

Como se puede observar fácilmente las diferencias entre la obra de Cormeille y de Calderón son notables.

Comparando las secuencias de las situaciones dramáticas en ambas obras no es difícil llegar a la conclusión de que son totalmente distintas. En la obra de Cormeille el desarrollo de la acción da lugar a un embrollo de reconocimientos causante de numerosas complicaciones psicológicas que llevan al desenlace. En la obra calderoniana el autor recurre a las intervenciones exteriores y el desenlace se hace gracias a una de ellas.

El mensaje también es distinto. La obra de Cormeille sólo funciona al nivel de relaciones interpersonales, mientras que la de Calderón tiene también el nivel ideológico, intentando ilustrar una tesis filosófica.

Todas estas y algunas más diferencias entre las dos obras sugieren, en nuestra opinión, que las convergencias son meramente casuales. Que sea Calderón el imitador parece muy poco probable por las razones ya expuestas por Valle-Abad. Por otra parte un argumento no despreciable apoya la tesis de la originalidad de la tragedia de Cormeille: el autor francés considera su obra original y no menciona ninguna fuente de inspiración, aunque lo hace abierta y ampliamente con otras obras cuyas de influencia española, indicando siempre al autor y la obra que lo inspiró.

LUBELSKIE MATERIAŁY  
NEOFITOLOGICZNE NR 18  
LUBLIN 1994

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#### Polysemy of Names in Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*

„Pick up some words... Them, we can talk about” (151), says Emory Bortz, a neurotic scholar, when Oedipa enquires about the meaning of „The Courier's Tragedy.” This statement is symptomatic of the fate of the reader of Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, who is doomed to pick words and try to construct the novel's reality on their basis. Being as knowledgeable as he is, Pynchon continually uses puns, encyclopedic facts, abbreviations, references to various obscure sources, and theories relating to nearly all the fields of science, art and life, all in order to make reading of his books as intellectually involving as possible.

On surface a regular book about a middle-class housewife entangled in a labyrinthine plot, at the core *The Crying of Lot 49* appears to be a labyrinth itself, whose layout is not determined and whose shape continuously changes. The reader has to work his way through Pynchon's convoluted and information-charged prose, following the plot of the novel. Simultaneously, however, the reader also attempts to interpret the design in the text itself, which treacherously entangles him to the same extent as the protagonist. One more part of this design along these mentioned above are acronyms and names, whose very appearance can provoke the suspicions of an inquisitive reader.

Acronyms used in the novel constitute the first source of possible ambiguity, and that is where Pynchon starts to tease the reader with the distorted and unexpected meanings. Two of the most central acronyms for the plot are W.A.S.T.E. and D.E.A.T.H., which read as common nouns, have a somewhat sinister shading. Depending whether they are spelled as acronyms or ordinary nouns they may assume different meanings. The former acronym stands for We Await Silent Tristero Empire, but at the same time the nominal interpretation of „waste” as garbage presents itself since waste bins are used as mail boxes of the Tristero as well as a number of other underground organizations. W.A.S.T.E. may also indicate what its users are perceived to be -human waste, the disinherited

ones, the collection of society's waste and refuse, children of the night.<sup>1</sup> The latter acronym - Don't Ever Antagonize The Horn - treated as a noun points to the clandestine character of the Tristero and the fate of all those who threatened it with disclosure. In addition, both having crucial significance for the plot, the acronyms are decrypted only some 20 pages before the end of the novel having appeared dozens of times before and contributed to pending uncertainty on the part of both Oedipa and the reader.

The next group of acronyms which introduce confusion are those perfectly known to most readers, but turning out to mean something entirely different. Accordingly, CIA ceases to abbreviate Central Intelligence Agency and A.C.D.C. no longer means "alternate current, direct current" or the slang expression for "bisexual", and both come to stand for Conjuracion de los Insurgentes Anarquistas and Alameda County Death Cult respectively. There are a few acronyms which (made up by Pynchon) point out to actual words, like N.A.D.A. standing for National Automobile Dealers' Association, the organization which Mucho, Oedipa's husband, belonged to, and which read as a word means in Spanish "nothingness", "void", I.A. - Inamorati Anonymous being an obvious allusion to Alcoholics Anonymous; or P.P.S. - Peter Penguin Society reminding of Post Postscriptum, possibly because of its marginal character. Finally, there is KCUF, the name of Mucho's radio station not belonging to any of the above categories, but read backwards being an oblique commentary on his weakness for "jilted chicks calling] in with requests".<sup>2</sup>

All these, either through the displacement or the shift of original meaning, open a considerable number of new contextual interpretations for the reader striving in vain to pin down their exact denotation. For some readers this is a bad news, some others find these possibilities refreshing and helpful in projecting their own worlds of Pynchon's novel. The likes notwithstanding, the presence of these acronyms does contribute considerably to the book's ambiguity.

The major source of this ambiguity, however, is to be found in names of both characters and places. Here the possibilities are vast and at times seem simply endless. Additionally, Pynchon uses a very original strategy, which is substantially different from what other writers do. Generally, there are two methods in the naming of fictional characters. The first operates randomly, with names taken from real life and usually not qualifying as Clyde Griffiths from Dreiser or Charley Anderson from Don Passos. The other method asserts names with a dominant

<sup>1</sup> The black as the color of the Tristero and outcasts relates very closely to the Black from the only non-fiction by Pynchon, "Journey Into The Mind of Watts" published in *The New York Times Magazine*, (June 12, 1966, pp. 33-35, 78, 80-82, 84). In this article Pynchon writes about the Blacks from the Los Angeles district Watts, "the poor, the defeated, the criminal, the desperate, all hanging in there with what must seem a terrible vitality" (35).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1966), p. 15. All subsequent references are noted in the text within parentheses.

quality of characters who bear them, the obvious examples being Christopher Newman in James or Stephen Dedalus in Joyce.

Pynchon decidedly uses the latter and often invents impossible names, but then denies the characters' most, if not all, of the qualities that the name usually implies. This is particularly true with the minor characters whose apparently meaningful names give "false" connotations to a person who does not live up to the implied features at all. Still, such a name leaves with the reader a certain concept of what a character should be like, and by creating expectations concerning the behavior of a figure it can distort to a lesser or greater extent his vision of the character. On the other hand, the naming and characterization of major figures carries a plethora of meanings which literally swamp supposed traits of their character. Even though some critics claim the names point to archetypal nature of the characters,<sup>3</sup> others demand that Pynchon actually insists the abstractions of the world are useless, which would also include the characterization of protagonists through naming.<sup>4</sup> It seems that the truth lies in between both statements, considering the above mentioned differences between the minor and major characters.

The most obvious example of the above is the name of the main protagonist, Oedipa Mass, of which exists a considerable number of interpretations with some pointing to qualities she actually displays and others applying to her on the basis of reversal or satirical meaning. The most often discussed aspect of her personality is naturally related to the myth of Oedipus. At that point there are, however, probably more differences than similarities. Admittedly, she strives to decipher the Tristero conspiracy in the same way as Oedipus confronts the Sphinx and faces riddles which ultimately lead to the very person of the solver - it is primarily her initiation into the underground and dissent that is obvious at the close of the book. But that is the only real similarity between two of them. There is no single mention of the relationship with her parents which plays such an important role in the Greek myth. By solving a riddle Oedipus saved Thebes while Oedipa saves only herself from the insultation. His search for the murderer of his father is juxtaposed with hers for meaning, and after their respective discoveries, the former becomes isolated, alienated, whereas the latter realizes that the only conclusion must be pluralistic and in that sense reaffirms the mystery she strived to unveil.

The Oedipus myth is only an iceberg tip of her name's contexts. The nickname her husband calls her is Oed which can stand for Oxford English Dictionary - a place to look up etymologies and chase down intricacies of

<sup>3</sup> Manfred Puetz, "Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*: The World is a Tristero system", *Mosaic* 7, No. 4 (1974), p. 132.

<sup>4</sup> James D. Young, "The Enigma Variations of Thomas Pynchon", *Critique* 10, No. 1 (1967), p. 72.

meaning, an activity she indulges in.<sup>5</sup> Her last name opens equally many interpretations. The first impression to mind is the phonetic variation of „mass,” possibly signifying the multiplicity of sources she checks. Moreover, her surname has got the exact spelling as „a mass” in Spanish - the language Pynchon seems to enjoy using quite often in his works. Finally, „Mass” in German means measure, proportion, moderation and these were ascribed to Oedipa because of her attempts at finding a measure to synthesize the shattered experience of American life.

Oedipa's husband's first name, Mucho, acquires additional meaning on the principle of antithesis. Being entangled in the crisis of consciousness over his profession and later on in the LSD addiction, he represents everything but masculine strength and decisiveness. A much broader spectrum of reference is connected with another man in Oedipa's life - Pierce Inverarity. Even though dead before the beginning of the book, his presence hovers over the narration as of the one who started her quest.

His first name bears a number of sexual connotations related to piercing. For some critics he is the one who pierced or penetrated Oedipa's life,<sup>6</sup> for others the allusion is much more literal and points to their romance. Interestingly enough, the image of piercing, penetrating, or breaking the protections repeatedly appears in the book. Pierce's surname is still more fertile for interpretations. One group of them indicates his input in uncovering the truth by Oedipa, either through foreign meanings of his name<sup>7</sup> or allusion to inveracity - penetrating the lie and subsequently trying to get Oedipa out of her tower. A few other interpretations are even more strongly based on the phonetic similarity to either Inverness, place where Clerk Maxwell, inventor of the Demon, was born, or „inverse rarities” - stamps whose Pierce was an avid collector of.<sup>8</sup>

The naming of the minor characters posits even more problems since in most cases their features either deny or do not fulfill their names, not mentioning the fact that their portrayals are mostly very scarce and insufficient to draw definite conclusions about their traits. It is exactly through this undercharacterization that the reader feels particularly authorized to envision them. First of all, many names point to the idea of America as „the melting pot” of

<sup>5</sup> This interpretation has been posed by several critics, most recently by Judith Chambers in *Thomas Pynchon*, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), p. 100.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Schaub, *Pynchon: The Voice of Ambiguity*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), p. 113.

<sup>7</sup> Stefano Tani in „The Dismemberment of the Detective” suggests that „inverare” is an Italian verb for „to make true”, (*Diogenes*, No.120 1982), p.29.

<sup>8</sup> This reference has been put forward by Bruce Bassoff in *Secret Sharers*, (New York: AMS Press, 1983), p.56.

nations. Hence we have names possibly<sup>9</sup> Scottish-Irish (McMingus, Inverarity), Italian (Manny Di Presso), Spanish/Mexican (Jesus Arrabal, Mucho, Ramirez), French (Driblette), Armenian (Fallopian), Greek (Nefastis), Russian (Koleks), Czech (Kubiseck), Jewish (Cohen, Roseman), German (Bortz, Metzger), or belonging to W.A.S.P. families (Winthrop Tremaine, Peter Pinguid). Many of these and others have extra connotations, either satirical or significant for a given character. Manny Di Presso seems to be pointing to „many depressions” which he is likely to have undergone switching constantly between professions of lawyer and actor. Mike Fallopian<sup>10</sup> and Stanley Koleks are somewhat crude allusions to female physiology. Genghis Cohen points satirically to Genghis-Khan, whereas John Nefastis' name either is an anagram of „isn't safe” or pertains to Nefasti, days of ill omen during the ancient Greek Athenian festival in honor of Dionysus. To the antiquity relates, also nonagenarian Mr. Thoib bearing the name of the messenger of Egyptian deities and of the god of wisdom in the Egyptian pantheon. In the field of Spanish one can find Jesus Arrabal whose name translates into „suburban savior”<sup>11</sup> and the publishing house K. da Chingado and Co. which in the Chicano slang stands roughly for „What a Fuck-up Company.”<sup>12</sup> There are references to other languages, too, and these include Metzger - „a butcher” in German, and Passerine whose name denotes „sparrow” (passer) in French and „birdie” (passerino) - a fond nickname for penis in Italian.

The last group of non/significant names includes the names of places or companies. The primary, and the one seeming to have the greatest importance, is San Narciso<sup>13</sup>, a town which Inverarity founded and developed. The instant implication is that of Narcissus, who in this case can denote no less than four different persons. First, there is a self-entranced figure from the Greek mythology indicating the culture whose part Pierce was with his corporate businesses as being in love with itself and thus oblivious to its corruption. Secondly, there is a freedman who was Emperor Claudius's secretary and who according to Britannica<sup>14</sup> betokens the development of a centralized bureaucracy, whose adherent Pierce can be again considered to be. Finally, there are two Christian

<sup>9</sup> I use the word „possibly” since not all of them are recorded as actual names, but still do look and sound as viable in respective languages.

<sup>10</sup> The name of a 16th century Italian physician Gabriel Fallopius may be an allusion to the fact that Mike Fallopian disillusions Oedipa at the end of her quest - as if he was sterilizing her of illusions.

<sup>11</sup> Arrabal is also the last name of an actual 20th century Spanish writer.

<sup>12</sup> This interpretation has been proposed by William Gleason in „The Postmodern Labyrinths of Lot 49”, *Critique* 34, No.2 Winter 1993, p.92.

<sup>13</sup> Surprisingly enough, many critics have misspelt it in their works as San Narcisco, which in itself makes a statement on the impact of Pynchon's naming.

<sup>14</sup> As related by Robert M. Davis in „Parody, Paranoia, and the Dead End of Language in *The Crying of Lot 49*”, (*Genre* 5, No.4 December 1972), p.373.

bishops, both saints, one of Genoa who was waylaid and assassinated, and the other of Jerusalem who helped determine the method of keeping the Paschal festival and to whom Pynchon alludes as to the one „changing well-water into oil for Jerusalem's Easter lamps” (128).

Another place name is Echo Courts, a motel in which Oedipa stayed in San Narciso. This alludes to a nymph from the Greek mythology who fell in love with Narcissus and died of sorrow of unrequited love. In the novel her name may also indicate hopelessness of Oedipa's quest which is nothing but chasing echoes and reflections of facts and events without getting to the core of things.

Allusive names of companies include Xoyodyne, a moloch which switched from production of toys (yoyo) to military missiles, and Osteolysis, Inc. which was involved in a clandestine and illicit operation of using bones of fallen GI's in cigarette filters, but whose name betrays the nature of the enterprise.<sup>15</sup>

Names are many in the novel and Pynchon starts to bomb the reader with them from the very onset of the story, thus engaging him in the habit of reading messages of the book simultaneously with the pursuit of Oedipa's search. However, what the reader does is not only interpretation, but also creation of the vision of the novel's world. The reader's process of decryption is then changed into that of encryption and creating new systems within possibilities Pynchon has left in words. Depending on the reader's sophistication some allusions and references become comprehensible and some others are passed over without a suspicion that they may hide certain undertones. Accordingly, there are as many worlds of *The Crying of Lot 49* as there are readers, even if some of them are using the same matrix to arrange the elements that emerge from the words of *The Crying of Lot 49*. Depending on which of the matrices the reader is using, the novel and its world may start to be interpreted in religious, psychological, scientific or still other terms, which frequently assign different explanations to the same events and phenomena. As much as some of the interpretations may seem to be a bit too far-fetched, we can still never tell whether these are only figments of critical imagination or Pynchon's encoded messages and traps. No matter which option is true, all the underlying meanings are there and, by virtue of one of the possible functions of the reader who may assume authorial powers, they cannot be discarded altogether. That Pynchon may be having a great time going through critiques implying meanings he never intended to put into his own books is another problem, but due to his absence no evidence is either verified or verifiable.

LUBELSKIE MATERIAŁY  
NEOFILOLOGICZNE NR 18  
LUBLIN 1994

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### La protestation tragique: *Caligula* de Camus et de Rostworowski

Avant d'aborder l'examen du tragique dans les pièces qui nous intéressent ici, il nous paraît utile de distinguer deux notions: la tragédie — genre littéraire possédant ses propres règles et le tragique — principe anthropologique et philosophique qui se retrouve dans plusieurs formes artistiques et même dans l'existence humaine. Dans l'étude des différentes philosophies du tragique, on retrouvera toujours la dichotomie:

- 1) une conception littéraire et artistique du tragique rapportée essentiellement à la tragédie (Aristote);
- 2) une conception métaphysique et existentielle du tragique qui fait découler l'art tragique de la situation tragique de l'existence humaine, conception qui s'impose à partir du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle (Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Scheler, etc.).<sup>1</sup>

Mais pourquoi „la protestation tragique”?

Nous avons emprunté ce terme à Zygmunt Adamczewski<sup>2</sup> pour lequel la protestation est avant tout une „déclaration ouverte” en faveur de quelque chose ou de quelqu'un. „La protestation est un témoignage et résulte par conséquent d'un engagement profond, de la volonté de s'engager sans égard pour le prix à payer”.<sup>3</sup> Et dans ce sens, chaque protestation est tragique car elle se retourne toujours contre la personne qui se révolte.

Comment se présente cette notion de protestation tragique dans *Caligula* de Camus?

Le protagoniste de sa pièce, le jeune empereur romain, Caligula après avoir découvert que ce monde, tel qu'il est fait, n'est pas supportable, tente de se faire comprendre par les citoyens de son empire. Le projet est difficile puisque la philosophie de ses partisans consiste, au contraire, à s'accommoder de tout — et du malheur d'autrui en premier lieu — jugeant que la nature fait bien les choses, qui nous permet de les oublier si vite. Caligula constate:

<sup>1</sup> Patrice Pavis: *Dictionnaire du théâtre*, Paris 1987, Éditions Sociales, p. 424.

<sup>2</sup> Z. Adamczewski: *Tragiczny protest*, Warszawa 1969, PIW.

<sup>3</sup> Irina Sawińska: *Le Théâtre dans la pensée contemporains*, traduction: François Rosset, Cahiers théâtre Louvain 1985, p. 44.

<sup>15</sup> Surprisingly, no critic has pointed so far the Greek root „osteon” meaning „bone”.