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LANGUAGE TEACHING IN A NATIONAL CONTEXT

If one could describe languages as an indigenous product of the countries where they are spoken, how could one describe them when these languages are transplanted from their native milieu to that of a foreign country? One could whimsically compare transplanted languages to exotic plants. The languages that are taught outside their native context, have to be fitted into a different context the nature of which is determined by the needs and exigencies of the country where these languages are taught as well as by the mechanism of the people's own language which generally gives rise to the problem of bilingualism.

The languages studied most intensely in Malta are English and Italian with unfortunately very little French. There is now also a drive for the teaching of Arabic as a compulsory subject in government secondary schools. English takes the lion's share not so much out of consideration for the splendour of the great literature that it has produced as for its practical utility and, most unfortunately, also for a sort of fictitious prestige that English enjoys in the society that is emerging very slowly from a long spell of British colonialism. One wonders how many who read for a degree in English, for instance, do so because they are sensitive to the values of English literature and not because they are self-consciously sensitive to its prestige status in an ex-colony and its economic market value as a world language.

There is a type of English that is widely used in non-academic social circles in Malta which is a kind of local Creole, that some upper class families still prefer to their native language, at cocktail and other social parties. It makes them feel different and superior. This mentality is bound to create friction between the genuine claims of Maltese as the people's language with prior rights in its own country, and English, which has for many years

now usurped or at least obscured the place of honour that belongs to the people's language by birth-right. We have ourselves drawn great moral strength from the heritage of English past and contemporary literature, and hold it in very high regard, but we are not sure that the claims of English language in Malta are not being somewhat inflated and supported for the wrong motives. We would like to have seen (that is what we have been advocating for many years) Maltese, as the people's language and English as a foreign but nonetheless an indispensable tool, create between them the right educational outlook for a country that is still looking for its long-blurred national identity. We would like to have seen the many teachers with degrees in a foreign language who are now language teachers in government or private schools acquainted with their native language and the route of its growth. As only Maltese has been a social product of the people of Malta for a number of centuries, no other foreign language can claim national parity with it even if it boasts a greater literature and history. How many Maltese teachers holding degrees in a foreign language can contribute to the formation of the right linguistic outlook? No teacher can fit well into the national context without a well-founded knowledge of his or her national heritage. Even when you have sung the highest praise of a foreign language, for instance, the greatness of Italian, English and French literatures, the status of a foreign language in a Maltese context remains basically different from that it holds in its native country. Languages are native plants (the people's own creation). Outside their native country they are exotic comparable to transplanted plants of which some survive and some perish in the process of transplantation. There is nothing wrong with exotic plants; they can be as fascinating as exotic plants are to the gardener, but a nation that really wants to be true to itself, holding up a clear mirror to its soul (its national identity) should insist on all teachers in government and private schools being well versed in the language and history of their country. How can they otherwise serve their country loyally and get their pupils interested in Malta, her language and her history?

This is where 'exotic plants' can hurt like stinging thorns. They do so when they spread like weeds and choke the native plants. They need not do so if there is proper guidance and direction from those who advise students. The teacher with a degree in a foreign language who sniffs at his or her native language, literature and history, is an unfortunate product of a misdirected or confused policy. We don't want such teachers in our government and private schools.

J. AQUILINA

IL TEATRO MELODRAMMATICO MALTESE

di J. EYNAUD

DOBBIAMO ritenere che questo genere di teatro era gloria tutta italiana, propenso a restaurare l'antica tragedia nella sua integrità di spettacolo insieme poetico e musicale. Vienna, durante il regno di Carlo V, offriva ospitalità e lavoro ai compositori, agli scenografi, ai ballerini, ai cantanti più famosi, e tutti quanti lavoravano nel teatro melodrammatico erano generalmente italiani o almeno venivano educati in Italia. La scuola di Napoli, infatti, durante il secolo XVIII divenne famosa superando la fama di Roma e di Venezia.

Musicisti e cantori italiani furono chiamati da tutte le corti europee, così i ballerini e gli scenografi. Nel Settecento vi furono intere dinastie di scenografi italiani. A questi stessi artisti i sovrani ricorrevano per l'organizzazione delle più importanti cerimonie, incoronazioni, matrimoni, funerali. Il teatro melodrammatico era un genere di spettacolo in cui confluivano vari elementi e che aveva scopi diversi. Un'opera era il risultato di diverse persone: poeta, compositore, scenografo, macchinista, cantanti, ballerini, coreografi. Uno spettacolo tale aveva una duplice funzione, di divertire il pubblico e di celebrare i fasti delle famiglie reali o aristocratiche. Decoro, esigenze di spettacolo, esigenze degli attori, tutto doveva essere considerato accortamente, contemperato con saggezza e anche con modestia.

La moda del teatro in musica in Italia si era ben diffuso nel Seicento e di più nel Settecento. Perciò si costruivano nuovi teatri, e quelli già esistenti abbandonarono il repertorio comico tradizionale per mettere in scena melodrammi. A Venezia questi avevano successo più della stessa commedia dell'arte, almeno fino alla riforma goldoniana. La vita sociale si svolgeva in buona parte a teatro, che era l'unico luogo dove si poteva incontrare. Ai nobili erano riservati i palchi, ma con l'avanzar del secolo anche le famiglie borghesi poterono affittare dei palchi. Questo era un segno di benessere economico e di solida posizione sociale.

Da questo quadro del teatro melodrammatico italiano passiamo ad esaminare quello maltese dando prima alcuni cenni di cronaca

teatrale. Fino all'anno 1731, l'isola di Malta non aveva il suo Teatro Pubblico, ma sappiamo che i Cavalieri della Lingua d'Italia davano ai loro colleghi ed amici, sin dal 1651 delle recite e rappresentazioni nella sala della loro 'Albergia'.

Dovendo, nel 1639, essere recitata una commedia, si proibì l'accesso alle donne nella Albergia, in conseguenza dei tumulti che erano successi nel carnevale; in seguito si diede ordine di levare il palco, che fu rimesso dopo quattro anni, dietro proposta del Cavaliere Conzaga, secondato dai suoi colleghi. In quest'occasione la Lingua d'Italia decretò la somma di 25 scudi, in aggiunta a quello che si spendeva dai singoli membri, per la recita di una commedia. Nel 1650 troviamo l'approvazione di 30 scudi per la rappresentazione di un'opera tragica, per la quale si richiedeva una grossa spesa, come si trova registrato nel verbale del 5 febbraio dello stesso anno. Nonostante che in quest'occasione si decidesse di non ammettere altre simili domande, il 23 gennaio 1660 venne confermata la spesa di 50 scudi, i quali aggiunti a quelli erogati dai Cavalieri, rappresentavano il compenso chiesto dai comici per rappresentare un'opera nell'Albergia, nei giorni di carnevale. Il 2 febbraio 1697 alcuni gentiluomini maltesi vi rappresentavano una commedia o forse un'azione allegorica musicata, scritta in nome della Pace. I due ultimi spettacoli che riscontrammo tra le Deliberazioni della Lingua d'Italia rimontano l'uno al 1717, quando Domenico Olivier e i suoi compagni fecero delle recite, e l'altro al 1746 quando si diede licenza al sacerdote Tommaso Perez di rappresentare in quella sala un'opera scritta da lui.

In quest'anno il Teatro Manoel era già eretto da quattordici anni ed era ufficialmente chiamato 'Teatro Pubblico'. Alcuni scrittori ritengono che la sua istituzione sia dovuta al fatto che il Gran Maestro Manoel De Vilhena volle che Malta avesse un teatro degno del nome per l'onesta ricreazione del popolo. Può darsi però che egli fosse indotto da questo motivo, sapendo che il teatro è stato sempre considerato come l'indizio della cultura di una nazione, ma da diversi chirografi esaminati ci risulta che il Teatro Manoel formava parte della fondazione del Forte Manoel, la quale consisteva di diversi stabili, clausure, molini, nonchè del Teatro Pubblico. Nel 1731, nella strada anticamente detta 'Del Carmine' esisteva un gruppo di tre case attigue, facenti angolo con le due strade del Carmine e Zecca verso occidente, denominate il Priorato di Navarra. Il 16 marzo dell'anno suddetto, il commendatore Gius. Carlo de Bajona ed il Cavaliere Sebastiano de Sarasa, quali rappresentanti

della Lingua d'Aragona, alienarono al Procuratore della fondazione del Forte Manoel le tre case su menzionate per il prezzo di 2186 scudi per erigervi un teatro. Secondo la relazione fatta dagli ingegneri civili Francesco Zerafa ed Antonio Azzopardi, questi stabili occupavano un'area di 94 canne e mezzo.

I Cavalieri De Bajona e Sarasa si obbligarono a impiegare la detta somma con altri 2000 scudi avuti in prestito dal Tesoro per fabbricare un simile Priorato sopra un pezzo di terreno confinante con gli stabili venduti alla fondazione Manoel. Le case erette su quel sito vennero chiamate il Nuovo Priorato di Navarra e sono quelle che vediamo di fronte alla porta laterale del Santuario della Madonna del Carmelo. Consideriamo opportuno di dare maggiori dettagli sulla costruzione di questo teatro, sulla struttura interna e sull'amministrazione del teatro durante i tempi dei Cavalieri Gerolimitani. Il lavoro del teatro fu cominciato il 16 marzo 1731, nello stesso giorno della stipulazione del contratto di vendita, e condotto a compimento nel breve tempo di dieci mesi. Considerando il breve periodo di tempo impiegato nella costruzione, abbiamo ragione di ritenere che il teatro venne formato da due delle case dell'antico Priorato, demolendo il muro divisorio tra le due case, nonchè tutte le stanze, e costruendo una nuova facciata, con pilastri di stile corinzio che si estendono più sotto la comice di finimento e con una mezza colonna ad ogni lato del Portone, sostenenti un balcone aperto. Non siamo però in grado di precisare la data in cui si fece tale cambiamento a balaustre al livello del primo piano.

Figurava sul portone lo stemma del fondatore che fu rimosso per ordine del governo francese. La struttura interna del Teatro, come pure tutti i palchi, pilastri ed altri lavori erano di legno, ed il pavimento della platea era anche rivestito dello stesso materiale. Ad ogni lato del piano terreno nelle vicinanze del vestibolo vi era un gabinetto, indicato nella pianta del Zerafa per luogo comune, ed un altro come deposito degli attrezzi necessari all'illuminazione del locale denominato 'Gabinetto dei lumieri'. A destra del palco esisteva una scala a chiocciola che menava alla terrazza. Questo piano conteneva palchetti da ogni lato, numerati dall'uno al numero otto, conosciuti come 'la loggia dei paggi' essendo stati riservati per i paggi del Gran Maestro, cioè i cadetti di allora o aspiranti al cavalierato. Il prim'ordine o la loggia magistrale comprendeva dieci palchi, cinque da ogni lato, indicati con le lettere dall'A alla K, e lo spazio intermedio tra i palchi indicati rispettivamente con le lettere E e F, era occupato dal palco del Gran Maestro, chiamato

'Loggia della Corte' che consisteva di tre palchi grandi comunicanti tra loro e riservati al Capo dell'Ordine ed al suo seguito. Tali erano le disposizioni interne del teatro ai tempi dell'Ordine, oggi alquanto alterate. Il maggior pregio del Teatro Manoel sta però nella sua acustica perfetta, pregio notevolissimo se si tengono in considerazione il tempo in cui fu costruito.

Ulderico Rolandi nel suo articolo *Musica e Musicisti in Malta*, riprodotto nel *Malta* del 1929 dice:

'Il Teatro Manoel è costruito su disegno somigliante al Teatro di Palermo e con pietre simili a quelle di San Carlo a Napoli.' L'area del pianterreno era divisa in platea a anfiteatro. I primi cinque banchi vicini al palcoscenico formavano la platea e anfiteatro. Questi banchi erano di noce e si stendevano per la larghezza del teatro. Generalmente la platea era riservata per i membri dell'Ordine.

I mezzi dell'illuminazione di allora erano a base di olio e di candele. Un grande fanale ad olio, simile a quei lampioni che si appendevano nelle strade fino alla metà del diciottesimo secolo, era fissato sul palco del Gran Maestro. Quando si davano dei balli o dei veglioni l'Impresario doveva porre nella platea quattro lampadari con otto lumi, cioè fiamme, per ciascuno ed una 'ninfa' nel mezzo della platea. Però quando si prolungava in simili circostanze il palcoscenico verso la platea, allora era suo obbligo di mettere una 'ninfa' con dodici lumi nel fondo del teatro e due lampadari a otto sul palcoscenico. In quanto all'illuminazione dei palchi, era lasciato alla discrezione del Protettore del teatro mettervi dei bracci di metallo, che appartenevano alla fondazione e si conservavano nel 'gabinetto dei lumieri'. Per quanto riguarda questi balli e veglioni si inseriva invariabilmente nel contratto la solita clausola 'purchè le suddette funzioni si facciano con tutta decenza e non altrimenti.'

L'amministrazione del teatro spettava ad una giunta detta Congregazione del Forte Manoel, la quale era rappresentata nei contratti da uno dei suoi membri chiamato l'economista, il quale concedeva a titolo di affitto ad un imprenditore o impresario il teatro 'accomodato', come dice il testo, 'di tutto e colle scene, viste ed apparenze che in esso si trovano in buon stato e capace a potervi rappresentare opere e commedie.' L'impresario aveva inoltre l'obbligo di impiegare un custode per tenere il teatro in buono stato e di pagare il fitto di tre camerini ammobiliati e provvisti di tutto il necessario per abitazione degli artisti, cioè uno per i maschi, un

altro per le donne e il terzo per i comici. Il palchetto numero 10 era riservato per la Giunta della suddetta fondazione. Infine la durata della concessione comprendeva il periodo dal mese di settembre fino all'ultimo giorno di carnevale, per la pignone di duecento scudi (moneta di Malta), pagabili in due rate.

Dal *Diario* di Fra Gaetano Reboul, *Compendio del giornale de' successi dell'isole Malta e Gozo — dall'anno 1729 sino all'anno 1750*, sappiamo che l'inaugurazione del teatro ebbe luogo il 19 gennaio 1732, con la rappresentazione della celebre opera del Maffei, la *Merope*, promossa con molta maestria dai Cavalieri italiani. Il 21 dello stesso mese fu messa in scena dai Cavalieri francesi l'opera col titolo di *Giocatore Disperato*. Anche se il Reboul non ne cita l'autore si tratta della commedia di Girolamo Gigli, rappresentata per la prima volta a Firenze nel 1707. Può destare qualche meraviglia che un testo simile impostato sulla satira anti-ecclesiastica (sottotitolo *Il bacchettiere falso*) sia stato scelto per il teatro dei cavalieri. Probabilmente esisteva una certa libertà ricreativa nei limiti della farsa, e del resto la commedia non sferza più il clero, ma gli ipocriti che si fingono pii, e può addirittura comportare un'intenzione moraleggiante. Un elenco degli spettacoli succedutisi in questo teatro dal 1735 al 1766 si trova inserito nella citata monografia del Rolandi.

Non tralasciavano i Gran Maestri di servirsi di questo teatro per trattenimenti, spettacoli e festini dati da loro in occasione di qualche festa di Stato, come il balletto in maschera qui dato per la nascita del Duca di Borgogna.

Il Gran Maestro Pinto in occasione del ventottesimo compleanno diede un festino il 18 gennaio 1769 nel quale venne cantata una composizione di Lentisco Adrasteo chiamata: *Il trionfo di Minerva*, piena di lodi e adulazioni per il Capo dell'Ordine. Emmanuele Pinto si recò al teatro vestito di gala, con un cappello guarnito di gallone, i cui fiocchi erano ornati di diamanti. Reboul dice 'che fu tutto un bellissimo trattenimento fino alle undici di notte'.

L'ultimo festino dato in questo teatro dai Gran Maestri ebbe luogo in seguito all'esaltazione di Hompesch al Màgistero. Il balcone era parato di damasco e la prospettiva principale illuminata da fiaccole disposte sulle sporgenze delle principali linee architettoniche. Hompesch entrò nel teatro fra gli applausi della gente che gremiva la strada del Carmine. Presentandosi nel balcone ringraziò il popolo e gettò quattrini a manciate.

Le lotte per l'impresa teatrale esistevano anche in quei tempi.

Troviamo, infatti, durante la metà del secolo diciottesimo gare continue tra Francesco Mancino, Pasquale Almirante, Giuseppe La Leta, Michelangelo Nani, figlio di Gerolamano, nelle quali quest'ultimo vinceva spesso i concorrenti, ma incominciò a perder terreno verso il 1790 quando spuntò un tedesco domiciliato nella Valletta di nome Domenico Caisellar.

In seguito, incominciò il periodo di Nicolò Isouard, nato alla Valletta nel 1775, richiamato in patria dal Gran Maestro Rohan che gli affidò la direzione della Cappella dell'Ordine. Egli ebbe diverse volte l'impresa e fece rappresentare le sue opere, *Avviso ai maritati*, e l'*Artaserse*, la prima già data nel teatro di Livorno, e la seconda al Pergola di Firenze. Compose inoltre per il nostro teatro: *I due avari*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Il Barone d'Albachiara*, *Rinaldo d'Asti* e *Ginevra in Scozia*.

Napoleone abolendo il titolo d'impresario, lo nominò Commisario del teatro con stipendio. L'attività del Teatro Manoel ai tempi del 'blocco' era soprattutto limitata allo svago dei diversi ufficiali della guarnigione francese addetti alle opere di difesa della Valletta e delle tre città. Tuttavia il pubblico era anche ammesso alle rappresentazioni le quali si davano di tanto in tanto. Evacuata la piazza di Malta dai francesi, il generale Vaubois condusse con sè l'Isouard a Parigi, dove l'Isouard si spense nel 1818 dopo aver raccolto diversi allori nel campo teatrale e musicale.

All'epoca della dominazione francese il contratto della gestione teatrale spettava ad una Giunta chiamata Commissione dei Beni Nazionali che aveva sede in una delle sale dell'Albergia di Castiglia. Subentrato il governo inglese, si cambiò il titolo di questa Giunta in Amministrazione dei Beni Pubblici. Fu allora che il nome di Teatro Pubblico venne cambiato in Teatro Reale. Ai tempi di Ball, il teatro era già aperto al pubblico, ritornando all'antico sistema della concessione per un anno ad un affittuario (impresario), cosa che diede luogo alle antiche brighe tra impresari.

Séguiroero durante il secolo diciannovesimo due grandi restauri, il primo nel 1812 e l'altro nel 1844. Il teatro allora poteva contenere in tutto 850 persone. Nei primi tempi del dominio britannico, veniva nominata dal governo una persona altolocata come Protettore del Teatro. Uno di questi che occupò tale carica per lungo tempo, fu il Presidente della Corte della Castellania, il Dott. G. Borg Olivier, G.C. dell'Ordine di San Michele e San Giorgio. Dimessosi l'8 novembre 1820 da tale carica, venne sostituito dal Segretario Hector Grech e dal Dott. Claudio Bonnici in qualità di protettori.

A quanto pare, le esigenze d'allora richiedevano troppa severità durante lo spettacolo, poichè nella Notificazione di Governo del 20 febbraio 1830, si proibiva agli artisti di ripetere qualunque pezzo di musica durante le rappresentazioni e si dava ordine alla Polizia Esecutiva di soffocare qualsiasi attentato alla trasgressione di tale regolamento. Durante quell'anno fu per diverse volte rappresentata l'opera *Il Contestabile di Chester* di Pacini, che è forse la prima testimonianza della fortuna di Walter Scott a Malta. Diversi cantanti passarono sulle scene del Teatro di Malta, fra i quali Adelaide Borghi e Francesco Caricchia. In questo periodo furono rappresentate, *l'Elisir d'Amore*, *Gemma di Vergy* e *Lucia di Lamermoor*.

A questo punto può arrestarsi la nostra cronaca teatrale perchè altrimenti usciremo dai limiti cronologici imposti al presente lavoro. Valga per gli anni successivi una breve traccia sintetica. Essendo stato il Manoel il solo teatro esistente a Malta fino all'anno 1866, si davano qui rappresentazioni di prosa, accademie di musica, spettacoli di varietà, e concerti a scopo di beneficenza. Nel mese di luglio del 1860 Sir Adrian Dingli, allora Avvocato della Corona, ricevette istruzioni dal Governatore di portare dinanzi al Consiglio una mozione per la costruzione di un nuovo e più grande teatro. L'inaugurazione del nuovo teatro ebbe luogo nel 1866 ed assunse immediatamente il nome di Teatro Reale. Solo allora il vecchio teatro riprese il vecchio nome del suo fondatore rimasto fino ad oggi. Diventato di seconda importanza venne destinato ad operette, recite di prosa, spettacoli di varietà. Anzi perdette importanza poco tempo dopo, quale teatro pubblico, poichè lo troviamo adibito a dormitorio pubblico per i mendicanti, i quali pagavano un soldo per ogni posto che occupavano nei palchi. Non sappiamo per quale ragione sia stato negletto in quel modo. Forse erano tempi di miseria. Il destino però gli serbò un altro periodo di primaria importanza nel 1873, quando il nuovo teatro prese fuoco. Sgombrato in fretta dai nuovi inquilini, ripulito e restaurato alla meglio, tornò il Manoel ad accogliere la stagione lirica fino al 1877. Quindi fu dato in enfiteusi perpetua al Dott. Salv. Mifsud, avvocato, ed al perito Anacleto Conti per 235 sterline all'anno come risulta dagli atti del Dott. Luigi Vella del 28 aprile 1881. Nel 1889 divenne proprietà del farmacista Carmelo Arpa, il quale vi pose il busto di Manoel. Poi passò a suo fratello e infine alla famiglia Gollcher. Tra il 1906 e 1907 ebbe luogo un nuovo restauro del Manoel sotto la direzione dell'architetto Gustavo Soler. Non

risparmiò alcune fatiche il detto architetto per conservare nella sua originalità tanto la disposizione del teatro quanto la sua sobria decorazione. Si riaprì al pubblico con una serie di operette date dalla celebre compagnia Suarez. Seguirono diverse altre stagioni liriche e così il Manoel tornò ad accogliere sul suo palcoscenico vari artisti rinomati.

Il primo melodramma maltese non venne composto che due secoli dopo la *Dafne* del Rinuccini ed era anche intitolato *Dafne*. L'autore si chiama Enrico Magi e la sua opera si conserva nel ms. 775¹ della Biblioteca Pubblica e pubblicata da Vincenzo Laurenza in *Memorie e documenti della Regia deputazione di Storia di Malta*, Roma, 1936. Il Laurenza² ha trovato dei documenti nell'archivio parrocchiale di San Domenico che attestano che il nostro Magi nacque alla Valletta il 4 dicembre 1630 da Paolo Andrea e Veronica Manussi, sposati il 3 gennaio 1628. Paolo Andrea nell'atto matrimoniale è detto generalmente 'Gallum', il che confrontato con quanto il Magi abbia scritto nella dedica a Salvatore Imbroil,³ ci lascia supporre che egli fosse provenzale, probabilmente di Aix, e ci spiega come in quella città mandasse a studiare il figlio. Ecco quel che scrive il Magi nella sua dedica all'Imbroil: 'è di virtù l'amore et obbligo paterno lo tiene dal paese natio paese lontano' e 'confinato da' suoi primi anni in Francia, è giovane forse troppo ancor per poter sottrarsi alle calunnie de' critici'. Nello stesso atto il padre viene chiamato 'Paulum Andream Maijo' che forse spiega l'origine del cognome Demajo.

La *Dafne* del Magi è una 'favola boschereccia' che, quantunque

¹ Vedi: R.M.L. Ms. 775 — Ms. del secolo XVII — Cartaceo di ff. 94 n. numerati, ff. 10 bianchi a r e t, 3 a r, 7 a t. Legatura in pelle con taglio e orli dorati 145×101. Firmato da Aix in Provenza porta la data del 30 gennaio 1649. L'opera, che fa parte della collezione Parnis, è dedicata a Salv. Imbroil.

² Vedi: *Archivium Melitense*, Volume IV, Numero 2.

³ Salvatore Imbroil nacque a Malta nel 1590 da Fran. Imbroil e Chiara Falzon. Laureatosi in teologia e in diritto civile e canonico fu primo Vice-Cancelliere dell'Ordine Gerosolimitano, quindi Uditore ed Elemosiniere del Gran Maestro. Nel 1624 fu nominato Priore della Chiesa Conventuale di San Giovanni. Nel 1631 Proinquisitore e Vicario Generale Apostolico. Morì nel 1650. Scrisse: 'Specula melitensis encyclica', 'Annuali dell'Ordine di S. Giovanni dalla fondazione al magistero di La Cassier', (R.M.L. ms. ccxx), 'Istoria della Sacra Religione Gerosolimitana, dalla esaltazione del Gran Maestro Del Monte alla morte di La Cassier' (R.M.L. ms. cclxxv), 'Storia dell'Ordine dalla fondazione al 1400' (R.M.L. ms. cclxxv).

non sia mai stata presentata al teatro, ci sembra tuttavia non indegna di occupare un suo posto tra le pastorali, che furono scritte in gran numero durante il Seicento. La nota favola ovidiana, contrariamente a quanto asserisce il Laurenza, ha avuto la fortuna delle più celebri favole mitologiche nel fornire argomento alla poesia pastorale italiana. Fra i precedenti della nostra *Dafne*, ricordiamo la *Rappresentazione di Febo e Pitone* recitata a Mantova nel 1486, e la *Dafne* di Ottavio Rinuccini, composta nel 1594, musicata dal Corsi e dal Peri e rappresentata in casa del Corsi tre anni dopo.⁴

Il noto melodramma del Rinuccini è ancora intimamente legato alla favola pastorale, ma in meno di 500 versi ha una trama semplicissima che è azzardato paragonarla con la *Dafne* del Magi. Questa appartiene alla numerosa progenie secentesca dell'*Aminta* e del *Pastor Fido*, da cui deriva la tecnica, la divisione in cinque atti, la metrica, i cori e altri elementi strutturali e formali. La *Dafne* del Magi più complessa dell'*Aminta* molto più semplice del *Pastor Fido*, rimane per tutto a una notevole distanza dai suoi modelli. Gl'interlocutori della *Dafne* sono numerosi e vari: Dei celesti (Cupido e Apollo), Dei Marini (Nereo e Tritone), un Dio fluviale (Peneo), ninfe (Dafne e Amarilli), pastori (Alcida, Damone e Aminta), pescatori (Hyla, Neri, Damata e Tirsi). Così la favola 'boschereccia' è piena anche di elementi marittimi. Ogni atto finisce con un coro diverso, di cacciatori, di vergini, di giovani, di ninfe, di pastori. Ma dopo i cori, al posto degli 'intermedi' usati dal Tasso, aboliti dal Guarini, troviamo 'sarabande' o 'canzoni' con musica presa in prestito da 'arie francesi'. Così la favola pastorale in cui, dopo il Guarini, si erano già fusi diverse elementi, accoglieva la danza spagnola, la musica francese, il canto, lo spettacolo suggestivo durante gli intervalli, per carezzare gli orecchi, per saziare gli occhi, per soddisfare, in una parola, i sensi degli spettatori, il cui sentimento estetico era senza dubbio decaduto durante le stucchevoli ripetizioni di vecchi temi rinascimentali per tutta l'età barocca. La lingua del Magi, tolti alcuni francesismi e provincialismi, è generalmente pura. La tecnica del verso non è però tanto corretta. Dispiace come nota il Laurenza, l'uso frequente della sineresi che costringe in due sillabe 'Diana', 'beato', in tre sillabe 'marziale', 'curiosa', 'violenza', in quattro sillabe 'attribuirti', 'affettuosi', difetto questo che si incontra in

⁴ Vedi: Carrara E.: *La poesia pastorale*, Milano, Vallardi.

parecchi verseggiatori maltesi.

Il Magi è comunque l'esempio più notevole di quel marinismo meridionale che possiamo osservare in questa estrema propagine dell'Europa, intimamente legata alla corona di Napoli (una spia napoletana potrebbe essere quella voce di 'cascio' per 'cacio'): se mai un problema critico interessante è la derivazione del marinismo per via diretta (Italia meridionale) o per via indiretta (preziosismo francese) data l'educazione gallica del nostro autore.

Della stessa epoca del Magi abbiamo trovato due tragicommedie, *L'Ippocrizia Castigata* o *L'Inganno pena all'Ingannatore* e *Le Disgrazie Avventurose* o *Ismeria Convertita* di Giacomo Farrugia. Quel che sappiamo sulla vita del Farrugia è dovuto a suo nipote Vittorio Grixti, cancelliere del Santo Uffizio, il quale ha scritto in forma di lettera la biografia dello zio.⁵ Il Farrugia nacque alla Senglea l'anno 1641. I suoi genitori erano probabilmente ambedue maltesi. Si avviò alla carriera ecclesiastica e, finiti gli studi di filosofia e di teologia, si recò a Napoli. Per cinque anni studiò lettere, storia e soprattutto giurisprudenza, nella quale, come pure nella teologia, ottenne la laurea dottorale. Ritornato in patria esercitò la professione d'avvocato. Conosceva molto bene il francese, lo spagnolo, il tedesco, oltre all'italiano ed il latino. Conosceva inoltre molti dialetti italiani, specialmente il napoletano, il calabrese e il bergamasco. Morì all'età di 75 anni il 1 settembre 1716. Il suo corpo fu sepolto nella Cattedrale di San Giovanni, nella 'cantina' Bartolot. Queste due opere di tema storico-politico, sono testimonianza di un teatro popolare, esistente allora a Malta. Il nostro Farrugia partecipa ai pregi e ai difetti del suo tempo, e a noi non dispiace di averlo ricordato, anche perchè ebbe dell'arte un nobile ed alto concetto. In questi limiti apologetici il teatro del Farrugia veniva incontro alle esigenze dell'Ordine di offrire spettacoli di assoluta dignità morale e religiosa; ma per attenuare il vuoto convenzionale degli eroici personaggi e delle loro parole, egli inserisce il dialetto dei servi. Si crea così un contrasto tragico-comico, che è in fondo il contrasto di ideale e reale intraveduto da Shakespeare e sviluppato compiutamente nell'era romantica.

Della stessa epoca del Magi e del Farrugia troviamo Carlo Magri, fratello di Domenico Magri, teologo della Cattedrale di Viterbo, il

⁵ Vedi: R.M.L. Ms. 10 — Cartaceo del secolo XVIII fa parte dei *Libri Stomatium* di Ignazio Saverio Mifsud. Contiene pp. 799, pp. 13 bianche; legatura moderna, 202 × 140.

quale scrisse il noto 'Viaggio al Monte Libano'. Non sappiamo la data della sua nascita, ma siamo certi che egli era più giovane di Domenico, nato nel 1604. Ebbe la sua prima educazione presso i Gesuiti di Malta e compì gli studi a Roma, dove fu fatto protonotario apostolico e prefetto della Biblioteca Alessandrina. Dovette però abbandonare la sua carriera, sembra per causa della vista, e ritornò a Malta, dove venne nominato arciprete della cattedrale di Gozo. Morì nel 1693. Il Magri scrisse due commedie, l'una intitolata *Chi la dura la vince ossia la Teodolinda*, pubblicata a Ronciglione nel 1674 e dedicata alla duchessa D.A. Maria Albertini Strozzi, l'altra *La reggia è un sogno* giace in un manoscritto nella nostra Biblioteca ed è dedicata al Gran Maestro Cottoner. In tutte e due le commedie l'autore è designato col nome anagrammatico di Marco Largi. Queste due commedie hanno una notevole importanza per lo studio della letteratura italiana a Malta, perchè mostrano una certa maturità di pensiero e di espressione che raramente si trova in altri scrittori maltesi del Seicento. Si sa bene quale era la sorte della commedia erudita in quel secolo. Il pubblico preferiva l'altra, la commedia dell'arte o a soggetto, che gli offriva scene ridicole e lazzi volgari. La commedia letteraria, per rendersi piacevole si riface lasciva, si servì, per destare interesse, di innumerevoli ritrovamenti e riscoscimenti, infine diventò quel che più tardi i francesi chiamarono 'pochade'.

A Malta il Settecento è rinomato per l'Arcadia e per l'erudizione storico-letteraria. La Colonia Etnea accolse tra i suoi pastori parecchi maltesi, di cui ricordiamo specialmente il conte Giov. Ant. Ciantar (1696-1778) col nome di Tagindo Jonide, e Luigi Rigord (1739-1823) della Compagnia di Gesù, con quello di Ruidarpe Etolio. Il Ciantar verseggiatore facile ci ha lasciato numerose rime religiose ed encomiastiche, edite ed inedite. Più notevole delle rime sono, però, le sue 'cantate' o 'serenate' drammatiche, d'imitazione metastasiana, tra cui *La virtù della fortuna*, in lode al Gran Maestro Depuig, *Gli Applausi della fama* per l'ascensione al pontificato di Clemente XIII, e le serenate drammatiche del maggio, circa dodici, tra le quali *Proteo Vaticinante*, *Didone in Malta*, *Giasone in Colchide*, *La partenza di Ulisse dall'isola di Calipso*, *Dejanira*.

Queste serenate ci richiamano alla mente la bella festa del Calendimaggio, che era di grande importanza nel secolo XVIII per le nostre isole. Infatti nei tempi dei Cavalieri oltre agli spettacoli in Teatro si tenevano nelle piazze pubbliche 'Serenate' o 'Cantate'

per festeggiare qualche avvenimento speciale. Di derivazione schiettamente italiana, la festa del Calendimaggio venne importata in Malta nelle prime decadi del secolo. Era costituita da una solenne esecuzione musicale — per di più una cantata espressamente composta — che si faceva nel pomeriggio del 30 aprile, sotto gli auspici e per l'impulso del capitano della città.

I poeti, o meglio i verseggiatori, sono in maggioranza italiani, tutti ignoti: Jacopo Albergotti, Claudio Mazzarelli, Francesco Uzzi, U. Ginnavio e M. Capranica. Alcuni sono maltesi, tra i quali un Servilio, un Giannicolò Muscat e il Ciantar. I musicisti che rivestirono quelle cantate furono anche quasi tutti italiani, solo eccezione i maltesi M.A. Vella e Fra Filippo Pizzuti. I versi di queste cantate, usati nel dialogo sono endecasillabi e settenari, liberamente intrecciati o rimati; i recitativi più lunghi e importanti finiscono con un'arietta di quartine, settenarie, ottonarie e decasillabe. Il Metastasio, dittatore del melodramma italiano si presentava facile modello. Le serenate del maggio maltese, dunque si adattarono a schemi metastasiani, ed ebbero per interlocutori o esseri mitologici, dei ed eroi, o idee astratte o cose personificate. In breve tutto il bagaglio classico, tutta la retorica del '700. Ci aggiriamo nel vario mondo delle prosopopee e delle favole, con il solito pretesto, che i nomi mitologici sono usati come simboli, senza alcuna intenzione di offendere la fede cristiana.

Osserviamo che a Malta la bella festa, per quanto si svolgesse in piazza, aveva caratteri troppo aulici per non apparire importata. Se è esatto quel che afferma il Ferris (*Memorie dell'Inclito Ordine Gerosolimitano nelle isole di Malta*, Malta, Busuttill, 1881.) l'albero della cuccagna fu importato qui dallo Zondadari (1720-1722). Nel primo quarto del '700 entrò qui l'uso di tributare omaggi ai signori del luogo, e quindi i mazzetti di fiori e i rami al balcone del Gran Maestro e alle porte dei Gran Croci. Siccome in quei tempi non s'immaginava una festa ufficiale senza una cantata, eccoti anche il componimento drammatico alla vigilia. Ma quel che pare innegabile è l'influenza italiana di tutti gli elementi del Calendimaggio maltese, il carattere più spiccatamente aulico che qui assunsero, e quindi la loro incapacità a conservarsi in vita.

La festa del Calendimaggio molto importante a Malta nel secolo XVIII, ci fornisce un documento molto prezioso per affermare che la vita teatrale sull'isola era molto intensa. Le cantate di maggio, fatte per esaltare i Gran Maestri, sono testimonianze di una vita culturale e teatrale legata con le correnti di quel tempo. Anche se

non sono sempre di un alto livello letterario, le cantate o serenate sono quasi sempre modellate sui grandi autori del melodramma italiano, come per esempio Metastasio e Apostolo Zeno.

IL TEATRO SETTECENTESCO MALTESE SOTTO L'INFLUSSO DI QUELLO NAPOLETANO

Si può dire che il teatro settecentesco maltese, molto legato a quello di Napoli, oscilla tra l'opera buffa e l'opera seria. Il Metastasio e gli operisti metastasiani, come in tutti i paesi europei, erano molto conosciuti. Questo si vede dal gran numero di opere del Metastasio, del Hasse, del Leo, dell'Jomelli, del Pergolesi, del Piccinni, del Fischetti date sulle nostre scene.

Anche l'opera buffa era molto popolare a Malta. Chi voglia rivivere per qualche ora in quel mondo teatrale deve leggere l'opera buffa *La Canterina*, che fu data al Teatro Manoel nell'autunno del 1736.⁶ *La Canterina* tipica opera napoletana, scritta da Tomaso Marianni Romano, musicata dal Fischetti e stampata a Napoli nella stamperia di Angelo Vocola, rappresenta perfettamente il suo genere teatrale. Ne *La Canterina* sono ritratti al vivo e la canterina e la madre che ne guarda gl'interessi, e la servetta che ne agevola gli intrighi, e gli spasimanti, e l'amministratore del teatro, e il poeta, e il maestro di cappella. Ecco la servetta, che gioisce dei vantaggi della sua speciale condizione:

E tu non saie
 che bò di' a sta cetate
 servì na canterina! Notte e ghiurno,
 te vide sempre attuomo
 segnure e titolate,
 arfiere e capitaneae reformate.
 Non r'alleguorde cchiune
 ca si' nata a no vascio,
 figlia de portarrobba e seggettarò,
 de sbirro o potecaro, e ncrossone,
 te scuorde de la paglia e lo saccone.
 Non pienze ca si' ghiuta
 scauza, scarosa, e co no panno cinto,
 ca si' stata deiuna
 o magnato carcioffole e cepolle,
 e pe ssi bancarotte

⁶ Vedi: Royal Malta Library, Miscellanea 133.

rosecanno le scorze de mellune.
 Po nce mettimmo ntuono,
 e chello ch'è lo buono, tu porzine
 (mme schiatto da la risa nche nce penso)
 deviente cantarina per consenso!

Ed eccola in azione, tra gli adoratori della padrone, che si presentano con la parrucca incipriata, l'orologio nel taschino, le dita inanellate e i lacci d'argento al cappello; mentre le mettono denaro in mano, e la carezzano, e procurarono di guadagnarsela, mentre essa vende bugie a tutti:

Uno dice: Sia Mené,
 che se fa? se pò saglì? –
 Tu respunne: Segnornò;
 la signora sta a dormì:
 ca sta notte, nsanetate,
 l'è afferrato no dèscenzo,
 che la tene trommentata. –
 Ste parole quante fanno?
 Chella llà te lo pò dī
 N'auto saglie a tozzolà:
 – Che bolite? – Addio, bonnì. –
 – Serva sua – Se pò senti
 st'arietta? – Non se pò.
 La signora sta abbrocata,
 non ha boce pe cantà . . .

Tipiche della commedia dialettale in prosa sono due commedie che ho trovato nel ms. 128, nella Biblioteca Nazionale della Valletta. La prima s'intitolata *Le trame scoperte dalla finta fata*, scritta da Francesco Coscia, attore comico napoletano del teatrino di San Carlino, nel gennaio del 1761. L'altra s'intitola *Il Procuratore* scritta da F. Ant. Corogna. Tutte e due sono dedicate al Gran Maestro Pinto. Non sappiamo di preciso quando il Corogna scrisse la sua commedia, ma dall'Archivio dell'Ordine sappiamo che lui e suo fratello Giacomo erano nel 1746 Cappellani Conventuali della Chiesa di Francia. Dunque i due autori, Coscia e Corogna, sono contemporanei.⁷

Tanto *Le trame scoperte ecc.* quanto *Il Procuratore* sono esemplari della Commedia dell'Arte. Questo si vede dai personaggi,

⁷ Vedi: Arch. 550, fol. 4 inv. e 234.

come Pulcinella, Colombina, Don Fastidio,⁸ Coviello,⁹ e dalle situazioni tipiche della Commedia dell'Arte.

Nella prima commedia Don Fastidio è fissato con l'idea di far sposare le due figlie a due nobili principi perchè le stelle così hanno pronosticato. Coviello fa introdurre Valerio, vestito da principe, nella casa di Don Fastidio con il pretesto di sposare una delle figlie e questi ci si casca subito. Colombina, comunque, svela il segreto, introducendosi come fata e presenta a Don Fastidio Pulcinella e Silvio vestiti da re, destinati sposi alle due figlie Rosaura e Angiola. Anche questo colpo fallisce e infine ognuno sposa il suo amato.

La seconda commedia tratta di un certo Arcinfanfero, procuratore che vuol far sposare sua figlia. Come procuratore non è altro che un truffatore e alla fine della commedia dovrà vedersela con i suoi clienti. Panfilla, la figlia di Arcinfanfero, è innamorata di Lucindo e pertanto rifiuta le insistenti preghiere d'amore fattele da due vecchi, Don Fastidio e Don Gusmano. Arcinfanfero è talmente seccato di questi vecchi che li prepara una trappola. Li fa venire di notte, all'insaputa dell'altro, col pretesto di farli sposare sua figlia; ma invece di Panfilla ci sarà una mora e tutti e due cascano nel ridicolo di tutto il paese. In fine Panfilla sposa Lucindo e Colombina, la servetta, sposa Pasquinello.

Le commedie del Coscia e del Corogna ci richiamano alla mente le commedie del napoletano Francesco Cerlone.¹⁰ I personaggi buf-

⁸ Tipo settecentesco del 'paglietta' napoletano, che apparve nelle commedie di F. Cerlone e fu interpretato da F. Massaro e poi da L. Paris.

⁹ Maschera italiana del teatro napoletano. Nata sui teatrini popolari di Napoli nella gran fioritura di tipi comici alla fine del sec. XVI, fu poi impersonata dai comici dell'arte napoletani fino alla metà del sec. XVIII, quando a poco a poco scomparve sopraffatta da quella più vivace e destinata a maggior fortuna, di Pulcinella. Il nome (Iacovello, Giacometto) è forse d'origine abruzzese e adesso vennero via via aggiungendo altre buffe designazioni come C. Ciavola (gazza), C. Cetrullo, C. Cardocchia ecc. Il suo carattere originario, quello di stupido e vile bravaccio, lo avvicina alla maschera del Capitano, di cui ha anche le caratteristiche del costume; ma M. Sand modifica il tipo togliendogli il cappello piumato e la spada e facendogli suonare il mandolino.

¹⁰ Il successo dei suoi lavori, che rappresentano un punto di incontro fra la tradizione convenzionale di marca metastasiana e l'improvvisazione popolare, fu dovuto alla vivacità del linguaggio burlesco e alla tipizzazione dei personaggi, nonchè agli allestimenti spettacolari: *L'usurpator*

fi del Cerlone sono presenti in queste due commedie, come ad esempio Pulcinella, la servetta Colombina, il 'napoletano grazioso' (cioè goffo, vigliacco o spropositante) e quasi sempre il 'maestro di casa napoletano' ossia 'Don Fastidio'. Don Fastidio è piuttosto la caricatura di quei tanti che si immaginano di parlare con sceltezza e dignità, dando alle parole dialettali desinenze di lingua, storpiando la grammatica sulla guida di strane analogie, con lo stesso processo analogico comiando vocaboli insueti o trasportando per ignoranza, sedotti dal suono, il significato di un vocabolo ad un altro affatto diverso. Luigi Serio, nella sua polemica contro la grammatica del Galiani, scena a quei napoletani che 'la festa se mettono la parrucca pe paré galantuommene e dicono: Io mi mangio'.¹¹ Così parla per l'appunto Don Fastidio, che ha un intero vocabolario di spropositi curiosissimi, per i quali egli ammira se stesso come se perle gli uscissero di bocca: 'profarare, smicciare, con esso seco voi, abbracciatura, mi capisciò, si persuadò, io l'amò'.

Ne *Le trame scoperte dalla finta fata*, Atto I, Sc. I, Don Fastidio così parla a suo fratello:

D. FASTIDIO – E come senza anticipazione di una foglia scritta venisti decapitato avanti a me?

DOTTORE – Decapitato

D. FASTIDIO – Sì decapitasti avanti a me.

DOTTORE – Capitasti volete dire.

D. FASTIDIO – Ecco qua già principierai a far da dottore.

Questo passo si può confrontare con un altro analogo nel *L'apparenza inganna* del Cerlone.

CONTE – Decapitato!

punito fu replicato 52 volte, *L'Amurat* 36, il *Tiranno cinese* 30, *l'Arsace* fu allestito 'con 100 e più combattenti, con cadute di muraglia, scalate, aiuti, macchine, ecc.'. Scritturato dal Teatro dei Fiorentini e dal Nuovo perchè fornisse ogni anno lavori drammatici e due libretti per musica e dal S. Carlino per una serie di lavori con Pulcinella (*La forza della bellezza ossia Il nemico amante*, *La morte del conte d'Upsal*, *Gli amori sventurati o sia l'Ariodante*, *Il Zingaro per amore*, *Cunegonda in Egitto*, *Sopra l'ingannator cade l'inganno*, ecc.), negli ultimi anni del Settecento il suo successo presso il pubblico (la critica affettò sempre per il Cerlone notevole disprezzo) andò declinando.

¹¹ Vedi: B. Croce, *I teatri di Napoli*, Bari, Laterza, 1916.

D. FASTIDIO – Eccellenza, sì, decapitato; e dissi bene: nel mio idiomola decapitato, decapitas, decapitavi, decapitatum, sta per arrivare, giungere a partire. (Atto I, Sc. IV).

A questa ignoranza, persuasa di essere profonda dottrina, accre-sceva comicità l'aspetto serio, accigliato, burbero del personaggio, Si chiamava Don Fastidio de Fastidiis, ed era 'fastidioso': andava 'vestuto paglietta', di nero, all'antica. 'Il Don Fastidio (scrive un tedesco che visitò Napoli alcuni decenni dopo, quando quel tipo fu ripreso sui teatri) ha una lunga persona, un grosso ventre, gambe straordinariamente sottili, un vestito antiquato e un gran naso provvisto di occhiali'.¹²

Come ho già detto il teatro a Malta nel '700 è quasi tutto melodrammatico. Il Metastasio, come in tutti i paesi europei, era molto conosciuto a Malta. Nel 1735 furono rappresentate sulle nostre scene l'*Artaserse* e il *Demetrio*. Nel 1765 fu la volta del *Demofonte* e nel 1775 la *Nitteti*, che fu rappresentata per la prima volta nel 1756, al teatro di corte di Madrid. Nel 1818 il compositore maltese Pietro Paolo Bugeja, probabilmente musicò il famoso oratorio di Metastasio, *Gioas re di Giuda*. Nel repertorio drammatico del nostro teatro del '700 troviamo tutti gli operisti metastasiani: Hasse, Leo, Jomelli, Pergolesi, Rinaldo da Capua, Piccinni, Fischetti. Al Manoel nel 1736 fu rappresentata l'opera di Hasse, *La sorella amante*. Dell'Jomelli, l'*Astianatte*; del Pergolesi, *La Sallustia* (1740); di Rinaldo da Capua, *Volgeso Re de' Parti*; del Piccinni, nel 1764, *Il curioso del suo proprio danno*, *Le Gelosie*, *La contadina spiritosa*; di Baldassarre Galuppi detto il Buranello, nel 1763, il *Filosofo in villa*; del Paisiello, nel 1783, il *Socrate immaginario*; di Domenico Cimarosa, *Il matrimonio segreto* (1827), *Giannina e Bernardone* (1787), *La ballerina amante* (1783), *L'amante combattuto* (1784), *Credulo e Baronessa Stramba* (1787).

Dal 1800 in poi la scena teatrale nella nostra isola cambia, come del resto, in tutta Europa. L'opera lirica si è largamente diffusa e si comincia ad assistere ad un gusto tipicamente operistico. Le opere di Donizetti, Rossini, Bellini, Fioravanti, Mercadante, Paer, Pacini, cominciano ad essere rappresentate sulle nostre scene con maggiore frequenza.

Si può dire che il nostro teatro seguì le maggiori correnti europee d'allora. Fu decisamente teatro melodrammatico ispirato dal

¹² Vedi: Rehfues: *Gemablde von Neapel*, (Zurich, 1808), I, 165-7.

grande Metastasio e dai suoi operisti. Passò attraverso l'opera seria e l'opera buffa settecentesca e sboccò in fine durante l'ottocento nel grande repertorio lirico. Noi abbiamo tentato di costruire un quadro il più chiaro possibile e su questo piano speriamo che il nostro lavoro sarà gradito a chi vorrà su questa base approfondire le ricerche su un ambiente teatrale assai vivo, che si può considerare come un'appendice periferica, ma non priva di una sua fastosa personalità, del grande teatro italiano ed europeo.

THE GETA INSCRIPTION

by Rev. JOSEPH BUŞUTIL

A Latin inscription found in Gozo was published by O. Brès,¹ and later by A. Caruana² and the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*.³ The following is the text:

TI

S

IMP. M. AVREL. ANTONI
NI. PII. AVGVSTI. fr.⁴ L. SEPTI
MI. SEVERI. PERTI
NACIS. AVG. ARABici
ADIABENICI. PARTHI
CI. MAXIMI. filio.⁵
ORDO. DECVRIONVM.
CVRANTE⁶.....PVP⁷....
IMO⁸.....STO.⁹

Relying on internal evidence we shall try to find out the date of the inscription and the person in honour of whom it was made.

The names of two historical personages are included in the inscription: Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Septimius Severus. We shall examine the titles appended to the name of Lucius Septimius Severus first. The full name with its titles reads as follows: *Luci Septimi Severi Pii Pertinacis Augusti Arabici Adiabeni Parthici Maximi, Of Lucius Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax Augustus Adiabenicus Parthicus Maximus.*

¹Cf O. Brès, *Malta antica illustrata*, Roma, 1810, p. 332.

²Cf A. Caruana, *Report on the Phoenician and Roman Antiquities*, Malta, 1882, p. 142.

³Cf C.I.L. No 7503.

⁴C.I.L. *fratri*

⁵C.I.L. *filio*, Brès, *PONT*; Caruana, *Pont Max.*

⁶Caruana, *IVRI... VTE*

⁷*id Publio*

⁸*id MO*; C.I.L. *IMO*

⁹Caruana, Brès, *STO*

According to Herodian when the soldiers where Septimius was stationed learnt that the Emperor Publius Helvius Pertinax had been murdered, they called Septimius Pertinax and Augustus.¹⁰ This salutation was accepted by Septimius on 9 April 193 A.D. Henceforth Septimius began to call himself Emperor Caesar Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus. Hence from the very outset, that is from 9 April 193 A.D. Septimius employed the titles of *Pertinax* and *Augustus*. On 1 June of the same year he was proclaimed Emperor by the Senate in Rome and some days later, at his own instigation, he was granted the cognomen *Pertinax* by the same Senate.¹¹

After his triumphal entry in Rome, where Septimius spent thirty days, he began preparations for war against his rival Pescennius Niger, who had been appointed governor of Syria by the Emperor Commodus. The soldiers in Syria had saluted Niger as Emperor as soon as the death of Pertinax had become known to them. Septimius, accordingly, set out for the east. The contest between the two rivals was decided in favour of Septimius after two or three engagements mainly fought by his officers. The last battle, at Issus, ended in the defeat and death of Niger in about April 194 A.D.¹²

After Niger's death Septimius spent another two years fighting in the East. King Vologaeses of Parthia had maintained friendly relations with Niger. On the latter's decease, the Parthian king apparently instigated the satrap of Adiabene and the ruler of Orrhoene to revolt against Rome. The Roman garrisons in those districts were put to the sword. Nisibis itself, the chief city in Mesopotamia, which had been occupied by Lucius Verus, was besieged. Septimius arrived in Mesopotamia, which had been occupied by Lucius Verus, in the summer of 195 A.D. He deposed the Orrhoenian ruler, Abgarus VIII, and marched to Nisibis which he strongly fortified. From Nisibis he directed two successful campaigns against Adiabene and the Arabs. Because of the victories he scored against these two peoples he assumed the titles *Arabicus* and *Adiabenicus*. This was in 195 A.D.

¹⁰ Cf *Ab excessu divi Marci*, 1967, 2.10.1-9; *Historia Augusta, Severus*, V, 2: Imperator est appellatus apud Carnuntum.

¹¹ Cf Cassius Dio, 73, 17, 3-5; *Historia Augusta, Pertinax*, XV, 2: ipse antea Severus amore boni principis, a senatu Pertinacis nomen accipit; id *Severus*, VII, 9: se (Severum) quoque Pertinacem vocari iussit.

¹² Cf Anthony Birley, *Septimius Severus*, London 1971, p. 178.

The Parthians, who had taken no part in the fighting, began to ravage Mesopotamia and besiege Nisibis, as soon as Septimius left the East, to fight against the other rival, Clodius Albinus. For a second time he mounted an invasion of Mesopotamia in 198 A.D. By January 28 of that year the Capital City of the Parthians, Ctesiphon, was captured and given over to the soldiers to plunder. Thousands were made captives and King Vologaeses had to flee for his life. Mesopotamia was now definitely established as a Roman Province. The dream of Trajan and Lucius Verus had come true. Like Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus before him, Septimius assumed the title of *Parthicus Maximus*, the Greatest Conqueror of the Parthians.

In 193 A.D., therefore, Septimius was called Pertinax and Augustus. In 195 A.D. he took on the title Pius. In 195 A.D. as well he assumed the two titles Arabicus and Adiabenicus. In 198 A.D. he took on the title Parthicus Maximus. This means that the inscription cannot be earlier than 198 A.D.

The name of the first historical figure with its titles as it is mentioned in the inscription is as follows: *Imp. Marci Aurelii Antonini Pii Augusti: of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Pius Augustus.*

Septimius Severus had two children by Julia Domna: one was Bassianus, so called after his Syrian wife's father, and was born on 4 April 188 A.D.; the younger one was named Publius Septimius Geta, after the Emperor's father, and was born in 189 A.D.

After his first victory over Niger in 195 A.D. Septimius, who was an ardent admirer of the dead Emperor Marcus Aurelius, chose to call himself 'son of Marcus Aurelius'. His elder son Bassianus he renamed after that Emperor and henceforth bore the official name of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. Hence the Marcus Aurelius Antoninus who is mentioned in our inscription is not the Stoic Emperor, but Bassianus, the elder son of Septimius Severus, who is more commonly known as Caracallus or Caracalla — a nickname given to him after his father's death.

Before setting out for his second war in the East, Septimius had ordered the Senate to confer upon his elder son the title of *imperator destinatus*. On 28 January 198 A.D. when Ctesiphon was captured, Septimius Caracalla became co-ruler with his father. The younger son, Geta, was made Augustus in about 209 A.D. It seems that Septimius had wanted his two sons to share the rule. On 4

February 211 A.D. Septimius died at York in Britain.

After studying the titles borne by Septimius's elder son it seems that the inscription was made after 198 A.D. Furthermore, the name Lucius Septimius Severus is not preceded by the words *imp* (imperator) and *Caes.* (Caesar). The name of Caracalla is put before that of Septimius Severus. It looks, therefore, that Septimius was already dead when the tablet was made. It also seems that the inscription was made when Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the elder son of Septimius, was alive. In other words it was made in the period covering the years 198 A.D. – to 217 A.D. The elder son of Septimius died in 217 A.D.

It is clear that the inscription was not made in honour of either Caracalla or of his father, Septimius Severus. Had that been the case, the names of M. Aurelius Antoninus and L. Septimius Severus would not have been in the genitive but in the dative (M. Aurelio, to M. Aurelius not of Marcus Aurelius). On the other hand the tablet was raised by the *ordo decurionum* by the highest representative of the Gozitan municipium. The person, therefore, in honour of whom the inscription was made must have been very prominent. The *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*¹³ suggests the word *fratri* (to the brother) after the titulature of M. Aurelius Antoninus and the word *filio* (to the son) after that of L. Septimius Severus. If this is so, then the tablet seems to have been dedicated to the brother of Caracalla and the son of Septimius Severus, that is to the younger son of Septimius, Geta. In that case the tablet was raised when both Caracalla and Geta were co-emperors, that is, in the period extending from 4 February 211 A.D. to about 3 January 212 A.D.

If we are right in what we have been saying, the first two lines which are missing, may have been as follows:

IMP. CAES. P. SEPTI.

MIO. GETAE. PIO. AUGUSTO.¹⁴

About 3 January 212 A.D. Caracalla murdered his brother when he stabbed him in his mother's arms. There followed, then, the *damnatio memoriae* of Geta. Caracalla ordered that Geta's name be erased from all the monuments and inscriptions and that Geta be

¹³ Cf C.I.L. 7503.

¹⁴ For other inscriptions containing the same words Cf Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos 433, 458, 459, 460. Cf also *Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania*, Ward-Perkins, No 36, 435, 438, 444.

treated as though he had never existed. If we follow the Corpus, then it would seem that the first lines of the inscription and the words *fratri* and *filio* were erased by the municipal authorities in Gozo.

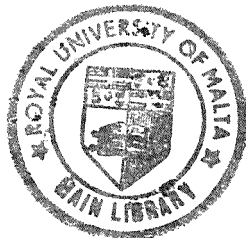
It looks, therefore, that the inscription was made in 211 A.D. Caracalla and his brother were not on good terms long before Geta's assassination. When the two brothers were in Britain, where Septimius had died, Caracalla had already tried to suborn Geta's soldiers and to have himself accepted as the sole ruler. The soldiers, however, remained loyal to Geta. It seems that in Rome the Senate was in its majority on Geta's side. In other words if the date suggested above is correct, then the Gozitans seem to have been in favour of Geta.

The tablet was made by the *ordo decurionum*. At the time there was a *municipium* in Gozo. The members of the local Senate or Curia were all taken together called the *ordo decurionum*, or class of decurions to distinguish them from the non-members of the municipal Curia. It was usually the *ordo decurionum* that set up commemorative tablets or statues in honour of the imperial family. The task was put under the charge of a curator, perhaps the officer in charge of the municipal finances. His names may have been Pupilius and Maximus.

From what we have said above it looks as though the whole inscription read as follows:

Imperatori Caesari Publio Septimio Getae Pio Augusto, imperatoris Marci Aurelii Antonini Pii Augusti *fratri*, Lucii Septimi Severi Pertinacis Augusti Arabici Adiabeni Parthici Maximi *filio*, *ordo decurionum curante Pup. imo . . . sto.*

To the Emperor Caesar Publius Septimus Geta Pius Augustus, brother of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus, son of Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax, Augustus, Arabicus Adiabenicus Parthicus Maximus, the *ordo decurionum* (has dedicated this tablet) the person in charge being Pupilius . . . Maximus.



POSTUMUS

By Rev. JOSEPH BUSUTTIL

LATIN inscriptions of the first and second centuries A.D. record the existence of a *municipium* on the island of Gozo. There was a *civitas* or city enjoying a certain measure of autonomy and with an assembly of the citizens. The representatives of the citizens were the *decurions* who met regularly in the Council or *Curia*. A number of public officials were in charge of the administration. A municipal priesthood was also in existence. At the head of the list of *Decuriones* were put the names of the *Patroni* of the *municipium*: they were influential and wealthy persons, usually of senatorial or equestrian rank, who were adopted by the *Decuriones* to form part of the municipal curia as honorary members. They made frequent visits to Rome and to the Emperor in order to take up the case of the people, of whom they were *patroni*. The municipal authorities had statues erected in their honour in the forum of the city. A Gozitan inscription of the second century A.D. records the services of a certain Postumus, the Patronus of the Gozitan *municipium*.¹

The following is the text:

(C. Vallio . . f.) QVIR. POSTVMo. patroNo. muNICIPII.
flamini divi.² HADRIANI. PERPETVO. (ex).³ QVINQ. DECVR.
IVDICum⁴
inter QVADRINGENARIOS.⁵ ADLECTO. A. DIVO. ANTO
nino AuG. PIO. OMNIB. HONORIB. CIVITATIS. SVAE. HO
nestissime.⁶ FVNCTO. ITEM. LEGATIONE. GRATVITA. APVD.
divum⁷ HADRIANVM. ET. APVD. AMPLISSIMVM, ORDINEM. DE
.....⁸ ALLIB. REDHIBENDIS. PLEPS. GAULITANA.

¹For this inscription Cf. O. Brès, *Malta antica illustrata*, Roma, 1810, p.315. A.A. Caruana, *Report* etc. p.141; C.I.L. No.7507; Ruggiero, *Dizionario epigrafico di antichità Romane*, Vol.III, 1895-1919, p.434; Des-sau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No.6772.

²Brès and Caruana suggest *imp* for *imperator*.

³Id read *IIIIV*.

⁴Id read *IV.DI*.

⁵Id read *quatrigenarios*.

⁶Id read *honeste*.

⁷Id have *imp*.

⁸Caruana reads *navalibus*; Henzen, *vectigalibus*; Mommsen, *callibus*.

EX. AERE. CON.

lato.oB. PLVRA. MERITA. EIVS. D.D.

(Caio Vallio, f. .) Quirina tribu, Postumo, patrono municipii, *flamini* divi Hadriani perpetuo, ex quinque decuriis iudicum inter quadringenarios adlecto a Divo Antonino Augusto Pio, omnibus honoribus civitatis suae honestissime functo; item legatione gratuita apud Divum Hadrianum et apud amplissimum ordinem de . . . libus redhibendis, plebs gaulitana, ex aere conlato, ob plura merita eius, donavit dedicavit.

To (Caius Vallius) Postumus, (son of . . .), of the Quirine tribe, Patron of the municipium, permanent flamen of the divine Hadrian, raised to the rank of a quadringenarius and made ex quinque decuriis iudex by the divine Antoninus Augustus Pius, after having filled all the offices of his city in a remarkable way and after having served on a free embassy to the divine Hadrian and the most honourable Order concerning the restoration of the . . ., the plebs Gaulitana, having collected the money, has donated and dedicated (this statue?) for his many services.

Postumus, according to the inscription, was chosen *ex quinque decuriis iudex* by the Emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161 A.D.). In the days of Augustus capital cases in Rome were tried, perhaps according to the provisions of the *Lex Iulia Iudiciaria*, by juries drawn from four decuries: Senators, Equites, Tribuni aerarii and ducenarii. From Caligula onwards the decuries – and each decury was a thousand strong – were increased from four to five. There seems to have been a number of jurors, the *iudices selecti*, who constituted an élite among those of the four or five decuries. Their full title was *iudex ex V decuriis* or *iudex selectus ex V decuriis*, juror chosen from the five decuries.⁹ Antoninus Pius in person, perhaps, or through a senatorial commission chose Postumus as a *iudex selectus*. When this happened Postumus must have been at least thirty years old.¹⁰ From the nature of their duties the *iudices selecti* had to spend much of their time in Rome. This must have been one of the principal reasons why the Gozitan municipium selected Postumus as its Patron in order to voice the interests of the Gozitans. Furthermore since Nero's time the *iudex selectus* had to be of equestrian rank with the equestrian census of 400,000 sesterces. Postumus was made an *eques* or quadringenarius as he

⁹Cf. A.H.M. Jones, *Roman Administration*, p. 43-44.

¹⁰Cf. *ibid.*

was the owner of at least 400,000 sesterces, i.e. about 4000 Maltese pounds.

Postumus, says the inscription, was made *iudex selectus*, after having filled all the public offices, *honores*, of his civitas, that is Gozo. Therefore, he had been in charge of the public works in Gozo as an *aedile* or of the treasury as a *quaestor*. He must have been one of the two *duoviri* in charge of the administration of justice. Perhaps he was a *quinquennialis*, an officer who conducted the municipal census. He had been elected or coopted *decurio*, or member of the municipal Parliament. In the inscription, which is incomplete, we read *Hadriani perpetuo* ... to the permanent ... of Hadrian. The adjective *perpetuus* following the Emperor's name in the genitive, normally qualifies the word *flamen*. The missing words seem to have been *flamini divi Hadriani perpetuo*, to the permanent flamen of the deified Hadrian.¹¹ Contrary to the wishes of the Roman Senate, Antoninus Pius decided in 138 A.D. that the late Emperor Hadrian should be declared a god and that flamines of Hadrian should be instituted.

If the missing words in the inscription are *flamini divi*, then it follows that Postumus occupied one of the highest offices in the Gozitan municipium, that of flamen or priest of the deified Hadrian. In his capacity as flamen he must have sacrificed to the dead Emperor on certain fixed days. This is of the greatest interest for the religious history of Gozo. It shows that when the inscription was made, i.e. after 161 A.D. there was the official cult of the dead Emperors in Gozo and that there was an official priest, the flamen, who looked after that cult. This means that the *curia* or *Council* of the Gozitans was still made up of pagans who were still following and fostering the pagan religion. It means also that the Gozitans, the *plebs gaulitana*, were honouring a pagan priest. Hence in the middle of the second century after Christ, that is, about a hundred years after St. Paul had been shipwrecked in Malta, the Christians in Gozo, if there were any, must have constituted a minority.

Postumus is said to have discharged his other duties well and to have been sent on an embassy to the Emperor Hadrian and to the Roman Senate (*amplissimus ordo*). The word *gratuita* (voluntary) after *legatione* (embassy) implies that it was Postumus himself who met the necessary expenses. We do not know the expenses a

¹¹ Brès and Caruana read simply *imp* for *imperatoris*. But in that case the genitive would be governed by no noun.

legatio urbica, an embassy to Rome, entailed; Postumus however, could afford to shoulder them himself. Unfortunately we cannot know for certain what the mission was all about. Half a word *LLIB* (us) and the word *Redhibendis* are all that survive. *Redhibendis*, however, provides a clue. *Redhibeo* means *I take back* or *I give back*. In legal terminology the verb *redhibere* means to receive back on the part of a vendor the articles that the vendor has sold.¹² If the articles sold were found to be damaged they were to be taken back by the vendor and the money was to be handed back to the buyer. Postumus, therefore, seems to have gone to Rome to discuss commercial or financial matters. He seems to have been successful. The Gozitans made him Patronus of their *municipium* and they contributed money out of their own pockets to have his statue (?) erected in the forum or at least to have the inscription made.

It is open to conjecture when Postumus was received in audience by the Emperor Hadrian. Hadrian spent almost his whole life inspecting the provinces, and he was therefore away from Rome for long periods of time. In 118 Hadrian remitted great amounts of arrears which the provincials still had to pay, and he decreed that a similar cancellation should be made every fifteen years. If the mission of Postumus was somehow connected with these financial matters then there is reason to think that the Patron of the *municipium* of Gozo called on Hadrian either in 118 A.D. or more probably in 133 A.D., that is five years before Hadrian's death. The inscription itself seems to have been made after the apotheosis of Antoninus, as that Emperor is referred to as *Divus* or *divine*.

The inscription mentions the *cognomen* Postumus; the *praenomen* and the *nomen* are missing. In another inscription discovered in Gozo¹³ we come across the name of a certain Marcus Vallius who was raised to the equestrian order by the Emperor Antoninus Pius, the same Emperor who appointed Postumus *iudex selectus*. We read also that Marcus Vallius was the son of a Caius Vallius Postumus, who had been the Patron of the Gozitan *municipium*. Probably, then, the full name of Postumus was Caius Vallius Postumus.¹⁴

¹²Cf. Digest, 21, 1, 21: *Redhibere est facere ut rursus habeat venditor quod habuerat, et quia reddendo id fiebat, idcirco redhibitio est appellata quasi redditio*. Cf. also A. de Zulueta, *The Roman Law of Sale*, Oxford 1966, p. 50 and *passim*.

¹³Cf. C.I.L. 7508.

¹⁴Caruana, *op.cit.*, p. 142.

In the second century after Christ there was in Gozo a very flourishing municipium. There were all the *honores* or posts of civil responsibility, there was a municipal Parliament, there was a Patron. Besides the senatorial class, made up of members of the the municipal Parliament and of public officials, there was another class, the *plebs gaulitana*, which comprised probably all those citizens who were not of the senatorial class. It is the latter that had probably been benefitted by the services of Postumus and it is that class that contributed money for having an inscription and probably a statue raised in his honour.

This is one of the few inscriptions which throws some light on the relationship of the Gozitan municipium with Rome. Postumus was sent on an embassy to the Emperor to discuss financial matters. Postumus was later raised to the rank of an *eques* and appointed *iudex selectus* in Rome. In other words posts like that of *iudex selectus*, which had once been the monopoly of Romans, became now open also to provincials; and a provincial, although belonging to a municipium of a small island, could now be called to occupy higher posts in the capital of a world-Empire.

FERNAND GREGH

par F. CUNEN

LE centenaire de Fernand Gregh, que nous avons célébré le 14 octobre 1973, date de sa naissance, s'inscrit dans le cadre du centenaire d'autres écrivains illustres qui furent les uns, durant de longues années, et l'autre, occasionnellement, ses illustres commensaux et amis. Marcel Proust, dont nous venons de commémorer le centenaire de naissance, est en fait le co-fondateur de la revue fondée par Gregh et d'autres jeunes et brillants esprits, Jacques Bizet, fils du fameux compositeur, et Daniel Halévy, pour ne citer que ceux-là. On connaît en outre, la fameuse correspondance qu'ont entretenue Marcel Proust et F. Gregh, lequel a publié à cet égard, au soir extrême de sa vie, *Mon Amitié avec Marcel Proust*.

Un autre centenaire illustre, plus proche encore de nous, puisqu'il coïncide avec celui de Gregh, nous rappelle le souvenir de Charles Péguy qui fut, suivant l'expression même d'une page de *L'Age d'Or*, 'un bon camarade' et, au début du moins, un vaillant compagnon d'armes de F. Gregh.

Nous voyons aussi se pencher sur ces lignes l'ombre d'Anatole France qui s'éteignait, il y a un demi-siècle, au même âge vénérable qu'atteindra son jeune ami F. Gregh. On commémorait en effet il y a 2 ans le cinquantième anniversaire de la mort d'Anatole France.

Il est donc de nombreux titres auxquels le poète 'humaniste' mérite notre admiration. Il sut s'entourer d'amis choisis, évoluer avec aisance dans les milieux les plus divers, et laisser partout la trace d'un parfum poétique dont s'imprégnaient les mille poèmes de ce poète social.

Il est une raison toute particulière qui nous convie à nous associer, si modestement que ce soit, au concert d'éloges, si dignes de ce 'Hugo du 20ème siècle' comme le disait déjà Charles Péguy. En effet la patrie lointaine de F. Gregh est cette île même de Malte qu'il célèbre en un de ses poèmes. D'autres poètes français sont d'ailleurs également dignes de notre considération, tel Marius

Scalési, dont la mère maltaise et le père italien vivaient en Afrique du Nord française à l'instar des grands-parents de F. Gregh, Tomas-Fidiel-Chalcédoine Gregh, et sa femme Marguerite, nés à Lija. Mais l'auteur admirable des 'Poèmes d'un Maudit' mourut trop jeune pour faire entendre outre-mer la voix d'un algérien. Nous avons consacré en ce périodique quelques pages au témoignage émouvant de ce Baudelaire nord-africain. Un autre poète français, de souche maltaise, Laurent Ropa, a déjà retenu notre attention dans des fascicules antérieurs, et nous comptons tirer de l'analyse systématique et exhaustive de ses oeuvres et de sa correspondance, une biographie qui rende hommage à ce directeur d'école de la Sarthe, qui voua tous ses loisirs à la poésie et au roman.

Fernand Gregh mérite ici une attention toute spéciale, lui qui consacra son existence toute entière au rude métier des lettres et exerça durant plus d'un demi-siècle une profonde influence sur nombre de romanciers, de musiciens et de penseurs du 20ème siècle.

Son autobiographie, il la commence en cet âge idéal où l'homme se penche sur son passé, et il mûrit les premiers volumes en des circonstances auxquelles les dures réalités de la dernière guerre mondiale accordèrent l'isolement favorable à la réflexion, sinon la quiétude et l'optimisme. *L'Age d'Or* décrit en détails tantôt somptueux, tantôt savoureux et familiers, cet âge d'or qui dans la vie de tout homme, correspond à son enfance et à sa première maturité, mais qui coïncide aussi singulièrement avec cet âge d'insouciance et de joie, précédant la première apocalypse, à savoir les années 1877-1905. Le second volume, *L'Age d'Airain*, narre ces années d'airain 1905-1925, où l'auteur se remémore les douleurs et les joies de la pleine maturité, qui allait remarquablement de pair avec celle que dut alors éprouver, dans le creuset de l'épreuve, l'Occident acculé soudain aux dangers de la Ière Guerre Mondiale. Enfin, *L'Age de Fer* raconte, sur un ton souvent désenchanté que relève pourtant constamment un sens de l'humour, je dirais, britannique, les années qui s'étendront en fait jusqu'à la vieillesse avancée, 1925-1955, période à nouveau tragiquement coupée en son milieu par une seconde apocalypse.

Mais F. Gregh est loin de s'être confiné dans le domaine ou dans le genre mémorialiste. Il écrit en effet de nombreux re-

cueils de poèmes. Le premier date de 1896, *La Maison de l'Enfance*, qui valut à ce jeune poète de 23 ans, le prix décerné par l'Académie Française 'Au volume de poésie qui fut le plus marquant de cette année'. L'attribution de ce prix divisa néanmoins l'Académie en deux camps: succès immense pour un jeune poète, que d'attirer sur sa tête de telles foudres et de les conjurer! Les vers, par ailleurs jugés excellents, du néophyte semblaient, aux yeux de certains puristes, pécher par certaines licences que la docte et sage Académie pouvait malaisément tolérer. Mais telle était la valeur intrinsèque de ce volume, telle en était la signification poétique, que l'ouvrage reçut contre vents et marées la couronne qu'il méritait.

Je viens de parler de couronne: ce terme même figure dans le titre de deux autres volumes de poésie de F. Gregh. L'adjectif qui qualifie en chacun des cas cette 'couronne', marque bien à propos la portée du message du poète. En effet *La Couronne douloureuse*, poème sur la guerre (1917) sera suivie lors de l'autre cataclysme, d'une seconde 'couronne', *La Couronne perdue et retrouvée* (1945). Ces chants de guerre sont parmi les plus poignants que la poésie française ait exprimés au cours de ces deux guerres. Si les deux volumes n'épuisent certes pas la production poétique de Gregh, ils n'en constituent pas moins un mémorial qui le range parmi les poètes de la guerre. Mais Gregh échappe aux catégories. *La Beauté de Vivre*, *La Chaîne Eternelle*, *La Gloire du Coeur* révèlent un poète profondément ému par les misères sociales, si bien qu'il fut aussi classé parmi les 'poètes sociaux'.

Ce poète était aussi un grand critique. Il inaugura la Chaire de Victor Hugo à la Sorbonne et il publia plus tard les conférences qu'il y avait données, sous le nom d'*Etude sur V. Hugo* (1905); il publie ensuite *L'Oeuvre de V. Hugo, étude critique* (1933), et enfin *Victor Hugo, sa vie, son oeuvre* (1954). Dans ces excellents ouvrages, il analyse subtilement et avec une grande profondeur de vues et de sentiment, nombre de poèmes et d'autres oeuvres hugoliens.

Mais F. Gregh était aussi parfaitement conscient des valeurs qu'offraient le symbolisme et d'autres tendances littéraires. C'est ce que montrent ses *Portraits de la Poésie Française*. Ce n'est pas un hasard; en effet, comme le dit un grand critique, F. Gregh se trouve à l'intersection de V. Hugo et de Verlaine.

F. Gregh pourrait également avoir été un grand dramaturge. Une de ses illustres Egéries, Sarah Bernhardt, le lui laissa entendre en diverses occasions, en l'encourageant à écrire son *Théâtre féerique* (La Belle au Bois Dormant, Le Petit Poucet), ouvrage qu'il terminera quarante ans plus tard (1950)! Parmi les ouvrages inédits de F. Gregh, on trouve des pièces de théâtre relatives, les unes, à l'histoire; les autres, à l'amour, par exemple *Les Amants Romantiques*.

F. Gregh méritait certes de devenir très tôt académicien. En fait, il ne le fut qu'en 1953 à l'âge de 80 ans. Nombre de ses amis lui avaient conseillé de poser sa candidature mais il est vrai que, très longtemps, il fut considéré, sinon comme un juif, du moins, comme un membre très actif parmi les Dreyfusards. Sa femme était d'origine israélite et un très grand nombre de ses amis étaient des juifs, par exemple le fameux Halévy, Reynaldo Hahn, Dreyfus, Léon Blum et d'autres grands politiciens et écrivains français. Il n'aurait jamais eu l'idée de trahir l'amitié qu'il portait à ses amis, comme d'ailleurs à sa femme, en proclamant: 'Je ne suis pas Juif'.

F. Gregh aurait également pu devenir homme d'Etat ou politicien. Il était en excellents termes avec Léon Blum et Poincaré pour ne mentionner que ces deux noms célèbres, mais sa vie respirait une simplicité, une franchise, une générosité qui ne semblent pas l'avoir prédisposé à la carrière politique d'alors. Il croyait en effet, en sa naïveté de poète, que tous les hommes étaient foncièrement bons, honnêtes et généreux, comme il l'était lui-même. Il y a en son caractère deux traits qui semblent s'être combinés harmonieusement pour faire de lui un Parisien très sociable et très humain. Le premier semble provenir de son ascendance maternelle, celle des Bonnard, à savoir d'une famille très simple, travailleuse, honnête, la famille socialiste française-type, solidement enracinée dans l'agnosticisme et les mouvements de gauche, ayant pour héros Gambetta et Anatole France. Mais du côté de son père, les choses en allaient autrement. En effet Louis Gregh qui n'avait été parisien que depuis l'âge de 25 ans était un musicien très délicat, totalement voué à son art, et bien qu'il ait acheté le fonds d'un magasin de musique, afin de pouvoir épouser sa fiancée Charlotte Bonnard, il n'avait jamais eu de succès en affaires. Quant à son grand-père, Tomas-Fidel-Kalçidon Gregh, appelé Kalçi par sa femme également maltaise (appelée Gerit par son mari), il était tout

aussi peu pratique que son fils. Il avait quitté Malte en 1843 et s'était installé à Philippeville, en Algérie, où il était armateur. Mais bientôt les naufrages avaient ruiné les efforts des premières années de Kalcidon. Il dut quitter l'Algérie, vécut quelque temps en Espagne et passa ses dernières années à Paris. C'est ce que F. Gregh appelle ses origines paternelles, plus romantiques et méditerranéennes, et qui probablement expliquent, dit-il, sa tendance poétique et artistique. C'est du moins l'explication qu'en donnera son ami, le grand poète Paul Valéry, dont le père était lui aussi armateur à Sète et dont les affaires n'étaient guère plus brillantes. Quoiqu'il en soit, F. Gregh fut grand poète, bon musicien, et fervent socialiste.

Voici quelques-uns des amis qu'il rencontra au cours de ses nombreuses années. Le premier qu'il faut mentionner, vu son importance dans la littérature et la culture française et la fréquence de ses contacts — jusqu'à trois ou quatre fois par semaine, et ce, durant vingt ans, — c'est sans conteste Anatole France.

F. Gregh fonda 'Le Banquet', revue littéraire, en compagnie de M. Proust, dont la longue amitié est décrite en son dernier livre, *Mon Amitié avec Marcel Proust*; de L. Blum, Henry Barbusse et d'autres brillants amis qu'il avait connus à l'Université.

Il fut en excellents termes avec M. Barrès, Mme de Noailles, José-Marie de Hérédia, mais également avec Georges Clémenceau et Jaurès.

J'ai mentionné plus haut qu'il était musicien lui-même. Ravel joua pour la première fois sur son piano Pleyel son 'Oiseaux Tristes'; Jacques Bizet, fils de l'auteur fameux de 'Carmen', était son ami depuis l'âge de vingt ans, et Camille Saint-Saëns lui portait une grande affection.

Il eut d'ailleurs aussi quelques contacts avec 'il comandante', Gabriele D'Annunzio, et, faut-il le dire, même avec Mussolini, qui lui avait écrit une lettre enthousiaste, après avoir d'ailleurs mal compris, comme F. Gregh le lui expliquera dans sa réponse à cette lettre, la signification de l'attitude prise par Gregh envers la culture méditerranéenne. Voici le texte de la lettre de Mussolini:

IL POPOLO D'ITALIA

Quotidiano

Fondatore: Benito Mussolini
Il Direttore

Milano, il..... 191 .
Via Paolo de Cannobio, 35
Tél. 9.93.

Mon cher confrère,

Je viens de lire votre magnifique *Italiam*. Votre article, c'est comme un beau rayon de soleil qui disperse des nuages. Merci. J'ajoute: gare aux Croates, si l'on veut fortifier l'alliance entre vous, Français et Italiens.

Salutations cordiales.

Mussolini.

Cette lettre est écrite en français. L'enveloppe, également de la main de Mussolini, porte simplement:

FERNAND GREGH
Journal 'Le Gaulois'
PARIS.

Le timbre date l'arrivée de la lettre à Paris: le 16-1-1919.

Ceci nous donne l'occasion de dire quelques mots des sentiments patriotiques de Fernand Gregh. Il avait déjà 41 ans lorsqu'éclata la première Guerre Mondiale. Néanmoins, il ne recourut jamais à aucun des personnages influents qui auraient pu le dispenser du service militaire. Il fut simple soldat, tout comme sa femme fut simple infirmière, elle qui s'était engagée volontairement dès le début du conflit. Le jour même de l'armistice en 1919, c'est F. Gregh qui fut choisi pour écrire le poème 'Triomphe' qui fut grandement apprécié par les foules enthousiastes.

Durant la dernière guerre, sa femme et ses enfants parvinrent à gagner la frontière espagnole, étant donné qu'Harlette, née Hayem, risquait d'être envoyée à Auschwitz ou à Buchenwald, comme des millions d'autres juifs. Quant à lui, il resta à Boulainvilliers où son fils vécut après lui, et où F. Gregh passa plus de 50 années de sa longue existence. Durant la dernière guerre, F. Gregh eut le grand courage d'abriter des parachutistes américains, risquant ainsi généreusement sa vie. Cet acte de bravoure lui valut

après la Guerre une haute distinction. Quant à la Légion d'Honneur, elle lui avait été décernée dès avant la Guerre de 1914-1918.

Etant donné ses origines maltaises et son intérêt profond pour la beauté et l'amour, pour la destinée et la mort, le grand poète ne pouvait manquer d'être hanté par l'au-delà. Dans la dernière page de son dernier ouvrage, *L'Age de Fer*, F. Grègh envoie un ultime message à ses amis, ces vers, tirés de 'Promenade d'Automne', dans *La Beauté de Vivre*:

Espérant dans la mort d'un espoir invincible,
Car tout ne trompe pas, car il n'est pas possible
Que mes pleurs devant un beau soir n'aient pas de cause
Et ne répondent pas ailleurs à quelque chose,
Et que mon âme enfin, douloureuse ou joyeuse,
Mais qui reste toujours pour moi mystérieuse
Ne cache pas peut-être au plus secret en elle
Un mystère de plus qui la fasse éternelle!

AN APPLICATION OF THE TAX RATIO OF INTENSION

E.P. DELIA

PUBLIC policy makers occasionally modify existing personal income tax legislation with the explicit intent of easing the tax burden through more generous personal maintenance allowances, leaving the tax schedule (in terms of marginal rates of tax per income bracket) unchanged. The modification of income tax structure¹ affects directly both public revenue and the disposable income of the tax-paying units.

A tax structure could be described by means of a series of ratios giving the effective rates (i.e. tax/own income) for different tax-unit statuses, whereby tax-status is defined in terms of the maintenance burdens. Such a series would become unhandy when comparative exercises are undertaken; therefore, it is helpful for certain purposes, if a summary statistic, expressing an overall view about a tax structure, were available.

Such a summary statistic is the tax-intension ratio.² The ratio is primarily intended to replace the conventional coefficients of tax-functions in estimating the 'progressiveness' of a tax structure in an economy; its value integrates the marginal tax rates and the income brackets at which the rates become effective and uses the number of taxpayers per income bracket for weighing. A macro-impression of personal income taxation in a given year is thus obtained.

However, the concept could be gainfully applied to the micro-level: to evaluate the impact of the nominal personal income tax schedules in a year or over time upon individuals in terms of varying tax-paying unit's social responsibilities (family size and health conditions) and in terms of tax-exempted allowances for basic subsistence for oneself, wife, children and/or dependents.

¹The term 'tax-schedule' refers to the series of marginal rates; 'tax structure' here stands for the marginal rates and the tax-exempted income allowances which change according to the maintenance burden of the taxpayer.

²For an explanation of this ratio see J.B. Bracewell-Milnes 'The Concept of Intension: A New Approach to the "Progressiveness" of Taxes'. (Public Finance, 1967, pp. 520-8)

The ratio varies between unity and zero; with a proportional tax of zero, starting at the origin, the ratio is unity; with a proportional tax of hundred percent raised from the first unit of income as defined by Inland Revenue Authorities, the ratio is zero. Given a tax structure and, so, a value for the Intension ratio (R_n), an increase in tax-exempted allowances raises the value of R_n while a rise in the marginal rates, with the income blocks at which they are activated remaining constant, would reduce the value of R_n .

Under this scheme a tax schedule is represented as a composite of three areas (i) the area of exemption giving the nominal value of income that forms the bulk of post-tax personal resource control per annum; (ii) the area of tax giving the value of personal funds withdrawn by the Tax Authorities; (iii) the area of intension, a buffer region between the other two. The larger this area the smaller must be one of the others.

To eliminate misconceptions in comparisons over time, we suggest that the area of exemption be held constant at its minimal value over the period under comparison. Any change in the tax schedule or the tax structure would then be apparent in the values of the areas of intension and tax. For example, if the marginal rates are raised for the same income blocks the tax area increases and the intension area falls accordingly with R_n approaching zero. On the other hand, if tax-exempted allowances are increased, the tax-schedule held unaltered, the area of tax is reduced and R_n moves towards unity.

It follows that the introduction of or additions to tax relief raises the R_n ; while an increase in the tax-burden is reflected in a fall in the ratio. The net effect of an increase in the marginal rates and in additional allowances; or of an absolute allowance rise added to changes over income blocks for which marginal rates become effective, could be obtained from the value of R_n . If R_n rises the benefits outweigh the tax burden; if R_n falls, the changes implemented operate against the tax-paying unit. Expressed in index form, the ratios constitute a ready-reckoner of the tax-payer's position over time by status (if the ratios are expressed in terms of a base year situation) or, in any given year, by relative location compared to other tax-paying units (if ratios are expressed in terms of a selected tax-unit for a base).

Of course, such indexes would not indicate where policy changes occur; they represent solely an end-result. If one is interested in the details of the change, one must refer to the actual computation data or to the effective rates series.

Besides, the ratios represent the change in a minor variable in

nominal disposable income (since the area of tax exemption is being held constant through time). However for the tax-payer free from money illusion, it is disposable real income that matters. Ideally, therefore, the ratios should be integrated to suitable deflators based upon different income groups and household units. If such indexes were available the 'real' intension area, as distinct from the nominal, could be obtained with the values being deflated accordingly prior to ratio estimates are made. A general retail-price deflator would be misleading unless it is so constructed to reflect the weights of the consumption patterns of household units within the universe, unless it is revised regularly to account for improvements in the quality of commodities, and unless a detailed break-up of tax-payers is available. A positive step would be to construct deflators that could be applied to two separate income regions: that part which falls under surtax and that part which does not and so derive a deflated value being the weighted sum of the income ranges adjusted by the relevant consumption-prices index.

The nominal reduction, if there is any, in a unit's tax burden over time should not be interpreted unqualifyingly as the betterment of a tax-payer vis-a-vis purchasing power. Rather, the rise in the R_n , summarising the overall improvement in post-tax disposable income, could be insufficient to compensate for the rise in the prices of the goods and services consumed by a tax-payer over the period. In addition, account must be taken of the extension of social goods provided in kind by the State and excluded from income-tax considerations, for example, the provision of subsidised public housing or free education. If State provided services increase as between two points in time, they could in part compensate for the rise in commodity prices in so far as the tax-payer benefits from them. A realistic image of the true 'burden' of a tax structure is not an easy objective; the ratios being suggested should consequently be regarded as the first step in a series of approximations towards real-world situations.

This note applies the above technique to personal income taxation in Malta;³ a tabulated 'history' of this tax is appended. Table 1 submits the ratios of intension for several years (when changes in income-tax legislation were introduced) by different tax-paying unit's maintenance burden and allowance claims. Two sets of ra-

³Malta is an island in the central Mediterranean; current population is about 300,000. Up to 1971 £M1 = £1 sterling; since then the £M has fluctuated vis-a-vis sterling and recent exchange rate has been £M1 = £1.20 sterling.

TABLE I

Ratios of Tax Intension by Status of Tax-Payer: 1948-1976

YEAR	(a)							
	(1) S + ME	(2) S + ME + LA	(3) S + ME + D	(4) MC + ME	(5) MC + ME + LA	(6) MC + 3CH. + ME	(7) MC + 3CH. (-9) + D + ME	(8) MC + 3CH. (-9) + ME + LA
1948	.4568	.4668	.4648	.4767	.4868	.5008	.5088	.5108
1953	.4568	.4668	.4648	.4767	.4868	.5068	.5148	.5168
1959	.4222	.4323	.4302	.4422	.4829	.4722	.4802	.4822
1963	.4145	.4245	.4225	.4345	.4444	.4645	.4725	.4745
1969	.4205	.4415	.4325	.4465	.4565 (a)	(b) (c)/(d)	.4974	.4955
					.4855	.4945 .4890	.4974	.4955
1973	.4205	.4415	.4325	.4505	.4565 .4855	.4945 .4890	.5057	.5155
1975	.4265	.4465	.4385	.4565	.4767 .4955	.5045 .4890	.5087	.5164
1976	.4259	.4452	.4375	.4596	.4789 .4971	.5058 .5014		
(b)								
1948	.2732	.3132	.3052	.3532	.3932	.4492	.4812	.4892
1953	.2732	.3132	.3052	.3532	.3932	.4732	.5052	.5139
1959	.2732	.3132	.3052	.3532	.3932	.4732	.5052	.5139
1963	.2732	.3132	.3052	.3532	.3932	.4732	.5052	.5139
1969	.2972	.3372	.3452	.4012	.4412 .5572	.5932 .5712	.6052	.5972
1973	.2972	.3372	.3452	.4012	.4412 .5572	.5932 .5712	.6052	.5972
1975	.3212	.4012	.3692	.4412	.5212 .5972	.6332 .6112	.6452	.6772
1976	.2846	.3587	.3291	.4143	.4883 .5587	.5920 .5754	.6031	.6328

NOTE:

S = Single

ME = Medical Expenses Allowance

D = Dependent

MC = Married Couple

LA = Life Assurance Allowance

Children: (a) = under nine

(b) = nine to sixteen

(c) = sixteen plus.

TABLE II

Index of Tax Intension Ratios: 1948-1976 ($R_{1948} = 100$)

(a)											
YEAR	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)		(7)	(8)		
	S + ME	S + ME + LA	S + ME + D	MC + ME	MC + ME + LA	MC + 3CH.	+ ME	MC + 3CH. (-9)	+ D + ME	MC + 3CH. (-9)	+ ME + LA
1948	100	100	100	100	100	100		100		100	
1953	100	100	100	100	100	100.20		101.18		101.18	
1959	92.43	94.74	92.56	92.76	99.20	94.29		94.38		94.40	
1963	90.74	93.03	90.90	91.15	91.29	92.75		92.87		92.89	
					(a)	(b)	(c)/(d)	97.76		97.01	
1969	92.05	96.76	93.05	93.67	93.78	96.97	98.74	97.65	97.76	97.01	
1973	92.05	96.76	93.05	94.50	93.78	96.95	98.74	97.65	99.98	100.92	
1975	93.37	97.85	94.35	96.55	97.88	98.94	100.74	99.64	99.98	100.74	
1976	93.25	97.57	94.13	97.21	98.38	99.26	100.99	100.12			
(b)											
1948	100	100	100	100	100		100		100		100
1953	100	100	100	100	100		105.34		104.99		105.05
1959	100	100	100	100	100		105.34		104.99		105.05
1963	100	100	100	100	100		105.34		104.99		105.05
1969	108.75	107.66	113.11	113.59	112.21	124.04	132.06	127.16	125.77		122.08
1973	108.75	107.66	113.11	113.59	112.21	124.04	132.06	127.16	125.77		122.08
1975	117.60	128.10	120.97	130.84	132.55	132.95	140.96	136.06	134.08		138.43
1976	104.17	114.53	107.83	122.87	124.19	124.38	131.79	128.09	125.33		130.04

TABLE III

Index of Tax Intension Ratios: ($R_{S+ME} = 100$)

YEAR	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)		(7)	(8)	
	S+ME	S+ME+ LA	S+ME+ D	MC+ME	MC+ME+LA	MC+3CH. (a)	+ME (b)	MC+3CH. (-9) +D+ME (c)/(d)	MC+3CH. (-9) +D+ME	
1948	100	102.19	101.75	104.36	106.57	109.63		111.38	111.82	
1953	100	102.19	101.75	104.36	106.57	110.94		112.70	113.15	
1959	100	102.39	101.90	104.74	114.37	111.84		113.74	114.12	
1963	100	102.41	101.93	104.86	107.21	112.06		113.99	114.48	
1969	100	104.99	102.85	106.18	108.56	115.46	117.60	116.29	118.29	117.84
1973	100	104.99	102.85	106.18	108.56	115.46	117.60	116.29	118.57	120.87
1975	100	104.69	102.81	107.03	111.77	116.18	118.29	120.87	119.44	121.25
1976	100	104.53	102.73	107.91	112.44	116.72	118.76	117.73		
(b)										
1948	100	114.64	111.71	129.28	143.92	164.42		176.14	179.06	
1953	100	114.64	111.71	129.28	143.92	173.21		184.92	188.10	
1959	100	114.64	111.71	129.28	143.92	173.21		184.92	188.10	
1963	100	114.64	111.71	129.28	143.92	173.21		184.92	188.10	
1969	100	113.46	116.15	134.99	148.45	187.48	199.60	192.19	203.63	200.94
1973	100	113.46	116.15	134.99	148.45	187.48	199.60	192.19	203.63	200.94
1975	100	124.91	114.94	137.36	162.27	185.93	197.14	190.29	200.87	210.83
1976	100	126.04	115.66	145.57	171.57	195.01	208.01	202.18	211.91	222.35

tios are introduced: one (Ia) covering income tax and surtax income regions, the other (Ib) restricted to the income tax region. As observed, with the exemption area held constant (0.35 Income) the smaller the R_n the higher the tax liability; and, conversely, as the ratio approaches unity, the disposable income that should be added to the proportion outrightly exempted from tax rises. Table II translates the absolute values in Table I into an index with R_{1948} for base; again, when the index registers an increase the nominal income at the disposal of the tax-payer rises; the opposite occurs when the intension index falls. Table III derives the relativities over time among tax-payers by using the intension ratio of the person, single, for a base in every one of the years indicated.

The tables are self-explanatory. Table IIa suggests that the net outcome of the various modifications in the general income tax structure will leave the tax-payer in 1976 with a higher tax-liability than in 1948, with the exception of the head of a household with at least three children (Columns 6, 8). However, over the income tax region (Ib) improvements favouring the tax-payer are observed, although one notes that the modifications proposed for implementation from year of assessment 1976 claws back partly or completely (in some cases) the gains for the tax-payer introduced by the changes effective from 1975. For example, for the tax-payer, single, changes proposed reduces him or her to a more burdensome position than any since 1969.

Moreover Table III shows that the relativities among tax-payers by status and maintenance burden established in 1948 have changed not so much over the £M0 – 5000 range as over the income tax range which has bettered the comparative position of the household of five that buys a life-assurance policy. Note that these same conditions minimise the income tax liability of the household while they provide the additional security in case of death of the tax-paying member in the family.

Tax relativity changes between two units should not be interpreted as discrimination against a tax-payer classified by status. The fact that relativewise the tax liability of a married couple, say, is reduced compared to that of a tax-payer, single, should not play down the reality that a husband who is obliged to support a wife is also compelled to meet specific expenses that the tax-payer, single, male or female, does not incur.

Still the above indexes could serve as a guide for policy makers if account is to be taken of the tax-relativity between tax-paying units and of the changes desirable to meet cost-of-living allowances without undue strain upon wage or salary claims, thus hope-

fully avoiding the wage-price-wage (or, price-wage-price) spiral. If it is a political party's policy that the distribution of relative tax liability should be altered, then such a policy should be explicitly stated; similarly, periodic adjustments in tax-exempted allowances should be appropriately introduced. For, unless a social money and tax illusion is assumed, it would be unrealistic for policy makers to concentrate entirely upon the revenue accruing from income taxation and failing to assess the probable reactions that could ensue from tax structure changes. Ad hoc revenue-oriented tax-exemption allowances could fail to countervail in part the upward movement of the cost of living while they could introduce distortion in a set pattern of income tax liability. The ratios and the indexes in the tables above are devices that could assist in the formation of an objective assessment of the nominal effects of changes in personal tax structures.

NOTE

Personal Income Tax in Malta: Marginal Rates, Personal Deductions and Allowances.

Marginal Tax Rates

YEAR	INCOME TAX	RATE	SURTAX
1948	Chargeable Income		Over £M2500
	£M200	10c	500 10c
	300	15c	500 12c5
	400	22c5	500 15c
	Remainder	32c5	Remainder 17c5
1959	Same as 1948		Over £M2500
			500 10c
			500 15c
			500 20c
			Remainder 25c
1964	Same as 1948		Over £M2500
			500 10c
			500 15c
			500 20c
			500 25c
			500 30c
			Remainder 32c5
1976			Over £M2700
	200	10c	Rates same as 1964
	200	15c	
	300	22c5	
	Remainder	32c5	

Personal Deductions and Allowances

Single: £M240 (1948-1968); 300 (1969-1972);
320 (1973-1974); 380 (1975) 430 (1976)

Married Couple:

£M420 (1948-1968); 540 (1969-1972)
580 (1973-1974); 680 (1975) 780 (1976)

Children:

First Child –	£M 80
Second Child –	60
Third Child –	40 (1948-1951)
Every Child –	80 (1952-1968)
Child – 9 years	110
9 – 16	125
16 +	140 (1969-1972)
Child – 9 years	130
9 – 16	145
16 +	160 (1973 onwards)

Dependents: Maximum allowance of £M 60 (1948-1968)
100 (1969-1972)
120 (1973 onwards)

Medical Expenses: £M20 per head including dependent relative (1948-1972). Since then an annual allowance up to a maximum of £M300 per family is granted, against the presentation of bills for professional, nursing, hospitalisation fees and medicinals. In addition a chronic illness allowance of £M100 per annum is granted where required.

Life Assurance: Maximum of £M100 per annum or one-sixth of total income which ever is less. (1948-1974). Since then maximum has been raised to £M200 annually.

'RENAISSANCE IN FRANCE, ITS HISTORY AND
ITS LITERATURE:
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY'

by GREGORY DE ROCHER and BERNERD C. WEBER

THE trend toward interdisciplinary study is becoming well-established, despite inevitable conflicts arising from our traditional university divisions. The development of a course or seminar attempting to draw parallels between the political and literary behavior of a given period and country might well have been opposed by either or both of the departments of history and language, not to mention curriculum committees. New structures, however, now facilitate such investigations, both within and outside existing terms and programs. Thus, during the regular term, General Studies, Honors Classes, or similar relatively recent additions to the curriculum roster offer courses created by groups of instructors or even by students and instructors. Interim Terms, on the other hand, as a sort of pause in the academic calendar, more easily lend themselves to the pooling of students and instructors wishing to widen their experience in particular subjects or periods without draining the staff or equipment necessary for the maintenance of operating programs.

We propose to relate here the experience of an interdisciplinary course offered during such an Interim Term. Although some details may be applicable only to our situation at the University of Alabama, many aspects, *mutatis mutandis*, could be adopted for similar courses elsewhere. At least three major differences, we should like to point out, separate the type of course we developed and taught from the very interesting *cours pluridisciplinaire* described recently by Palomba Paves-Yashinsky.¹ To begin with, ours was a team effort: major political and economic developments of the period were delineated by the history instructor while the literature was presented by the language instructor. Next is the fact that our course lasted only three weeks, the length of the Interim Term

¹"Le Réalisme en littérature et en peinture dans la deuxième moitié du dix-neuvième siècle en France": Remarques sur un cours pluridisciplinaire,' *French Review*, 47, No. 3 (1947), 566-72.

(May 13 to May 31). The third point is that we were seeking to bring as much of the period as possible to students not yet familiar with sixteenth-century France.

Our course was spurred into existence by the accumulation of various regrets over the systems in which we found ourselves locked. There was too little time in the formal courses to treat as much as we would like the history behind the literature or, respectively, the literature as it reflected institutions, events and habits of life and thought. In two different departments, two courses, *The History of the Renaissance* with its would-be counterpart *The Literature of the Renaissance*, were providing for two different disciplines. Only too obvious were the advantages to be gained by uniting them. The Interim Term conveniently provided this opportunity.

The period dealt with in the course was divided into two major movements: the French Renaissance and the Reformation. Various aspects of the historical background were covered and accompanied by the EMC filmstrip lectures on the Renaissance. The historical section of this course provided a sketch of the principal political developments in French history from the reign of Charles VIII (1483-1498) to the assassination of Henry IV in Paris in May, 1610. Attention was focused on the institutional aspects of this period, especially the monarchy, the social structure, the legal aspects of society, and the growing importance of urban development. The serious impact of the outbreak of the civil-religious struggle between Catholics and Huguenots which began in March, 1562, and which continued intermittently until nearly the end of the sixteenth century received special attention. Mimeographed sheets distributed to the students, and which covered such topics as French interests in overseas expansion during the sixteenth century, the significant peace treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis of April, 1559 (involving the dynastic interests of the royal houses of Habsburg, Valois, and Tudor), and similar topics greatly facilitated the work of the lecturer in covering much basic groundwork. Inasmuch as the class was small there was ample time for students to ask questions and thereby clear up any possible misunderstandings. Because many students lacked an adequate grasp of French geography, a mimeographed list of critical places in France at the time was given to the student to learn, and a subsequent map test spurred on those who might possibly have neglected this aspect of the course.

In regard to the literature, after an introduction on the classical

and medieval traditions and the role of Italian and other European literature, attention was directed to three *Grands Rhétoriciens* in an attempt to understand the type of writing cultivated by the *courtisans* of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Particularly interesting were Clément Marot's 'épîtres' to François Ier: allusions accompanied by his playful wit are frequently made to such recent happenings as the Collège Royal, the increasingly overshadowing movement of Evangelism, but also to minor and more personal incidents such as his interest in Anne d'Alençon or his misadventures with an untrustworthy valet. A major literary as well as historical figure was the talented Marguerite de Navarre, sister of the king and also a protector of Marot; both her religious poetry and her sometime ribald tales were found to give a more complete account of the tastes of Renaissance readers. François Rabelais, with his giants and his energetic trickster Panurge, was seen to embody the contemporary qualities of exuberance, play, discovery, and erudition as displayed by the humanists and, less gloriously, by fossilized tutors; a film on this perplexing author entitled 'Jusques au feu exclusive' lent by the French Cultural Services animated even more the moments spent on *Pantagruel*. Pierre de Ronsard and Joachim Du Bellay in the area of French poetic hegemony contributed to the nationalistic spirit which reigned throughout the middle of the century. Ronsard's *poésie engagée*, it was felt, announced the more turbulent works to flow from the pens of the Baroque poets. Both Catholics and Protestants, the students noted, used a powerful if not violent imagery in their works. Jean de Sponde, Guillaume de Salluste du Bartas, Agrippa D'Aubigné, and the numerous participants of *La Vertu du Catholicon d'Espagne* are but a few who expressed vehement political and religious passions over the edicts, massacres, and wars during the last half of the century. More sober recounts of the events were read in the works of Blaise de Monluc and Michel de l'Hospital, while Jean Bodin formulated a policy supporting a powerful monarch. Another voice spoke out more softly on the troubles of the period: Michel de Montaigne offered in what was possibly the keenest of detail the workings of a reflective mind in self-chosen seclusion during the closing decades of the French Reformation.

This rapid resumé scarcely conveys the amount of material our concentrated schedule permitted us to cover. In order to fulfill the requirements laid down by the College concerning the number of contact hours necessary for a given course to award three credit

hours, daily meetings of three hours were held. Although the history and the literature of the period constituted the heart of the course, guest lecturers on the music and the furniture of the Renaissance provided an enjoyable variation in the students' concentration on the subject matter. Two volumes donated by the cultural attaché served a similar purpose; *L'Art monumental* and the fascinating engravings of *L'Ecole de Fontainebleau* afforded visual proof of the classical heritage and the brilliant luxury of the French courts. A book by the distinguished sixteenth century French humanist, Adrien Turnèbe's *Philosophiae et Graecarum literarum regii professoris . . .* (Paris, 1580), was also examined by the students so that they might perceive at first hand something of the nature of French printing and binding of the late Renaissance period. Other visual studies were facilitated by still more gifts and loans from the French Cultural Services: posters illustrating Renaissance *châteaux* and several slide series on the art, scientific discoveries, architecture, and even handicraft of the time.²

In spite of the effort required before and during such a course, the experience was a rewarding one, for a number of the students found the experiment as stimulating as it was demanding. The instructors as well found it a challenge to present the complex interrelationships of political, social, and cultural life which provided the foundations for the growth of one of the great nations of Western Europe.

²We wish to express our deep gratitude to Monsieur Gérard Roubichou, Cultural Attaché at New Orleans, whose immediate response and generosity contributed to the success of the course.

POEMS

by J. AQUILINA

DYING

Dying must be an extraordinary experience,
A sort of examination one sits for only once
And can't afford to fail.
I wonder what it is like?
Do you know?
Can you tell?
Ever tried to find out?
Have you the feel of it
As one has the feel of ice or fire?
(No need to run away from what is as real as life).
You are not a coward, are you?
I imagine dying to be something like slipping
From one cocoon dream into another –
Or slimy slug zigzagging between two unrealities,
Perpetual cycle of life,
Tinsel and gossamer –
Wet, sticky eel that slips from between your fingers,
Or like falling off the arms of Mother Earth
To lie flat on the hard ground
Face upwards, eyes staring into a vacuum
Till you are covered over with dust –
Black dust, white dust, choking dust –
Metamorphosized
Into something different,
Perhaps rejuvenation
Of all dead bones and withered nerves,
Or like the scattering of seeds on a patch
Of barren soil
From season to season,
For ever and ever,
As we say in our prayers.
Really, I am at a loss for the right image.
But if you think this is not the right figure of speech,
See if you can find a better image yourself
To express the extraordinary experience of dying.

I prefer to compare it to
 Falling off the arms of Mother Earth
 Sixty, seventy years after birth
 (The Earth is a woman with a big belly, protracted
 parturition and hanging breasts,
 That is why she has always been considered our ancient Mother)
 Come on, you must agree that
 Dying can be fun –
 The flight of the butterfly
 From the husk of the cocoon:
 Do not be afraid to die.

20.vii.74

THE BONDSMEN

We have been given a Hobson's Choice
 – A very fine strait jacket and a gag,
 Or a pistol shot in the back;
 And because we do not want to be shot
 Like dogs
 (Could we but live twice over again!)
 We accept the gag
 And the strait jacket
 With a grin,
 A salaam and a hurrah, pain in the belly
 As we wave the Flag
 (*Achtung*, bloody fools, Superman's Fools!)
 And salute
 The Brute
 Praying inaudibly for the gale that will wash away
 The hovels of the pigs
 (Grunting, dirty pigs!).
 By this hope, only by this hope
 We put up with the bite of the gag
 And wave the Flag
 As we stand to attention
 (Ashen hatred burning dry hearts)
 To salute
 The Brute.

20.vii.74

EPITAPH ON A FANATIC POLITICIAN

Here lies one who died of a mysterious disease;
 Doctors have diagnosed it as a kind of obsession,
Morbus politicus, something like palsy of the knees,
 A tumour of the brain, diabolic possession.
 He lived for party politics, by party politics, all his life.
 Truly, *Signora Politica* was his only wife.

Pray for the repose of his soul in which he did not believe,
 But pity him – Wherever he is, he must neither fret nor grieve.
 After all, politics are a terrible obsession,
 Really a diabolic possession.
 A disorder of the mind: forget, be kind!

31.x.74

BURIAL

They slipped him down the grave, how quickly he went down,
 Adolph the politician who was also a clown!

31.x.74

POLITICAL POWER

A philosopher speaking in parables compared
 Political Power to an outsize cake,
 With arty icing, Yellow, Black, or Red,
 Marketed on the principle of give and take.
 How it makes your mouth water for a slice:
 Adolph, the Cook, obliges for a price.

31.x.74

LES BETES

The Adolphs and the Benitos continued the breeds
 Of the dastardly tyrants who rob us of our rights;
 Add Stalin to the *pot-pourri* and others of his ilk,
 And you'll get the sum of the Beasts that blew out the lights.
 Whilst the Beasts trample on corpses in concentration camps,
 What else is left for us to do but mend the broken lamps?

31.x.74

GLORIA MUNDI

Here lies one who in his long career won distinctions galore,
 Who, being very ambitions and always hungry, like Oliver Twist,
 asked for more:
 And when, alas, he reached the end of his adventurous career,
 And had nothing more to look forward to except the sexton
 and the bier,
 Found comfort in the thought that at least his funeral would be
 A Grand State Funeral different from the plebeian funeral of
 you and me.
 The glory of the world (tremendous spur!) was his sole
 passion and lust
 Till Death, that has a very wry sense of humour, struck him
 down and reduced him to dust.
 Be not hard in your judgement on the man who chased this
 ambitious dream;
 Are we not all of us, in one way or another, chasing the
 some elusive gleam?
 'The Glory of the World' – its Power and Wealth is what most
 of us live for:
 The Golden Calf that foolish mortals cheat for, kill for,
 hug and adore.

18.xii.74

EPITAPH

Here lie the bones of a distinguished civil servant
 Who climbed up the ladder obeying his master's orders
 Faithfully and uncritically, till Master Death
 Jealous of the bloated hero of personal cult,
 Bade him stop the nonsense, pack up and cross the borders.

5.vi.1975

FACES

Millions of faces that were
 Beautiful faces everywhere
 Faces dark faces fair
 Millions of faces that will be
 All these and more
 Flotsam on the sea
 Of eternity

29.vi.75

LOVE'S MISTAKE

He sat beside her
Remembering the time
When he had sat beside another girl
Of flowing hair and laughing eyes
Forty years before
Imagining the sudden return
Of his fair lady,
Beloved girl
Sitting beside him again
Shoulder to shoulder
Face to face
His arms round her waist
His fingers in her hair.
Closing his eyes
He whispered the lost tune
Of a romantic song of love
Till the girl beside him –
The girl in flesh and blood
Forty years younger – nudged him.
Mumbling his words, he apologised
For a silly mistake:
'Sorry', he told her,
'I mistook you for another girl.
Please, excuse me.
I had an appointment with her
forty years ago.
Good Lord!
I must not forget.
I must hurry to join her –
See you again, forty years hence.'

BALZAC'S HISTORICAL RELIABILITY

by ROBERT BEUM

THE revival of interest in Balzac among the English-reading public in the late 1960's and in the 1970's – attested to, for example, by the success of new translations by Donald Adamson, Marion Crawford, Herbert J. Hunt, Rayner Heppenstall, and others – has raised once again the question of how reliable Balzac is as a student of historical manners. Though Balzac has never been considered a mere historical impressionist doubts have sometimes been expressed about the authenticity of some of his portraiture. Usually it is for 'exaggeration' that Balzac is faulted. It may be significant that the form this exaggeration takes is almost never specified or otherwise made intelligible, the result being that the charge creates the impression of calumny where constructive correction would be more useful. 'Seeing little that was good in this social order [the bourgeois monarchy of Louis Philippe], Balzac, in his *Cousin Bette*, *Droll Stories*, and *Eugénie Grandet*, has given us a stimulating but exaggerated picture of bourgeois society' (F.C. Palm and F.E. Graham, *Europe Since Napoleon*, New York, 1934, p. 63). In historical and in literary criticism, as in the litigations of life, the law ultimately demands a specified charge. In this particular case, as in some others, it does nothing for the credibility of the prosecution when one discovers it in an egregious error in the very framing of the charge: the sprightly, good-natured, erotic *Droll Stories* are set in an era prior to the vast dominance of the bourgeoisie; they make light of the clergy and of lovers' foibles, but not of the merchants and bankers, from whose lambasting Balzac affords himself a merry vacation.

The problem may be put in perspective quickly. To find Balzac unreliable as social historian does nothing to diminish Balzac the raconteur and *savant*. On the other hand, Balzac is no belletrist or aesthete; much that he gives us is given because it purports to offer accurate cultural depiction and interpretation. We may be quite sure that Balzac's shade will be chagrined at any historical inaccuracies or distortions we may uncover in him, for the prejudice and irresponsibility he himself found in historians wrought him to indignation: 'to those who thoroughly examine the history of modern times, it is evident that historians are privileged liars, who

lend their pens to popular beliefs, exactly as most of the newspapers of the day express nothing but the opinions of their readers' (Introduction to *About Catherine de Medici*). Balzac's charge is uttered with characteristic passion, but is not ill-founded. Before the Soviets' blatant rewriting of history there was the Tudors' portrayal of Richard III, and all along, as Lynn M. Case reminds us, a republican-progressivist version of modern history has passed as 'objective': 'While the republican and democratic historians of our century tried to be unbiased, they were still too much influenced by the political philosophy of their time to see much good in the [French] Restoration' (Preface to Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny's *The Bourbon Restoration*, Philadelphia, 1966). This reminds us how greatly it is to Balzac's credit that his social-historical portraiture is spoken well of by modern historians: on the whole, it cannot be a case of birds of a feather taking in one of their own. The consensus — particularly in twentieth-century scholarship — is that Balzac accurately lays open the realities of life under Revolution, Empire, and Restoration. But no adequate and handy survey or summation of this consensus exists. Anyone who produces it will do us a favor. In the interim, one might present at random some reliable witnesses to Balzac's reliability.

Aside from the fact of his avowed intention to supply a corrective to the standard, i.e., Protestant and progressivist, version of modern European history, *prima facie* evidence for Balzac's historical authenticity is his accuracy — granted by everyone — in observation of particulars, as in features of terrain, architecture, and dress and ornament; and his fairness in political representation (his *royalisme* does not prevent him from giving liberals and Bonapartists their due, nor does it blind him to the typical and individual weaknesses of noblesse and royalists). On his brilliance and fairness as analyst of French politics ca. 1789-1846 the various commentaries of translator Herbert J. Hunt are noteworthy: *Honoré de Balzac, a Biography*, 1957; *Balzac's 'Comédie Humaine'*, 1959; and his Introductions to his translations of *Cousin Pons*, 1968; and *Une Ténébreuse Affaire (A Murky Business)*, 1972. Hunt notes that Balzac gives 'a scrupulous account of judicial principles and procedure in the transitional period between Consulate and Empire,' a verdict corroborated by Colin Smethurst in 'Balzac and Stendhal: a comparison of electoral scenes,' (*Balzac and the Nineteenth Century*, ed. D.G. Charlton, J. Gaudon, and Anthony R. Pugh, Leicester, 1972).

Nora E. Hudson's neglected masterpiece *Ultra-royalism and the*

French Restoration (Cambridge, 1936) amasses details elegantly and its accuracy and fairness in delineating the ultraroyalist position and the fortunes of the early French Right make it a text of which Balzac would have approved; and Miss Hudson (p. 189) pays Balzac the social analyst and historian a handsome compliment.

Less sympathetic to royalism but no less illuminating on the era of the Holy Alliance, H. G. Schenk's *The Aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars* (London, 1947) includes an interesting comment on Balzac's historical faithfulness (p. 220). Philippe Bertault, perhaps the most erudite and deep-looking of twentieth-century authorities on Balzac, offers more extended commentary in *Balzac and the Human Comedy*, trans. Richard Monges (New York, 1963), pp. 36-42. Also germane are: Frantz Funck-Brentano, *The Old Regime in France*, trans. Herbert Wilson (New York and London, 1929), pp. 96 and 364; Preston Slosson, *Europe Since 1815* (New York, 1954), p. 214: 'Balzac showed French life at every social level, in a romantic spirit but with scientific accuracy'; Gordon A. Craig, *Europe Since 1815* (New York, 1961), p. 72; and Stanley Loomis, *Paris in the Terror* (Philadelphia and New York, 1964), p. 355. Balzac's early editor, the captious George Saintsbury, whose heavy and condescending Prefaces consistently underrate Balzac's achievements, observed that the architect of the *Comédie humaine* was 'a considerable student of history'. Twentieth-century studies confirm that remark.

The social-political theory Balzac derived from his historical scrutiny, and which he in turn illustrates through it, is the same theocratic royalism which forms the common ground of Bonald and De Maistre — 'those two eagles of thought' Balzac calls them in the first part of *Lost Illusions*. But though Balzac particularly admired those two among the royalist theocrats, his views were not so much learned from them as confirmed by them. His *ultraïsme* was neither an academic acquisition nor a hearthside prejudice, but was derived, as Charlotte Touzalin Muret justly remarks in her invaluable *French Royalist Doctrines Since the Revolution* (1933, repr. 1972), from careful observation and original reflection. Within the *Comédie humaine* itself the fullest expression of Balzac's views on the social order is in *The Country Doctor* (*Le Médecin de Campagne*). Letter XII of *Memoirs of Two Young Brides* (*Mémoires de deux Jeunes Mariées*) provides a clear and very concise exposition of the fundamentals, as does the paragraph beginning 'Les avarés ne croient point à une vie à venir' near the end of the third section ('Provincial Love') of *Eugénie Grandet*.

In expository form Balzac's views are developed in the pamphlet *Droit d'aînesse* (1824), where his training in the law is shown to advantage in the analysis of primogeniture; in a later pamphlet, *Enquête sur la politique des deux ministres* (1831); in the first few pages of his long introduction to *Sur Catherine de Médicis*, and in the closing pages of the novel itself.

ARTHUR KOESTLER AND MYSTICISM

by NILS BJORN KVASTAD

ARTHUR Koestler was an influential writer during the first years after the war. His attacks on communism got a world-wide echo, in particular among intellectuals. To the reading public he was in the first place a political writer. But according to himself the political content is only one aspect of his literary production from his first years as an author. As important were some mystical experiences he had while sitting in one of Franco's prisons awaiting execution during the Spanish Civil War.

These experiences had for him certain ethical implications, and an important theme in his first books was the contrast between the ethics derived from his mystical experiences on the one hand and Marxist-Leninist ethics as well as the ethical implications of Freudian psychoanalysis on the other. In his autobiography Koestler writes about how his first books were influenced by his mystical experiences, or the 'hours by the window' as he called them: 'In the years that followed I wrote a number of books in which I attempted to assimilate the (mystical) experiences of cell no. 40. Ethical problems had hitherto played no part in my writing, now they became its central concern. In 'The Gladiators', (...), and 'Darkness at Noon', (...), I tried to come to intellectual terms with the intuitive glimpses gained during the 'hours by the window'. Both novels were variations on the same theme: the problem of Ends and Means, the conflict between transcendental morality and social expediency. The next novel, 'Arrival and Departure', was a rejection of the ethical neutrality of science as expressed in the psychiatrist's claim to be able to 'reduce' courage, dedication, and self-sacrifice to neurotic motives. Finally, in 'The Yogi and the Commissar', I tried once more to digest, in the form of essays this time, the meaning of the solitary dialogue of cell no. 40. This book, (...), closed the cycle, it had taken five years to digest the hours by the window.'¹

In this article I will first discuss Koestler's mystical experiences as he tells about them in the second volume of his autobio-

¹ Arthur Koestler, *The Invisible Writing*, London 1954, p. 358

graphy, 'The Invisible Writing'. I will show what kind of experiences Koestler had, and point out peculiarities of his experiences compared to those of other mystics. I will also discuss his interpretations of his experiences.

Then I will discuss the influence of mysticism in his first three novels and point out those passages that are relevant in this connection. These novels are 'The Gladiators' (1939), 'Darkness at Noon' (1940) and 'Arrival and Departure' (1943). These books make out three of the four ones in which Koestler tried to digest and understand his experiences. The fourth, 'The Yogi and the Commissar' (1945), is non-fictional, and I think a discussion of it would lead too far into sciences like physics and biology. I will therefore not discuss it here.

First it must be stated that it can be no doubt that Koestler's 'hours by the window' were genuine mystical experiences. In the first place he calls them so himself, as when he refers to them by saying 'Yet, "mystical" experiences, as we dubiously call them'.² The description of his experiences are also enclosed in several anthologies on mysticism as an example of mystical experiences in our time.³

As mentioned Koestler was in one of Franco's prisons when he had his mystical experiences. He expected to be shot there. But nevertheless he felt happy and at peace.

He sometimes had a split consciousness at this time, a phenomenon often mentioned by mystics. Koestler tells about it in this way: 'I had benefited from the well known phenomenon of a split consciousness, a dream-like, dazed self-estrangement which separated the conscious self from the acting self - the former becoming a detached observer, the latter an automaton'.⁴

Koestler mentions that this phenomenon happened in three subsequent dangerous situations and had a soothing effect. But he does not relate this phenomenon to his mystical experiences. It is known, however, that this split consciousness is often reported by mystics. H.D. Thoreau wrote for instance: 'With thinking we may be beside ourselves in a sane sense. By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences(...).

² Ibid., p. 352

³ See for instance W.T. Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, New York 1960, p. 230-235, and Aage Marcus, *Mystikk og mystikere*, Oslo 1966, p. 152-154

⁴ Koestler, *op.cit.*, p. 350

I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience'.⁵

A yogi sufficiently advanced on his path of enlightenment experiences such a split permanently. This phenomenon, however, might also be a symptom of scizofrenia.⁶

But the point here is that Koestler already before he had his first mystical experience, experienced a mental phenomenon common among mystics. And in spite of the fact that no generally accepted theory exists about how mystical experiences originate, one might suggest the hypothesis that before his mystical experiences had taken place, certain psychological processes had occurred that prepared him for the 'hours by the window'. This split consciousness was perhaps an effect of these processes.

Koestler himself suggests that one reason why his experiences happened was the various shocking events that occurred to him which 'had apparently caused a loosening up and displacement of psychic strata close to rock bottom — a softening of resistances and rearrangement of structures which laid them temporarily open to that new type of experience that I am leading up to.'⁷

This might be so. Frequently, however, the mystic is in a melancholy state of mind during the time preceding his experience. This was for instance the case regarding George Fox, the founder of Quakerism. But Koestler's state of mind was peaceful, as mentioned, in spite of the shocking events.

Scholars of mysticism often distinguish between spontaneous and acquired mystical experiences. A spontaneous experience is not willed by the mystic. The processes leading up to it take place in the subconscious, and the experience might then be started by some insignificant event. Koestler's experience is clearly of this type.

The acquired experiences are those brought about by some conscious effort in order to produce a mystical experience. Examples of such efforts are Hindu and Buddhist types of meditation, and the spiritual exercises of Ignatius Loyola.

The events that started Koestler's first experience was his attempt to recall Euclid's proof that the numbers of primes are in-

⁵H.D. Thoreau, *Walden — or Life in the Woods*, London, New York, Toronto 1906 (First published 1854), p. 120

⁶R.D. Laing, *The Divided Self*, Chicago 1960, p. 76

⁷Koestler, *op.cit.*, p. 350

finite. At first glance this might seem to have little to do with mysticism. Of course it is just the final link in a chain of causes leading up to the experience. But this problem is not altogether without relation to mysticism. As Koestler says: 'The scribbled symbols on the wall represented one of the rare cases where a meaningful and comprehensive statement about the infinite is arrived at by finite means'.⁸

When mystics describe their experiences, they use words like infinite, cosmical, boundless etc. And for Koestler Euclid's proof had a relation to the infinite. So it was perhaps no coincidence that just this event brought about his experience.

Koestler describes the experience like this: 'And then, for the first time, I suddenly understood the reason for this enchantment (of the proof): the scribbled symbols on the wall represented one of the rare cases where a meaningful and comprehensive statement about the infinite is arrived at by precise and finite means. The infinite is a mystical mass shrouded in a haze, and yet it was possible to gain some knowledge of it without losing oneself in treacherous ambiguities. The significance of this swept over me like a wave. The wave had originated in an articulate verbal insight, but this evaporated at once, leaving in its wake only a wordless essence, a fragrance of eternity (...). I must have stood there for some minutes, entranced, with a wordless awareness that 'this is perfect-perfect' until I noticed some slight mental discomfort (...): I was of course in prison and might be shot. But this was immediately answered by a feeling whose verbal translation would be: 'So what? is that all? have you got nothing more serious to worry about? (...). Then I was floating on my back in a river of peace, under bridges of silence. It came from nowhere and flowed nowhere. Then there was no river and no I. The I had ceased to exist.

It is extremely embarrassing to write down a phrase like that when one has read 'The Meaning of Meaning' and nibbled at logical positivism and aims at verbal precision and dislikes nebulous gushings. Yet, 'mystical' experiences, as we dubiously call them, are not nebulous, vague or maudling – they only become so when we debase them by verbalization. However, to communicate what is incommunicable by its nature, one must somehow put it into words, and so one moves in a vicious circle. When I say 'the I had

⁸ Ibid., p. 351

ceased to exist', I refer to a concrete experience that is verbally as incommunicable as the feeling aroused by a piano concerto, yet just as real – only much more real. In fact, its primary mark is the sensation that this state is more real than any other one has experienced before – that for the first time the veil has fallen and one is in touch with 'real reality', the hidden order of things, the X-ray texture of the world, normally obscured by layers of irrelevancy.

What distinguishes this type of experience from the emotional entrancements of music, landscapes, or love is that the former has a definitely intellectual, or rather noumenal, content. It is meaningful, though not in verbal terms. Verbal transcriptions that come nearest to it are: the unity and interlocking of everything that exists, an inter-dependence like that of gravitational fields or communicating vessels. The 'I' ceases to exist because it has, by a kind of mental osmosis, established communication with, and been dissolved in, the universal pool. It is this process of dissolution and limitless expansion which is sensed as the 'oceanic feeling', as the draining of all tension, the absolute catharsis, the peace that passeth all understanding'.⁹

Many definitions of mystical experiences exist. I will here use the definition of Professor W.T. Stace, who also has written a little about Koestler's experience. Stace distinguishes between extrovertive and introvertive mystical experiences. The main difference between them is that during the extrovertive experience the mystic perceives 'real reality' as Koestler says, or the One, or God, as other mystics say, in the surroundings. But during an introvertive experience the mystic experiences this reality in his own mind, having lost contact with the outer world.

Stace defines the two types of mystical experiences in this way:

'Common Characteristics of Extrovertive Mystical Experiences.

1. The Unifying Vision—all things are One.
2. The more concrete apprehension of the One as an inner subjectivity, or life, in all things.

Common Characteristics of Introvertive Mystical Experiences.

1. The Unitary Consciousness, the One, the Void, pure consciousness.
2. Nonspatial, nontemporal.

⁹ Ibid., p. 351-352

- | | |
|--|---|
| 3. Sense of objectivity or reality | 3. Sense of objectivity or reality. |
| 4. Blessedness, peace etc. | 4. Blessedness, peace etc. |
| 5. Feeling of the holy, sacred, or divine. | 5. Feeling of the holy, sacred, or divine. |
| 6. Paradoxicality. | 6. Paradoxicality. |
| 7. Alleged by mystics to be ineffable. | 7. Alleged by mystics to be ineffable'. ¹⁰ |

Although Stace does not mention it here, one also ought to stress the difference between mystical experiences of a personal kind and those being impersonal. This distinction will be important when discussing certain passages of 'Darkness at Noon'. In a personal experience the mystic realizes an entity with certain personal aspects, whom he might call God, the World-Soul, or the like. During the impersonal experience he is in an impersonal state of mind. An example is Nirvana in Buddhism. Christian mysticism is generally personal, Eastern mysticism usually impersonal.

Stace classifies Koestler's experience as a partial and incomplete introvertive mystical experience,¹¹ since the attention is directed inward and not outward, although Koestler still had some awareness of the outer world. To clarify this Stace wrote some questions to Koestler, to which Koestler replied: 'Q: Am I right in supposing that during the experiences your physical senses were still in operation, so that you continued to perceive the various physical objects around you (. . .)?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they become dim or fuzzy at the edges?

A: No. But they were just there in the margin of attention, but unattended to.

Q: One of the Upanishads says: 'It is pure unitary experience wherein awareness of the world and of multiplicity is completely obliterated.' Have you had any experience like this? Do you think that when the Upanishad speaks of the awareness of multiplicity being 'completely obliterated' it is perhaps exaggerating?

A: No, I did not experience that. That must be a higher degree. But somehow I believe that the experience exists and that its description is not exaggerated.¹²

¹⁰ W.T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, London 1961, p. 131-132

¹¹ W.T. Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, New York 1960, p. 230

¹² W.T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, London 1961, p. 122

But although Koestler did not attain the highest stage, his experience is still an example of the unitary consciousness because he writes about the 'unity and interlocking of everything that exists', as the closest characterization of the experience he could give. And this peculiar feeling of unity with everything is the chief characteristic of the unitary consciousness. Koestler describes this consciousness further by saying: 'The "I" ceases to exist because it has, by a kind of mental osmosis, established communication with, and been dissolved in, the universal pool'.

Such ego-loss is frequently reported by mystics. But in some cases the ego, often in a more vague form, continues to exist, and there is a distinction between the ego of the mystic and 'true reality', the Absolute, God, or what he calls that he experiences.

Regarding the objectivity and reality of the experiences (characteristic 3) Koestler says: 'These (mystical experiences) one may regard as 'real' in the sense of subjective pointers to an objective reality *ipso facto* eluding comprehension.'¹³

He thus maintains that his experiences are not in themselves an objective reality. But they give a proof that such a reality exists. By 'objective' he seems to mean 'extramental'. He says that the experiences 'had filled me with a direct certainty that a higher order of reality existed. I came to call it later on 'the reality of the third order'!¹⁴

The requirements of characteristic 4 is fulfilled since he says that he was 'floating on my back in a river of peace'. That the experience was holy (characteristic 5) seems, however, not to have been mentioned.

The paradoxicality of the experience (characteristic 6) is probably also mentioned. He refers to reflections on his experiences by saying that: 'they will become more embarrassing and more difficult to put into words. They will also contradict each other – for we are moving here through strata that are held together by the cement of contradiction'.¹⁵

He also talks about his experiences as ineffable (characteristic 7) as when he says that to write about them is like trying 'to communicate what is incommunicable by its nature'.

When Koestler describes his mystical experiences, he does not say that they were nonspatial and nontemporal (characteristic 2).

¹³ Koestler, *op.cit.*, p. 349

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 353

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 349

In his comments on them, however, he says: 'so the "third order" disclosed that time, space, and causality, that the isolation, separateness, and spatio-temporal limitations of the self were merely optical illusions on the next higher level'.¹⁶

As mentioned above, the 'third order' was Koestler's name for this objective, 'real' reality his experiences allegedly disclosed. From the viewpoint of the 'third order', time and space are illusions. But this does not necessarily imply that this 'third order' and the mystical experiences revealing its existence are nonspatial and nontemporal, as characteristic 2 requires. Something might be spatial and temporal although it reveals that these qualities are unreal. Koestler is a bit unclear at this point.

I can thus conclude that characteristics 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7 belong to Koestler's experience. But whether characteristic 2 belongs to it is uncertain. Characteristic 5, however, does not seem to be mentioned in connection with his experience. Stace defines a fully developed mystical experience as having all the characteristics on his list. Experiences having only some he calls borderline cases. Koestler's experience is therefore a borderline case of an introvertive mystical experience, although close to a fully developed one.

Peculiar to Koestler's experience is also that it is impersonal. He experienced a state, not a personal being. He also experienced ego-loss during the experience. But as said above other mystics retain their ego or some aspects of it during their experiences.

Mystical experiences are also roughly divided in two groups according to their emotional tone. One group of experiences are of an intellectual and serene kind. The experiences of Meister Eckhart and Shankara belonged to this group. The experiences of the other group are characterized by ecstasy and violent emotions. St. Theresa's and Mechthild of Magdeburg's experiences belonged for instance to this group.

Koestler's experiences seem, however, to belong to the first of these groups.

Koestler's experience apparently lasted between a few minutes and an hour. It was for this reason not like a flash, which often is reported. But it is also far from that state which in Christian mysticism is called 'The Unitive Life' or 'Spiritual Marriage', i.e. that state when the mystic constantly lives in the mystical consciousness. St. Teresia and John of the Cross lived in this state.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 354

What Koestler writes about the end of the experience and its aftereffects is well-known in the mystical tradition. He felt that the experience left a 'serene and fear-dispelling aftereffect that lasted for hours and days. It was as if a massive dosis of vitamins had been injected into the veins. Or, to change the metaphor, I resumed my travels through the cell like an old car with its batteries freshly recharged'.¹⁷

Such effects are often mentioned by mystics. Peace, joy, and energy follow an experience.

The experiences had also long-range effects. In fact they changed his whole personality. This is the usual effect of mystical experiences. The mystic's character is reshaped. This process has in the West been called the *via mystica*, the mystical path.

This development is often characterized by great emotional changes, by ups and downs. Sometimes mystics might go through real depressions, that in Christian tradition often is called 'the dark night of the soul'. Koestler writes about this: 'I feel that this present account gives a far too tidy and logical description of a spiritual crisis with its constant ups and downs, advances and relapses, its oscillation between new certainties and old doubts, its sudden illuminations, followed by long periods of inner darkness, petty resentments and fear. My stay in cell no. 40 was a protracted, compulsory sojourn on the 'tragic plane', where every day is judgment day. When I got out, the process continued. It had started at the unconscious foundations, but it took many years till it gradually altered the intellectual structure'.¹⁸

Koestler thinks that this development lasts for a long time. He opposes the views of some Christian converts by saying: 'I do not believe that anybody, except a very primitive person, can be reborn in one night, as so many tales of sudden conversions will have it. I do believe that one can suddenly "see the light" and undergo a change that will completely alter the course of one's life. But a change of this kind takes place at the spiritual core of the subject, and it will take a long time to seep through to the periphery, until in the end the entire personality, his conscious thoughts and actions, become impregnated with it. A conversion which, after the first genuine crisis, saves further labour by buying a whole packet of ready-made beliefs, and replaces one set of dogmas by another, can hardly be an inspiring example (...) Nor do I believe that a

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 352

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 357

true spiritual transformation can be the result of a process of conscious reasoning working its way downward, as it were. It begins on the level where the unconscious axioms of faith, the implicit premisses of thinking, the innate standards of value, are located.¹⁹

Koestler's experiences became the base for an independent philosophy. His views are not those of any particular religious creed or philosophy, although they show similarities with some mystical philosophical systems. He writes: 'The hours by the window, (...), had filled me with a direct certainty that a higher order of reality existed and that it alone invested existence with meaning. I came to call it later on 'the reality of the third order'. The narrow world of sensory perception constituted the first order: this perceptual world was enveloped by the conceptual world which contained phenomena not directly perceivable, such as gravitation, electromagnetic fields, and curved space. The second order of reality filled in the gaps and gave meaning to the absurd patchiness of the sensory world.

In the same manner, the third order of reality enveloped, interpenetrated, and gave meaning to the second. It contained 'occult' phenomena which could not be apprehended or explained either on the sensory or on the conceptual level, and yet occasionally invaded them like spiritual meteors piercing the primitive's vaulted sky.'²⁰

This interpretation could clearly not have been written by any mystic before the beginning of modern science. Koestler regards this 'reality of the third order' as more fundamental than the ordinary physical world. But although Koestler uses the language of modern physics, his views are close to those mystical, metaphysical systems maintaining that the 'true reality' of the mystical experience is more real and basic than the sensory world, and that the latter is somehow derived from and owes its existence to the former.

From other passages it is clear that he regards this third order as basically incommunicable and irrational. His views thus contradict the well-known marxist thesis that everything in the universe is rational, and that natural phenomena never can be explained by something irrational. But Koestler felt that it was the ethical implications of his experiences that mostly contradicted communist views.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 357

²⁰ Ibid., p. 353-354

He has also the following comments to his experience: 'one could not hope to grasp in cognate terms the nature of ultimate reality. It was a text written in invisible ink, and though one could not read it, the knowledge that it existed was sufficient to alter the texture of one's existence, and make one's actions conform to the text.'

I liked to spin out this metaphor. The captain of a ship sets out with a sealed order in his pocket which he is only permitted to open on the high seas (...), but when the moment arrives and he tears the envelope open, he only finds an invisible text which defies all attempts at chemical treatment. Now and then a word becomes visible, or a figure denoting a meridian, then it fades again. He will never know the exact wording of the order, nor whether he has complied with it or failed in his mission. But his awareness of the order in his pocket, even though it cannot be deciphered, makes him think and act differently from the captain of a pleasure-cruiser or of a pirate ship.'²¹

The title of the second volume of his autobiography, 'The Invisible Writing', is alluding to this passage and to this reality of the third order.

Koestler says that for him this reality was mainly unknown. But he does not discuss whether it can be known in its entirety, although not in rational terms, e.g. later in his development as a mystic.

The influences of Koestler's mystical experiences on his books were mainly ethical. And these ethical influences were in the main caused by this feeling of identity with everything existing which is a part of the mystical experience. He writes: 'For it struck me as self-evident that we were all responsible for each other - not only in the superficial sense of social responsibility, but because, in some inexplicable manner, we partook of the same substance or identity, like Siamese twins or communicating vessels. If everybody were an island, how could the world be a concern of his?'²²

Similar views also exist in Buddhism that teaches that the root of evil is that the individual egos of persons overshadow their fundamental identity with each other and the universe.

This feeling of identity with everything is the cornerstone of most ethical systems based on mystical experiences. Stace writes for instance: 'The basis of the mystical theory of ethics is that

²¹ Ibid., p. 354

²² Ibid., p. 355-356

the separateness of individual selves produces that egoism which is the source of conflict, grasping, aggressiveness, selfishness, hatred, cruelty, malice, and other forms of evil, and that this separateness is abolished in the mystical consciousness (...) there is, in that reality which the mystic believes himself to perceive, no separateness of I from you, or of you from he, and (...) we are all one in the Universal Self – the emotional counterpart of this is love.²³

Most mystics claim that their experiences filled them with love, and they felt it to be a duty to pour out this love to their fellowmen. Koestler does not explicitly mention that a feeling of love accompanied his experience. Neither does he say that this reality he experienced was the source of all ethical values, as many mystics claim.

The problem of ends and means that was so central in Koestler's first books, is not common in mystical literature. That Koestler was so preoccupied with it, must be a result of his background as a communist. The problem illustrates the conflict between Marxist-Leninist utilitarian ethics and that ethics Koestler derived from his mystical experiences. According to the former almost any sacrifice and means was justified to promote the cause and bring about a utopia with happiness for all. Koestler has given many examples of what it implied. He once wrote: 'My Party comrades, for instance, would say that the question whether A should sacrifice his life for B, depended entirely on the relative social value of A and B.'²⁴ Koestler felt, however, that when human beings were involved, this problem could not be solved merely by some kind of calculation.

In Koestler's first novel, 'The Gladiators', this problem of ends and means, which Koestler felt was closely related to mysticism, is central. The book does not contain, however, any *direct* allusions to mysticism.

The great moral problem of the slave leader Spartacus is that in order to establish and preserve his supreme goal, the new society, the Sun State, he could not shrink from any measure. He thus once had to crucify 24 of his leading men to avoid a break-down of army discipline.

Spartacus's problem was formulated by the lawyer Fulvius from Capua, who wrote the chronicle of the slaves' rebellion: 'he who

²³ Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, London 1961, p. 324

²⁴ Koestler, *op.cit.*, p. 356

guides the blind may not shirk a reputation of haughtiness. He must harden himself against their sufferings, be deaf to their cries. For he must defend their own interests against their own want of reason, which attitude will often force him to inflict measures which may appear as arbitrary as they are difficult to understand. He will have to make detours whose point is lost on others, for he alone can see, while they are blind.'²⁵

This could as well have been a formulation of Lenin's view of the relation between the Communist Party and the Masses. It is therefore no coincidence that many communist organizations have called themselves 'Spartacus'.

But Spartacus is more like Raskolnikow than like Stalin. He learns that logic is one thing, ethics another.

The same problem is also central in Koestler's next novel, 'Darkness at Noon'. Apart from giving a theory why many leading communists confessed at the Moscow Trials, it is also a confrontation with Marxist-Leninist, and in particular with Stalinist ethics, personified in the examining magistrates Ivanov and Gletkin. Ivanov says for instance: 'The principle that the end justifies the means is and remains the only rule of political ethics.'²⁶

Many of Koestler's thoughts on this principle and what he believed it to imply are found in the mottos preceding each chapter. He thus quoted one Dietrich of Nieheim, bishop of Verden, who wrote in the fifteenth century: 'When the existence of the Church is threatened, she is released from the commandments of morality. With unity as the end, the use of every means is sanctified, even cunning, treachery, violence, simony, prison, death. For all order is for the sake of the community, and the individual must be sacrificed to the common good.'²⁷

What here is said about the Church, could as well have been applied to the Communist Party as Koestler saw it.

Thus 'Darkness at Noon' in many ways resembles 'Crime and Punishment' by Dostojevski. In Dostojevski's novel the central problem is also about ends and means. But Raskolnikow had to draw the conclusion that the end did not justify the means in his case. And Rabashow formulates the conclusion of Raskolnikow by saying that human beings cannot be treated according to the rules of arithmetic. He says that Raskolnikow discovers that 'twice two are not four when the mathematical units are human beings.'²⁸

²⁵ Koestler, *The Gladiators*, London 1949, p. 182

²⁶ Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*, London 1954, p. 152

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 97

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 152

It is therefore no surprise when Ivanov says that every copy of Dostojevski's book ought to be burnt.

Koestler's own solution to the problem can probably be found in the quote from Lasalle that he puts as a motto before the last chapter:

'Show us not the aim without the way.
For ends and means on earth are so entangled
That changing one, you change the other too
Each different path brings other ends in view.'²⁹

It is probably not correct that every new set of means will change the end as well, as stated here. That will depend on the nature of the means as well as on the whole situation. But it is clear that the means used will often also influence the end, although not always. But it is hard to give any general rule about how much the goals will be affected. That can only be decided by analyzing each particular situation.

In the book Koestler does not mention the philosopher who is best known for his thinking about ends and means, i.e. Kant. But some of Kant's thoughts are nevertheless discussed and Rubashov seems to give them a vague support.

Kant believed that every person, including oneself, should be treated as an end and never as a mere means. But Ivanov opposes the idea that the 'individual is sacrosanct', which might be a way of saying that it is an end in itself, by pointing out that then a battalion commander might not sacrifice a patrolling party to save the regiment. To that Rubashov answers that war is an abnormal circumstance.³⁰ But Rubashov does not mention the various objections that can be raised to the principle also in normal times, e.g., the way society imprison criminals as a means to deter others from crimes, or the fact that when a population is vaccinated against some diseases, a few persons will die due to the injection etc.

'Darkness at Noon' has many references to and descriptions of mystical experiences. It also contains descriptions of a phenomenon that resembles the 'split-consciousness' that Koestler tells about in his autobiography. Rubashov felt that his ego contained a component that he had not been aware of. He writes: '... by his observations Rubashov gradually became convinced that there was a thoroughly tangible component in this first person singular,

²⁹ Ibid., p. 231

³⁰ Ibid., p. 152

which had remained silent through all these years and now had started to speak.³¹

This component seems to be what psychologists call an autonomous complex, i.e. some split-off part of the psyche which is felt to have an independent existence in the mind. Such complexes have different contents. Some are so comprehensive that they make up a whole personality of their own beside the person's ordinary one. Others have a rather limited content. In the minds of some schizophrenics there might be a multitude of such autonomous complexes which alternate of having control.

An autonomous complex is either conscious or unconscious. For Rubashov it seems to have been unconscious during his previous life but became conscious during his time in the cell.

The way Koestler describes this autonomous complex shows that it is related to mysticism. He gives it different names. Sometimes he calls it 'the silent partner', and sometimes 'the grammatical fiction'. It speaks to Rubashov with an 'inner voice'. Koestler writes about it: 'Rubashov tried to study this newly discovered entity very thoroughly (...) he felt a compelling urge to clear up this matter, to 'think it to a logical conclusion'. But the realm of the 'grammatical fiction' seemed to begin just where the 'thinking to a conclusion' ended. It was obviously an essential part of its being, to remain out of the reach of logical thought, and then to take one unaware s.'³²

Once it is characterized in this way: 'but the silent partner just remains silent, shuns observation and even refuses to be localized in time and space.'³³

This silent partner seems thus to be irrational and apparently also in a way nonspatial and nontemporal. It can probably be regarded as the content of a borderline introvertive experience of the personal type. Like Koestler's own mystical experience it has ethical significance, as when Rubashov reflects: 'His consciousness of guilt, which Ivanov called "moral exaltation", could not be expressed in logical formulae - it lay in the realm of the "grammatical fiction".'³⁴

Koestler also describes how to communicate with this silent partner. He explains thereby how an experience of this partner leads to an impersonal, mystical experience: 'He (the silent part-

³¹ Ibid., p. 109

³² Ibid., p. 111

³³ Ibid., p. 109

³⁴ Ibid., p. 146

ner) was deaf to direct questions (...). And yet there were ways of approach to him. Sometimes he would respond unexpectedly to a tune (...), or of the folded hands of the Pietà, or of certain scenes of his childhood. As if a tuning-fork had been struck, there would be answering vibrations, and once this had started a state would be produced which the mystics called 'ecstasy' and saints 'contemplation', the greatest and soberest of modern psychologists had recognized this state as a fact and called it the 'oceanic sense'. And, indeed, one's personality dissolved as a grain of salt in the sea, but at the same time the infinite sea seemed to be contained in the grain of salt. The grain could no longer be localized in time and space. It was a state in which thought lost its direction and started to circle, like the compass needle at the magnetic pole, until finally it cut loose from its axis and travelled freely in space, like a bunch of light in the night, and until it seemed that all thoughts and all sensations, even pain and joy itself, were only the spectrum lines of the same ray of light, disintegrating in the prisma of consciousness.³⁵

This is clearly a description of an introverted, impersonal experience, partly more detailed than Koestler's account of his own experience in 'The Invisible Writing'. It seems also that Koestler reserves the term 'mystical' for the impersonal experience and not for the experience of this silent parmer. This, however, is a matter of definition. Many mystics have both had such personal experiences as well as impersonal ones. The latter has generally been regarded as the higher ones. Meister Eckhart called the content of his personal experiences for God and the content of the impersonal ones for the Godhead.

The mystical state described here is probably of the introverted kind, because Rubashov's attention seems to be directed inwards. But like Koestler's first experience it is not fully developed since some reminiscences of sensations and thoughts still remain, although somehow transformed into 'the spectrum lines of the same ray of light, disintegrating in the prisma of consciousness.'

Rubashov's impersonal experience seems to have the following of Stace's characteristics. The dissolution of the ego into something greater, which is a way of describing the Unitary Consciousness (characteristic 1). It is (probably) nonspatial and nontemporal (characteristic 2). The formulation that thought 'lost its direction and started to circle', may be a way of expressing the irrationality

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 244

and paradoxicality of the experience (characteristic 6). Other characteristics do not seem to be present. Rubashov's experience can therefore be termed a borderline, introvertive mystical experience that developed from a personal into an impersonal state.

In the quote Koestler mentions a phenomenon that is not included in the description of his own experience. That is the well-known mystical 'all-in-all'-experience which is here expressed like this: 'but at the same time the infinite sea seemed to be contained in a grain of salt'. This is a variation of the somewhat strange idea in mysticism that everything existing might be contained in a single object, an idea Blake expressed when he said he 'saw the world in a grain of sand'.

It seems, however, that Rubashov also had impersonal mystical experiences that were not brought about by this silent partner. In one passage it is said that: 'Apparently even a patch of blue sky was enough to cause the "oceanic state".'³⁶ On the same page Koestler writes: 'When he had read that newspaper notice (...), he had fallen into a queer state of exaltation – the 'oceanic state' had swept him away'. This also seems to be a typical example of spontaneous experiences.

A phenomenon that usually accompanies a mystical experience is a deep feeling of inner silence. Rubashov felt it like this: 'When he stood still (...), the silence between the whitewashed walls came to meet him, as from the depth of a well. He still did not understand why it had become so quiet, within and without. But he knew that now nothing could disturb that peace any more.'³⁷

This silence had sunk over him just before he held his last speech at the trial. It is not connected with a mystical experience. Nevertheless the mystical consciousness he had had before, might have contributed to this quietness, since mystical awareness generally is followed by such a state of silence.

Rubashov also reflects on the value of these experiences: The communist view he sums up like this: 'The Party disapproved of such states. It called them petit-bourgeois mysticism, refuge in the ivory tower. It called them 'escape from the task', 'Desertion of the class struggle'. The 'oceanic sense' was counter-revolutionary.'³⁸

This is the communist variety of the old claim that the mystic is an escapee from the world. He seeks isolation to enjoy his own

³⁶ Ibid., p. 245

³⁷ Ibid., p. 241

³⁸ Ibid., p. 245-246

transcendent pleasures. But this view is generally opposed in the mystical tradition. Meister Eckhart wrote for instance: 'Those who are out for "feelings" or for "great experiences" and only wish to have this pleasant side: that is self-will and nothing else.'³⁹ The mystic ought also to be active in the world.

Rubashov reasons further: 'But had these irrational processes become more admissible merely because he had a personal acquaintance with them now? Was it any the less necessary to fight the 'mystical intoxication' merely because one had oneself become intoxicated by it.'⁴⁰

Rubashov's final conclusion regarding his experiences is, however, positive. He puts them into a larger social context and thinks: 'Perhaps later (...) the new movement would arise - with new flags, a new spirit knowing of both: of economic fatality and the 'oceanic sense'. Perhaps the members of the new party will wear monks' cowls, and preach that only purity of means can justify the ends. Perhaps they will teach that the tenet is wrong which says that a man is the product of one million divided by one million, and will introduce a new kind of arithmetic based on multiplication: on the joining of a million individuals to form a new entity which (...) will develop a consciousness and an individuality of its own, with an "oceanic feeling" increased a millionfold.'⁴¹

The vision of a new society is contrasted with his former ideals, and Rubashov sums up the message of the book in this way: 'For forty years he had lived strictly in accordance with the vows of his order, the Party. He had held to the rules of logical calculation. He had burnt the remains of the old, illogical morality from his consciousness with the acid of reason. He had turned away from the temptations of the silent partner, and had fought against the 'oceanic sense' with all his might. And where had it landed him? Premises of unimpeachable truth had led to a result which was completely absurd, Ivanov's and Gletkin's irrefutable deductions had taken him straight into the weird and ghostly game of the public trial.'⁴²

In 'Arrival and Departure' there is probably no direct description of a mystical experience. But the hero seems sometimes to be on the verge of a borderline experience. In those cases he uses many mystical-sounding phrases. He describes for instance a dream in

³⁹ Rudolf Otto, *Mysticism East and West*, New York 1957, p. 73

⁴⁰ Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*, London 1954, p. 150

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 249

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 246-247

this way: 'He stood engulfed from all sides in a very bright, transparent fluid which permeated his body, and he knew that the fluid was Time and that where he stood was its centre, the present. Then he realized that this fluid was cool and dry, and he said aloud: I am a fossil in the crystal of frozen time. He experienced an exquisite coolness and cleanness, and said in a serene voice: I am a captive immured in the present, which is the crystalized void.

He dearly regretted that he had woken up in the middle of the dream, when he seemed just on the verge of some blissful and important discovery. (...) All he remembered now of his dream was the sensation of a vibrating, penetrating void, and the phrase: 'A prisoner empty time'.⁴³

Often mystical experiences occur during sleep.⁴⁴ Sometimes a mystical experience is also foreboded in a dream.

What above is said about time, is similar to many mystics' philosophizing about it, a philosophizing that often appear somewhat obscure. Mystics frequently report that the feeling of time is changed in many peculiar ways. Time might be identified with a tangible object or looked upon as unreal and superficial. Some also hold that it imprisons man so that he does not get the full experience of reality.

A mystical-sounding expression used in the passage is 'This bright, transparent fluid' which somehow also is time. The notion seems similar to that 'life-force', 'transcendent essence' etc. that the extrovertive mystics see in nature and which often makes everything shining with a 'celestial' light.

The concepts 'crystalized void' and 'vibrating, penetrating void' has perhaps a similar meaning as the mystical concepts 'the void', 'nothingness', 'emptiness', 'pure consciousness' etc. which so often are used to describe the introvertive mystical experience.

The hero also felt he was on the verge of some blissful and important discovery. This might be an indication that this vague, borderline-like experience might develop into a real mystical experience. But it must be stressed that one cannot be sure that this dream renders a borderline mystical experience. The dream only contains a few elements that might be interpreted in that way.

Later the hero becomes acquainted with some new aspect of his being, with his inner core that seems to have some mystical char-

⁴³ Koestler, *Arrival and Departure*, London 1966, p. 58-59

⁴⁴ Aelfrida Tillyard, *Spiritual Exercises and their Result*, London 1927, p. 50.

acteristics. He says about it: 'Yes, Sonia was right, but all her logic could not interfere with this experience of supreme peace which seemed to emanate from a source beyond her reach, from the very core of his self.'⁴⁵

As his personality develops, a new faith is formed with a certain religious and mystical tinge. The hero writes: 'I think a new god is about to be born (...). Don't try to divine his message or the form of his cult - this will be after our time. The mystics of to-day are as trite as the political reformers.'⁴⁶

Those passages in 'Arrival and Departure' which might have something to do with mystical experiences are, however, rather peripheral. Koestler has formulated the central theme in this way: "'Arrival and Departure" was a rejection of the ethical neutrality of science. The hero, who has been made to see on the psychiatrist's coach that his beliefs "in big words and little flags" have been illusions, his courage vanity, his self-sacrifice the effect of repressed guilt, is apparently cured of all these unreasonable attitudes. Yet after the cure, he once more volunteers for a dangerous and self-sacrificing mission, driven by an urge that emanates from his untouchable core, beyond psychological causation and beyond the grasp of reason.'⁴⁷

As Koestler says in his autobiography, this theme is also derived from his mystical experiences. He felt that his mystical experiences implied that ethical conduct was something irreducible. They could not be explained by factors from any science. The hero formulated his credo like this: 'If one accepted a faith, one should not ask because of what - the "because of" should be taken for granted, beyond questioning.'⁴⁸

Perhaps Koestler's ethical views can be formulated in the way that ethical conduct and imperatives ought to be regarded as indefinable and irreducible. They cannot be explained by something else. Koestler thus rejects so called naturalism in ethics, i.e. those theories that maintain that ethical concepts can be analysed without remainder into non-ethical characteristics, e.g. taken from psychoanalysis.

When Koestler rejects the reduction of ethical norms and conduct to something else, he also rejects fundamental parts of Freud's theories.

⁴⁵ Koestler, *op.cit.*, p.175

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.186-187

⁴⁷ Koestler, *The Invisible Writing*, London 1954, p.358

⁴⁸ Koestler, *Arrival and Departure*, London 1954, p.176.

Communism and psychoanalysis were the two theories that most influenced Koestler in his youth. In 'The Gladiators' and in particular in 'Darkness at Noon' he broke with communism. But in 'Arrival and Departure' he mainly rejected Freud.

Many great authors have been mystics, like Dostojevski, Proust, Valery, Thoreau, Whitman, and Tennyson. But the mysticism in their works have always got a personal form. And this is especially so regarding Koestler. His mystical experiences might be of the same kind as those known thousands of years ago. But characteristic for him is that his experiences have been interpreted and brought to bear upon important currents of thought in this century, so that his work is something that only could have appeared in our time.