remains unanswered.

National Mythology: Past and Present

EPP ANNUS

The issues of nation and nationhood are nowadays largely perceived as a social, economical and political topic — the cultural side of the question is usually left aside. For nation is not something natural and primordial — instead, the birth of a nation is related to specific historical moments and depends on socio-economic conditions. As Miroslav Hroch puts it: "The basic precondition of all national movements — yesterday and today — is a deep crisis of the old order, with the breakdown of its legitimacy, and the values and sentiments that sustained it." (Hroch 1996: 96). Historical transformation, political emancipation, modern liberalism, state-building — these are the standard key words of a nation.

Similarly late nationalism, which is often associated with our times, is related to the socio-economic criteria: the socio-economic system of a cosmopolitan world, the political situation of which was described by Habermas in terms of 'world domestic politics', has effaced the functions of a nation state. Eric Hobsbawm has argued, for example: "... in post-communist societies ethnic or national identity is above all a device for defining the community of the innocent and identifying the guilty who are responsible for 'our' predicament" (1992: 174). There is nothing positive in the 'Kleinstaaterei', as Hobsbawm calls it, of our days — the nation states just serve as a means of separating ours and others, leaving one part of the human beings without the right of being a citizen — that's the pathos of Hobsbawm. In a similar vein, though in a more objective tone, Gérard Noiriel describes immigration politics in France in his careful study "Le creuset français: Histoire de l'immigration XIXe – XXe siècles" (1988).

The idea of lateness, is, of course, a peculiarity of our times on a larger level: post-modernism, late capitalism, post-industrialism, late nationalism — postisms have become the denominators of the world. We can hear a feeling of loss and remoteness, separation from something which may have been important, unattainability, regret, nostalgia for the past in these postisms — and the suspicion that the best times are already past. However, this nostalgia is not a special feature of contemporary Europe and North America, and for a nation its lateness can be pushed back at least to the 19th century. My interest here dwells in the development and changes in the role of nostalgia for a nation. National nostalgia and desire to return to 'good old times' find its expression in national mythology, or, to put it the other way round, national mythology is based on national nostalgia. In what follows I will try to investigate the nature of national mythology and outline the similarities and differences between national mythology in our times and earlier times, focusing particularly on the Estonian situation. I suggest that parallelly with socio-economic features of the society a nation is shaped through its desires.

I. The Creation. The Emperor's New Clothes

The formation of a national narrative begins with a period that is called the 'national movement' — in the case of Estonia it started in the middle of the 19th century. As it is often noted, a national movement may begin as an intellectual activity of a bunch of educated people who, so to say, decide to invent a nation. Geoffrey Eley and Ronald Suny explain it in the case of smaller nations: "... the smaller nationalities of central and eastern Europe and Transcaucasia were more obviously an invention of enterprising intellectuals — of intellectuals, moreover, who aspired to emulate the histories they observed in the West, especially in France" (1996: 8–9). The intellectuals start their nation-building from creating the national past: they construct an ideal picture of an ancient flourishing culture. Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald writes the national epic *Kalevipoeg*, Jakob Hurt urges people to collect folklore, Lydia Koidula writes poetry and dramas in the national

spirit. Carl Robert Jakobson delivered his speeches for the father-land: *Kolm isamaa kõnet* ('Three Speeches of Fatherland'), in 1868 and 1870. Published in 1870, they became, according to Rudolf Põldmäe, 'the most stimulating fighting book of the national movement' (1985: 71). Jakobson was one of the educated Estonians who created the positive historical narrative of Estonia; in his speeches he claimed that before the German invasion Estonia had been a more civilised country than Germany. "It [the pagan religion of the Estonians — E.A] shows us the Estonian nation in such a high spiritual state that we can find only with the most educated ancient nations"[1] (Jakobson 1991: 16), was Jakobson's estimation of the past of Estonia. Jakobson designed an idealistic picture of a flourishing ancient Estonia and described the crusades as endeavours to enlarge territories, not as a benevolent attempt to bring light to a country in darkness. This was basically the tenor of the emerging Estonian national movement. Nationally-oriented intellectuals strove to idealize past times in order to create the possibility of a national future based on the ideal past. Their joint intellectual efforts established the mythical space of a nation, a lost period of perfection in the past.

What did this newly created mythical space look like? It was a homogeneous world with the simultaneity-along-time, 'a simul-taneity of past and future in an instantaneous present' (Anderson 1991: 24), it was a world with "a conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable, the origins of the world and of men essentially identical" (ib. 36). It was a closed and 'ready-made world', clearly outlined. Everything was signi-ficant there, every detail was in correspondence with the whole. It was a transcendental home, a homogeneous[2] world, a perpetual present, where people belonged naturally to the unity of the world.

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[1]   All translations from Estonian into English are mine. In Estonian the text is the following: "Ta näitab meile Esti-rahvast ühes nii kõrges vaimu olekus, nagu meie seda üksi kõige rohkem haritud vana-aegse rahva juures leiame."

[2]   Please note that I'm not using 'homogeneous' along Walter Ben-jamin's lines, Benjamin's thoughts on the homogeneous, empty time move in a somewhat different direction.

Georg Lukács in his study *Die Theorie des Romans* offers one of the most alluring visions of the past 'blessed times', employing a full arsenal of graceful nostalgia. He delineates the era of the epic in Greek literature as the period when the world was large and still a home, the world was round and full, for a soul there was no distinction between the outside and the inside. Lukács adds a few pages later, though, that the homogeneity of the world was so strong that the tensions between the humans and the world could not destroy it: "Es ist eine homogene Welt, und auch die Trennung von Mensh und Welt, von Ich und Du vermag ihre Einstoffigkeit nicht zu stören." (Lukács 1994: 24) — this, however, implies a distinction between the inside and the outside. But his point is that in these times a human being was not the centre of the universe, but one link in the chain of totality, "... seine Beziehungen zu den anderen und die Gebilde, die daraus entstehen, sind geradezu substanzvoll, wie er selbst," (ib. 25).

Totality as a constructive principle of the world implies the fullness, felicity, beauty and virtue of all its parts:

> Denn Totalität als formendes Prius jeder Einzelerscheinung bedeutet, daß etwas Geschlossenes vollendet sein kann; vollendet, weil alles in ihm vorkommt, nichts ausgeschlossen wird und nichts auf ein höheres Außen hinweist; vollendet, weil alles in ihm zur eigenen Vollkommenheit reift und sich erreichend sich der Bindung fügt. Totalität des Seins ist nur möglich, wo alles schon homogen ist, bevor es von den Formen umfaßt wird; wo die Formen kein Zwang sind, sondern nur das Bewußtwerden [---]; wo das Wissen die Tugend ist und die Tugend das Glück, wo die Schönheit den Weltsinn Sichtbar macht. (Ib. 26).

Lukács succeeds in gathering everything desirable into one total image of (lost) perfection, and as an illustration of his main thesis his text is full of small alluring metaphors that repeat the same

total image (e.g the fire in the soul used to be of the same origin as the light of the stars)[3].

Also a myth of a paradise, a world before the Original Sin, captures rigorously this world with a 'spontaneous totality of being'. Jüri Ehlvest, a young Estonian writer, describes it as follows: "... a sin for which Adam with his wife was expelled from paradise wasn't the fact of eating an apple in itself, but the separaton of a part, or an apple, from the Tree or the God-given. God's creation is a perfect, homogeneous whole, whereas the world of the people, the sinful, is divided into pieces."[4] (Ehlvest 1996: 101). If paradise means unity, then the mythical world corresponds to paradise. Linear time hasn't as yet gained the supremacy over the world there.

National mythology did not create anything new: it was based on the mythology of a pre-national community, while making a whimsical substitution: the explanatory power of the myth, destined originally for the entire world, was transferred to a nation instead. According to Alan Dundes, "A myth is a sacred narrative explaining how the world and man came to be in their present form" (Dundes 1984: 1). A nationalist myth is a sacred narrative explaining how the world and man *of a nation* came to be in their present form, what the origins of a nation are. Lauri Honko stresses the functional value of the myth as a defence of a world order: the myth preserves the community's values and normes. A nation needs a story of its origins to preserve its values, but the problematic aspect of a nation as an exploiter of religious mythology lies in the static aspect of the mythology: the mythical world is based on unchangeability, myths always are meaningful for a religious person (the person who lives in a mythical world), therefore its patterns can be imitated. Honko explains the true validity of mythical events:

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[3] However, Lukács admits that 'we' couldn't breathe in this closed world (ib.).

[4] In Estonian: "... patt, mille eest Aadam oma naisega Aiast välja kihutati, polnud mitte õuna söömine kui selline, vaid Puust ehk Jumalikust antusest osa ehk õuna eraldamine. Jumala loodu on täiuslikult tervik, ühtne, inimeste, patuste maailm aga tükkideks jagatud."

> The ritual acting out of myth implies the defense of the world order; by imitating sacred exemplars the world is prevented from being brought to chaos. The reenactment of a creative event, for example, the healing wrought by a god in the beginning of time, is the common aim of myth and ritual. In this way the event is transferred to the present and its result, i.e. the healing of a sick person, can be achieved once more here and now. In this way, too, the world order, which was created in the primeval era and which is reflected in myths, preserves its value as an exemplar and model for the people of today. The events recounted in myths have true validity for a religious person. (Honko 1984: 49).

Now the idea of a nation is based on progress, on change — how can these two different ways of thinking converge? A nation is formed in this tension between two radically different ways of thinking: an ideal, a story of origins, and a separation and split from it. A nation uses mythological pathos, while moving in an opposite direction.

Benedict Anderson describes a nation through its desire towards a perfect future, the most important tense category for a nation being the 'Future Perfect'. A nation is tied to the idea of human progress, and for the ideal future the present sacrifices are accepted. I would add that a nation is a seesaw which moves between two tenses, the Past Perfect and the Future Perfect. The idea of nation-building consists of creating two ideal spaces — the past and the future — and a nation (not yet a nation-state) is perceived as a joining link for fastening these two spaces into a **Present Perfect** with the restored happiness and unity of the mythological era. The mythological Past Perfect is employed as a guarantee of a possible Present Perfect in the future. The mythological past has vanished (destroyed by the enemies of the nation, as nationalists claim), and this loss has to be overcome with the help of a harmonious future; the desire towards a perfect state of affairs gets transferred from the past to the future, which is regarded as a future reflection of the Past Perfect. The nation is presented as a restoration of lost perfection.

Thus a nation is coined through its lateness, is created as being already late in its onset. While based on a pre-national community and forming the national identity on its basis, the nation-formation supersedes it at the same time; the pre-national mythical era is declared lost and unattainable, the present times are regarded as its pale imitation. The development of print-capitalism, the serial space created by newspapers and censuses which lay down the conditions of a self-reflexive discourse and an outside view of the community, attaches the pre-national community to the larger discourse of nations[5], but at the same time destroys the pre-national social order. Destruction and celebration move hand in hand, the more the pre-national gets dismantled, the more it is desired. At the moment when the pre-national community is vanishing, it becomes fixed in the form of the national narrative as the vanishing point of the nation's desires. Myths, the national epic, brave pre-national heroes are used as a nostalgic basis of pedagogically narrating the nation, of supporting national identity in the periods when the nation is already 'ready-to-wear'.

Hence the late creates its beginnings in order to regret its lateness by means of these 'beginnings'. To overcome the lack of a mythical unity, the status of the nation is presented as a solution, which through connecting the Past Perfect with the Future Perfect could create the Present Perfect. The national ideology is established through a mistaken logic: the lateness is created in order to overcome the same newly formed lateness. The original is

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[5] B. Anderson, while describing this process in his *Imagined Communities* (1983, 2. ed. 1991) and *Spectre of Comparisons* (1998), also stresses the importance of an outsider's point of view in nation-formation: living in exile, identifying the differences and similarities between one's homeland and other places enables one to gather a cluster of specific features under the main constituent: the name of a nation. Long-distance nationalism, as Anderson calls it, creates a perspective needed to estimate a situation in the homeland, and the spectre of comparisons, even if offered through a distorted mirror (for Anderson an illuminating experience had been the speech of the Indonesian president, glorifying Hitler) clarifies the field of vision. Thus paradoxically nationalism's purities emerge from the hybridity, they are modelled according to the experiences of other nations.

constructed from the void, from the desire towards something unattainable which does not exist, something seemingly important which has been lost a long time ago. The desire for the original constructs the original, but at the same time it also destroys the object of its construction.

In the countries with a colonial past like Estonia the mistaken logic was easy to conceal: the image of the mythological past concentrated on the era before the crusades. The desired period of harmony was that of 'independence', which had been destroyed by external forces centuries ago. The colonial power had worked on the Estonian territory according to the same rules as everywhere else: the subordinated nation was sealed in its position by the discursive block. Whereas every nation constructs its identity by opposing itself to the Other — the positive identification of a nation involves a cluster of pleasant features attributed to the identified nation and, respectively, a number of negative counter-features attributed to the Other-nation (usually a neighbouring nation), colonialism changes the position of the negative Other from outside to inside; a (pre-national) community obtains the position of a less valuable Other. The subordinated people (future Estonians) were impelled to perceive themselves as unworthy, almost contemptible, their previous communal voice was subdued, the conquerors were depicted as unbeatable and irresistible, as the possessors of supreme intelligence and culture. Franz Fanon (1965: 170) describes this process:

> Colonialism is not simply content to impose its rule upon the present and the future of a dominated country. Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding the people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it... the total result looked for by colonial domination was indeed to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness.

On the basis of the faded past a new discourse of the present was formed to avoid the possible awakening of alternative voices. As

Edward Said claims: "...the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism" (1993: xiii). The obstruction of the possible creation of positive national narratives guarantees the stability of the system.

For Estonians the opposite pole was formed by the German culture, especially by the Baltic Germans, who had enjoyed the supremacy in Estonia for centuries. Foreign rulers regarded the natives as a lower people, as the negative pole of the identifying opposition; and the same conviction was transferred to the natives, who started to perceive themselves as Others who are always secondary, always subordinated. The national movement signified an opposition to the ideology of the Other, its destruction, the removal of the narrative block, the establishment of the national narrative. This was achieved partly by the texts of national literature, partly by political speeches, schoolbooks and newspapers, choral songs etc. These narratives had to destroy the ideology of the Other and to ratify the new narrative, which esteemed the subordinated nation. The renewed narrative relied on the imagined precolonial era of harmonious life.

II. A Nation State. Ready-to-Wear

The second stage in the national mythology is reached with the nation state. When the aspiration of national self-determination reaches its desired ideal, the right of self-determination in the form of a state, then a nation has attained its basic goal — the nation-formation is finished, a nation seems to be 'ready-to-wear'. The status of being a state is a stamp of success[6]. But it is also the moment, when the dynamics of the national narrative changes its direction, turning from the future to the past, a national seesaw sinks to the side of the Past Perfect. The 'big' moments of a nation are from this moment on situated in the past — this is not to say

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[6]   Of course, a nation state is never perfectly complete, it strives towards an ideal which it never achieves, and therefore one could claim that a nation never fulfils itself either. Still, the dynamics of the national narrative changes its direction.

that the future is not important any more, it certainly is, but it is a future of banal nationalism that cannot raise its side of the seesaw. The basis of national identity remains anchored to the past. The formation of the state is the beginning of the decline of the nation; it is accompanied by disappointment and indifference. Freedom-fighters are destined to be disappointed with the attained freedom[7], the received national independence loses its magical aura soon after its attainment, the fiercely desired gets transformed into the natural and normal state of affairs, to go unnoticed. "Fixity of identity is only sought in situations of instability and disruption, of conflict and change," notices Robert Young (1994: 4). National memory becomes fixed in museums and statues, folklore moves from the natural circulation to the archives — the lateness of nationalism becomes conspicuous. Of course, this is not a fixed moment, a threshold — the process was initiated already with the very formation of the nation. However, the pedagogical nature of a nation becomes evident with its institutionalisation by the state. The lateness of nationalism can be described also as a split between the pedagogical and performative national discourses, which emerges together with national nostalgia for the lost innocence of pre-national times. In this sense the nostalgia of late nationalism is a nostalgia for an era of homogeneity that existed before the separation of the communal voice into two different directions. Nation as a narrative is a narrative with two folds: the performative discourse, which perceives members of the nation as subjects, different from each other and significant in themselves, accompanies the discourse of the national pedagogy which defines the nation in terms of historical experience and the narrative derived from it. Homi K. Bhabha (1994: 145) explains:

> The people are the historical 'objects' of a nationalist pedagogy, giving the discourse an authority that is based on the pre-given or constituted historical origin *in the past*; the people are also the 'subjects' of a process of signification that must erase any prior or

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[7] Tiit Madisson, one of the prominent Estonian freedom fighters during the Soviet occupation, was also held captive in the free Estonian republic.

originary presence of the nation-people to demonstrate the prodigious, living principles of the people as contemporaneity: as that sign of the *present* through which national life is redeemed and iterated as a reproductive process.

Through its nostalgia the mythological imagination of a nation designs the homogeneous prenational community where the disjunction of performative and pedagogical discourses is nonexistent. Paradoxically, this split creates an idea of unity as a vantage point of its desires. Already the pathos of national awakening is pedagogical by its nature, but the special sensation of personal engagement in the historical events contrives to camouflage the object-position of the participants. The nation in the nation state is an undisguised pedagogical discipline, taught at high schools, reinforced through national rituals on Independence Day, the president's speech on the New Year's Eve etc.

However, with the accomplishment of a nation state the mythological Past Perfect has gained new territories: now the period of nation-building belongs already to the period of mythological harmony. The mythological sphere is never fixed and ready — it is always enlarging. Traditionally myths, the stories of origins, remain fixed for a religious person, the beginning of the world cannot be modified. But for national myths the situation is somewhat different: when was a nation born? The beginning of a nation is always *a* beginning, never *the* beginning. The creation of the first independent republic pertains to the stories of creation, the regaining of independence belongs there too. Everything that has passed can count as a part of a story of origins. And the more spacious the mythological past, the more convincing it appears. The augmentation of remarkable historical events leads to their stratification; mythological spheres will be permanently reordered through the patterns of mythological repetition. If myths of origins include a mythological repetition, the nation looks more natural (myths always strive to present cultural artefacts as parts of nature) and plausible. Even if a birth of a nation is followed by a decline (e.g. occupation), it has its place in the mythological inescapability together with the following rebirth. Repetition assures the reliability of a myth.

III. A Contemporary Nation State. Worn Out

So far, we have claimed that a nation has been late from its beginning, that national mythology has always been carried by the nostalgia for the lost transcendental home. Is our contemporary situation somewhat different?

By now, national mythology has reached its third, self-conscious stadium.

The Estonian national mythology in the second half of the nineteenth century used romantic colours, strong images, the objects of national desires were cleary defined, the main targets being cultural and economic development — the goal was attainable, one moved towards the satisfaction of desires. The hard-working, shrewd peasant with a national consciousness and agriculturally innovative ideas could obtain a farm and a beautiful diligent girl – in such a way the national programme was accomplished in the dramas by Lydia Koidula.

In the period of realism the situation turned out to be more complicated, the desired goal may not have been attained — but it still existed, the was still hope that it could be reached, as we see, for example, in the novels by Eduard Vilde.

Later, modern thinkers realized that it is the nature of desire to remain unsatisfied. Anton Hansen Tammsaare, an important modern writer in Estonian literature, depicted life as a perpetual pursuit of goals that can never be achieved, an everlasting process both hard and painful. The modernist is conscious of the unattainability of the object of desire because of the evermoving nature of desire — and suffers because of that.

In our times, national mythology is conscious of its constructed nature. Yes, there has never been a Present Perfect, there has never been a perfect state of affairs and there will never be — but there will always be a desire for it. Postmodern authors use the national mythology, mix desire with irony, they construct mythical spaces, at the same time being conscious of their mythical, artificial nature. In that way the double discourse of national mythology is created: on the one hand, there is the nostalgic narrative, carried by a desire towards the Past Perfect, on the other hand, the questioning of the first, the conscious acknowledgement that this

harmonious past is a myth, that it has never existed as a reality. Fictional texts, if they are fascinated by national thematics, still follow the national project and still maintain the desire for an original harmonious state of affairs, at the same time displaying this desire with a smile. The text in itself may even not present its desire explicitly and it may remain unnoticed by the reader of a different nationality: the desire is located in the reader who grasps certain keywords of the text. Whatever is written of national heroes like Lydia Koidula, Kalevipoeg, Anton Hansen Tammsaare or Konstantin Päts, for the Estonian reader it has nostalgic connotations.

We might ask, is it reasonable to distinguish between these two levels, the ironical and the nostalgic, in the contemporary national narrative? Maybe it is just the changed nature of desire? Mythological fields are in the process of permanent restructuring according to the contemporary models of the perfect past. But what is the difference between reconstruction and deconstruction? To what extent mythological spheres differ from period to period? Does every era construct its mythological past according to its own understanding of felicity?

However, it is evident that national mythology is recreated and re-established continually, the past still gets turned into an ideal space. National mythology gets updated every now and then; in the era of postmodernism/ postindustrialism the initial period of the nation state gains the aura of authenticity it did not have before; new historical, cultural, economical, political facts and narratives contribute to the pedagogical discourse of the nation, occupy places on the shelves of fixed memories.

Ivan Orav, the omniscient blacksmith (created by Andrus Kivirähk, a young Estonian writer), who moves freely in our contemporary world and in the previous Estonian republic as well, unfolds the mythical nature of the previous republic with cheerful humanism:

> ... every night the violin sounds were to be heard from the Moon and even birches had apples [---]. This was a time when birds and animals still talked [---]. During the Estonian republic everyone could

> say what they had in mind. In the streets a woolf and a sheep were often seen walking and chatting happily. All were friends, every citizen knew the others by face and in the streets people were constantly shaking hands. (Kivirähk 1995: 3).

The technique of self-conscious myth-making in this case is very straightforward: one must add a bit of colour to the mythical landscape, strengthen the oppositions, attach small and fantastic details. In this way Kivirähk stresses the mythical nature of the first republic, without destroying its mythical aura. On the contrary, he relies on the same everlasting nostalgia for the Past Perfect.

Ivan Orav also shows the Other, an image of the enemy belonging to the same sphere of mythology: Russian politics did not destroy only one social institution, no, their real and very significant crime was the destruction of the unity of the mythological world. Not only was the independent state destroyed, but birds and animals had to give up talking in a human (apparently Estonian) language: "This was a time when birds and animal still talked. Just a boot of a Russian soldier closed the mouth of these pure creatures." (Ib.). Probably also the apple trees started to specialize in growing apples and the violin sounds from the Moon were not heard any more. Or to put it the other way round, the historical rupture imposed by Soviet imperialism enabled the Estonian Republic to be populated with speaking birds and animals and the violin sounds from the Moon.

During the last few years neither poetry nor prose fiction but drama has been the ringleader in the renewal of national mythology. One example of this kind of drama was an interactive project *Eesti mängud. Pulm* ('Estonian Games. A Wedding') by Peeter Jalakas, which presented the history of Estonia as a computer game. It started with choosing the place on the globe, then the time-period and the actors, and it followed the logic typical of these kinds of games. From time to time the actors stepped out of the screen and acted their roles, then stepped back into the screen of history again — a good example of a co-presentation of the pedagogical and performative sides of a nation. And on the stage,

inside the interactive environment, the choir of folk singers, old women in national costumes, accompanied the computer game with their monotonous folk songs. The viewer's pleasure of watching this spectacle derived from the double nature of the presented narrative: on the one hand, the spectators felt the extreme importance of the events they were witnessing, and on the other hand, they perceived it as a game it is possible to play. It was a mixture of the uncanny and the marvellous, it made one anxious and it was entertaining at the same time.

Has in our times the self-reflexivity of the myth replaced the dream of a perfect future? The self-reflexive myth – is it not a contradiction in itself? The myth strives to naturalise history, "it [myth — E. A.] transforms history into nature," explains Roland Barthes (Barthes 1993: 129). If the myth lays bare its naturalisation, can it still be a myth? Maybe it is an outworn myth, the one that does not function any more? If the national myth should authenticate the vigour of a nation, then maybe the objects recognised as mythical are not convincing, do not endorse the virility of a nation any more? As Barthes says, "… the worn out state of a myth can be recognised by the arbitrariness of its signification" (ib.127). The sign in language is always arbitrary, but mythological signification needs to be in part motivated in order to have its influence — when a myth shallows to look arbitrary, it is a dead myth, it does not function any more. However, the arbitrariness does not seem to be the most important indicator of a tired myth — for in national mythology the connection between the two sides of the myth is never arbitrary. That verses of Lydia Koidula "Mu isamaa, mu õnn ja rõõm" ('My fatherland, my felicity and joy') indicate the value of a fatherland and the emotional tie between a country and its people, even if the myth itself may not work. The principal feature of the myth's 'workability' seems to be its emotional charge — a worn-out myth does not stir the emotions of its addressees. A myth must be believed in, and beliefs rely on emotional ties, not on logical investigations.

But the expiry of the myth's signifying power does not result in the abolition of desire. The mythological spheres expand to include the sincere belief in myths. The belief in the myth of the nation becomes a part of the mythological world.

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If the Past Perfect is forced to carry its fictionality with itself, the Future Perfect gets contaminated by the same sense of fictionality. But if desire for a perfect future is accompanied by a sense of its ludicrousness, can it still offer an ideal that is capable of attracting people?

A seesaw stands still. Or is it still moving?

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Falling into History:
Postcolonialism and Fin-de-siècle
in Ene Mihkelson's *Nime vaev*

TIINA KIRSS

The term "post-colonial" as it is used by critics such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Homi K. Bhabha, to name a few, has come to identify an area of interdisciplinary scholarship on cultural production in the former colonies of the British and French empires in Africa, Asia, India, and the Caribbean. Its conceptual framework is drawn from post-structuralist literary theory and "cultural studies" of the Birmingham school, but as Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman outline in the introduction to their anthology, post-colonial discourse analysis engages in ongoing dialogue with specific key intertexts: Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Edward Said's *Orientalism* (which is in turn in dialogue with Foucault and Gramsci), and the writings of Frantz Fanon. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin define the agenda of post-colonial studies (PCS), "The determining condition of post-colonial cultures is the historical phenomenon of colonialism, with its range of material practices and effects, such as transportation, slavery, displacement, emigration, and racial and cultural discrimination. The relationship between these material conditions, and their ideologies and representations, is the task of PCS" (7). Discourses of the colonized both incorporate and oppose the colonial Other, the colonizing culture, deploying a variety of strategies that post-colonial studies is concerned to recognize and specify: in addition to documents of political resistance, forms of parody and pastiche — what Bhabha refers to as "hybridi-

zation" — more subtly aliment, dismantle, and reconfigure the cultural text of the colonizer.

In the critical scrutiny of a post-colonial studies' ur-text, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin's own *The Empire Writes Back*, Mishra and Hodge warn against several pitfalls in the analysis of the "self"/Other dialectic: a disjunction between political insurgency and discursive radicalism, a reduction of the relationship of colonial to colonizing culture to the extremes of "abrogation and appropriation," and "the homogenization of particularities into a more or less unproblematic theory of the Other" (278). These pitfalls, particularly the last one, apply as well to any efforts to "extend" post-colonial theory to the discourses emerging from any other historically and regionally specific empires. Until the last few years, the regional focus of PCS — at least in the theorizing of Western scholars or Third World expatriates — has not included (or has positively avoided) the area of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the designation of which as "post-imperial" would seem to be beyond dispute. Two related reasons might be responsible for this avoidance: (1) a perception that the legacy of persistent black-and-white rhetoric of the Cold War era is part of the ideological structure of capitalist First World Empires; thus the marking of the former Soviet Union as "imperial" might be ideologically treacherous; (2) the intellectual lineage of PCS in a Marxist, particularly Gramscian analysis of imperialism. Nevertheless, the writings of Ellen Berry, Svetlana Boym, Helena Goscilo, Thomas Lahusen, and Tomas Longinovic, all in the area of interdisciplinary Slavic studies and comparative literature demonstrate the validity and usefulness of post-colonial studies in generating frameworks for the study of post-Soviet culture. I would argue that these works skilfully avoid uncritical terminological borrowings and the "homogenization of particularities" that Mishra and Hodge warn against.

The multiple colonized terrain of the Baltic region seems particularly to lend itself to analysis based on post-colonial studies, since the half-century long Soviet period is but the most recent historical stratum superimposed on centuries of Baltic German cultural hegemony coexisting with the political rule of a variety of imperial powers. For example, Fanon's writings on the cultural

implications of national liberation resonate provocatively with the emergence and organization of indigenous intellectuals in Estonia and Latvia in the "national awakening" of the late 19th century, and raise new questions for the study of the accelerated blooming of culture during the intense, interstitial period of independence in the interval between the two world wars. A second, admittedly more problematic example of the pertinence of post-colonial theory to the Baltic region is the era of "postcommunism," which has its roots in the environmental activism, heritage preservation movements, and "singing revolutions" of the late 1980s and extends into the first decade of newly regained independence and aspirations for membership in the European Union. The emphasis in definitions of "post-colonialism" that the "post" refers not to subsequence and supersession, but to colonialism's sinister after-life ["business as usual, only more so"] locates with uncanny accuracy the valence of the social and psychological legacy of communism in the Baltic states and elsewhere in Eastern Europe — referred to colloquially as "homo sovieticus." As has been discovered in the early years of the "new" or "second" independence, coming to terms with that legacy in social structures, legislation, economic and educational policies, and cultural institutions is a far more intricate process than can be served by measures such as "lustration" efforts, draconian language laws as preconditions for citizenship, and a passionately nostalgic reengagement with (or reincarnation of) the ideals of the 1920s and 1930s.

In addition to "homogenization of particularities" there are limits to the transferability of the analyses of post-colonial cultures in other regions to the Baltic, indicating that theories are never neatly abstractable from the sociohistorical and geopolitical contexts that provoke and engender them. Post-colonial theorists often acknowledge symmetries, or at least parallels not only with post-structuralist theory, but also between post-colonial phenomena and postmodern textualities. Indeed, postmodern and experimental fiction and its practitioners have grown to occupy a secure niche in the literary market of post-Soviet Estonia and have a devoted elite readership. However, a consciousness, perhaps particularly acute in Estonia and Latvia, of being a small, ethnolinguistic entity that is consequently radically vulnerable, a mere generation away from

extinction, may qualify the overall cultural significance of celebratory postmodernism. Some political and discursive strategies of coming to terms with colonial oppression and its aftermath that in larger collectivities would seem productive, are utterly inappropriate, indeed suicidal, for "small" cultures mapping options for mere survival in the wake of recent genocide and carefully orchestrated Soviet policies of resettlement and assimilation. Put bluntly, and perhaps overly simplistically, the urge to name and memorialize the dead, to reweave rather than further to unravel the ravaged web of culture in such post-traumatic situations may call for homage to "essentialism," the fetishization of land, language, and (despite its horrifying implications in Bosnia and Kosovo) blood and clan. It is as if such cultural situations have fewer words and myths to spare in their hunger to reclaim and resacralize, to perform the indigenous, however mystified that desire might be. Perhaps it is thus less surprising that in the recent "postcommunist" prose fiction of Estonia, the ludic "hybridization" noticeable in Salman Rushdie's writings or in contemporary Russian literature is less frequent than more modest variations on a revalued or parodied realist prose fiction. One example, used extensively by Viivi Luik and Ene Mihkelson, is overdetermination of the prose text with palimpsestic allusions to and quotations from the social text. Admittedly this is a postmodern strategy which, borrowing a metaphor from one of Jaan Kross' early poems one might call "ore enrichment," an enhanced, supersaturated socialist realism that approaches "magic realism." One of the effects of such prose is the performance of mourning, preserving in textual amber scraps and vestiges of previously-silenced traumas, and pointing to the gaping holes of forgetting that besiege collective and individual memory. Jaan Undusk's recent study of magic realism and Stalinist discourse has elegantly identified some of these discursive possibilities. While such overdetermination may resemble hybridization, it is often lacking in gleeful optimism, haunted as it is from within by a suspicion that hybridization may be more than a textual gesture, and may actually be the first step in cultural assimilation. Satire and parody in the realist mode, as in the wickedly humorous travel diaries and short novels of Mihkel Mutt (*Rahvusvaheline*

mees ['International Man'], 1994 in particular) is another modestly resistant fictional strategy of the postcommunist period.

Ene Mihkelson's 1994 novel *Nime vaev* ('The Labour of Naming') is one of the first works of Estonian fiction explicitly to engage the recent past of the struggle of liberation on the thematic level, and to establish its setting in the period of perestroika, the singing revolution of the late 1980s, and the regaining of independence in 1991. It is also, alongside Emil Tode/Tõnu Õnnepalu's *Piiririik* ('Border State', 1993) and *Hind* ('Price', 1995), one of Estonia's first post-colonial novels. I would argue that the symptoms of postcolonial consciousness in Mihkelson's text are what Homi K. Bhabha refers to as dimensions of the "unhomely" and the "interstitial," manifesting as the psychic disorientation of an individual and a generation caught in the midst of cataclysmic sociopolitical changes. It is tempting, and I believe justified, to recognize resemblances between "fin-de-siècle," writ perhaps larger as "millennial" anxiety, and Bhabha's interstitiality. As was evident in the December 1999 Estonian press coverage of the "four digit turning point," millennial anxiety is a kind of "chronotopic shock", an outward projection of tensions internal to the culture with respect to epochal sociopolitical and economic shifts. The millennium serves as an attractive signifier for these anxieties.

Significantly, the original title of Mihkelson's novel was " The Hundred Year War of Independence," in ironic, even perhaps polemical counterpoint to the well-known phrase "700 years of oppression" of the Estonian peasantry by Baltic German overlords, a phrase that gained popularity in the late 19th century movement of national awakening. The novel's interior monologues repeatedly evoke earlier periods of colonization in Estonia, their uncanny similarities, and their mutual reinforcement. Such questions are evoked through the symbolic exploration of superimposed colonial layers in social spaces, particularly in architecture. Baltic German manor houses, for example, were "refunctioned" in the Soviet period as school dormitories and lodgings for Young Pioneer camps; churches became museums and cultural clubs, or were put to even more unusual uses. A web of ironic allusions and citations from the social text — popular songs, slogans, and street names, serves as the accompaniment to the excavatory memory-work of

the novel's protagonist and narrator, creating barriers for the uninitiated reader with no access to these cultural codes. A residual, elegiac lyricism, a bond with a landscape, intermittently grounds the narrator's restless subjectivity, and refuses to yield to definitive deconstruction; however, as the narrator discovers in her dispossession from her family home, there is no road back "home" again, and a more temporary shelter must be found in the laboriously painful process of naming places, people, and memories.

In what follows I shall explore the textual processes by which "interstitiality" and postcolonial "unhomeliness" are manifested in Mihkelson's novel, exemplified first by the tropes of "falling into time" (or "falling into history") and opening doors. I will then examine three significant moments in the novel's performance of unhomely narratives: the internally dialogized encounters with four alter-egos, the documentary plot of the narrator's disinheritance, and the lyricizing of the relations of land, language and identity in a key "interstitial" passage of the novel. All of these examples will serve to test the pertinence and usefulness of selected lenses from post-colonial theory in the "laboratory" of post-communist Estonian literature.

Mihkelson's novel can provisionally be regarded as the collective autobiography of the generation born between the beginning of World War II and Stalin's death in 1953, thus a generation approximately coeval with the Soviet occupation of Estonia. Mihkelson's (and her contemporary Viivi Luik's) rural childhoods began in the Stalin era on a scarred landscape scored by burned villages and barbed wire fences marking out the newly configured collective farms, with parents living on the edge of survival in constant fear of a new wave of deportations. Usually one or more male family members had been lost in the war or in hiding in the forests with resilient bands of partisans, that were being systematically and ruthlessly flushed out by the Soviet military. Welcomed by the regime as the "new generation" who would fulfil the hopes for a communist future, "virgin" of emotional attachments to the "bourgeois republic," these children were enthusiastically indoctrinated with the "new Gospel." The unconverted learned to live a double existence of minimal conformism to the imperatives of the system and a richly ironic, carefully protected inner life inaccessible to all

but a few trusted friends. As in the case of Mihkelson's fictional narrator, many of these children also lived in makeshift families, left behind with grandparents, relatives, or foster parents by parents deported to Siberia, and were subjected to the bullying and social ostracism of being from a family "besmirched" by the stigma of enemies of the state. This sociological reality of the recent past is almost a taboo subject in the "new republic," though broken incisively and provocatively by the productions of Merle Karusoo's "life-history theatre." Though the spirit of the times may foster attitudes encouraging workaholism, and though young Horatio Algers would rather forget the old, the disabled, and the homeless in pursuit of prosperity, social psychiatrists frankly acknowledge that the consequence of family brokenness from the 1940s and 1950s will be palpable for at least three generations.

The years 1988–91 for Mihkelson's "interstitial generation" coincided with midlife: by the time of glasnost and perestroika, rising national consciousness, and the popular fervor of the "singing revolution," Mihkelson and her contemporaries were "played out," intensely conscious of the belatedness of these changes: their major life decisions had been made, ideological commitments carefully sealed, parried, or deftly avoided. The anticipated new republic with its openness to the West, tantalizing possibilities for foreign travel, self-development, economic advancement, reclaiming the family farm, and returning to the land on one's own little patch of private property were met with more detachment than enthusiasm. A personal memory clotted with trauma witnessed and experienced in early childhood made intimate relationships tenuous, and the holding of ideals precarious, if not impossible; in addition, a diffuse ache of guilt and complicity made the contradictions in the newly minted myths abundantly visible. Consciousness of contemporary events was locked, as it were, in a condition of double vision, with no respite from the attendant nausea. The road to catharsis was blocked by an ingrained habitus of fear and suspicion, refracting the surrounding jubilant turmoil of crowds singing together into a spectrum of possible narratives. The position of detached critic provided some defense against this vertigo, a vantage point from which to allow inner processes of remembering, repeating, and working through to take

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place. Mihkelson's narrator muses that "vaev" (an untranslatable Estonian word best approximated by "labour or work of suffering") is the only condition for existence. ("Vaev kui ainus kestvus".) Since "vaev" is protracted, usually without issue, purpose, or definable endpoint, it becomes paradoxically its own reward: the interrogation of one's identity against the onslaught of temporal and spatial ruptures of a new era, and against the sacred reference points of land, genealogy, and language is both provisional and interminable. The quest for home is a quest in both space and time: "I had searched for myself in an epoch not of my choosing: now I sought a time that had always belonged to me."

The first scene of the novel embodies the vertiginous sense of "falling into history" with one foot on each side of the epochal divide: "I have often walked past the university along Juhan Liiv Street toward the railway station, but I have never walked that road the way I did on the day of the torchlight procession organized by the Tartu Heritage Society" (Mihkelson 1994: 5). This now-legendary street demonstration in Tartu in April 1988 sponsored by the Heritage Society, a cross-generational organization of intellectuals seeking the preservation of sites and monuments of national significance and a revalorization of the national past entailed the first public re-exhibition of the Estonian tricolor blue, black and white, though as three separate banners and not yet an "actual" flag. A key moment in the procession took place in front of the former headquarters of the Eesti Üliõpilaste Selts (Estonian Students' Union fraternity), which was historically responsible for the choice of these three colors for the national flag a century earlier. Such a gesture would have been punished with imprisonment or deportation only months before.

Alongside the heady sense of new possibilities and new freedoms in the "Tartu spring" was a surreal sense of historical repetition, put to powerful use in the rhetoric and iconography of the mass gatherings of the "singing revolution" in Tallinn later that summer. One such ironic historical echo is provided in the opening scene of *Nime vaev* by the shrill shout of a gray-haired woman, jostling for a better vantage point by claiming to be a veteran of the "Mahtra War," the brutally repressed peasant revolt of 1858, reevoked in Eduard Vilde's 1902 historical novel. The bio-

graphical and historical anachronism of the shouting elderly woman in *Nime vaev* catches the expectation of repetition in the air, along with a distortion in the scale of chronological time. The narrator, standing on the margins of the demonstration, meets such uncanniness with ambivalence, her cool, reflective attitude toward the unfolding events hiding a panicked sense of a film gone into reverse. This is reinforced by the bizarre coincidence of the Heritage Society procession and the funeral of the narrator's colleague Miili, a "true believer" Party member and close friend of her mother, whose view of history was clearly undergoing a tangible and symbolic death during those heady spring days in Tartu.

Rather than merging with the crowd, the narrator identified imaginatively with the cityscape, with the street itself, which is similarly full of pieces and presences that jut out in their polymorphic "otherness": "In the city of Tartu had lived Tuglas, Suits, Hans Kruus, and Aino Kallas, but they had lived there before me, before the great war, before the present time, and I had never before had this feeling of historic time, which endows every place with sight. The streets remembered them, and the present opened the doors of the departed, those doors that opened toward us" (ib., *translations mine — T.K.*).

This spectacle is marked by the narrator at first by the modest, everyday word "harjumatu" (uncustomary, unfamiliar). Only in the specifics of the litany of cited names can we sense a deeper uncanniness, as these are all figures with one foot across the threshold of Estonian culture on the way to extended periods of exile abroad; intellectuals whose initiation to Estonian culture has not been seamless; writers whose "internal exile" has been in madness. Tuglas and Suits were intensely cosmopolitan writers of the Young Estonia movement of the turn of the century, forced into political exile in Finland and Western Europe by the crackdown following the 1905 revolution, in which both had enthusiastically participated as youthful romantics, agitators and ideologues. Ten years of exile in metropolitan Europe led them, upon their return to their provincial Estonia to proclaim a controversial literary and cultural manifesto: "Olgem eestlased, aga saagem eurooplasteks!" (Let us be Estonian, but become European). "Europe" thus replaced hegemonic Baltic-German culture as the opposite term to nativist

Estonian culture (that some referred to as "pastlakultuur" [culture of peasant leather shoes] in the self/Other dialectic of many Estonian intellectuals.

Hans Kruus was a left-leaning prominent professor of history in the late independence period, whose scholarly studies of the Russo-Livonian war perhaps contributed to his survival in the Soviet period. Aino Kallas, a Finnish writer who married ethnographer and diplomat Oskar Kallas in the first decade of the century, remained ambivalently suspended between her Finnish roots and her adopted Estonian homeland, disrupting gender norms in the traditionally insular, provincial Tartu society, not least through the intimate revelations of her published personal diaries. Thus, the Tartu through which the narrator walks is saturated with the alien, the foreign, the tracks of the interloper, even the collaborator, the "other among us" whose presence placed in quotation marks the purity of an "Estonian identity." These are the palimpsestic "doors of the departed" that the fervor of the new revolution is opening toward the gaze of the recalcitrant narrator, even as she moves with the tide of the crowd down Juhan Liiv Street. Indeed, the figure of Juhan Liiv is perhaps the most uncanny and disruptive of the list of names: Liiv's strangely prophetic short lyrics from the turn of the century were turned into patriotic songs and have persisted in the popular memory ever since, while Liiv himself, an iconic national bard, incarnated an archetypal "other," the mad poet, whose peasant roots, poverty, and isolation due to recurrent psychiatric illness seemed to underscore the tragic view of Estonian history.

The "new era's" erasure of boundaries between past and present, those invisible borders that kept certain territories of history sequestered within carefully marked, canonical spaces, is imaged in the novel's eleventh chapter as a vertiginous falling, as the narrator recalls the landscapes of her childhood: "I could go back to those manor houses and parks at any moment, since out of coincidence those buildings and parks signified home and school for me at the same time. As if I had fallen back into the time of my grandfathers and grandmothers, a time when people lived according to definite rules and regulations. For a long time now I have not given thought to the fact that I was dwelling in the places

that preserved the final waning of Estonians' fight for indepen-
dence" (ib. 59). The spatial images of vertigo and falling circulate
throughout the novel, a phenomenological equivalent to the dis-
orientation, the lability, and plurality, of historical awareness in an
uneasy age of transition.

The narrator's displacement of her temporal vertigo, her
"chronotopic anxiety" into the spatial imagination, resonates with
Homi K. Bhabha's evocative definition of interstitiality, the "trope
of the times," in which time and space implicate one another in
figural crossings:

> The beyond is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving
> behind of the past... Beginnings and endings may be
> the sustaining myths of the middle years; but in the
> fin de siècle, we find ourselves in the moment of
> transit where space and time cross to produce
> complex figures of difference and identity, past and
> present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion.
> For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of
> direction, in the "beyond:" an exploratory, restless
> movement caught so well in the French rendition of
> the words au-delà — here and there, on all sides,
> fort/da, hither and thither, back and forth. (Ib.1).

Clearly epochal change such as the break-up of the Soviet empire,
a case of large-scale "decolonization," creates the conditions for a
heightened perception of "fin-de-siècle" consciousness; given the
concurrence of the last decade of the millennium and the dis-
assembly of the Soviet empire, perhaps millennial anxieties and
decolonization synergistically intensify one another. Perhaps the
ways in which colonial empires are dismembered — through
violence or "velvet" — plays a role in the pattern of "au-delà"
taken by the post-colonial imagination, and the sense of recurrence
of past historical conjunctures may contribute to the degree of
dread or optimism, openness or obsessive repetition attributed to
the experience of "au-delà." Phenomenological similarity between
postcolonial manifestations in different regions and occasions may
belie deeper differences between varieties or tonalities of intersti-
tiality and the sociohistorical terms on which they are experienced.

For example, do small "border states" emerging from engulfment inscribe even the beginnings and endings of centuries differently from "larger" cultures, whether size is defined by geographical territory, population, or extent of the oral or written canon?

A corollary to the consciousness of interstitiality in Mihkelson's novel is the problematic of enclosure and exposure, the erasure of boundaries between outside and inside, which is emblematized by the removal of the door to a dwelling. The reflective passage in the first chapter of *Nime vaev* that situates Miili's death alongside the oceanic rapture of the political demonstration introduces yet another, more personal field of reference to the image of opening doors:

> Every public speech and every aggressive, unique revelation of what was remembered tore something away from me, displayed the secretly stored drapery of suffering in decorative contrast, so that everyone could touch the body of the child about to be beaten, or who had just been beaten, so that everyone could sigh about that heroic fear of being 'taken away'... Whoever could name the most dead was the winner... At that moment reality as something generally agreed upon ceased to exist for me. One imaginative oasis had been replaced by another... Suddenly I could no longer live in a house with a torn-open door. My memory kept filling the building with pictures to the point that the landscape and people disappeared, or landscapes were created and people born, whom I had never met before in my life, or so I thought. (Ib. 16).

The exposed interiors of houses evoke mental images of the materiality of postwar ruins, the violence of the NKVD breaking into houses with a list of deportees, and the abandoned houses of "kulaks" or the "Western" diaspora. Beyond and through these material images is the rupture of privacy brought on by the "new era," new psychological vulnerability of those who must rewrite the enabling narrative masks, the carefully constructed alibis and subterfuges that allowed them to survive the Soviet era. Depending

on one's positioning during the Soviet era, derepression brought specific dilemmas, specific secrets out of drawers, particular tasks of rewriting and revision. This is perhaps most true of Siberian deportees, and, in the case of the narrator, their children who escaped deportation. Survivors of Siberia returned home as pariahs, legally forbidden to resettle in their former counties of residence, often unemployable, and carrying a political taint that threatened to stigmatize anyone who sheltered or aided them. Needless to say, Siberia was a taboo topic of discussion in all but the most intimate settings; officially, it was forgotten under the guise of the party line. The removal of doors and the invasion of interior psychic spaces points to the renegotiation in the "new era" of boundaries of public and private. In Bhabha's words, disruption of such boundaries is one facet of postcolonial uncanniness: "The recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting." (Bhabha 1994: 9) The ritual derepression of the collective past is no relief to the narrator of *Nime vaev*; it does not restore a precious gift of freedom that was taken away, nor does it confer a cathartic permission to finally speak one's truth; rather, it unmasks personal trauma so radical and intimate that it has been wilfully muffled and forgotten. Further, the shadow side of the derepression is the emergence of new hierarchies, visible in the rhetoric of public rituals of mourning for the deported and the murdered. A grotesquely competitive comparison of kinds and degrees of suffering placed individuals in newly triangulated relations, even within their families of origin. On the one hand, victims of Stalin's deportations, such as the narrator's mother, could seek "rehabilitation" and material compensation, which might mean a small boost in a paltry pension; on the other, small quirks of fate intervened to make some "more equal than others." Mihkelson's narrator has no privileged insertion point in the collective text, as is evident in the painful legal ironies of her dispossession; she has been written out of history, as she will tell in a later chapter.

In the cited passage, however, the floating Freudian trope of the "child being beaten" hints both outward and inward — outward at the story of collective trauma (Siberian deportation), and inward at secrets of violence internal to the family. In addition, the fantasy of the "child being beaten" inaugurates the novel's "family romance" of postcolonial ghosts, the narrator's dialogue with four alter-egos that structure the novel as a psychodrama in five voices. The first of these was Miili, the "true Party member" and "double" of the narrator's deported mother, who died in the days of the "Tartu renaissance" of 1988. The second, Kudri Elli, a woman of the narrator's generation, thrives vulture-like on the derepression of suffering, seeing it as her mission to perform aggressive psychotherapy on disaffected teenagers. She half-deliberately subjects the narrator as a guinea pig to her experimental play therapies and psychodramas, with disastrous results. Elli, a kind of surrogate sister, and the dead Miili (a surrogate mother or aunt) are mirrored by two male interlocutors. High school history teacher, mentor, and "surrogate father" Joonatan, who despite his "foreign-looking face" teaches his students a philosophy of the "genius loci" and reverence toward the Estonian literary tradition, also instructs them in reading between the lines of the social text for the spaces left by official erasures. Aadu, Elli's generational counterpart, and thus surrogate brother or would-be lover, sees any engagement with or reflection upon the past as superfluous, investing his energies instead in reproduction according to the masculine double standard: "making more Estonians" with any woman he meets, while maintaining a "respectable" monogamous family.

The novel's discursive complexity is in part due to the dream-like doubling of each interlocutor: on the one hand the narrator is telling pieces of the life-stories of real individuals; on the other she is recording the traces of their phantasmagoric appearance as figures in her unconscious. This renders the frequent dream-narratives reported by the narrator particularly interesting as the liminal turf on which the doubles meet. The entrance of Miili, Elli, Aadu, and Joonatan into the "conversation" is triggered by key phrases that function like release valves; their voices mingle and alternate polyphonically, with the frequency of dream sequences gathering more and more momentum toward the end of the novel.

Each interlocutor can provoke a flood of memories and associations that lead the narrator into psychic overload and regress: Aadu is sometimes a flesh-and-blood other, whose sexual advances the narrator impatiently rejects, and sometimes the shadowy double of a boy her own age who committed suicide as a teenager after a particularly egregious episode of schoolyard bullying. Kudri Elli is likewise a tangible friend who "baptizes" the narrator's summer-home by the gift of an Estonian flag, and a brutal projection of her traumatized inner child, vampirically in quest of suffering to feed her need to be needed.

In counterpoint to the ongoing conversation with the four alter-egos the reader encounters the novel's "documentary plot," which is a search for the narrator's place in her family history, a quest not only for origins, but for the "au-delà" and the material consequences of those origins. In a later chapter set in the Tartu Historical Archives, the narrator researches her family tree, to find out why she cannot lay legal claim to the farm on which she was born. Ironically, the archivist on duty asks her whether she is looking for Swedish blood in her family tree, which would connect her to the more benign hegemonies in Estonian history, the "good old Swedish era" between the Livonian Wars of the mid-16th century and the Great Northern War of the late 17th century. Such an admixture would make her problem somewhat easier to solve, and move it out of the range of disputes between Estonian neighbours, continuing to settle accounts from their parents' generation, and the innumerable rumours, accusations and betrayals of the 1940s that led one neighbour to report another as "kulak" to gain points in a deceptive scale of advantage with the Soviet rulers, or with the more banal intent later to snatch the deported family's cow or wedding china. Repossession of land and a pervasive sense of entitlement were in vogue in the late 1980s. Descendants of Baltic German baronial families were returning as curious tourists to the manor houses their ancestors had owned, some with the intent of reclaiming them, others with more philanthropic intentions, contributing to their restoration as national historic sites. Diaspora Estonians were likewise revisiting the homeland, hoping for the legal restitution of the property seized from their families in 1940 or 1944. For the narrator of *Nime vaev*, historical accident is both

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more banal and more cruel than these optimistic quests and categories. In the wake of the second Soviet occupation in 1944, both of her parents had fled into the forest to evade deportation, instead of waiting passively in their farmstead for the dread sound of military trucks in the early morning hours. According to property law in late Soviet Estonia in the late 1980s, such a proactive measure constituted abandoning the property, and classified her parents as vagrants, despite the fact that her father was captured and shot soon thereafter, and her mother was deported to Siberia, both achieving, in corporeal terms at least, the status of legitimate victimhood. The child of vagrants was an abandoned child: she had no claim to inheritance, no claim to place let alone to name (in order to protect her, her mother had turned her over to distant relatives under a false identity). The narrator's family is thus excluded from the circle of newly glorified victims of the occupation — the families of the executed and deported who were "taken on their own land," and who could reclaim their homesteads and proudly proclaim their names. Once again, the nationalist scripts of repossessing the land, locating oneself in an Estonian genealogy, and inscribing the "white spots" in the history books with the "factual truth" are undercut by the narrator's life history. She is blessed and cursed with two alternative narratives of origin that partially cross over, supplement but contradict each other; she refers to these as her "first" and "second" childhoods: "That was in my second childhood, because it is the one connected with my home and that blank era of my inheriting, that era that never happened, that I call my first one" (Mihkelson 1994: 25). Neither past can be erased; both are "constructed," not "natural"; the narrator is caught between versions of her own life that are as irreconcilable as they are unforgettable.

The narrator's solution to her quandary of inheritance, un-naming, and dispossession in 1990 is to make a new beginning in geographical terms, to "buy herself a mountain" (more properly speaking, a hill) in a different region of Estonia. The farmhouse and outbuildings are circled by trees, providing her with the transcendent vantage point she longed for in the opening chapter of the novel, and at least partially assuaging her hunger for a home. The catch is that the narrator purchased the buildings, while

the land and the forest still belonged to the state. Snooping neighbours urge her to chop the maple trees down, because they block out the light from the "productive, economically valuable" apple trees; the subtext is that the activities of the new landowner are concealed from the neighbours' view, setting her apart and above them in a fearsome privacy. The suspicious neighbours finally chop down a few of the offending trees themselves, and when the narrator takes them to court, it is not only the neighbours' lies but the law's own ambiguity that prevails:

> I looked at the bare corner of the yard, suddenly in the power of the winds and strangers' glances, and I wasn't sure whether to hoist the flag as a mark of estrangement, forever and ever. Independence existed and yet it didn't. Strangers invaded and pillaged as they wished, but the law hesitated; the law had nothing to say about "home-breaking." For the law, it was a matter of destroying the natural environment, and I was to be held responsible for that, for the wielders of the axe got scared in court and said, "She asked us to. She herself told us to chop them down." (Ib. 88).

The farm that the narrator bought was located on a nature preserve; it was a crime to chop down trees in a national forest; and the narrator, in fact, had said, with a kind of sinister literalism, "over my dead body... shall you cut down these trees." The macabre resonance of that locution, "over my dead body," is amplified by the reflection, a few paragraphs later, on her fantasized punishment for the crime against the state committed with her ostensible permission: "I was labelled a half-witted destroyer of nature in advance. Or as a coward, who left the pillaging work to others and fled to the city to evade responsibility. (To the city, where there might be cattle cars waiting, to take me finally, at the state's expense, somewhere farther away, so that what I had escaped from in my childhood would finally happen.)" (Ib. 92). The legal fine print belies traumatic repetition of a scenario always on the horizon in the narrator's psyche, fed by the persistent atmosphere of fear and suspicion. "Restructured" laws carry long

shadows, and, instead of promising liberation and restitution, they compound injustice with injustice, adding insult to injury. The narrator continues, in a passage of significant self-reflexivity, to comment on the implications of the verdict pronouncing her "not-guilty": "...non-being not only could, but did exist. An ordinary border dispute, a lust to destroy opened onto conical funnel, the end of which rested on a heart that had been rendered numb by incantations. A timeless moment stood in judgment. The genius loci had revealed itself once again. The judge removed the lock from the already closed cattle-car, let me out and smiled, 'You may go free.' For what? I asked, not understanding yet the meaning of what had happened" (ib. 93). The "conical funnel" accurately evokes the way the passage opens onto another crypt in the text: the phrase that introduces this commentary is a veiled quotation from the title of one of Artur Alliksaar's poems ("Ole-matus võiks ka olemata olla"). Alliksaar, psychically a close cousin to the fictional Joonatan, Siberian survivor, and mentor to many of the poets of the 1960's "thaw" generation, was a master of innuendo, paradox, and Aesopian discourse in his own philosophically dense poetry and plays.

The deferral of punishment, punctuated by the fear-conjured ghost of impending deportation to Siberia, is no final reprieve, only another phase of the spiral journey of repeated trauma. Land ownership remains a phantasmagoric possibility, fraught with legal absurdities, "home" an asymptote for nostalgia. The farm on the hilltop is a surrogate, displaced home-place, "not the real thing," and not possessed, always virtual and elusive. At the same time, just as it was easier for the narrator to identify with the urban streetscape of Tartu than with her fellow Estonians at the demonst-ration in the opening chapter, belonging to the land, however adopted and "surrogate" the specific place, is more secure than locating oneself genealogically, "rehabilitating" one's name, settling accounts between the two childhoods, the two narratives of origin: "The land bound me more than a name. Language testified to a concealed belonging that only death could destroy." (Ib. 54).

Ultimately, then, the novel carries a residual lyricism that is connected both with the incantatory power of the spoken (and sung) word, and with the dream of a (virgin) land providing

pockets of refuge. In reality, the land is an inscribed landscape, cross-cut by colonialism and inhabited by ghosts, but faith in the land to transcend its violation remains powerful, whether in the ecological activism of the late 1980s or in the narrator's poetic credo and the project to build her hearth at the top of a mountain. In a long, epic passage toward the end of the novel, the narrator evokes the magically repetitious history that has marked the land-scape, provocatively interweaving language and land, and yearning for a redemptive act of naming that would reconcile the irrecon-cilable oppositions:

> From behind the round face of the peasant we see the gaze of the long-dead baron, and the title-encrusted name belongs to a pair of heavy hands, molded to the shape of a plough. Seven hundred years is a long enough time for them to become indistinguishable, to care too much or too little about class and status differences... to be open to enclosure, to enclose one-self finally in a safe self-protection...Too much con-sciousness is agonizing, constricting; it forces on one the need to watch out, to compare, to measure, to long for that which is one's very own, that which is forever elusive.
>
> The only part of history we have yet to repeat is the hundred-year war of liberation. We sang our-selves free, bewitche ourselves into strength, for a moment, for a century, what's the difference — now something more is supposed to follow. Not the "Baltic Chain," but a road. The longing of the scat-tered Estonians for a holy land, one and irrevocable, which would last as long as the language. (Ib. 96).

The narrator in this passage speaks (as she does only rarely), in an oracular mode, for a people rather than for herself as an alienated individual, but she speaks "out of interstitiality" and with a sense of being "on the road," in transit. She senses herself (and the larger "we" with whom she identifies) poised on the brink of the "beyond," the unnameable. She is sceptical of the sacred triad of language, genealogy, and land, but profoundly drawn by a longing for what Kristeva has called "monumental time." Calling on

Biblical topoi, the coevalness of land and language seems to function as a double-edged sword: on the one hand there is the utopic possibility of a resacralized homeland and "homecoming;" however, it is equally possible, given regional history, and the destiny of other Finno-Ugric peoples such as the Livonians, that both language and land will disappear, or that language will have to stand in for homeplace as earmark of identity, while the land sighs under foreign hegemony, as it has for so many of the previous centuries.

The narrator of *Nime vaev* persists through the labour of naming — her memories, her contemporaries, her many selves — in pursuit of a landscape; the novel is an incantatory approach to that landscape that will not signal the end of the quest, but that may serve as a tangible, recognizable moment of rest. In terms of envisaging her personal and collective future, she is on the territory of "au-delà," knowing instinctively that "au-delà" is a condition that one never successfully resolves. Her disorientation in space and time is interrupted by epiphanic or kairotic moments of connection with the land. Lyric moments irrupt into the discursive, narrative, and analytical work of excavating the psyche, providing moments of refuge, not the terms for a sustained utterance. On the rational level, the poet-narrator recognizes that primal unity with the land is only a fiction; lyricism and the lyric mode give way to the elegiac, and the experience of disconnection. Even the lapses into an oracular voice through which the scarred but enduring landscape speaks, the bard's voice from folk poetry, are but sound bytes, quickly undercut by a shift of voice, leaving an after-pain as after an amputation.

On the collective level, however, the fetishism of land, the "essentialization" of it, is in the final analysis a historically and demographically necessary fiction, a life-lie as it were, enabling and undergirding survival in however modest and restricted a form. In this respect, Mihkelson's narrator's long meditation on the "seven hundred year period of serfdom" and the "hundred years' war of liberation" can serve as a kind of manifesto for an Estonian post-colonialism. While rejecting, through a combination of indifference and active deconstruction, the ideologically narrow myths of restored nationhood, with its legends of a golden age, be

it located in the brief flowering of independence earlier in this century or in the period of "ancient independence" prior to the coming of the Teutonic knights in the 13th century, Mihkelson's "middle" generation can nevertheless apprehend old elemental sacralities through embracing what Bhabha calls "the complex, interweavings of history, and the culturally contingent borderlines of modern nationhood" (Bhabha 1994: 9). Chastened by the multiple alienations and internal fracturings of new value schemes among the Estonan people (such as the hierarchy of victimhoods), a new subjectivity can be provisionally forged, not on the reclaimed ground of these sacralities, but in an intense consciousness of the processes by which they have and continue to signify. Such a subjectivity is always-already split, aware of its own plural and contradictory prehistories. It is also profoundly attuned to Bhabha's distinction between "homelessness" and the condition of being "unhomed," the uncanny condition of "extraterritorial and cross-cultural initiations"(ib.). But final relinquishment of the pursuit of these particularities of land, language, and name is suicidal for a small collectivity, whether this takes place in the name of economic integration into some large transnational unity such as the European Union, by way of unbridled market forces and unlimited hybridization, or as the result of an overly strict "policing of the borders," a denial or foreclosure of internal ethnic differences. Perhaps Mihkelson's narrator is right when she sees "vaev," the labour of naming, as the only path to survival, and following its paths of figuration as the only possible "au-delà."

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Paigallend, or the Building of Estonia in the Novels of Jaan Kross

JÜRI TALVET

Over the last three decades Jaan Kross (b. 1920) has not only built up his renown as the most outstanding (and also, internationally, the most acclaimed) Estonian novelist of the second half of the twentieth century. Now, as we approach the turn of the millennium, with Estonia enjoying — in this century and in all times — the twenty-eighth year of its political independence as a nation, one can see ever more clearly that the ultimate goal of Jaan Kross' to date fifteen novels and a dozen or so shorter narratives has been to build up Estonia's identity as a nation — thus, in a way, fictionally anticipating history.

It is also obvious that the author and man Jaan Kross himself can be seen as a symbol of Estonia's national destiny in this century. He was born in the capital of Estonia, Tallinn, in 1920, the year the Tartu peace treaty was signed, by which the young Soviet Russia recognized Estonia as a sovereign state. Kross' intellectual formation, thus, coincided with the first short independence period of Estonia between the two world wars. Afterwards, he has shared with his people all major historical developments, which for the most part were cruelly unjust and tragic. In 1938 Kross had scarcely started law studies at Tartu University — the second oldest university in the Northeast of Europe and the main cradle of Estonia's young intellectual élite — when his country was submitted to the consequences of the infamous treaty between Hitler and Stalin. What Kross participated in, witnessed and later reflected on in his narrative work, had, thus, by far a wider significance than an exclusively local Estonian history. As the Baltic

states turned into the tragic "border zone" disputed by the main European warmongers, Germany and Russia, Kross, as well as his country, were fated to share the most decisive moments of European destiny in the twentieth century (Hasselblatt 1990: 66).

Kross' life in those gloomy years ran parallel to the fate of the main characters and narrators of the prose cycle he began tentatively in a collection of stories *Kajalood* (1980; the title might be translated both as "Sonic Depth Finder" or "Echoed Stories") and then has continued through the novels *Wikmani poisid* ("The Wikman Boys", 1988), *Väljakaevamised* ("Excavations", in Finnish 1989, in Estonian 1990), *Mesmeri ring* ("The Mesmer Circle" 1995) and finally, *Paigallend* (1998).

After doing some casual jobs and continuing his university studies in Estonia that had lost its independence, Kross was arrested and imprisoned by the German occupation authorities in 1944. After the war, when Estonia had become annexed to the Soviet Union, Kross worked for two years as a young university lecturer of law, but was arrested by the occupying regime shortly after (1946) and deported, like tens of thousands of his compatriots, to Siberia. There he worked in a coal mine and a brick factory until being rehabilitated in 1954, when he could return to Estonia and become a professional writer.

Like the overwhelming majority of Estonian intellectuals who had stayed in Estonia (or had been forced to stay; many leading writers and artists also managed to flee the country during the war), Kross hailed the conditional liberalization that started in the Khruschov era. He first became known as a poet who, in the expressionist manner of Becher and Brecht and pioneering free verse, welcomed "socialism with a human face". His four verse collections (*Söerikastaja*, 1958, *Kivist viiulid*, 1964, *Lauljad laevavööridel*, 1966, and *Vihm teeb toredaid asju*, 1969) put him into the élite of Soviet Estonian poetry in the 1960s. Kross also stood out as an important translator from several languages. Thus, his were the renderings of *Othello, Macbeth, Pericles* and *The Tempest* in Shakespeare's "Complete Works", translated into Estonian between 1959 and 1975, as well as of Béranger's songs, Brecht's *Dreigroschenoper* and fragments from Rabelais' *Gargantua et Pantagruel*.

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However, as a younger generation of talents in the second half of the 1960s (Paul-Eerik Rummo, Jaan Kaplinski, and others) emerged, influenced by T. S. Eliot, existentialist philosophy and equipped with rather sophisticated poetic means, Kross preferred to turn from poetry to the field of prose fiction. He chose historical narrative as the main vehicle for expressing his views on the state of things in the world. His success was almost immediate. His short narratives *Neli monoloogi püha Jüri asjus* ("Four Mono-logues Concerning St. George" 1970), *Michelsoni immatrikulee-rimine* ("Michelson's Matriculation" 1971), *Pöördtoolitund* ("The Hour of the Swivel Chair" 1971), *Kolmandad mäed* ("The Third Mountains" 1975) and *Taevakivi* ("The Heaven's Stone" 1975), supported by the four-volume novel *Kolme katku vahel* ("Between Three Plagues", 1970–1980) and especially *Keisri hull* ("The Czar's Madman", 1978 — to date his most undisputed interna-tional success) gained him a wide and attentive reading public in Estonia, while in the 1980s, when more historical novels followed (*Rakvere romaan* — "A Rakvere Novel", 1982, *Professor Mar-tensi ärasõit* — "The Departure of Professor Martens" 1984, and *Vastutuulelaev* — "The Head Wind Ship" 1987), he could see his work gradually being translated into other languages (Russian, Finnish, German, Swedish, Czech, etc.). However, translations into English, French and Spanish, marking Kross' debut in the Western book market in its widest sense, are really not much older than the restored independence of Estonia (1991).

Since then, Kross has been for several times nominated as can-didate for the Nobel Prize. However, the disadvantages of a writer of a small nation, as far as the translation and international recep-tion are concerned, are more than obvious, as Kross himself has admitted (cf. Kross 1996: 9). Thus, Kross' two novels published in Spain (*El loco del zar,* 1992, and *La partida del profesor Martens*, 1995) have been rendered into Spanish from the French trans-lation, while his collection of short narratives, which was trans-lated in the same way — relying on a third language — some three years ago, has until now remained unpublished, to be sure, above all for commercial reasons.

Kross' work has suffered even more unjustly from the scarcity of critical reception. Although every new novel or narrative of

Kross has been reviewed in Estonian literary magazines, longer monographic studies are practically absent. As the only exception, one could see a tentative attempt of a wider semiotic-typological study in some articles of the late Mart Mäger (1978, 1980). As for Kross' international reception in criticism, it has been limited to sporadic enthusiastic echoes of his translated work, as well as short prefaces written by the translators themselves. Some critics of international standing, like the Spaniard Carlos García Gual (see his excellent review on *El loco del zar,* 1992: 12) have been able to illuminate "from outside" important facets of Kross' work with precision and objectiveness that has not always been the case in the writing "from inside", by Estonian critics. However, the access of foreign criticism to the whole of Kross' work has been sadly blocked by the language barrier.

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Here I would like to stress how different the Estonian novelist's creative trajectory has been from that of some other major nove-lists of our days, who by far more than Kross have enjoyed — thanks to the language advantages — immediate access to a wide international reading public. Thus, in the case of Gabriel García Márquez, the trajectory was cumulative until attaining the apex in *Cien años de soledad* (1967). Later, in my opinion, fragmentation has followed, the result being that his later work, e.g. such novels as *La crónica de una muerte anunciada* or *El amor en los tiempos de cólera* hardly allow the reader to discover any new significance in the earlier work — they rather look like fragments from the great synthesis which had already taken place in *Cien años de soledad.*

In the trajectory of another major Latin-American "novel giant", the Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa, the "total novel", in-cluding some extremely sophisticated narrative techniques — like especially in *La casa verde* and *Conversación en la Catedral* — was also achieved in the second half of the 1960s. Later there has been a gradual slow-down of narrative experiments, to the point that the reader of some of the most recent work (e.g. *Lituma en los Andes*) of Vargas Llosa may ask himself what really was the point

of all the technical "feuerwerk" of the earlier novels if in the long run a rather traditionally realistic narrative manner has been restored. The technique (or the form) thus becomes relatively irrelevant, detached from the whole of the narrative body. On the other hand, the attempts to change the generic code, in the case of both García Márquez and Vargas Llosa, have not been completely successful either. The former's *El coronel en su laberinto* and the latter's *La guerra del fin del mundo* have remained in the work of both isolated and hesitant ventures into the realm of the historical novel, while Vargas Llosa's "novela rosa", the erotic narrative in *Elogio de la madrastra* (1988) has very little to say about the Peruvian author's earlier ambitions of the "novela total".

Jaan Kross's narrative work, by contrast, is characterized by an almost archaic unity and wholeness, with strongly individualized features in the image system and the art of narration. The commercial factors that so often influence, in the negative sense, the writing of internationally recognized authors, have had little if any impact on Kross. The language barrier, thus, has defended the inner integrity of his writing.

On the other hand, it would be out of place to argue that Kross has been able to work in the virginal state of "pure" creativeness. Like any liberally minded writer acting under the Soviet regime, he had constantly to face the choices imposed by the political-ideological censorship, as well as, in the anticipation of the latter, his own interior censorship. Even the fact itself that Kross in his first historical narratives plunged into the remote sixteenth century, with an artist (Michael Sittow in *Neli monoloogi püha Jüri asjus*) and a chronicler (Balthasar Russow in *Kolme katku vahel*) of obscure origin as their main characters, has to do with these choices, as Kross himself has admitted (Pino 1996: 3).

Criticism first outlined, as the main theme of Kross's novels, "the position of a distinguished individual in the past, in a reactionary environment" (Lias 1971: 241). From the beginning it was evident that Kross did not focus so much on the history as an object in itself, as on existential dilemmas faced by individuals and far transcending a concrete historical period. Their nucleus was Hamlet's dilemma whether in an alienated, corrupt or totalitarian society an (intellectually or spiritually advanced) individual should

rebel against injustice, or conform to the historical circumstances. The protagonist of Kross' first short novel, *Neli monoloogi püha Jüri asjus*, the Tallinn-born painter and sculptor Michael Sittow never surrendered, at least in his innermost soul, to the demands of his narrow-minded guild fellows.

However, Estonian literary critics were quick to discover in Kross' attitudes, especially on the basis of *Pöördtoolitund* — where the narrating main personage was J. V. Jannsen, the founder of Estonian journalism, generally known for his anti-radical and mitigating views in the period of the Estonian national "awakening" (2nd half of the nineteenth century) — a justification of the historical compromise, if not a direct submission to alienating power structures. Thus Hando Runnel, a patriotically-minded Estonian poet, reviewing Kross' transition from poetry to fictional prose, observed a simultaneous transition from the ethical idealism to utilitarian and pragmatic positions, from the ideal of freedom of a humiliated and exploited nation to the moral of those who imagine themselves to be free by aspiring to or sharing power (Runnel 1972: 681, 683).

Kross was criticized for having torn his personages out of the historical context (Jansen 1972: 1923), for concentrating on exceptional (and, thus, not representative or typical) individuals, capable of rising above their own social layer or state — instead of depicting the "normal" national environment (ib. 1921), especially the peasantry to which the Estonian ethnic population in its majority belonged until the beginning of the twentieth century (Runnel 1972: 683). The reproach of making — often by connecting the Estonians with other dominating nations — the exceptional too much stand out, at the cost of the uneducated Estonian peasant folk, as if suggesting that the latter did not possess any culture and could be "civilized" only by the ruling bigger nations, Germans and Russians, could be heard as late as the beginning of the 1980s (e.g. Valton 1983: 158).

On the other hand, no critic could deny that Kross' narratives, whatever their ideological shades, possessed a particular charm, standing vigorously out in the midst of both Estonian and translated historical novels. Very early the poet Jaan Kaplinski noticed Kross' "shamanic" talent in evoking the quotidian surroundings of

the past (Kaplinski 1971: 135), while some other critics claimed that the Estonian capital Tallinn, the main place of action in Kross' novels, was itself magically transformed into a living character (cf. Liivamets 1978, Jõgi 1980: 66). The main narrative vehicle which made Kross, from his first narratives, differ from others and gradually helped him to build up his original style was the use of interior monologue. This distinguishing feature was mentioned by nearly every critic (see Bochariov 1977: 78–79, Mäger 1978: 324), but nobody really tried to explain what was Kross' relation to the types of interior monologue already known, by that time, in Western literature, and in what Kross' original contribution could be seen.

In fact, when Kross introduced his interior monologue into Estonian prose fiction, nobody had been able to read in the Estonian language Joyce's *Ulysses* (its fragments were translated for the first time not earlier than 1992). The formal experiments introduced by modernists like Joyce and Woolf were for a long time viewed with great suspicion in the official Soviet criticism. The aversion was not only "theoretical": until "perestroika", or the mid-1980s, publishing the work of Western modernists was still considerably hindered. It is no wonder, then, that the Russian critic Bochariov, in his longer overview of Soviet prose fiction (Bochariov 1977), only in passing mentions the use of the interior monologue by Kross. A more detailed discussion of the phenomenon could hardly have been possible, without causing harm to Kross and the critic himself. This means that the reception of Kross' work in Russian — which really could have provided Kross with a "back-window" to the wider world — was curbed, despite his novels being translated.

The Joycean type of interior monologue — revealing the subconscious and hidden sexual impulses — was not introduced in Estonian by the work of Joyce himself, but (paradoxically?) by the early translation (1969) of the novel *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1962) by the Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes. Only in the first half of the 1970s — with Kross further developing his monologuebased historical narratives — Faulkner's important novels, representing the maturity of interior monologue in its varied shades (*The Sound and the Fury, As I Lay Dying*) were rendered into

Estonian. Thus the Estonian readers as well as critics, on the whole, could get acquainted with the interior monologue relatively late and were hardly prepared for a further discussion of it.

Kross himself, a writer with an ample erudition and a good knowledge of foreign languages — like his *alter egos* Ullo Paerand and Jaak Sirkel in *Paigallend* — had certainly at least some knowledge of Joyce and the formal modernist experiments in his early formative years. In *Stahli grammatika* (1980) — one of the longer narratives in *Kajalood* — another *alter ego* of Kross, Peeter Mürk, admits that his novel was written in the style of a "joycifyed Coster", being something between *Ulysses* and *Ulenspiegel* (Kross 1980: 74). This declaration could further confuse the Estonian reader, who, as mentioned above, even at the beginning of the 1980s scarcely knew anything of Joyce at first hand. I think Kross has slightly mystified the style of his historical narratives, as mystification is one of the poetic (if not ideological) means he has with some frequency turned to.

As a matter of fact, Kross' narratives have very little to do with the Joycean revelations of the sexual (sub)conscious or with the chaotic mess of temporal and spatial planes. Kross has neither sought any too far-fetched formal innovations in the syntactical nor orthographic sense — his style is definitely more conservative, when compared, for instance, with that of another great author of historical novels, the Portuguese Nobel Prize winner José Saramago, in *Memorial do convento* (1982).

However, Kross' self-qualification as a "joycifyed Coster" might still have some relevance. It hints at an "interiorized adventure" — an attempt to provide a steady psychological scrutiny of the characters belonging to the past. To find a preceding narrative pattern for Kross' monologues, I think one should rather have a look at Thomas Mann's historical (as well as personage) novel *Lotte in Weimar*. What Mann introduced there — and what Kross echoes and elaborates throughout his narrative work — is a kind of a reflexive-discursive monologue, one that does not suppress the "exterior" signs of events, or the plot, as such, but makes the characters reveal their inner life to a far greater extent than the pattern of realistic narrative, generally employed in historical novels, would allow. It also means that the novel's characters

appear as highly individualized persons, not just "typical" signs or uni-dimensional symbols of the reality they represent. This constitutes, at the same, Kross' skilful response to those critics (see, e.g. Uibo 1982) who have detected in his novels too much rationalism or geometry. In his best work Kross has been able to introduce a good deal of ambiguity, sensuality and emotional "darkness" (Lias 1971: 239, Mäger 1978: 325, Uibo: ib.). Or, as it has been claimed both by Estonian and foreign reviewers, the psychological load of Kross' characters is considerably weightier and more varied than that of an average character in an Estonian novel (Haug 1985: 494); "the reader [of *Keisri hull* — J.T.] feels himself caught up in a dense, intriguing and dramatic plot, of an extraordinary psychological deepness and a final melancholic tonality" (García Gual 1992: 12). The reflexive-discursive monologues of Kross' novels make us intuit history from the "inside", they create a kind of "intra-history" (Kaplinski 1971: 131), maybe not exactly in the sense the Spanish writer and philosopher Miguel de Unamuno gave to the term — unlike the Portuguese Saramago, Kross does not attempt to write a history of the people or masses -, but definitely they revolt against the schemes of "extra-history", appropriated by the "dominant" nations.

Kross obviously soon became aware of a certain self-repetition when returning to discursive monologues. In parallel with monologic novels, narrated alternately by several characters in the first person, Kross also wrote novels (like *Kolme katku vahel*) which fitted into a more traditionally realistic third-person narrative pattern. He has continued to alternate narrative modalities till his latest work, never abandoning a search for a varied and fluctuating point of view. The main story in some novels, like *Keisri hull*, has been provided in the form of a diary. In the case of *Keisri hull*, the form of narration itself introduces a kind of purposeful ambiguity, as the narrator's rather vulgar and earth-bound conscience is strongly contrasted to the story of the Don Quixote-like protagonist rebelling against the Russian czar Alexander I and defending the local Estonian peasants. In *Paigallend*, the narrator Jaak Sirkel, one of Kross' doubles, alternately transmits what he himself remembers of his schoolmate, the novel's protagonist Ullo Paerand, in the 1930s and later, and what the latter tells him in

1986 — the second year of Gorbachov's *perestroika* — about the crucial peripetias of his past life during the war, under German and Russian occupations and in the post-war Soviet Estonia. In the novel *Tabamatus* ('The Inscrutable', 1993) Kross makes his semi-autobiographical narrator, who tells the story in the years of the German occupation in Estonia, symbolically repeat the tragic fate of Jüri Vilms, one of the founders of the Estonian state, murdered at the age of twenty-nine, in 1918, by the German occupants in Helsinki.

There is no sharp contrast between the discursive monologue and the traditional realistic narration, but a rather "soft switch" from one to another. It contributes to the unity of Kross' fiction, providing a close linkage between his latest and earliest work. At the end of the millennium, when the postmodern fiction at its best has proved the failure of the modernist formal experiments and has returned, in general, to a rather conventional narrative art, the title of Kross' last novel, *Paigallend,* might serve as a symbol sceptically reflecting that process. It means "hovering in the air" or, more literally, "a suspended flight (in the same place)". The modernist narrative experiments, in a way, have been a "flight/ escape to nowhere" — a return has proved inevitable. However, it does not mean at all that the "flight" in itself was useless. By means of the "flight" the vision of a novelist could gain depth and height, while it proved that his art was moving on the vertical rather than the horizontal axis.

As was said, Kross has strongly focused his narratives on the dissection of an individual in a conflicting, if not hostile, historical environment. From the beginning his novels have come to be defined as "historical personage (or, individual) novels" (Lias 1971: 239). For Kross, one of the examples to be followed, in that sense, could be the novels of Stefan Zweig, the German author who in his best-known work, semi-fictional essays and monographs, concentrated on the lives of outstanding historical personages. Kross has been among the Estonian translators of Zweig's work. In this type of historical narrative history itself moves into the background, being often projected from the point of view of the protagonist and his ideology. Lion Feuchtwanger was another German author whose historical novels became influential

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in post-war Estonia, especially from the 1970s onwards; his work was considered almost as a model of historical fiction by some Estonian critics. History, there, is strongly submitted to already existing myths of historical personages, they tend to prevail over reality.

In the case of Kross' fiction, the objective, still, differs fundamentally from that of Zweig, Feuchtwanger, Rolland, Maurois, and other great painters of fictional portraits.

Firstly, even though Kross lays the stress on the person/ individual — who, as was mentioned above, could to a certain extent become detached from the environment — all critics have unanimously admitted Kross' meticulous faithfulness to the historical fact. Yuri Lotman, reflecting on Kross' *Keisri hull*, has highly appreciated Kross' ability to evoke in minute details the sociocultural settings of the era of Alexander I. Lotman also considers important what he defines as the Pushkin way of narrating — Kross' skilful use of the intermediate narrator who really "does not know quite well what he is narrating" (Lotman 1987: 7). As Lotman further says, the rebellious protagonist Timotheus von Bock, declared a madman by the czarist authorities, perfectly embodies madness as a form of social protest, outlined by Foucault in *Madness and Civilization* (ib.).

Is Kross, then, a writer of historical fiction who, in the analogous way, for instance, with Marguerite Yourcenar in her *Opus nigrum*, makes his protagonist an exemplifying sign of a particular phenomenon — considered important by the writer — of a particular moment of history?

I very much doubt it. Kross' conceptual scheme seems to have a broader scope. It must have something to do with the physical-geographical material/corpus used by Kross in his novels. When Kross in his narratives of the 1970s centred on the historical options of characters like the painter Michael Sittow (whose Estonian origin is uncertain), the czarist general Michelson (son of Estonian peasants who could historically still have a say in the cause of the Estonian peasantry) and the Baltic-German colonel and landowner Timotheus von Bock, the ethnocentric orientation in Kross could hardly be considered the foremost issue by his critics. (And probably it was not — at least in the beginning; in

fact, it could hardly have been, if the constant menace of censorship hanging on national topics is taken into account).

Considerably more attention was paid to the fact that quite a few of Kross' historical characters managed to rise above their social status and become "somebody" in the society. Thus, Michelson, a former serf, leads, as a general, the stifling of Pugachov's rebellion (*Michelsoni immatrikuleerimine*) and simple village boys Jannsen *(Pöördtoolitund)* and Köler *(Kolmandad mäed)* become the founders of the Estonian journalism and the national painting tradition, respectively (Mäger 1978: 322). Another type of transition (crossing a "border") was observed on the ethnic ground: a Baltic-German identifies himself with the Estonian peasants' cause (Timotheus von Bock), an Estonian-born chronicler contributes importantly to the German historiography (Balthasar Russow) (ib.). In later novels, the Estonian-born lawyer Martens, in his role of a czarist official, has a share in the foundation of the international law at the end of the nineteenth century *(Professor Martensi ärasõit)* and another Estonian, Bernhard Schmidt, at the beginning of the twentieth century, makes a weighty contribution to optical science *(Vastutuulelaev)*.

However, gradually a constant feature became visible in Kross' narratives. Whatever the national-ethnic or social origin of his characters, all Kross' novels and stories, without exception, have Estonia in their geographical focus. Even if their action, temporarily, leaves Estonian borders, it always returns there. Few internationally known authors of historical fiction have been as faithful as Kross to their own ethnic-geographic and ethnic-cultural space. Thus, in the novels of another important Estonian twentieth-century author of historical prose, Karl Ristikivi, European (universal) space prevails over the ethnic place of action. (About Ristikivi, see Mattisen 1998).

This should provide us with a cue of the "magistral plan" of Kross' novels. Estonian criticism slowly started to pay attention to it from the beginning of the 1980s. Mall Jõgi was probably the first to assert that "what Kross above all has observed is the process of b e c o m i n g a nation, touching at the same time the much more confused problematic of b e i n g a nation (Jõgi 1980: 73).

Here the use of "nation" would need some clarification. Whereas in Western languages "nation" has become the synonym of "state", in Estonian, at the beginning of the 1980s, with the Estonians not being able even to dream of their own restored state, and all publications being rigidly watched by Soviet censorship, the notion of "nation" *(rahvus)* naturally excluded any shade of a "state" *(riik)* as a political entity. However, as we come to Kross' latest historical fiction which, as a matter of fact, reaches the threshold of the new independence and is partly written in Estonia as a restored sovereign state on the world map), a new light is shed on the entire cycle of Kross' historical narrative.

Kross' novels could be viewed from the turn of the millennium — in the retrospective of thirty years — as a single majestic saga, with Estonia as its central protagonist. It is a saga about Estonia becoming a "nation" both in the ethnic and political sense, but above all anticipating Estonia's restoration as a national state, the recuperation of its political individuality (incarnated in "a state" — "riik") which coincides with and includes its being an individual ethnic-cultural entity ("rahvus").

Not much has (as yet) been written about Kross' latest novel, *Paigallend.* However, in a couple of reviews that have appeared, it has been considered one of the writer's masterpieces (Haug 1998: 938, Hinrikus, Kronberg 1998: 17). Not only has the novel's political orientation been mentioned (Haug 1998: 935), but apparently *Paigallend* has helped to reveal an important archetype/ image in Kross' historical fiction as a whole — "the Political Estonian", as Toomas Haug has called it (ib. 936).

Indeed, Kross' novels have a lot to do with political ideas. However, I would still say that if we were to speak of Kross as a writer of politically orientated historical fiction, politics should be understood in a fairly broad sense — as a vehicle of a nation's self-realization, as well as an active part of its culture. More precisely, on the basis of the retrospective provided by *Paigallend*, I suggest that Kross' great theme in his novel saga is the transformation of Estonia from a nation, *rahvus-rahvas* (an ethnic unit: people connected by their language and culture with their historical-geographical *locus vivendi*) into a nation as an independent state *(rahvus-riik)*. Kross envisages an Estonia exercising as

freely as possible all the mechanisms of the *rahvus-riik* — including those of power — according to the people's democratically expressed will.

Estonia's transition from its peasant way of life to urbanized culture was reflected in the great novel cycle *Tõde ja õigus (Truth and Justice;* in five volumes, 1926–1933) of Anton Hansen Tammsaare, the celebrated Estonian novel classic of the first independence period. Kross did not intend to repeat what Tammsaare had done before him. On the contrary, the rural peasant life poeticized by Tammsaare especially in the first (and best-known) volume of his novel cycle, is almost absent from Kross' novels. From the very beginning Kross concentrated on urban life and the culture born in (or for) the Estonian towns; thus according to the image provided by his work, the formation of a nation as a state could hardly be conceived outside town walls.

I think there is a notable coincidence between Kross' conception of Estonia and the ideas the Spanish thinker José Ortega y Gasset has had about nationhood. Whereas throughout his philosophy Ortega y Gasset accentuated the importance of an intellectual-cultural vanguard in the becoming and being of a nation, Kross situates into the focus of his novels historical characters who embody the premises for a nation's rise above its being as *rahvas* (folk, people), dominated by other, mightier nations, and becoming an individual nation/state (*rahvus-riik*) capable of realizing its identity in history.

Contrary to the suggestion that Kross' effort to make excel Estonian-born artists, scientists, generals or lawyers might be derived from the national inferiority complex — against the background of Estonia's smallness as a country and an ethnic body (Hasselblatt 1990: 65) —, I suppose that the primary function of such a concentration on outstanding personages in Kross' novel saga is to make the world identify Estonia as an individuality — a nation with its own personal culture and character.

Needless to say, because of the foreign occupations Estonia — as any of the three Baltic nations — was, indeed, lost in the memory of Europe and the world. Kross skilfully recovers that memory, first providing some cues and connections to Estonia by signs that reach from it to neighbouring areas, more easily

identified by the international (Western) world. In a way, the reception of Kross' novels in the West has reflected the process of Estonia's (re)indentification via a "third nation". Timotheus von Bock is close to the Russian emperor, as is the lawyer Martens. *The Czar's Madman* and *Professor Martens' Departure* have been, correspondingly, among the first novels by Kross translated into Western languages. The reception of Kross' exclusively Estonian-centred novels, on the contrary, has been delayed (as I have mentioned above, referring to the fate of Kross' collection of short stories in Spain).

Furthermore, I am reluctant to deduce from the fact that Kross' Estonian characters appear closely related (by marriage or familiar ties) to other nations, the building up of a kind of an imaginary multinational society in Estonia in his work — something that would deserve to be qualified as a utopia, especially as seen from the restored Estonian Republic on the eve of the new millennium (see Undusk 1998: 219–220). I would rather assert that these inter-ethnic connections, as well as the accentuated openness of Kross' characters — intellectually bright young men well versed in several foreign languages, as well as the literature of other nations — function in Kross' novels above all as a symbolic pre-condition, even an imperative, for Estonia's becoming a nation. In Kross' novels the Estonian nation, capable of founding an independent Estonian state, is depicted as open to the world, disposed for a dialogue and an understanding of the "other". On the contrary, what is always rejected, is the violent totalitarianism of any kind (both that of the Nazi Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Russia), the Western complex of superiority and arrogant negligence of the "other" — especially, if the latter is "smaller". The false universalism of the West, embodied by an arrogant and tyrannical French teacher, is ridiculed in the story *Väike Vipper* (in Kross' two-story book *Ülesõidukohad* — *Places of Transition*, 1981), while in *Paigallend* Kross puts on the Western nations the blame for betraying the Baltic nations at the end of the Second World War.

Paigallend repeats once again, as well as sums up Kross' fundamental ideological-philosophical positions. The novel does not add much to the psychological structure of Kross' nation-

building — its solidity has been gradually achieved in his earlier discursive-monologic narratives. The narrative centre here looks intentionally deprived of psychological tensions, to make room for political developments. No attempt is made to depict the main character's intimate relations; when these briefly appear, their function seems to be rather to accentuate the protagonist's weaknesses as a human being, his basic proximity to the earthy condition. Similarly, in the double symbol Timotheus von Bock/ Jakob Mätlik — a vivid parallel to the double Don Quixote/Sancho Panza (cf. García Galiano 1993: 32/236) — Jakob embodies man's basic human weaknesses. It would make little sense to look for clear-cut archetypes in Kross' novels — the romantic or the realistic (compromise) code would not function fully either.

Differently from other main characters of Kross' novels, Ullo Paerand in *Paigallend* is not a historical but a fictional character. At the beginning he is presented as an average Estonian — really "nobody" in the cultural or political sense —, fated to share the lot of that one million Estonians who could not or did not want to flee the country during the war and, consequently, had to suffer, like Jaan Kross himself, both from the German and the Soviet-Russian occupation. Like a hero of a picaresque novel, Ullo moves through different spheres of Estonian society, providing the reader with an access both to the "outside" and the "inside" of it and letting him see it from the changing time perspective, as the narrative develops from the first Estonian republic to the post-war years. Ullo Paerand may remind one of a picaresque hero also because he is clever enough, despite his ups and downs, to find a way out even of the most complicated situations.

However, radically distancing himself from a picaresque novel, Kross soon lets his character become from nobody somebody, pushing him into the very centre of the political-ideological turmoil. With the Germans leaving and the Soviets entering the country in 1944, Ullo shares the desperate attempt of a small number of Estonian politicians to declare the country's continuing independence and make the outside world hear it. At the critical moment, when he could flee the country, he — like Timotheus von Bock, in *Keisri hull* — takes the decision to stay, because, as he tells his wife, "(...) when thousands go, a million must stay (...)."

(Kross 1998: 326). Under the Soviet regime, Ullo writes a poem in which the image of the Greek patriot Manolis Glezos hides the dream of his own country's liberty. Ullo is also close to the leading Estonian intellectuals — like the writer Friedebert Tuglas — who consolidate a tacit resistance to the occupying power.

Unlike his father — who fled from Estonia and his family to the West before the war — Ullo, thus, assumes full responsibility for the fate of his country. Like Jaan Kross himself, he is above all an adherent of existentialist philosophy — not so much because from the end of the 1950s existential ideas gradually started to filter through the "iron curtain" from the West to the Soviet Union, and especially its more liberalized periphery, the Baltic countries. It was first and foremost the existential limit situation of Estonia itself that awakened the alert part of its population to responsibilities. To survive the long Soviet occupation and to retain its premises as a nation, capable of re-establishing its identity in the form of an independent state, protests abroad — above all from the Estonians who had fled the country and settled abroad —, were not enough. Estonia as a country in the primary physical-geographical sense needed to have its own intellectual resistance vanguard. Kross and his fictional characters Ullo Paerand and Jaak Sirkel, in *Paigallend*, incarnate this historical responsibility.

On the basis of socio-ideological responses emerging from the texts of three contemporary Estonian writers (Jaan Kross, Linda Kivi and Jaan Kaplinski), Thomas Salumets has qualified Jaan Kross as one of the "escape artists" — looking for inner artistic liberties and imaginary spaces before the end-of-the-millennium social and moral chaos. The opposite group would be "freedom's children" — those adapting themselves to the new world of globalization, with its demand of openness, as well as overcoming all national-ethnic limitations and prejudices (Salumets 1998).

Jaan Kross' response, however, as I have tried to show along the lines above, could never be merely artistic or cultural. His earlier texts (such as *The Czar's Madman*, analyzed by Salumets) acquire their full meaning only in the context of the totality of Kross' novel saga. *Paigallend*, as far as I see it, is the ultimate stage in Kross' search for Estonia's identity both as an ethnic nation and a state (political unit). One could hardly contain a better

symbol in the title word of the novel. *Paigallend* — "hovering in the air", "a suspended flight" — means, on the one hand, Estonia's openness to the world and to higher spiritual-intellectual-moral values, rising above itself. On the other hand, it seems to embody a nation's (as an individual's) inevitable relatedness to the earth — with all the corresponding limitations imposed on the human being (and a nation) —, but even more so, a nation's responsibility for that particular patch of the earth which has given birth to a language, a culture, a cry of liberty. A flight, then, need not always be a flight (fleeing), and can often be much more than a flight (flying away).

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Jaan Kross: Negotiating Nation

THOMAS SALUMETS

For Merike

Jaan Kross — influential poet, prolific essayist, and accomplished translator — is known in world literature as Estonia's grand old man of the historical novel. Born eighty years ago on February 19th in Tallinn, he studied law and international relations at the University of Tartu. In 1944 he was arrested by the occupying Germans and, two years after Estonia's subsequent Soviet occupation, in 1946, deported into Russian labor camps. After his return to Tallinn, in 1954, Kross worked as a translator and writer. In the 50s and 60s he wrote poetry and published the collections *Söerikastaja* (1958), *Kivist viiulid* (1964), *Lauljad laevavööridel* (1966), and *Vihm teeb toredaid asju* (1969).

None of his many publications are, however, as remarkable as his powerful historical prose. Among his to date fifteen novels are the trilogy *Kolme katku vahel* (1970–77), *Professor Martensi ära-sõit* (1984, *Professor Martens' Departure* 1994), *Tabamatus* (1993) and *Paigallend* (1998) — to name but a few. His internationally most successful novel is *Keisri hull* (1978, *The Czar's Madman* 1993). It has been translated into more than a dozen languages.

With his prose fiction, Kross maps Estonia's past from the 16th to the 20th century. He tells stories of colonial intrusion and oppression as well as stories of compliance and resistance. Throughout, the stories turn on one single pivot: his native Estonia. It is a deep and complex sense of dignity and worth as

well as a profound concern for his people and their home that informs Jaan Kross' work. More than that, it could be argued that Kross' prose fiction amounts to a monumental saga, to quote from Jüri Talvet's splendid essay in this issue of *Interlitteraria*, "about Estonia becoming a 'nation' both in the ethnic and political sense, but above all anticipating Estonia's restoration as a national state." Similarly, for Rein Veidemann — as Kross' texts evoke the fate of Estonians, their "soul and spirit," — Kross' work is forming part of the myth of the Estonian nation:

> Krossi ajaloolised kultuuriheerosed on eestlaste saatuse sümbolmärgid. Nõnda on Kross läbi oma ajaloolise proosa kirjutanud ka eestluse teksti. On selge, miks see meile nii omane on. Sellepärast, et see on meie hing ja vaim. Just niisugune, ajale vahele ja alla jäänud, aga ometi taas jalgele tõusnud ja lootusrikkalt tulevikku loonud. Krossi looming on osa eesti müüdist, sellest tüvitekstist, mille ümber keerdub rahvuslik ideoloogia ja eneseteadvus. (Veidemann 2000).

As symbolic acts of resistance, his novels and short stories helped shape the idea of an independent Estonian nation and kept it alive through some of the darkest times in Estonia's history. "So wurden seine Texte in düsteren Zeiten als Lebenszeichen nationaler Identität gelesen" (Raubold 1992: 28). Jean-Luc Moreau reads Kross' novels as chapters in the history of the Estonian nation: "Alle Kross-Romane sind [---] Kapitel der estnischen Nationalgeschichte" (Moreau 1990: 167).

Or, as Ea Jansen put it in 1995 stressing the significance of Kross' prose before Estonia regained its independence as a kind of "romantic" national identity forming power:

> Krossi ajaloolise belletristika sõnum on eelkõige rahvusromantiline, ja just selline sõnum oli oluline ajal, kui tema teosed ilmusid. See oli eestlaste rahvusidentiteeti kinnitav ja säilitav sõnum. (Jansen 1995: 7).

As much as this makes him an icon of Estonia's past, this is not to say, that Kross' work lacks relevance today. On the contrary, in

complex, albeit not uncontroversial ways, it continues to speak to its readers because it also embraces a timely view of 'nation'. His historical narratives are not celebratory of 'nation' in any simplistic way; instead, they evoke what Julia Kristeva in her *Nations without Nationalism* calls "a critique of the national tradition without selling off its assets" (Kristeva 1993: 46).

As a result, a double-edged narrative emerges: Kross participates in the construction of a unified national identity that owes its existence to and is in permanent conflict with a multitude of competing identities. This tension balance between the desire for being *one* nation and the *many* people who live in it, forcefully resonates throughout his work.

Whatever factual disputes there might be between historians and Jaan Kross, in his fiction, Estonia's history presents itself in a fundamental way as more real than the dominant discourse of professional historians, East and West, permitted for a long time. It is only recently, that Estonian historiography, both in Estonia and abroad, has caught up with Kross and has begun to move in the same direction. Now historians are increasingly turning away from a frame based on 'nation' as a kind of 'solid collective self'— or, alternatively, organized around class antagonism — to a frame based on more differentiated, inclusive and dynamic networks of human interdependencies.

Such a change constitutes a significant shift towards what Homi Bhaba calls "the affective life of the national culture;" it consists of contingent and arbitrary not fixed, natural and timeless signs and symbols (Bhaba 1993: 293).

More than that, this characteristically postmodern perspective goes hand in hand with the self-image of a growing number of people. Their experience is not shaped by 'nation' alone, but also by diaspora, relocation, displacement and migration. They claim cosmopolitan diversity, exile, and living between cultures as a preferred condition. Anyone who answers imperial control with the counter-imperial idea of 'nation', is therefore obviously in conflict with their kind of "being at home in the world." To speak of their identities then is to go beyond the concept of 'nation', no matter how inclusive and dynamic it might be.

In Jaan Kross' case, this constitutes a challenge not only to his historical narratives — understood as a kind of *Bildungsroman* with Estonia as its protagonist — but also a challenge to his own position as it emerges from some of his essays and interviews.

Of course, as Kross himself pointed out, it is often "devilishly difficult to decide who someone really is" (Kross 1992: 27), especially given the pre-independence realities in Estonia. But it is not difficult to see how deeply committed to Estonia Jaan Kross is. When, for example, faced with the possibility of leaving Estonia, Kross always, in the end, chose to stay. That is not to say he wasn't tempted to leave. On the contrary, the thought was part of him for almost half a century. And on two occasions he came very close to, as it were, getting away from it all: first in 1944 when the Germans were retreating from Estonia and the Russian occupying forces advancing under the pretext of bringing freedom from foreign rule; and then in 1978 during the Estonian writers congress. But, as he said in an interview shortly after Estonia had regained its independence, he could not flee, as he put it (and would later repeat, almost verbatim, in *Paigallend*), when a million had to stay (ib.). Consequently, he turned his back to the Baltic Sea; perhaps with the same sense of distress and suffocation some of his fictional characters express who felt compelled to make the same choice (e.g. *Paigallend* 114). Tellingly, Ullo, the protagonist of *Paigallend*, counts Rainer Maria Rilke's famous poem *Panther* among his favourite texts. It captures both the imagined power and determination as well as the devastating sense of loss and isolation that accompanies this kind of inward turn. The narrator quotes the first stanza:

> Sein Blick ist vom Vorübergehn der Stäbe
> So müd geworden, dass er nichts mehr hält.
> Ihm ist, als ob es tausend Stäbe gäbe
> Und hinter tausend Stäben keine Welt.
> (Ib. 115).

In 1991, following the news of the overthrow attempt in Moscow and the looming threat of a return to Stalinism, Kross, for the first time, was ready to finally give in and leave Estonia. He had already bought tickets for the ferry ride across from Tallinn to Hel-

sinki when the news broke that the coup attempt had failed. Again, Jaan Kross stayed (Raubold 1992: 31).

Instead of leaving, Kross embarks on another kind of journey, a journey in time rather than in space. This, he argues, is for him the more responsible choice. For, as he sees it, he is uniquely positioned to make a significant contribution as a writer. Seizing this opportunity means, in his view, staying in Estonia and writing about its past; leaving Estonia would therefore, in his opinion, amount to the less responsible thing to do and could not be taken as seriously:

> Kui ma aga kirjutan Eesti minevikust, pole keegi minuga võrreldes paremas lähteasendis. Välja arvatud mõned ajaloolased, ja needki omas spetsialiteedis ning teatud neile vastavas laadis. Nii et meie omist asjust kirjutades on mul veendumus, et ma ei tee midagi, milleks on ju olemas nii ohtrasti hoopis kutsutumaid kui mina. Selles mõttes on minevikku-siirdumine minu meelest vastutustundlikum ja tõsiseltvõetavam asi kui võõrsileminek, s.t. teisalesiirdumine ruumis. (First published in *Sirp ja Vasar*, 15. II. 1980; here Kross 1986: 105).

In addition to Kross' sense of competence, loyalty and intellectual responsibility, comes a strong emotional attachment to things Estonian. Together they define, for Kross, the primary task of the Estonian writer: "[---] Eesti asjad on mulle nii ruumilises kui emotsionaalses mõttes kõige lähedasemad. Nimelt nendest kirjutamine on minu meelest eesti kirjaniku esimene ülesanne" (Kross 1986: 104). Other Estonian authors, such as Karl Ristikivi (1912–1977) who escaped to Finland in 1943 and settled in Sweden, are to some extent measured by Kross in terms of their success in fulfilling this task of "narrating the Estonian nation," to borrow Homi Bhabha's turn of phrase. Regarding Ristikivi's historical novel *Põlev Lipp* (1961), which deals with the medieval Europe of the Hohenstaufen and *not* Estonia, Kross is critical of, as he puts it, the inability of Ristikivi to find his native land: "Kahju, et üks eesti kirjanduse kunagisi lootusi kulutab end unenäolisel retkel Sitsiilia kuningriiki ega suuda ilmsi leida kodumaad" (Kross 1968: 160). In an inter-

view which was published in January 2000, Kross reiterates his
view that, during the Soviet occupation, Estonia's chances for
independence were minimal; yet the preservation of Estonia as an
ethnic entity was of paramount importance: "Eesti vabanemise või-
malusi hindasin stagnaajal üsna minimaalseiks. Rahva säilimis- ja
säilitamiskohustust aga kõige tähtsamaks asjaks" (Kross 2000: 35).

Kross' own historical narratives mirror this unequivocal com-
mitment to Estonia by creating a discourse that, on balance, invites
a view of exile as *loss* and staying as *gain*. What, for example, is
beyond the geographical space of Estonia, Kaarel — a character in
Kross' *Väljakaevamised* (1990) whose wife has been deported and
he by sheer chance left behind — refers to simply as "ära", "gone"
(Kross 1990: 18).

Another telling example of this sort is Kross' short story "The
Wound" — in Estonian "Marrastus" (which translates as both
erosion and graze). It was written in 1979 and published in Estonia
as part of a collection of short stories (entitled *Silmade avamise
päev*) not until 1988 — a few years before Estonia was to regain
its independence. The English translation appeared in 1995 (*The
Conspiracy & Other Stories*). The story unfolds in 1979. The nar-
rator, Peeter, recollects his relationship with Flora Ventsel and her
unexpected death in 1939. Flora and her family prepared to leave
Tallinn for Stettin in order to settle in Posen. They were part of
Hitler's repatriation call of the Baltic Germans. During a farewell
get-together, Flora grazes her knee. The incompatibility of immu-
nization shots causes convulsions; Flora dies before she can leave
Estonia.

Interestingly, in this story too, leaving Estonia, or fleeing, is,
despite some uncertainty, not depicted as an opportunity. Instead,
it is seen as punishment (Kross 1995: 19).

In this regard, the perhaps most revealing description comes
from Flora herself. When she turns her eyes away from the four
German ships docked in the port of Tallinn, she says to Peeter:

> I don't want to look at those ships! Don't you under-
> stand! It's terrible [---] Here, they're all bathed in
> light. But once they put to sea — I know what they
> do, they extinguish all lights. Out at sea they are as

> blind and dark as coffins! You understand — the ship, the sea, Germany — all of this from tomorrow evening on — blind and dark — like a coffin! (Ib. 29–30).

Ilmar, in the 1979 short story *Toru* (*Lead Piping*) from the same collection as *Marrastus* goes ahead with his plan to escape from Tallinn to Helsinki by hiding in an oil tanker wagon. Not unlike Jüri Vilms, the protagonist of the novel *Tabamatus* (1993), Ilmar fails. Through the narrator Peeter Mirk, we learn what happened:

> Ilmar had been found in the tanker wagon in Helsinki. Dead. Overcome by crude oil fumes. He was not discovered until he had, in effect, died a second time: when his corpse was drowned as they filled the tank with oil. (Ib.86).

Maret together with Ullo, the protagonist of *Paigallend*, are on their bikes en route from Tallinn to the west coast of Estonia. Like so many Estonians really did, they are fleeing the country from the invading Russians. As dawn breaks, it is still raining, they stop, and wonder if they are doing the right thing when, in Ullo's word, "thousands are fleeing but a million have to stay" (Kross 1998: 326). They turn their bikes around and ride back to Tallinn.

> Nad seisid kõrvuti, kingad teeporis, ja vaatasid teineteisele silma. Ullo ütles: "Kuule — ma ei tea, kas —" Maret sosistas: "Mina ka ei tea —" "Mida?" Küsis Ullo. Maret ütles: "Seda, kas — meie põgenemine on õige —" Ullo küsis: "Sa mõtled — kui tuhanded küll lähevad, aga miljon peab jääma —?" Maret sosistas: "Ja kui kõik, kes siin sünnivad, peavad jääma –" Ullo haaras Mareti käe. Ta ütles (ma kujutlen, nii sisendavalt nagu ta oma elus oli vaevalt midagi öelnud): "Jääme ka!" (Ib.).

In the same novel (*Paigallend*), the protagonist is offered an exceptional opportunity to study in Italy. The catch, Ullo Paerand, whose father left Estonia to skirt his responsibilities, would have to convert to Catholicism (ib. 200). Ullo declines the offer because

he feels accepting it would be accepting eternal dependence (ib. 202).

In *The Czar's Madman,* after two years of secret preparations, on September 18th, 1829, the title hero Timotheus von Bock, his wife Eeva, and their son Jüri are ready to board the cargo ship "Ameland" which is waiting to take them across the Baltic Sea. In the last moment, and for no apparent reason, Timo aborts the escape. Trying to explain his decision to his devastated wife, he says:

> When you realize that you're standing in a hail of grapeshot — of course you want to escape from it ... And if your wife and child ... are close by ... in mortal danger ... and want to help you get away ... and you yourself ought to help them get away from where they are [...] you just push the most categorical imperative out of your mind — which is that *one must never flee from a battle!* (Kross 1993: 278).

Escape is impossible for Timo because he is convinced that: "who wants something more important, he stays at home" (ib.). Or, as Kross' count Peter Pahlen early on in the novel puts it: "And, generally speaking, only those who seek revenge go abroad. Who seeks something more important stays at home" (ib. 40).

As these examples are intended to show, the discursive practice suggests a clearly marked opposition between *inside* and *outside,* between *exile* and *Estonia.* Staying, unsettling and limiting as it may be, provides hope, opens up to responsibility, insight, courage, compassion, independence, loyalty, competence, commitment, satisfaction, integrity. Leaving puts all of that at risk.

As much as Kross insists on such exclusionary practices, he does not fall into the trap of simply replicating that against which his work is directed in the first place. His is not a xenophobic and coercive view of 'nation'. Within the margins of the nation-space, as his stories evoke it, those seemingly rigid borders are much more permeable. His novel *The Czar's Madman* powerfully makes this point.

The historical Timotheus von Bock (1797–1836) is a German-Estonian nobleman who in 1817 marries an Estonian peasant

woman — in those days, a scandal, in more ways than one. As for example Raun points out in his *Estonia and the Estonians,* there is consensus among historians that in the first half of the nineteenth century the

> Baltic German nobility, clergy, and merchants continued to form the elites in both rural and urban areas. The Estonian population — whether peasants or members of the lower orders in the cities — found little opportunity for upward social mobility, and those who did rise on the social ladder could only do so by adopting the language, customs, and values of the German elites. (Raun 1987: 37).

Of course, the division between the Baltic German nobility and the Estonian population was not only a social division, as Kross himself points out, it was also an ethnic division and the division between colonizer and colonized (Kross 1986: 66). The result, such a wide rift that it couldn't even be bridged. One had to, in the phrase of a Baltic-German historian, "jump the national gap" (Lieven 1994: 135). This view also informs the Estonian historian Juhan Kahk's 1978 book entitled *Murrangulised neljakümnendad.* Here, according to Raun, "the author finds a yawning social gap between lord and peasant that is clearly unbridgable since the nobility regarded the Estonian peasantry as coarse, inherently lazy, and worthy of disdain" (Raun 1999: 346). In the historiography of the 1930s and the 1970s the image of the Baltic German elites is reduced to that of a reactionary force. Typically, relations between Germans and Estonians are cast in oppositional terms, both by Estonian and German historians.

In his novel *The Czar's Madman*, Kross confirms this split but disagrees with the historians' description of it; it is, judging by his novel, both lacking and misleading. To speak of upward mobility in terms of *adopting* the ways of the establishment or *jumping across* to the established fails to account for the emotional impact involved, the anger, fear, pride, attractions, aversions, tensions, desires and anxieties.

It is also important to recognize that the discourse of the historians perpetuated the myth of the supposedly entirely powerless

Estonian peasant as well as the stereotype of the "Baltic baron as the merciless exploiter of the Estonian [---] peasantry" (ib. 349).

From the perspective of *The Czar's Madman,* traditional historiography misses the interdependence of colonizer and colonized. For both, Baltic Germans and the Estonian population, were affected by the established-outsider relations they together formed. They were painfully unequal, but still, neither could escape the influence of the other. The result was a continuously changing and hybrid rather than fixed and monolithic identity — on both sides. This, of course, is difficult, if not outright uncomfortable to see and describe; it is impossible to grasp as long as identities are being treated as if they were objects that can be discovered, or commodities that can be exchanged, but, as such, do not change themselves.

Imagining identities in this essentialist, static way has a long and influential tradition, especially in Western thought. It also informed the discourse of professional Baltic German and Estonian historians. For example, Reinhard Wittram (1902–1973), among the most influential Baltic German historians, creates in his *Geschichte der Ostseelande* of 1944–1945, as Hackmann put it, an "image of history where the Baltic nations find their place [---] as a basic peasant substratum under German rule" (Hackmann 1999: 331). Generally, in the period from the 1930s to the 1970s, history was variously instrumentalized by both either to "strengthen national consciousness" or put in the service of class struggle. What is more, it made "enemies of German and Estonian historians" (ib. 326). It was not until the decade of the 1990s that saw a decisive "revision of Baltic *Ostforschung*" (Hackmann) and Estonian historiography (Raun 1999: 349).

As we shall see, Kross anticipated this paradigmatic shift. Power, according to Kross's *The Czar's Madman*, for example is not simply a matter of cause and effect; social change does not occur in one direction only. As the historians often present it, one *either* remained an Estonian peasant *or* left one's past identity behind in exchange for becoming part of the ruling elite. This does not correspond to the facts, Kross suggests. Instead, it is precisely the acknowledgement of both resistance and appropriation which allows for a much richer, more adequate understanding of the

complex relationship between the Germans and Estonians. The life of Jakob Mättik — the narrator in *The Czar's Madman* — as Kross has it unfold — expresses both this fluidity and in-between of identity as well as the unsettling challenges it poses in a most memorable way. Here are some examples:

Von Bock's wife Eeva and her brother Jakob are sent away for five years to learn the language, customs, and values of the German elites. Afterwards, Jakob does not feel at ease anywhere: "But I remain a very odd bird in the eyes of the villagers ... the fact that I lived in the old manor at Voisiku [Võisiku in the Estonian original], and was the brother in law of that reputed madman that fact made me into such an odd visitor from another world" (Kross 1993: 200). Jakob turns into "that half-a-squire" and half Estonian peasant wearing German trousers and speaking French (ib. 74). Put this way, it becomes apparent that his identity is located on neither side. It is instead in-between, a "perpetual seesaw of superiority and inferiority" (ib. 75). This is not to say that he has *lost* his identity. This can only be argued as long as one perceives identity as an object. Identity can also be understood as a particular continuity of change. In this sense, Jakob embodies not only a more real understanding of individual identities but also the fate of all cultures. They are, as Edward Said put it in *Culture and Imperialism*, "involved in one another; none of them single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogenous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic" (Said 1994: xxv). Not surprisingly, however, Jakob does not welcome this fluid identity. He does not have the needed tolerance for ambiguity. Instead, he mourns lost stability and certainty, the loss of his "home" (Kross 1993: 200), feels "miserable and disconnected" (ib. 201). Jakob longs for a world where good and evil, self and other are more clearly distinguishable. And yet, Jakob's own story shows that life is much messier; human beings are connected to one another, whether they want it or not. Neat divisions can be imagined but they are not real.

It is this kind of rich relational, rather than static, sterile and orderly perspective that Kross' *The Czar's Madman* evokes on many occasions. The novel moves beyond several boundaries, joining what otherwise often remains separate — as if to create the impression that everything is connected but we have lost the

ability to see that. For example, the reader is left uncertain where historical fact ends and fiction begins. This includes the "Editor's Preface", the "Afterword", and the "more than a dozen texts that are imbedded within" the main text (Valgemäe 1993: 391) as well as the many fictionalized historical characters appearing in *The Czar's Madman*. Furthermore, the narrative structure of the novel is such that it is easy to confuse past with present events. As the narrator puts it:

> I notice it seems to be my pattern to alternate passages dealing with the present and the past. From now on, I'll try to maintain this alternation rather than diverge from it, even though this might be confusing to an outsider ... especially since it seems to me now that I myself have some difficulty distinguishing the present from the past in and around me. (Kross 1993: 67)

In addition, languages and literatures — such as Estonian, French, German, Russian — intersect; the boundaries between sanity and insanity, truth and opinion are blurred. Is Timo really mad? Was his death murder, an accident, or suicide? The novel does not provide a definite answer, only changing perspectives, doubt about absolutes, clear-cut borders. *The Czar's Madman* turns into the "territory", as Kundera describes the strong novel, "where no one possesses the truth" (Kundera 1993: 159); it remains "uncertain", as Kross confirms in the "Afterword" (Kross 1993: 350). We witness Timo's deep commitment to his German past; after all, the medieval times he longs for, are, for Livonia, as the historian Wittram put it, "the most German time of its history" (Mühle 1999: 352). But we also see Timo move closer to the way of life of the native Estonian population. He, for example, speaks Estonian, albeit with an "awkwardness" the narrator, perpetuating exclusionary practices of his subjugators, finds difficult to accept (Kross 1993: 58). As much as Kross' Germans differ from the Estonians, as uneven and painful the relationship is, it is not one-sided. Germans and Estonians are clearly distinguished but are not portrayed as if separated by an invisible wall. Instead, they are

shown to co-determine one another. The boots Timo's Estonian parents in law made for him are symbolic of this interdependence.

> They were my favorite boots, in the wintertime. There, there are times when a man can feel so low — I know I did — that his heart sinks all the way down into his boots ... But when I wore those boots, my heart warmed up so much in them that it rose back into my chest. (Ib. 264–265).

We read about the narrator's efforts to stay clear of the local informers and any relationship "afflicted by suspicion" (ib. 65). Without, at first, realizing it, he nevertheless ends up compromising his efforts. He desires a fixed, "pure" identity with clearly defined boundaries. Yet, as the narrative unfolds, he too learns that he is a trespasser. That, in turn, implicates him in another tension balance: As his own identity continues to embrace more seemingly foreign territories, the borders of his nation-space are ever more clearly drawn.

As I indicated at the beginning of this paper, where Kross' narratives insist on rigid boundaries determined by affiliation to tribe and place, they are in conflict with those whose identities are not limited to one community, one place. What is more, it is a widely accepted theoretical stance that we are interdependent and that everything, including the concept of 'nation,' is a construct. True as that may be, it also needs to be recognized more fully that our capacity to arrange our lives accordingly is limited. We have, in Eagleton's words, as yet no useful "political theory, or theory of the subject, which is capable [---] of grasping social transformation as at once diffusion and affirmation" (Bhabha 1994: 64). For that reason alone, 'nation' may indeed remain a historical necessity for a long time to come (Kristeva 1993: 32); but the challenge of the displaced will remain, and perhaps even grow stronger. Kross has met it *within* his nation. Beyond the borders of nation, it still is an open question. It will have to be addressed more fully by both: those who claim the *world* and those who claim the *nation* as their home.

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24

The Role of National Theatre at the Turn of the Millennium. Estonian Theatre Interpreting Estonian Literature in the 1990s

PIRET KRUUSPERE

One of the functioning mechanisms of theatre in general has been defined as the "doubling up" of the culture in which that theatre has existed; or in other words: theatrical art can be characterized as an act of self-presentation and self-reflection on the part of the culture in question (Fischer-Lichte 1992: 9, 10). Analyzing the change which has taken place in the role and functions of the Estonian national theatre in the cultural discourse of the 1990s, primarily from the aspect of theatrical interpretations (re-readings — M. Esslin; concretizations — P. Pavis) of Estonian national classics, drawing simultaneously parallels between productions based on original contemporary Estonian drama, and comparing the status of theatre during the above-mentioned period to that of the previous decades, we must admit that in the 1990s Estonian theatre has definitely lost its former role as a tribune and a place of consolidation (that was especially typical of it in the 1980s). In addition to the break in the political-ideological system — in post-soviet society the former function of arts as an intellectual opposition has generally diminished —, a change in the paradigm of culture itself has taken place. Namely it has been stated about postmodernism that: "It is now descriptive of 'the state of our culture', it is not reducible to being merely an idea, an abstraction, a mood or a fashion." (Jenks 1993: 145). While postmodern theatre and *mise en scène* abandon their textual and dramaturgical inheritance (Pavis 1995: 65) and, likewise, postmodernism aban-

dons faith in the great narratives, one might ask if there is still a need for national theatre as an institution, aimed at preserving the so-called positive resp. **national identity.** Bearing in mind the change that has taken place in the "institutional process" (i.e. the decline of the importance of the theatre as an institution of the so-called national "congregation"), we could recognize the change of the stage-image of the "congregation" itself (e.g. comparing the scenic image of a peasant community, holding together, in the production based on the first volume of Anton Hansen Tammsaare's (1878–1940) epochal novel *Truth and Justice*, staged in 1986 by Ago-Endrik Kerge, to the society, eagerly searching for scandal, presented in the interpretation of Tammsaare by Mati Unt in 1995, under the title of *Heavenly and Earthly Love* and involving all the five volumes of *Truth and Justice*).

Looking for the answer to the question of what kind of literary texts have been selected, mediated and, thus, actualized by the Estonian theatre in the 1990s, we could state that at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s theatres tried to find a solution to the sudden diminishing of the audience by the help of changing repertory politics and laying the main emphasis on Western comedies. Today the situation has stabilised and various genres of drama have found their audience, though the predominance of Anglo-American drama can still be observed. In the second half of the 1990s a wave of plays with romantic subject matter and characters appeared (e.g. Don Quixote, three musketeers). On the other hand, interest in absurdist or surrealistic plays has increased. Estonian original drama seems to be on the increase in repertoire since the season 1991/1992. As a matter of fact the status of Estonian drama has also undergone a change in the 1990s when speaking broadly about dramatic texts published, but not staged, as well as plays staged, but not published. A gap between these two metaphorical "branches" is quite obvious, while boundaries of dramaturgy itself have become vague and the general impression of dramatic texts looks rather heterogeneous (e.g. the appearance of Estonian TV-series, or, like in the 1960s and 1970s, the remarkable activity of stage directors and actors in creating dramatic texts which can be characterized more as scenic scripts and have often been based on actors' improvisation). Among the leading stage directors of the

1990s, Priit Pedajas (born in 1954) has declared his special attachment to Estonian literary texts. Pedajas could well be called the "discoverer" of the plays by a physicist and philosopher, by now generally recognized as one of the best Estonian playwright of the 1990s, Madis Kõiv, having achieved also the most congenial scenic interpretations of these texts. National as well as world classics (incl. Anton Hansen Tammsaare, Oskar Luts, Peet Vallak, Eduard Vilde, August Kitzberg on the one hand and Shakespeare, Chekhov, Ibsen etc. on the other) have returned to the stage since the season 1992/1993. Two important classics for the Estonian theatre of the 1990s have definitely been A. H. Tammsaare and Oskar Luts (1887–1953). The works of both of them have offered possibilities for various operations within mythical paradigms. Stage directors Mati Unt (born in 1944) as well as Ingomar Vihmar (born in 1970), in their turn, have found remarkably bright and witty dramatic (resp. scenic, including rhythmic) counterparts for the impressionistic prose texts by Friedebert Tuglas (1886–1971).

In the 1990s motifs of human dissonances, estrangement and loneliness become more explicit in original Estonian plays (e.g. *A Mad Professor, His Biography* by Jaan Kruusvall, staged in 1996 by Mikk Mikiver) as well as in theatrical interpretations of classics (e.g. the production of Eduard Vilde's (1865–1933) play *The Inscrutable Mystery*, staged in 1992 by Priit Pedajas). In the depiction of problems related to **national identity and memory**, the unidimensional national pathos, typical of the 1980s, has been replaced by a more ambiguous (incl. self-ironic, tragicomic, retrospective, dream-like) point of view; more stress has been laid on the pain of remembering as well as to the relativity of human and/or collective national memory (e.g. the motif of the "forgotten pledge" in *Heavenly and Earthly Love*); parallels between national memory and problems of general human existence have been drawn more frequently (the most representative examples could be found in Madis Kõiv's dramaturgy). At the same time interest in cultural self-reflection has increased in the 1990s, finding its expression, among the rest, in the (self-)parody of our national (including literary and theatrical) "heritage" (e.g. exposing polemical relations between literary characters and their author, while the latter has found a con-

crete scenic embodiment in the production of Mati Unt, based on the works by Oskar Luts, entitled *Tonight at Six We Play Ducks and Drakes/Tonight at Six We Play a Bit of Luts*, and in the interpretation of August Kitzberg's (1855–1927) play *The Werewolf* by Peeter Jalakas, both staged in 1998); one could also refer to the image of a book as a symbol of national identity in Rein Saluri's dramatic texts (e.g. his play *Ghosts Haunting a House/Home Visitors*, published in 1993). The so-called theatre fantasy *The One and Eternal Life*, written and staged by a young stage director Jaanus Rohumaa in 1996, depicting the very beginning of the 20th century as well as the innovative period of Estonian theatre at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, has served not only as an illustrated piece on the history of the national theatre, but also as an expression of contemporary theatre's search for self-identity.

One can also recognize the re-birth of social theatre in the 1990s, for instance, plays and productions dealing with the captivating and yet destructive influence of money on human relations (e.g. the satirical modification of August Kitzberg's play *The Incendiary*, written by Mati Unt and staged by Priit Pedajas in 1993, under the title of *The Angel of Fire*, where motifs of money and fire have been amplified; or *Highway Crossing*, a play by actor Jaan Tätte, presenting a conflict of love and money and staged in 1998–1999 in three Estonian theatres). A remarkable social nerve and an uncompromising spirit have been characteristic of the works of the stage director Merle Karusoo (born in 1944), a representative of sociological and documentary drama and theatre, a "mediator" of common Estonians' biographies on stage, aiming to evoke the nation's social memory and self-consciousness. In the late 1990s she has concentrated on the historically fatal years of the 1940s (the escape from homeland, deportations to Siberia). A social message has been explicit also in her interpretations of classical texts: the modernized version of Eduard Vilde's comedy *The Hobglobin (Pisuhänd)*, staged in 1994, entitled *Secondhand* and exposing exchanged generic roles, served as a self-ironic parody of the well-known text and at the same time a socially self-reflective drama of warning, showing the risks of the newly capitalist society. In her version of the fourth volume of Tammsaare's *Truth and Justice* under the title *The Veritable Republic of*

Estonia, staged in 1992, Karusoo critically indicated cautionary parallels between social processes in the 1930s and 1990s, being convinced that an economic crisis is and has always been tantamount to a cultural crisis. With a stress on ethical problems, Jaanus Rohumaa (born in 1969) has attracted attention with his milder social criticism and tolerance, so that his productions have even been called contemporary parables, where the motifs of the risk of losing oneself in the alluring world of money and mass media are explicit. Rohumaa could be characterized as a representative of an impressionistic "free and easy" style of the younger generation of stage directors (Elmo Nüganen, Andres Noormets, Katri Kaasik-Aaslav, Ingomar Vihmar, Ain Mäeots), whose world view tends to suggest a mild smile rather than sharp irony.

In the 1990s playwrights of especially the younger generation (Andrus Kivirähk, Ervin Õunapuu, Toomas Hussar, Mart Kivastik etc.) have deconstructed classical themes and situations as well as the myths of the historical (including the Soviet) past. Events of contemporary everyday life, often depicted in an alienated, absurd or astonished mood, have also found reflection.

From 1991 up to 1999 eleven plays by **Madis Kõiv** (born in 1929) have been staged in the Estonian theatre (some of these texts dating back even to the 1960s). The reality of Kõiv's dramaturgy has been characterized as subjective, interwoven with memoirs, dreams and images, and occasionally taking strange shapes: space undergoes rapid metamorphoses, time randomly oscillates between the present and the past (Epner 1999: 18). In the microcosm of his dramaturgy various stylistic episodes and different layers of subject matter (e.g. reality, social-political and existential spheres, layer of theatricality) have intertwined. It has been stated, that although Kõiv's scope ranges from ordinary Estonian peasant life to the subtleties of European philosophical thought (his plays *The Meeting* and *The Philosopher's Day* present, for instance, philosophical disputes of Spinoza and Leibniz as well as Kant and Fichte — P. K.), his work is essentially homogeneous, based on the ultimate meaning of things. The sensuous and extremely concrete world, full of colours, sounds and smells, constitutes at the same time the scale of human existence (ib. 19). Likewise, the time of individuals as well as that of the nation becomes in his

treatment mythological. According to Priit Pedajas, who has managed to find impressive scenic counterparts to Kõiv's ultimately free and magic treatment of time as well as space (in contemporary Estonian theatre Pedajas has generally been appreciated as a master of creating scenic atmosphere), the main motif of Kõiv's works is the picture of life in Estonia as an extremely insecure one, comparable to life in a never-ending war. One of the most characteristic examples of the above-mentioned statement is Mother's monologue in *Return to the Father*, protesting against the inevitable influence of the "fatal" years of Estonian history on every single Estonian, as well as expressing a resigned recognition of the consequent lack of an individual history. The war seems to haunt in the backgroud of several of Kõiv's plays, either in his confessional family saga-like stories *(Drought and Rain in Põlva County in the Summer of 1914* and its sequel *Private Conversations with Aunt Elli,* both written in the "võru" language, i.e. a Southern Estonian dialect, actualizing thus the identity of one almost forgotten ethnic group and reminding us of the fact that the stage can also serve as the nation's language laboratory, as Antoine Vitez has stated — Pavis 1995: 58), in *The Rogues' Night Show,* the genre of which reads "madness", or in *Scenes from the Hundred Years War,* where bleak light has been thrown upon the fragments of the fate of people in an unending war. Fairy-tale like *Castrozza,* in its turn, is based on a motif of a forgotten name as a symbol of forgotten identity, resembling, thus, the image of name and naming in the plays by Rein Saluri (Kruuspere 1999: 292–297).

Besides staging several plays by Kõiv, in the 1990s Priit Pedajas has also demonstrated his fondness for **Estonian classics.** In 1991 a myth-like story *The Punjaba Pottery of Epp Pillarpart* by Peet Vallak inspired him to create a mild comedy with songs (when compared to the previous interpretation of this text by Kaarin Raid in 1974 as a tragedy of a woman, the version by Pedajas was said to be much more characteristically Estonian). One of the earliest narrative poems by the poet Betti Alver (1906–1989) *The Tale of a White Crow* served as a basis of an original, and at the same time, funny and sad show, presented in 1995 by theatre-school students. *The Angel of Fire* was based on August

Kitzberg's play and brought together the principles of ritual as well as conversation-drama and marked the co-operation of two leading stage directors of the 1990s, Priit Pedajas and Mati Unt, the latter, on this occasion, acting in the role of a playwright (he indeed started his career as a writer; about Unt's dramaturgy see e.g. Epner 1996: 32–36).

In the 1990s scenic interpretations of the works by Anton Hansen Tammsaare and Oskar Luts have varied from dream-like sagas (e.g. *Heavenly and Earthly Love* by Unt) and bitter social criticism (*The Veritable Republic of Estonia* by Karusoo), to playful lyricism of his short stories (e.g. when staged by Katri Kaasik-Aaslav; the younger theatrical generation in general has demonstrated their attachment to classical short prose forms). Productions based on the works by Oskar Luts have taken the form, on the one hand, of an ambitious scenic "study" (or even a "monograph" or "discussion"), compiled and staged by Mati Unt in 1998, and, on the other hand, dialogues, written by Madis Kõiv and entitled *Winter* (staged by Raivo Adlas in 1996), where Luts's archetypal motifs and characters have been transferred to the tragic social background of the 1940s.

In what way has the Estonian contemporary theatre of the 1990s operated with common **national myths and archetypes,** if we do postulate the role of the theatre in the building or re-building canon of a nation through the so-called "nucleus" or "core" texts? Proceeding from the assumption that the 1970s' scenic interpretations of Estonian classics searched for an expression of national mentality, as well as from Robert von Hallberg's statement that historical moments of consolidation, when a nation is given over to patriotism and appeals to shared traditions (typical of the end of the 1980s as well as of the beginning of the 1990s — P. K.) seem especially propitious to canon formation (as quoted by Koski 1998), may we thus declare, that the last decade of the 20th century was a time of "emphasized" deconstruction of national canons and myths as well as disintegration of national identity? As mentioned above, generally attitudes towards aspects of self-determination (the ultimate need for an identity) as well as self-reflection have become more ambivalent. A series of productions of classics, staged by **Mati Unt** (in his case already from the

beginning of the 1980s), can serve as an example of sceptical "studies of the Estonian archetype" and the cultivation of a gentle self-ironical view of a small nation's complexes, both the inferiority and megalomaniac ones. In the 1990s his postmodernist play-versions, polystylistic and large-scale deconstructions of the microcosm of Tammsaare and Luts are the best examples of denarrativization, typical of postmodern theatre (Pavis 1995: 59). Principally dealing with existential questions, Unt has focused on clusters of motifs in his productions (a treatment typical also of studies by Estonian contemporary literary scholar Rein Undusk) and exposed the lyrical side of Luts, as well as the paradoxical thinking and humour of Tammsaare. Unt has been strikingly fond of all kinds of cultural references, allusions and quotations, creating thus surprising intertextual relations and combining at the same time elements of elitist and mass culture — as a typical representative of postmodern theatre (Pavis 1995: 66); so have his literary works been characterized by their "fragmentary poetics" (Krull 1996: 109-110). Well aware of the previous (theatrical as well as literary) interpretations, Unt demonstrates an emphasized estrangement from them, for instance, often using shifting viewpoints on the one hand and the image of the *museum* as well as the *theatre/stage* on the other (while canonical toponymical metaphors of Estonia or the ancient home of Estonians, presented in the works of national classics, such as "Vargamäe", "Põrgupõhja", "Tammaru" or "Paunvere", have covered the range of scenic-spatial images of a closed space, cosmic space, "clean sheet of paper" or a "wheel of time/history" in previous decades). In his interpretations of Estonian classics the auto-reflexive self-consciousness of postmodern work (e.g. the theatre's reflection of itself) (Pavis 1995: 66) has been artistically combined with national self-reflexivity. Assigning one and the same actor different roles in one production has enabled him to draw new and suprising parallels, associations and relations between the (literary) characters and to create typologies of national roles.

Although it has been stated that, like in the 1960s and 1970s, in the 1990s changes in other arts have taken place more rapidly than in the theatre, theatrical art has been unable to deny the invasive influence of the aesthetics of international pop art, mass culture

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and media. Besides using the "theatre within theatre"-technique, as well as forms of the absurd and the grotesque in his productions, the director of the first privately-owned theatre in Estonia Peeter Jalakas (born in 1961) has, for instance, turned the course of real historical events of Estonia into a computerized scheme of algorithm and framed it with the ritual of the traditional Estonian wedding in his production *Estonian Games. The Wedding* (1996).

In the context of scenic expressions of national mentality, attention will subsequently be paid to stage-embodiments of national character, forms of expression of the (national) comic spirit as well as the relationship between epic and lyric elements or stratifications in dramatic texts resp. theatre productions. **National characters**, especially those of classical texts, presented on stage, have, to some extent, acquired the status of archetypes (almost like characters of folklore), recalling, thus, the high degree of predictability of dramatic characters on the whole. With regard to the stage-embodiment of classical characters, a relationship between their national being on the one hand and functioning as a role or a sign on the other, could be traced: in the 1990s national characters have often (been) acted as roles because of the extensive use of "play within play" or "theatre within theatre"-technique on the textual level and/or as a strategy of production (e.g. the image of theatre/ stage, the situation of a rehearsal). Texts by Estonian playwrights and stage directors of the1990s, especially those written in the postmodernist style, have often been based on the principle of a game and, as a result, characters tend to be eager to change roles (incl. gender roles — typically of the 1990s).

While in the 1970s and the 1980s role-playing could function as a means of resistance (e.g. in dramatic texts by Rein Saluri — Kruuspere 1999: 316), it could also give rise to a split personality (e.g. the image of "the Estonian and his shadow", referred to by the theatre and literary scholar Mardi Valgemäe): in the final scenes of the production of *Scenes from the Hundred Years War* by Madis Kõiv (staged by Mikk Mikiver in 1998) the text of two characters, a Man and a Woman, was delivered by two female and four male actors. In Paul-Eerik Rummo's play *The Blind Alley of the Light* (published and staged in 1993) members of one Estonian family act as puppet-like role-players, while different roles of

Estonians in the course of history have found general scenic expression in the symbolic character of the Veteran. Jaanus Rohumaa has exposed historically the semantic sequence of roles resp. types of actors in the two-part *The One and Eternal Life*, as well as offered a metaphor of TV-play as a drug in his *Impro II. Nansen's Passport* (1996). Mati Unt, as indicated above, has emphasized the motifs of recurrence and return by using one and the same actor in different roles (*Heavenly and Earthly Love*). Characters in his stage-versions of Estonian classics (Tammsaare, Luts) have been defined as the antithesis of their former stereo-types (in this respect, i.e. the reviewing of national stereotypes, the name of Jaan Tooming, a representative of theatrical innovation of the 1960s and 1970s, and e.g. his production of Tammsaare's *Truth and Justice* in 1978 invite comparison).

Some types and roles, explicit in the theatre and drama of the 1990s, could be indicated here: modifications of the theme of the "prodigal Son" and "the lost Father", the latter symbolizing a crisis of personal resp. national identity and in some cases hidden behind the notion of "fatherlessness"; versions of Guest and Master, in connection with whom the question: "Who is the guest and who is the master?", essential to Estonian national history and problems of self-determination of Estonians, arises. In comparison with world literature one could also find national Hamlet-like heroes in the original drama as well as the stage productions of the 1990s (remembering that already in 1974 in his production of Kitzberg's *Werewolf* Mikk Mikiver had added the well-known "To be or not to be"-monologue to the text of one of the main characters, a peasant boy Margus), either trying to find out the truth about the past (e.g. the fate of their father or home) or, on the other hand, acting like clowns, but carrying at the same time their personal secrets and inner pressures, like rogues *(The Rogues' Night Show* by Madis Kõiv), who could indeed, to some extent, be compared to the *trickster*-Hamlet, presented in the production of Shakespeare's tragedy by (sic!) Mati Unt in 1997. As to the characters of Kõiv, they could generally be defined on the scale of (national) philo-sophers and rogues. The image of Stranger or the Other has also carried various semantic connotations in the dramatic texts as well as productions of the 1990s, referring to the Estonians' in-born

fear of everything strange or non-familiar (e.g. in the production of Kitzberg's *Werewolf* by Peeter Jalakas, in the situation of theatrical rehearsal, Kitzberg's Tiina has been presented as her Russian modification, actress Tinotshka; a double image of the Stranger appeared in *Tonight at Six We Play Ducks and Drakes/Tonight at Six We Play a Bit of Luts*; characters like Admirer and Aunt, as representatives of other nationals or Estonians living abroad, are tantamount to Strangers in Paul-Eerik Rummo's *The Blind Alley of the Light*).

Raising the question about the relationship between the role and the actor resp. the so-called role-reading, we must admit that when in Rein Saluri's dramaturgy, for instance, names create intriguing intertextual references, in the 1990s namely actors have functioned in the same way, e.g. expressing the principle of historical-cultural continuity in *The One and Eternal Life* or the conceptual relationship between different characters in *Heavenly and Earthly Love*. Actors in productions by Mati Unt often tend to act like variations of one and the same type of character; on the other hand roles of actors like Ain Lutsepp and Andrus Vaarik, for instance in the productions of Madis Kõiv's plays, already serve as examples of the actors' self-quotations, also typical of postmodern theatre (Pavis 1995: 66).

As to the question of **national comic theatre**, one could state that in the 1990s in the manner of depiction elements of the absurd and the grotesque start to prevail; more attention has been paid to, as well as scenic counterparts have been found, for the paradoxical humour of Tammsaare, the lyrical humour of Luts, as well as the so-called local mild absurd of Madis Kõiv. Presenting an intellectual approach to philosophical problems, first and foremost in two of his plays *(The Meeting* and *The Philosopher's Day)*, Kõiv has exposed common people, extremely fond of philosophizing and tending to act as philosophers, as an evocative source of humour. Kõiv's last play, entitled *Moondsundi Vassel* (staged by Priit Pedajas in 1999), a pure popular comedy or a postmodernist village-revue of the unending talks and inconclusive activities (the reconstruction of an old house) serves apropos as an ironic symbol of the never-ending process of building up the whole Republic of Estonia.

As to the **epic and lyric elements** in dramatic texts as well as stage-productions of Estonian literature, the epic (e. g. in the form of dramatizations of prose, dramas with epic elements, including the figure of a story-teller and its modifications) has often been considered to be of an essential characteristic of our national mentality. But on the other hand "*laulumäng*" (a play with songs), for instance, has also been mentioned as a typical feature of the Estonian theatre; while bearing in mind the contemporary theatre, this phenomenon has found remarkable expression in the "musical style" of the productions by Priit Pedajas, where songs resp. singing can function as an element of estrangement, creating thus distance, as well as a source of pure nostalgia.

In the Estonian theatre of the 1980s we can find the rise of the so-called confessional dramatic texts (including monologues). The genre of monodrama has been characterized as evocation and formation of "genetic" collective memory (Kayner 1998), explaining, thus, the attachment of Merle Karusoo to this genre, or, to be exact, the modifications of the genre (already since the beginning of the 1980s). Scenic biographies of Estonians, presented in the form of monologues/confessions (in the 1990s her productions *The Cranes Gone, Bad Weather* and *The Deportation Men*) are indeed sometimes equal to a series of independent monodramas. On the contrary, in 1995 in the scene of confession of the main female character Karin (in *Heavenly and Earthly Love*) the intimacy of her long monologue has been demonstratively eliminated and the whole scene turned into a farce; likewise Unt has deconstructed epic narratives elsewhere (e.g. by replacing long monologues with estranged utterances of canonical quotations).

In the Estonian drama of the 1990s we can indicate narrative textual strata in texts by Rein Saluri and Madis Kõiv for instance, realizing, that while in Saluri's plays interrupted stories function rather as a form of anecdote, the long monologues in Kõiv's plays tend to manifest the dramatic incompleteness of his works (Epner 1995: 150). Priit Pedajas, being especially fond of Kõiv's humorous monologues (as one level of his polystratal textual structure), has compared them to the process of recalling, and frequently placed them in the forefront on stage; while using in his other productions a method of "sprinkling" episodes of story-telling into

the course of external action, so that the corresponding situation of telling a story itself has easily turned into competitive action (e.g. in *The Punjaba Pottery of Epp Pillarpart*). Monologues have become a significant structural element in Pedajas' productions, creating the scenic rhythm and having gained their cumulative effect in *Moondsundi Vassel*. Story telling resp. monologue have obtained importance also in the works by Jaanus Rohumaa (e.g. the self-evident situation of story telling in the final scene of *Impro II* as a principle opposition to the meretricious TV-show at the beginning).

To draw any conclusions about Estonian literature as interpreted by the Estonian theatre of the 1990s, we should acknowledge the microcosm of Madis Kõiv on the one and the "scenic epochal stories" by Mati Unt on the other hand as the most characteristic phenomena of this decade, outlining some additional typical features, as follows:

1) as to the hypothesis of "the Estonian as a role" in the postmodernist era, we could refer to the image of the Estonian as *homo ludens*; while characteristics like "melancholy" and "hardworking", hitherto considered to be typical of Estonians as a nation, have been opposed by emphasized playfulness; 2) as to the national comedy, self-irony as a typical character of the Estonian people could easily turn (or maybe has already turned?) into a fashion or even a cliché; the romantic mood could provide the balance here; 3) Madis Kõiv has demonstrated that his plays can vary from the tragic to the humorous, introducing a personal "mild, warm-hearted" comedy that has apropos derived from the collisions between the philosophical and every-day (or trivial?) way of thinking; 4) epic elements (e.g. monologues, stories resp. storytelling), counterbalancing the principle of denarrativization, can still be characteristic of Estonian dramatic texts; 5) reasonable references to the relationship, even parallels between theatre and the discipline of literary criticism could be drawn (e.g. some kind of methodical resemblance of productions of Tammsaare by Mati Unt with studies by literary scholars like Toomas Haug, Epp Annus and Rein Undusk; the theatre's impossibility to ignore the aspect of melancholy in the works of Luts, e.g. studied by Jaan Undusk). Although we definitely cannot overestimate the mutual

influences between literary criticism and theatrical art, in the 1990s they are significant.

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"Beyond Modernity".
Millennial Mythology in the American
Culture of the Present *Fin-de-siècle*.

MADINA TLOSTANOVA

"This is the way the world ends — not with a bang, but a whimper", — T. S. Eliot wrote in *The Hollow Men,* reflecting in a peculiar way the type of eschatological consciousness typical of early modernism. Several decades later, when the 20th century nearly came to its end, the postcolonial scholar Homi Bhabha reflected on the issue of millennial "in-between-ness" in his books *The Location of Culture* (1994) and *Nation As Narration* (1990). Bhabha conceptualizes the millennial border within the metaphor of overcoming modernity, connecting the present moment of transition with the concept of "beyond-ness". For him, the main boundary in the countless number of different borders and crossings of the century's end is that of passing from modernity to postmodernity, from culture to postculture. "At the century's edge, we are less exercised by annihilation — the death of the author — or epiphany — the birth of the subject. Our existence today is marked by a tenebrous sense of survival, living on the borderlines of the present, for which there seems to be no proper name other than the current and controversial shiftiness of the prefix 'post': postmodernism, postcolonialism, postfeminism (...). If the jargon of our times (...) has any meaning at all, it does not lie in the popular use of the 'post' to indicate sequentiality (...) or polarity (...). These terms that intensely gesture to the beyond, only embody its restless and revisionary energy if they transform the present into an expanded and ex-centric site of experience and empowerment (...). The "beyond" is neither a new horizon, not a leaving behind

of the past (...). Beginnings and endings may be the sustaining myths of the middle years; but in the *fin-de-siècle*, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the "beyond" (...) where the sign and the meaning are temporarily divorced and the painful birth of new meanings takes place", — he writes (Bhabha 1994: 1, 2, 4).

One of the main and quite schematic dichotomies, around which the present models of cultural dynamics are often built, is the juxtaposition of an interaction of the global and local, centrifugal and centripetal tendencies, according to which synthetic, integrative trends in modern culture coexist with fragmentation, with a new syncretism, that comes after synthesis, with the "reverse enchantment of the world", to paraphrase Max Weber after M. Maffesoli (Maffesoli 1989: 103). In the frame of this dichotomy a multitude of various cultural theories arise — starting with neouniversal, cosmopolitan and essentially optimistic ideas of cultural diversity (one can name Edward Said's concept of "worldliness" (Said 1989: 205–225), G. Pomerants' "concerto of cultural universes" (Pomerants 1995: 445–455), various ideals of cultural intersection, marked with transgressive tendencies, as well as dialogic theories, that have become particularly fashionable in the West in the last decades, being inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin's notions of dialogue and polyphony) and ending with more pessimistic accounts of the overall "borderization" of the world, fragmentation, cultural "mosaickization", in the center of which there is a mediating individual — a monad, an immigrant, a refugee, a person lacking a fixed cultural locality or milieu, marked by the cultural disorientation and specific vertigo of existence *after* family, *after* language, after all, *after* culture; and on a more general level, with the quite vastly spread theories of "entropy" (Peter Koslowski's *Die Postmoderne Kultur* (1987) being a fitting example of that trend), stating that the principle of entropy (decadence, finite nature of all systems) — the physical metaphor of postmodernity — denies the principle of conservation together with the accompanying ideas of progress and development. In

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cultural theories developed overseas, grim variants of secular eschatology are particularly widespread today. North America in the last few years has been filled up with books bearing the attractive if somewhat risky titles such as *The Signs of the Millennium*, *The Twilight of Common Dreams*, etc., predicting more or less the end of the US not only as a great imperial power, but also as one of the global and unrealizable projects of modernity, the end of culture, the end of literature, the end of the finally exhausted modernity itself.

It is typical that the so called border studies, that have become a separate sphere of interdisciplinary critical theory in the US, have come to regard the phenomenon of the border usually in the synchronous postmodern aspect, oriented toward the spatial dimension, whereas the temporal and, moreover, the eschatological aspect of the border has been largely ignored so far. The synchronous aspect, connected with such concepts as "otherness", the birth of the subject, interconnection of cultural "backyards" and the center, is better researched, largely in the frame of the well established logo-centric tradition, without infringing upon its rights or aiming at its destruction. Here it is mostly easy to divide the site of the border into many fragments and variants of marginality — ethnic-racial, gender, homosexual, regional, etc. up to the quest for "otherness" within the limits of one's own self, that brings the problem of the border to the interior, intentional level, say, of the split identity and "schizoid discourse", that has become quite common recently. However, a number of the so called post-cultural theoreticians, who started to develop their views largely in the 1990s, and among them the already mentioned Bhabha and, to some extent, Spivak and others, describe the problem of the border in its temporal aspect, dividing the postmodern space and the postcolonial time by means of the "time lag" or "temporal break", that they borrow and further develop from Lacan and Kristeva, stating that each marginal discourse has its own parallel time, not always synchronous with national or metatime (Bhabha 1994: 191, 240, 242). It is particularly important that Bhabha here tries to withstand both the so called cultural pluralism with various egalitarian theories of diversity, but not difference, when the cultural locale is regarded within one universal time (time then

temporarily "freezes"), and extreme cultural relativism with its idea of various time zones, frozen within one universal space.

Bhabha's attempt to regard nation as narration, as a text, is paradoxically intrinsic and fundamental in the case of US culture, where the European model of the nation state is lacking, and the idea of what is or has to be American is totally constructed (the Derridean deconstruction of the *Declaration of Independence* as a text, that creates the nation in the process of the speech representation, when the epistemological uncertainty itself works for the creation of national identity, should be evoked here (Derrida 1986: 7–15).

Bhabha writes of "the ambivalent figure of the nation", connected with a problem of its "transitional history, its conceptual indeterminacy, its wavering between vocabularies" (Bhabha 1990:2). This quite naturally leads to the understanding of the nation as a text, which is largely determined by the temporal aspect of cultural development. That is why he connects the border in its temporal aspect, the "beyond-ness", to modernity not only with the utopian and life-asserting conscious choice of self-marginalization, but also with the "substantial intervention into those justifications of modernity — progress, homogeneity, cultural organicism, the deep nation, the long past, — that rationalize the authoritarian, "normalizing" tendencies within cultures" (ib. 4). In this particular sense the concept of the nation as narration determines those cultural borders which "contain the thresholds of meaning that must be crossed, erased, and translated in the process of cultural production" (ib.). For contemporary American culture this is again particularly fitting due to the extremely eroded notion of the national tradition that appears today as a certain set of non-blending or melting into the whole and often extremely separatist sub-traditions, existing in the amorphous and transitory (post) postmodern culture of diversity, marked by extreme fragmentation, uncertainty, slipping away from the linear, progressive mode of development. Under this process the very dynamics of the national tradition of self-reproduction come to change, and the sphere of concepts, reexamined as a result of the border's infringement upon the cultural center, includes such fundamental categories as the

American dream, American Adam, exceptionalism, pastoral idyll, the ideals of democracy and egalitarianism, etc.

The global aspect of the border that is connected with the change of cultural paradigms in contemporary America is expressed in the active development of the so called "multicultural" model, by means of which the American society has chosen to represent itself in the last two decades. This model can be regarded as a national variant of the pluralistic cultural paradigm, being developed worldwide today and connected with the ideology of cultural multiplicity and diversity. As is well known, throughout the 20th century and especially starting with its second half, this model gradually came to replace the 19th-century evolutionary paradigms in their various forms, as well as cyclical and functional concepts of society in general and "other" cultures in particular, which finally led to the spreading of the "organic" (rather than functional) ideas of the world, as a "collection" of different cultures of equal value, not one of which can be considered marginal, primitive, leading or better developed. The change from the Euro-centric and Americano-centric evolutionary model to the plura-listic, anti-logo-centric, in a sense, anti-Western one, is closely connected with the postmodern project and especially with the shift from the "techno-morphism" of modernity to the "anthropo-morphism" of postmodernity and the establishment of the "socio-cultural principle of decision making", to use Koslowski's terms (Koslowski 1997: 46).

Postmodern American culture is an especially clear example in this sense, because the elements of the forming multicultural para-digm are closely connected in the diachronic and synchronic aspects with the evolution of the main elements of the national tradition, as well as with a number of outer reasons, related to the global (post)cultural context. Inner heterogeneity together with constant prophesies of the imminent synthesis, national and cultural identity, that have always been determined negatively, by "the rule of contraries", the de-centered nature of American culture, that existed practically at all times, expressing itself in such forms as regionalism, different ethnic sub-traditions, as well as the general inner marginality toward Europe, or, finally, in the newer "vertical" elements, connected with a counter-patriarchal

sensibility and counter-cultural problematic, were always com-
bined in America with the powerful influence of the actively
propagated official homogeneous and holistic cultural models.
This idea of the higher than usual cultural pre-mediation in the US
was aphoristically, if somewhat too schematically, expressed by
the American literary and cultural critic William Spanos, who
wrote about the "puritan errand in the wilderness, secularized by
post-revolutionary writers, such as J. F. Cooper and R. M. Bird,
who transformed the Frontier experience of Daniel Boone and
Davy Crockett into cultural myths of Manifest Destiny". Later this
mythology "was legitimized philosophically (however uninten-
tionally) by American "Renaissance" thinkers Thoreau, Emerson,
Parker", who presented "the difference between the American
errand in the wilderness and the European experience in terms of
the difference between the creative principle of "New-World self-
reliance" and the decadent principle of old-world authority, and
was finally institutionalized by the American culture industry (...),
i.e. the naturalized cultural imagery, in the name of which America
has perennially justified its essentially imperial, racist, patriarchal
historical project" (Spanos 1995: 2–3).

The eschatological and providential emphasis, as is well
known, had always lain at the basis of the American tradition,
moreover, it can be regarded as a formative myth of the national
metanarrative, actively being destroyed today. This emphasis
creates the typically American concentration on the near future
and the search for self-identification — national, cultural, indi-
vidual — within the limits of this "impending" future. Today the
all-embracing and somewhat painful interest in the re-definition
and re-evaluation of national identity in the US can be regarded as
an element typical of "liminal" or "border" cultures, an expression
of a certain collective inferiority complex, which is neither new
nor unique for America. A hundred and two hundred years ago, as
well as today, the American pattern of living in the future and for
the future, providential in its basis, but having acquired a rather
banal form of "living on credit" — is still intact and working.
Identity is looked for also in the future and it still is determined
negatively, rather than positively. "America will be!" (assuming,
"not is") — stubbornly repeat its "sacred" texts — from the

Declaration of Independence to the declarations of Afro-American leaders of the 1960s. This positive fervor of creating their own historical destiny, marked by the constant and indispensable strive to renounce the collective and imagined past, as well as their own actual past selves, together with the specifically American virus of historical amnesia that one of the contemporary cultural and literary critics, Gregory Jay, called the "Jay Gatsby's disease" (Jay 1997: 60), has safely lived to the present. However, the present crisis of national identity in the US, coinciding with the "eschatological hysteria" or the "millennial paranoia", as it is often called in America, is by no means the first and the only one in their relatively short history. Although it is not legitimate to speak seriously of the "fin- de-siècle" at the end of the 19th century in America, nevertheless, there are certain signs marking the crisis of national consciousness that had paralleled this concept in Europe. One can name in this respect the co called "protestant despair" that expressed itself in the final secularization of the idea of providence and the loss of the religious basis of Americanism, the fast emergence of the hybrid, impossible for European consciousness, of soft Unitarianism and new scientific theories, coming from Europe and domesticated in the US, as usual, in the half-religious form. As a result, the traditional moral-spiritual ideals, conceptualized within the frame of puritan allegory, were replaced with the abstract and blurred belief in progress and collective prosperity. Traditional American ideology, closely connected with the protestant world vision, had managed to find points of contiguity with Darwinism and especially Spencer's philosophy, that came to the US later than to Europe, leading to the creation of the national variant of the evolutionary paradigm, specifically in the form of pragmatism, originating at that time, where analysis was often replaced with prophesy. The philosopher and cultural critic George Santayana described this tendency of American consciousness as an inclination to present all philosophic ideals in the form of predictions and premonitions, religiously and intuitively tinged, as a paradoxical combination of materialism and magic, leading to a unique idealistic "volksgeist", marked by a critical attitude to cognition, subjectivism and the prevalence of empirical experience (Santayana 1934: 146). So the possibility of the reverse "enchant-

ment" of the once "disenchanted" and rationalized world has existed in the American national consciousness for a long time and has become active each time when America found itself at the cross-roads and historical turning points. The national experience of such sensibility in the US marks the process of the neo-mythologization of consciousness, as one of the key elements in the ontological and aesthetic complex of the millennial border-crossing, sometimes expressing itself in a rather paradoxical form. Thus, e.g. the problem of the year 2000, stripped of its religious dimension, operates seemingly on a purely rational level, but, in a sense, is regarded by mass consciousness in an absolutely mythological way. As is well known, American culture is much more "digital" than e.g. the European one, and for this reason neo-mythologization is performed largely in the way of "virtualization". That is why it has become natural to speak of the neo-mysticism of the internet, of the (re)deification of TV and computers, etc., i.e. of the supermodern archaic, the rudiments of which Santayana described long ago.

Authors of the popular reforming fiction of the end of the 19th century in the US — both in the form of utopia and dystopia — borrowed many of their theories from the above mentioned common ideas, trying to combine the evolutionary paradigm with the Lost Eden myth, say, pastoral America, as it was done by Edward Bellamy in the novel *Looking Backwards* (1888), the main character of which falls asleep under hypnosis and wakes up in Boston of the year 2000, where by means of gradual progress and scientific achievements an overall social harmony is reached, which has a lot to do with the familiar pastoral idyll. Or these writers created grim apocalyptic pictures of the destruction of modern civilization, anticipating contemporary "conspiracy theories", as it was done by Ignatus Donnelly in his novel *Cesar's Column* (1889), where he pictured the technological miracle of the "new" New York of 1988 and the activities of an international terrorist organization. These utopias and dystopias were mainly socio-political in their pathos and were marked by the fear of anarchists, immigrants, revolution, only sometimes touching directly upon the religious, spiritual or moral problems. The accent in the dystopias of this century's end has shifted again from the social-political

dimension to the individual one, although it is often regarded within the frame of the global cultural context of "heterotopia", to use Michel Foucault's term, and the temporal multiplicity of postmodernity (thus the "absolute" boundary between the individual and the social is erased). In this sense it has become possible to speak not only of the "borderization" or crossroads in the choice of the future way of the US as an imagined community or the nation's substitute, the possibility/impossibility of the final embodiment of their exceptionality, but first of all, of the choice of the future way of an individual, a human being, determined within the limits of his (her) individual (dis)(trans)embodiment, a human being at a threshold, the main agent of the world at the crossroads, constantly and feverishly re(de)constructing his (her) own identity, "as iteration" (Bhabha 1994: 9), as a way in the migrant world, breaking the temporal borders of the cultural present.

The gradual deconstruction of the national metanarrative in the US in the second half of the 20th century and especially the so called post-Vietnam syndrome make America, however paradoxical it may sound, an example of culture that has existed for quite a long time within the "time lag" that Bhabha describes in his books. However, in recent years it has become possible to trace the complicated and multipurpose process of the reunification of sign and meaning, the birth of a new hybrid ontology and aesthetics of "beyond-ness", which are still hard to define in stable terms, because, to use Bhabha's quite a neo-mythic in its way metaphor, it is impossible to see the back side of the "Janus-faced" border and "to touch the future on its hither side" (Bhabha 1990: 3). Both pluralistic and entropic cultural models and the principle of difference and diversity are being immediately formalized, generating new variants of mythologization, often combining hardly compatible things — a computerized discourse, traces of the typically American rationalism and common sense, neo-tribal dislocations, etc. The millennial sensibility has been often conceptualized at the end of the 19th and 20th centuries as a paranoia, phobia, fear of the "other", difference, breaking loose from his metaphorical "cage", in American mass consciousness, necessarily anti- or non-American. There has appeared even a new semi-clinical term — PMT, or Pre-Millennium Tension. In commercial, mass, popular,

mainly visual development of this problem America undoubtedly plays the leading part, having created a whole millennial industry, a certain "paraphernalia of consumerism". Here one can find real scenarios of the millennial celebrations (both positive and vicious) and such phenomena as 2000 — Y2K, the so called time bomb, hundreds of manuals written in the characteristically American genre of "how to do it" — a practical guide for survival, a whole mass of various more or less fictional books, movies, etc.

Finally, secularized only by the end of the 19th century, American consciousness today quickly becomes "enchanted" again, but it is important that it does not refer to Christian or national meta-narratives, to the very re(de)constructed and dethroned metaphor of the "end of the world", other than in the form of parody (with very few exceptions). In contemporary American culture there are numerous fictional variants of the millennial sensibility. Most often the end of the world is presented there as T. S. Eliot's "whimper", that no one even noticed, and after which the world continues in its "creaking" way, as before.

A good example to start with would be a typical mainstream novel by John Updike *Towards the End of Time* (1997) — an attempt to grasp the millennial sensibility by means of creating the image of post-America of the year 2020 — "after" the end of the world, "after" the nuclear war between the US and China, the former superpower mechanically living on "after" its existence is over, and at the same time, with a feeling that nothing has changed, that the end of the world was indeed just a "whimper". As most of the millennial fiction, Updike's novel is full of entropic images — disintegration being the main atmosphere in the book — neglected roads, half-destroyed and derelict buildings, half-finished highways leading nowhere, theme parks, haunted by rats, enormous empty supermarkets with unimaginable lines for food, the former apotheosis of happy consumerism. There is also another typical and not too original a metaphor in Updike's novel that is present almost in all US millennial fiction. It is that of a human-kind, compared to an ant-hill, waiting for someone to thrust a stick into it and everything will be over. But again, nothing happens. At the end of the novel Updike even compares humankind with the "multitude of small pale moths" that "have mistakenly hatched"

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because of the warm weather, "trapped in a narrow wedge of space-time beneath the obliterating imminencity of winter" (Updike 1997: 334) — a delayed but not a cancelled end of the world? Updike is trying to cross, deny, resemanticize various possible and established borders together with their accompanying meanings contemporary America is oriented towards — from the principle of equal opportunities to ethnic-racial multiplicity, leading finally only to another leveling. However, in his case, in contrast with such writers as, e.g., a Mexican-American author Ron Arias, who is trying in his novel *A Road to Tamazunchale* (1975) to create a certain Pan-American symbolic road, re-evaluating the border myth, uniting various times and cultural milieus, everything ends up not with the birth of the new, if tentative meaning, but with the simple and straightforward change of polarity (e.g. Mexico versus USA).

The Japanese-American author Cynthia Kadohata's novel *In the Heart of the Valley of Love* (1992) — is a rather grim dystopia of the America of the year 2052, the middle of the "dark century", which is on the verge of an ecological catastrophe and Civil War, about the world, where the principle of diversity and multiplicity, taken to its extreme, leads again to the general leveling, and where the end of modernity again appears unnoticeable. It is a story about spiritual, physical, cultural homelessness and the useless efforts of the post-Americans to save something of the human dimension in their insane world, marked with a grotesque incongruity and the unstable nature of human identities, where everything gets mixed up — pesticides and mysticism, police and religion. Survival becomes a haunting image in the novel, introducing the utopian element into it, being connected rather unconvincingly with the theme of love as the only salvation after the end of the world. A similar utopia was created earlier by a talented American southerner, the late Walker Percy, in his novels *The Second Coming* (1980) and especially *Love in the Ruins* (1971). Signs of entropy and destruction in the joyless world of diversity, as well as a constant balancing between the end and the beginning, are scattered along Kadohata's narrative as well — neglected highways, sticking up like halves of the concrete rainbow arch, derelict junctures, people who live in camps behind barbed wire due to

security reasons and are preoccupied mainly with searching for food and drinking water in the world full of mechanical computer voices. A haunting image in Kadohata's novel is a theme only delineated in Updike's narrative — that of the mythologization of the postmodern individual's consciousness. The 19-year-old main character of the novel lives mainly by premonition, intuition and insight, the abilities which have developed in the people of the 21st century as a result of new adaptive and adjusting techniques. Thus come the neo-tribal and narcissistic overtones, constantly reappearing in these books, particularly a somewhat "sadistic" violation of the physical borders of the human body and tattooing as a challenge to God. The neo-mythic imagery is continued in the destabilization of the sacred for America myth of consumption — which is expressed, among other things, in the derelict super-market that has become a church. Another important motif is that of waiting for the personal destiny, as well as the destiny of humankind to be embodied, realized, necessarily present practi-cally in all millennial fiction. The scene of the end of the world in Kadohata's book is presented as a grotesque materialization of Updike's entomological metaphor of humankind, as a bunch of moths, stupidly hatching on the winter's brink — it is a scene of the air fight of hundreds of helicopters, sprinkling Los Angeles with pesticide. But the death of billions of living creatures, after which the characters feel that the world is disintegrating, coming to an end, is followed only with a terrible silence and someone's meek hysterical laughter or crying, not too far from T. S. Eliot's "whimper".

The last book I would like to mention is by a writer, poet, actor, journalist Andrei Codrescu. It is his bestseller *Messiah* (1999) — a digital phantasmagoria of the cancelled end of the world, where mystic and religious insights are combined with the neo-mysticism of the internet, where the "terror of images" of the world of simu-lacra clashes with the real terrorism. Codrescu plays on the mythologization of the postmodern narcissistic culture, depicting the neo-tribals in his novel as the "shades" — people who forget their names, abandon their identities, practice voluntary exile from reality. Moreover, the "shades" reject the material world, they don't believe in it (lack of belief in the flesh, tattooing as a

substitute for suicide, piercing of all possible parts of the body as a substitute for sex, are obviously allusions to the popular back in the 1980s virtual "cyber–punk" novels by W. Gibson). The author is playing on the Christian metanarrative as well, making his Messiah not only a woman, but a dual entity, who is responsible for the salvation of humankind and/or the possible perishing of the world in the chaos and entropy of the Millennium. This multiple Messiah will consist of the New Orleans Creole girl Felicity and a Sarajevan orphan — refugee Andrea, who mysteriously turned up in Jerusalem. Felicity and Andrea do not resemble a Messiah in the least. A shaved-headed and tattooed "angel" does not know who she is — a Black or a Creole, a man or a woman, a catholic or an atheist, alternately imagining herself as the Virgin Mary and the Whore of Babylon. Andrea is an untidy angel-thief, who went through all possible humiliations, hunger, prostitution. She forgets her story, erases her recollections in order to survive. And in her constructed «ego-s» Codrescu expresses the metaphor, that has become almost necessary in the literature of «in-between-ness» — that of life and destiny slipping through the fingers, passing over the borders, avoiding cordons, documents, customs. In this novel, however, this idea carries clear biblical allusions as well. Felicity and Andrea are people of the new generation, the one which will survive the end of the world, because they do not believe in the material reality. They are postmodern nomadic individuals, lacking home, as well as borders of their own selves, constantly migrating and able to become invisible. It is not by chance that Codrescu actively uses the grotesque, the hyperbole, the fantastic, the mixing of the high and the profane, gradually deflating, destroying, questioning, but finally making the reader believe again in the basic myths of millennial sensibility. The material world and virtual reality, the character's identities, whose real stories are forgotten, censured by their sensitive consciousness — all that is acting in the gigantic game of appearances, of simulacra, being immediately objectified, getting the special obviousness of the exhibit or of an actor on the stage. The unstable «ego» of the border personality with its multiplying identities fits very well the metaphor of the hypertext, as well as the imaginary rather than real "heterotopia" where he or she exists.

The museum and the theater, as well as the carnivalesque disguise–dis(re)embodiment are very frequent images in the novel, more so because the topos of New Orleans where the main action takes place, as well as the internet — a fleshless space of the all-embodying amnesia, where everyone, an angel and a mortal, can become anyone, but a true dialogue is impossible and is substituted by pretence and hypocrisy — provide a very rich material for the elaboration of carnivalesque metaphors. The grotesque mixture of the high and the profane, the decentration of the Christian meta-narrative express themselves in the distorted images of the Great Minds who are supposed to decide the Destiny of the world, — from Nostradamus to Confucius, hastily embodied into anyone's flesh in the streets of New Orleans, finding in the neo-paganism of postmodernity nothing new, in the figure of the cynical angel Zack (Hezekiah), embodied in the flesh of the strip-tease club owner, in the mysterious President of the Heavens, where as a result of a revolution a democracy has been established not long ago. Waiting for the Destiny to be embodied — for life or death, salvation or damnation — is the main occupation of all characters in the novel. It is predictably connected with the metaphor of confinement as pending, an all-human lot, that is expressed in the Destiny of humankind as a whole and in the life of each of its representatives, in the vivid images of the internment camp, the monastery, the neo slavery at the School for Messiah Development of the TV preacher Mullin, in the phantasmal carnivalesque atmosphere of deadly merriment of New Orleans itself — images that confront each other in the complicated "heterotopia" of the novel, creating a strange effect of timeless, space-less, interstitial, everlasting and momentary flight. The supernatural in Codrescu's millennial fantasy is often presented in an ironic, grotesque light, and then it imperceptibly turns out to be quite real in the end, leaving behind the feeling of instability, uncertainty about the borders between the real and the virtual, the true and the false.

The metaphor of border crossing, a threshold first of all in the temporal, but in the spatial and the discursive senses as well, can be regarded as the key one in the book. It is expressed on the utmost bodily level of penetration, the crossing of physical borders, as well as on the level of various arrays into other reali-

ties, from the Old World into the New (thus comes the contrast of Jerusalem and New Jerusalem, as Codrescu calls New Orleans), from life to death and back (at the party of the end of the world, organized by the computer king Bill Gates, the dead and the living are supposed, in an almost Biblical sense, to swap their places in the internet).

Another haunting theme of American millennial fantasies, present in Codrescu's novel, is the theme of the word governing the world, being able to change it, destroy it and recreate it again, the word as power. The author draws dizzy parallels from Cabala through Christianity to the postmodern theories of the world as a text. In the center of the End of the World conspiracy there is the Will of Fortune, the latter being the goddess, who lost her higher dimension and became the idol of gamblers in the modern times. On the most realistic pop-cultural level in the novel the will of Fortune is embodied in the TV programs "Gal Gal Hamazal", "Kismet Chakkar" and hundreds of such games, that exist at every TV station of every country, hypnotizing humankind and involving it in the dangerous game with the Great Language Crystal, a part of a gigantic plot to disembody the world by the word and put it back into the eternal chaos (as in the old story of Golem). The neo-universal, cosmopolitan, ecumenical pathos of Codrescu's ironic utopia is expressed in the game that the representatives of various religious denominations play, aiming at the creation of a computer variant of a new *New Testament*, consisting of the fragments of various traditions, in the center of which invariably stands a trickster, a mediating, border entity — a fitting symbol for the time of transition, of modernity turned into the 'post'. In *Messiah* the end of the world is presented as a carefully planned show with several rehearsals, which is still doomed. Neither the Great Minds, who vote for and against the end of the world, nor the multiple Messiah or the President of Heavens, not even the "Devil ex Machina" (an analogy to Deus ex Machina) with a notebook, where a single line pops up – «and nothing happened», — are able to decide what the Destiny of humankind will be like. Instead of T. S. Eliot's "whimper" nothing happens. Or something does happen after all? The puzzled Nostradamus asks if the end of the world actually took place. Ovid and Mani answer him that only the

material world has ceased to exist, except for those elements that refused to believe in it and continue to cling to the physical reality. There is only the virtual reality left — a fantastic internet-cafe «New Jerusalem», beyond time and space, beyond the end of the world, where representatives of the new humankind leave their bodies, departing for their endless journeys in cyberspace, the only true world for them. "The world was not finished" — Codrescu says close to the end of the novel. "False Messiahs and pseudo creators perished, but the world "was continually evolving in complexity. God was not in the past, but in the future. Humanity was evolving God, therefore there could be no End. At least not until God was born" (Codrescu 1999: 348).

It is obvious that we could speak of the gradual "travesty", overturning and finally, in some cases, the complete destruction of the eschatological mythology in the fictional variants of the millennial sensibility representation in the culture of the US, where the central place is occupied by the dystopic representation of the change of one cultural paradigm into another or others (pluralist, entropic, hybrid, etc.), as well as the problem of neo-mythologization or neo-paganism. The combination and crossing of different space and time models of the border creates certain specific cross-roads novels, where naturally a multiple crossing and play on various discursive borders takes place as well. Thus, in Ana Castillo's *Sapogonia* (1990) the accent is on the imaginary topos of hybridity, and in the much talked of Thomas Pynchon's *Mason and Dyxon* (1997) the crossing of time, space, cultural borders is transferred into the sphere of play on different narrative view points, various fictional, scientific, philosophic discourses, aesthetic traditions. The recurrence of certain images, metaphors, in some cases, devices, by means of which American writers express the millennial sensibility, together with obvious onto-logical similarity, which can be at least partially explained by their keen reaction to the shifts in the conceptualization of the postmodern culture, possibly allow to speak of the formation of certain elements of the aesthetics of the border, which turns out to be rather hard to describe at this point. These elements are of the existential rather than purely aesthetic nature. The "millennial craze", translated from the religious dimension into virtual,

rational-mystic destruction of the Manifest Destiny idea and the typically American aspiration to the future, as a result of the deconstruction of all main myths, upon which the national meta-narrative was built, neo-paganism and play on various obviously false panaceas able to save humankind — from dematerialization of being to love and nature — here are only a few of the main signs of the millennial mythology in the US. The posing of the questions, the parting of the signs and previous meanings, cautious efforts at resemanticization — here is what theorists of the millennial border and writers, reacting to the global shifts in the culture of the present, "that is being turned into the "post"", are trying to do today. What will finally come of the being, thinking and creating "beyond modernity" we will probably still have a chance to see in our lifetime.

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Au carrefour d'ethnies et de civilisations: Adam Mickiewicz et Czesław Miłosz entre la Pologne et la Lituanie

TADEUSZ KOWZAN

Litwo! Ojczyzno moja!, «Lituanie! ô ma patrie!». C'est par cette invocation que commence le poème épique *Pan Tadeusz*, œuvre majeure du plus illustre poète polonais, Adam Mickiewicz. Poème écrit et publié à Paris, en 1834, ce que rappelle, en français et en polonais, une plaque sur la façade du n° 63, rue de Seine.

«Lituanie! ô ma patrie!» sous la plume d'un poète polonais du XIXᵉ siècle peut surprendre un lecteur non initié. Les singularités, en ce qui concerne la vie de Mickiewicz, n'en finissent pas là. Né près de Nowogródek, aujourd'hui en Biélorussie, il fit, dès 1815, ses études à l'Université de Wilno (aujourd'hui, en lituanien, Vilnius), la plus ancienne université polonaise, après celle de Cracovie. Emprisonné par les autorités tsaristes, en 1823, pour ses activités patriotiques, déporté en Russie l'année suivante, c'est en 1829 qu'il fut autorisé à quitter l'Empire russe pour l'Europe occidentale. Installé à Paris, en 1832, il y passa une grande partie de sa vie, jusqu'en 1855, année de sa mort. Le plus grand poète polonais n'a jamais vécu sur le territoire de la Pologne d'aujourd'hui, il n'a jamais eu un passeport polonais, l'État polonais n'existant pas au XIXᵉ siècle.

Plus étonnant encore est le cas de Czesław Miłosz. Celui qui était citoyen polonais avant et après la guerre, diplomate au service du gouvernement polonais, en France et aux États-Unis, puis exilé, déclare: «interrogé sur mon pays d'origine, je ne pouvais pas répondre «la Pologne», même si l'on s'y attendait de la part d'un écrivain de langue polonaise», et un peu plus loin: «j'ai travaillé

assidûment, avec l'obstination qui est une vertu proverbiale des Lituaniens». (Miłosz 1988: 9). Prix Nobel américain? polonais? lituanien? Cette ambiguïté a d'ailleurs donné naissance à d'immenses absurdités: une revue anglaise, *Poetry National Review*, l'a présenté comme un écrivain tchèque, et la brochure publiée par le Théâtre des Amandiers à Nanterre, à l'occasion de la création de *La noce* de St. Wyspiański, en novembre 1996, cite Czesław Miłosz en le qualifiant de «poète franco-lituanien», confusion évidente avec Oscar V. de L. Milosz.

Polonais? Lituaniens? Alain Besançon a exprimé cette ambivalence par la phrase suivante: «De grands Polonais, à commencer par le poète national Adam Mickiewicz, et par le plus célèbre poète d'aujourd'hui, Czesław Miłosz, sont des Lituaniens». *(Le Figaro* du 17 avril 1990). Ce paradoxe est difficile à comprendre sans une connaissance des réalités historiques et géographiques de cette partie de l'Europe, depuis le XIIIe siècle.

Les populations dites «baltes», parce que installées, probablement au VIe ou au VIIe siècle, le long du littoral de la partie sud-est de la mer Baltique, étaient composées de trois groupes linguistiques: vieux prussien, lituanien et letton. Les Prussiens ou Borusses furent conquis, au XIIIe siècle, par les chevaliers de l'ordre Teutonique et pratiquement exterminés. Le vieux prussien n'est aujourd'hui qu'une langue morte. Le lituanien et le letton restent les seules langues baltes vivantes. Elles sont les plus anciennes des langues indo-européennes, les plus proches du sanskrit. Les Lituaniens, comme les Lettons, en sont fiers. Ancienneté qui s'explique par l'isolement, dans lequel vivaient ces peuples pendant des siècles, isolement assuré par les marécages et les forêts impénétrables qui les séparaient du monde extérieur, notamment du monde slave.

Cependant les Lituaniens étaient un peuple guerrier. Les historiens ont recensé, pour la période 1246–1383, dix-huit incursions sur le territoire polonais, certaines troupes lituaniennes s'étaient avancées jusqu'à Cracovie (1246), Lublin (1273) et Sandomierz (1350, 1383), ayant parcouru 400 à 600 km. À la suite de ces expéditions, des dizaines de milliers de prisonniers, hommes et femmes, ont été amenés en Lituanie; ils étaient les

premiers à y introduire la langue polonaise et aussi les mœurs chrétiennes.

Au point de vue de l'organisation politique, la Lituanie constituait, jusqu'au début du XIIIe siècle, un assemblage d'une vingtaine de duchés. C'est le grand-duc Mendog (en lituanien moderne Mindaugas) qui réussit, vers 1235, à les rassembler. Baptisé en 1251, il s'était vu offrir une couronne par Innocent IV, en 1253; cependant il a répudié la foie chrétienne en 1260. La christianisation de la Lituanie n'a commencé qu'en 1386, avec le baptême du grand-duc de Lituanie, Jagellon (Iagello ou Jagello d'après les sources de l'époque, en lituanien Jogaila), devenu roi de Pologne et fondateur de la célèbre dynastie.

Revenons au XIIIe siècle. Ce n'est pas vers l'ouest et le sud (royaume de Pologne) que s'exerça l'expansion des ducs et grands-ducs lituaniens, mais vers l'est et ensuite le sud-est. Par des conquêtes armées, mais aussi par des tractations, mariages princiers, actions diplomatiques et intrigues, tout en exploitant les rivalités entre les chefs de principautés russophones, ils étendirent leur souveraineté sur de vastes territoires, jusqu'aux frontières du Grand-Duché de Moscovie à l'est (150 km de Moscou) et la mer Noire au sud. Au XVe siècle, les frontières du Grand-Duché de Lituanie dépassaient celles de la Biélorussie et de l'Ukraine actuelles. Ces territoires étaient habités par des populations utilisant des idiomes slaves, proches du vieux russe et du vieux polonais (le russe et le polonais étaient, à l'époque, moins éloignés l'un de l'autre qu'aujourd'hui). Il se produisit un phénomène rare dans l'histoire: les conquérants, loin d'imposer leur parler aux populations conquises, adoptèrent la langue de celles-ci. Processus facilité par le fait que le polonais était déjà présent en Lituanie ethnique et que le vieux russe était utilisé dans les rapports avec les principautés russophones. Ce qui a aussi joué un certain rôle, c'est l'attrait de la civilisation des peuples conquis, supérieure à celle des Lituaniens de souche.

Il se forma donc une langue devenue, à partir du XIVe siècle, la langue officielle du Grand-Duché de Lituanie, ancêtre de la langue biélorusse d'aujourd'hui (qui se situe entre le russe et le polonais),

langue que nous appellerons le vieux biélorusse[1]. C'est dans cette langue que furent rédigés les documents officiels du Grand-Duché de Lituanie, d'abord en caractères cyrilliques, ensuite, sous l'influence du latin et du polonais, en alphabet latin. La population parlant uniquement le lituanien constituait à peine quelques pour cent des habitants de cet immense État. D'ailleurs l'usage homogène de la langue lituanienne ne dépassait, au cours des siècles, les frontières qui étaient celles de la République de Lituanie de l'entre-deux-guerres. Ajoutons que c'est pour cette raison que les nationalistes biélorusses, au XXe siècle, revendiquent le nom historique de Lituanie («Litva» en biélorusse) et ses symboles (le Cavalier armé, comme écu).

Quelle était la capitale du Grand-Duché de Lituanie, c'est-à-dire le siège du grand-duc? Mendog installa sa capitale à Novogrodek (aujourd'hui en Biélorussie, lieu de naissance de Mickiewicz); c'est là qu'il fut baptisé (1251) et couronné (1253). Le grand-duc Gedymin (en lituanien Gediminas), qui se faisait appeler *Rex Lithuanorum et multorum Ruthenorum,* choisit comme capitale Troki, puis, vers 1322, il construisit un château en bois à Vilna et y transféra son siège[2]. Pendant un siècle, ces deux localités rivalisaient comme capitale du Grand-Duché. Vilna l'emporta, grâce à sa situation géographique et à son rapide développement comme un important marché de produits et de services. Gedymin et ses successeurs ont mené une politique d'ouverture, encourageant l'installation des marchands et des artisans polonais, russes, allemands, juifs. Dès le XIVe siècle, Vilna était un centre multilingue, multiethnique et multiconfessionnel.

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[1]   Le terme «ruthène», utilisé par certains historiens, correspond plutôt à l'ukrainien d'aujourd'hui, donc à la partie méridionale du Grand-Duché.

[2]   Dans les sources écrites latines, françaises, allemandes et anglaises, dès le XIVe siècle, on trouve les graphies: Vilna, Wilna, Vilno, Vilne, Wilne, Ville. L'orthographe polonaise est Wilno. Vilnius est un nom lituanien moderne. Nous utiliserons dans ce travail, embrassant plusieurs siècles, la version latine Vilna, qui est aussi la version française la plus répandue. Les documents historiques seront cités plus loin.

Gedymin n'osait pas se faire baptiser, pour des raisons politiques. Cependant il comprenait le potentiel civilisateur de l'Église; il autorisa la construction des églises et fit venir des franciscains et des dominicains. Voici en quels termes Gedeminne (c'était la graphie utilisée dans ses lettres) s'adressait aux franciscains de la province saxonne (allemande), le 26 mai 1323:

> Volumus enim episcopos, sacerdotes, religiosos Ordinis cuiuscunque colligere, praecipue de Vestris, quibus iam ereximus duas ecclesias unam in civitate nostra regia, dicta Vilna, aliam in Novgardia, ad quas nobis hoc anno quatuor fratres scientes polonicum, semigallicum ac ruthenicum ordinetis, tales ut nunc sunt et fuerunt.

Cette lettre confirme l'existence de deux églises, à Vilna et à Novogrodek. Ce qui paraît étonnant, c'est que le grand-duc demandait l'envoi des frères connaissant le polonais, le vieux biélorusse (*ruthenicum*) et le vieux letton (*semigallicum*, langue parlée par les voisins du nord, habitants de Zemgale ou Semigalia, déjà christianisés à cette époque), sans mentionner le lituanien. Ne voulait-il pas encourager les Lituaniens ethniques à pratiquer le culte chrétien? Ou bien considérait-il que même les lituanophones des deux capitales, Vilna et Novogrodek, d'ailleurs peu nombreux, connaissaient le vieux biélorusse ou le polonais?

C'est le petit-fils de Gedymin, Jagellon, devenu grand-duc en 1377, qui fut à l'origine de l'union du Grand-Duché de Lituanie avec le royaume de Pologne. Devant la menace des chevaliers Teutoniques, il se décida à épouser la jeune reine de Pologne, Hedwige (Jadwiga), en 1386. Baptisé à Cracovie sous le nom de Władysław (Ladislas) et couronné roi de Pologne, il résidait tantôt à Cracovie, tantôt à Vilna, où il fonda un évêché. Il fit venir à Cracovie des artistes russes et/ou biélorusses qui ont décoré, dans le style byzantin, une chapelle de la cathédrale du château royal de Wawel. Il a rénové l'université de Cracovie, la plus ancienne, après celle de Prague, en Europe centrale et qui porte jusqu'à aujourd'hui le nom de l'Université Jagellone. La troisième, en date, université dans cette partie de l'Europe fut fondée à Vilna, en 1579, par le roi de Pologne et grand-duc de Lituanie Stefan Batory

(de la famille princière hongroise Băthory) et c'est son nom qu'elle portait de 1919 à 1939, nom supprimé par les autorités lituaniennes.

Quant au règne de Ladislas Jagellon, l'événement le plus illustre et politiquement lourd de conséquences fut la victoire de l'armée polono-lituano-biélorusse sur les chevaliers Teutoniques à Grunwald (1410). L'historiographie polonaise est presque unanime à considérer Ladislas Jagellon comme un grand monarque des deux nations, parce qu'il a réussi à créer la plus importante puissance politique et militaire de la région. Par contre, les nationalistes lituaniens ont créé, au XIXᵉ siècle, l'image d'un traître qui était à l'origine de tous les malheurs du peuple lituanien.

L'association des deux États, royaume de Pologne et Grand-Duché de Lituanie, fut renforcée par l'Union de Lublin (1569), sous le règne de Sigismond Auguste, dernier roi de la dynastie Jagellone. Cependant la Lituanie conservait ses principales institutions, sa jurisprudence, son trésor et son armée. Avec un seul monarque et une diète commune (*sejm*) la *Respublica polono-lithuana* était couramment appelée la République (chose commune) des Deux Nations. C'est la constitution du 3 mai 1791 qui consacra la fusion des deux organismes en un seul État. Mais c'était déjà l'époque des partages de la Pologne par les puissances ennemies, Russie, Prusse et Autriche. Tout au long du XIXᵉ siècle, les Polonais et les Lituaniens on subi le même sort dans un pays occupé, il se sont soulevés solidairement contre la Russie, en 1830 et 1863, enfin, ils ont retrouvé l'indépendance, mais séparément, à l'issue de la Première Guerre mondiale.

Revenons à la situation linguistique sur le territoire du Grand-Duché de Lituanie et particulièrement ă Vilna. Quant aux grands-ducs, Gedymin connaissait aussi bien le lituanien que le vieux biélorusse. Son petit-fils, Jagellon, avait la connaissance du lituanien, mais se servait surtout du vieux biélorusse avec son entourage et dans l'exercice de ses fonctions; devenu roi de Pologne, il apprit sans difficulté le polonais, très proche du vieux biélorusse; en plus, il connaissait probablement l'allemand. Lui et son cousin germain et concurrent Vitold (en lituanien Vytautas) étaient les derniers grands-ducs de Lituanie se servant de la langue lituanienne. Le petit-fils de Ladislas Jagellon, Casimir (1458–

1484), canonisé en 1602, patron de la Lituanie et du royaume de Pologne, séjournait tantôt à Cracovie, tantôt à Vilna. Il ne parlait pas lituanien; élevé dans un entourage polonais, le jeune prince avait aussi la connaissance du latin.

À partir du milieu du XVIe siècle, le vieux biélorusse est progressivement remplacé, comme langue officielle, par le polonais. En 1551, le règlement du conseil municipal de Vilna fut publié en polonais et ratifié par Sigismond Auguste, arrière-petit-fils de Ladislas Jagellon. Dès le XVIIe siècle, tous les documents publics et privés (procès-verbaux des assemblées locales, actes des tribunaux, testaments, etc.) étaient rédigés en polonais; les archives de Vilna en contiennent des milliers.

Au cours des siècles suivants s'accentuait la barrière linguistique entre le lituanien, langue balte qui évoluait peu, et les deux langues slaves, le biélorusse et le polonais. Le bastion du lituanien restait la partie occidentale du Grand-Duché (*Samogitia* en latin, *Žemaičia* en lituanien, *Żmudź* en polonais). La distinction entre la Lituanie et la Samogitie, on la trouve dans les plus anciennes sources écrites. Vitold portait le titre de duc ou de grand-duc de Lituanie et de Samogitie, auxquels duchés certains chroniqueurs (par exemple, Gilbert de Lannoy, en 1413) ajoutaient la Russie. Une telle division est explicite dans les ouvrages géographiques, où ces deux pays sont présentés dans des chapitres ou paragraphes différents, entre autres chez Sebastian Münster (1544) ou chez le géographe flamand Ortelius (1570) qui écrit notamment: «*Sub regno Poloniae continetur Lituania, Samogitia, et Masovia*». La plupart des cartes, depuis celle d'Ortelius, distinguent ces deux entités géographiques.

À la délimitation territoriale correspond celle qui concerne la langue. D'après les chroniqueurs, le lituanien était une langue parlée par la population de la Samogitie, tandis qu'en Lituanie on parlait une langue slave. Dans son ouvrage *Liber cronicarum* (Nuremberg, 1493) Hartmann Schedel affirme, au chapitre «Lituania»: «*Sermo gentis sclavonicus est*» (la langue du peuple est slave). Sebastian Münster écrit, en allemand de l'époque, au chapitre 74 «Littaw» de sa *Cosmographia* (1544): «*Der Spraachen halb stimmen sie zu den Poländischen*» (les langues correspondent au polonais). Cet ouvrage fut sensiblement élargi et publié en

français (Paris, 1575) par François de Belle-Forest sous le titre *Cosmographie universelle de tout le monde*. Celui-ci traduit et développe cette phrase de Münster de la façon suivante:

> Ils [les Lituaniens] usent du langage Sclavonien, comme les Polonois. Car ceste langue s'estend bien loing, et est commune à beaucoup de nations. La principale ville de toute ceste region, c'est Vilne (...) (p. 1815).

De Belle-Forest fait aussi la distinction géographique: «du costé de Septentrion, les Lithuaniens touchent aux Samagites» (p. 1814). À la même époque, Ortelius écrit, dans son *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (1570): «LITHUANIA. *Sermo genti ut Polonis, Sclavonicus.* (...) SAMOGITIA (*quod eorum lingua terra inferior sonat*)». En effet, le nom lituanien *Žemaičia* veut dire «terre inférieure». Ortelius ajoute que les Russes l'appelaient *Samotzka Semla*.

La Samogitie était donc le berceau et le bastion du peuple et de la langue lituanienne, tandis que la Lituanie était un ensemble étatique créé par les conquêtes des grands-ducs. Plus la connaissance du Grand-Duché de Lituanie se répandait dans le monde, plus on soulignait la spécificité de la Samogitie et on commençait à appeler la langue lituanienne — le samogitien. Voici un extrait du rapport du curateur vilnois A. J. Czartoryski, qui date de 1824 (année où Mickiewicz quittait Vilna pour toujours):

> Dans la capitale de la Lituanie, des leçons de lithuanien ou samogicien doivent trouver leur place, comme curiosité qui peut faciliter et conduire à des recherches historiques, et comme dialecte encore parlé par une population nombreuse. Tous les prêtres du diocèse de Samogicie doivent prêcher et enseigner dans cette langue. Les élèves du séminaire, destinés à ce diocèse, profiteront partout des leçons de lithuanien à l'université. Jusqu'à présent, on n'a pu trouver quelqu'un, qui à côté d'autres connaissances indispensables, eût celle de la langue lithuanienne et qui fût capable de l'enseigner d'une manière régulière et savante. (Beauvois 1977: 289)

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Quant aux autorités tsaristes, elles considéraient cette langue comme «un dialecte samogitien ou lituanien»[3].

Le lituanien ne gagnait pas du terrain à l'Est, ses frontières étaient stables[4], tandis que le polonais s'introduisait de plus en plus dans la partie lituanophone du Grand-Duché comme langue de la noblesse, des propriétaires terriens, du clergé et des marchands, surtout dans les villes. Kovno (en lituanien Kaunas), capitale de la République de Lituanie de 1918 à 1939, comptait, en 1923, 22,7% de Polonais et seulement 6,6% de Lituaniens (les Juifs et les Russes constituaient la majeure partie de la population).

Et voici, en pourcentage, la répartition des habitants de Vilna selon leur nationalité:

	1910	1916	1919	1928	1931	1941
Polonais	56	50,1	56,2	55	65,9	50,7
Juifs	36	43,5	36,1	40	28,0	
Lituaniens	2	2,6	2,3	0,5	0,8	28,1

Notons que dans tous ces recensements on prenait la langue maternelle et la déclaration des intéressés comme critère de l'appartenance à telle ou telle nationalité. Il y est donc question de Juifs, et non de juifs comme adeptes d'une religion (à côté de catholiques, orthodoxes, protestants, etc.). Cela explique d'ailleurs la diminution du pourcentage de Juifs au profit de Polonais, entre 1928 et 1931, de plus en plus de Juifs déclarant la nationalité polonaise. Dans tous les recensements de notre tableau, les Polonais et les Juifs constituaient ensemble entre 92 et 95 pour cent de la population. Cité polono-juive au XIXe et au XXe siècle, Vilna ne

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[3] Voir, par exemple, la lettre circulaire de l'Office du Gouvernement de Vilna du Ministère de l'Intérieur (*Vilenskoje Gubernskoje Pravlenije*), du 26 mars 1865, n° 3886, qui se trouve aux Archives Nationales Historiques de Lituanie, Fonds 494.

[4] D'après la carte linguistique publiée en 1914 (Beauvois 1977: 288 bis) la frontière de la langue lituanienne passait à l'ouest des anciennes capitales, Vilna et Troki.

comptait qu'une petite minorité de langue et de nationalité lituaniennes. Quant aux environs de Vilna, les Polonais constituaient, en 1916 (recensement allemand), 89,8% et en 1919, 87,3% de la population.

Deux aspects du problème linguistique sont à souligner:

1° S'il y a eu polonisation, c'était un processus lent, pacifique, par la voie de la culture, sans violence, contrairement à la russification et à la germanisation que subiront le peuple polonais et le peuple lituanien au cours du XIXᵉ siècle.

2° La polonisation, qui ne s'effectua d'ailleurs que dans une partie du Grand-Duché de Lituanie, se fit surtout au détriment du vieux biélorusse qui dominait sur ces territoires. La langue lituanienne, langue principalement de la paysannerie, résista à la polonisation et s'est maintenue dans ses anciennes frontières linguistiques.

C'est ce dernier fait — non sans analogie avec le phénomène breton, basque ou irlandais — qui a rendu possible le renouveau national lituanien vers la fin du XIXᵉ siècle, renouveau qui s'exerçait principalement par l'intermédiaire de la culture et du folklore: journaux, livres, chants et légendes populaires.

Le «père» de ce renouveau fut un médecin dont le nom s'écrivait en polonais Jan Basanowicz et en lituanien Jonas Basanavičius. Encore un paradoxe dont abonde l'histoire des rapports lituano-polonais: ce mouvement, dirigé principalement contre l'influence de la civilisation polonaise (et non contre celle des occupants russes, considérée par les nationalistes lituaniens comme moins «dangereuse»), fut l'œuvre des hommes qui avaient obtenu leur statut social à travers la culture polonaise et qui, au début, hésitaient entre l'identité polonaise et lituanienne. Ainsi, Vincas Kudirka (1858–1899), ancien séminariste qui a fait ses études de médecine à l'Université de Varsovie, écrivait ses premiers poèmes en polonais, avant de passer au lituanien; il est l'auteur d'un poème, devenu hymne national de la Lituanie indépendante, qui commence par l'invocation «Lituanie, ô notre patrie...», référence directe aux premiers mots de *Pan Tadeusz* de Mickiewicz. Maironis (pseudonyme de Jan Maciulewicz alias Jonas Mačiulis, 1862–1932), prêtre et théologien, considéré comme le plus grand poète de langue lituanienne, écrivait en polonais

dès son jeune âge; en 1904, il a publié dans cette langue un poème fustigeant la polonisation des propriétaires terriens lituaniens. Dans la génération suivante, citons Vincas Krévé-Mickevičius (forme lituanisée du nom Mickiewicz, 1882–1954), romancier et auteur dramatique qui écrivait d'abord en polonais (un recueil de poèmes publié en 1907). Après un séjour prolongé au Grand Séminaire de Vilna, il étudia à l'Université de Kiev, ensuite à l'Université de Lwów.

Ces fils de paysans, éduqués souvent dans des séminaires polonais et/ou les universités polonaises de Cracovie et de Lwów (en Galicie, partie méridionale de la Pologne, annexée par l'Autriche à l'époque des partages), se sont tournés vers la langue de leurs parents et grands-parents pour la mettre au rang d'une langue littéraire, et aussi la «purifier» de nombreux polonismes. Comme réaction à la polonisation au cours des siècles précédents et à la russification au XIXe siècle, ils entreprirent une lituanisation avec un zèle néophyte, en commençant par leurs propres noms de famille, ensuite de tous les noms étrangers, notamment en leur ajoutant des terminaisons typiquement lituaniennes *-as*, *-is*, *-us*. Czesław Miłosz a dit: «la Lituanie est une création moderne, une créature de la philologie. Peu de gens comprennent que c'est beaucoup plus la philologie que l'histoire qui a créé la Lituanie» (Miłosz 1991: 185). Et Yves Plasseraud remarque, à propos du réveil national lituanien:

> On note ici l'une des caractéristiques du nationalisme lituanien (par opposition aux autres Baltes), à savoir son caractère rural et souvent ecclésiastique. La faiblesse de la classe moyenne a en effet pour conséquence que le nationalisme est souvent plus primaire et moins qu'ailleurs lié au sentiment démocratique. (Plasseraud 1996: 98).

Si la re-lituanisation, le retour aux sources ethniques de ces intellectuels d'origine paysanne peuvent être considérés comme un phénomène naturel, il y a aussi des cas qui paraissent «contre-nature». Celui, par exemple, de Gabriel Landsberg (1852–1916), hobereau issu de la noblesse polonaise (d'ailleurs d'origine allemande), élevé dans l'esprit patriotique polonais. C'est en 1889,

à l'âge de trente-sept ans, qu'il apprit le lituanien et devint militant du mouvement national lituanien, ensuite auteur dramatique et animateur théâtral. Il transforma son nom en Gabrielius Lands-bergis et y ajouta la traduction de l'allemand en lituanien: «Žem-kalnis» (*Land* = *Žemé* = terre, *Berg*=*kalnas* = montagne)[5].

Un cas encore plus insolite est celui de Oscar V. de Lubicz Milosz (1877–1939). Fils naturel d'un grand propriétaire terrien appartenant à la vieille noblesse polonaise et d'une jeune femme juive, il naquit et passa son enfance dans le domaine de son père, personnage fort excentrique, près de Moguilev, en Biélorussie orientale, loin de la Lituanie ethnique[6]. Envoyé à Paris, à l'âge de douze ans, il fit ses études au lycée Janson-de-Sailly, puis à l'École du Louvre et à l'École des Langues Orientales. Maniant aussi bien le polonais, langue de ses parents, que le français, il commença à écrire dans les deux langues, mais c'est comme écrivain français qu'il acquit une notoriété. En 1916 ou 1917, il apprit de la bouche d'Aristide Briand l'existence du mouvement national lituanien et se décida, en 1919, à se mettre au service de la délégation lituanienne qui venait de débarquer à Paris. Cette décision résultait d'une confusion entre le Grand-Duché de Lituanie, pays de ses ancêtres, biélorusse et polonais depuis des siècles, et la Lituanie ethnique aspirant à son indépendance. À moins qu'il y ait eu un intérêt matériel, Oscar Milosz ayant perdu toute sa fortune à la suite de la révolution russe. Il acquit la nationalité lituanienne et devint délégué et ensuite chargé d'affaires de la République de Lituanie en France. Au début, il était obligé de communiquer avec ses patrons et ses collaborateurs lituaniens en français, en polonais ou en russe. Mais il apprit vite le lituanien; c'est en 1919 qu'il toucha pour la première fois le sol de la Lituanie ethnique.

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[5] Par parenthèse, son fils, architecte, fut ministre dans un gouvernement lituanien, et son petit-fils, Vytautas Landsbergis, c'est le leader du mouvement d'indépendance et chef du parti conservateur, dominant aujourd'hui en Lituanie. Celui-ci parle d'ailleurs un polonais impeccable.

[6] Czesław Miłosz appartient à une autre branche de cette famille, ayant eu des propriétés en Lituanie ethnique.

Fervent défenseur de la cause lituanienne, dans la période 1918–1926, Oscar Milosz publia en France plusieurs articles politico-historiques antipolonais, particulièrement virulents pendant le conflit au sujet de Vilna, articles truffés de divagations pseudo-historiques sur l'histoire de Lituanie, dignes de celui qui, dans ses écrits mystiques des années trente, affirmera que les Hébreux sont d'anciens Ibères émigrés d'Andalousie au Moyen-Orient et que les Lituaniens sont originaires du pays basque. Dans une conférence de 1919, il évoque «l'antique Lithuanie, mère de la race aryenne». (Milosz 1990: 97). Dans une autre conférence de la même année, il s'adresse au public parisien:

> Oui, femmes et hommes de l'Occident, je vous parle de votre antique patrie. Oui, filles et fils de la race indo-européenne, je vous parle de votre berceau. Car cette Lituanie si imprécise dans votre imagination, est le plus ancien et le plus pur vestige de cette race mystérieuse qui descendit, dans la nuit du passé, du lieu saint appelé Pamir, pour se répandre dans les forêts et les plaines de la froide et sauvage Europe. (...)
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> Vers l'an 1200 avant Jésus-Christ, un rameau de la race lithuanienne descendit par les Balkans en Grèce et, greffant sa tradition aryenne sur la culture créto-mycénienne déjà à son déclin, prépara la merveilleuse civilisation hellénique, source des deux mondes, romain et français. (Milosz 1990: 27–28)

Il est rare qu'un homme déteste à tel point sa langue maternelle. Oscar Milosz l'oppose à la langue lituanienne, «cet harmonieux sanscrit de l'époque créto-mycénienne, ce mystérieux et chantant dialecte de l'Hellade pré-homérique». Tandis que «l'idiome polonais [est un] ensemble sifflant et gras, comparé par les Russes à la menace aiguë du serpent» (Milosz 1990: 163–164). Sur le plan politique, bien qu'il reconnaisse, dans un article de mars 1920, que «la majorité de la population de Vilna fait usage de l'idiome polonais», il écrit, lorsque se dessinait l'idée d'un plébiscite: «Il serait temps de rompre, en politique, avec ces méthodes hypocrites qui consistent à subordonner (...) les facteurs qualitatifs, spirituels

et nationaux, aux puériles données statistiques» (Milosz 1990:156–157). Et quand il veut démontrer ce que les Lituaniens ont donné à l'Europe et au monde, il cite Adam Mickiewicz et le héros national polonais et américain Tadeusz Kościuszko — parce que l'un et l'autre naquirent sur le territoire de l'ancien Grand-Duché de Lituanie, d'ailleurs en Biélorussie — mais aussi le poète polonais Norwid qui n'y mit jamais les pieds, Immanuel Kant (!) ainsi que Jan Matejko, peintre polonais né et mort à Cracovie, toute sa vie fidèle à la ville natale.

Tout mouvement de renouveau national a besoin de mythes. Pour les lituanophones, ces mythes ont été puisés dans l'histoire, plus ou moins légendaire. De nombreux ouvrages littéraires (poèmes, drames) ont pris pour héros les grands-ducs de Lituanie des XIIIe et XIVe siècles, qui avaient encore la connaissance de la langue lituanienne: Mindaugas (Mendog), Kęstutis (fils de Gedymin), sa femme Biruté et leur fils Vytautas (Vitold), enfin Skirgaila, frère de Ladislas Jagellon. «Comme résultat de l'oppression tsariste — écrit le théâtrologue lituanien Antanas Vengris — et aussi sous l'influence du mouvement de libération nationale, la dramaturgie lituanienne était fondée sur la version romantique de l'histoire nationale, histoire formée par des héros aussi bien réels que mythiques.» (Vengris 1993: 166). Citons encore l'opinion de Czesław Miłosz:

> Les Lituaniens, eux, tiennent aux légendes et ils ont d'ailleurs tendance à créer une histoire légendaire. Si on considère un grand héros de leur histoire comme le grand-duc Vytautas (ou Witold) (...) et que l'on suit attentivement le déroulement de son existence, on réalise vite qu'il n'a pas été ce que prétend la légende mais personne en Lituanie ne conteste la version de l'histoire nationale. (Miłosz 1991: 184).

Un autre mythe, formé par les animateurs du renouveau national et entretenu par les générations suivantes, c'est la capitale de leur pays. La plus ancienne capitale, celle où fut baptisé et couronné Mindaugas (Mendog), Novogrodek, était trop éloignée: 60–100 km du territoire ethnique des Lituaniens. Troki (en lituanien Trakai), première capitale de Gedymin, n'était qu'une petite ville de

quelques milliers d'habitants, même s'il s'y trouvaient d'imposantes ruines d'un château construit au début du XVe siècle par Vytautas (Vitold). Restait Vilna, une ville importante qui s'est développée au cours des siècles grâce à l'apport de sa population multiethnique. Seulement, la ville n'avait presque pas de lituanophones. Qu'importe. Les mythes, comme les rêves, n'ont pas besoin de réalités[7].

Les nationalistes lituaniens du XIXe siècle ont même rebaptisé l'ancienne capitale, connue depuis les plus anciennes sources sous le nom de Vilna, Wilno ou Wilnè. En voici quelques preuves.

Dans sa lettre, déjà citée, du 26 mai 1323, et dans d'autres lettres de la même période, le grand-duc Gedymin, fondateur de la ville, l'appelle Vilna.

Le diplomate et voyageur français Gilbert de Lannoy a décrit son séjour dans la ville du «duc Witholt [ou Wittolt], roy [ou prince] de Létau [Lituanie] et de Samette [Samogitie] et de Russie», en hiver 1413–1414:

> Passay parmy pluisieurs villaiges et très grandes forestes, et vins à la souveraine ville de Létau, nommée le Wilne, en laquelle a ung chastel situé moult hault sur une savelonneuse montaigne, fermée de pierres et de terre, et le masonnaige de dedens est tout édifié de bois. (...) Et au dict chastel et fermeté tient coustummièrement le dict ducq Wittolt, prinche de Leuttau, sa courte et sa demeure. Et y queurt une revière emprès le dict chastel, laquelle vat parmi la ville d'en bas, appelée la Wilne. (Lannoy 1878: 39).

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[7] Tomas Venclova, un Lituanien «pas comme les autres», émigré, poète et sage, ami de Czesław Miłosz, a déclaré, pendant son séjour à Vilna, en juin 1999, que cette région était «un centre étatique mythifié, dont les habitants parlent une autre langue»; d'où l'analogie, d'après lui, entre la région de Vilna et le Kosovo. L'exploitation du mythe du Kosovo (habité par 90% d'Albanais) comme «berceau» du peuple serbe, par les nationaux-communistes de Milošević, en 1998–1999, aboutit à un carnage.

Gilbert de Lannoy avait été reçu par Vitold et sa famille, c'est donc de la bouche du grand-duc qu'il a dû entendre le nom de la capitale, tel qu'il a noté dans son récit.

La forme Wilno ou Vilna est utilisée régulièrement par l'historiographe polonais, le plus docte de son époque, Jan Długosz, dans sa *Historia Polonica*, écrite entre 1455 et 1480.

L'historien et théologien Albrecht (Albertus) Krantz note, dans son ouvrage *Wandalia* (Cologne, 1519), sous l'année 1385: «*Inde profectus cum agmine suo Vitoldus, obsidione cinxit oppidum Ville. (...) Quo tempore in Letuania Vitoldus Kinstoti filius quum in arce oppidi Villae conmaneret (...)*».

Dans son ouvrage *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii*, publié pour la première fois en 1549, le diplomate autrichien Siegmund von Herberstein, qui se rendit à Moscou en 1517 et 1526, emploie la graphie Wilna.

Au chapitre 74 «Littaw» de sa *Cosmographia*, publiée en 1544, Sebastian Münster, géographe allemand déjà cité, écrit «*Die Hauptstatt in diesem Landt ist Vilna, da ist auch ein Bisthum*». Il donne aux noms des grands-ducs la forme slave: Olgerd, Keistut, Jagello, Skirgello, Vitold. D'ailleurs il distingue, comme d'autres chroniqueurs, la Lituanie de la Samogitie (chapitre 75), région de la langue lituanienne proprement dite.

Ortelius, dans son *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (1570), écrit, au paragraphe sur la Lituanie: «*Sermo genti ut polonis, sclavonicus. Caput regionis Vilna est, episcopalis civitas, tantae magnitudinis quantae Cracovia*».

On trouve la même graphie dans l'ouvrage de Georg Braun et Franz Hogenberg *Urbium praecipuarum totius mundi descriptio* (1576). Voici un fragment de leur *Théâtre des cités du monde* (t. 2) dans la traduction française, publiée vers 1579: «Littavie, region de grande estendue et peu cultivée, tenant aux Polonoys du costé d'Orient, est quasi du tout marescageuse et boscageuse, la ville capitale de laquelle contrée est Vilna, cité episcopale.»

Enfin, Samuel Lewkenor, dans son ouvrage *A Discourse of all those Cities wherein doe flourish at this day priviledged Universities*, publié à Londres en 1600, écrit: «Vilna, *commonly called the Wilde, is a large and opulent Cittie in the great Dukedome of* Lithuania *or* Littow, *whereof it is the Metropolis. (...) It is seated*

on the banke of the river Vilias (...)». Il évoque notamment le voïvode vilnois de la famille de «Radzivilli[8]» et décrit avec considération *«the Universitie Vilna».* Il faut souligner que l'auteur a passé à Vilna tout un hiver, depuis fin octobre jusqu'à Pâques.

Dans tous les documents qui viennent d'être cités, depuis le XIVe jusqu'au seuil du XVIIe siècle, en latin ou en allemand, en français ou en anglais, la capitale du Grand-Duché de Lituanie est nommée Vilna, avec les variantes Wilno, Vilno, Vilne, Wilne, Ville, Wilna. Sur toutes les cartes géographiques, depuis le XVIe siècle, figure le nom de Vilna. Mais pour le re-nouveau lituanien de la fin du XIXe siècle il fallait un nom nouveau, aussi a-t-il inventé la forme Vilnius qui est le nom officiel de la capitale actuelle de la République de Lituanie (*Lietuva*).

Même le porte-parole si ardent de la Lituanie dans le conflit avec la Pologne, après la Première Guerre mondiale, Oscar V. de Lubicz Milosz n'a pas employé, dans ses nombreux écrits politiques, le néologisme «Vilnius» et d'autres noms géographiques néo-lituaniens. Ainsi écrit-il Vilna, Grodno, Kovno, Suwalki, Novogrodek et la rivière Vilia (actuellement, en lituanien, «Neris»). C'est en 1926, dans son article «Vilna et la civilisation européenne», qu'il évoque la nouvelle appellation de la ville: «capitale de l'ancien grand-duché de Lithuanie, dont le nom lithuanien est Vilnius et le nom européen Vilna». (Milosz 1990: 183).

Les auteurs soucieux de respecter les réalités historiques (contrairement à ceux qui écrivent, par exemple, «Pouchkine est mort à Leningrad») signalent trois ou quatre versions du nom de la ville et expliquent leur choix. Ainsi Daniel Beauvois, dans sa remarquable thèse, déjà citée, sur l'Université de Vilna, justifie son choix de la façon suivante:

> Pour la graphie des noms de villes, nous suivons l'usage du début du XIXe s. Deux villes seulement ont alors une appellation française, fixée et reconnue dans les textes en français émanant de Polonais ou de

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[8] Le nom de l'illustre famille lituano-polonaise Radziwill, dont les descendants étaient aussi connus en France et en Allemagne, a pris, en lituanien moderne, la forme «Radvila».

> Russes: Vilna, Kiev; nous les préférons donc aux
> formes polonaises Wilno, Kijów et aux formes
> lituaniennes: Vilnius ou ukrainienne: Kiiv, qui
> seraient anachroniques. Pour le reste, la prépondé-
> rance de la culture polonaise écrite, à l'époque et
> dans la zone étudiée, fait choisir la graphie polonaise.
> (...) Depuis 1918, les villes de Lituanie ont été
> rebaptisées en lituanien. Parmi les plus fréquemment
> citées: Kowno (s'appelle aujourd'hui Kaunas) (...).
> (Beauvois 1977: 5).

Le sémioticien russe Vladimir Toporov (École de Tartu) a intitulé
Vilnius, Wilno, Vilna: gorod i mit (= ville et mythe) son étude où il
dissèque et interprète avec des outils sémiotiques tous les mythes
accumulés autour des origines de cette ville (Toporov 1980).
Encore un exemple. Henri Minczeles a intitulé son ouvrage, très
érudit, *Vilna, Wilno, Vilnius, la Jérusalem de Lituanie* et il
l'explique:

> Je devais prendre en compte qu'elle s'appelât Vilnius
> pour les Lituaniens, Vilna pour les Russes, Wilna
> pour les Allemands et Wilno pour les Polonais. Mais
> vu du versant juif, son nom était à la fois Vilnè et
> Yerushalaym de Litè (la Jérusalem de Lituanie).
> (Minczeles 1993: 13).

D'ailleurs H. Minczeles utilise, selon le contexte, les cinq
appellations de la ville.

Ajoutons que les occupants soviétiques de la Lituanie ont
adopté, dès 1940, le néologisme Vilnius, transcrit, évidemment, en
caractères russes, bien qu'en russe la ville s'appelât toujours Vilna
(Wilna). Ils imposèrent ce néologisme même dans les publications
en langue polonaise.

En ce qui concerne les encyclopédies, dans *Le Robert des noms
propres* (ainsi que dans *Encyclopaedia Britannica*) l'article «Vil-
nius» note les variantes «Vilna», «Wilno», tandis qu'une entrée
«Wilno» renvoie à «Vilnius». Dans *Le Grand Larousse* l'article
«Vilnious» note «anc. Vilna», et une entrée «Wilna ou Wilno»
renvoie à «Vilnious». Le lecteur qui fait sa recherche à partir du
nom «Wilno» arrive à trouver l'information dont il a besoin. Mais

il y a des encyclopédies qui ne respectent pas ce principe; par exemple, l'*Encyclopédie Bordas* donne l'article «Vilnius ou Vilnious» en ajoutant «en russe Vilna, en polonais Wilno», mais faute d'entrée «Wilno» le lecteur est incapable de situer, par exemple, l'action de l'*Éducation européenne* (titre prémonitoire!) de Romain Gary. (Cet écrivain qui a passé à Wilno son enfance, de 1917 à 1923, persistait à écrire toute sa vie «né à Wilno», bien qu'il était né à Moscou.) C'est de Vilna que Napoléon datait ses ordres du jour, en 1812. C'est de Wilna que datait ses lettres l'officier de l'armée napoléonienne, Henri Beyle, le futur Stendhal. Ce n'est pas à Vilnius mais à Wilna que naquit le compositeur russe Cesar Cui, fils d'un ancien officier français et d'une Polonaise. C'est le conservatoire de sa ville natale Wilno, et non Vilnius, que fréquentait Jascha Heifetz, enfant prodige, dès l'âge de quatre ans. C'est à l'École des Beaux-Arts de Wilno ou Vilna qu'étudiait Soutine, en 1910, avant de partir pour la France. C'est à l'Université de Wilno, et non pas de Vilnius, qu'ont fait leurs études Adam Mickiewicz et Czesław Miłosz.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

La réponse à la question que nous avons posée tout au début: qu'est-ce que veut dire l'invocation «Lituanie! ô ma patrie!» placée en tête de *Pan Tadeusz*, c'est le poète lui-même qui la donne dans le onzième et avant-dernier chant, intitulé «L'année 1812». Le Chambellan (*Podkomorzy*) s'adresse à la foule rassemblée après la messe:

> Frères! le prêtre vous a annoncé en chaire
> La liberté que l'Empereur-Roi [Napoléon] a rétabli à la Couronne,
> Et maintenant au Duché de Lituanie, à la Pologne entière
> Il la rétablit (...)

L'équation est simple: Couronne + Grand-Duché de Lituanie = Pologne. Et le meilleur commentaire sur les rapports ambivalents Couronne / Grand-Duché, Mickiewicz le fait par la bouche du vieux Gerwazy (Gervais), quelques pages plus loin:

> Étrange a été le destin de notre Couronne
> Et de notre Lituanie! c'est comme deux époux!
> Dieu a uni, le diable désunit (...) [9].

L'autre grand poète polonais de l'époque romantique, Juliusz Słowacki, jeune «confrère» et rival de Mickiewicz (tous les deux, ils étudiaient à l'Université de Wilno, ils ont passé une grande partie de leur vie comme émigrés à Paris, et reposent aujourd'hui côte à côte dans la crypte royale de la cathédrale de Wawel à Cracovie), fait dire au héros de son drame *Horsztyński* (1835), dont l'action se passe près de Wilno, pendant l'insurrection de 1794, que la révolution a déjà gagné «Varsovie, Wilno, la Pologne entière». Il s'agit donc de la même équation: Varsovie + Wilno = Pologne.

Afin que les choses soient claires pour celui qui entend ou lit aujourd'hui les mots «Lituanie», «Lituanien», il faut faire la distinction entre l'entité ethnico-linguistico-territoriale Lituanie (en lituanien *Lietuva*) et la structure étatique multiethnique, multilingue, multiconfessionnelle que fut le Grand-Duché de Lituanie associé au royaume de Pologne. Il y a d'une part *Lietuva* et d'autre part *Lithuania* (en polonais *Litwa*), d'une part le lituanophone ayant une conscience nationale intimement liée à cette langue (celui qui s'appelle *Lietuvis*), d'autre part le polonophone qui par sa naissance est lié au territoire et aux traditions de l'ancien Grand-Duché de Lituanie (celui qu'on appelle en polonais *Litwin*). «Tous, nous étions Lituaniens: dans les palais, les gentilhommières et les chaumières; cela n'empêchait personne d'être Polonais» – remarque, dans ses souvenirs du début du siècle, un fils de cette terre, Mgr Walerian Meysztowicz, issu d'une vieille famille établie en Lituanie ethnique. (Meysztowicz 1983: 10). C'est en exploitant l'ambivalence des notions «Lituanie» et «Lituanien», la double signification de ces mots que les nationalistes lituaniens s'approprient le poète polonais Adam Mickiewicz (rebaptisé à

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[9]   Il existe plusieurs traductions françaises de *Pan Tadeusz*. Les plus récentes sont celles de Roger Legras (Lausanne, L'Âge d'Homme, 1992) et de Robert Bourgeois (Montricher, Les Éditions Noir sur Blanc, 1992). J'ai traduit moi-même les fragments cités ici, pour qu'ils soient plus proches de l'original.

cette occasion en Adomas Mickevičius)[10], né loin de la Lituanie ethnique, et beaucoup d'autres personnalités polonaises (mais non pas leur bête noire, Józef Piłsudski, né près de Vilna)[11].

Il suffit de feuilleter un dictionnaire biographique ou une encyclopédie polonaise pour se rendre compte que la moitié des hommes et des femmes qui, depuis des siècles, ont joué un rôle dans la vie politique, sociale ou culturelle de la Pologne, étaient nés sur le territoire de l'ancien Grand-Duché de Lituanie. On les appelait *Litwini* («Lituaniens») par opposition aux *Koroniarze* («Coronaux»), ceux-ci provenant du territoire de la Couronne et non pas du Grand-Duché. Les uns et les autres se considéraient comme Polonais, ils appartenaient à la nation polonaise. D'où cette appellation, courante aux siècles précédents, *gente Lithuanus, natione Polonus*. Ajoutons que le concept de nation n'est pas, dans cette partie de l'Europe, celui d'État-nation, comme en France, mais d'une communauté de langue, de culture, de territoire, ayant la conscience de son unité: nation = peuple. Pour les Polonais, il n'aurait pu être autrement, puisque l'État polonais n'existait pas de 1795 à 1918, et c'est justement dans cette période que le sentiment d'identité nationale s'est consolidé sur les territoires où la population polonophone était majoritaire, donc sur une grande partie de l'ancien Grand-Duché de Lituanie.

Adam Mickiewicz, «né en captivité», écrivait-il, c'est-à-dire après le troisième partage de la Pologne, invoque son pays natal, non pas la Lituanie ethnique, *Lietuva*, dont il ne connaissait pas la langue, mais l'immense Lituanie, partie intégrante de l'ancien royaume de Pologne. Comme si Alphonse Daudet écrivait: «Provence, ô ma patrie!» ou Guy de Maupassant: «Normandie, ô ma patrie!»

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[10] Ce nom déformé est le seul à figurer sur la statue de Mickiewicz érigée à Vilna.

[11] Au point de vue de la sémiotique, il s'agit de la polyvalence et de l'ambiguïté du signe. Si le signe linguistique («Lituanie», «Lituanien») a différentes significations, si son signifiant renvoie à plusieurs signifiés et plusieurs référents, nous avons affaire à un signe ambigu ou équivoque (Kowzan 1992: 102–111).

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Meanings of the Moon in Lithuanian Literature

LORETA MAČIANSKAITĖ

This article by no means attempts at a complete description neither of the semantic nor the figurative aspect of lunar symbolism in Lithuanian literature. It is rather built as a mosaic of a few deliberately chosen characteristic texts, presenting a metonymical overview of Lithuanian literature throughout the 20th century. Concentrating on some typical images, I shall attempt a historical survey of lunar symbolism and its narrative function in particular, which, I hope, will help us to trace the rhetoric of discourse in its dynamics and reveal the outline of historical consciousness it gave expression to.

To start with, I shall emphasize the peculiarity of the Lithuanian language, in which words 'moon' and 'sun' are of masculine and feminine gender respectively. The moon, which plays the role of the husband in the celestial family, has broken his matrimonial pledge to the Sun, falling in love with the star Ausrine (Morning Star), who outshines his wife both in beauty and power. For which, according to folksongs, he has suffered the punishment, being divided into two parts by the highest god Perkunas. There are numerous prayers on record, which appeal to the Young Moon for health, youth and beauty. In his semiotic study about Ausrine, Algirdas J. Greimas has pointed to a whole body of popular beliefs, still well preserved, demonstrating the peculiar connection of human fate and happiness to lunar phases, which serve as an archetypal model of human life. In Lithuanian mythology the Moon also takes care of the dead and is granted the status of god,

pertaining to the third function, that is, his responsible for human-kind.

It goes without saying that the moon is the attribute of nocturnal landscape. And nightlife has its own rules, which are quite different from the prescriptive conventions and social activity of daylight. The night is the kingdom of the personal, a special time, related to mediations, various revelations, probations, etc. Of course, literature does not waste it for sleep, but rather devotes it to the most intimate experiences and thoughts. And, quite often, to very creative acts.

The afore-mentioned Algirdas J. Greimas has left us a portrait of the Lithuanian poet Jonas Aistis as a child striving to reach the moon; and noted his own debt to that child for the devastating lesson to pursue the path of life with the hand held out reaching for the moon. Here Greimas employs the striving for the moon as a metaphor for literary devotion or the power of creative inspiration. The moon often plays the role of the silent addressee of a night-time dialogue or simply emerges as a detail in the background. This has granted special importance to the lunar code in lyrics and lyrical fiction, which are preoccupied with the adequate expression of the most personal. Nocturnal images and the use of the folk-tale code became essential for the romantic discourse in particular. At the start of the century two Lithuanian fiction writers wrote under the common pseudonym The Owl of Hazel [Lazdynu Peleda]. The name gives an unusual clue to certain facts of their life and creativity. The owl, according to an autobiographical commentary, accounts for those pleasures which the two sisters found in their long walks along the riverbank in the moonlight.

The Owl of Hazel symbolizes for us that culture of last century, which today wholly belongs to the past. It expresses the romantic atmosphere of the period with its characteristic overtones of sorrow and decline, with its worries about survival and a possible solution. The whole scene reveals itself to the sight of the owl, that bird of wisdom, who observes it in its moonlit flight from a special space. "We can call it the realm of creative inspiration," — wrote the literary critic and writer R. Serelyte about the complete volume of The Owl of Hazel, which was published under the title *Spirits of the Past* in 1997. She entitled her critical overview "The Touch of

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Moonlight", giving us quite a precise poetic formula of romantic consciousness and its characteristic mode of life.

The masculine side of romantic discourse is, metaphorically speaking, far less sensitive to the touch of the moonlight, rather demonstrating devotion to social and national problems. Though this by no means presents the sufficient account of the phenomena. Maironis, to whom belongs the most outstanding place in Lithuanian romantic poetry, also addresses the moon in his patriotic poems. It serves as the witness to the heroic past of Lithuania, which still preserves a memory of its long-perished heroes, also granting a hope of a glorious national renaissance. It appears also in quite a few modest erotic poems, but this hardly deserves more attention than a usual image in their common folksong incrustation. Nevertheless, we have one particular text with the central figure of woman, who makes her appearance in the moonlit vision. The title 'Poetry', which gives the direct clue to the main image — the personification of poetry — looks like a quite unsophisticated attempt to prevent any erotic interpretation. Which is rather understandable. Maironis, like many Lithuanian poets of the romantic period, was a catholic priest. And the moonlit realm of erotic experience was, of course, beyond the sphere of his mission. Nonetheless this eclipse of the sign is telling. It leaves quite a noticeable void in the place which, according to the figurative laws of the romantic landscape, usually belongs to the moon. Such absence naturally provokes curiosity about the nature of that frightening power hidden beyond it. And, of course, it is the threatening power of love, which is incompatible with their duty and therefore leads to the abstention from the direct source of its light. The unconscious memory of the punishment, suffered for unfaithfulness to the Sun, prevents the romantic hero from heretic identification with the moon, that ancient stray. The Moon is doomed to eclipse in the discourse of Lithuanian priests, leaving its place for the bright source of daylight or those of daybreak. The romantic poem, in its characteristic narrative development, is given the first impulse by the sunset; the darkness of night provokes feelings of loneliness, sorrow and even desperation; and at the closure this negative experience is overshadowed by the bright ideal of devotion and faith, which are symbolized by the

Morning Star (Ausrine), appearing on the horizon. Such a scheme asks to be interpreted as an inversed model of mythological narrative. Or, more precisely, it witnesses the historical conflict between two cultural traditions. That conflict, having led to the final triumph of Christianity, nevertheless left a noticeable trace of a more ancient narrative. The Sacred Family of the romantic discourse presents the poetic transfiguration of the celestial love triangle, where the Sun is granted the function of God and the Morning Star (Ausrine) serves as the substitute for the Virgin Mary, who is also interchangeable with Ausrine in the modification of Christianity, still widespread among the common folk.

The romantic hero undertakes the role of St Joseph, who in his matrimonial duty to Mary, performes the mission, which has been ascribed to him by God. In the light of that context the object of particular interest is presented to us by the impressionistic story *Moonshine* by Ignas Seinius. Employing the popular narrative model, it traces the path of a young hero towards his devotion to priesthood. Furthermore, he suffers the moment of weakness in a romantic episode, being tempted by the possible devotion to his beloved. The scene inevitably involves a commonplace romantic landscape. A first reading provokes us to interpret moonshine in terms of a dangerous ephemeron, tempting the hero to lose the true path of daylight. But a closer examination shows quite the reverse: far from being the mystifying illusion, moonshine rather reveals the hidden or the suppressed essence of human heart. The author, not bound by priesthood, has preserved his intellectual freedom to perceive and express the complicated ambiguity of human nature.

In the novel *The Shadow of Altar*, written by the priest V. M. Putinas, we come upon quite a similar situation. A young seminarist finds the power to resist the temptation of love in a romantically moonlit garden. But the whole body of the novel, with the final decision of the hero to abandon his priesthood, gives the episode, once again, the opposite meaning. In his abstention from love the main character has overlooked the possibility of authentic existence, committing himself to fear and illusion. In V. M. Putinas's symbolist poetry of the earlier period the thirst for love, spiritual freedom and unbound creativity is compared with the state of somnambulism. By the way, such an association of

love with somnambulism is not privileged in any particular historic period, being a commonplace in love poetry on the whole.

Lunar symbolism is not restricted to the realm of sensibility only. Let's take a look, for instance, at the short story *Drowned Girl*, written at the start of the 20th century by A. Vienuolis, which tells us the tragic story of a young woman, abandoned by her bridegroom. Here the moon represents prescriptions of moral behavior and punishment, which is inevitable as a part of the divine order. The moon, from his point of an absolute perspective, witnesses both the scene of fatal sin and tears of repentance. But those tears do not move it in its indifferent distance of cold light. Veronika is left in a total void, repudiated by her own father, as well as by the local priest and the whole community of the strictly catholic and patriarchal village. She receives some consolation only from Ausrine, which represents celestial opposition to the moon. As it was already noted, the mythological beloved of the moon, Ausrine, in its Christian transfiguration is also granted the function of the Virgin Mary. At the end of the story the reader is offered an apotheosis of Veronika as Madonna with the child, by which narrator grants her some posthumous consolation.

Futurism and avant-gardism initiated the revolt in poetry against outdated moral and rhetorical conventions. "No more moon-shines" — with this motto it began to undermine commonplace rhetorical and lexical devices of the romantic discourse. The image of the moon is deprived of its usual semantic weight and glow of sacrality. It is forced to perform an inglorious journey all the way down to the surface of the earth, often taking the shape of the lamp or the lantern and becoming the object of irony. In its turn it provides an ironic comment on the world and the subject of the speech-act, sharing with them bravado and a cynical attitude. It has lost its position as the final instance of order, provoking instead a chaotic freedom, which is granted the ultimate significance and value (as, for instance, in Binkis's poems). It became common to substitute various conventional predicative descriptions (such as a glass of beer, a loaf of bread, a football or an ear, as Tysliava did in his poems) for traditional personifications. Nevertheless, the moon was not reduced to the merely objective existence of a thing. Having preserved its institutional power for the subject, it granted

the reversed hierarchy of values. This final power — the joker, the trickster — manifests itself in the metonymical implications of the avant-garde discourse as well.

A representative of Lithuanian expressionism, Jurgis Savickis, gives quite a clear ironic comment on the tradition of rhetoric with its worn-out devices. He creates for his fiction an ironic sceno-graphy, combining the moon with the birch, another commonplace image, or employs the opposite strategy, sharing with the futurists their vitality of expression and calling the moon a pale coquette or an ancient idiot.

Neo-romanticism (or at least the best part of its discourse) also granted the moon the same role of a trickster or a fake authority. The poetry of Aistis shows a clear awareness of the incompa-tibility, which sets apart the imaginative realm of dream-reality and "the reality" itself. Irony comes to the rescue of authentic inti-macy and values, making manifest the fictional nature of literary creation. On the deliberately theatrical scene of neo-romantic poetry the moon makes its appearance as the producer of the play, who wishes to remain nameless or, to use Roland Barthes's defini-tion, as the character, who hides his face under the mask while pointing a finger at it at the same time.

The moon appears in no less than 40 poems by Henrikas Radauskas, who among his contemporaries stood quite apart. His poetry, which eludes any ready-made labels, opens up an exclusi-vely rich field of possibilities, predicting various future transfigu-rations and functions of the image in Lithuanian poetry. However, the ironic attitude is prevailing. It inscribes the moon into the realm of illusion. The moon emerges both as a power, setting up the ironic narrative development, or as the counterpart of a joker-authority in "the fake painting of the sky". Nevertheless, it can represent true values as well. The poem "The Revolt from the Depth" leads its subject through a melodramatic flood of passions to a culminating revelation, which is granted to him as a momentary blaze of water in a simple glass under the beam of moonshine.

Vytautas Macernis represents the generation of poets who became active at the very sunset (during the last decade) of Lithua-nian independence and were considerably influenced by existen-

tialism. For him unbound sensitivity and self-deception in illusion were incompatible with his ideal of stoical responsibility. The only authority a human being can lay his trust in is the revealing light of his own mind, congenial in its insight with the cold light of the moon.

Since 1945 poetry both in exile and in Lithuania has been marked by a strong tendency to seek escape from postwar realities, turning rather to the world of childhood memories, visions of the future or an imaginary realm of "the lost Paradise". The moon in its utmost phase ("the full moon", in Lithuanian) serves as the symbol of this realm and implies the fulfillment of the human existence as well. At the culmination of Soviet hardship this figure with a striking insistence marks titles of poetry volumes. The poetry of resistance represents an exception from this romantic usage, making the moon witness posthumous derision for tortured heroes, bodies of whom are left unburied in market places. In A. Cibulskis's poem the moon is being reached through the window of the prison cell — it would serve as the pillow for the dead friend.

The value of national sentiment and patriotic rhetoric was put into question by the post-war generation of exiled poets. Commonplace images, deprived of their sacral significance, correlate with the experience of destruction and desolation. The moon, falling to pieces, reminds of the destructive powers of history and serves as a metaphor for human destruction. The poem "Laterna magica" by H. Nagys shows us three Russian mounted soldiers, who thrice use their swords to cut the moon into pieces, while making their way through a Lithuanian village. A. Landsbergis in his novel *Journey* presents us a surrealistic picture of an air-raid, in which pieces of the moon, falling upon the city, are substitutes for bombs. In the novel *Isaoc* by A. Skema we come upon an erotic episode, in which the usual romantic function of the image is turned upside down; the male character (narrator) watches his beloved, pissing in the center of a moonlit room of their love-making. In his other novel, *White Sheet*, Skema makes use of the moon as a metaphor the destruction of the classical world and values; in an apocalyptic poem the main character the rising moon follows a funeral procession, crowning the head of the insane mother. Here we recognize

the semantic inversion of the iconic image of the Virgin Mary as the Queen of the World, in which the moon plays the role of an anti-authority.

A. Mackus, a representative of the so-called Generation without Ornament, invested the image of the moon with an utmost negative significance. The character of his poems is doomed to total desolation, being deprived of his parents, native language, country, God and faith in the eternity of the human soul. In the lines "black moonshine outlines silver beasts, tearing themselves to pieces" black light implies the total void of human existence. In the volume *Chapel B*, dedicated to Skema upon his death in a tragic incident on the road, we recognize the inversion of the ancient drama, which broke apart the celestial family. This time the Sun takes the place of the moon, breaking their matrimonial bonds for another — Western — moon, who "speaks a strange tongue," while the young woman (the Morning Star), being abandoned and left alone in the East, is doomed to suffer from the merciless power of the historical violation. Subsequently her image merges with that of the black Mary, the "negro Madonna" who, having suffered rape, gives birth to a child, still another victim of death. Africa with its colonial history becomes the counterpart of Lithuania, which has been deprived of its independence.

Liune Sutema, who belongs to the same generation of poets, speaks about a somnambulist and chaotic journey through life in search of the lost country [fatherland], language and beloved. The common fates of exiles merge with the personal tragedy of the poet, the death of her husband and the mental disease of her son. The bright light of the full moon leaves an unnoticeable trace of glow on the fingers; the child is deprived even of this ephemeron.

In Lithuania the image of a broken or a black moon is of rather a recent usage. The moon in its utmost phase [the full moon] has prevailed for a long period. This phenomenon, in part, can be ascribed to censorship with its restrictive control over the semantic and rhetoric freedom of literature. Many Lithuanians still remember their childhood poem about the boy, who after the journey to the moon found the dream-world of paradise: mountains of chocolate, rivers of lemonade, piles of candies. The moon is no longer just one celestial body among others. The so-called Cosmic era

gave birth to a Utopia: a distant land, which nevertheless remained within reach. While in the symbolic order the significance of the utopian realm was ascribed to the sweet home of childhood in the old Lithuanian village. In the so-called agrarian fiction the moon emerges as the representative of national identity and traditional values, threatened by Soviet reality (short stories by J. Aputis, B. Radzevicius, J. Granauskas can serve as good examples).

Love is still another Utopian realm, opposed to that of reality. Woman poets rather often make use of the Lunar cycle as an image, while talking about human life and its different periods. It serves to express the dialectics of a love relationship as well. The full moon becomes one of the central images in Degutyte's poetry. In this context her metaphor of the full moon, which becomes a mere ephemeron in one's palm, is granted a particular dramatic force. The parallel with the aforementioned Liune Sutema is rather obvious and witnesses a certain congeniality of the two women poets, who wrote in the same period. Nevertheless, Liune Sutema's moon, speaking for the tragic experience of exile, out-shines in its dramatic force that of Degutyte. Degutyte has the privilege of the sight of the moon in the landscape of her native country. And her metaphor, far from expressing the feeling of total desolation, speaks rather about the natural cycle and its inevitable power for an individual human life.

In love poetry, written by men, the moon preserves its distance as the celestial body. It appears as the supervisor of an erotic relationship, which gives it the first impulse and grants intimacy. The moon serves as a metonymical image for the feminine body (Bloze, for instance, employs the metonymy of the full moon for breast, and the half moon for lips). In the cycle of poems *A starling under the Moon* Geda revives the ancient story of the celestial drama, giving it a new interpretation. His poetic insight tells him that the old one, in which the Moon plays the role of the husband, was merely faked of Reza, who wrote the story down. The truth is, tells the poet, that the Moon is Earth's wife. This feminine figure of the moon is by no means an exclusive invention of Geda's imagination, but reveals a certain tendency, and a rather strong one, for the feminine moon, obviously, outshines its masculine counterpart in Lithuanian poetry. Poets are strongly inclined to use

for the moon those words which in the Lithuanian language are of feminine gender. However, we cannot have doubts about its masculine qualities in Bohemian poetry. The moon listens to a drunkard's confessions and is invited to share a glass of wine. Rather often it provokes dangerous bravado or a romantic adventure. Sancho Panza and Don Quixote, the heroes of the short story "The Meeting" by A. Ramonas, set up for a sea-journey towards unknown horizons at the first sight of the red moon. And, naturally, the moon is involved in the most masculine affair, which is war-making. Bloze compares it with the helmet of a German soldier, using it as a symbol for the destructive forces of history. Jewish kids from the novel *The Week of the Moon* by I. Meras are keeping vigil in the hope to see the full moon, which would be the sign for the planned escape from the ghetto. But at the decisive moment the full moon falls down to earth under their feet and outlines two figures in the empty street, implying the light of German lanterns.

The increasing tendency to substitute the moon, which is falling into pieces, for its full shape, marks the beginning of decisive changes in Soviet reality. In J. Ivanauskaite's novel *Children of the Moon* the moon appears as the god of death, who throws its light upon the whole generation of the eighties, doomed to chaos, insanity and early death through drugs. The literature of recent decades, quite rich in lunar symbolism, reveals two prevailing tendencies. The first one reduces the image to the function of a rhetorical ornament, using it as a cultural reference, paraphrase or even an empty sign, deprived of any significance. This tendency has gained power in the pop-culture of the last decade (advertisement, TV, popular magazines). The second usage, reviving the Gothic tradition (with its nightmare horrors, vampires etc.) represents a nihilistic attitude. The moon is granted the function of a negative authority, a death-bringing power. Such images, a sickle, a sword, a mill, a grave are particularly popular. The void occupies the celestial place of the moon, implying desolation and the total destruction of meaning. For the young poet Degesys the total eclipse of the moon even serves as the image for the creative act.

I believe that today we are still left a slight trace of the glow, which predicts the appearance of a bright moon in the sky of the third millennium, encouraging constructive efforts and giving us hope for a renaissance of meaning.

"Even a Highwayman, a House-Breaker or a Murderer": International Compassion as an Insufficient Universal

JIM HICKS

Like most academic work, this essay has a rather complicated genealogical history. Most crucial, perhaps, to its present form is a short paper by the historian Carlo Ginzburg entitled "Killing a Chinese Mandarin." In this essay, Ginzburg investigates the topic of compassion as an illustration of the tension between natural law and history. His typically wide-ranging commentary brings together examples from *Antigone* and examinations of a variety of eighteenth-century philosophers, it concludes with a brief, and grim, confrontation between "our feeble moral imagination" and contemporary advances in martial technology. The present essay will not be quite so eclectic, although it will, to some extent, repeat the historical juxtaposition made in the second and third parts of Ginzburg's essay. In essence, what I propose to do here is examine a particular social and cultural formation, that of compassion, which has remained remarkably stable throughout the modern period.[1] How this international formation relates to contemporary cultural nationalism, or even to nationalism during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I'm afraid, is too large an issue to address in a short essay, although I do hope at least to offer a

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[1]   My argument that compassion is a modern discursive and conceptual formation does take a somewhat distinct path in this regard from that of Ginzburg; any substantial discussion of such differences, I'm afraid, would require, at the very least, an essay of its own.

perspective suggestive of the direction in which such a discussion might lead.

The reference to Bosnia is a motivated one: the eventual aim of this paper will be to examine a contrasting pair of accounts of the former Yugoslavia by the American journalists Robert Kaplan and Chuck Sudetic. (Kaplan's book, *Balkan Ghosts*, was written in large part before the recent war and has often been said to have been influential, even instrumental, in setting the Clinton administration's early policy towards that conflict.[2] Chuck Sudetic, a Croatian American married to a Serb from Belgrade, was a stringer for the *N.Y. Times* during the war in Bosnia.) My thesis is that both journalistic accounts can be understood as following representational practices put into place during the eighteenth century, both are examples, broadly speaking, of a form of literature which, from the nineteenth century on, would be disparaged as "sentimental" but which, during the eighteenth century, existed as a complex configuration of psychological "sentiment", social "sensibility" and philosophical "sympathy".[3] Without going too far afield, I should add that the primary effect of such representational practices has been to create a societal equivalent for that "Great Divide" (between subject and object, nature and culture) upon

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[2]   This story, first reported by Elizabeth Drew of the *Washington Post*, has since been very widely circulated. See, for example, Drew's book *On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency*, as well as an article by Jason De Parle in the *New York Times* (August 20, 1995) and Yahya Sadowski in the *London Guardian* (August 1, 1998). In his career as pundit, Kaplan often takes positions diametrically opposed to those which his own book suggests. In the transcript of a CNN program on June 9, 1995, the host, Judy Woodruff, and Senator Dan Coats (Republic, Indiana) each virtually summarize Kaplan's book; Kaplan himself takes his distance from both and sides instead with Senator Joseph Lieberman (Democrat, Connecticut).

[3]   The latter term, sympathy, actually has an even longer and more complicated history, particularly insofar as it was used as a technical term in the Renaissance sciences of alchemy and astrology.

which the self-conceptionalization of modernity has been founded.[4]

In a passage from his *Discourse on Inequality*, one which has become something of a touchstone for recent American analyses of sentimentalism, Jean-Jacques Rousseau presents "the tragic image of an imprisoned man" who helplessly witnesses a mother and child being attacked by a savage beast.[5] Rousseau comments:

> What horrible agitation seizes [this man] as he watches the scene [...]! What anguish he suffers from being powerless to help the fainting mother and the dying child!

For the French *philosophe*, such a spectacle necessarily evokes a universal expression of sympathy, a sentiment which he portrays as so widespead that it is not even species specific. Oddly enough, however, Rousseau's acknowledged source for this scene of pathos and horror is Bernard de Mandeville, an essayist whom, as a follower of Hobbes and a prefiguration of Adam Smith, ought to have had rather different ideas about what his version of the scene portrayed.

In fact, in Mandeville, it is clear that the scene is ironic: even before viewing this portrait of compassion, we are told that the

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[4] For an analysis of twentieth century culture and its relationship with the "Great Divide," see Andreas Huyssen's study *After the Great Divide. Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism.* On the foundational importance of such conceptions for modernity, see Bruno Latour's *We Have Never Been Modern.*

[5] The scene in full, as depicted by Rousseau, is as follows: "the tragic image of an imprisoned man who sees, through his window, a wild beast tearing a child from its mother's arms, breaking its frail limbs with murderous teeth, and clawing its quivering entrails. What horrible agitation seizes him as he watches the scene which does not concern him personally! What anguish he suffers from being powerless to help the fainting mother and the dying child". My attention to this passage was a result of its analysis by Philip Fisher in the chapter on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in his book *Hard Facts.* In a recent conference on sentimentalism at Brown University, Nancy Armstrong commented that she, and Elaine Scarry as well, have frequently made use of the same Rousseau passage.

author considers the sentiment a "counterfeit Virtue"; he thus intends not to reveal, but rather to expose. In other words, the horrible, and horribly vivid, banquet that Mandeville's version offers up is actually designed to incriminate the compassionate observer. With his emotions exposed as vulgar, voyeuristic, even paidophagic, Mandeville's spectator is ultimately placed somewhere in moral proximity to the devouring beast. The author, and the right-feeling reader, on the contrary, are revulsed by such sentiments, they smile disdainfully at all those who would confuse such displays with virtue or charity; they, it is clear, neither enjoy nor attend spectacles of this kind, it's a question of taste. One might even wonder how Mandeville, holding his nose perhaps, ever managed to write such a passage.

Moreover, the scene as imagined by Mandeville is also much more detailed, its characters are given more than a moment's notice and a single gesture apiece. In its particulars, differences are even more striking: in Mandeville the "bête féroce," the one that counts, is a(n insufficiently domesticated) Sow, said to be "mad with hunger," and there is no mother for the child, there is only the confined observer and the "helpless Infant" (Mandeville 1924: 255). At a certain point, "our Cries" and "threatning Gestures" to no avail, we are allowed to imagine the "ravenous Brute" attacking, destroying and devouring, right before our eyes (without even the continued intervention of pronouns used in our name):

> To see [the Sow] widely open her destructive Jaws, and the poor Lamb beat down with greedy haste; to look on the defenceless Posture of tender Limbs first trampled on, then tore asunder; to see the filthy Snout digging in the yet living Entrails suck up the smoking Blood, and now and then to hear the Crackling of the Bones, and the cruel Animal with savage Pleasure grunt over the horrid Banquet; to hear and see all this, What Tortures would it give the Soul beyond Expression! (Ib.).

This, for Mandeville, is a clear, distinct and unadulterated example of Pity or Compassion, one with which even a Highwayman, a House-Breaker or a Murderer could sympathize; he defies the

opponents of his political views, moralists of the Shaftesbury school, to find better (ib. 254–256).

There are no doubt a myriad of conclusions that may be drawn from this juxtaposition of passages. First and foremost, it should be apparent that the politics of sentiment are by no means simple. Here we have both irony and sentimentality grounded in a single drama, a sort of Ur-scene of "the sentimental encounter"; both sentiments appear as two sides of the same representational coin.[6] Following the traditional classifications given to both Mandeville and Rousseau, I would push this interrelation even further and suggest that there exists a sentimentalism of the right which opposes itself to a sentimentalism of the left. The basis for such a distinction lies in the political disposition of subject positions which a given instance of representation sets up; insofar as it tends to collapse distance between subject and object, it can be read as progressive, insofar as it solidifies, or even increases, such distance, it is reactionary.[7] What I most particularly want to emphasize here, however, is that both irony and sentimentality, as forms of social discrimination, arise from a single, and strikingly artificial, source; the conclusions of both Mandeville and Rousseau depend on scenarios that are played out on abstract,

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[6] I borrow this phrase from an excellent essay by Carol McGuirk.

[7] John Muller's book, *Sentiment and Sociability*, contains a discussion which contrasts the philosophies of David Hume and Adam Smith in precisely these terms. Hume's explication of sympathy, according to Mullan, is grounded in the physical transmission of sentiments from observed to observer; Smith's lengthy treatise, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, begins with a denial of precisely this claim: "As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation. Though our brother is upon the rack [...] It is the impressions of our own senses only, not those of his, which our imaginations copy. By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them" (Smith 1976: 3–4).

ahistorical stages. It is my opinion that the sentimental encounter, in effect, created a sort of laboratory for the invention of modern subjects, one which corresponded, in both imagination and practice, to the creation of new objects within the laboratories of science.

When I began work on the first version of this essay, the refugee crisis in Kosovo was at its height and the NATO bombing campaign was only days away. After my class at Smith College one day that week, I attended a teach-in on the crisis. A Smith professor who has spent a good part of his career working with refugees and doing other human rights related work was the first to speak. He began by showing us a collection of news photos which he had accumulated from a variety of conflicts during the fifty-odd years since WWII. Each photo portrayed a nearly identical image, a mother and her child, invariably in the midst of desolation of one kind or another. The professor explained, with no trace of irony that I could detect, that within human rights organizations this image is commonly referred to as "The Madonna of the Refugees". His point was not, as mine is, to describe and reflect on the representational constraints and presuppositions which generate this image, time and time again. He simply wanted us to think about this woman with her child, to imagine ourselves in her place, and to remember her face the next time that history brought it to our attention. In this particular case, of course, that time was now: almost as if my colleague had predicted it, the very next cover of *Time* magazine portrayed a Kosovar Albanian woman, wearing a head-scarf and breast-feeding her child while carrying it through a crowd of other displaced Kosovars. The Madonna of the Refugees.[8]

Before I move to a discussion of the two journalists I mentioned earlier, let me attempt to make something as clear as possible. Much like Edward Said's *Orientalism*, which borrows its methodology from Foucault, the discussion which follows attempts to suspend the question of truth during its investigation of representation. In part, I do this for reasons common to Said and

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[8] Ironically, Sudetic's book itself, in its paperbook edition, was reissued with a somewhat similar cover.

Foucault, i.e., I believe there is much to learn from analyses which operate out of this sort of shift in focus (among other things, we may learn something about the rules of the game that make our representational practices possible). Particularly in subjects such as war journalism, however, suspending the question of truth is a risky business; it is also one which I am not at all certain is possible, or even desirable, to achieve, if such an accomplishment is thought to preclude other forms of more traditionally empirical historical investigation. Nonetheless, as a literary critic, formal analysis is inevitably one sort of work that I do and I do feel there is something to be gained from such work. To put it a bit too bluntly, the other sort of questions are better asked by people who have the knowledge, the training and the ability to answer them.

That said, and with the *Time* magazine cover still in mind, let us move to a discussion of the two journalists which I mentioned earlier. As I suggested above, Robert Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts* may eventually be a work more remembered for its reception than for its content. (Or so one might hope.) Its content, nonetheless, is nothing if not ambitious. Kaplan himself describes it as "not a typical [travel] book" (Kaplan 1993: x). He goes on to comment that, "It progresses vertically, in idiosyncratic fashion, from the most specific to the most general: from an essay about the war guilt (or innocence) of one Croatian cleric to a speculation about the fall of empires" (ib.). "Idiosyncratic" is a better choice of words than "progresses"; progress is in fact precisely what the book is *not* about. A statement near the end of his "Prologue" sums up Kaplan's view of his subject:

> This was a time-capsule world: a dim stage upon which people raged, spilled blood, experienced visions and ecstasies. Yet their expressions remained fixed and distant, like dusty statuary. ("Saints, Terrorists, Blood, and Holy Water"; ib. xxi)

The sentence which follows, and which makes the author's thesis explicit, is typical of Kaplan's ventriloquistic control over his sources: "Here, we are completely submerged under our own histories," Luben Gotzev, Bulgaria's former Foreign Minister, told me" (ib.).

Because it offers a distillation, in both form and content, of the work as a whole, Kaplan's prologue is also the quickest way to indicate how the book works. The overall form of both book and prologue is that of a pastiche or montage; in the six or so pages which lead up to my last citation, the prologue flips between (among other sites): a) an epic poem, b) a description of a medieval monastery, c) a contemporary "man on the street," d) an event from 1941 and e) [as we've just seen] Kaplan's thesis and a native informant. Let me quickly run through these passages with you, making a pastiche of my own out of Kaplan's:

> The "blind man is not hindered by eyes: he keeps [...] steady on the same road, like a drunk man holding onto the fence" [...] Apostles and saints intermingled with medieval Serbian kings and archbishops [...] elongated bodies and monstrous hands and heads. Many of the saints' eyes had been scratched out [...] "Do you know what it is to throw a child in the air and catch it on a knife in front of its mother?" [...] The Legionnaires packed the victims into trucks and drove them to the municipal slaughterhouse [...] Blood gushing from decapitated and limbless torsos, the Legionnaires thrust each on a hook and stamped it: "fit for human consumption" [...] This was a time-capsule world, a dim stage upon which people raged, spilled blood, experienced visions and ecstasies [...] "Here, we are completely submerged under our own histories."

What I intend to suggest is that Kaplan's prologue is, roughly, the literary equivalent of a certain kind of Hollywood movie preview; that such representation achieves its effects through the manipulation of sentiments should also be clear.[9] Defined in literary terms,

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[9]   It seems to me neither unfair, nor too far afield, to offer here a passage from Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy's commentary on two more extreme, and notorious, examples of this genre: "Were there time, it would be worthwhile to consider the style (if one can call it that) of these books, which resemble each other in many respects. In their composition as in their language, they proceed always by affirmative accumulation,

Kaplan's prose borrows most closely from sentimentalism's evil twin, the gothic. As Margaret Doody has pointed out, in sentimental literature a limited sort of Hobbesian world (a war of all against one) is confined to, and focalized on, its objects of pathos; in gothic fiction, that world becomes, at least potentially, an all-powerful force, one which threatens to overwhelm even the normally secure vantage point of the interpreting sensibility. (Hardly a surprise, then, that Kaplan's most famous reader wanted our boys to stay the hell out of Bosnia.)

To sum up: I read Kaplan's book as using typical sentimentalist representation for reactionary ends, more or less the reverse of how I read Rousseau. The next book I would like to discuss, Chuck Sudetic's *Blood and Vengeance*, manages a similar sort of reversal vis-à-vis Mandeville, using irony, that is, for what I read to be essentially progressive purposes. By definition, an ironic sensibility is aware that what is expected of it is precisely that which it is not willing, or able, to perform. In this, Sudetic is certainly no exception; here, from his prologue, is an explanation of the rules of the game for war journalism:

> There is a method to presenting the reality of war in *Times* style, a restrictive method but a perfectly valid one just the same. It focuses mainly on institutions and political leaders and their duties and decisions, while leaving the common folk to exemplify trends, to serve as types: a fallen soldier, a screaming mother, a dead baby [....] This method is described by various terms: detachment, disinterestedness, dispas-

never, or hardly ever, by argumentation. It's an often confused pile-up of the obvious (or at least of what is passed off as such), a tireless repetition of certitudes. They hammer at an idea, supporting it with whatever might seem to fit, without any analysis, without any discussion of objections, without any references. There is neither knowledge to establish, nor thought to overcome. There is only an already acquired, already available truth to declare. Already on this level, in short, they implicitly base themselves, not on a *logos*, but on a kind of mythic proffering, which is not however poetic, but which draws all its resources from the naked, imperious power of its own affirmation" (Labarthe, Nancy 1990: 304–305).

> sion, distancing, and others with negative prefixes
> engineered to obliterate any relationship between
> observer and observed. (Kaplan 193: xxxii)[10]

Sudetic's real story, in effect, begins where his war journalism ends; even if, in *Blood and Vengeance*, he will continue to record the macrohistory of politicians and institutions, as his subtitle reveals, Sudetic's true subject is the microhistory of a single refugee family, the Celiks, a family to which he happens to be related, a family whose road also happens to end up in Srebrenica.

Where Sudetic's war journalism quite literally ends, the last story he wrote for the *New York Times* before leaving Bosnia, was one which *The Times* refused to publish because its author would not take out the words "irrational" and "genocide." This story attempted to record those shootings and deaths which, in December of 1994, Sudetic could witness about once or twice a day from his fourth floor window at the Holiday Inn in Sarajevo. The "Putnik street killings" took place on two crosswalks which interrupt the main thoroughfare connecting the center of town with its largest residential areas. Each day, thousands of pedestrians would cross these crosswalks and each day some Serb sniper would have a shooting gallery full of thousands of targets. So far, nothing new.

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[10] When he goes on to describe his self-positioning as journalist, Sudetic's language is quintessentially ironic: "When I went to Bosnia to work, I used to imagine I had entered a great grassland teeming with life. 'I build a tower hundreds of feet high,' I told one of my friends. 'I climb it every morning and observe the wildlife devouring one another and struggling to survive down below' [...] I once walked through a town littered with the purple-and-yellow bodies of men and women and a few children [...] and I felt nothing; I strolled around with a photographer, scratched notes, and lifted sheets covering the bodies of dead men to see if they had been castrated; I picked up a white flag from the ground near the twisted bodies of half a dozen men in civilian clothes [...] and then I carried the flag home and hung it above my desk" (xxxii). The white flag, tacked up on the wall before him as he writes, is clearly the key to this passage. Both empty and violated by the war which he is employed to record, Sudetic, in picking up the flag, marks himself as at once victim, victimizer and witness to its crimes.

This much I am certain we all remember from the nightly reports. An innocent victim, struck down by a force of unmitigated evil and a helpless bystander serving as interpreting sensibility. (Does this scene sound familiar?) Each day, as Sudetic comments, "that day's horror from Bosnia would [...] be packaged and beamed to millions of viewers and readers, complete with pools of blood; the faces of one more bereaved friend, one more bitter comrade, one more childless mother or motherless child; and a smattering of 'political analysis' for garnish" (Sudetic 1998: 247).

Once again, however, the difference between the Rousseau version, which we all watched, and the scene à la Mandeville, lies in an exposition of the drama's horribly artificial construction. And here the players multiply. The U.N., for instance, occasionally placed armored cars to protect the crosswalks and occasionally tried to pinpoint the sniper's position; they also helped to "gather up any wounded or dead and truck them off to the hospital or morgue" (ib.). Furthermore, "[t]elevision crews always set up on the sidewalk before lunch. Some of them would focus their cameras on the crosswalks and keep the tape running" (ib.). Even more difficult to understand, perhaps, is that, as Sudetic also comments, "These deaths were practically suicides [...] The street running parallel to Putnik Street, about a hundred yards behind the Holiday Inn, had crosswalks shielded from the snipers by tall buildings and shipping containers" (ib.). In other words, the Sarajevans were risking their lives, each day, "for the sake of a shortcut and nothing more" (ib.). Sudetic concludes with an even harsher truth, pointing out that "[t]he Sarajevo government, the Muslim leadership, had not seen fit to rig up so much as a clothesline hung with bedsheets" to give the pedestrians cover from the snipers; moreover, "the city's police officers stationed at each end of this shooting gallery did not [even] bother to direct people away" (ib.). Finally, he sums up the picture:

> somebody, somewhere in the government [...] knew that the broadcasting of pictures of dead children and grieving mothers kept the Bosnian genocide from disappearing from the evening news in the powerful countries of the world [...] it was impossible not to

> draw the inference that these acts were committed in a conscious effort to garner sympathy and drag the international community toward military intervention (ib. 248).

Such acts are also, I think you will agree, the work of compassion in an age of digital reproduction.

That said, I am left, I am afraid, with a rather large question, the Tolstoy question. What is to be done? I have already suggested that I think the ultimate effect of Sudetic's deconstruction of international compassion is progressive. What I certainly do not want to do, however, is offer a simple attack on compassion (in favor of, for example, *Realpolitik*); such attacks on liberal sentimentalism, I hope to have made clear, begin at least as far as Mandeville and are themselves inseparable from the very structures that make the modern sentiment of compassion almost irresistible. To begin to understand how, in the case at hand, a deconstruction of compassion might conceivably be labeled "progressive," it will be necessary to examine the other half of Sudetic's dual focus — his attempt to replace both *Realpolitik* and compassion with a combination of folk and family history.

At one point, I thought that this aspect of *Blood and Vengeance* reminded me of nothing so much as the stories that Oliver Sacks has become famous for telling, stories where a patient suffers some great neurological trauma and yet heroically struggles to reconstruct him- or herself as a whole, fully-sentient, fully-functional human being. Such an analogy would be misleading: Sacks' stories, with their explicit celebration of the autonomous individual, are themselves quintessential modern. In the story Sudetic tells, on the other hand, modernity is the trauma rather than the patient. The heroic struggle that he records is a premodern family, a community, a way of life attempting to remain whole.

Given Sudetic's title, with its evocation of blood vengeance, such a description of the book's contents might seem, well, too affirmative. Unlike *Balkan Ghosts*, however, the book by Sudetic makes it clear that even archaic traditions of blood vengeance, when not manipulated by power-hungry politicians, are, like all systems of justice, attempts to contain violence, not proliferate it.

(Girard at least got that right.) The ultimate purpose of *Blood and Vengeance*, in other words, is not to report on some strange and archaic Balkan world, it intends instead to perform it – to recreate the lives, and the histories, of its subject people, what Sudetic calls "peasant Bosnia."

One of the moments in which this aim is most apparent is during the book's presentation of the life of Saliha Muratagic, a distant cousin to the Celik family. Saliha's father was executed in 1941, along with most of the Muslim men in Kupusovici (the Celiks' village) by Chetnik soldiers; their bodies were dumped into a deep vertical cave named Zvekara, near the top of Zvijezda mountain, above the village. Saliha's mother, two brothers and a sister were burned alive by Chetniks in a second massacre in 1942. Saliha herself later married and had six children; her husband eventually migrated to Austria, leaving Saliha and the children behind.

After two years of living, with her six kids, in the Celiks' basement while her own house rotted away nearby, the Celik men organized the help of the village in building Saliha a new house:

> Everyone knew Saliha. Everyone knew how she had been orphaned during the war. Everyone knew that her husband had abandoned her with six kids, and they knew that she had kept right on going without whining and moaning about it, as if it were the will of Allah and nothing more. All of the neighbors gave money, even some people farther down the mountain. Others promised to come up with building materials [...] A few weeks after Tito's state funeral, work began on the walls and roof of Saliha's new house. (Ib. 59–60).

As one might expect, however, there are more layers to this action than might at first appear. Sudetic continues the story with the following anecdote:

> Grandpa Avdija came and went to work beside Dragojle Radovanovic. The two old men drank together and told tales about the work camps after the war [....] The two men climbed up onto the new ceiling

> joists to put the roof on the house. They kept drinking and kept jabbering. It must have been the heat, but it was certainly helped by the brandy. Saliha looked over and saw Grandpa Avdija lose his balance and slip over the side of the house. Dragojle grabbed Avdija's legs before he tumbled to the ground, and the Serb held him there upside down, until Avdija recovered his wits and hauled himself up. They laughed and resumed hammering and sawing, and when the work was done they drank some more and ate the food the women kept bringing out. (Ib. 60).

If you have not read *Blood and Vengeance*, and if you are not familiar enough with Bosnian first names to sort them as Muslim, Serb or Croat, you might not realize, at least until Sudetic refers to Dragolje as "the Serb," that the point of this anecdote is to teach the reader something about relations between Muslims and Serbs in the mountain village of Kupusovici. Even this description, however, is once again insufficient. Relations in Kupusovici are not simply between ethnic, religious, or national identities, any more than they are simply between autonomous individuals. These particular individuals, like all others, have a history. If there is a difference to life in Kupusovici, it lies in the particular way in which individual histories are known. Sudetic closes his chapter by noting how the work finished that day, but also by summarizing historical facts for which no villager would have needed a reminder:

> [The two old men] took lead pencils, and on the joists supporting Saliha's kitchen floor they wrote their names: Avdija Avidic, the former storm trooper [and father of Hiba Celik]; Dragojle Radovanovic, the former Chetnik; Paja and Sead and Hamed Celik, the sons of [Hiba Celik and] Huso Celik, [the latter] the man whose mother nearly threw him into the creek the day after Dragojle wrote his father's name in a notebook and helped lead him off to the Zvekara cave. (Ib. 61).

The modern period, in the tradition of Rousseau and Mandeville, offers only two possibilities for interpreting these inscribed names, neither of which seems adequate to the task at hand. One might read the building of Saliha's house, and the companionship between Avdija and Dragojle, sentimentally, as evidence for the true multiethnic heart of Bosnia, a further sign that sympathy for the other goes at least as deep as our darker impulses. Or one might read the same events ironically, as both a perverse twist of fate and as an essentially superficial phenomenon, one which may temporarily hide that deeper, darker truth which a world war, a civil war or some other such "state of nature" would reveal.

The strength of Sudetic's book is that it shows us quite clearly what we moderns have to learn, both from Kupusovici and from the Celiks. In this, we share the perspective of the author's sister-in-law Gordana Todorovic, a Serb from Belgrade who happened to marry Hamed Celik (one of the names inscribed on Saliha's floor joist). When Gordana first visits Kupusovici, she is "dumbstruck to see the Serbs in the Celik home, drinking brandy, chatting, giving gifts. Hamed had told her the stories of war and left matters at that" (ib. 72). After Gordana asks how they can even talk to one of them, the Celiks shrug their shoulders and explain. The Serbs are their neighbors, like any neighbors. One had loaned them money, and Hamed's brother Paja had carried the funeral wreath for the father of another. The Celiks had lent money to the son of one Serb neighbor and helped the father to tile his bathroom. And Paja Celik, like his father, like his grandfather and his great-grandfather, like the "Celik men of generations long forgotten", continued to make his plum brandy, every autumn and spring, in his Serb neighbor's family still (ib.).

The point of such anecdotes, it seems to me, is to point out the insufficiency of a response of the sort which comes naturally to Gordana, as it would, no doubt, to many of us. It is typically modern to think that one can simply not talk to one's neighbors, just as it is typical to believe that either interethnic harmony or interethnic hatred is an answer or explanation of anything at all. Lives, and identities, in Kupusovici are composed, in part, of houses that are built, in part of lives that are saved, or sacrificed, in part by sides that are taken, and of course by the taking up of arms.

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Perhaps just as much, those lives are also composed of the histories, of the stories and of the legends which are told in whispers, or with laughter, inside the families or between them.

This is not to say that some events, and some stories, do not have deeper meaning than others, nor that the stories of death, or of atrocities, are not the most fundamentally significant in these lives that have seen, and are able to rehearse, so many horrors within their histories. To make such a claim would be to accuse the Kupusovici villagers of ignoring the very thing which they understand best. In fact, the truth is just the opposite. When, for example, a younger Huso Celik found out that his Uncle Avdo had sent a postcard gloating about the death of a Serb involved in the Zverara killings addressed to the man's son, Huso pleaded with the postmaster to let him search the sacks of incoming mail in order to intercept the card. "'That card will bring nothing but trouble,' Huso explained, 'And I've got to live in this place'" (ib. 63). If there is something that we can learn from the Celiks, it may perhaps be that – what it takes "to live in this place." In short, I mean to argue that the continued presence of premodern traditions within Sudetic's subject community must somehow explain, not merely (as in Kaplan) something about the atrocities of their recent history, it must also be the source of peasant Bosnia's ability both to limit and to survive such horror. This ability, in effect, may well be the former Yugoslavia's memo for the new millennium. Certainly we moderns have been much more successful at "atrocity management" than premoderns ever were.[11]

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[11] The phrase "atrocity management" is the title of an essay on the Kosovo crisis by Ed Herman. That moderns are less civilized than premoderns in this regard is argued by Bruno Latour in his book-length essay *We Have Never Been Modern*.

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Time magazine, cover photo. April 12, 1999.

Postmodern Emancipation from Meaning in the Discourse of Post-Socialist Latvian Literature

VALDA ČAKARE

Let me begin with an example from contemporary Latvian literature. In 1996, the annual prize for the best debut in poetry was awarded to a young and promising poet Kristīne Sadovska for her book *Jukusi saulespuķe* ('A Crazy Sunflower'). However, Kristīne Sadovska's poetry called forth not only songs of praise, but also severe criticism. She was blamed for creating poetic chaos, for playing with indeterminacies and aesthetic impurities, for an eclectic mixing of styles and focusing on fragmentary, disconnected, flat and one-dimensional images, which only refer to themselves, for blending cultural and stylistic levels and dissipating the meaningfulness of language. The scholar and literary critic Anda Kubuliņa wrote: "Poetry belongs to the high genres which never give up their dignity".

The straightforward rejection of Kristīne Sadovska's poetry by the critic is due to the fact that in this specific case the principles of poetry and the principles of evaluation belong to different aesthetic paradigms. The young poet derives her vision of the world from postmodern relativism, anti-systemism, eclecticism and disregard for hierarchy. The experienced critic in her turn insists that poetry should not only adhere to the elitism and essentialism of modernist "high art", but also strive for literary "graces" and "correctness" of style.

This is only one of the countless examples testifying to the fact that Latvian poets, writers, artists and critics are suffering from a disunion caused by diversities of aesthetic and ethic convictions.

The lines of demarcation are well defined — postmodern disregard for meaning can mainly be attributed to the young generation whereas modernist essentialism and concern with originality are the properties of the middle-aged and the elderly. I do not intend to utter battle cries for either side, but rather to address the features that characterize post-socialist Latvian literature at the turn of the millennium.

The point of departure of my paper is a self-evident statement that since the beginning of the 1990s Latvian culture has been experiencing a shift to postmodernism. I would like to develop this statement by drawing attention to some aspects of how this shift manifests itself in poetic texts. I am going to focus on the texts of pop songs — a marginal genre which has traditionally been deprived of theoretical exploration.

Under the Soviet regime, Latvian pop music used to be quite "academic". I am positive that people of my age and those who are older remember Soviet popstars dressed up in dinner-jackets and ties standing stiff and upright in front of the audience. Sometimes their songs served as a vehicle for Soviet ideology, sometimes as a vehicle for hidden protest against it, but they were always impregnated with meaning.

Songs written by the patriarch of Latvian pop music Raimonds Pauls were no exception to this rule. Moreover, in the 1970s and the 1980s Raimonds Pauls used to collaborate with the strongest and most talented Latvian poets — Imants Ziedonis, Jānis Peters, Māra Zālīte. The artistic value of their song-texts was so high that these texts could be separated (and often were separated) from the music and enjoyed as original, stylistically refined and meaningful poetry. It was only natural for audiences to expect something new both in style and subject matter.

In the 1990s the content-related problems have acquired a new shape. Alongside with the former practice of writing meaningful song-texts the recent history of popular music is marked by a trend towards evacuation of meaning. The aesthetic hooliganism of Roberts Gobziņš serves as the most convincing testimony to it. Gobziņš is in his mid-thirties now. Despite very limited professional training and lack of academic education he has become a cult figure among teenagers and those who feel at home in the

ephemeral, decentralized world of technology, consumerism and virtual reality.

Gobziņš' aesthetic activities encompass manipulations with already recorded songs. Modernist popular music can be understood as an attempt to fashion new and distinct forms out of previous styles. Gobziņš does not strive for innovation. He randomly picks Western pop songs and pastes them together with his own texts. When doing this, Gobziņš neither transmits the original meaning, nor does he create a new, completely different meaning which quite often was the case with songs by Raimonds Pauls. For instance, the Latvian text of Pauls' pop song "Dāvāja Māriņa meitenei mūziņu" ('Mara Gave a Lifetime to a Girl') enunciated flat truths about human fate and the heritage of the previous generations. The corresponding Russian text of the same song "Milion alikh roz" ('A Million of Bright Red Roses') was written as an equally flat enunciation of passionate love manifesting itself through millions of bright red roses.

Substituting Latvian texts by English texts, Gobziņš imitates the sound pattern and the syntactic pattern of the original. This kind of mimetic exercise has been well known in European literature since the time of neoclassicism when literature was conceived to be primarily a set of skills which must be perfected by a long period of study and practice. In his *Dichtkunst* the 17th-century literary scholar Martin Opitz offered a whole range of techniques which might be helpful in acquiring the skills of a poet. One of these techniques is a deliberate imitation of the syntactic and metric structure of the prior literary model. This kind of technique lies at the basis of parody which imitates the distinctive style of a particular author or genre and applies imitation to a lowly or comically inappropriate subject.

However, Roberts Gobziņš does not aim at parody. He does not aim at anything except the imitation of the vocal pattern of the original text. By doing this, he denies the communicative possibilities of language and admits the fact that poetic text is not convertible. In terms of semiotics, his texts function as a free play with signifiers which have lost all stable meaning. If any meaning appears, Gobziņš would not try to avoid it but he also would not try to maintain it. For instance, the famous song by N. Tennant

"Go West" in Gobziņš' Latvian translation sounds like "Dod ēst" which means "Give me something to eat". The phrase "I saw you dancing" is reproduced like "Man saujā benzins" which means "I have petrol in my palm". "You're in the army now" translates as "Kur indiāņi nav" which means "Where there are no Indians", while "Please, believe me" is converted into "Bīstams dzīvnieks" — "A dangerous animal".

It might be interesting to note that Gobiņš is not the first in the history of Latvian literature to make such experiments. In her comprehensive article about the most weird Latvian poet Jānis Steiks who lived and worked at the turn of the 19th and 20th century the literary scholar doctor Janīna Kursīte observes that Steiks was obsessed with searching for a similarity of sounds in different languages in order to detect a common meaning and establish fantastic etymologies. According to Steiks, there is a sole source of all the names — the Latvian language. For instance, New York is pronounced in Latvian as Ņujorka. Consequently, it comes from "nu, Jurka" which means "well, George". Warsaw (Varšava) comes from "var šaut" ("you can shoot"), Odessa (Odesa) — from "o, desa!" ("oh, sausage!"). At first sight the experiments of Roberts Gobziņš seem to be very much like those of Jānis Steiks. However, Gobziņš does not take an interest in fantastic etymologies, he imitates sounds and sound structures just for the sake of imitation.

This is quite different also from the avant-garde of the beginning of the 20th century, when the same technique was utilized to create a unique, incomparable, new work of art. I would rather associate Gobziņš with a trend of contemporary performing art which is signified by the verb "to lipsync" (lip+to synchronize). To lipsync means to move one's lips silently in order to imitate singing to the accompaniment of a recorded song. Gobziņš goes still further, not only moving his lips, but also filling the space with the sound of his own text which has preserved the appearance of the original. From the modernist perspective, the linguistic manipulation carried out by Gobziņš demonstrates how loyalty to the letter (the sound image of the text) kills the spirit of the text.

The French playwright of the absurd Eugène Ionesco considered it to be the tragedy of language that words were meaning-

less and that all communication among human beings was impossible, since words could not reveal fully and precisely the personal associations resulting from the experience of each individual. By the end of the 20th century, this tragedy has turned into a comedy: from the perspective of postmodernism there is nothing to reveal. The world is essentially meaningless. Therefore Robert Gobziņš and other activists of Latvian popular culture like Ufo, Fredis, Loks, Švāns, willingly accept the real world just as an extension or the act of fiction-making.

You might ask me the question why I have chosen a minor figure who indulges in assassinating art in the modernist sense of the word as the topic of my paper. In order to appreciate the aesthetic activities of Gobziņš one needs neither deep knowledge and experience, nor taste. The only thing one should have is a perfect knowledge of Western pop songs and the clichés of mass culture, as well as an awareness of the poststructuralist idea that man is governed by language, not the other way round. My answer would be that in the first place, the song-texts written by Gobziņš can serve as a most eloquent sign of the fact that after roaming through the Western countries the spectre of postmodernism has reached Latvia. However, as an aesthetic style postmodernism could not have been possible without postmodernity as a political and cultural reality.

Secondly, from the perspective of postmodernism the binary oppositions between the high and the low, between literature and non-literature have been undermined. Consequently, there is no reason to qualify the aesthetic activities of Roberts Gobziņš as second-hand commodities and keep them in the periphery of critical thought.

Last but not least, emancipation from meaning in song-texts by Roberts Gobziņš is an ambivalent phenomenon. Certainly, it is a manifestation of postmodern indifference. But it is also a kind of challenge and protest against traditionally meaningful metanarratives which have been brought to a compromise by the social authorities of post-colonial and post-socialist Latvia. So why not play with texts whose meaning is missing? It is less hypocritical than to indulge in ideological illusions which are aimed only at maintaining economic and political hegemony.

Women's Time and Female Chronotypes in Matilde Serao's *Checchina's Virtue* and Franca Rame's *Waking up*

ANNA BOTTA

In her well-known article from 1979 entitled "Women's Time," Julia Kristeva asserts that "it could even be demonstrated that World War II brought an end to the nation as a reality" (Kristeva 1981: 13). Although, in my opinion, such demonstration is hardly self-evident — particularly as the question is still being debated in conferences such as the one held in Tartu in October 1999 — Kristeva's article nonetheless had the merit of calling critical attention to various kinds of social ensembles which are superior to the nation. Such sociocultural groups, while bearing the specific traits of their place of production, are traversally connected to other sociocultural formations according to their role in the mode of reproduction and its representations (ib. 15). "The symbolic denominator" of such groups are the responses which they have given to the problems of reproduction (survival of the species, life and death, the body, sex, and symbol) rather than to the problems of production (which pertain to the domain of economy) (ib. 14). As a sociocultural group defined by sexual divisions, women of Europe are not only "women of Europe", "but [...] echo in a most specific way the universal traits of their structural place in repro-duction and its representations" (ib. 15). Although they belong to the linear time of history (Europe reinventing itself at the end of the millennium), these "women of Europe" also represent a much broader history, Nietzsche's monumental time, a history which encompasses supranational and perhaps universal traits.

Such a sociocultural group, women of Europe, offers a valid methodological tool for an inquiry on time and, more specifically, on the epistemic shift which such basic categories, like time, have undergone in our post-industrial societies. The analysis of women's temporal experience is important for two reasons: first, it has led social and philosophical studies to revise their discipline in order to account for the complexities of that experience and, second, by juggling heterogeneous temporal dimensions in their everyday activities, women might help in constructing a counter-response, a "new economy of time" (Sirianni), which addresses problems, both national and international, which afflict the dominant culture of today's Europe.

But, first, allow me a brief detour into the historical origins of our modern sense of time. In 1489, in his *Family Books* (*I libri della famiglia*), Leon Battista Alberti commented:

> In order to avoid that one task gets confused with another or to avoid finding myself having begun many tasks and not completed any, or possibly, to find that I had done only the worst job, and left behind the best one, in order to avoid all this, do you know, my children, what I do? The morning, before getting up, I think to myself in the following manner: today, what will I have to do? Many things: I make a note of them, I think of each of them, and to each of them I assign its own specific time: this task this morning, that one later today, that other one tonight. In this way, I attend in orderly fashion, without effort, to each of my affairs. (Alberti 1969: 214–215)[1]

Already in the Italian Renaissance, Alberti's temporal ethics, his utilitarian conception of time as a manageable resource, gave theoretical form to that feeling of domination over human time which clock towers had been realizing in a concrete way within urban landscapes since the first part of the fourteenth century.[2] The

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[1]   All translations of Italian texts are mine.

[2]   The invention of the clock dates from the end of the thirteenth century; during the first half of the following century, it begins to be displayed in church towers and town hall belfries, primarily in large urban areas

time of modernity is urban time and it is born in the Renaissance city, a city whose spaces are conceived in order to frame and organize everyday life in a chronological network. Breaking away from the uncertain and episodic time known to medieval society, the fifteenth-century city poses itself as the privileged locus of rational management of space and time. For Leon Battista Alberti, time, like space, is a homogeneous and uniform continuum which can be employed to promote the social mobility and mercantile dynamism typical of his Florentine society.

The distribution of everyday business ("faccende") is a recurrent theme in Alberti's *Family Books*. For the virtuous man, time is understood as "la stagione delle faccende"; each period must correspond to a single "faccenda" which is separated from others by well-marked temporal limits. *Otium* is banned as the useless waste of a precious commodity:

> As for time, I therefore try to use it properly and I seek not to waste any of it [...] In order not to loose any bit of such a precious thing, I follow this rule: never find myself in otium; I avoid sleeping [...], keeping myself always busy doing something. (Alberti 1969: 214–5)

Alberti's narrator lives in his busy present, always ready to seize the right moment ("il tempo giusto"). The Renaissance city offers him the images and devices by which to measure that present and fully valorize its potentialities. In particular, because of their privileged position on public buildings in urban landscapes, in this period clocks become closely linked to the new connotations of

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(Northern Italy, Catalunia, Northern France, Southern England, etc.) (Le Goff 1977: 34, as quoted by Paolucci 1983: 81–82). The first church clock tower in Florence was built in 1354 (Le Lionnais 1959: 30).

As will be clear in the following pages, Gabriella Paolucci's outstanding work, *Tempi postmoderni. Per una sociologia del tempo nelle società industriale avanzate*, has been a major source for this article. Although I conclude the essay with an implicit criticism of her work, this essay would clearly not have been possible without her major contribution to the sociological study of time.

productive time. Both Lewis Mumford and D. S. Landes have acknowledged the primary function that mechanical clocks performed in the shaping of the modern period and the historian Jacques Le Goff has demonstrated how the clock made it possible to substitute the sixty minute hour for the "journée," the previous time unit which was used to measure peasant labor during the Middle Ages (Le Goff 1977: 26–28).[3] Thanks to clocks, time becomes a social institution, a socially accepted discipline which rules the behavior of citizens:

> Being a lay instrument par excellence, the urban clock becomes thus one of the main instruments used to rationalize and control the practices which take place in the city. The time measured by the clock is thus the time of power, a tool of economic, social and political domination in the hands of the merchants who manage the economic and political life of the city. (Paolucci 1983: 82)

In a society which considers time as a consumer good subject to diligent administration, the temporal divisions of the clock are magisterial practices which contribute in maintaining and perpetuating the dominant class and gender's representation of time.

Leon Battista Alberti 's *Family Books* has been often cited as the most eloquent expression of the Florentine merchants' calculating morality and its transformation of everyday urban life into a temporal machine.[4] His work had a central role in codifying the most basic images inherent in the "status" of modern time: the vectorized temporal arrow subdivided into measurable distinctions, the disciplinary practice inseparable from an ethics of maximized activity. Indeed, temporality understood in such a fashion became so engrained in the following centuries that it eventually came to be considered as a universal and a priori category. It took the

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[3] See also L. Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (1934) and D. S. Landes, *Storia del tempo. L'orologio e la nascita del mondo moderno* (1983).

[4] In his *Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1922), Max Weber, for instance, saw in Alberti a key precursor for the ethics of capitalism.

epistemological break of our post-industrial era to point out the problematic nature of such notions of time. The paradigmatic shift in the basic categories through which human beings construct metropolitan reality has led our era to question such naturalized conceptions of time.

At the turn of the 19th century, Emile Durkheim and his collaborators were the first to emphasize the historically and socially determined nature of temporal experiences and point out the connections between the tempo of modern social life and its category of time. In so doing, Durkheim laid down the foundations for that outburst of sociological studies on human temporal structures which has characterized the second half of the twentieth century.[5] In such a context, women's temporal experience has been seen as paradigmatic of the ways of representing and using time which are typical of postmodern societies. By pointing out the conjunction of the sexual and the symbolic, feminist studies have shown that gender plays an important role in the social regulation of time and that temporal experience is a sexually-coded construction. By revealing the fragmentary and heterogeneous quality of women's time, sociological studies have also brought attention to the strong connections between temporal experiences and the new fluid form of female identity which characterize contemporary European women (Rosi Braidotti, for instance, calls such an identity, "nomadic subject").

The epistemological revaluation resulting from the introduction of the women's point of view into the sociological analysis of time can also be seen in literary works, many of which depict the relationship of women to the sociosymbolic contract as a sacrificial contract. Matilde Serao and Franca Rame are two obvious examples of women authors who, in two rather different periods, have devoted their writing (and acting, in Rame's case) to the representation of women's social experience. They have excelled in showing how the specificity of women's experience can only appear as non-essential, or even nonexistent, to the totalizing male ideology which their narrative and dramatic situations present. The difference in experience of their women characters is often

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[5] See, for example, N. Elias, A. Giddens, C. Sirianni.

sacrificed to the demands of a society that does not recognize the relationship between the symbolic and the sexual. As Julia Kristeva has argued:

> Sexual difference — which is at once biological, physiological, and relative to reproduction — is translated by and translates a difference in the relationship of subjects to the symbolic contract which is the social contract: a difference, then, in the relationship to power, language, and meaning. (Kristeva 1981: 21)

It is also true that, in the translation of the social contract into its symbolic form, questions of representation and narrative structure have a central role. In the cases which I analyze here, a story and a theatrical monologue, time is constructed most explicitly through distinctive narrational attitudes. In the commentary which follows, I will examine the particular chronotypes which characterize Rame's theatre and Serao's novella.[6] Among the questions which need to be asked are the following: how do particular chronotypes contribute to the formation of women's identity? in what ways does the fabrication of these new chronotypes build on, expand, and revise the predominant symbolical order? what are the technologies that enable such chronotypes to be constructed? what is the relation between temporal construction and empowerment?

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[6] The term is used by John Bender and David E. Wellbery in the title of their collection of essays on cultural temporal patterns: *Chronotypes. The Construction of Time*. Their term makes an evident reference to Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotopes (which designate characteristic time/ space formations in specific narrative genres); Bender and Wellbery define their use more precisely as follows: "[c]hronotypes are models or patterns through which time assumes practical or conceptual significance. Time is not given but [...] fabricated in an ongoing process. Chronotypes are in themselves temporal and plural, constantly been made and remade at multiple individual, social, and cultural levels. They interact with one another, sometimes cooperatively, sometimes conflictually. They change over time and therefore have a history or histories, the construal of which itself is an act of temporal construction" (Bender, Wellbery 1991: 4).

and finally, how might a reading which brings together these two texts account for a plurality of contrasting chronotypes?[7]

Perhaps the most evident similarity in the texts by Rame and Serao is the dominant role of the clock in the life of their respective female protagonists. Matilde Serao's *La virtù della Checchina* (*Checchina's Virtue*) was first published in four installments in *La Domenica Letteraria* in 1883.[8] It takes place in the 1880s Rome, "in King Umberto's Rome, a city which had become the consolidated political and business capital of liberal Italy" (Iermano 1999: 175). With an unprecedented realism, one which demonstrates great knowledge of both the feminine psyche and the women's domestic environment, Serao's novella describes a young woman who attends to her everyday house chores. In many respects, the story is similar to Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. Checchina is also the young and unhappy bride of a doctor (who, on the contrary, moves at ease within the dynamics of his bourgeois life). Toto Primicerio, like Madame Bovary's Charles, could also be described as "accoudé sur son bonheur". Checchina, like Emma Bovary, is fascinated by a young aristocrat who stumbles into her life by chance and breaks its monotonous marital routine. While for Emma, Rodolphe is only the first in a series of lovers who will cause her financial ruin and eventually her suicide, Checchina fails twice to meet the marquis of Aragon in his apartment and she therefore maintains the "virtue" which is indicated by the title of Serao's novella.

The principal cause of this failed adultery is not, however, moral scruples, but simply ... her lack of a timepiece. (Her husband, the good bourgeois citizen, is also the only one in the household who possesses a watch.) Once Checchina is out of her house, outside of her own routine and outside of her husband's control, she feels so lost that she eventually realizes her inability to live within the new temporal chronotype which an adultery would entail. The novel ends with her silent renunciation: "Then

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[7] My methodological questions are also modeled after those asked by Bender and Wellbery (1991: 4).

[8] The novella was later collected in a volume together with the collection of short stories *Il romanzo della fanciulla*.

Checchina lowered her head and, giving up, went back home"
(Serao 1985: 256).

Far from being a story of romantic, unruly passions which the
subject matter could lead one to expect, *Checchina's Virtue*
concerns itself much more with meticulous descriptions of house
labor and with the managing of a domestic economy. From the
first paragraph (where the servant Susanna goes to open the door
wearing a greasy and smelly apron and with a rag in her hands),
we enter into the life of a bourgeois household, a domain whose
day is "operosamente" ("diligently") measured by a series of
routines. Checchina and Susanna, often clothed in their aprons and
donning handkerchiefs, are described rubbing wood furniture with
oil (ib. 214), dusting (ib. 238), managing the house finances with
the little money that Toto gives them (ib. 224) and inspecting the
laundry brought by the "lavandaia." In addition, Checchina, by
herself, also brushes the shoulders of her husband's coat (ib. 215),
plans the dinner menu (ib. 216–217), makes gnocchi and an
accompanying sauce, bakes a cake (ib. 217), embroiders kitchen
towels (ib. 225), mends worn-out gloves (ib. 242), inspects the
house to check its cleanliness (ib. 225) and polishes the marble top
of her toilette (ib. 238). Susanna, in the meantime, is in charge of
shopping and other culinary tasks [skimming off the broth (ib.
215), punching holes in the lamb which is to be roasted (ib. 232)
and cleaning and sorting lentils (ib. 240)]; she also buys the coal
(ib. 218), deals with household goods suppliers (ib. 224), scrapes
the kitchen table (ib. 228), cleans the oil lamps (ib. 240) and
combs her mistress' hair (ib. 224). Each activity is described only
briefly, but invariably with a few touches which nevertheless show
Serao's intimate knowledge of this female world.

As the above list indicates, Checchina's and Susanna's day is
studiously spent in multiple activities; Alberti would praise them
as "virtuous women," who efficaciously employ their time in many
"faccende", never wasting their hours in *otium*. Not altogether
surprisingly, the incursion of "the beau marquis of Aragona" (ib.
249) into Checchina's life also marks one of her first failures in
performing her house chores, one of the first glitches of her well-
oiled temporal machine:

> She began to embroider in red, with the initials A. P.
> and with a progressive number, some new towels [...]
> She worked for half an hour, as in a dream, trying to
> overcome her sleepness, applying herself to count the
> threads, while her lids lowered [...] her hands laid on
> her lap, motionless. (Ib. 225).

Instead of working, at this moment, Checchina falls prey to day-dreaming and later we learn that she has to redo her work (ib. 231–232). After dinner, she either sits apathetically, "crumbling the roasted chestnuts' skins in many pieces" (ib. 231) while Susanna clears the table or she wastes time, reading over and over again the marquis's "billet doux" (ib. 249).

Such interruptions in Checchina's productive use of time are the first symptoms of her rebellion against the dominant chronotypes of her domestic regime. It is evident that she is also rebelling against her husband's clock-regulated time and the Church-oriented chronotype as expressed through the character of the servant [in one significant passage written in free indirect discourse, Checchina refers to Toto and Susanna as "her two enemies" (ib. 236)].[9] There is, however, a third chronotype at work in her household, one which intersects and combines with the other two. Many of the household chores performed by the two women follow a different temporal schedule than that which is dictated by mechanical clocks or religious prayers. Even today, domestic work is predominantly oriented to the activities themselves and is not in function of the mechanical divisions of hours. The term used by contemporary sociologists and anthropologists to designate such a productive strategy is "task orientation."[10] E. P. Thompson writes that task orientation is a form of temporal

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[9] Le Goff has shown how the chronotype of modern time created by Florentine Humanism was a lay version of the strictly regulated timetable which ruled monastic life in the Middle Ages (Le Goff 1977: 38). The church bell divided the monks' day into a succession of periods dedicated to prayers and work. In Serao's short story, the servant Susanna's time is equally divided between house chores and Church services.

[10] See Thompson 1967.

organization substantially conditioned by the interaction between
different productive situations and their connection with natural
rhythms:

> The way of measuring time as described by task
> orientation [...] is perhaps the most efficient way in
> peasants' societies [and] it still plays an important
> role in domestic and village activities. (1981: 7)

Although task orientation does not exclude attention to tempo-
rality, this is a different form of attention from the one dictated by
mechanical clocks. Dusting furniture, scraping a table top, em-
broidering and laundry are all activities which make up
Checchina's day without being fully determined by the succession
of hours (as is meal preparation, for example). Task orientation is
possible wherever the demands for synchronization are low, as in
peasant societies or pre-capitalist economies. But this form of
temporality has also characterized women's labor in domestic
settings, in both industrial and post-industrial societies, in oppo-
sition to the dominant male chronotype ruled by mechanical time.

If the industrial society — the society of Matilde Serao's
time — privileged work organized on the basis of timed labor and
tended to cancel out a chronotype such as the one of task orien-
tation, the post-industrial society, on the other hand, has revalued
that discarded cultural formation. The technological transforma-
tions which have contributed to make knowledge into the primary
productive force of the post-industrial era, have also greatly
reduced the importance of time measurement in labor manage-
ment.[11] The wealth produced in our post-modern economy thus
depends not so much on the quantity of labor (the hours employed
in a task), it rather depends on the quality of knowledge which the
machines assimilate. The changes in the current status of know-
ledge have ended up by determining a sense of time closer to the
model of task orientation than to the equation between time and

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[11]   See Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*. Lyotard's
seminal work for the study of the postmodern paradigm was written in
1979, during the same years in which feminist studies were most active
in exploring the difference of women's sociosymbolical experience.

money. In this respect, women's family labor, such as Checchina's microactivities within her domestic economy, have become paradigmatic of the temporal experience of our post-modern condition.

Checchina, however, is not conscious of the subversive character of her domestic chronotype nor is she aware that it could be used by her to affirm her difference vis-a-vis her husband's ethics of calculation. On the contrary, her desire for emancipation takes the shape of an imagined interior — a confused projection of a luxurious room, sheltered from the outside by rich curtains, soft cushions and delicate perfumes. In her fantasies, the apartment of the marquis of Aragon takes on connotations which oppose those carried by her home and her everyday life. The interior decor of the latter is connoted as cold, uncomfortable, cheap and colorless (the long description of her living room sets up this atmosphere from the beginning of the novella). Toto's insistence on pecuniary value and his stinginess make her life miserable; even her most minimal desire for new clothing is systematically turned down on the pretence that she is too coquettish. In response, she dreams of leading a life of excess, one which would disrupt her husband's petty economy. The only hint of such a life, however, comes to Checchina through her friend Isolina, who has a good deal of experience in extramarital affairs. But Isolina gives a very disappointing picture of her life of adultery. In conversation, she obsessively comments on the price of every single luxurious item which she has bought for her various rendezvous (Isolina's wasteful spending thus strangely comes to resemble Checchina's husband's economic thriftiness; both are caught in the same economic value system). When describing her visits to her lovers' apartments, Isolina complains how clock-regulated even the time of desire and excess is.

> You can't believe how terrible it is not to have a watch when one has a lover! One always has the wrong time. You get there and it's too early; he isn't there; it's a slow death. You arrive late, a quarter of an hour has gone by and he pouts for the next quarter of an hour; it bothers men to have to wait. Or you're at his place, every five minutes you ask him: what time is it? He gets annoyed by that question. You

> always return home late, with such a puzzled face that it's a miracle it doesn't betray you. My God, what would I do to own a watch! (Serao 1985: 235)

Checchina first listens to her friend and, then, when she is alone, begins crying: "She cried because she had none of those things which are needed when in love" (ib. 235). Her disappointment is in finding out that even the fulfillment of her desires would have to take part in the same regime of mechanical time from which she desires to escape. Already in her nervous insomnia during the night before her planned rendezvous, we see Checchina frantically rehearsing the itinerary from her place to the marquis's apartment with maniacal chronometric precision:

> She would go, yes, she had to go, since she had said yes, that evening, when he had kissed her. How long would it take from Bufalo to Santi Apostoli Street? May be ten minutes, on foot. No, more, may be twelve. (Ib. 236).

Yet, when the day comes and the hour for her romantic tryst approaches, she realizes that she has no way of knowing the exact time: "Finally, it must not have been so late: he had said from four to six. But she had no watch [...] She had no idea of what time it was, nothing" (ib. 244).

Overtaken by such practical obstacles (no watch, no money, no umbrella), Checchina finally renounces becoming an adulterous wife. The Cerberus-like figure of the vulgar doorman whose presence dissuades her from entering the Marquis's building is only the final representation of that male domination which has already disempowered her by denying the specificity of her temporal experience. Within that male-dominated utilitarian morality, the highest compliment a woman can receive is one which hints at her ability to function in everyday life with a clock-like precision. The tobacconist whom she meets in the street expresses his admiration for her by saying: "Always precise, always good, Mrs. Checchina: eh, there aren't many women like that left around!" (Ib. 252).

Unlike the feminists of Franca Rame's generation, Checchina has no language in which to theorize sexual difference and it is

therefore next to impossible for her to devise practices of resistance to the dominant chronotype.[12] The time of adultery, as described by Isolina, is simply another temporal construction of male empowerment, equivalent to that used by Toto in ruling his daily routines (meal time, his afternoon siesta, his practice, his visit at the hospital). In the end, Checchina remains virtuous, but her virtue is purely that of temporal economy; in short, she behaves like Alberti's virtuous man, one who knows how to manage precious time. Such virtue, for Checchina, cannot belong to the symbolic, it instead points out the agonizing gap between the symbolic representations of her desires as well as her otherness (*alter-ation*) from the dominant chronotype.[13]

Franca Rame's *Waking up* (*Il risveglio*) was first written and performed in 1977, during the heat of the Italian feminist struggle on major women's issues [e.g. the campaigns to obtain a new bill of rights for families (1975), the parity of labor conditions for both women and men (1977), the right to divorce (1970) and abortion (1978)]. The piece is therefore strongly endebted to the collective history of those years, although in a 1977 interview, Franca Rame

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[12] As a consequence of the processes of urbanization and industrialization, between the end of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century, there is an increasing demand for watches in Europe and in the United States (Landes 1984: 331, as quoted by Bruni in Serao I).

[13] In his essay *Time and Creation*, the philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis considers time to be a form of diversity which manifests itself in two distinct manners (Bender and Wellbery 1991: 38–64). First, it organizes time as difference, as quantifiable distinctions governed by a single Law (we recognize here Alberti's time arrow). Such diversity, however, can also be conceived in a second way, as relation rather than difference. Castoriadis calls this relation "otherness," a radical heterogeneity, and argues that such time is *alter-ation*, the becoming of alterity. Whenever new forms appear (in nature, society, or individual experience), otherness happens. This is clearly the case with women's experience of time; their otherness is *alter-ation* because it destructs pre-existing forms of time and calls for the creation of new forms.

also comments on her personal involvement with this particular monologue.[14]

Waking up is the monologue of a woman worker who wakes up late because her alarm did not go off. She then has to get ready for work at the plant, as well as wake up her baby and get him ready to go to nursery school. The protagonist does everything in a chaotic frenzy; things are misplaced, objects are lost, the baby receives the wrong care, and, throughout the play, she gives her audience a minute-by-minute commentary on both her present and recent past (for instance, misplacing her apartment key and arguing with her husband the previous night). Moreover, throughout all this frenetic activity, that same husband continues to sleep in the back of the stage.

In short, Rame's monologue could be read as a grotesque parody of Alberti's passage from *Family Books* which I quoted at the beginning of this essay. Like Alberti, Rame's protagonist is involved in many "faccende" at the same time. In sociological terms, we could say that her temporal experience, like that of many contemporary women, is highly fragmented, stratified and heterogeneous; one single period of her day is constituted by the overlapping and interlacing of different, and often conflicting, time allocations (Paolucci 1983: 102). While Alberti, at the outset of his morning, had time to reflect on the course of his day's events and to plan their course, the alarm clock ejects Rame's protagonist from her nightmare into the *hic et nunc* of her everyday activities. In real time, for a half hour, the audience watches this woman attending to the routine she performs every morning from six thirty to seven. It is evident that she is unable to find time for reflection within the thick materiality of her everyday experience. In her

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[14] As quoted by Marga Cottino-Jones (1995: 330). *Il risveglio* is part of a collection of monologues, *Tutta casa, letto e chiesa*, which marks the debut of Franca Rame as both coauthor with Dario Fo (the first 1977 edition carries both of their names) and as actress in one-act monologues staged on untraditional stages where props were often reduced to their bare minimum. All Rame's monologues quoted in this article are from that collection (which was partially translated in the English edition entitled *Female Parts*).

actions, we can see no sense of a project (which would involve a vectorial temporality directed towards the future, as the place assigned to the realization of goals); instead, she devotes her exclusive attention to the present, as if she were engulfed in what Italo Calvino calls "il mare dell'oggettività" ("the sea of objectivity") (*Una pietra sopra*).

Nonetheless, one purpose of the protagonist's ongoing commentary is to impose a rational, chronological order of linear narration onto her disordered "faccende" and thus to make them appear as if they were a planned chain of events. The failure of her attempt to impose such an order is precisely what Rame's play performs. Whereas Alberti concludes, with evident self-satisfaction, "In this way, I attend in orderly fashion, without effort, to each of my affairs" (ib. 215), Rame's narrator proves herself unable to master her many activities. Unlike Checchina who seemed to fit the image of the perfect housewife, the protagonist of *Waking up* projects the image of a rather disorganized, scatterbrained mother and housewife, one who, for instance, forgets her baby in the closet:

> I go to the closet and I take the baby basinette, keeping the key in between my teeth...
>
> I set down the baby basinette here, I look for my baby ... the baby is not there! I've lost my baby! Where did I put my baby? In the fridge ... in the dishwasher ... in the closet!
>
> I'd put it in the closet'!! (Rame 1989: 29–30)

From her own words, we also learn that she put the detergent box in the fridge instead of the milk bottle, that she sprinkled parmesan cheese instead of talcum powder on her baby after bathing it, and that she mistook a can of spray paint for her deodorant.

The conflict brilliantly depicted by Franca Rame is thus the one between the clock's mechanical time (the chronotype which rules the measurement of productive time in plants, factories, offices, kindergartens, popular housing, etc.) and the more flexible hours of family time and care duties. Rame's parody reaches Rabelesian proportions when the woman comments:

> O my ... he did it! Pooper of a pooper ... How many
> times I must tell you that you must poop at the
> kindergarden. You must poop at two minutes past
> seven, so it is the young kindergarden nun who
> changes your diaper! (Ib. 31).

In this first part of the play, it is evident that the strong ac-
celeration of social tempos in our postmodern era has affected both
women and men. Both sexes have experienced the inhuman as-
pects of capitalistic industrialization which have developed
Alberti's modern chronotype to its most extreme consequences.
The ruling of the factory's mechanical time has become so power-
ful that it has also invaded her hours of sleep; at the opening of the
play, she is having a nightmare punctuated by the accelerated
tempo of her factory work on the assembly line.

Even if the husband sleeping in the backstage is probably
having a similar nightmare, it is evident that the woman, as house-
wife and mother, manages a much more complex web of time
allocations than he does. The description of her morning routine
shows, on the one hand, the difficult commensurability of the
different chronotypes which are experienced by women who live
the "double-presence condition" (women who are simultaneously
engaged both in the paid labor force outside their home and in
unpaid domestic work), but also shows, on the other, their
potential for flexibility and resistance in responding to rigidly
structured social temporalities. In the first part of *Waking up*, the
woman's resistance is very weak and takes place mainly in the
heteroglossia which inhabits her monologue. It is as if many
contradictory voices speak simultaneously through her mouth; one
voice reinstates the dominant symbolic order, while the following
one questions it. The result is a highly effective ironic mode. In
this way she deconstructs the persuasive techniques of mass media
publicity: "Camaj, the stars' soap. Camaj, the stars' ... (She stops
speaking) The water, there is no more water! Damn! [...] With
what do I wash the soap off now! My ... how much Camaj burns in
my eye... the ad does not say this" (ib. 28). Later on, she ridicules
one of the commonplaces of domestic economy: "On the other
hand, I put the lemon scented detergent in the fridge ... It is

correct: one must always put the lemon in the fridge otherwise it 'goes bad'!" (Ib. 29).

The drama's presentation of a distraught woman as spectacle is further reinforced in the second part of the play, when the actress realizes that she has lost her house key. She then begins a minute-by-minute playback of her routine activities of the previous evening, while commenting on them aloud. Hence the dilated temporal effect experienced by the audience, who is made to participate simultaneously, from here to the end of the play, in two different staged times: evening and morning. At the level of style, the monologue thus presents conflicting narrating voices and a metatheatrical performance (a play within the play); such devices contribute to enhance the plural and heterogeneous character of the chronotypes experienced by the protagonist. While the extra-diegetic narrator in Matilde Serao's *Checchina's Virtue* was typical of an earlier era in her ability to depict Checchina's rebellion with an ironic smile, the immediacy of the first-person monologue requires Franca Rame to adopt more refined techniques of distanciation from her character. The complexity of postmodern temporal experience has led many literary critics and fictional writers to question the adequacy of linear narrative as a device for the organization of time and the representation of everyday life; like Franca Rame, they privilege instead heteroglossic and heterogeneous forms of narration.

Towards the end of the drama, the protagonist's discombobulated monologue becomes more and more reflexive as she launches herself into a tirade against the sacrificial role played by women in both productive contexts, work in the factory and work within the family. At one point, she says, addressing her sleeping husband: "The family, the holy family, they invented it on purpose so that everybody like you, who are made nuts from brutal work schedules, can find in us do-it-all wives the mat onto which you vent your frustrations " (ib. 31). In a dramatic crescendo of accusations against her husband, she vents her frustrations about the many impositions the social contract locks women into. After a heated exchange, her husband finally gives in and they reconcile in

bed.[15] The optimistic ending of this part of the play can, however, be read or performed as a wishful or ironic flight from reality. At this point, in fact, the apartment key is found in her husband's pocket as if to show that men, even in this moment of crisis, do not easily relinquish their position of empowerment.[16]

The end of the monologue adds a final twist, an ironic comment which represents the lasting hold that mechanical time has on the protagonist. Looking at her weekly bus pass, the woman sees that it has been punched six times; only then does she realize that it must in fact be Sunday and that she does not have to go to work:

> But what day is today? *(She looks at the calendar hanging on the wall* ...*)* Sunday? *(Yelling)* Sunday!! *(Speaking to her baby)* and you don't tell me anything? [...] To bed, baby, sleep! [...] I want to dream about a world in which every day is Sunday [...] And if I dream about another time where I have to go to work, I'll strangle myself. (Ib. 33).

For Matilde Serao's Checchina, the desire to escape takes the form of fantasizing about a luxurious room untouched by her husband's clock and his ethics of calculation. The protagonist of *Waking up*, on the other hand, dreams of an "eternal Sunday", a death-like sleep where the clock has no power to rule. Almost one hundred years separate the temporal experiences of the two characters; although women in the post-industrial era might well have gained an awareness of the gender structure implicit in social chrono-types, their everyday life has nevertheless been so thoroughly

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[15] The monologue technique allows Rame to present the husband's point of view through the wife's words, reversing thus, at least at the metaphoric level, traditional patriarchal language's silencing of women's specificity. Both Anderlini (1985: 37) and Cottino Jones (1995: 333) comment on this aspect.

[16] The happy ending (reconciliation between husband and wife and the key being found) is even more ironical if confronted with *A Woman Alone (Una donna sola)*, the first monologue of *Tutta casa, letto e chiesa*. In that monologue, the woman is locked in her apartment by her husband since the day he found out about her extra-marital affair.

saturated by the multiple times within which they operate that even their dreams are threatened.

In contrast to the realistic situation of sexual politics presented throughout *Waking up*, its final song introduces a Communist utopia in which speed, that *modus vivendi* of our postmodern era, has given way to a relaxed and harmonious combination of different chronotypes. In such a utopia, women are no longer isolated social actors at the center of a congested pluridimensional network of temporal functions; instead their experiences are shared by men both in market and family labor. It is significant that the factory's regime of mechanical time is here replaced by the more flexible tempo of an invented figure which combines female and family counterchronotypes: "the tempo was given by my aunt, / we took it easy, we took it slowly" (ib. 34). The conflict between time-budgeting (work organized quantitatively on the basis of timed labor) and task orientation (work measured qualitatively on the basis of the activity to be performed) is resolved in favor of the latter.

It remains to be asked how Rame's monologue and its final song can be interpreted today, more than twenty years after its first performance, in an era where feminist studies have continued to explore the functioning of the sociosymbolic contract and where new information technologies have caused further revolutions in the modern spatial-temporal dimension. The time of today's information-based world — potentially infinite, simultaneous, stratified — is irreducible to clock metrics and to the temporal arrow (Paolucci 1983: 21). If such technological developments have meant a certain desynchronization of work times, increased flexibility and more permeable borders between work and life, our postmodern task-oriented chronotypes nevertheless continue to intersect, more often than not, with temporal models oriented around the clock. The temporal experience of women such as the *Waking up* protagonist, their flexibility at juggling with incommensurable temporal orders in their everyday life, has thus become emblematic of the postmodern temporal paradigm experienced by both sexes.

In the prologue to *Tutta casa, letto e chiesa*, Franca Rame defined the protagonist of *Waking up* as a "one of the pillars of our

society" (Rame 1989: 8). Today such a characterization must seem even more apt, in an era where it has become evident that the dialectics of women's "double presence" at work and at home have made them more accustomed to managing the complex web of time allocations typical of our fragmented temporal condition. According to Paolucci, women of the post-industrial era, thanks to their ability at moving at ease within the plurality of conflicting chronotypes, are best situated for the necessary task of replacing the obsolete arrow image of modern mechanical time with the postmodern image of the puzzle:

> Female time is typically postmodern; it is flexible, fragmentary, differenciated, and heterogeneous; it is the time of a subject who has to master modalities of temporal regulation which are extremely differentiated and are often in contrast with one another. Which subject of the postindustrial society, if not women, continually assembles and reassembles the puzzle of the everyday time in order to satisfy her many social expectations? (Paolucci 1983: 14).

Although Franca Rame's protagonist is evidently a woman who is constantly faced in her everyday life with just such time management decisions, it nonetheless seems incongruous to depict her hysteric activities and her outburst of frustration through the self-control, determination and playful attitude of a puzzlemaker. What is lost in the image of the puzzlemaker is the sacrificial dimension of women's sociosymbolical contract. No matter how ingenious women may have become in developing temporal tactics and how obsolete communication technologies may have made clock-regulated time, women's actual know-how remains founded on an a priori disempowerment. Only when, and if, chronotypes constructed as puzzles are reconceived as privileged strategies rather than as defensive tactics, will it become possible to dislodge the present world, where male-dominated chronotypes are still dominant. And as long as subjects are engaged in a production of knowledge which disregards the history of gender difference, subsequent changes in the postmodern configuration of social time may well continue to favor the male symbolic and to assign to

women the management of the "frattempo" ("the in-between") while what society constructs as "il tempo" (time itself) remains the property of men. It is difficult to imagine a conversation in which one would explain to Rame's protagonist the epistemological privileges of her social positioning. Having the big picture before them, philosophers and sociologists tend to emphasize the subversive effect played by disadvantaged categories of social actants and to idealize the liberating potentiality which fragmentation of the present may allow. Among its many other qualities, the real-life monologue of Franca Rame's *Waking up* has the merit of waking us up to the human cost which all revolutions, social and epistemological as well as political, demand from the disempowered.

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His Century, Her Solution?: Women's Alternatives to Technocratic Society in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* and Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*

RAILI PÕLDSAAR

Our century has seen many culture wars that have revealed seams in the social fabric. There has been fight for national cultures and identities, within national and international settings. The academic circles have been discussing a further division, in the famed discrepancy of the "two cultures" of C. P. Snow (Snow 1993). Paradoxically, the age that has dedicated itself to celebrating globalization and the breakdown of boundaries, is also seeing an increasing number of polarities in both the public and intellectual sphere. Human mind seems to require sets of binary oppositions to make sense of the world around it, be they sacred-profane, center-margin, good-bad... One of the eternal culturally conditioned pairs is the male-female. Tensions between the two have always directed human action and interaction, even though the lasting impact may have gone unnoticed due to the "naturalness" of the concepts and their purported lack of importance. Yet, the gender dichotomy is inextricably linked to the development of human society. In contemporary world, all cultures are "man-made" and thus it should not seem surprising that protest against the ills of the society would include a gender dimension and that there have been feminist versions of social critique.

The social construction of gender transcends national borders and language barriers. Male and female, masculine and feminine are ever-present and constantly re-negotiate their respective roles and identities within any cultural framework, influenced by the

society and influencing it. To echo an old feminist slogan, personal does become political and, in the age of openness, national international. Gender discussions of one culture may become valuable for another. The relevance is especially marked in the case of the Anglo-American culture that, as the power behind the spread of industrialization and capitalism, has left its footprints all over the world map and, indirectly, its fingerprints on national cultures, if not psyches. The issues that emanate from global capitalism, then, might have an Anglo-American origin but they have long ceased to be limited to the USA or Great Britain, due to the fast dissemination of their cultural messages. Therefore, looking at the alternative views of human development proposed by American women, we might be able to make generalizations about cultures outside the Anglo-American cultural sphere and consider the transnational implications of gender on individual nations at the global marketplace of the turn of the millennium when we are constantly engaged in cultural bargaining, barter and dumping. If we are being enveloped by the patriarchal dominance of the technocratic social model then, instead of being proper dutiful daughters, we might also look at how the margin of the structure has challenged the establishment. Maybe we in the periphery will also learn to strike back at the center, be it women challenging the patriarchal world order or small cultures standing up against the cultural superpowers.

The two American critiques in question appeared at the times when the man-made industrialist-military society was demonstrating its moral bankruptcy by first accumulating unprecedented wealth and then squandering it on war: *Herland* was published in 1915 and *Woman on the Edge of Time* in 1976. The focus of the authors' challenge is the system, not the male sex. The root of all evil is seen in the alienating technocratic society, with all human beings as prisoners with a life sentence. Both novels function as utopias that try to look for an escape from the trap and give a human face and warmth to the mechanistic existence that debilitates the mind through its obsession with control and hierarchies.

In *Herland* three men crash into a women's world that has evolved separately from other human societies. The non-hierarchical rural community is built up on the caring use of the limited

resources, with the supreme aim of maintaining harmonious human relationships, not working towards individualist success. *Woman on the Edge of Time* transports a 1970s urban minority woman, considered insane, for brief mental trips into a future of communitarian living and sustained growth within small agricultural communities with no hierarchical state structure, gender or ethnic strife. Both authors seek alternatives to the technocratic society: hierarchy, patriarchy and narrow national(istic) perspective.

The USA the authors address has long since overflowed its original boundaries. The newspaper magnate Henry Luce ecstatically declared in 1941 that Americans had "to accept wholeheartedly our duty and our opportunity as the most powerful and vital nation in the world and in consequence to exert upon the world the full impact of our influence for such purposes as we see fit and by such means as we see fit" (Schiller 1969:1). Our century, dubbed American by Luce, has seen the world adopt the Anglo-American capitalist system, with all its bane and blessing. Capitalism is as linked to patriarchy as any other economic system. If one were to divide qualities into male and female ones, for example by the classification of Geert Hofstede, the masculine values achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material success, whereas the feminine stresses relationships, modesty, caring and interpersonal harmony (Berry 1997: 97). The capitalist system is aligned to the male (individualism, competition, aggression) rather than female (caring, sharing, compromise) in addition to just celebrating the controlled gender roles that guarantee the reproduction of the workforce as efficiently as Ford's assembly line. Any disturbance could interfere with the sanctified production process or the market.

The American society was described in gendered terms already in 1907 when Henry Adams in his *The Dynamo and the Virgin* described masculine and feminine as the "two kingdoms of force which had nothing in common but attraction" (Adams 1997: 91). In his opinion, the problem of the American culture was it excessive obsession with the machine and its outright fear of the natural and supernatural, as symbolized by women. The throbbing engine is raised to a mythic status while the female who had caused awe with her force and mystery in earlier social formations, is relegated

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to a secondary status. After all, her power, unlike the machine's, cannot be easily controlled. Thus, the whole discourse had to be rewritten to ensure security and the containment of the potentially subversive force that did not always obey common sense. Gradually, we can see the same pattern emerging globally, with cultures that had been living in peace with the environment and egalitarian gender patterns, rush to adopt the "Western" value patters that promise economic advancement and integration into global structures.

The technocratic society is controlled by the rational vision that has reduced all society to mechanistic structures and subjected it to the dictate of scientific progress as the epitome of civilization, often perceived to be a primarily masculine project. The absolute rule of reason offers only one approach to reality, presented by the model of unbiased empirical inquiry, through a methodical elimination of the subjective, emotional and irrational — traits commonly identified as female. Objective consciousness is best presented in terms of technological advancement and control through an intricate set of hierarchies and power relations that govern every aspect of life, subjecting nature to technology, emotion to reason, body to mind, woman to man. (Roszak 1995: 226). The unruly aspects that deviate from the "norm" should be restrained lest they upset the balanced system. Since control is the key element, the society favors what is measurable, man-made and unambiguous. Token liberties are allowed in literature and art — the margins safely out of the range of the center or the mainstream. The focus of the society is on growth and competition. Civilization is defined through distance from nature and the ability to tame and often kill the unrestrained. Compromise, compassion and cooperation are seen as potential weakness. The measure of everything is the individualistic Man/Victor.

Gilman's definition of civilization clearly has different emphases:

> Civilization ... does not consist in the acquisition of luxuries... A civilized state is one in which the citizens live in organic individual relation. The more full, free, subtle, and easy that relation; the more

perfect the differentiation of labor and exchange of product, with their correlative institutions, — the more perfect that civilization ... to serve each other more and more widely; to live only by such service; to develop special functions, so that we depend for our living on society's return for services that can be of no direct use to ourselves, — this is civilization, our human glory. (Gilman 1997: 60).

The shift towards personal, natural and sharing is evident, as is the lack of an individualistic or technological bent. In fact, by the definition, true civilization would belong more to the female, rather than the male sphere of experience, to the intimate and nurturing presence of the Virgin/Venus, rather than the control of the Dynamo. A machine cannot regain a Garden of Eden for us because it disrupts harmony. According to Gilman, the industrialized male-dominated society had placed civilization in peril by excluding women, exaggerating the differences between the sexes and depriving women of their rightful duty to be productive, not just reproductive, members of the society because their inability to function as active human beings could lead to the degeneration of the whole race. Human progress could only continue with the increase of female contribution, as the feminine social feeling and nurturing came to challenge masculine individualism and, by doing that, point the way to a more balanced world and true civilization.

To prove her point that the masculine is disposable in the process of social development, Gilman eliminates men from her utopian Herland and stresses its belonging to the camp of the Virgin by introducing self-willed immaculate conception as the means of reproduction (ib. 45–48). The bureaucratic government and all technological apparatus is gone together with the stronger sex, instead of which "everything was beauty, order, perfect cleanness, and the pleasantest sense of home over it all" (ib. 1979: 19). Not only is there no pollution or war but even dogs, as symbols of aggression, have been ousted. Instead of scientific prowess, the society celebrates harmony and Motherhood that is quite different from the hypocritical Kinder, Küche, Kirche concept of the Western world of the time. The fact that the society works perfectly and guarantees a happier life prompts the following

exchange from the male visitors: "But they look — why, this is a civilized country! ... There must be men." — "Of course there are men." (ib. 1979: 11).

Herland not just abolishes the gender hierarchies but allows all women to realize their human potential without destroying themselves or their environment through production and reproduction without having to expend energy on competing with the male race or Nature. The calm femaleness recreates the kind of all-embracing power that Adams missed in American culture: "She was the Goddess because of her force; she was the animated dynamo; she was reproduction — the greatest and most mysterious of all energies" (Adams 1997: 91). The male characters sense that attraction as well: "As I looked from face to face, calm, grave, wise, wholly unafraid, evidently assured and determined, I [the narrator] had the funniest feeling — a very early feeling..." (Gilman 1979: 19). The liberated female power does not frighten but just unsettles the previous worldview. The masculine is not destroyed but divested of its aura of grandeur and power. The scenario was successful in the novel as it gains one and a half converts of the three aliens, offering an environment for the maximum self-realization of both sexes without either one dominating over the other.

Piercy's novel, too, emphasizes the need to move towards improved human relations, including those between men and women. Without social hierarchies the inequality of power is eliminated and people's interactions become more immediate, authentic and human — that is, not primarily male/female or boss/subordinate. Men and women become more alike — men more caring and women more assertive. Both sides have retained their characteristics, only feminine and masculine traits, freed from an ideological burden, have ceased to be used as a weapon. In keeping with the general idealism — or, perhaps, naiveté — the striving for more egalitarian social relations, language, too, has been reformed to free it from hidden dominance, be it in personal pronouns (both *he* and *she* have been replaced by *per* derived from *person*) or in elimination of terms that depict the subordination of one person to another (no husbands, wives or lovers — even children are not seen and treated as minors but as developing adults). Even names

have ceased to be sex-exclusive — Jackrabbit or Bee could be either male or female and, additionally, every person has the right to change their name whenever they feel their personalities have changed so much that the previous one is no longer valid. This is in clear contrast to the determinism of the technocratic society where labels are the surest way to ensure clear classification. Sex wars have been replaced by sharing which channels the energies previously spent in the male-female love-hate relationship towards cooperation. Love, sex and passion are there but have been separated from destructive angst. Mothering is shared by both men and women and neither has the exclusive right to the child as the young are raised communally, thus doing away with the possessiveness that is inherent in motherhood. Everybody, including children, have a right to their space and independence — even madness — but one that does not lead to egocentric individualism but better cooperation.

The caring-cooperative attitude is also extended to the surrounding environment which leads to progress in quality of life, not conspicuous consumption, and increases productivity by making people interested in the outcome and process of work, not possible rewards. Alienation is abolished both at work and in human relations. Piercy as if carries Gilman's project one step further — she keeps men in her utopia of 2137 and shows that escape (that is, artificial elimination of men) is not enough but that both sexes can and should be transformed in order to achieve a more human society.

The technocratic society disregards what does not fit its mechanized framework. It cannot tolerate uncontrolled impulses and is obsessed with hierarchies and borders. The unwavering control can be maintained through a variety of ideological tools, above all the rule of Common Sense/Reason and Tradition. Once something has been conveyed as sensible and compatible with "how things have always been", it has been ceased to be resisted by the majority who will, subsequently, protest against any challenge to the "natural order of things". Our Western world has invested its faith in the myth of objective consciousness, forgetting that "like mythology, it is an arbitrary construct in which a given society in a given historical situation has invested its sense of

meaningfulness and value" (Roszak 1997: 215). Yet, the world-view is elevated into a dogma and its arbitrariness concealed, as we can see daily in international politics where the global leadership follows and enforces a seemingly universal set of rules. The exclusive monopoly of truth makes the combination of objective consciousness and technocratic control "bad magic" as, in Roszak's terms, "good magic opens the mysteries to all; bad magic seeks simply to mystify" (ib. 261). "Good magic", a mould that would fit many anti-technocratic philosophies or mystical schools of thought, would help people understand and grasp the world around them more immediately by letting them penetrate the depths of their consciousness and moving towards greater unity with the environment, both animate and inanimate. Power can only dominate and corrupt, not liberate, as it uses tainted means to achieve it noble goals, not believing in human beings but the sanctified method/mechanism.

Technocratic society is supportive of the hegemonic thinking of patriarchy but, less directly, also of the nation state — a construct that relies heavily on the ideology of the sacred myth of bloodline (Latin *nacio*!) and the often unwritten tradition of dominance, overt or covert, that posits itself over other alternatives and denies their validity, as yet another version of "bad magic". The state is also perceived to be an efficiently running machine that ensures maximum benefit to its citizens who conform to the stated rules and excludes those who "do not belong". Nationhood and nationalism often come together. Great economic successes coexist with imperialist-nationalist thinking — a need for a controlled homogeneous and predictable organism to ensure smooth running, coupled with the demand to seek new markets. Often, though, such endeavours have ended in macho power demonstrations.

Thus it is not surprising that alternative feminist utopias have done away with the concept of nationhood as such both in 1915 and 1976. Both eras witnessed the rampage of technocratic imperialist states that were unable to put an end to the chaos they had instigated by indulging in macho strutting on an international scale. Neither of the proposed societies has anything that would resemble the hierarchical mechanistic nation, with an institutionalized ideology, civic religion or expansionist rhetoric. Instead,

the stress is on community and humanness of contact and inter-
action, quality of life, not on the quantity of the output or the size
of controlled territory. These particular female utopias pay sur-
prisingly little attention to technological detail or human victory
over nature — aspects that are often listed as achievements of
human societies to prove the need for states. Celebration of human
technological prowess and the subduing of nature are just not
considered practical or sensible — a sharp contrast to the techno-
cratic system that strives for efficiency but often ends up acting
irrationally.

The irony is brought out clearly both in *Herland* and *Woman on
the Edge of Time*. In the first the expansionist macho rhetoric of
the male gatecrashers in the female utopia is shown as un-
reasonable and irrational side by side with the efficiently working
community that does not know or need greed or surplus. In the
1970s version, Piercy constructs a larger society, not just an
isolated exceptional world of its own. But here, too, the basis of
the society is a self-sufficient rural community that lives in har-
mony with nature, acting as custodians to her limited resources,
not producers for profit. The small community is free of hier-
archies or centralized control of any kind and order is maintained
by people's respect for their mutual freedoms. The people see no
use for state control. Their life is not carefree nor glamorous but
people are free from the stress and alienation of the capitalist
system, be it at work or at home. The contrast is reinforced by the
demonstration of an alternative that is similar to Roszak's
technocratic state. The agrarian community is but one possible
future. The other carries the excesses of contemporary indus-
trialized imperialist consumer culture to a bleak caste system, a
war-mongering machine speeding towards perdition through
exhausting all natural resources within a segregated urban jungle
amid a desolated raped environment. There the ills of our world
have been taken to an extreme and that is also reflected in gender
issues. That future has, once again, relegated women to a purely
sexual role of brain- and will-less trophies to the male ego. Since
gender is inextricably linked to social development, women will
continue to be undervalued as long as the patriarchal thinking is
joined to the technocratic power structures, unchallenged.

Piercy shows both the likely scenario for the future, if nothing is done to change the contemporary pattern of behavior, and a way out. We are still functioning on the pattern of the technocratic machine-obsessed masculinized society. In fact, we are becoming increasingly dependent on omnipresent machines and communicate more with them than with our peers. The social fabric is becoming frayed, especially in the countries that have been subjected to a crash course of "Intensive Cut-Throat Capitalism". Disturbingly, the arrival of capitalism and advanced technologies has not helped in decreasing national polarization/tribalization or gender inequalities. On the contrary, the world is swept by ethnic conflicts as never before and the gulf between men and women is increasing in the post-socialist countries. Globalization has not only brought us together but also drives us apart. The reason could be in the chosen methods. One cannot build a new house without getting out of the old one and reviewing the foundations of the problem. Maybe more effective change could be wrought through bettering human relations on most basic levels. Women, as the eternal outsiders, others, observers, might have their hints to give. At least we can try to step out of our technocratic mass produced shoes (shackles) before we claim that we "have seen the future and it works"? Literature has often expressed discontent with the status quo before the society at large has shaken off its complacency. The two authors, Gilman and Piercy, have tried to find a way out of the maze in two different periods, ending up with a similar conclusion — that when you start to reform, you should start from the basics — working on gender issues that influence us all in our everyday life. Thus, in the age of globalization, we should first review not just the concept of nationhood but that of identities inside a nation and culture. If we achieve harmony on the level of our cultural behaviour, we might be better equipped to face the next challenges without losing our integrity and humanity.

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Poetry and Gender:
Mindscapes and Publishing Opportunities

INDREK TART

1. New phenomena of globalisation, accompanied by the end of previously dominant world orders, are taking place all over the world, including cosmopolitan attitudes towards language use. The literary field experiences pressure from networking and electronic messaging/publishing, which substantially changes the surviving conditions of any printed text. Electronic images are resolving mysteries of human feelings, the Internet presents us with immortality and resurrection ("Cybernauts negate corporeality for the incorporeality of cyberspace, but the body returns in a hypercorporeal synthesis in which, like the resurrection in glory at the last judgement, it has lost all of its historical attributes: it has become incorruptible (because it is data) and ultimately indestructible" (Fisher 1997: 120–121)). Gender, race and ethnicity are the dominant conceptions to describe the inequalities of the world in sociological terms. Body has become an important notion even in theoretical reasoning. Without bodification nothing works perfectly. Fragmentation, hybridisation and new symbolic forms of power manipulation are creating unknown backgrounds for poetical activities. Are these activating or destroying the poetic field — this is my question. And does gender partake in those battles?

2. Poetry is a purely symbolic act in a culturally saturated environment and as such, it is a perfect model to describe the human mental condition in this world of ours. If we interpret culture "as an organised set of meaningfully understood symbolic patterns"

(Alexander 1999: 30) poetry reflects it in a most satisfying way as Yuri Lotman always used to emphasise. Several poetical worlds describing social and cultural situations of the modern world have demonstrated more power of description, influence and foreseeing than many other mental activities. To catch the meaning of a poem is to have a whole world of human meanings at hand at that special moment. "Because we experience the world rather than simply behave in it, the world is meaningful." (ib. 30) At the same time "we must willingly inhabit the world of meaning itself." (ib.) Without will and knowledge, without cultural experiences the human signs are nothing. Only the human thought and its transformations embody those symbols by breathing meaning into them. Culture is practice, not just beautiful schemes ("there may be many 'outsider' interpretations; yet they all distort in one way or another the 'insider's' understanding" (Bauman 1999: xlv)), practice in all its outcomes, including gender differences.

3. Men are usually outlined as rational, logical, instrumental, technically inclined, looking for power and building hierarchies, emotionally in control. Women, on the contrary, are described as irrational, sensible, caring, practically inclined, looking for secret powers and intuitive communities with high emotional output. Those descriptions also hold a view that poetry, being mythical and unreasonable, is on the women's side. Any cultural-sociological survey supports that opinion, showing that women read much more poetry than men. And yet, if we look at writers and publishers of poetry, we will find it to be a man's tool, while women are left in the role of a Muse. Why is this? Is a poem anything like a mathematical theorem? Is there more logic in it than we usually presume? — This is certainly one of the possible answers. The other alternative is perhaps that the craft has been invented by men, and as such, it just does not suit women's worldview. The fact that most of the publishers and editors are men is the third one. However, why are women reading men's invention so avidly, and with a great insight at that? There must be something greater behind it than the difference between sexes. Are the modernisation and postmodernisation processes as well as the increasingly individualised value systems going to resolve the

situation? Yes, we have feminist presses publishing only women. Yes, many poetesses do write like men. To what extent, however, are those processes revealed in the actual publishing process?

4. Cultural sociologists have made several excursions into causes of gender differences in literature publishing, mostly dealing with the novel, though, which is probably due to the imperatives of the genre. "The novelist has a formal problem very different from those of the playwright and poet. Inasmuch as lines of prose do not require sounding out and their individual words do not, as a rule, demand close attention, prose can be read quickly and without intense concentration on the part of the reader. Reading poetry is hard work..." (Griswold 1981: 758) Two factors have been dis-covered to be particularly important in the field, notably money and prestige, which are both related to the main power-makers ("the unified literary field tends to organize itself according to two independent and hierarchized principles of differentiation: the principal opposition, between pure production, destined for a market restricted to producers, and large-scale production, oriented towards the satisfaction of the demands of a wide audience, re-produces the founding rupture with the economic order") (Bourdieu 1996: 121). The dynamics of this process is unveiled in the so-called "empty-field phenomenon". "That is, when a field or occupation is not socially valued, women and other minorities will populate it heavily. If the field grows in prestige, (white) men push women (and other minorities) out." (Tuchman and Fortin 1999: 142) Does that mean that cool instrumentality destroys any sensi-bility (the roots of poetry), turning anything into profit (poetry as futile idleness) and removing human values as useless affections altogether? Making feelings part of a business as "men have "invaded" occupations that have been in the process of developing into professions" (ib. 149), including that of fiction writers — novelists and dramatists. Thus, if being a poet cannot be taken to the same level of professionalisation (yet mostly recognised as a voice of prophecy), do women have better chances to be dis-tinguished and honoured in this field? If poetry cannot be transformed into a money or prestige machine — is that a reason for not taking it seriously? However, the following data prove the

opposite: men's defences against letting women enter the published poetry field, which is their sacred land, are strong indeed. Is there a contradiction? Or else, is the hidden power of prestige brought out to the front stage here?

5. As we know, male poets are dealt with great respect and represented in carefully composed anthologies as classics, but few women are chosen. Moreover, often even good poetesses are referred to in a very harsh way: "It is difficult to understand why Charlotte Mew [1869–1927] has so few readers today. She merits them. Thomas Hardy spoke of her as 'the least pretentious but undoubtedly the best woman poet of our day'." (Schmidt 1979: 57) And elsewhere: "Elizabeth Daryush has been forcefully championed for her originality as a poet, but little read in England." (ib. 115) Why are even the few chosen treated in such a manner?

6. Let us look at the representation of women in Anglo-American poetry. How many of them have been selected for entrance in the well-known biographical reference book *Contemporary Poets* (4th edition, 1985)? The volume is meant to include the poets writing in English and being active after WW II. Our calculations concerning that huge edition are summed up in Table 1 according to sexes and nations. The conclusions are clear-cut:

a) The number of women poets represented there is relatively low (15.5% only);

b) The best represented women poets are the American ones (54.4% of all women poets included);

c) The non-American and non-British poets writing in English are represented quite well (25.1% of all) and, as far as women-poets are concerned, they look rather more equal to the British ones (25.6% and 20% of all women poets, respectively);

d) The New-Zealanders, Canadians and Americans have relatively more women in their samples than others (about one woman in every five poets *v*. one in ten, respectively).

Table 1. Nations and women in contemporary poetry in the English language.

	Of all authors (809)	Of women authors (125)	Of men authors (684)	Women's percentage in the national sample
Americans	43.6%	54.4%	41.7%	19.3%
British	27.4%	17.6%	29.2%	9.9%
Canadians	8.7%	12.0%	8.0%	21.4%
Australians	4.9%	5.6%	4.8%	17.5%
New-Zealanders	2.7%	4.0%	2.2%	22.7%
Scots	2.5%	1.6%	2.6%	10.0%
Indians	2.3%	1.6%	2.5%	10.5%
Irish	2.1%	1.6%	2.2%	11.8%
Welsh	1.4%	0.8%	1.5%	9.1%
Other	4.4%	0.8%	5.3%	2.8%
Total	100.0%	15.5%	84.5%	15.5%

Source: Vinson, J. and Kirkpatrick, D. L. 1985. *Contemporary Poets.* 4th edition. New York: St. Martin's Press.

It means that the British area is more strongly bound to certain traditional attitudes towards poetry, while societies that are more open culturally allow women poets more space. This is supported by a comparison of the American and Canadian literary canons: "The general argument is that Canadian literature is more likely to be written by women and to focus on women's experience while American literature is more likely to be written by men and to focus on men's experience." (Corse 1997: 82) In our case the American national character happens to be more patriarchal, more bound to the tradition than the Canadian one. In the non-canonical field of prize-winning and popular fiction, however, the situation changes and the two neighbouring countries appear more similar. Nevertheless we can establish some traits of the women poets' place in the Anglo-American poetry: even in the best cases observed only one fifth were women, while men prevailed even more in countries with a longer national history and deeper cultural roots, i.e. with stronger heritage patterns.

7. Maybe the reference book selections are driven by historicism, thus not representing the contemporary situation adequately enough? Let us look into several distinctive poetry anthologies from teaching volumes to special purpose gatherings. Our selection of the American poetry anthologies in Table 2 is from 1962 up. It includes huge collections used for teaching purposes in American universities (The Norton's, Longman's) carrying the whole poetic universe in English, paperback selections for a broader public (100 American Poems), special selections of contemporaries (Poulin, Wallace selections) as well as those based on a specific region (Michigan), nativity (Native Americans) or activity (New Formalism).

Table 2. American Anthologies	Editor(s)	Volume (pages)	Authors (number)	Year of publishing	Share of women authors
The Mentor Book of Major American Poets	O. Williams and E. Honig	536	20	1962	15.0%
The Voice That Is Great Within Us: American Poetry of the Twentieth Century	H. Carruth	722	136	1970	17.6%
100 American Poems	S. Rodman	240	67	1972	10.4%
The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry	R. Ellmann, and R. O'Clair	1456	158	1973	12.7%
Text-Sound Texts	R. Kostelanetz	441	98	1980	16.3%
The Longman Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry 1950–1980	S. Friebert and D. Young	592	48	1983	20.8%
New American Poets of the 80s	J. Myers and R. Weingarten	435	70	1984	34.3%
Contemporary American Poetry	A. Poulin, Jr.	727	51	1985	23.5%
The Morrow Anthology of Younger American Poets	D. Smith & D. Bottoms	784	104	1985	38.5%

Early Ripening: American Women's Poetry Now	M. Piercy	280	63	1987	100.0%
American Poetry Since 1970: Up Late	A. Codrescu	591	103	1987	32.0%
Ecstatic Occasions, Expedient Forms	D. Lehman	256	65	1988	26.2%
Contemporary Michigan Poetry	M. Delp, C. Hilberry, H. Scott	360	53	1988	39.6%
The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry, 2nd. ed.	R. Ellmann and R. O'Clair	1865	180	1988	22.2%
The Maverick Poets: An Anthology	S. Kowit	149	40	1988	40.0%
Harper's Anthology of 20th Century Native American Poetry	D. Niatum	396	36	1988	41.7%
Vital Signs: Contemporary American Poetry from the University Presses	R. Wallace	502	168	1989	39.9%
The Longman Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry 1950 to the Present, 2nd ed.	S. Friebert and D. Young	629	51	1989	25.5%
Rebel Angels: 25 Poets of the New Formalism	M. Jarman and D. Mason	261	25	1996	40.0%

Several conclusions can be drawn from that table:

a) The newer the anthologies the better the performance of women, rising from 10–15% in the 1960s and 1970s to around 20–30% in the 1980s and 1990s. Norton's older edition (1973) contains only 12,7% of women poets, against the 22.2% of the newer one (1988);

b) Conventional massive anthologies covering a larger time span are quite conservative in representing women poets, which may well be due to the classical male preponderance;

c) Special and regional anthologies prefer women more (around one third of the authors, let alone the purely feminine ones (Marge Piercy's collection);

d) None of the men-edited anthologies gives preference to women poets (the maxima reaching 41.7% in the case of Native Americans and 40% in the case of Mavericks). You cannot find anthologies with 50% or 70% or 90% of women authors;

e) Women fare better in shorter and more specific anthologies of the 1980s and 1990s.

Thus, the anthologised poetry in America today tends to favour women poets more than ever before, without, however, letting them prevail. Men are still preferred.

8. An equivalent comparison of poet representation in British, Irish, Canadian and Australian anthologies (Table 3) yields analogous results: women are taken into consideration but never let to dominate the field. We even find one purely men's anthology of poets from Northern Ireland as "of the Northern women poets born since 1900 — Barbara Hunter, Freda Laughton, Meta Mayne Reid and Joan Newman, for example — few have published in a book form." (Poets 1979: xi) The hard road of recognition for women could be traced even in the appraised feminine poetry of Canada (13.9% to 26.5% of anthologised women authors). Does the reason lie just in most of the editors as well as publishers being men? Or should it rather be sought in the meaning, prestige and essence of poetry? It is not only the social conditions determined by the professionalisation of literary activities mentioned above that seem to take and keep men in the field, but also the core principles of language making and functioning in society including connections between language and philosophy, discussed at large by Hans Georg Gadamer. The latter, however, have been developed historically by men and thus are shaped according to their mindscapes. Success in the poetical field is thus predetermined and for entering this field one needs to adopt the values and forms of previous times. Surprisingly women, who as readers know the mechanics of poetical constructions so well, cannot imitate it as fluently as may be expected. Or else, perhaps the reason lies somewhere in the different physicalities, bodifications of the word?

Table 3. British, Irish, Canadian, Australian Anthologies	Editor(s)	Volume (pages)	Authors	Year of publishing	Share of women authors
The Penguin Book of Canadian Verse, revised edition	R. Gustafson	282	72	1967	13.9%
15 Canadian Poets	G. Geddes and P. Bruce	301	15	1970	20.0%
The Penguin Book of Irish Verse	B. Kennelly	428	115	1970	5.2%
The Penguin Book of Love Poetry	J. Stallworthy	400	99	1973	9.1%
Poets from the North of Ireland	F. Ormsby	232	20	1979	0.0%
Consolidation: The Second Paperback Poets Anthology	T. Shapscott	265	29	1982	10.3%
The Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry	B. Morrison and A. Motion	208	19	1982	25.0%
The Younger Irish Poets	G. Dawe	176	21	1982	9.5%
The Atlantic Anthology, Volume 2/ Poetry	F. Cogswell	238	49	1985	20.4%
British Poetry since 1945, rev. ed.	E. Lucie-Smith	423	96	1985	6.3%
The New Oxford Book of Australian Verse	L. A. Murray	399	206	1986	14.6%
The New Canadian Anthology: Poetry and Short Fiction in English	R. Lecker and J. David	280	34	1988	26.5%
The New British Poetry 1968–88	G. Allnutt, F. D'Aguiar, K. Edwards, E. Mottram	361	84	1988	37.3%
The New Poetry	M. Hulse, D. Kennedy, D. Morley	352	57	1993	30.9%

9. Can it be that some smaller language communities and countries give more credit to their poetesses? The Estonian people have long appreciated their poetry and poets. Poetry has been regarded as the place for the soul of the nation to hide, especially in hard times. Poetry has been the secret language of the nation from the days of serfdom until the very recent times of Soviet occupation. Estonians have been proud of their women poets, their own great magicians of language and signs. Their grand-grand-grand- etc. mothers picked up and wrote down their rich and peculiar folk song tradition. They are well aware of the presence and importance of women poetry. Equality sounds valid in this connection. Yet, is it reflected in the publishing reality? — Hardly! A mere glance at our landscape of anthologies (Table 4) reveals an identical picture with the Anglo-American one previously discussed.

Table 4. Estonian Anthologies	Editor	Volume (pages)	Authors (number)	Year of publishing	Share of women authors
Aastaajad Eesti luules	D. Kareva	240	40	1999	27.5%
Väike Sõnarine 1-3 kd.	K. Muru	392	92	1999	21.7%
Väike Sõnarine 1. kd.	K. Muru	64	22	1999	9.1%
Väike Sõnarine 2. kd.	K. Muru	168	26	1999	15.4%
Väike Sõnarine 3. kd.	K. Muru	160	44	1999	31.8%
Eesti luule antoloogia	R. Kuusk	1038	26	1998	26.9%
Täis tähti Jumallapse põll...	V. Kepp	383	120	1994	33.9%
Sõnarine 1.–4. kd	K. Muru	2731	194	1989–94	22.7%
Sõnarine 1.kd	K. Muru	559	51	1989–94	5.9%
Sõnarine 2.kd	K. Muru	797	35	1989–94	8.6%
Sõnarine 3.kd	K. Muru	640	46	1989–94	39.1%
Sõnarine 4.kd	K. Muru	735	62	1989–94	32.3%
Eesti looduslüürikat	D. Vaarandi	352	95	1980	26.5%
Eesti luule	P. Rummo	999	120	1967	20.0%
Eesti lüürika	A. Mägi	745	47	1957–58	14.9%
Sinikangas	K. Kesa	422	32	1948	15.6%
Sada viiskümmend aastat eesti luulet	J. Kärner	346	346	1936	8.3%
Eesti luuleilm	A. Kaarna	879	104	1913	15.4%

Even the percentages of women authors in different anthologies do not differ much from the Anglo-American sample used above. We can observe that:

a) Time does good to the representation of women in the anthologies of Estonian poetry. This appears especially clearly from the internal structure of our general anthology by Karl Muru, the first volumes of which (of the times before the establishment of an independent Estonian state in 1918) contain less than 10% of women authors and the last two up to 32.3%. The overall average 22.7% of women authors in that canon-making volume is well comparable with the 22.2% of the1988 edition of the Norton's. Thus, Estonia is not distinctive from the point of view of aggregated examination. Men's poetry predominates in abundance.

b) Even in women-edited anthologies women's share rarely exceeds 30% (as a mystical coincidence, the collections of Estonian nature lyrics by D. Vaarandi and D. Kareva both contain the same proportions of men and women authors (26.5% and 27.5%), despite being published with an interval of 19 years (in 1980 and 1999)).

As a historical curiosity, the only purely women's anthology in Estonia was published as early as 1897 (*Eesti Nais-luuletajate Album*, presenting 32 women authors), thus being ahead of certain processes in the West for decades. No special feminine circles or women-alone-in-anthology tendencies have been discovered in Estonian poetry ever after. Poetry has basically been a balanced field in Estonia, men's production being avidly consumed by women.

10. Is the above situation a fair model of the gender relations in poetry book publishing in Estonia? Maybe there are numerous poetry books by women authors that the editors of anthologies prefer not to notice? Table 5 offers an overall picture of poetry book publishing in the Estonian language (in both Estonia and abroad).

Table 5. Poetry books in the Estonian language by books per author, 1851–1998.

Number of poetry books per author	Authors				Books for children authors				Books for adults authors			
	Women		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	151	56.6	299	50.8	17	37.8	41	49.4	145	59.4	281	50.7
2–3	68	25.5	138	23.4	13	28.9	17	20.5	62	25.4	133	24.0
3	24	9.0	52	8.8	4	8.9	4	4.8	24	9.8	53	9.6
4–7	27	10.1	83	14.1	8	17.8	12	14.5	22	9.0	82	14.8
8–15	13	4.9	35	5.9	4	8.9	8	9.6	13	5.3	36	6.5
16–31	6	2.2	29	4.9	3	6.7	4	4.8	1	0.4	19	3.4
more than 32	2	0.7	5	0.8	0	0.0	1	1.2	1	0.4	3	0.5
Total	267	100	589	100.	45	100.	83	100.	244	100.	554	100.
Of all authors		31.2		68.8		35.2		64.8		30.6		69.4

As we can see the Estonian resource of poets of one and a half centuries has been 267 women and 589 men, most of whom (52.6%) have published just one poetry book. If we add those who have published 2 to 3 books, the proportion rises to 76.6%. This leaves us with 200 authors who could be called publishing poets, and surprisingly enough, this is about the number of poets (194) represented in our fullest anthology "Sõnarine". Three quarters of publishing activity has been in vain (except for the sake of vanity and for therapeutic reasons as well as for youngsters' self-expression). Are there any gender differences involved? Women poets form less than one third (31.2%) of all published authors but their share in that representative canon of 200 is only 48 (24%), which is also in accordance with the 22.7% of the anthology. Some, but not substantial differences could be found if we separate poetry for children and for adults. In the latter case the number of fully respected authors falls to 177 (22.2% of all), of which women constitute 20.9%. Thus, the women authors' share in the established Estonian language poetry makes up a fifth to fourth part of all published authors. In overall poetry books publishing the exit (never printing the fourth collection) of women authors is even greater than that of men (82.1% vs. 74.2%). Even poetry books for

children fail to bring a substantial improvement for the women authors. This proves that the prevalence of men in the field of Estonian poetry-book publishing is a reality.

11. Are there any signs of time healing those wounds? Aggregated surveys may hide great differences, especially if one pools the data for the 19th and 20th centuries. Let us examine time slices of Estonian poetry-book publishing with its gender distributions. As we have learned from the anthologies, older times were more men-centred than the last quarter of 20th century. In Table 6 the Estonian poetry-book publishing has been divided into ten-year periods and we can see how lonely our first great poetess Lydia Koidula is in the 1860s, not getting company until the1880s.

Table 6. Number of authors who published poetry books for adults in Estonian in 1851–1998, by periods and gender.

	Total authors	Women authors	Women %	Men authors	Men %
1990–98	356	154	43.3%	202	56.7%
1980–89	184	73	39.7%	111	60.3%
1970–79	140	44	31.4%	96	68.6%
1960–69	116	30	25.9%	86	74.1%
1950–59	69	17	24.6%	52	75.4%
1940–49	40	10	25.0%	30	75.0%
1930–39	92	18	19.6%	74	80.4%
1920–29	87	10	11.5%	77	88.5%
1910–19	62	7	11.3%	55	88.7%
1900–09	67	4	6.0%	63	94.0%
1890–99	50	5	10.0%	45	90.0%
1880–89	52	3	5.8%	49	94.2%
1870–79	45	0	0.0%	45	100.0%
1860–69	24	1	4.2%	23	95.8%
1850–59	12	0	0.0%	12	100.0%

Ever since the end of the 19th century the situation for women authors has been steadily improving, yet their share in poetry book publishing until the 1940s does not exceed 20%. Under the Soviet

policy of gender equality that percentage rose to around 25–30%, but not substantially higher. Only the 1980s and 1990s celebrate the rise of the publication of women-written poetry books to the height of 43.3% (how much of it is self-publishing and vanity remains beyond the scope of this article). It is high, yet still below 50%! Thus even in the relatively more open and less prestigious field of poetry publishing (several famous men poets being more happy in politics or business) women are not enjoying predominance. The situation of poetry has definitely changed, but does it represent an empty-field phenomenon mentioned at the beginning of the present discussion? Is poetry becoming increasingly populated by women as a consequence of its loss of attraction for men as a professional and symbolically appreciated field? At present, the proportion of poetry books published by men (60.3% in 1990–1998) is even greater than that of all authors of the same period (56.7%). Since the 1870s, at least 100 poetry collections were published by Estonian male authors in a decade, whereas women reached the same level only by the 1980s. Whether this predicts a substantial and sustainable change in attitudes towards women authors or not will be seen in the 21st century. At least we can say that at the end of the 20th century two of every three poetry books in Estonian are written by male authors.

12. By way of conclusion: throughout the second half of the 20th century, poetry has still endured as an occupation of men's minds, first and foremost. Our observations of poetry publishing habits in Anglo-American and Estonian grounds display a great resemblance. Notwithstanding the relatively insignificant position of poetry in modern societies, its prevalent makers are males. Women are looking for ways to enter the field but mostly they consume its output. Over the past decades women's opportunities to be published in poetry anthologies have increased. Yet although this trend reflects a changing situation, the essence of poetry stays hidden somewhere in the depths of the male-constructed union of language and philosophy, which prevents women from a full participation in their own psychological and social basis. The abstract and logical dimensions of poetry still attract men and form a fortress not yet conquered by women. Whether the reason for that

lies in the specifically male construction of poetic structures (even emotional ones) or rather in a playground attraction of the poetry field in Johan Huizinga's sense of *homo ludens,* is still veiled. Anyway, study above shows features of male predominance persisting in the poetry-publishing sphere at the end of the 20th century.

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La invención del espacio mágico en la narrativa de Bernardo Atxaga

ÁNGEL GARCÍA GALIANO

Bernardo Atxaga es el pseudónimo del escritor en lengua vasca Joseba Irazu (Asteasu, 1951). El enorme éxito de que dan cuenta sus premios y traducciones a casi todas las lenguas de Europa es, si cabe, más sorprendente cuando sabemos que su literatura es fruto de una profunda y saludable contradicción: bebe en las fuentes de los grandes escritores de todos los tiempos y, al mismo tiempo, nace en el venero casi seco y exiguo de un idioma, el vasco, que apenas si ha tenido, por circunstancias políticas y sociales de todos conocidas, una tradición literaria autóctona digna de tal nombre. Escribir, pues, en un idioma literariamente balbuciente, sin padres, pero poseedor de un rico sustrato de tradición oral y folklórica, y enraizarse a un tiempo en las grandes corrientes innovadoras de la narrativa universal son los dos pilares sobre los que se sustenta el imaginario literario de este interesante y original escritor vasco.

Es sabido que la generación de escritores a la que sucede Bernardo Atxaga navegó en un mar de enormes dificultades: a las políticas de la dictadura de Franco, se sumaba la necesidad imperiosa de crear una lengua literaria unificada, inmerso como estaba el euskera en una babel de dialectos y variantes locales. Había, además, una tercera tarea pendiente: la apertura de los nuevos escritores a la gran renovación literaria que se había gestado en la literatura occidental del siglo XX. De nada servía dotarse de una lengua literaria lista para su uso imaginativo si la casi exclusiva fuente de inspiración seguía proviniendo de los

viejos catecismos clericales o de las leyendas folklóricas y orales de los valles euskaldunes.

Todo ello, transición democrática y autogobierno cultural incluido, hizo que a mediados de los años setenta los escritores vascos contaran con unas posibilidades inéditas hasta entonces: tenían el mundo a su disposición, ya no había trabas ideológicas ni culturales a las que achacar una carencia de logros: el talento será, a partir de ahora, la exclusiva vara de medir de esta nueva generación de escritores, entre los que destaca Atxaga y, entre todas sus obras, la más vasca y universal a un tiempo, *Obabakoak*. A un talento indiscutible, Atxaga añade su peculiar agudeza para advertir los problemas de la literatura y cultura vasca actuales. Como explica Ibon Sarasola en el prólogo a *Obabakoak*, ha sabido establecer la prosa narrativa más sabia y eficaz del momento, merced al estudio de la tradición literaria y de la sabia utilización de los recursos de la narrativa popular dialectal. Súmese a ello que su notable conocimiento de la literatura europea lo ha puesto al servicio de su lúcida comprensión del quehacer narrativo para entender por qué estamos ante uno de los escritores contemporáneos, en lengua minoritaria o no, más interesantes.

El propio Atxaga ha dejado varias veces y por escrito detalladamente expuesto su pensamiento a este respecto. Su militancia literaria en pro de la literatura en lengua vasca nace, sin duda, del reconocimiento de eso que los románticos alemanes dieron en llamar el *Volkgeist*, el espíritu del pueblo. El problema es que el *volk* al que Atxaga pertenecía era, según el estereotipo al uso, "un pueblo pequeño, sencillo, inculto y ágrafo". Contra ese estereotipo tan aplastante es contra el que luchan escritores como Atxaga.

"Si mi testimonio personal sirve para algo — ha dejado escrito Atxaga en uno de sus alfabetos —, tengo que confesarte que la conciencia de pertenecer a una comunidad lingüística del tamaño de Liliput ha determinado mi manera de estar en la literatura . Sin embargo, no creo que esa pertenencia tenga consecuencias literarias directas, ni positivas ni negativas. Es, sencillamente, un lugar desde el que escribir. Con sus ventajas y sus inconvenientes."

El somero análisis que paso a realizar de algunos aspectos de este libro va precedido por una advertencia: no está entre los "inconvenientes" de la literatura de Atxaga esa insistencia de algunos

escritores románticos y allegados en el famoso *sabor local*, tan abundante en los constructores de las literaturas nacionales, al menos en su vertiente más tópica. Como tampoco se deja arrastrar por la transcripción inmediata y mecánica de los aspectos más noticiables de la realidad vasca. Atxaga, hasta cuando ataca directamente el fenómeno del terrorismo, por pensar en un caso trágico y candente de las últimas décadas, lo hace desde el lado más humano, más literario, nunca desde el epidérmico o político: universaliza el problema ahondando en su raíz. Digamos de paso que esta universalización por ahondamiento en lo local (pensemos en cierto Lorca o en Dostoievski) son características comunes de los grandes escritores. Dicho de una forma un tanto antigua, su compromiso es con el ser humano y con la literatura, no con la ideología, la tribu o la coyuntura más o menos candente y oportunista. Esto último, como sabemos, bien poco tiene que ver con el arte.

Porque el territorio de Atxaga es, fundamentalmente, el espacio de la imaginación: la memoria, la nostalgia, el contraste entre el sitio desde el que se escribe y el lugar sobre el que se escribe son las pautas sobre las que va elaborando una atmósfera mágica o mítica construida a partes iguales por la memoria infantil y la imaginación melancólica y extrañada del novelista adulto que desea de ese modo recuperar lo perdido.

Late en su obra un deseo de inventar un territorio mítico, una nuez íntima, una concha protectora, que habita y brota de la propia memoria. Sucede, además, que ese territorio mítico, ese espacio que configura la evocación de los ámbitos más vívidos de la infancia, es uno de los universales literarios más constantes: el lector, si el autor ha construido su invención con talento, no tarda en identificarse con eso Macondos, Regiones, Condados de Yoknapatawpha del profundo sur americano u Obabas euskaldunas, porque más allá de la apariencia "regional" y pintoresca de estos paisajes míticos del novelista, lo que en ellos percibimos es nuestro "rincón del mundo", el espacio donde viven y anhelan las imágenes de intimidad protegida.

"Muchas de las historias que he contado — ha escrito el propio Atxaga — están relacionadas con lugares que durante la niñez me parecieron extraordinarios: una casa donde, en el lugar del perro,

había un zorro; un bosque que en los días de viento se llenaba de lamentos, "como si Pan estuviera llorando"; una iglesia en la que, entre flores y columnas doradas, resonaban cada domingo las serenas voces del latín. Lo extraordinario de los lugares actuaba además, en aquella temprana edad, como el agua sobre una tierra blanda, abriendo surcos, caminos, itinerarios, creando un precedente..."

Vamos a intentar esbozar algunas de estas características apuntadas de la narrativa de Atxaga a través del análisis de "Esteban Werfell", primer relato o novela corta incluido en *Obabakoak*. Relata una anécdota en apariencia muy sencilla: la infidelidad de Esteban para con su padre, que le ha prohibido entrar en la iglesia de Obaba. Pero ese hecho, sus antecedentes y, sobre todo, sus consecuencias, está cargado de profundas significaciones y motivos, tales como: el abandono definitivo de la infancia, el extrañamiento, el deslumbramiento que produce el infatuado amor de la adolescencia, el baldón horrible y maravilloso de sentirse diferente y, de manera muy intensa, la lucha entre el mundo de dentro, seguro y luminoso en su soledad, y el de fuera, asegurante en su mezquino y temeroso deseo de homogeneización.

Así pues, la estructura del relato se construye según esa doble y antitética configuración del espacio narrativo: el de dentro, representado por la casa del padre, un extranjero, un ingeniero alemán dueño de una extraordinaria biblioteca y de una profunda soledad en un pueblo al que está vinculado por el amor a una mujer, la madre muerta de Esteban, y un trabajo al que ha de resignarse en la mina de Obaba, porque no puede volver a una Alemania sumida en el terror nazi. Y el espacio de fuera, Obaba, la patria de Esteban, donde están sus amigos, su escuela, sus paseos en bici, su idioma, pues él rechaza el alemán paterno y asiste, receloso y asustado, a los comentarios lancinantes sobre él y su madre que de cuando en cuando se cuentan en la aldea.

Pero en esa patria no habita sólo una maledicencia que sus catorce años apenas si entiende, está, sobre todo, el cine de los domingos, la pandilla, toda la felicidad adolescente a su alcance que, como en el Jardín del Edén, lleva su prohibición incluida: en su caso, el árbol del bien y del mal inaccesible es la iglesia, adonde acuden todos sus amigos a cantar salmos en el coro los domingos

por la tarde y adonde él tiene vetado el ingreso: "el espíritu está en esos libros, Esteban. No en la oscuridad de la iglesia" le repetía el ingeniero, señalando la biblioteca de la casa, el único sitio, por cierto, de Obaba, que le gustaba al padre, explica el narrador adulto Esteban con frío y melancólico sarcasmo.

Hay otro espacio más, tan importante como los dos antagónicos de la niñez, Obaba frente a la casa paterna. Me refiero al lugar (y el tiempo, febrero de 1958) desde el que escribe y recuerda Esteban Werfell su memorial, la ciudad en la que, ya adulto, vive y trabaja como profesor de geografía, acolchado en el refugio de la biblioteca paterna: una mezcla, por tanto, ese espacio desde donde escribe, del ayer y del ahora, los libros del padre y los cisnes del parque, en el que alimenta esa melancolía literaria con la que va llenando cuaderno tras cuaderno, esa memoria mágica desde la que reconstruye los espacios y las vivencias de su infancia. Veamos como se describen en un muy significativo comienzo del relato:

"Encuadernados la mayoría en piel y severamente dispuestos en las estanterías, los libros de Esteban Werfell llenaban casi por entero las cuatro paredes de la sala; eran diez o doce mil volúmenes que resumían dos vidas, la suya y la de su padre, y que formaban, además, un recinto cálido, una muralla que lo separaba del mundo y que lo protegía siempre que, como aquel día de febrero, se sentaba a escribir. La mesa en que escribía –un viejo mueble de roble- era también, al igual que muchos de los libros, un recuerdo paterno; la había hecho trasladar, siendo aún muy joven, desde el domicilio familiar de Obaba.

Aquella muralla de papel, de páginas, de palabras, tenía sin embargo un resquicio; una ventana desde la que, mientras escribía, Esteban Werfell podía ver el cielo, y los sauces, y el estanque, y la caseta para los cisnes del parque principal de la ciudad"

Advertimos en este primer párrafo cómo aparece ya uno de los motivos fundamentales del relato, la casa como refugio, y dentro de la casa, la biblioteca, el lugar más espiritual y sedante de la misma y que más lo aproxima al recuerdo de su padre. Esa casa concentra, en un escritor, las imágenes, intensificadas, de todas las casas que hemos habitado y de las que hemos deseado habitar. Son imágenes, como el mismo narrador expresa, de intimidad protegida, no en vano, cuando comience su furiosa relación epistolar

con Maria Vockel, será esa misma biblioteca el lugar donde se refugiará, alejándose cada vez más de los lugares y las gentes, sus amigos, de fuera, esto es, de Obaba. Treinta años después, busca también, en otro lugar, el refugio de la biblioteca paterna para hilar la rueca de su melancolía.

Esteban escribe en una ciudad y en una madurez adulta desde la que va desgranando los recuerdos de su infancia en Obaba. Sabemos así que es hijo de una unión libre, insólita en aquellos tiempos, y con un extranjero, de una muchacha de la aldea que murió en el parto. El extranjero quedó atrapado en los valles de Obaba ante la agresiva locura nazi. También su padre, pues, hubo de protegerse en esa casa, entre esos libros de la implacable desolación de aquel lugar.

Imágenes de intimidad protegida, decía. Curiosamente, esa casa-madre apenas si se describe, apenas si los novelistas la describen, pues no se trata de pormenorizar sus aspectos pintorescos o dar cuenta de sus posibles comodidades, sino de expresar en el relato su valor de concha inicial. Esa concha inicial, que en el conjunto del libro remite al territorio todo de Obaba, está, si reparamos un poco en ello, libre de "color local": los espacios que devienen territorios universales jamás decaen en el pastiche localista, ese tremendo defecto del *Quijote* de Pièrre Ménard que, en cambio, había soslayado Cervantes, como bien supo imaginar Borges.

Ese espacio que la memoria inventa como Obaba es y no es Asteasu, la aldea natal de Atxaga, de la que, como veremos enseguida, se sirve el escritor en numerosos detalles anidados en la memoria para inventar esta "concha primigenia" ante la que cualquier lector se siente identificado. Porque estos lugares propios se definen y construyen más por sucesos universales que por datos o descripciones costumbristas. Ahí radica el talento del verdadero escritor frente al mero fotógrafo de "color local", costumbrista y castizo, defectos en que, como ya advertimos arriba, jamás decae Atxaga. Nadie pone en duda que Obaba es un rincón de Euskal Herria; lo que trato de explicar es que en ese espacio mitad imaginario y mitad real y en una lengua del tamaño de un liliputiense que apenas si acaba de vestirse de largo, se puede hacer literatura tan universal como la de Tolstoi o Faulkner, precisamente porque también ellos inventaron su universo mítico a partir de la "con-

centración e intensificación de realidad propia" y no con meros y siempre superficiales brochazos localistas:

"Creemos a veces que nos conocemos en el tiempo, cuando en realidad sólo se conocen una serie de fijaciones en espacios de la estabilidad del ser, de un ser que no quiere transcurrir, que en el mismo pasado va en busca del tiempo perdido, que quiere "suspender" en el vuelo del tiempo. En sus mil alvéolos, el espacio conserva el tiempo comprimido", sostiene a este respecto Bachelard.

Frente a la casa como paraíso y refugio paterno, nos encontramos con la iglesia de Obaba, el árbol prohibido, en ella, en su imponente edificio, allí en lo alto de la cuesta, dominando desde su orgullosa y recia soledad todo el pueblo desde el altozano, se cristalizan y simbolizan todos los referentes culturales, sociales, con sus tabúes, imposiciones, miedos y reglamentos, todo lo que podríamos llamar mecanismos de seguridad e identificación de la aldea. Pero, además, en el caso particular de Esteban, desde su posición de semiextrañamiento, encarna también el lugar de la trasgresión, la infidelidad al padre, la complicidad con sus amigos, ahora que en la adolescencia eso es tan importante, su deseo tácito de ser aceptado como uno más en Obaba y no tener que esperarlos fuera de la iglesia, domingo tras domingo, para llegar tarde, después, al cine de la estación, sino morder la manzana prohibida, adentrarse en la espesura de un lugar doblemente fascinante, por sí mismo y por prohibido.

No obstante, la cualidad de los lugares centrales o extraordinarios no depende en exclusiva de las vivencias, ha de depender, también, de algún valor intrínseco al lugar, ha de tener, como justo correlato de la vivencia subjetiva, una base material, física, objetiva.

Este es el caso de la iglesia de Obaba y (para ir, como siempre en este análisis, de Esteban Werfell a Bernardo Atxaga) de su trasunto real, la iglesia de Asteasu, situada en el barrio alto de la aldea. Para ir a la iglesia desde el valle, desde la zona más viva y poblada de Obaba y de cualquier aldea vasca, cuya vida bulle siempre en torno al río y los caminos, había que subir por la "cuesta de los canónigos", modo de acceder al barrio alto de Obaba, y en lo más alto del barrio alto, la iglesia (y a su vera la

escuela). Ni que decir tiene que en épocas de escaso o nulo parque automovilístico, basado todo en la tracción animal, la vida de la aldea estaría casi muerta en la parte alta, lejos del valle y del río. Lo que en el valle es tránsito, ruido, vitalidad, en el barrio alto es quietud, tiempo condensado, lentitud. Y más, si reparamos en ello, un domingo por la tarde, momento en que transcurre la escena principal de este relato, en que no hay escuela, y por tanto desaparecen sus casi únicos y temporales habitantes, quienes, al menos a diario, llenarían de gritos y risas los espacios mudos del altozano.

Y ahora, entremos *por primera vez* en una iglesia. Como dijo Esteban al reponerse de la impresión oscura y hueca de haber mordido el fruto prohibido, aquella iglesia en la que entrara, por primera y última vez, era "cien veces mayor que la escuela, mil veces mayor que mi habitación". Así interpreta aquel muchacho de catorce años la iglesia: como un teatro. Con un gran escenario central, con imágenes de hombres barbudos, con sillas y bancos para el público. "Y todo era dorado, todo brillaba". Es decir, está intentando reconstruir aquel espacio ignoto ayudándose de las imágenes que ha aprendido y tantas veces ha escuchado de su padre. Un enamorado del género operístico en su Alemania natal y añorada. Esteban, como no podía ser de otra manera, no *ve* la iglesia, nadie ve una iglesia, la interpretamos con las imágenes, pulsiones, representaciones previas con las que entremos. Repito: nadie ve una iglesia, no sólo el pobre y asustado Esteban; es muy difícil ver cualquier cosa, porque siempre aparece antes del milagro un mecanismo de seguridad muy bien aprendido que se llama interpretación. Acaso los niños vean, acaso.

El propio Atxaga ha confesado que este pasaje en que Esteban describe la iglesia le llevó mucho trabajo, pues no es fácil recuperar la inocencia y "recordar" la primera vez, de niños, que entramos en un ámbito semejante. Pero el escritor escribe siempre desde la lateralidad, eso que los formalistas llaman el extrañamiento, volver a oír el sonido del mar, esa tarea casi imposible para los pescadores, como recuerda Shklovski. Escuchemos la descripción de Esteban antes de su interpretación de lo que está viendo, y, ahora sí, entremos por primera vez en una iglesia:

"La puerta era pesada y muy grande, y tuve que empujarla con todo el peso de mi cuerpo.

— Antes de entrar tienes que hacer la señal de la cruz — me dijo Andrés. Le respondí que no sabía. Entonces mojó mis dedos con los suyos y dirigió los movimientos de mi mano.

— ¡Qué sitio más oscuro! — exclamé nada más entrar. El contraste entre la luminosidad de fuera y la penumbra del interior me cegaba. No distinguía nada, ni siquiera el pasillo central que tenía delante.

— No hables tan alto — me pidieron los compañeros al tiempo que me adelantaban.

Lejos de mí, donde yo me figuraba el final del pasillo, ardía una gran vela. Era el único punto de luz de todo el edificio. Di unos cuantos pasos en aquella dirección, pero volví a detenerme. No sabía hacia dónde tenía que ir, y mis compañeros parecían haber desaparecido.

Mis ojos seguían fijos en la llama del otro lado del pasillo pero, poco a poco, iba viendo más cosas. Reparé en las vidrieras, que eran azules, y en los reflejos dorados que salían de una columna cercana a la gran vela. Con todo, no me atrevía a moverme.

— No tengas miedo, Esteban. Soy yo — escuché entonces detrás de mí, y a pesar de la advertencia sufrí un sobresalto.

Antes de que tuviera tiempo de nada, un brazo largo y huesudo me rodeó por el cuello. Era el canónigo.

— Vamos, Esteban. No tengas miedo — repitió acercando su cara la mía.

El olor de sus ropas me resultaba muy extraño.

— La llama de esa vela no se apaga nunca, Esteban — me susurró señalando hacia delante con la mano que le quedaba libre-. Cuando nos toca encender una nueva, siempre lo hacemos con el último fuego de la anterior. Piensa en lo que significa esto, Esteban. ¿Qué crees que significa?" (p. 37)

Si la iglesia se opone semióticamente a su casa, a la biblioteca del padre, la aparición del sacerdote organiza la contrafigura paterna por antonomasia: un jesuita de Loyola que busca la tranquilidad de una aldeucha para apacentar su grey. Si ya el cura para cualquier muchacho es un "hombre otro" (como la iglesia es un espacio otro, un mundo otro, por oposición a la escuela, a la taberna, a la estación del tren, la casa del indiano, el aserradero o la carretera de las mariposas), alguien completamente distinto a su padre, a sus hermanos, a cualquier vecino del pueblo, imaginemos para Esteban Werfell, el extranjero, el hijo del pecado, el no bautizado, el que nunca pisó una iglesia. Repasemos el encuentro entre ambos, porque ilumina muy bien el talento literario de su autor:

Esteban está como hipnotizado por la llama del sagrario, por el azul de las vidrieras, por la sombra que proyecta una columna. Pero no se atreve a dar un paso: reparemos en que su "encuentro" con el sacerdote le llega, en un principio, a través de varios sentidos, pero no por el de la vista, hipnotizada como sigue en el fulgor rojizo de la llama votiva:

"Escuche entonces **detrás de mi**", "un brazo largo y huesudo **me rodeó** por el cuello", "el **olor de sus ropas** me resultaba muy **extraño**".

En medio de la confusión, el miedo y, latente, la desobediencia al padre, la aparición del cura se hace a través de su voz, del tacto huesudo de su brazo y del agror extraño de su sotana. Sólo varios párrafos después, cuando el canónigo explica el milagro de esa llama eterna y el significado de vínculo entre las generaciones de la iglesia, sólo después de que Esteban se sienta "humillado, como si mi exclusión de aquella comunidad hubiera sido un defecto o una mancha", sólo entonces **ve** al canónigo expresar su victoria mediante una amplia sonrisa. Y concluye esta magistral escena: "escuché el frufrú de sus ropas incluso después de que hubiera desaparecido de mi vista". Es entonces cuando se hace la reflexión, ya citada, sobre el tamaño de la iglesia, la cosa más grande que jamás vio nunca Esteban, y el carácter teatral de su ambientación. Sólo entonces las palabras del padre salen a su encuentro, en su ayuda: un teatro. Pero antes, antes de las palabras, Esteban ve la iglesia, y lo que ve es la oscuridad, el fulgor de la vela, el azul de las vidrieras y los reflejos dorados que salían de una

columna y el olor, el tacto y las palabras del canónigo: esa es, antes de la interpretación, la iglesia que *vemos*.

Tenemos, pues, los dos espacios, casa *versus* iglesia, las dos figuras antitéticas, antagonistas, el padre y el canónigo, y, en medio, el resto de las *dramatis personae*, Obaba y los amigos de Esteban, por un lado, ayudantes del cura, según el esquema de Greimas, y Hamburgo y Maria Vockel, del lado del padre, según el mismo código actancial.

La victoria del padre se resume en esta significativa cita en que explica Esteban su nuevo talante con los amigos, desde que anda devanado en el amor epistolar hacia Maria:

"Muy pronto nuestra relación comenzó a enfriarse. Me negaba a enseñarles las cartas que regularmente me llegaban de Hamburgo, y sólo me juntaba con ellos para ir al cine. Y cuando, siguiendo los pasos de Andrés, dejaron el cine y tomaron la costumbre de frecuentar los bares, la ruptura fue total. **Yo prefería quedarme en casa, estudiando alemán y leyendo los libros de la biblioteca de mi padre. Quería prepararme**, estar a la altura de Maria Vockel."

Ese es el principio del fin de la adolescencia de Esteban, el alejamiento de los amigos y de todo lo que significa Obaba, y su conversión definitiva en un extranjero, algo que lo vincula definitivamente a su padre y su mundo, a esa Hamburgo imposible donde late el amor de una muchacha entrevista en el paroxismo de su visita a la iglesia.

Atxaga ha echado mano, con sumo talento, de los recursos más habituales para mitificar el espacio e inventar, así, el territorio donde la memoria y la imaginación urde sus ficciones narrativas. Lo ha hecho desde la nostalgia, para eso ha colocado el punto de vista del narrador *en otro sitio* (en otro tiempo y lugar), una foto, los libros de una biblioteca, un manuscrito destapan la lámpara maravillosa de la memoria emergente en trance de literatura. No hace falta decir, o acaso sí, que el sentido de la composición, la precisión léxica, el matizado juego de los contrastes y algún que otro apero narrativo han de ser utilizados con la inteligencia y la precisión del estilete para que estos artefactos de la imaginación funcionen con la lucidez y eficacia que, por lo general, acaece en *Obabakoak*. Hay otros mecanismos, citados ya o no, que contri-

buyen a crear esta atmósfera de evocación "donde todo es posible", uno de ellos es el clima, la niebla, la lluvia, la noche que acompaña a ciertos momentos esenciales de los relatos. También, y muy importante, la soledad, de las personas y de las casas, esas *imago animae* como diría Bachelard, a quien citábamos antes.

Otro mecanismo de configuración del relato capaz de abrir la grieta y mostrar el lado de allá aparece en los escenarios elegidos, el bosque, la iglesia, la escuela, la chabola de los lagartos: son espacios abiertos y propicios para que la imaginación o la "otra realidad" irrumpan y su efecto, real, aunque esas realidades sólo fueran imaginarias, influya en la deriva de los protagonistas.

Esa misma aura mágica que posibilita lo que estamos llamando, sin excesiva concreción, el efecto fantástico, viene propiciada igualmente por personajes singulares: Javier y su circunstancia, el propio canónigo, los pastores de Villamediana y su hábitos pintorescos, el ingeniero alemán, la maestrita de 22 años en el barrio periférico de Albania, Enrique de Tassis, el propio Ismael y sus lagartos o el tío indiano y sus *soirées* literarias, todos ellos invitan a la ruptura de la Costumbre al irrumpir con su singularidad en un territorio detenido y perpetuo, como la luz de la llama votiva de la iglesia, que sólo desde ese extrañamiento ve alterada su ciclicidad y, con ello, cobra consciencia de su propia realidad, imposible de percibir "desde dentro". Mecanismos todos, por cierto, concebidos para oír de nuevo (y "de nuevo" significa también "por primera vez") el mar, para ver la Realidad como es y no como la interpreta la Costumbre, esa mezcla de Miedo y Deseo contra la que batalla todo escritor digno de tal nombre. Vale.

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Between Two Realms:
Cross-Cultural Tensions as Reflected in Estonian Fiction

TIINA AUNIN

The study of cultural identity and cultural relativism has become an important item for literary scholarship. In his article about the significance and limits of cultural relativism (1997) a well-known comparativist, Gerald Gillespie repeats Leibniz's prediction about how the pattern of world development would bring about an intensifying tendency towards cross-fertilization of cultures; but he also warns the literary scholars about possible cross-cultural misunderstandings and says, that "the knitting together of peoples sets new tasks to literary theoreticians and social scientists to face cultural relativism" (Gillespie 1997: 3).

Recent appreciation of half-repressed marginal literatures, of which Estonian literature is one, leads to internationalization of comparative literature. Being formerly politically and culturally contested, Estonian writers and literary scholars start re-examining the assumptions of their home culture and its place among other cultures. Nationhood is one of their dominant concerns. The leading Estonian daily newspaper *Päevaleht* of June 9, 1999 for instance argues that instead of the endless and heated discussion about Estonia's place in the world and its economic parameters, we should first define the meaning of the notion "Estonian" itself.

What are the social, ethical and cultural undercurrents that give an impetus to the formation of our self-understanding? The rapid and radical changes of the Estonian nation's place in Europe have altered its attitude towards itself. Keeping this in view, should we

not even call ourselves NEO-ESTONIANS? But what are the values the Neo-Estonians can rely upon?

Each nation should treasure its great narratives with their cultural and moral effect that is able to bridge the generation gaps. In case of the Estonians, could one of these narratives be the Singing Revolution, or is the narrative diminished, down to minor political arguments? Will such a great narrative ever be published in Estonia? I am not intending to construct any new hypotheses with my paper, nor am I able to answer the question raised above. I am only trying to enter into an already existing discourse taking place in the Estonian press, literary criticism and fiction.

Novels can sometimes function as problem-solving models. And even if it is not always in their power to suggest immediate solutions, they can bring forward the same problems from different angles, offer their readers dialogues and strategies; instructing, persuading and evoking their consciousness.

Emil Tode's novel *Printsess* ('The Princess') is one of the cases where the writer takes into account the addressee's perception of the given cultural area of communication and opens the dialogue with the misunderstood "other". The novel, published in 1997 forms one of the master-codings that may be studied either as a microcosm with its own characteristics and dynamics, or "in relation to the other codings with which literature relates" (ib. 5).

Any literary scholar who is familiar with the cultural situation in Estonia at the end of the century can situate it in the relation to the significant movements of postmodern literature. As far as the plot is concerned, it presents an episodic life story line. The events which steer the plot are largely determined by chance but their consequences evoke serious existential and ethic dilemmas in the main character, following the postmodern discourse of a man's place in the multicultural world.

Staying at a German boardinghouse near Munich, two Estonians (Anna and Taaniel) and two Russians (Marfa and Father Alexander), get their fates closely entangled as has been the historical case in the Baltic countries for centuries. An example from the text. Anna hears Marfa entering the door, saying:

> — Prasti, ja stutshala, tõ ne otvetila, tak ja prosto vashla (Excuse my entering. I knocked but there was no answer. So, I simply came in.).
>
> Anna, thinking to herself:
>
> — I can immediately understand what she is saying, even too clearly; each word expands to a huge picture, to a whole performance. I must watch it to the end and come to a solution. Only then can I give an answer. (Tode 1997: 49).

Once more, let me quote Gillespie who says: "All of our home cultures can be analysed as some amalgam resultant from earlier or even more recent imperialist movements" (Gillespie 1997: 5).

The protagonist of *The Princess* Anna is constantly weighing the influence of the two imperialist cultures — German and Russian — on the Estonians' perceptive landscape. Encountering a variety of cultural forms finally leads her to the question of cultural relativism, and to the dialogue with various cultures.

The novel will attain a high position in the national canon not only from the point of view of individual dilemmas, but first of all because it is thematically relevant with the cultural phenomena, so empowering in the present-day readers' minds. Emil Tode's two novels, *The Border State*, and especially *The Princess* help us to decode the late-twentieth-century approaches towards multicultural worlds. At the same time they illustrate various layers in the Estonian-language literature and the shifts in its addressees: (1) under the Soviet domain, (2) in emigration, (3) in the newly independent republic.

(1) As the numerous written life-stories of Estonians reveal (I refer to the 1997 collection *Women Speak*) under the Soviet rule people felt alienated in their own land. The native residents had been forced into inner immigration — into silence or double morals:

> — I went along with the lies. It was so simple... I deciphered the system ahead of time... I lied even when there was no one present to hear or see. Because I had a deep suspicion that one must believe

> such a big lie oneself, otherwise it will squash you.
> Just like my sandal on a beetle. (Tode 1997: 70).

(2) The Estonian immigrant writing in Sweden, Canada and the U.S. reveal varying degrees of alienation in new cultures which push the protagonist and the reader towards the margins of society. The archetypal generation gap in immigrant families has brought forth many fine texts: Linda Kivi's *If Home Is the Place*, Elin Toona's *The Last Daughter of Kalevi Village*, novels and short stories by Aarand Roos, Marta Pihla, etc.

(3) The rapid political and social changes in the newly independent republic cause tensions between the old and the new so that most of the time we feel ourselves situated between the two realms, not only geographically but also culturally, not really belonging to either of them. The writing of the transition period to which Emil Tode's novel generically belongs tries to introduce a new type of a character who feels alien everywhere, even inside herself/himself.

How can this kind of alienation develop, and how can it be overcome? Human existence is dialogical in its essence. This is what the female protagonist *of The Princess*, the 27-year old Anna intuitively understands. Her willingness to compare and to speak up is so overwhelming that she is ready to take the responsibility for killing the man she did not kill. She knows that the constant comparison is the only way in which the new and the foreign can be approached. Only in this fashion can a dialogue be initiated.

Although at times she feels that "the trees are too tall here... they do not understand me", that "strawberries have no taste", even if the swallows seem too ordinary to Marfa, not like the ones along the Volga "where they dance in the sky singing songs of praise to all Christians", although to Father Alexander life seems awful on earth where "humans are living like animals" (ib. 32, 37, 39) — are all these three characters ready for the dialogue with the misunderstood other? For they grasp the simple paradox that their "misunderstanding has its roots in the very process of understanding the other" (Veit 1997: 166). Finally they admit that their misunderstanding is primarily "understanding differently".

Yet, there is another character in the novel, Taaniel, who is clearly unable to overcome his aversion toward "the other". This aversion seems to be based on an unreflected pre-judgement, thus, offering a paradigmatic case of cultural misunderstanding and absolutism. Denouncing Father Alexander who pays for his and Anna's stay at the boardinghouse, Taaniel's judgement is unexpectedly hostile.

> — I don't particularly like them... It's so Russian. I don't understand them. They seem to have loads of money, but they live like, I don't know how... strange... he could buy himself a more ordinary car, a last model BMW. He is a real mafia type. (Tode 1997: 17).

The author continues to describe the scene in terms of the critique against the social reality and moral values in Estonia. He offers the episode in terms of the opposite European values at large. Thus, on the second and even the deeper level, critique is not directed against the unfamiliar customs, or "the other". Rather, it is directed against the familiar and treasured self.

From the very beginning of the novel the symbolic purpose of Anna's and Taaniel's journey through Europe as a self-searching pilgrimage becomes apparent. It is revealed via a number of images: starting off on a bleak Good Friday afternoon; the upside-down cross in a small country church; the empty frame instead of Christ's picture above the altar; the run-over man and his blood on the back seat of the car. United by a mortal sin, the two young Estonians throw themselves to the mercy of Father Alexander and his fatally ill sister Marfa. They are both given an opportunity to reconsider their involuntary crime, and repent. But only one of them — Anna — is able to repent the evil done, for only she can see the dialectical relationship between the understanding of the self and the other as the key to her salvation.

The complex pattern of European interculturality reveals itself to Anna's eyes and she is painfully eager to learn it.

> — I want to study the pattern, I want to understand it... Primroses in the grass. Different primroses, another variety, a pale yellow... It's moving; all is

> moving around me. The pattern is too complex, a vertical haze, a sliding transition, if I could only understand it... The bird becomes silent. I become one with the pattern. (Ib. 44).

Cultural influences have always played a prominent part in the self-identification process of the Estonians. There seems to be no ending to the discussions about the superiority of either the native or the foreign cultural elements as a basis for formulating truth-claims. Claiming the search for truth as one of the basic drives in a human being, Tode certainly is the writer who strives towards objectivity. His text offers enough hints at his awareness of the cultural perspectives of the united Europe which might not float necessarily in the right direction, but in the direction where "... no one thinks of anyone. Only about his own extension, his own function... his own illness" (ib. 56).

Walter Veit in his article on Gadamer's analysis of historicity concludes: "If we can accept the existential position of our dialogue with the past, we are equally asked to accept the dialogue with the culturally foreign and the new as the overarching existential situation for the understanding of the self " (Veit 1997: 173). *The Princess* is not only the dialogue with the misunderstood other, it is also a constant dialogue with the past. It is in the past Anna seeks the common foundation for the comprehension of human experience. The memories of her grandmother with her set of absolute Christian values are hauntingly present in Anna's mind. But she stubbornly refuses to confess, finding past morality too rigid to understand her complex sin.

> — Listen, Anna, I can see that your conscience is not clear. Tell me what bothers you.
> — I cannot hear, I would not tell. Because I don't even know what it is... It's like a dark fog rolling over this unfortunate landscape. (Tode 1997: 68).

Instead, she confesses to Father Alexander and finds his understanding. Father Alexander's relativism is constantly weighed against her grandmother's absolutism. The latter eliminates every possibility for dialogue.

On the other hand, Taaniel rejects all attempts of communi-
cation. His "absence of soul" (his basic crime) is interpreted by the
author as one of the consequences of cultural discontinuity. He is
like a tree planted in a wrong place "not in the same row with the
others but in the middle of the road. The cut roots are visible" (ib.
21). A nation without a soul would gradually loose its cohesive
force. Anna defines it as something " general and diffuse" (ib. 68).

And yet, the undertone of the novel is not totally pessimistic:
the roots of culture have not entirely been cut, the soul of the
nation has been shaken, not lost. At times Anna complains:

> — I am alone, because I have not istinno (really)
> lived. Because I do not istinno (really) know any-
> body. My days are counted. (Ib. 23).

Nevertheless, the absolutism inside herself is always willing to
give way to relativism and curiosity. Father Alexander says:

> — This is our mania: to clear the square, to escape
> somewhere there is nothing, to the most empty place
> in the world, which is called one's self.
> — But what does exist there?
> — I don't know but I want to see and you too. We
> want to see what there is, when there is nothing.
> (Ib. 134).
> And Anna is compelled to admit:
> — I knew that I'll never live more (istinno —
> T. A.) than on that spring evening, passing behind
> that fence... (Ib. 134).

To sum up, any human being sufficiently curious and motivated
can overcome emptiness inside himself and absorb another culture,
no matter how "alien" it may appear to be.

The use of the Russian language plays an outstanding role in
the narrative strategy of the novel. Russian provides the effect of
the real. The word "istinno" occurs in the text repeatedly with
good reason, adding linguistic color and creating a special mode of
discourse that challenges not only the usual prejudices Estonians
hold about Russians, but also the conventions of the Estonian
novel in itself. The linguistic competence of its characters is pre-

sented more than once. Anna, for example switches freely from Estonian to Russian, from Russian to French, German and English. Nevertheless, the gap between her self and the other is distinctly pronounced, up to the end of the novel. The constant intersection of languages and cultures constitutes a rich signifying system of the narrative structure of *The Princess*, creating at times marginalization of the "pilgrims", at times offering common ground on which their different hopes as well as their self and the other could meet and walk together.

The rich signifying system of the novel implies that there will be never-ending interpretation and recontextualization of the text by successive readers in their different sociocultural contexts. As for the foreign reader *The Princess* may function relatively monologically, for the end-of-the-century Estonian reader at the present historical juncture it functions dialogically. Everything is dependent on reading practices which in their turn are influenced by many factors — political, religious, psychological, and of course cultural.

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Acknowledgment

Permutations of the Identity
of the English Gentleman
in Tom Sharpe's Fiction

PILVI RAJAMÄE

It is common knowledge that at the heart of any national identity is a collection of myths designed to provide assurance and give a sense of mission to the people otherwise prone to needless soul-searching and self-doubt. The greater the nation's accomplishments, the more attractive the myth that sustains it. Empire-builders throughout history seem to have possessed a special, irresistible mystique all their own.

Until comparatively recently one of the most enduring myths was that of English greatness. Though the Empire was officially British, in the popular mind it was an English creation. Their achievement seemed stupendous. Having spread their seed to all corners of the earth, and policed the world's seas for more than a century, they had left an indelible imprint on the minds of less fortunate men. To have a share in that greatness, just by being English, must have seemed supreme virtue. And the apex of God's creation was the English gentleman.

This was a creature extraordinary and unique. His country house lifestyle, his sports and pursuits, his manners and dress were a constant source of wonder. Haughty and inaccessible, the English gentleman seemed a breed apart, cultivated in England alone, and even there in small numbers. Adhering to a code of behaviour nowhere explicitly written down but clearly known to all initiates, he was, and probably still is, a source of envious and baffled curiosity. Countless men have hankered after the arcane know-

ledge which would transform them, mere mortals, into that embodiment of every manly virtue.

This object of admiration and envy, though having a long pedigree going back to early feudal times, was essentially a product of the Late Victorian ethos. It was the 19th century which gave the finishing touches to the English gentleman as we know him. The original stock on to which all later additions were grafted was the traditional English country squire, honest and reliable, a good landlord and an enthusiastic hunter, sturdy and commonsensical, but not always very bright. In the 18th century he had ruled the country through his ownership of land. As this power base came to be eroded in the 19th century, steps were taken to provide him with a moral authority as a justification for his privileged status. A special training, available to him alone, was to produce those qualities which would elevate him above other men and make him the natural ruler. The qualities which were to set the elite apart from other classes were found in chivalry.

The 19th-century chivalric revival is responsible for turning the unassuming country gentleman into a Victorian knight of God. Their imaginations fired by the apologists of the medieval revival and the mid-century moralists, enthusiastic schoolmasters set about producing true knights of the Empire. The training grounds of the elite, the public schools and universities, saw as their aim not so much the imparting of knowledge as the building of the right sort of character. To this end a strong emphasis was laid on sports and games at the expense of more intellectual pursuits. The games were also useful in diverting the boys' attention from their more disturbing physical needs. Sexual purity and a respectful attitude to women were a part of a wider programme of clean living in which there was no room for a vulgar interest in money. The dirty businesses of trade, industry and finance were left to the middle classes, while gentlemen of 'independent' means could afford to ignore anything so base. Because the working classes had so little money that they were supposed to be uninterested in getting more, there was a widely held belief that a natural affinity existed between the working man and his more noble counterpart, both being superior to the middle-class businessman whose philistinism

made it impossible for him ever seriously to aspire to the status of a true gentleman.

Though the gentlemanly ideal was ostensibly universally applicable and attainable to any man who undertook to train himself according to the precepts expounded in pertinent literature, there was the tacit understanding that gentlemen of birth were a cut above all other gentlemen, even if the latter were also public school-educated and talked and looked like real gentlemen. A gentleman made inevitably lacked the total self-confidence of the gentleman born which only a good family tree and the resultant connections in high places could give. He was always aware, and so were all other gentlemen around him, that he was second class at best. Nevertheless, the gentlemanly ideal was eagerly pursued by all men because the right sort of training held out a promise of acceptance into the magic world of the propertied classes which otherwise would have been debarred without the necessary property qualifications.

When the 20th century opened, the gentlemanly ideal was universally accepted and had spread to all corners of the Empire. The Englishman foreigners were likely to come into contact with more often than not had had a gentleman's training, whether he was a gentleman made or born. The ideal these men aspired to, and which abroad tended to be equated with the English character generally, has beautifully been summed up by M. Girouard, to whom I am indebted for the discussion above, in his book *The Return to Camelot*:

> "A chivalrous gentleman was brave, straightforward and honourable, loyal to his monarch, country and friends, unfailingly true to his word, ready to take issue with anyone he saw ill-treating a woman, a child or an animal. He was a natural leader of men, and others unhesitatingly followed his lead. He was fearless in war and on the hunting field, and excelled at all manly sports; but, however tough with the tough, he was invariably gentle to the weak; above all he was always tender, respectful and courteous to women, regardless of their rank. He put the needs of others before his own; as an officer, he always saw

that his men were looked after and made comfortable
before thinking of himself, as a landlord he took good
care of his dependants. He was always ready to give
up his own time to come to help of others, especially
those less fortunate than himself. He was an honour-
able opponent and a good loser; he played games for
the pleasure of playing, not to win. He never boasted.
He was not interested in money. He was an ardent
and faithful lover, but hated coarse talk, especially
about women." (Girouard 1981: 260).

Few things have amused the English more than other nationals'
attempts to act and behave like Englishmen. Intensely preoccupied
with their own identity, the English have traditionally approached
other cultures as a huge joke. Viewing the strangers' habits with "a
kind of envious mockery" (Theroux 1984: 5), making supercilious
comments about the natives, the weather, the food, the entertain-
ments wherever they go, they have been virtually responsible for
inventing the concept of "the funny foreigner" (ib.). This refusal to
take other cultures seriously, which the latter might view as
haughtiness, is really no more than "a form of carelessness" (Silex
1933: 263), a part of the unassuming English attitude which treats
life as a game. This game is to be played fairly and the greatest
crime is to be a bad loser, but a gentleman does not play the game
to win. He plays it for the beauty of it and to take it seriously
would be to admit that one takes the prospect of losing seriously,
which would considerably detract from his superiority over lesser
men who might turn out to be bad losers.

It is a peculiar characteristic of the British empire-builders
abroad that they strenuously kept themselves apart from the cul-
tures they subdued. While other colonizing peoples were changed
as much by the people they colonized as they changed them,
"British civilization was very much more resilient and sure of
itself than these; and besides, the British exerted themselves to
make sure they were *not* contaminated by other cultures, which
was what all the nonsense about dressing for dinner in the African
bush was all about" (Porter 1996: 356). "Going native" was some-
thing a gentleman just did not do.

In its last, imperial, phase the ideologues of the Empire lauded British superiority in lavish terms. Joseph Chamberlain called the British race "the greatest governing race the world had ever seen" (ib. 136) and for Lord Curzon the Empire was "the greatest instrument for good" (ib. 137) in world history. For Cecil Rhodes the British people were simply "the best people in the world, with the highest ideals of decency and justice and liberty and peace" and the more of the world they inhabited "the better for humanity" (ib. 136). Such complacent self-righteousness was bound to come under scrutiny when the Empire started to disintegrate.

Tom Sharpe (b. 1928), whose maturity coincided with the Empire's collapse and the resultant erosion of assumptions about Englishness, has dissected various facets of English identity in a number of books. In *Blott on the Landscape* (1975) and *Indecent Exposure* (1973) he explores the impact of elevated notions of Englishness on credulous foreigners. The writer whose books are habitually characterized as "savage farces" (Stringer 1996: 611) and who indeed occasionally matches the ferocity of Swift or Jonson, is not entirely without sympathy once a character takes his fancy. The two foreigners he creates in these books, a Jewish gardener and an Afrikaner policeman, whose greatest desire is to resemble Englishmen (this desire in itself constituting a source of boundless merriment for an Englishman), may appear ridiculous in their pursuit, but the "real" gentlemen they encounter hardly fare any better in Sharpe's hands. Nor are our protagonists alone in their desire to be somebody else. Sharpe has elsewhere, in practically all his books, dealt with assumed or imposed identities, with hilarious results, but that is beyond the scope of the present article.

So, how does one go about assuming a new national identity, in our case that of the English gentleman? Where would one find models for the desired transformation? Two traditional and obvious sources would be history and literature. The first is usually the vehicle of national myth-making, the second is taken to provide a mirror of the nation's soul. Interestingly, our gardener finds his inspiration in history, while the policeman hopes for a transformation through literature.

When Blott arrives in England in the midst of World War Two in *Blott on the Landscape*, he is a self-created *tabula rasa*. An

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orphan of unknown parentage, found in the Ladies Room in the Dresden railway station, he is classified by Nazi authorities as an Aryan, though the hook-nosed dark looks and short stature of his maturity seem to point to an altogether less desirable nationality. Having, as rear gunner, ineptly shot down two friendly Messerschmidt 109s that were escorting his bomber squadron, he is ordered to volunteer as navigator to stiffen the resolve of the pusillanimous crew of an Italian bomber. Taking the opportunity to get out of both the *Vaterland* and the war, he crashes their plane over North Wales and is subsequently found naked in the wreckage. The sole survivor of the crash, he is naturally taken for an Italian, a misconception he is happy to perpetuate, the only drawback being his inability to speak Italian. He solves the problem by claiming to be the son of a Tyrol shepherd.

In 1942 his camp is moved to Handyman Hall, a seat of the local gentry family, and Blott finds his paradise. It is his first real home. The lifestyle he becomes part of, as Lord Handyman's gardener and right-hand man, is that of a typical country squire, and though a mere prisoner, he can enjoy all its privileges: "He lived in a great house, he had a park to walk in, a river to fish in, a kitchen garden to grow things in, and the run of an idyllic countryside full of woods and hills and fair women whose husbands were away fighting to save the world from people like Blott" (Sharpe 1975: 25). Even the pleasures of hunting are not denied him. At night, when the camp gates are closed, he can scale the walls and roam the countryside, supplementing his rations with poaching. In his anonymous way he makes the estate his own.

The country of his adoption fascinates him. Like many people dazzled by the sinking though still bright sun of the British Empire in the thirties, he thinks that the English are the supreme nation on earth and even being their prisoner is better than being free anywhere else. To unravel the mystery of what it means to be English, he would, over the succeeding decades, assemble a sizeable library of second-hand books, all on English history, for if "the secret of being an Englishman was to be found anywhere it was to be found (...) in the past" (ib. 76). In long winter evenings, sitting at the fireside, he would immerse himself in the romance of England. When he later falls in love with his employer's daughter,

the big and rather ungainly Maud, he invests her with the qualities of Elizabeth I, the Virgin Queen.

The Handyman family that is the epitome of Englishness for him, and the model of greatness, can indeed claim a brief moment of "prominence". After centuries of obscurity, they had been lifted into the limelight by two visits paid to their recently completed Hall by Edward the Seventh. That notorious womanizer had on both occasions seduced Mrs Handyman in the mistaken belief that she was a chambermaid. Appalled by his gaffe and to make amends, the contrite monarch had raised the family to the peerage. The last Lord Handyman had been a man of many enthusiasms, sturdy and good-natured, as traditional English country squires go, and likewise completely unintellectual. Befriending Blott, they had pottered away in the garden together, a living proof of the theory that a natural affinity brings together the lord and the working man over the heads of interfering middle-class busybodies. Conscious of their class superiority, the Handymans carry themselves with over-bearing self-assurance which irks the more egalitarian-minded people but appeals tremendously to Blott, imbued as he is with paternalistic ideas gleaned from history books. With no family or other hierarchies to rebel against, he finds reassurance in their authoritative commands. Not that there is anything submissive in Blott. The proper sense of hierarchy is just proof that the old values still hold. Viewing the Handyman estate as his own domain, he eyes with suspicion any outsider who seems to threaten his private paradise.

One such evil outsider is Sir Giles, Maud's husband. Sir Giles is the embodiment of all the vices dissociated from gentlemanliness. A sleazy City speculator, he has won his fortune through shady financial machinations. He has married Maud to gain social acceptance and a seat in parliament but does not play fair. In return for a house and a title, he was to do his duty by Maud. This he has refused to do, preferring to indulge his perverted sexual phantasies with a mistress in London. When Blott thinks of Maud as a *Virgin Queen*, he is nearer to the truth than he thinks. At forty-one Maud is still as sexually pure as she can be and she definitely is a maiden in distress, driven by a strong sense of duty before her ancestors to

produce an heir. To get a divorce, she has to prove Giles' faithlessness. To this end she makes Blott tap Giles' phone.

Listening to Giles in the greenhouse for hours on end and practising his manner of speaking unwittingly brings Blott closer to becoming the Englishman of his dreams. Good at mimicry, with years of trying on other people's personalities and voices to compensate for his lack of his own identity, he is soon sound- and word-perfect, scaring the wits out of Sir Giles himself when the latter accidentally overhears himself issuing orders from Blott's cucumber frames. Not really knowing what he is saying, Blott can roll City and parliament lingo off his tongue with consummate ease. In such a manner Blott has unknowingly fulfilled one of the most important requirements posed to men who want to be gentlemen, the correct upper-class way of speaking.

A gentleman made must not only talk like a gentleman, he must also dress like one. Maud takes care of that when she takes Blott with her to London to look up Giles' mistress. Rejecting Blott's choice of a salmon pink Harris Tweed suit, very ethnically British but not gentlemanly, she buys him an inconspicuous dark grey pinstripe business suit, the uniform of the City businessman, and all the necessary accessories, down to a bowler. By the time they return from London, Maud has taken him into her confidence.

Maud needs an ally. To get rid of her, and a handsome compensation for the house, Giles has used his influence with the government to have a motorway built through the estate. By the time Blott achieves his new understanding with Maud, she has exhausted all legal and orthodox ways of stopping the motorway. She has even opened a zoo in the park, knowing her fellow countrymen's reluctance to infringe upon the rights of animals, while humans can be evicted from their homes with no qualms whatsoever. Maud's last hope had been to persuade Giles to reverse the events and halt the motorway's advance into the park with the threat to expose his sexual perversity to the wider public. To destroy the incriminating photos Blott had taken in London, and get rid of Maud at one blow, Giles returns one night with the intention of burning down the house and all it contains. Catching him in the act of setting fire to the house, Maud locks him out to fend for himself among the hungry lions prowling in the park.

Giles tries to plead with Blott to be allowed to drive away but Blott is unmoved by his offer of money: "Sir Giles meant nothing to him. He was like the pests in the garden, the slugs or the greenfly. No that wasn't true. He was worse. He was a traitor to the England that Blott revered, the old England, the upstanding England, the England that had carved out an Empire by foolhardiness and accident, the England that had built this garden and planted the great oaks and elms not for its own immediate satisfaction but for the future. What had Sir Giles done for the future? Nothing. He had desecrated the past and betrayed the future. He deserved to die." (Ib. 193).

Sir Giles had indeed demonstrated his total lack of those gentlemanly qualities that upstanding England had required in her sons. In fact, he is a flagrant example of the kind of man who Kenelm Digby in his seminal book which helped to launch the chivalric revival, *The Broad Stone of Honour*, had called the "churl", a prosperous middle class businessman who has made a fortune and established a worldly position but who is forever incapable of rising to the level of a true gentleman because of his greed (Girouard 1981: 65). He has been a dishonourable and cheating opponent, disrespectful of women and hierarchy, and a bad loser. He has no justification to go on living.

Sir Giles in eaten by the lions and this puts an end to the wildlife park. With the animals gone, nothing stops the motorway's advance into the park. To save the Hall and defend Maud, Blott now decides to take matters into his own hands. He starts a private subversion campaign against the motorway. Having at night been shifting the pegs that mark the route to direct it away from the Hall and creating chaos generally, he one night takes over one of the Handyman pubs and, tempering the beer with vodka, gets the construction workers into a nicely belligerent mood, especially one bulldozer driver whose expertise to demolish a house at one blow he constantly puts in doubt. To prove his skill, the driver, with Blott's generous help, smashes two cottages in the village, one already vacated but the other still occupied by an eminent Rotarian and his wife. Their drunken progress along High Street wrecks the rest of the village, a well-preserved architectural monument.

The resultant outcry having proved insufficient to stop the motorway, Blott then takes steps to fight a private war with the authorities. Having during the war assembled a small arsenal of weapons filched from the unguarded ammunition dump nearby and buried it in the forest, he now decides it is time to put it to good use.

The Englishman's home is his castle. Blott's home is the Lodge, the park gates built in the form of a triumphal arch. It obstructs the narrow passageway into the park, being pressed tightly between two cliffs. There is no way of getting into the park without evicting Blott first. Knowing that the English would never blow up the Lodge or the cliffs around it while he is in residence, he turns the Lodge into a veritable fortress, with provisions to withstand a prolonged siege.

The police having been unable to evict Blott, the motorway people engage the services of the army to forcibly remove him from the premises. Blott is ready to meet their attack in the middle of the night. Blinding the commandos who try to climb up his walls with the flash of his camera and pouring cooking oil down the walls, he defeats the army. When the military are in retreat and carry their comrades with broken legs back to their transport, Blott climbs down and completes their attack with liberal machinegun fire and an anti-tank missile.

By morning he is famous. The media summoned by Maud are appalled by the undue violence too reminiscent of the uncivilized world to be associated with a peaceful corner of rural England. The motorway is discontinued and Maud and Blott can make plans for the future. Now that Giles' seat in parliament is vacant, Maud has him elected a new member in the constituency she controls. She then has his name changed to Handyman and marries him.

All through the struggle to stop the motorway and win Maud's approval, Blott, a simple handyman, and a foreigner, had demonstrated a natural nobility of spirit, the qualities of loyalty and courage, idealism and selfless service traditionally associated with a cultivated Englishman. This unlikely knight in shining armour has earned his spurs and been made a true lord of the manor.

He has also demonstrated two other very English traits, those of the freebooter and the amateur. "The British Empire was not built

up by experts. It is not only the great politicians whose lives are known to the whole world who stand for England, but also those who in one way or another have kicked over the traces, who cannot plod along in any calling, but have in their veins the blood of the freebooter. (…) There are still a few of them to be found in England, and suddenly they blossom out into Prime Ministers and Governors of the Bank of England. They are the amateurs, the young men with careers to which they have never given a thought," Karl Silex (1933: 180) wrote in the 1930s when the professional had not yet ousted the amateur nobleman, but it is also a perfect commentary on Blott's fictional career. Ironic as Sharpe's attitude to Blott's career and the system that sustains it may be, it is not a little tinged with nostalgia for more unregulated times when a man could, in a spirit of enterprise and adventure, carve out a place for himself under the sun. It is also a reminder to his fellow countrymen of the qualities they have lost. "I must say I think it is a poor show when we have to rely on Italians to look after our interests for us," Maud tells his fellow members of the local elite who after a token resistance had abandoned the struggle to preserve their homes. Blott, inspired by the old, enterprising England, had the courage and cunning to stand up for the traditional values of Englishmen, and Sharpe, himself a traditionalist and conservative, has awarded him with victory.

While Blott is "himself at last, the possessor of a new past and a perfect present" (Sharpe 1975: 237), Kommandant van Heerden, the Afrikaner Chief of Police of Piemburg in *Indecent Exposure*, views the present with a jaundiced eye. Piemburg is not what it once was. Built in the heyday of the British Empire, it has come down in the world. Its Victorian Town Hall still looms over the Market Square, but Fort Rapier, formerly the headquarters of the British Army "where once ten thousand men had marched and wheeled" (Sharpe 1973: 7) is now a mental hospital and in the gardens of the Governor's Palace, the scene of magnificent receptions and garden parties in the past, lounge now the students of the teacher training college. The two dominant nations, the British and the Boers, have withdrawn into mutually intolerant communities, while the Zulus have been banished to the townships on its borders. Over the whole place hangs the air of seedy grandeur.

Comparing the past splendours and the drab present, the Kommandant feels aggrieved that the British had abandoned their Empire so easily. Painfully aware of his inferiority when compared to that superior race, the Kommandant had almost become reconciled to being the despised Boeremense when Fate intervened and he had been given new hope. Having recently gone through a heart transplant operation, he quite literally feels a new man due to the actually erroneous belief that "at least a portion of his anatomy could trace its ancestry back to the Norman Conquest" (ib. 10).

It remains to reflect this inward change with a set of matching outward characteristics. The formerly straightforward, rough and violent policeman now adopts what he imagines to be the truly English benign and lordly manner and sets about acquiring the appropriate gear. Judging by his acquisitions — a twelve-bore shotgun and a Norfolk jacket, a trout rod and waders, a Harris Tweed suit and brogues — the hero of our Kommandant is the sporting gentleman who hunts, fishes and goes for long walks. For social polish he arms himself with a pocket *Etiquette for Everyone*.

On Sundays he would don what he imagines to be the English walking uniform — the Norfolk jacket and brogues — and saunter in the woods around Piemburg, pondering deeply on the problem of how to become even more English. At night, in the privacy of his garden, he would practise casting flies into a bucket of water in the hope of mastering the English art of fishing. He also starts talking English instead of Afrikaans to his subordinates, disconcerting them with newly acquired phrases like "Jolly good show", "Chin up" and "Absolutely spiffing, what?", picked up at the local English Golf Club. Yet he is vaguely aware that a crucial ingredient in his new persona is still missing.

Then one day, when he is yet again sitting on the club terrace, soaking up the English atmosphere, he experiences a revelation. A Rolls Royce drives into the courtyard and opens for the Kommandant a door into the past he has never known but for which his soul hankers. It is not so much the elegance of the attire of the occupants of the car, harking back to the Gay Twenties — the gentlemen's knickerbockers and the ladies' cloche hats and parasols — that affects the Kommandant so powerfully, but their voices: "High-pitched and arrogant, they seemed to reach him like

some echo from the English past and with them came a rush of certitude that all was well in the world in spite of everything." (Ib. 36). The group passes him without so much as a glance in his direction and the Kommandant suddenly realizes what he has been looking for in the English: "It was precisely this self-absorption to the point where it transcended self and became something immutable and absolute (…) And here it was before him in the Piemburg Golf Club in the shape of four middle-aged men and women whose inane chatter was proof positive that there was, in spite of wars, disasters, and imminent revolution, nothing serious to worry about." (Ib. 37).

Intrigued, he later inspects the Rolls more closely and on the back seat discovers something which he had not believed existed outside his imagination. Staring haughtily from the back cover of a book, past the Kommandant into the future which has no place for the likes of him, is a face of a man, high-cheekboned, hooded-eyed, straight-nosed and with an impeccably trimmed moustache - the spitting image of the man the Kommandant had always wanted to be. The archetypal empire-builder in the picture is the author Dornford Yates and his romantic fiction is going to transform the Kommandant's life.

Knowing with "a certainty that passed all understanding that he was on the brink of a new phase of discovery in his search for the heart of the English gentleman" (ib. 38), the Kommandant rushes to the library to borrow the book. When he later in the evening delves into it, "the world of sordid crime, of murder and fraud, burglary and assault, cowardice and deception" with which he comes into daily contact, miraculously falls away to be replaced by "a new world in which lovely ladies and magnificent men moved with an ease and assurance and wit towards inevitably happy endings" (ib. 46) and the Kommandant knows he has found his spiritual home. Not a bookish man, he does not recognize blatant kitsch when he sees it and in good faith sets about transforming himself into a gentleman after the totally unreal models suggested by Yates' books.

He later strikes up an aquaintance with one of the ladies in the strange group who call themselves the Dornford Yates Club and in time receives an invitation to visit them on their farm. Delighted

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that finally he can learn first-hand "how British aristocracy really lived on their country estates" (ib. 74), he sets out for Weezen, locally known as "Little England", full of high hopes.

The town, nestling cozily in the midst of rolling hills and green meadows amid the arid wastelands of native black areas, is for the Kommandant the English shires come to life. "It is like a picture on a biscuit tin, only more real" (ib.) he muses blissfully and drives into the town which has seemingly changed little since Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The Kommandant eyes her statue, sitting plumply in the Market Square, with approval. Very soon he will have occasion to look at her very differently.

His uncritical admiration of the English receives a severe blow when an English storekeeper contemptuously throws him out of his store. The ramshackle and smelly spa where he has been asked to stay, instead of his friends' home, accords little with ideas of lordly hospitality. And there is a disquieting discrepancy between the ideas gleaned from Yates' books and the reality at White Ladies, the Club headquarters. The luxurious house, with impeccable lawns and a rose garden, looks authentic enough, but the Club members themselves and the way they talk and act leave much to be desired. They look not nearly as noble and their talk about discounts and divorces it too far removed from Yates' world of upper class romance. Neither do they seem very friendly. Their snide comments on his manners and dress with which he is "welcomed" into their midst happily pass the Kommandant by due to his inadequate command of English, but when he is given a murderously capricious horse to ride when going hunting, their spitefulness is unmistakeable. Moreover, instead of the ineffable confidence which had so attracted the Kommandant to the English in the first place, the Club members "exude an air of confident uncertainty" (ib. 131) which is too close to how the Kommandant himself feels to be appealing. Contemplating his disconsolate Afrikanerdom among two hostile tribes, the English and the Natives, he suddenly feels a large surge of pride at his own identity as a self-made man and anger at the way he has been treated since his arrival in Weezen.

Actually, the reader has been aware for some time that the Kommandant's uneasiness is fully justified, for the Dornford

Yates Club is a bunch of pretentious phonies. Sharpe has obviously modelled them on the scandalous Muthaiga Club in Kenya between the wars.

Kenya was a unique experiment in British colonial history. A protectorate since 1895, it became a colony in 1904. Various things combined to make it especially attractive to a certain type of English settlers: there were no whites already there, the natives seemed accommodating, the economic prospects were good and for those who yearned for home, the White Highlands (since 1908 reserved exclusively for European settlers) seemed "strongly reminiscent of Wiltshire" (Cannadine 1992: 438). From the start the new colony was particularly attractive to the impoverished aristocrats and reckless upper class adventurers. Though there was a fair share of serious and high-minded immigrants, the colony, especially after the First World War, became "a haven for some very unsavoury notables — men already separated from their lands, their responsibilities, their reputations (and in some cases, their wives), who went out to escape their creditors, to live down their past or simply to indulge themselves" (ib. 440). These men with a landed background evolved a peculiar escapist lifestyle in their new country of residence: "In their bungalow mansions, with their large verandahs, magnificent gardens and retinues of servants, filled with silver, furniture and family portraits brought out from the ancestral home, they sought to recreate a stable, rural, hierarchical aristocratic world, which had already disappeared in modern, industrialized, democratic Britain" (ib. 441). In 1924 the scandalous Lord Erroll established a community in the White Highlands known as "Happy Valley". Its centre was the Muthaiga Club which quickly became notorious for riotous behaviour and promiscuous living. In the 1930s Kenya had developed a reputation of "a dumping ground not only for adventurers of the new stamp, but also for life's failures of all kinds and divorced women" (Silex 1933: 204). Nairobi, its capital, was rumoured to have the highest number of scandals of any town in the British Empire (ib.).

The Dornford Yates aficionados have also come down from Nairobi. Swept southward "on the ebb tide of Empire" (Sharpe 1973: 54), they had finally ended up in Weezen. The Club members, whose mannerisms and dress seem to imply that they are

aristocrats who have opted to stay permanently in the Gay Twenties in defiance of the sordid and demeaning post-colonial reality, have really lower middle- or even working-class origins. Pretending to be county, they in fact hail from the Cockney suburbs of South London. The president of the Club, the self-styled Colonel Heathcote-Kilkoon, actually made his "ancestral" pile by playing the Stock Exchange and has come to Africa to avoid paying taxes on his winnings. This supposedly military hero spent his war years working on the London Underground, being a guard on the Inner Circle. The Kommandant, whose command of English and awareness of English life is inadequate at best, mistakes the Colonel's humble occupation during the war to have had something to do with espionage and belonging to the inner circle of MI5. Another man in the house, a Major Bloxham, another self-styled military, was really a barman at the Savoy, a hotel in London. Daphne, the Colonel's wife, for whom the Kommandant has tender feelings, and who is the most adroit of the three in matters aristocratic and elegant, was born in the London suburb of Croydon and had come down to Africa during the war via Women's Auxiliary Force. Here her suburban polish had earned her a husband with money and she had acquired those social pretensions without which life had been unthinkable in Nairobi's white community before the blacks took over.

Ironically, the people whom the Kommandant looks up to in his search for a truly respectable identity, are even more troubled by their identity than he is. Living a life of total artifice, their personas, manners and way of speaking directly borrowed from Yates' books, they have given themselves totally over to being what they are not. And even this pretence is founded on falsehood, for their idol, Dornford Yates, is also a phoney. This "authority" on aristocratic living was in reality a mere major in the colonial army and his fiction is a pure fantasy of what life in the upper spheres of society might be like.

Their fake life is a bitter commentary on the British abroad and the nature of the English gentleman. Their self-contained world is perverse, full of boredom and derision for each other. Their inviolable seclusion is an illusion which is shattered the moment they let an insider into their midst. When Daphne, bored by deceit

and her effete male companions, decides to have an affair with a "hairyback" Afrikaner, she inadvertently destroys their community. Her judgement of character impaired by the hothouse atmosphere of the Club, she inanely gives the Kommandant a motive for revenge. Playfully coquettish about their affair in the manner of Yates' heroines, she scares the Kommandant into thinking that her husband might come after him with a gun. In order to avoid retribution, the Kommandant decides to strike first.

When he suddenly needs to arrest twelve white saboteurs because his second-in-command has gone mad and has organized a series of acts of sabotage in his effort to rout Communism in the republic, he suddenly sees a way to solving his problem by arresting the twelve members of the Dornford Yates Club with whom he has become thoroughly disgusted. They can be made to fit the bill in every way. Arrogant and supercilious, despising Afrikanerdom, keeping themselves apart as if they had something to hide, the double identities they have assumed to reconcile their real lives with enacting scenes out of Yates's books during their club meetings, they are just the kind of subversive element the South African security service prefers in their suspects. In the course of making the arrest the ephemerality of the Club is underlined by making it quite literally go up in smoke when it is blown to bits by the police when planting incriminating evidence in the house.

We might just as well give the Kommandant the last word on matters concerning the protean nature of the gentlemanly ideal. Pondering on the ignoble end which he himself has brought on the Club sets him thinking about the great difference between life and literature. It does not do to read too much, he decides, and sets out to carry on the traditions of the English gentleman in his own, practical Afrikaner, fashion. Every Sunday, dressed in the crimson English hunting coat, he can be seen riding to hounds in the forests around Piemburg, with a convict with a bag of aniseed tied round his middle running for his life in front. But while the Colonel, ever mindful of the English concept of fair play, had given the convict with the aniseed bag a head start before setting off with the hounds, the Kommandant feels that he can dispense with such senseless niceties and hunts the Negro, clad in English dress, with the ferocity customary to his native land.

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The Irish Experience

INDREK ÕIS

Some questions immediately arise when we want to analyse what is going on in world literature today. For example, it is clear that the old concept of national literature has to be rethought considering how many borders have shifted during the last decade. This is especially true of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but can also be observed in other countries, though of course in a different form, the changes there being more often economic than geopolitical. The aim of my paper is to show that these borders are also in a state of constant change in Ireland. In order to do this I will use one of the recent bestselling books both on the American and European market, *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt, and look at the ways in which it highlights potential problems in defining the nationality of an author.

But before we examine this particular work in detail it is useful to see how it fits the traditional description of Irish literature. The most common way to distinguish one literature from another is probably to refer to the place and/or language in which it is written. This is usually all we need to know in order to define French, Austrian or Estonian literature, but with Irish literature it creates certain problems. One of the reasons is that most contemporary Irish writers use English, which makes it sometimes difficult to distinguish them from other English-speaking writers with whom they share the same medium. The place where they live is also often different from the place where they originally came from, so it is not as easy to place them as British or American writers. For example, Seamus Heaney is undoubtedly a Northern Irish writer but resides in Dublin at the moment. Or if we choose

to ignore the difference between the North and the South what about Samuel Beckett whom both the French and the Irish claim to be their playwright? So, as we can see, the above definition which relies on language and geographical location is not always valid. The book I am discussing here, *Angela's Ashes* would also be an American novel according to this concept of literature, even though it explicitly deals with Ireland most of the time. Obviously we need more flexible terms.

This problem is very practically solved by Allan Massie who avoids the idea of nationality by defining British literature as something that is published in the UK, but does not have to be written uniquely by those who live there (Massie 1990: 1). What this seems to imply is that Nadine Gordimer who lives in South Africa and writes about the problems of her own country is basically as much a British writer as Ian McEwan. It is difficult to say to what extent this is true or whether postcolonial writers themselves would actually want to be associated with Britain, but on the whole they do have much in common with British literature and in many cases use it as a valuable springboard to reach wider audiences. Of course this economic definition of literature is only suitable for a big country such as Britain.

Smaller countries, on the contrary, tend to lose some of their writers to big neighbours, especially if they have a colonial background. Several well-known Irish poets and novelists publish their work or live outside Ireland — still for the same reason of having a wider audience — but this does not make them less Irish. Consequently we have to establish other characteristic features which would enable us to define an Irish writer irrespective of the place where he lives and the language in which he writes. One possibility would be to ask ourselves if a literary work is directly or indirectly influenced by the fact that its author grew up in a certain environment – if it is psychologically conditioned by what we could call here 'the Irish experience'.

So what is the Irish experience like? I think the best answer to this question is given by Frank McCourt in *Angela's Ashes*:

> People everywhere brag and whimper about the woes
> of their early years, but nothing can compare with the

> Irish version: the poverty; the shiftless loquacious
> alcoholic father; the pious defeated mother moaning
> by the fire; pompous priests; bullying schoolmasters;
> the English and the terrible things they did to us for
> eight hundred long years. (McCourt 1997: 1).

Of course everybody can compile their own list of typical features based on different Irish writers, but I think it would be surprisingly like the one presented by McCourt above. This passage is clearly meant as a joke, but as these elements are all part of young Frank's own life, we can assume that there is also some statistical truth behind these stereotypes.

It is not difficult to notice that Irish literature possesses a more specific or national character than British literature which Massie defines as culturally neutral. This may have something to do with the fact that in a multicultural society such as Britain 'nationalism' has a negative connotation that somebody is being discriminated. But this does not mean that nationalism cannot be a positive value in other contexts.

The Scottish literary theorist Robert Crawford points out that poststructuralism has devoted enormous energy to examining works produced by female authors as well as racial and sexual minorities since the invention of the term 'difference'. On the other hand, it has completely ignored this 'difference' when it comes to small nations (Crawford 1992: 1).

Still the difference is there. Otherwise it would not be so easy to distinguish an Irish book from an English or American one – which is usually only a matter of minutes. Sometimes the nationality of the author is already betrayed by the name, sometimes we have to read a few pages until familiar place names and references to religious conflict and IRA bombings tell us exactly where we are. Some readers who are more used to Irish writing, might even be able to recognise it by peculiarities of idiom and syntax.

Of course it is also possible to write a book that is not so explicitly Irish, but the author's nationality is still bound to surface at some point, as everybody is psychologically influenced by their own personal experience. For example, the Northern Irish novelist Brian Moore has written several books about very different places

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and periods, from 17th-century Canada to present-day Africa. One of them — *The Colour of Blood* — is set in an East European country and deals with a dangerous compromise between a cardinal and the communist authorities. At the same time Moore has said that this is "the novel I have always wanted to write about Ireland" (Massie 1990: 32).

The next question I would like to briefly discuss is: if we can distinguish Irish literature from other English-speaking literatures, as we have seen above, can we also distinguish a typical Irish novel? In my opinion, we can. Generally there seem to be two different kinds. The first is a country novel where the events take place in a rural environment or a small town; the atmosphere is generally peaceful and nostalgic, nothing much happens. One of the typical examples of this type is *The Country Girls* by Edna O'Brien. Maeve Binchy's novels also fall in this category. The second type is a story from Northern Ireland, usually harsh and dramatic, where all hopes are destroyed by random and pointless violence. Of course there are works which do not belong to either of these categories, e.g. *The Newton Letter* by John Banville where the main character is a historian of science and tries to find out why Newton gave up mathematics.

There is also a third type which seems to be increasingly popular. This is the Irish version of the urban novel which develops from the social realism of Sean O'Casey and explores the back alleys of Dublin. The best-known example of this type is maybe *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*, another recent bestseller which differs from the mainstream because it uses local slang and is seen through the eyes of a boy. Writing in substandard language seems to be one of the signs of new literature — linguistic difference is used to compensate for the general similarity in everyday life. This can be seen also in Scottish literature where James Kelman writes in working-class Glaswegian and Irvine Welsh, the author of the famous cult novel *Trainspotting*, uses Edinburgh Scots.

Resorting to a child narrator as in *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* is another feature which characterises many works of modern fiction. This is understandable as people have always liked childhood stories. What is surprising is how many such novels have recently won prestigious literary prizes, e.g. *The Famished Road* by Ben

Okri, *Reading in the Dark* by a Northern Irish author, Seamus Deane — and also *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt, where the protagonist is aged 4 at the beginning. Besides, they are all good books. Still it would be interesting to know why this technique is employed so widely. Is it caused by some kind of millennial fear which makes people want to look back at the last century through the unprejudiced eyes of a child since other rational (and grown-up) explanations have failed?

The reason why I based this paper on *Angela's Ashes* is that it is one of the most famous recent Irish novels and at the same time exemplifies the looseness of borders in modern Irish literature. Strictly speaking it is not an Irish novel at all because its author Frank McCourt is a retired New York school teacher. On the other hand, it tells us about the author's childhood in Limerick. The language used in the book is also Irish, not American English. So we are faced with a dilemma — should we classify a book by the author's country of residence or can we trust more inherent qualities? I think we should choose the second solution which I also offered at the beginning, i.e. take into consideration the psychological background of the author, not his or her present nationality. The South and the North of Ireland have already for a long time been regarded as one when talking about literature. Why not then give Frank McCourt also a place in Irish literature[1] if he deals with the same problems, that is, the Irish experience?

There is also a contrary tendency: some Irish writers who have moved to Britain have given up their earlier style and become almost indistinguishable from other British writers. William Trevor and Edna O'Brien are two good examples here. If we use the definition given above neither of them seems to be a really Irish writer any more. Which I think is quite true. Edna O'Brien has said herself that she is more interested in feminist fiction. I personally think they have both lost by adopting a British voice, but some people might argue with that. Sean O'Faolain tells in his autobiography how Liam O'Flaherty attempted to start his career

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[1] Of course Frank McCourt might object to my classification. What I'm trying to say is that he is also in a way an Irish writer, not that he is not an American writer.

by writing about society ladies and their love affairs but was soon told by his London publisher to write about things he knew from personal experience — even if it consisted only of "fields, rocks and cows" (Ford 1986: 268).

The diaspora of Irish writing is widening; at a time when everybody uses the Internet it is no longer important from which corner of the world we write. On the other hand, this does not mean that literature is moving away from its roots. In fact the reverse might be true. Umberto Eco has spoken about the revival of medievalism. Old allegiances are broken; more and more writers identify themselves not only through nationality, but the region where they live or originally come from. This is evident in the case of Kelman and other Scottish writers who feel more Scottish since the recovery of national pride in the 1970s. The break-up of the Soviet Union is another example of several nations emerging from the shadow of a dominant one which is typical of the all democratic processes of today. So, on the whole I think there is still hope that we will be able to talk about comparative, not one big global literature during the next millennium.

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Singing 'Che Gelida Manina' in Welsh: Internal and External Cultural Translation in the Future Wales of Islwyn Ffowc Elis

JOHAN SCHIMANSKI

With the work of the Konstanz School of *Rezeptionsästhetik* and with other developments in Hermeneutics, it has become possible to distinguish between at least two different possibilities brought into play during the interpretation of any single text. 1) The text may be read in relationship to its immediate readership — contemporary with its first appearance. 2) The text may be read in relationship to its later readership — e.g. readers of our own present. At least, we are admonished *not* to leave out the one horizon of expectations when describing the other.

We may however complicate this model when reading fictional texts if we take into account new horizons of expectation within the fictional world of the text itself. After deconstruction and new historicism, it appears that we cannot ignore disturbances and overlappings between form and content, inside and outside, making such complication inevitable. A tale of the future, for example, involves the construction of fictional *future* horizons of expectation, and a time-travel story about a trip from the year 1953 to the year 2033 involves two horizons of expectation not unsimilar to those of the past/present hybrid already established in textual interpretation. Not unsimilar to — and perhaps usefully confusable with. The science-fictional text presents us with a doubling of the time-gaps of *Rezeptionsästhetik* and hermeneutics involving — at the very least — similar effects of estrangement and naturalization.

A Week in Wales to Be

I have thus arrived at my example: a novel published in 1957 under the title *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd*: "A Week in Future Wales" or "A Week in Wales to Be" (Elis 1957).[1] This novel is a time-travel narrative which poses us questions about our own horizon of expectations concerning the use which nationalist discourse has for futurity — for the construction of future histories and future horizons of expectation. *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd* was published by Plaid Cymru, the Welsh nationalist party. The author Islwyn Ffowc Elis had already established himself as a novelist — indeed the first professional novelist writing in the minority language of Welsh. In retrospect one may also see in his writing an inclination to experiment with many different genres then as yet mostly unproved in Welsh — especially popular genres, such as science fiction.

Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd is a piece of nationalist propaganda and polemic framed as a time-travel narrative in which the young Welshman Ifan is sent forward in time from the year 1953 to the year 2033. That is to say, Ifan is actually sent forward in time *twice*. First to a 2033 in which Wales has become *Cymru Rydd* ("Free Wales"): independent, modern, social-democratic. Afterwards to a 2033 — a parallel 2033 — in which Wales has become *Western England*: a province of England, depopulated and deprived (also of the Welsh language itself), part of a police state similar to that in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The following diagrams show the rough structure of the novel, the first showing how time lines are structured in the novel, with a split in the history of the future:

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[1] The novel is as yet not translated, and the translations of quotes here are mine. This paper develops and reformulates arguments in my dissertation (Schimanski 1996).

2033
Cymru Rydd
"Free Wales"

1953 ⟶ ?

2033
Western
England
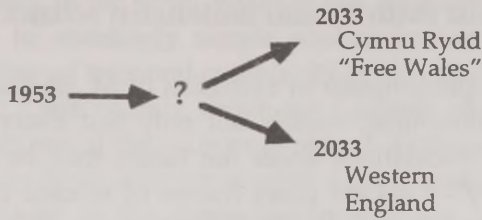
The second shows Ifan's narrative journey as he shuttles back and forth between 1953 and different 2033s.

CYMRU RYDD
utopian tour
w. complications

WESTERN ENGLAND
dystopian tour
and escape

2033:

novel
starts

novel
ends

1953:

talked into
time travel
experiment

insists on
returning to
the future

draws moral:
becomes
nationalist
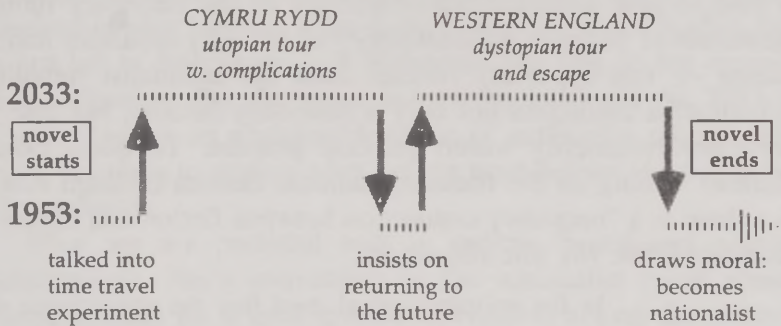
With the help of a science-fictional device, the narrative thus presents first a utopian future, and then an anti-utopian or dystopian future. The striking contrast between these two futures convinces the once-sceptical Ifan that he must join the nationalist cause in order to realise a Wales which both *conserves* and *makes modern* the Welsh-language culture and moral world-view with which he identifies. The author and publishers of the novel obviously hoped that the contemporary reader might follow Ifan's example.

In the following I will be doing two things: 1) reflecting on the relationship between the generic structure of the book and the role of the future in nationalist politics; 2) giving a reading of the "Che Gelida Manina" scene of the book — a playful handling of internal and external circulations of cultural capital.

Nationalist futurity and nationalist science fiction

Here I make a presumption in extension of M. M. Bakhtin's work on novelistic discourse, namely not only that everyday political fantasies and speculations about the future may be incorporated into the literary — via the genre frames of science fiction — but also, by implication, that the literary discourse of science fiction may be incorporated into everyday political discourse (Bakhtin 1975; Bakhtin 1981). To say this in another way: If science fiction is able to give adequate representations of the necessary future dimension of minority nationalism — of minority separatist nationalism — this capability reflects back on nationalist minority discourse. It highlights not only a necessary futurity, but also a necessary fictionality within political practice. To quote Doris Sommer writing on the founding national fictions of Latin America there is a "necessary connection between fiction and history" (Sommer 1990: 76). She also writes:

> In the epistemological gaps that the non-science of history leaves open, narrators could project an ideal future. (Ib. 76).

I would also cite Jacques Derrida on this point. For Derrida, politics (or decision-making in general) is the art of the *à-venir*, the "to come", the "future" (*avenir*) (Derrida & Attridge 1992: 38), and this art is qualified by a certain *incalculability* (Derrida & Sprinker 1993) — in the context of this article the basis of political fictionality and figurality. Now, Derrida privileges a politics which is both *responsible* and *responsive*, which takes account of this incalculability. He images that this would come about through not following any set direction or *heading* in a slavish or mechanical way (Derrida 1991: 46; Derrida 1992: 44–45). Derrida further uses the etymological connection between the French word for "heading", *cap*, and the word *capital*, in order to criticise a politics in which capital becomes the automatic heading of the future (Derrida 1991; Derrida 1992). Not only economic capital perhaps, but also the saved-up cultural capital of identity politics — and also nationalist politics.

Turning back to the novel *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd*, it soon appears that its seemingly simple science-fictional structure reveals a handling of temporal complexity of this kind of nationalist politics. Here I will quickly sketch out a couple of examples. The first being that one of the main problems of *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd* is that the book does not provide a good enough explanation of what happens in the future-historical space which lies in-between 1953 and 2033. The question-mark in the middle of my first diagram figures a space of incalculability. We may assume from the nationalist sub-text that the dystopic 2033 of Western England is what happens if the present situation under English rule is just left to deteriorate — if Welshmen like Ifan do not *respond* to the situation. But the space in-between 1953 and the 2033 of Cymru Rydd is an unmappable space of nationalist agency. The novel struggles to explain what exactly must happen to bring about Cymru Rydd.

What we *are* provided with is various figural and generic substitutions. Ifan's conversion to the nationalist cause stands metonymically for a more general conversion among the readers. The novel itself ends in a dream:

> A'r noson honno mi freuddwydiais fy mod yn sefyll mewn tyrfa fawr, a thân gwyllt yn ariannu'r awyr, a'r dyrfa'n torri i ganu am fod Cymru wedi dod yn rhydd. (224)
>
> *
>
> And that night I dreamt that I was standing in a great crowd, and a wild fire silvered the sky, and the crowd broke into song, for Wales had become free.

— standing for the historical event of independence in itself.

My second example is the way in which the novel depicts the future as both *modern*, futuristic, and as *traditional*, a coming into its own of Welsh traditional culture and values. The novel provides a science-fictional handling of the paradox of national coming-into-being, whereby the nation is created as a repetition of the past. To come into being, the nation *must already exist*.

Internal and External Circulation

With this kind of anachrony in mind, I now present my reading of the "Che Gelida Manina" episode of the novel. The scene in question takes place in the utopian, Cymru Rydd part of the novel, when Ifan visits a *noson lawen* of the future. The *noson lawen* ("evening of enjoyment") is a Welsh tradition of amateur entertainment. Like Estonia of course, Wales is the land of song. Some will have heard of the National Eisteddfod — which brings together Welsh-speaking Wales in a way comparable to the All-Estonian Song Festival, the Laulupidu.[2] A *noson lawen* is a downscaled and domesticized version of the eisteddfod, held in a private home for people of the district.

So, when Ifan goes to a *noson lawen* during his utopian tourist trip, we are shown how the free Wales of Cymru Rydd has preserved Welsh tradition. Ifan is however struck by certain differences from the *noson lawen* of his own time. By this point in the novel, the reader has realised that everything is better in this future Wales — that concomitant with political independence comes an improvement in the quality of life, sport and art. National cultural capital gives interest, it self-propagates, is over-determined, as soon as the nation is freed from oppression, according to the nationalist discourse of the novel. Even ("the") women are more beautiful, in a gendering typical of nationalist discourse. At the *noson lawen*,

> Yr oedd y merched yn eu ffrogiau llaes heb fod yn
> rhy laes, a byddai'n anodd dod o hyd i well casgliad
> o degwch yn unman. (141)
>
> *
>
> The girls were in their loose (without being too
> loose) frocks, and it would be hard to come by a
> better collection of fairness anywhere.

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2   Thanks to Jüri Talvet for providing me with the Estonian term. The
     original holding this paper in now independent Estonia allows for
     perhaps fruitful comparisons between separatist futures and national
     presents.

Ifan is "braidd yn syn" — "rather astonished" — at the quality of the first musicians to play at the *noson lawen*. Turning to the man next to him he points out that the BBC of his own time would be proud to broadcast these on the radio. Ifan then learns that these musicians do broadcast on the national radio, but that they are local farmer's boys for all that, travelling to the capital Caerdydd (Cardiff) only to receive musical training and to broadcast — and then returning to work as farmers. They thus partake in an *internal circulation* between town and country typical of Cymru Rydd. Travel becomes a kind of national glue as the rural and the urban are brought together in national harmony.

The big surprise of the evening is however the presence of an internationally known tenor from the Caerdydd Opera House: Siôn Colwyn — another sign of national improvement. While Siôn is from Wales and has now returned to work there, he has studied in Milan and sung in La Scala:

> Mae Siôn wedi bod yn canu yn La Scala. Ym Milan y bu o'n dysgu, ac fe ellwch ddweud hynny ar y ffordd mae'n cynhyrchu'i lais. Mae wedi canu ym mhrifddinasoedd Ewrop, ond fel llawer o Gymry'i genhedlaeth, yn ôl i Dŷ Opera Caerdydd y daeth yntau. (143)
>
> *
>
> Siôn has sung in La Scala. He studied in Milan, and you can tell that by the way he projects his voice. He has sung in the capitals of Europe, but like many of the Welsh of his generation, he also has come back to the Caerdydd Opera House.

In singing at the *noson lawen* cultural evening, Siôn — like the musicians mentioned above — takes part in an internal circulation between the capital Caerdydd and the countryside; but also in an *external* circulation between the (once peripheral) Wales and the traditional centres of European high culture, such as Milan. This external circulation is concomitant with nationhood. Welsh culture now takes its rightful place in the "wall of nations" — the modern, international context in which each nation has its equal symbols:

embassies, flags, airlines, opera houses, internationally recognized singers, etc.

What I am arguing here is that internationalism — which is part-and-parcel of post-war 1950s modernity and an attempt to live the future in the present — presages the risks (from a nationalist perspective) of globalization in, say, the 1990s. Symbolic equality slides over into symbolic equivalence, national symbols are devalued in their very sameness. But Siôn's performance, positioned as it is within hybrid external/internal circulations, is punctured by an element of irony in this future utopia. Siôn is teased by a man in the rural audience, referred to as a *wag*, who asks him to sing a Welsh song in Italian!

> 'Cana *Hen Ffon fy Nain* yn Eidaleg!' galwodd rhyw wag o'r cefn.
>
> 'Gan dy fod ti mor goeglyd, Twm, mi wna'i beth hollol groes,' ebe Siôn mewn tymer dda. 'Mi gana' i *Che Gelida Manina* yn Gymraeg.' (142)
>
> *
>
> 'Sing *Hen Ffon fy Nain* ["My Grandmother's Old Stick"] in Italian!" called some wag from the back.
>
> 'Since you are so sarcastic, Twm, I will do something completely contrary ["cross"],' said Siôn good-temperedly. 'I will sing *Che Gelida Manina* in Welsh.'

Siôn is sensitive to accusations of having denied his Welshness earlier in his career in order to further that career. At one point he had even gone to the length of Italianizing his own name:

> 'Diolch yn fawr iti, Siôn,' ebe'r arweinydd.
>
> 'Giovanni Coluino ydi'i enw fo, was,' gwaeddodd y wag o'r cefn.
>
> 'Chware teg, chware teg,' meddai'r lleill, a gwridodd Siôn fymryn. Yr oedd yn amlwg mai Giovanni Coluino oedd ei enw gynt ar bosteri Milan, a bod llawer o bryfocio wedi bod arno am wadu'i enw Cymreig, er i Siôn daeru na wnaethai ddim ond rhoi ffurf Eidalaidd i'w enw. Bellach, fodd bynnag, yr oedd y byd yn ei nabod wrth ei enw'i hun. (143)

*

> 'Thank you very much, Siôn,' said the presenter.
>
> 'Giovanni Coluino is his name, boy,' shouted the wag from the back.
>
> 'Be fair, be fair,' said the others, and Siôn blushed slightly. It was obvious that Giovanni Coluino was his name once on the posters of Milan, and that he had been provoked a lot for denying his Welsh name, though Siôn insisted that all that he did was to give an Italian form to his name. Now, however, the world knew him by his own name.

The utopian irony is meant in the novel to defuse an all too dogmatic adherence to a total (even totalitarian) nationalism — creating a "good-tempered" utopia — and it grows in the unease of a "slight blush", and unease at the hybridity of external/internal circulations. Cultural difference between inside and outside is never completely safe; as Homi K. Bhabha would have it,

> Cultural difference does not simply represent the contention between oppositional contents or antagonistic traditions of cultural value. [...] Designations of cultural difference interpellate forms of identity which, because of their continual implication in other symbolic systems, are always 'incomplete' or open to cultural translation. (Bhabha 1994: 162–3)

An uncanny repetition underlies the slide from *Siôn* to *Giovanni*:

> In the restless drive for cultural translation, hybrid sites of meaning open up a cleavage in the language of culture which suggests that the similitude of the *symbol* as it plays across cultural sites must not obscure the fact that repetition of the *sign* is [...] both different and differential. (Ib. 163)

All national symbols prove to be structurally ambiguous, hybrids between the national and the international, between capital city and rural community. Bhabha emphasizes the structural aspect of the translated sign, "the overpowering of content by the signifier" (ib. 164), which may be contrasted to the slippage in content

taking place in cultural translation according to overtly nationalist discourse in its wholly non-ironic state (Bhabha's "nationalist pedagogy" [145]).

To round off: 1) politics cannot do without literature; 2) national unease about modernity contra tradition can also be expressed as an unease about the role of external circulation in the nation. I would also add that much of my argument here applies not only to Welsh translations of Italian songs, but also to the importation of the modern popular genre of science fiction into Welsh literature instigated by Elis' book.

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Perspectives on the Emblems of the Nation in Contemporary Estonian and Anglo-Welsh Poetry

ENE-REET SOOVIK

This paper attempts to discuss representations of the nation in contemporary Estonian and Anglo-Welsh poetry. In the first section of the article some aspects of defining and delimiting these literatures will be considered. The second part is devoted to the projections of the nation as they appear in recent anthologies of poetry.

I

The two literary traditions are comparable in the sense that they are relatively young. English-language literature written in Wales has its roots in a 15th century hymn to the Virgin Mary by the bard Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal (Johnston 1994: 91). However, even the critics who support the view of a continuous tradition from that time onwards admit that Anglo-Welsh literature came into prominence only in the 20th century (Lloyd 1992: 435). Also the body of Estonian literature is a young one — the Estonians had to wait till the Reformation to get the first religious texts in their own language, and up to the beginning of the 17th century for the first occasional poems in Estonian to be put on paper by Reiner Brockmann. The birth of a vigorous national literature falls in the wake of Romanticism in the 19th century. Thus, the main bodies of the literatures reflect sensibilities later than those of pre-nationalist, pre-Enlightenment Europe.

Both literatures use the majority language in the region as their medium, although the status of the languages differs: in the case of Estonia it is also the indigenous language, while in Wales an imported one. Both literatures are relatively little known outside their own regions. This is apparently an inevitability in the case of a small Finno-Ugric language like Estonian, and, although Anglo-Welsh literature meets no linguistic barriers when reaching out into the world, it has nevertheless been argued that, "While using the medium of English, it is written out of a Welsh milieu, physically and culturally distant from the centers of English-language literary activity in London and New York. Consequently, Welsh writing in English has been largely ignored by the English and American critical establishment..." (ib.)

In discussing national literatures the polyvalent term of the nation needs clarification. For the purposes of this paper Benedict Anderson's treatment of the nation as an imagined political community, imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign (Anderson 1995: 6) will be employed. Anderson suggests that nations dream of being free and the gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state (ib. 7). In this respect Estonia and Wales differ considerably: the former has already realised the aspiration, while the latter remains a part of the United Kingdom. Looking back to its history in the 1920s, the Party of Wales, Plaid Cymru, reasons, "If national governments could be set up in Ireland, Poland and the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, why not in Wales?" (http://www. plaidcymru.org) and these days major steps are being taken towards increased national independence. On the basis of the results of the 1997 referendum the first Parliament in Wales for nearly 600 years — the Welsh Assembly — has been called into being. Plaid Cymru has full self-government within the European Union as its ultimate goal, they also campaign for Wales to have a seat in the United Nations.

An assumption of such imaginary political communities becomes obvious in the very titles given to the volumes that will be the focus of this paper — the most recent poetry anthologies of the respective nations, *Eesti luule antoloogia* (*Anthology of Estonian Poetry*; ed. Raivo Kuusk, 1998) and *Twentieth-Century Anglo-Welsh Poetry* (ed. Dannie Abse, 1997). These proceed from the

premise that there exists a body of texts that can be labelled with the name of the nation — or its subsection.

The term "Anglo-Welsh", however, deserves closer examination, as it has not been uniformly accepted. It was coined by H. Idries Bell in 1922, by the 1930s it had gained wide usage and in the 1950s and 60s the term was actively promoted as it allowed for a distinction between this tradition and literature written in Welsh. (Lloyd 1992: 436) Still, David Lloyd claims that several authors and also critics do not support the term as, on the one hand, it implies a division within the Welsh nation, and, on the other hand, suggests a still lingering colonial linkage to England (ib.). "Being Anglo-*any*thing is really tough," the poet John Davies sighs with a hint of mockery in the collection under consideration (Abse 1997: 192). The possible political associations have made the authors favour the descriptive phrase "Welsh writer in English" (Lloyd 1992: 436). Dafydd Johnston suggests, though, that "the term "Anglo-Welsh" should not be taken to imply any dilution of Welshness; indeed, it is most fittingly used of those writers who assert their Welsh viewpoint most vigorously" (1994: 91). Dannie Abse, both the editor of the anthology as well as a poet included in it, clearly does not consider the term offensive, but possible opposing voices are hovering in the air concerning even the very existence of such a literature.

For instance, in the review of a previous anthology spanning the years 1480–1980, Michael J. Collins touches upon the question whether an Anglo-Welsh literature that is separable from English literature altogether exists. Collins refers to the lecture given by the poet and dramatist Saunders Lewis in 1938, titled "Is there an Anglo-Welsh Literature?" — a question that at the time received an answer in the negative, as "it was written in a language and for a community largely indistinguishable from those of industrial England, and, secondly, it sought its audience not among the Welsh, but the English." (Collins 1989: 55). Today's attitude, however, has shifted. If we consult David Lloyd, we find that publishing outlets for English-language literature in Wales were few and far between up to the mid-1960s, thus turning to England for publishing may have been a necessity, not the authors' preferred choice (Lloyd 1992: 436). As regards the argument against

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accepting the English-speaking community as a part of the Welsh nation, on today's political scene it does not seem to apply. Even Plaid Cymru has changed its name from the Welsh Nationalist Party into the Party of Wales, and proclaims on the Internet, Website Wales: "unifying the country is imperative if we are to succeed as a political entity. It /i.e. the Welsh Assembly/ must create a feeling amongst the voters that they are all Welsh, no matter what their historical background may be."

Turning to Benedict Anderson, we find support to the idea that a nation cannot be determined exclusively on the basis of language, although languages have played a crucial role in the formation of nations — "from the start the nation was conceived in language, not in blood..." (Anderson 1995: 145). Yet a language can be learned and, as Anderson puts it, "If radical Mozambique speaks Portugese, the significance of this is that Portugese is the medium through which Mozambique is imagined" (ib. 134). For Welsh poets, writing in English, their language is the respective medium. Collins quotes the poet David Jones as saying: "And, after all, all "artists" or "poets" of whatever sort can best work within the civilizational or cultural setting in which they find themselves. They are not responsible for the particular circumstances into which they were born. So I suppose the most that any of us can do is to "show forth" the things that seem real to us and which we have inherited by this accident or that." (1989: 56)

All in all, Anglo-Welsh poetry is under constant pressure to constantly define and re-define itself against the traditions of both Cymric poetry and English or English-language poetry, as it can be rejected by the first or appropriated by the other as part and parcel of an English legacy. A recent example of the latter tendency can be found in Dennis Brown's article on Vernon Watkins and R. S. Thomas that proclaims: "Vernon Watkins and R. S. Thomas have both expressed preoccupations of Anglo-Welsh verse in the latter half of this century. Special numbers of *Poetry Wales*, in particular, have considered their work in this light, and the nature of their contributions to a sense of Welsh cultural identity remains of critical interest. Nevertheless, both poets have written specifically in English and out of a largely English tradition — in each case with particular debts to mainstream Metaphysical and Roman-

tic poetry." (Brown 1997: 221) A contrary approach is launched by R. P. Draper, who in his discussion of regional, national and post-colonial poetry admits that "English poetry in English is itself to some extent decentralised, on a par with the 'regional' and 'natio-nal' forms of poetry which its very title might seem to regard as tributaries of, or diversions from, the main stream" (1999: 162). In reality the 'centre' cannot hold; using Seamus Heaney's words "we are all regionalists now". (Ib. 161).

The editor of the Anglo-Welsh anthology has by no means taken the legitimacy of the body of poetry referred to by his title for granted. He has added an introduction explaining his conside-rations in making the selection, as well as a "Prologue" — a set of quotations on the topic of Anglo-Welsh poetry by different authors and critics. Also, we find biographical notes on the sixty-seven contributors whose poems offer a broad panorama of the century's verse, thus laying claim to a considerable representative force of the anthology. Dannie Abse has clearly set out to provide a com-prehensive survey of the century's poetry and, naturally, the selection favours texts that are seen to be of interest from an end-of-the-century point of view. However, as this paper is con-centrating on the nation as perceived at the shift of the millennium, it is also the texts themselves that ought to be limited by the period. Thus, only those of the anthologised poets will be observed in the analysis who have made their names during the second flowering of Anglo-Welsh poetry in the 1960s and later. Gene-rally, Dafydd Johnston characterises them as "being more sym-pathetic towards nationalism and the Welsh language, tending to make less of a show of their Welshness, which suggests that they were writing for their own people rather than for the English" (1994: 122).

Similar considerations have led to considering only the second part of Kuusk's two-volume anthology of Estonian poetry. In comparison with the Welsh anthology, the principles of compi-lation seem to bear a marked difference. Kuusk's anthology is restricted to just 14 authors, thus obviously claiming no coverage of all the aspects of contemporary Estonian poetry. The more exclusive format necessarily makes the whole more dependent on individual performance and the idiosyncratic preferences of the

editor. At the same time, as this collection is apparently used as a set text at schools, its formative power in conditioning the young reader as concerns the established canon of Estonian poetry is to be given due consideration.

Also, the concept of Estonian poetry seems to need no delineations or explanations in the collection. Apparently the factor of language will suffice and, indeed, Benedict Anderson has emphasised the capacity of languages for generating imagined communities, building in effect *particular solidarities*. He underscores a special kind of contemporaneous community which language alone suggests — above all in the form of poetry and song (Anderson 1995: 145). On the basis of the anthology the conclusion can be drawn that, as Estonian is both the indigenous and majority language in Estonia, Estonian poetry cannot be expected to be written in any other language. Also, no commentary or bibliographical data are added regarding the authors. Thus, an uninformed reader may never learn from Kuusk's anthology that there are so to say "two Estonian literatures" included, both that of the homeland and that of diaspora. While Dannie Abse's notes call attention to the fact that firstly, there is no obligatory precondition of having been born — or residing — in Wales, which suggests a wide scope of experiences reflected, and, secondly, "a Welsh affiliation" was required (Abse 1997: 14), the Estonian collection offers no such information. Actually, Abse's criteria have been met also in this case, but they are not acknowledged openly: we meet three diaspora writers whose medium is Estonian, but who share the refugee experience in Sweden..

Although Estonian literature developed according different lines in and outside the Soviet Union during nearly five decades since World War II, the question of its two canons has obviously been dismissed. To employ Jaan Kross's image recalled by Tiina Kirss in her paper on the subject, the cleft oak has healed effectively. If Tiina Kirss concludes her article by suggesting that "perhaps in imagining a reconstructed "whole" Estonian literary canon, it is best that the outlines of the scars of separation and regrafting remain in plain view, as signs of the arbitrariness and artificiality both of a historical rupture and equally historical healing" (1998: 324), Kuusk's volume does not alert the reader to an awareness —

let alone questioning of — the possible boundaries or inner divisions of Estonian poetry.

II

Language is the main determining factor of the Estonian collection that indeed celebrates language in its endless possibilities for the creation of meaning, unexpected shifts and juxtapositions that take place to this end. Empirical referentiality of the poems is empathically not the focus of interest for several poets selected by Kuusk, such as Artur Alliksaar, Ilmar Laaban, Andres Ehin, Karl-Martin Sinijärv, Jüri Üdi. Their often surrealistic play of free-floating signifiers constitutes a major part of the selection. To this, the purely aesthetical word magic constructing a space for refined emotions in Indrek Hirv's and Doris Kareva's poetry may be added. If we, however, look for language represented as a nation-emblem, as the cherished mother tongue, we find considerably fewer cases. There are just a couple of examples that we shall consider here.

Firstly, there is the epigrammatic aphorism by Paul-Eerik Rummo "keeltpidi külmas rauas kinni, / emakeeltpidi kirves" ("stuck by the tongue to cold iron / by the mother tongue to the axe") (Kuusk 1998: 146). The language is bestowed upon you, a fatal reality not picked or chosen and, according to Anderson, there *is* an aura of fatality about nationalness (Anderson 1995: 145), yet "seen as both a fatality and as a community imagined through language, the nation presents itself as simultaneously open and closed" (ib. 146). And there is the private-property language of Arno Vihalemm for whom it is important that the language is his own: "Mu kandlel on üksainus keel / ja see on eesti keel" ("My harp has but one single chord, and that's Estonian." — the Estonian word "keel" can be translated both as *chord* and *language*) (Kuusk 1998: 345). The language and poet create each other reciprocally in their own images, "Võib olla on mu ainus keel / mu oma halter eggo... / Kuid see on siiski eesti keel / ja minno omma näggo" (" It may be that my single chord / is my own alter ego... / But it is still Estonian / and looks like myself"). (Ib.). The archaic spelling Vihalemm uses, as well as the image of a

harp, popular in the poetry of the national awakening, creates a playful connection with the literary heritage of the past. Indeed, the noticeable intertextual dimension of many of the anthologised poems, rather linking texts to texts than to any empirical reality, obviously supports the overall non-referential thrust.

In general, a search for poems that expressly concentrate on the nation and its emblems, intimated by key words and notions such as homeland, the people etc., proves their number to be surprisingly limited. It is curious that there are fairly few poems that precisely locate the poem or name a toponym — the majority of texts develop in a more or less abstract space. The refusal to name and, by naming, to make public turns even these poems that do focus on a specific site (usually a landscape somewhere in the countryside) into the poets' private mindscapes, rather than shared loci of communication. Place names, if their occur, rather have a synecdochal function, representing more inclusive notions. For example, the largest cities in Estonia Tallinn, Tartu and Pärnu as well as the Latvian Riga, stand for cities as sources of environmental pollution for Hando Runnel (Kuusk 1998: 198). In case particular locations imply Estonia as a nation, the connotations need not be exactly cordial. Karl-Martin Sinijärv's bitter "Dochery rodiny" — (one of the few poems that acknowledges the existence of another language in Estonia in its Russian-language title that translates as "Daughters of the homeland") — introduces the topic of burning social problems and launches the image of Estonia as a brothel, and an insignificant one at that, "maailmabordellin on eesti / vaid tilluke separee / tallinn on syljekauss / tartu — bidee" ("in the world brothel estonia is / but a tiny compartment / tallinn is a spittoon / tartu — a bidet") (ib. 426).

In a couple of cases toponyms still serve as landmarks in an Estonia spread out and mapped, the poet absorbing the entire reach of the country as a whole and endorsing an imaginary communion with it. Paul-Eerik Rummo speaks about having been born in a flat country that has given one one's peace and balance. Its horizontality is underscored by describing its highest "peak" Munamägi (the Egg Hill, 318 metres above sea level) as reaching the clouds: "Munamägi on pilvepiir, pilv on madal ja hall nagu hiir" ("The Egg Hill remains the cloud-frontier / the clouds are low and

mouse-grey here", trans. Ivar Ivask). (Ib. 161) Viivi Luik, how-
ever, sums up the country using the vertical dimension of a map
hung on the wall — the North becomes the top and the South the
bottom: "Tallinn üleval ja allpool Valga, vahel külmad suved, paas
ja savimuld" ("Tallinn up at the top and Valga below, / cold sum-
mers, limestone and earth of clay in between.") The poem is by far
the only poem in the anthology that manifestly admits the possible
threat of a loss of the language "vaata / ülbet verekuma kümne
küüne vahel / verd, mil pole väärtust keeleta ja maata." ("look / at
the haughty glow of blood between your ten fingernails / the blood
that has no value without the language and the country") (Ib. 283).

On the whole, however, the poems try to avoid dealing with
the emblems of nation-ness directly. Rather, biblical imagery, e.g.
the scattered sheep in Kalju Lepik (ib. 223), historical parallels
with perished ancient tribes, such as in Jaan Kaplinski (ib. 121), or
metaphors, for instance Hando Runnel's tough and stubborn weeds
(ib. 177), are employed to broach the issue of the nation. Naturally
it must not be forgotten that the main body of the anthologised
poems was written under the conditions of severe Soviet censor-
ship — yet the selection encompasses also diaspora writers who
had no restrictions imposed on their works, as well as later texts.
Avoidance of a direct commitment may suggest a fear of empty
elocution. Luik writes "Juurde saab kõrge ja kallis / kergesti võltsi
läike. / Eestis on latid kõrged. / Eesti ise on väike." ("What is high
and dear, / easily acquires a false glitter./ In Estonia the standards
are high. / Estonia itself is small.") (ib. 277). Karl Martin Sinijärv
says bluntly, "mu tydruk mu maa minu rahvas / mis tydruk mis
maa kelle rahvas // kui uhked me oleme olnud// me sõnad kui
vormid mis / tyhjax on jäänd" ("my girl my country my people /
what girl what country whose people // how proud we have been //
our words are like moulds that / have become empty") (ib. 416).
Paul-Eerik Rummo is afraid of the same, warning against myth-
making in our national literary heritage, "Tema on ju meie, ja ärme
teeme endast / seda müüti, seda uhket ja suurt. // Tema on ju
meie — väike külmetav järv. Tema on ju meie — lumi lõdisevasse
vette" ("He is us, and let us not make of us / that myth, so proud
and so great. // He is us — the little freezing lake. He is us — the
snow into the shivering water.") (ib. 162–163). This poem also is

one of the few that include a manifest sense of community in the speaker. Luik is another poet who explicitly uses the plural "we" next to the idea of the nation, "Mis asja me mõtlesime? / Endast ja Eestimaast." ("What were we thinking about? / Ourselves and Estonia") (ib. 276) But, all in all, the plural subject is rare in the poems; these are but sparsely inhabited with personas different from the private lyrical voice

An open discussion of nation-ness is for the most part avoided, and so the anthology does not explore borderline areas that might problematise the hitherto unquestioned wholeness of Estonian national subjectivity. Only Debora Vaarandi contrasts her Estonian-based persona and her exiled conversation partner, the sadness of their separateness brought into relief against the happy and laughing Swedish people in Stockholm. "Võõras naer on me vahel / Skanseni alleil" ("There is laughter of strangers between us / in the alleys of the Skansen") (ib. 12) In this poem, a community that is "not us, the Others" appears, enhancing the awareness of the Self. Otherwise, the volume's universe is mostly inhabited by people whose nationality remains implicit and smoothly merges with the great names from the (dead, white and male European) canon of world literature — fragments from Hamlet's soliloquy, for instance, are incorporated into their texts by four of the poets.

The Welsh anthology, on the contrary, makes explicit the editor's views on the poetry he uses. Dannie Abse's introduction suggests that many poets in Wales believe themselves to be members of a defeated nation (Abse 1997: 13). "That awareness leads them, in the signature of their poems, to side with the losers of history and of life's procession" (ib.). Also, Dannie Abse informs the readers that the verse included emerges from the Welsh tradition in which the poet is departing from an intense sense of community and adds, "Those verses imbued with the most *blatant* nationalist valency do not find, for the most part, a place here because platform poems of whatever orientation rarely outlast their season." (ib. 15). Probably, though, it was not so difficult to exclude at least one category of extremely nationalist writing — the category that expresses hostility towards other nations. Anderson has drawn attention to the fact that art works showing love inspired by the nation are numerous, while those expressing

nationalist hatred are truly rare. "Even in the case of colonized peoples, who have every reason to feel hatred for their imperialist rulers, it is astonishing how insignificant the element of hatred is in these expressions of national feeling" (1995: 142). And indeed, the English do not appear as an obvious target or open antagonists. For instance, the sarcastic "Ode to the Severn Bridge" by Harri Webb, "Two lands at last connected / Across the waters wide / And all the tolls collected / On the English side." (Abse 1997: 107) rather stresses an economical tension between the centre and the margin of the UK, than a tension between different national groups within Wales. If there is a feeling of resentment towards the English, it is finally recognised as ungrounded prejudice against a tourist, as in Roland Mathias' poem. "'Can we get to the island?', he asks, Lancashire / Accent humble, dark curls broad. And I / Am suddenly angry. But how is my tripright sounder, / Save that I know Roger Parry and he does not." Abse 1997: 97).

The language of the poems strongly leans towards referentiality and also openly recalls the problem of identity. Although written in English, the poems do not offer a celebration of their medium, the English tongue. The latter's status as not the language of the indigenous people, but that of the "oppressor" rather tends to build up tensions. It is the other language, Welsh, that seeps into the poems, takes over bits and pieces of them, is yearned for and still proves inaccessible or half-forgotten. "We have lost the old tongue, and with it / The old ways too," Herbert Williams regrets (ib. 162). Loss of the language contributes to a feeling of rootless-ness. Harry Guest's persona descibes his return to Wales, "They took me young to learn a different language. /---/ A harper gives his message to the clouds. / I do not understand the words he sings. / I can no longer tell where I belong." (ib. 162) Attemps are made to regain the language, to learn it, but it is resilient and does not open up easily. Ann Drysmdale comes to the conclusion, "To study Welsh is like embracing Buddhism." (ib. 188) The language seems alien, operates according to strange principles, "Welsh is a mad language, there are no words in it. / Not words as Anglo-Saxons understand them. / Definite, finished words that stand for things." (Ib.) At the same time, Welsh is the language of the since-rest communication, and adopted English will hamper even heart

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to heart communication with God, as T. H. Jones suggests. "Back to the chapel, and a charade / Of the word of God made by a preacher / Without a tongue" (Abse 1997: 110).

A crucial break has occurred that splits the English-language poet from the nation's past, as "nothing connects us affectively to the dead more than language" (Anderson 1995: 145). The presence of Welsh intimates a past dimension, a stock example of this realisation being the chrestomatic R. S. Thomas, "You cannot live in the present,/ At least not in Wales. / There is the language for instance, / The soft consonants / Strange to the ear." (Abse 1997: 75) — Also, Peter Finch is aware of the past dimension and the attempt to relate to it, "We speak the language. No. / We understand it. We say that. / The bricks of our houses / are thick with it./ We know all the songs / and the place names. / It's not foreign.". He concludes, "... using English slyly, / we say that we're glad it isn't dead." (Ib. 213) The place names, indeed, are important. The continuity and sense of community the poets are looking for and that has been lost in time can be found in space and location. The poems abound in toponyms or references in footnotes to particular events that legitimise the presence of the poems in Wales. Indeed, Michael Collins remarks that Anglo-Welsh poetry is generally more aware of time and place, of history and geography, than American or English poetry. "The history may be only personal, the place simply some small village somewhere in Wales, but the Anglo-Welsh poem characteristically reflects a local habitation and a name". (Collins 1989: 56).

Indeed, there is a deep concern with contemporary events: the Welsh perished in the Falkland islands in 1982, the miners' strikes in the 1980s and the community-building power of such events. The source of inspiration rather lies in the immediate empirical reality than abstract language play or other literary texts. The poetic voice often belongs to or from within a community — related to the Welsh bardic tradition; or focuses on a non-literary character in the community, often active in a family. Thus the dimension of the nation Timothy Brennan describes as more ancient and nebulous than the concept of a nation state — "the natio — a local community, domicile, family, condition of belonging" (1990: 45), is brought to the forefront.

And the status of belonging to the community is open and negotiable, it is not taken for granted. Other locations, other nationalities brush shoulders with the English-speaking Welsh in Wales, and acting out the role of the Other, help to explore the limits of the Self. Even Caroline Street in Cardiff may take on an international air in John Tripp's poem. "Curry spice in the air / the smell of burnt paratha. / You'd have thought you were in Bombay." (Ib. 149). However, this situation causes no resentment, immigrants rather evoke pity because of their homelessness. In another poem, the same poet asks, "Do those Pakistanis feel the cold?/ What are they doing in Bridgend?/ How did they land here and those lost Sikhs and Chinamen? / I am sorry of them, they look bereft" (ib. 153). Sympathetic treatment of the new arrivals in the country, suggested in the preface as the siding with the underdog, is a feature that could not be found in the Estonian anthology. A heightened awareness, and including poems on the Holocaust, such as Raymond Garlick's "The Heiress" (ib. 146–7) is likely to be supported by the fact that Dannie Abse himself is both Welsh and Jewish. The strongest expression of nationalist hatred can be found in his "Case History" as a patient's extremist ranting, to whom the Jewis-Welsh doctor still prescribes alleviating medicine (ib. 141). Generally, an open attitude and negotiations of the place of the English-speaking Welsh within the nation set the anthology's tone. One possible answer is provided in Leslie Norris' "Belonging" in which the persona meets an American who thinks himself a Welshman, although there are no Welsh names among his ancestors, and admits, "Belonging, after all, is mostly a matter of belief" (ib. 1997: 118).

In conclusion, it can be said that the Estonian anthology projects the nation as a finite entity that can, indeed, be ironised, but not questioned. The vulnerable borderline areas of the nation and its poetry remain in the shadows, an identification of the country with language is implied and deviations from this pattern are not revealed. The main thrust is towards inscribing the body of poetry in a Christian and Western literary tradition as seamlessly as possible, using dilution of referentiality to this end.

The political dimension of the Anglo-Welsh anthology is considerably more exposed. The community is negotiating its ambi-

valent relations to the nation; trying to legitimise its subjectivity by measuring itself against other regions and nationalities, and also, to a degree, trying to recover a specific Welsh essence related to the Cymric tradition. Finding itself in a network of linguistic, literary and empirical-political discourses, Anglo-Welsh poetry is still discovering the space allotted to it.

Timothy Brennan has suggested that the nationalist mood is, aesthetically as socially more strongly felt in the emergent societies of the world today, including ethnic or regional breakaways on the European continent itself (1990: 44). Thus it will not come as a surprise that a post-independence anthology should be less explicit in its treatment of nation-ness than one, representing a community in a nation gradually moving towards more self-governance; a community, which by virtue of sharing the imperial language, has double reason to emphasise its allegiance to the nation's cause.

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About Authors

EPP ANNUS works as Lecturer at the Chair of Literary Theory of Tartu University. She defended her M.A. (1993) on the novels by the Estonian writer Asta Willmann. Jointly with Rein Undusk, she has published in Estonian a book on Estonian novels, *Klassika ja narratiivsus* ('Classics and Narrativity', 1997). In her articles she has dealt mainly with Estonian prose fiction.

TIINA AUNIN is Professor of Comparative Literature at the Tallinn Pedagogical University. She took her Ph.D. at Leningrad University. Specializing in American and Canadian literature she has published a large number of theoretical articles in English, Russian and Estonian. Her research area includes discourses between history and literature, cross-cultural relations and Women's Studies. Her latest contribution is a chapter to the book *Poe Abroad* (1999). She has done research and lecturing at the universities of Surrey, Essex, Lund, Cornell and British Columbia and presented papers at interdisciplinary conferences in Estonia, Latvia, Russia, Finland, Spain, the Netherlands and the US.

ANNA BOTTA earned her laurea in Lingue e Letterature Straniere Moderne from the University of Turin (Italy) and her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Literary Theory from the University of Pennsylvania. She is Associate Professor of Italian at Smith College (Massachusetts, USA). She has published work on Italo Calvino, Cristina Campo, the Oulipo, George Perec, Antonio Tabucchi, and Elemire Zolla. Her current research is centered on new configurations of cultures and national identities which are being constructed in today's Europe.

ARTURO CASAS (1958) is Doctor in Hispanic Philology and Professor of Literary Theory at the University of Santiago de Compostela. He is the author of numerous articles on Galician and Spanish literatures, aesthetical thought and literary criticism, and has specialized in the theory of the poem and in Literary Pragmatics. He is the editor of some works by Rafael Dieste (*Encontros e vieiros*, *Fragua íntima* and *Obras Completas*) and has published the books *Rafael Dieste e a súa obra literaria en galego* (1994), *Avances en Teoría de la Literatura* (as a co-author, 1994), *La teoría estética, teatral y literaria de Rafael Dieste* (1997), *Diccionario de termos literarios* (as a co-author, 1998), *La descripción literaria*

(1999), and also three books of poetry (*Sombra de unidade* 1990, *Pedra de Nadir* 1995, *Momentum* 1997).

VALDA ČAKARE is Professor of Theatre and Drama at the Academy of Culture in Riga (Latvia), and a theatre critic. Between 1983 and 1998 she worked at the Department of Latvian Literature of the University of Latvia. She took her Ph.D. on paradox in the plays of Behan, Pinter and Simpson at the University of Saint Petersburg (Leningrad) in 1989. In 1993 she spent four months as a Fulbright research scholar at the University of Wisconsin, working on the subject of Postmodernism in Latvia. The total number of her publications in newspapers, journals and scholarly almanacs amounts to five hundred.

ÁNGEL GARCÍA GALIANO (1961) is since 1988 Doctor in Spanish philology. His thesis *La imitación poética en el Renacimiento* was published in 1992 in Kassel, Germany. He works at present as Professor of literary theory at Madrid Complutense University. He has published literary criticism on works of the Spanish "golden age", Francisco Ayala, Benito Pérez Galdós, Julio Cortázar and also the Estonian Jaan Kross. In 1998 his novel *El mapa de las aguas* was published by Mondadori.

JIM HICKS (1959) teaches Comparative Literature at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and Comparative Literature and English at Smith College. He has published works on various 20th-century authors, including Beckett, Pirandello and Pessoa, and has completed a book-length manuscript entitled *The Sentimental Disposition of Modernism*. He is currently Fulbright Professor of American Literature and History at the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzogovina.

TIINA KIRSS is Visiting Assistant Professor of Estonian Studies at the University of Toronto. A comparatist, her Ph.D. dissertation (University of Michigan, 1994) was on censorship and the Aesopian discourse in 20th century East European texts, including the historical novels of the Estonian writer Jaan Kross. From 1993 to 99 she was Assistant Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, where she also directed the Women's Studies Program. Her research interests include women's autobiographical texts, literature of exile, feminist theory in cross-cultural contexts, and Estonian fictional and autobiographical works of the Siberian deportations.

TADEUSZ KOWZAN (1922) is Professor Emeritus of the University of Caen (France). Born and educated in Poland, he took his M.A. in French philology (1952), Ph.D. (1964) and "habilitation" (1968) at the University of Warsaw. He has worked as Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Arts in

Warsaw, as professor of comparative literature and theatre studies at the university of Lyon II (1972–1975), and has since then been professor at the University of Caen. He has published fourteen books in French and Polish, among others *Littérature et spectacle* (1970, 1975), *"Hamlet" our le miroir du monde* (1991), *Spectacle et signification* (1992), *Sémiologie du théâtre* (1992), *Znak i teatr* (1998), *Wilno. Polska-Litwa* (1999). He has in preparation a book on meta-theatre.

PIRET KRUUSPERE (1961) is a researcher at the Under and Tuglas Literature Centre (Institute of Literature) of the Estonian Academy of Sciences. She defended her M.A. (1997) on Estonian theatre and drama in exile. She has published a survey of drama in exile *Näitekirjandus. Eesti pagulaskirjandus 1944–1992* in the series of Under and Tuglas Literature Centre "Collegium litterarum" (1993) and articles mainly on Estonian drama.

LI XIA was born and educated in China. She is the founder of the Chinese programmes at the University of Newcastle, Australia, where she lectures on Chinese language and literature. She has published intensively on the Chinese poets Gu Cheng and Yang Lian and on translation. She is currently conducting research in Chinese avant-garde literature, women's literature and Chinese cinema. She is the editor of *Essays, Interviews, Recollections and Unpublished of Gu Cheng, 20th century Chinese Poet. The Poetics of Death* (New York, 1999).

LORETA MAČIANSKAITĖ was born in Vilnius. She works as a senior researcher at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore and as a lecturer of text analysis at Vilnius Pedagogical University. She defended her Ph.D. (1997) on semiotic study of the Lithuanian writer Antanas Skema, has published a book on his novel (1998) and articles mainly on Lithuanian prose and theatre.

INDREK ÕIS (1975) is an M.A. student in English Language and Literature at the University of Tartu and is currently preparing a thesis on different ethnic, religious and political identities in Northern Irish literature.

RAILI PÕLDSAAR is Assistant Lecturer at the Department of English of the University of Tartu, where she also continues her graduate studies, working on a thesis of cultural influences on Estonian gender images. She is the current Acting Head of the Baltic Center of North American Studies. She has presented papers at numerous international conferences and has published articles in several collections and a handbook on writing.

PILVI RAJAMÄE is Lecturer in British history and English literature at the University of Tartu, where she also took her M.A. degree. She is also the Executive Director of the Estonian Centre for British and Overseas Studies at the University of Tartu. The theme of her doctorate thesis is the decline and fall of British aristocracy as reflected in 20th-century English literature. She has published articles on 20th-century English and American literature.

JAAK RÄHESOO (1941) has worked for years as a freelance essayist and translator. He has acquired a good reputation as the translator of Joyce (*Dubliners*), Faulkner (*As I Lay Dying, Light in August,* short stories), T. Williams, T. S. Eliot and other English and American authors. A collection of his essays on drama and theatre, *Hecuba pärast* ('For Hecuba') appeared in 1995 in the series "History of Estonian Thought", launched by the publishing house Ilmamaa, of Tartu. For 1995 he was elected to the extraordinary Chair of Liberal Arts at Tartu University. Recently he has stayed on grants at several British and US academic centres.

THOMAS SALUMETS (1956; Ph. D. Princeton University 1985) is Associate Professor of Germanic Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. He is co-editor of the collected works of F. M. Klinger (with Sander L. Gilman) and author of numerous articles on German and Estonian literary and cultural history. His most recent work includes the multi-author volumes *Germanics under Construction* (1996, with J. Roche) as well as *Human Interdependencies and Norbert Elias: A Critical Reader* (forthcoming). From 1995 to 1997 he chaired the Programme in Comparative Literature at the University of British Columbia. His current interests include the intersection between long-term civilizing and de-civilizing processes and imaginative literature. From 1998, he is the editor of the *Journal of Baltic Studies.*

JOHAN SCHIMANSKI (1963) is Associate Professor at the Department of Comparative Literature of the University of Tromsø. He defended his Dr. art. on nation and genre in texts by the Welsh-language author Islwyn Ffowc Elis at the University of Oslo in 1997. His research interests include science fiction and fantastic literature, genre theory, romantic literary forgeries, Welsh literature, and problems in the fields of nation & literature, postcolonialism and border theory. He maintains the literary studies resources web site *Litteraturvitenskapelige hjelpemidler* <http://www.hum.uit.no/alm/littvit>.

ERKKI SEVÄNEN (1954) is Professor of Literature at the University of Joensuu in Finland. He has published five books and several articles. His most recent books are *Taide instituutiona ja järjestelmänä. Modernin taide-elämän historiallis-sosiologiset mallit* (Art as an Institution and as a System. The Historical-sociological Models of Modern Artistic Life, Helsinki 1998) and (together with Tero Koistinen, Piret Kruuspere and Risto Turunen) *Kaksi tietä nykyisyyteen. Tutkimuksia kirjallisuuden, kansallisuuden ja kansallisten liikkeiden suhteista Suomessa ja Virossa* (Two Routes to the Present Time. Studies on the Relationships Between the Literature, Nationality and Nationalist Movements in Finland and Estonia, Helsinki 1999). His special interests are sociology of literature and sociology of the arts in general, cultural theory and nationalism.

ENE-REET SOOVIK is a graduate of the University of Tartu, where she is currently teaching contemporary British literature and literary translation. Her publications include articles on 20th-century literature and translation problems. She has published translations from English, Swedish and Danish into Estonian. She is a board member of the Estonian Literary Society.

MONICA SPIRIDON is Professor of Semiotics, XXth Century European Culture and Literary Theory, and Director of the Study Center for Communication Studies and Public Relations of the University of Bucharest. She is elected member of the Executive committee of ICLA, founder and Secretary General of the Romanian Association of Comparative Literature, and member of the Romanian Writers Union, the Romanian PEN Club, the Romanian Association for American Studies and the editorial board of the *Review of National Literatures and World Report* (New Series, 1998–). She has published in Romanian the following books: *Sadoveanu: the Wise Man's Argument with the World*, 1982; *On The Appearance and the Reality of Literature*, 1984; *Melancholy of Descent*, 1989, 2nd ed. in print; *Man and the Terror of History — Marin Preda the Novelist*, 1993; *Eminescu: An Anatomy of Eloquence*, 1994: *A Defense and an Illustration of Criticism*, 1996; *Interpretation Without Borders*, 1998. She is author of approximately 300 studies and articles published in scholarly journals and of several chapters in books published in Germany, Italy, The Netherlands and the US.

JÜRI TALVET (1945) is since 1992 Chair of Comparative Literature at the University of Tartu. He took his Ph.D. on the Spanish picaresque novel at Leningrad University in 1981. He has published a collection of articles and essays on Spanish and Catalan literature *Hispaania vaim* ('The Spanish Spirit', Tartu, 1995), books of travel essays *Teekond*

Hispaaniasse (Tallinn 1985, Estonia's annual literary prize in essay genre) and *Hispaaniast Ameerikasse* (Tallinn 1992), and also four books of poetry (*Äratused* 1981, *Ambur ja karje* 1886, *Hinge kulg ja kliima üllatused* 1990, *Eesti eleegia ja teisi luuletusi*, 1997). In 1997 he was awarded the Juhan Liiv Prize of Poetry. He has translated into Estonian both classical and modern works (*Lazarillo de Tormes*, poetry by Quevedo, Espriu and Aleixandre, Gracián's *Oráculo manual* and Calderón's *La vida es sueño*, short stories of García Márquez, etc.) He is the editor and principal author of a manual of world literature for Estonian high schools and universities (*Maailmakirjandus*, I–II, Tallinn 1995–1999). Since 1994 he is the Chairman of the Estonian Association of Comparative Literature.

INDREK TART (1946), a graduate in physics of Tartu University, is at present a senior research fellow at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies of the Tallinn Pedagogical University. In 1993 he took his M.A. in the information science on bibliometric analysis. His investigation of the publishing of poetry books, *Eestikeelne luuleraamat 1851–1995* ('Estonian Poetry Books between 1851 and 1995') appeared in 1997. As a poet, he has participated in the International Writing Program of the University of Iowa (1992), has published a book of poetry, *Haljendav ruumala* ('The Verdant Volume', 1982). He has also translated British and American poetry.

MADINA TLOSTANOVA is Senior research fellow at Gorki Institute of World Literature in Moscow. She specializes in contemporary American literature, cultural and comparative studies, problems of regionalism, multiculturalism, border and interdisciplinary studies. Her dissertation was devoted to Eudora Welty and Southern Fiction after World War II. Major publications include a series of articles on 19th–20th century American writers for the *New Academic History of the Literature of the US*, essays on contemporary Southern writers, Chicano fiction, V. Nabokov, several international publications. In 2000 her monographical study *Late 20th-century American Fiction in the Context of Muticulturalism* was released in Moscow.

REIN VEIDEMANN (1946) is a graduate of Tartu University in Estonian philology. After working as Academic Secretary at the Estonian Museum of Literature and finishing doctoral studies at the Institute of Language and Literature he took his Ph.D. in 1984 with a thesis on Estonian post-war literary criticism. He has been active as editor-in-chief of literary monthlies *Looming* (1983–1986) and *Vikerkaar* (1986–1990), Member of Estonian Parliament (1990–1995) and councillor of the Ministry of

Culture. Since 1998 he is the Chair-holder of Literary Theory at Tartu University, as well as heads the literary supplement "Arkaadia" of one of the main daily newspapers of Estonia, *Eesti Päevaleht*. He has published numerous articles and essays about Estonian literature, a selection of which has appeared in his books *Olla kriitik* ('To Be a Critic', 1986), *Mälestus Golfi hoovusest* ('Memory of the Golf Stream', 1993) and *Ajavahe* ('Time Difference', 1996). His confessional essay book *Elu keskpäev* ('Life's Midday') appeared in 1986.

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INTERLITTERARIA *publie des articles originaux en anglais, en allemand, en français et en espagnol, touchant surtout le domaine de la littérature comparée. On attend de préférence des recherches sur les contextes interculturels des phénomènes littéraires. INTERLITTERARIA publie aussi des traductions des articles en quatre langues mentionnées ci-dessus, parus avant en d'autres langues moins parlées dans le monde. L'extension d'un article ne doit pas excéder 15 pages. Les travaux sont priés de présenter en deux exemplaires, l'un imprimé, l'autre en disquette (Word Perfect, Microsoft Word for Windows).*

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