

playwright was not the result of a sudden, inexplicable and uncontrollable revolt. It will show that the measure of its coherence, in spite of the tragic gap between a utopian wish and realistic possibilities, lies in the acceptance of the greatest, but, paradoxically, most frequently applied theoretical utopia of the times, Machiavelli's *Prince*.

From artistic vision to conspiratory reality, from the prologue of Long Nose to the letter to Cosimo de' Medici, Pomet's Machiavellism has remained only a poet's dream.

The Thematic Conflicts in Marin Držić's Dundo Maroje

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1 Great literary works are open to multiple interpretations. The sense of excitement, discovery, and pleasure that we derive from such works are rarely due to the novelty of their content or form for they can easily be assimilated and become standard ware. The true and lasting value of such works lies in the richness of their texture, the coexistence of conflicting if not antagonistic strands, and the inevitable tension between the autonomy of the parts and the unifying, centripetal movement of the whole.

Literary, artistic criteria should also guide the analysis of the works of one of the greatest playwrights of the Renaissance, son of the Dubrovnik Republic, Marin Držić.

While the question of the innovations which we brought to the traditional comedies of Terence and Plautus or to those

22 L. Vojnović, *Nikola Machiavelli, the intended secretary of Dubrovnik (1521)*, special reprint from Book I, Dubrovačko učeno društvo "Sv. Vlaho", Dubrovnik, 1927, pp. 1-21 (The text quoted here is on pp. 20 and 21).

1990 1/2

of the contemporary Italians should certainly not be ignored — and I shall touch upon them in due course — we must recognize that the significance of his plays lies not in the novelty of his themes, or in the elements of folklore, language, or descriptions of the local scene which permeate his works, but in the way he molds them into new and artistically integrated wholes. But the importance of literary works depends not only on their intrinsic qualities, but also on the way they are perceived and interpreted by critics and readers, and these are notoriously subject to changes of fashions and taste. The opinion of Držić's works has, fortunately not suffered from the vicissitudes of taste, for it is generally agreed that they represent a level of excellence which is hardly matched by the works of his contemporaries. The growing fame and popularity of his plays attests also to the fact that they have lost none of their originality, energy, and verve.

This opinion applies above all to Držić's comedy *Dundo Maroje*, which has been analyzed and celebrated by a number of Yugoslav and foreign scholars. But like any outstanding work, *Dundo Maroje* will continue to invite new interpretations which will deepen and broaden our understanding of its art. Such interpretations seem to me the more timely because Yugoslav scholarship, learned and well-intentioned as it might have been, has gravitated towards a type of analysis that has flattened and reduced the complexities and playfulness of the work. Notable in this respect have been the studies by Živko Jeličić and Leo Košuta whose political, sociological and biographical interests have almost totally obscured the artistic qualities of the work. Thus it is somewhat surprising that even such a perceptive critic as Čale should claim that the discoveries of these scholars must lie at the basis of every serious analysis of the play (1971: 44). We should rather ask ourselves whether the conclusions of these scholars do justice to the play as one of the great literary achievements of its times. I believe they do not. In the first place, one should object to the mixing of literary and biographical criteria, which has marked the analysis of the text. All too much, in my opinion, has been made of Držić's conspiratorial letters to Cosimo Medici, which were written

about 15 years after the production of the play. The play itself, including the Prologue, which flatters the *zlatni ljudi* of Dubrovnik as being the descendants of Saturn, bears not the slightest allusion to Držić's subversive designs nor to his late condemnation of the Dubrovnik ruling class. The biographical fallacy and the ideological premises of the critics have led them to overlook the deeper literary and historical significance of the Prologue, the ambiguity of the Negromant's tale and its actual relation to the play. The one-sided interpretation of the Negromant's tale about the origin of the *ljudi nazbilj* and *ljudi nahvao* and the ideologically tinged reading of the play have obscured many of its literary aspects, and have threatened to reduce it to a political or moralizing tract. For where, indeed, do we find in the play the *oštre klasne karakterisitike Držićeve umjetnosti* apart from the interplay between masters and servants which had been one of comedy's most traditional themes? And is Držić's picture of the servants merely one of an oppressed *mršavi narod*? Or is there any reason to treat Pomet as a *narodni borac*, as one who *kreće uporno do konačnog obračuna*; and where indeed is this *konačni obračun* in a comedy which ends happily for all because of the fortunate turn of events? The treatment *Dundo Maroje* as an ideological or moralizing play and the flat division of its characters into villains and heroes has also taken out the life of most protagonists of the play. There seems to be no reason to claim that Ugo Tudešak, the drunkard and hedonist of the play, is rich but does not know how to enjoy life, or that Bokčilo's »popular common sense« is diametrically opposed to the »deformed character of his master«, the *stari škrtac*. I am rather inclined to agree with Švelec to whom *Dundo Maroje*'s behavior appears perfectly reasonable. For who can fault a father for attempting to divert his son from the path of sin, or a Dubrovnik merchant for trying to salvage his money, especially if he can, as he says, pull it out *iz morske pučine*, i. e., from the greedy hands of a Roman courtesan. Equally strained, it appears to me, is the attempt to characterise Maro as a *Čovjek nahvao*: we should rather feel pity for the young, vain man who trembles with fear at the prospect of all at once losing his pride, his in-

heritage and his mistress, and who in time of trouble is totally dependent on his servant. Particularly misleading seems to me the interpretation of Pomet. To view him as the representative of a class that »will share power with the rulers of Dubrovnik in accordance with the utopian vision of Držić's letter« is to reduce to a stereotype this versatile figure as well as the rich complexity and wit of the play. I assume that no one who has read Čale's excellent disquisition on Machiavelli's *Prince* can fail to be impressed by the parallelism which he discovered between Machiavelli's ideas concerning fate (*fortuna*) and the dignity of man (*dignitas hominis*) and Pomet's ruminations about *sreća* and *kako se trijeba s bremenom akomodovat*. But can we possibly agree that *Držićeva urotnička zamisao i machiavellijeva teorija* underlie the basic conception of the comedy (p. 70), or that Machiavelli's ideas on the tactics of a prince may have any relevance for the behavior of Pomet who, as he himself reminds us, is only *na brijeme doktor i filozof*? To believe that this astute wheeler and dealer who had served time for some minor thievery, to whom only his stomach is *kralj i gospodin*, and who finds the fulfillment of his dreams in wearing, like Maro, a necklace and sword, is Držić's ideal of a *pravi čovjek* of a *čovjek nazbilj* strains somewhat our imagination and prevents us from seeing the true nature of this protean figure and Figaro of Držić's theatre.

Another author who was left behind the crude Marxian interpretations of the play is Franjo Švelec. Unlike Čale who primarily dwelled on the moral and philosophical aspects of the play and on the significance of the heroes, Švelec's main interest lies in the performance qualities of the play, Držić's use of improvisation and of multiple actors who appear on the stage simultaneously. But, like everyone else, Švelec seems to accept the established division of the characters into *ljudi nahvao* and *ljudi nazbilj*. No less questionable appears to me his claim that Pomet is a *sinteza potčinjenog čovjeka uopće* (271) for, as I have said, it loses sight of the protean and ambiguous dimensions of his character. Of for greater value, in my opinion, is Švelec's observation that Držić's technique is based on the orchestration of opposites

(*orkestracija suprotnosti*). It is precisely this aspect that deserves for deeper exploration and to which I shall devote most of my following remarks. In conclusion I shall also advance some observations on the historical and literary significance of the Prologue.

2 *Dundo Maroje* is a tightly structured play in which all the parts and principal characters are closely intertwined. Like any classical comedy, it is built on a plot with zigzag peripeties which create the elements of humor and of surprise and which find their resolution through a happy turn of events thanks to which Laura, the central object of the intrigue, can become the heiress to a German fortune and the wife of Ugo. This *deus ex machina* resolves the accumulated tensions of the play and restores, as befits a comedy, the original order: it returns to Dundo Maroje most of his ducats, it saves the position of the servants, and makes it possible for Maro to marry Pera and to settle into a comfortable bourgeois existence. But behind this more or less traditional plot pulsates the true life of the comedy, which is made up of several thematic conflicts or oppositions. Some of them belong to the traditional repertory of the theater, while others consist of themes that reflect some of the major national and philosophical concerns of the time. The traditional oppositions involve (1) the relation of fathers and sons, or more broadly, of old age vs. youth; (2) the relation of servants and masters, and (3) the perennial tension between the sexes to which Marin Držić gives a new and original twist, for he deals not with the stock theme of »boy chases girl«, but with the love of an innocent but profligate son for a Roman courtesan. But the love itself is by no means innocent, for the young man is not only the hunter but also the prey of Laura's obsession with money which colors the entire episode of love with the tint and tinkle of pecuniary greed.

The motif of money reverberates throughout the play, reflecting not only the rise of a new bourgeois society but, no doubt, one of the deepest concerns of 16th-century Dubrovnik. Vlaho's jingle *Dukat mi, dukat kralj i car / dukat djevojci*

častan dar vivifies the moves of all the protagonists of the play regardless of sex, age, or social class, and is the ultimate spring of the entire comedy. The motif of money enables Držić to present a wide spectrum of contemporary society including merchants, wastrels, servants, money lenders, innkeepers, courtesans and even the poor Dubrovnik whores. The obsession with food, jewels, and clothing as the outer accouterments of money defines not only the character of the actors but the eminently bourgeois character of the play. In addition to the above stated oppositions and the obsession with money, Držić introduces two more oppositions that deepen the artistic significance of the play even though they are only a reflection of some of the topical problems of his time. These are the questions of fate vs. free will and of national identity. While the first question preoccupied the leading contemporary thinkers of Italy, the problem of national identity was another overriding concern of the Renaissance, which witnessed the rise of sovereign cities and states, of national languages, and of modern literatures. Držić's work is itself the most eloquent expression of these epochal developments, whereas the awareness of local or national identity is translated in *Dundo Maroje* into the contrast between foreigners (Italians, Germans and Jews) and *našjenci*. Držić highlighted this contrast by the astute device of placing the action of his Dubrovnik characters in the midst of Rome, and by exhibiting cosmopolitan but decadent Rome on a Dubrovnik stage.

As I stated above, the enumerated oppositions do not appear independently, but interlock with and modify each other in the unfolding of the play. They enrich the significance of the plot and lend roundness to the characters both through their dialogues and actions, as well as through the monologues which make up a significant part of the play.

But it would be deceptive to think that the oppositions alone suffice to define Držić's art. As in any work of art, the oppositions acquire deeper significance by revealing their unifying bond and by implying that beneath each opposition there lurks a fundamental resemblance. The tension between oppositions and resemblances is encapsulated even in the

smallest form of verbal art, in a single metaphor in which the confrontation of opposites compels us to look for the deeper resemblance and where the resemblance itself sharpens and heightens the quality of the opposites. A work of art is thus a creative process, in which the reader participates no less than the author, for the recognition that the ostensive oppositions conceal deeper similarities is a process of discovery and a source of aesthetic delight.

The conjunction of opposites and similarities, the *coincidentia oppositorum* which I have elsewhere called the complementarity of opposites was early and cogently formulated by the near contemporary of Držić Pico della Mirandola. In reading the comedy of Držić it might be worthwhile to keep his words in mind: »Nor do contrariety and discord between various elements,« he wrote, »suffice to constitute [beauty], but by due proportion the contrariety must become united and the discord made concordant; and this may be offered as the true definition of Beauty, namely that it is nothing else than amicable enmity and concordant discord«.

I would like to point out that the concept of unity of opposites defines not only the thematic conflicts of *Dundo Maroje*, but also its use of stylistic and linguistic components which are no less fascinating than the principal thematic conflicts. *Dundo Maroje* is a remarkably polyphonous work because it combines learned and popular elements, poetry and prose, Latin and Slavic proverbs, and a mixture of languages and styles which reflect only in part the multilingual situation of 16th-century Dubrovnik. The use of these elements has been studied by a number of scholars, but we miss something of their significance if we treat them in isolation or only for their origin. Their true literary value arises only in context and from the way they interact with each other and other elements of the play. It is not by chance that the passages of verse are interspersed among the dialogues in prose, and that they are used mostly by the servants (particularly by Petrunjela) and primarily for the purpose of playful and erotic play. Special affects derive from the juxtaposition of Latin and Croatian proverbs, which resemble but modify each other to create changes of meaning and humorous surprise. The use of

diverse languages and dialects serves not only to define the origin of the protagonists, but also for changes of scene and for *blason populaire*. The play with language is exploited not only by the author but also by the actors, who assert thereby their linguistic consciousness and local pride.

Like any local comedy, *Dundo Maroje* has central and peripheral characters. The central characters are the objects and carriers of the action, while the peripheral characters have secondary, supportive roles or deliver themselves (like Tripče and Dživo) of soliloquies that express the views of the author. But here, too, I would like to point out a characteristic feature of Držić's art, namely his predilection for asymmetrical symmetry, or symmetrical asymmetry. The central characters are organized into triplets according to social status and gender. They include the masters Dundo Maroje, Maro, and Ugo; the servants Bokčilo, Popiva, Pomet, and the female characters Pera, Laura, and Petrunjela. This symmetry is broken up in a number of ways. One of the main plots hinges around the triplet Maroje, Maro, and Pera, while a second, competing plot involves the relations of Maro, Laura, and Ugo. However, a clear binary opposition separates the principal figures, for some of them are, to use E. M. Foster's term, »round«, whereas others are »flat«. The round figures include the Dubrovnik natives; the *našijenci*, Dundo Maroje, Maro, Popiva, Pomet, and Petrunjela, whereas the flat figures are Ugo and Laura who, despite their importance for the plot, are undimensional and dull. Ugo is a boorish glutton and drunkard, while Laura's only concern is money. The two are thus not only »flat«, but also the only negative characters of the play. An asymmetrical relation holds also between the main Dubrovnik characters. Dundo Maroje, Maro, and Popiva pursue but a single goal, while Pomet advances not only the interests of Ugo, but also his personal ambitions. In addition to pulling the strings of the plot, he is also a thinker and dreamer and the *porte parole* of the author. He is, in other words, the roundest figure of all. A separate position is also occupied by Petrunjela, who with her charm, playfulness, and virtue is the diametrical opposite of her mistress. Having thus covered the asymmetrical symmetry of the characters

we may now turn to our main subject: the thematic conflicts or polarities of the play.

3 Our primary polarity is that between *starost* and *mladost*, which is concretized in the conflict between Dundo Maroje and his son. The first is to all appearances interested only in recouping his 5000 ducats, while Maro is seemingly interested only in having a good time, to the chagrin and at the expense of his father. According to standard criticism, both represent the *ljudi od ništa* or *nahvao* because one is a rich miser and the other a wastrel. However, in Držić's conception both characters are far more nuanced. The very terms *mahnitost* and *ludost* which Držić applies equally to father and son are bound to soften their image and to show that they are fundamentally alike. The father reclaims not only his money, but also his son, the only heir to his fortune, for as Držić reminds us in the Prologue, many a tragedy has befallen a Dubrovnik household for entrusting money to inexperienced and fun-seeking sons. If the father goes crazy (*deve essere pazzo questo vecchio*, say the *sbirri*), it is not only over the loss of money but also because of the trickery of his son, which he pays back in kind. The son, too, is *mahnit* because of his single-minded obsession with Laura and his reckless waste of the money. But the madness is not only his own, but that of youth and of his social class. This »collective« madness is recognized by the bystanders of the action, Baba, Sadi, and the two Dubrovnik youths, Niko and Pjero, who envy Maro his money and his mistress. Ah, *mladosti, luda mladosti*, says Baba; one has to get old to realize *kako vaš vjetar nije ino, nego ludost, nego malo vidjenje, nego nespoznanje*. The collective nature of the madness is also recognized by Sadi when he says: *Sti giovani spendono alla cieca, si indebitano, inbrogliano e poi danno sulzo* (II, 7). But that this kind of behavior was not a madness but part of a social norm is also suggested by Popiva when he slyly assures Laura that Dundo himself recognizes the rights of the young and that he himself was not much different in his youth (*veli, mladost je taka i ja jam u mladost gori bio*). However, Maro is motivated not only by sensual passion, but by a quest

for prestige and social standing, which derive from the ability to support a Roman courtesan. For what upsets Maro more than the loss of his mistress is the loss of face. *Ti je neotac*, he complains (III, 8), *došao je za osramotit me, za ruinat me u Rimu*. The quest for social standing, which goes with the ability to *pendžat dukate*, is then, at the end, another aspect of monetary possession which also inspires the actions of the old man, except that in his case the money is to be accumulated and kept. The inextricable union of the two is further emphasized by their resemblance and mutual dependence. *Smiješni su ovi oci*, says Pjero (II, 1), *ne spominjaju se er su oni u mladost mahnitiji od nas bili*, which is summarized by the amusing oxymoron *Ah, da se ljudi bez otaca radaju, dobro bi i mladijem bilo*. That the relation between father and son is both antagonistic and complementary is finally borne out by the fact that they play each other the same trick. If the son at first outmaneuvers the father, the father at the end outfoxes the son in a breezy reversal of roles. *Sin mi je meštar*, Maroje says (IV, 1), *normu mi čini... igrat ćemo š njim al più saper*. But although he claims that *među lisicom i hrtom nije ugođaja* (IV, 6), the similarity of their characters is poignantly recognized by their servants. *Lisice otac i sin*, says Popiva and Bokčilo echoes him: *stučiše se dvije vuhve ne male*. For at the end father and son must be reconciled not only because they are *ćaćo i sin*, but because of their common interests and social roles.

From classical comedy Držić has also inherited the theme of antagonistic and complementary relationship between masters and servants, which he developed again in a new and original way. The major representatives of this relationship are the pairs Maro and Popiva and Ugo and Pomet. A less prominent role is assigned to the pair Maroje-Bokčilo and Laura-Petrunjela.

The first two pairs are poised against each other in a relentless but uneven battle, which shows again Držić's predilection for asymmetrical symmetry. While both servants pursue the interests of their masters with all possible subterfuge and means, Pomet is head and shoulders over Popiva, not only because of his bigger bag of tricks, but because of his

greater astuteness, drive, and vindictiveness. Nothing but a mean streak can explain Pomet's desire to see his defeated opponent hang (*ma tebe ako ne vidim na vješalijeh, neću miran umrijet*; U, 1) and to put Maro in jail (*Bog dao da mu još Pomet donosi u lončiću na tamnicu*). His paradoxical condition of a virtuoz and an underdog should also explain his contempt for most people around him, his tirade against the higher professions (the merchant, the soldier, the poet, the *doktur*, the *mužik*), and his ambition to claw his way from the lowly condition of servant to an illusory top symbolized by such outward trappings as *velut*, *kolajina* and *mač*, the irony of which does not escape Petrunjela (*Nut gdje se je nagalantao, i s kolajinom na grlu, kako da ide na pir*; U, 3). His change of fortunes from Dubrovnik pauper to Roman man-about-town, his servility and pride, his intrigues and fantasies make him into a quintessential representative of the Renaissance man, enterprising but tossed by fate, a figure of dignity and of laughter all at the same time. But both he and Popiva are first of all servants who depend on the will and whim of their masters. Popiva's declarations (IV, 12) *sluga je za slušat gospodara* and (IV, 4) *gosparu, na smrt na život, ovo sam, slijedim te!* resemble Pomet's own words to Ugo *Con voi andar in inferno et star bene*. The attitude of the masters towards the servants is basically one of selfishness, rudeness, and cruelty. While they depend on the servants for the satisfaction of all their needs, they are ready to blame them for all their misfortunes. Thus Ugo unceremoniously chases out Pomet from his house (*Traditor, fuggir casa mia*, IV, 3) and threatens him with a weapon, just as Maro abuses Popiva in the vilest terms (*tradituru, pse jedan, smrti moja, ribaode... and gdje mi je punjao da zakoljem ovoga asasina*; IV, 13). Neither Bokčilo nor Petrunjela are treated with any greater finesse. Bokčilo is kept hungry and dry by the old miser, Dundo Maroje, while Petrunjela is rewarded for her faithful service (*ja sam joj vjerna sluga, she says, but ne smijem joj ni u kamaru uljesti, ja kuham i perem i jošte z drugom*; III, 9) with invectives and threats (*Idi, oslico* (V, 3) and *avrai delle bastonate, disgraziata*). This is, however, only one side of the coin. On the other side, the servants are

the brains of and proxies for their masters, while the masters have an almost childlike dependence on their servants. We might even say that the ineptness of Maro and the crudities of Ugo are always at the point of spoiling the moves of the servants. Thus it is Popiva who devises the scheme to »borrow« money from Laura by seducing her with the promise of greater gain (*stavi malo na udicu, da uhitiš vele*) and who keeps up Maro's spirits at the time of his fiasco (*gospodine, ne valja se desperavat ni abandonavat... svemu je remedijo neg samoj smrti*). It is at such moments that the roles of master and servant are completely reversed. In his state of despair Maro literally whines for help (*da, nauči me, sve ću činit*) and puts himself completely in the hands of the servant (*Ja ne umijem što... ti meni sad budi gospodar, a ja ću tebi sluga, istom da se isplije... Orsu, Popiva, rekao t'sam da te ću slušat, što mi veliš, sve ću učinit... vod'me kud znaš*, III, 8). The ambivalence of the master-servant relationship is even more pronounced in the case of Ugo and Pomet because of the greater difference between the characters. While Popiva is morally a mirror-image of his master, Pomet pursues the interests of Ugo as a form of art, i. e., for the sheer fun of the game. If he serves Ugo with zeal it is because Ugo provides him with a well-decked table, his *raj zemaljski*; Pomet can hardly control his bitterness when Tudešak, his »idol«, tears him away from the table, *iz onijeh delicija*, for the business of seeking the favors of Laura (*Srcem, Pomet* says, *mučno idem, čijerom volontijera*). Pomet finds it altogether difficult to understand Ugo's infatuation with Laura and his amorous complaints (*Ubi me*, he says, *Kad mi to reče; u meni rekoh; mahnitost s namuranijem družji*; II, 1), and he tries to help Ugo in his misery with the usual remedy for a drunk: *Trink, misser Ugo, star allegro...* Pomet's dedication to Ugo is the more problematic in that he pursues his intrigues as a kind of personal sport and for the pleasure of defeating his opponents. His true master is Pomet himself, or more precisely, his stomach, which he treats with all the affection and respect due to a master. By propelling his stomach to the position of master Pomet seems to annul his servitude to Ugo and to establish himself, at least in his

fantasy, as a free man. Pomet's addresses to his stomach are a true *tour de force* and make up one of the most moving and witty passages of the play. *Za tebe*, he says, *Pomet sve stenta, za tebe se ovo spravlja, krajju i gospodine! Ti si moj, ja sam tvoj! Ti meni gospodar, a ja tvoj sluga*. His faithfulness to this master is unqualified even when the going gets tough, that is, when Ugo banishes him from his house and his table. *Trbuše, moj dragi gospodine*, he says, *Ja te i sad u adversitati s baretom u ruci onoram, and nijesam kao i neki ki u dobru prijatelje ljube, u zlu ne čine ga se vidjet*.

Petrunjela too gains a moral edge over her mistress by comparing the life of a Roman courtesan with that of the poor whores and *potištenice* of Dubrovnik. *Ove*, she says about the Roman courtesans, *odre od svile... sve u srijebru... ijeđu vazda letušte; svako hoće dvije kamarijere*, whereas the girls of Dubrovnik, *one vaše od Polila i od Podmirja ke se vazda od buha puđaju* (III, 17) or the *dubrovačke potištenice štono se čeršaju bulom... kad optoku koja od dzetennina ima na koretu, para joj da je njeka gospoda velika — u cokulicah*, III, 9). The contrast and parallels between masters and servants are finally underscored by the simultaneous, yet differently motivated complaints of Bokčilo and Maroje, and by the latter's remark *tebi je teško i meni je teško i ja to vrijeme nosim* (IV, 1).

The third opposition, that between the sexes, is ostensibly the spring of the entire action, though it is closely linked with the other elements of the plot. But the motif of love is above all tied up with the theme of money which animates all the protagonists and where their similarities come most conspicuously to the fore. Thus, Maro is aware that only infusions of money can secure the favors of Laura, though he himself is propelled not only by lust but by his desire to cut a fine figure. But the moment his affair with Laura is over he rants and raves against his mistress, as well as against the social condition that set him on his course: *O životu moj ljudi... Ah, sinjore, ah kurve... Prid moje kompanje s kojijem obrazom imam pristupit... što se će po Rimu od mene govorit... Oh, Popiva, dinara veće nije, čast izgubih, eredita veće ne mogu imat* (IV, 13); *Ah, kurve, kurve, tko s vami ima što činit* (V,

11). Ugo's courtship of Laura follows the same pattern. His declarations of love with its ironic allusions to Petrarch sound vulgar and false (*Ah cruter queste lacrime*; I, 4; *mi morir, se non aver la signora*; II, 1), and are immediately translated into promises of money (*prometer ducati mille, do mila; meglio spender ducati che perder la vita*) to end up, as in the case of Maro, with a chain of invectives (*Per Tio, mattar te ancora; puttana e puttana tua padrona...; mattar, tu non viver*). Cru- deness and greed mark also the character of Laura, the center and seeming object of love. Thus she utters hardly a sentence which does not in one way or another refer to money and the things it can buy (jewels, gold, curtains, sables). As Popiva remarks, Laura does not want gifts in food or drinks, *dukata hoće* (I, 5).

A different game of love, but on a lighter and more allusive plane, is played out by the lower classes, i. e., between the servants and visitors from Dubrovnik and Petrunjela who is diametrically opposed to Laura, for she is the most graceful and least ambiguous character of the play. In presenting this relationship, Držić switches to a completely new register by making use of popular ditties, proverbs, and riddles which are full of erotic allusions and earthy play. But a special place in this drama of love is reserved for Pomet, for Pomet who, as we have seen, has some difficulty grasping love's sexual drive. If Pomet makes sexual overtures to Petrunjela, it is only to advance the cause of his master. Like Ugo, he translates his feigned affections for the girl into money (*Ah, moja Petrunjelica, he says, na t'ovi škud, kup' štogodi za moju ljubav, and Petre, kralja me si danas učinila! Odsele pitaj što god ćeš od mene, IV, 4*) and he addresses her as the only kind of object for which he has genuine respect, i. e., food. Thus, he speaks to her in the way he would speak to his favorite morsels. *Petrunjelice, moja jarebičice... moj kordijalu od stomka* (II, 1); *Petrunjelice, draga ptičice* (III, 15), and *Bogme mi si draga, a sad pobjed, kako sam pinuo paraš mi se ljepša*. Pomet's love moves on a totally different, for more abstract and lofty plane. Pomet's mistress is fickle and changeable fortune, and it is for this mistress that he reserves all his anxieties and passion. The poetic heights to which he

rises in expressing his love for and uncertainty about this mistress deserves to be quoted in full: *Fortunu pišu ženom ne zaman... ako se obrće sad ovamo sad onamo, sad na zlu sad na dobru; sad te kareca, a sad te duši. Tko joj je kriv? Ma bogme, je ona meni kriva! Da vrag uzme tu nje moć kojom na čas čini smijejat ljudi, na čas plakat. Vražija njeka ženska narav! Scijenim da aposto čini, da se ja sad malo proplačem, a da se ona nasmije. Nasmijej se, nasmijej se! Bogme plačem srcem, plačem očima, (IV, 3)*. And when fortune smiles at him, he waxes almost ecstatic: *Ah, srječo, moja srječo, fortune draga, sad poznam er se mnom špotaš; očito vidim er se sa mnom salacaš, i vidim er me ljubiš; bogme me ljubiš; a ja, žimi, ja tvoj, mahnit sam za tobom... A sad me malo poognjijevi, — zašto? Za učinit me svasma čestita i blažena: dala si mi po ruke okazijon da deventam što ne bih veće mogao žudjet*.

4 As I suggested, *Dundo Maroje* is a bourgeois comedy because the theme of money dominates and colors all aspects of the play. At the same time it explores two subjects that acquired singular importance in the political and intellectual life of the century: the problem of national identity, and the question of necessity and personal freedom. In the hands of Držić these subjects too are raised to the level of art because they are treated in a playful and contrapuntal way. The first subject is couched in terms of the opposition between »us« and »them«, or *našijenci* and foreigners, and in the contrast between Dubrovnik and Rome. But Rome, which is introduced in the Prologue as *malo mirakulo*, is treated throughout as a peculiar and far from miraculous place. This impression is, no doubt, strengthened by the fact that the only Roman inhabitants in the play are the *sbirri*, the greedy innkeepers (the owners of *alla grassezza, alla sciochezza* and *alla miseria*), and the equally greedy foreigners who are all too ready to exploit and bamboozle the innocent and not-so-innocent visitors from across the sea. Rome is *lijep i vele veličak*, a city of joy (*mjesto toliko delicijozo*), but in its essence it is corrupted by sin and debased by the hustling

noise of innkeepers and the broken Italian of foreigners, such as Ugo, Laura and Petrunjela. In this derision of the Babel called Rome one can almost hear an echo of the contempt which the linguistic purists of Florence felt for the multilingual city of Rome. But Držić's irony is aimed at the Italian language as a whole, as well as at the heartless and depraved manners of the Italians. The criticism comes above all from the less sophisticated visitors from Dalmatia. What kind of language is it, asks Grubiša, *gdje ljudi svi šu-šu parlaju, »šu-pšu«, da im se vraguto slovo ne razumije or šo-šo, nuti svinje, gdje kako prasac šoka*. Why, he wonders, do they not speak like Christians (*kao hristjani*), and why did fate bring him to this cruel Latin land *gdje se u zdravjice ne pije, a voda se u vino lijeva* (IV, 9). The same attitude is voiced by the other visitors. According to Baba, it is a place of heartlessness and sin (*Oto nas naš grijeh dovede u ove strane gdi svoj bježi od svojijeh... gdje su kamena srca od ljudi*) and where disease destroys the flower of Dubrovnik youth (*tuj se ste zabavili. Brižni, ne vidite li er s kankari imate što činit koji vam ijedu i život i imanje i čast?... po bradah vam se poznavaju koje vam, brižni hodili, opadaju*, III, 17). But Držić's main sting is directed against the German foreigners in Rome, Laura and Ugo. They and their German compatriots are indeed the vulgar, rapacious, and boorish barbarians of the North. Not only Ugo, but all Germans are presented as gluttons and drunkards (only the Germans, says Pomet, know how to *pastedžat* and *trink ide naokolo*), while even Laura had to hide and change her name as an illegitimate child out of fear of being killed by her father. Ugo's rudeness provokes the anger of Tripčec who castigates him with the words: *Ti par essere in terra tudeška e bravar*. Ugo's final union with Laura seems then perfectly justified, *er i ona je Tudeška*.

Given their isolation in Rome it is not surprising that the *našijenci* are instinctively drawn to each other, and grow sentimental over the memory of their homeland and the sound of their native tongue. The most frequently repeated phrases they utter are *našijenac, pravi našijenac, našjenica; da smo ščavi; sangue tira; istom krv poteže na svoga;*

dubrovačko dijete, blaženo mljeko, koje sisa; kotorska slatka krvi; našega ti mi našega; nije ti bez svoga; ovi je od našijeh and istom se obeselim, kad čujem koga od našego jezika. With this sense of solidarity goes the disdain for the adoption of Italian customs and names (Laura for Mande, Petrunjela for Milica). Even Laura reminds Petrunjela at a moment of tension *sad mi govoriš toškano, a naši smo, ili hoćemo ili nećemo*. A sense of belonging and national pride overrides even the local differences. Tripčec expresses this attitude by saying *ja ne kuram da sam u tuđem mjestu signor i misser, gdje me ne znaju, ma da sam na mom domu gospodar počtovan i svijetao, gdje sam poznat* (I, 1).

But Držić's art does not stop with mere contrasts. He attenuates the contrast by the very act of placing Dubrovnik in Rome and by revealing the pettiness, foibles, vindictiveness, and machinations of the Slavs. He also makes it perfectly clear that Laura's profession flourishes, albeit on a lesser scale, also in the side streets of Dubrovnik, and that in matters of virtue and deceit the two cities are not that far apart.

Our final opposition deals with the question of fate and free will, or man's capacity to control the vicissitudes of fate. References to this problem are scattered throughout the play and all the major participants stake their hopes on the turns of luck. While some of them are passive (e. g. Bokčilo: *dokli naša sreća hoće tako*), others lament their fate (e. g., Popiva and Maro: *fortuna nas u veliko zlo sbila and nesrećo, na što me si dovela*). Dživo is more philosophical: he recognizes the futility of free will (his *volja* and *prozuncijan*), the supremacy of pure luck (*brijeme je meštar*) and the painful uncertainties of living (*mučno je umjet živjet na svijetu*, III, 2). But the most challenging and philosophical attitude is adopted by Pomet. According to him, only men of brilliance and determination, such as he himself, can surmount the obstacles life puts in their way. He is *čovjek virtuoz, virtutibus praedutus* who runs the affairs of men (*bez mene se ljudi ne umiju obrnut*), and he is bound to prevail because *s razumijem sreća stoji, s čovjekom i umijem ju karecat*. He has no doubts that (*fortuna*) *namurala se na mene-nije inako!* But what is the reality of the thing? Although he compares

his *faccende* to a *triunfus caesarinus* which could not be matched by a *Cezar*, *Šilo* and *Marijo*, and although he sees himself as an *abate*, *kont* and *kavalijer* he is keenly aware of the limitations of his state. His great ambition is to acquire, like Maro, a *haljina*, *kolajina* and *mač* which will not alter in the least his social condition. Despite his bravado he, too, suffers, as we have seen, from anxieties over his fate for he is both reminded of his poverty in Dubrovnik and he can hardly be sure of what the future may bring. The vicissitudes of fate cannot but fill him with concern and Angst, which he conveys to Laura in a chain of proverbs: *neće vazda jednako brijeme bit; za slatkijem ljetom dođe gorka zima; za lijepom godinom dođe daž*. Pomet's great deeds belong to a world of dreams which together with his passionate pleadings with fortune and ecstatic addressees to food (his *jarebičice*, *slatke jetrice*, *guske*, *kapunić*), make him a figure of charm, fantasy, and pathos. Pomet's ruminations about *sreća* and *kako se trijeba s vremenom akomodovat* may indeed recall some of Machiavelli's ideas about destiny and free will, but in the pushy and circumscribed world in which he lives he can hardly be expected to become a *pravi čovjek*, a *čovjek nazbilj* let alone a master of his fate or a ruler of men. If Pomet and *Dundo Maroje* as a play come close to Machiavelli's philosophy concerning the human condition, it is rather to its gloomy, pessimistic component. Eugenio Garin summarized this outlook as follows: [Machiavelli] *annula in partenza ogni effettivo processo e riduce il mutare delle vicende umane a un ondeggiare senza scopo, a un ritorno ciclico che fa dell'avventura dell'uomo nel mondo una favola vana... Neppure il »salire« deve ingannarci, ma anzi farci più timorosi del prossimo inevitabile crollo*. Similar views on the tenuous situation of man, on his exalted position and his earthly frailty, were voiced by other thinkers of the Renaissance (Alberti, Ficino, Pico, Pomponazzi) who recognized that they lived in a heroic but most difficult age. According to Pico, man himself is a changeable and ambivalent creature for he contains both the substances of animal and those of a spiritual, celestial being. As shown by Giulio Ferroni, Machiavelli, too, brushed aside the humanistic notion of dig-

nitas hominis, replacing it with the concept of *uomo bivalente* or *uomo-bestia*. It is precisely the *uomo-bestia* which we can find in most of Držić's characters, with the exception perhaps of Ugo and Laura in which the animal substance does clearly prevail. Notice that such a view is also expressed in the play, and most specifically by Tripče, who in enumerating the various animal traits of men concludes with the statement *ljudi participaju, misser mio, od ovizijeh bjes-tija*. (III, 9)

What then, we may ask, inclined the Yugoslav critics to arrive at the notion that Držić divided his heroes into two sharply distinct camps, into *ljudi nahvao* and *ljudi nazbilj*? Apart from their ideological preconceptions, they might have arrived at it on the basis of the Negromant's tale. But a close reading of the Prologue may show it to be far more ambiguous and allusive than has generally been assumed. For here, too, Držić develops the theme of the mixed, *uomo-bestia* origin of man, rather than the simple distinction of two kinds of men. Držić makes this quite clear when he says: *Budi vam draže što ste uzaznali odkud su izišli i koji su početak imali ljudi od ništa... i ljudi nazbilj*. This *početak* he elaborates, comes from the mingling of *ljudi nahvao*, the ones who lived at the time of Saturn, *u vrime od zlata*, with the women of *ljudi nazbilj*. *Ljudi nahvao*, he goes on, *useliše se u ovi naš svijet... i smiješase se među dobre i razumne i lijepe*. Although there is allegedly an ongoing war between the two, this war, we must assume, goes on as much in the souls and hearts of men, as on the fields of battle. Držić teases and mystifies us when he declares that *komedija vam će odkrit koji su ljudi nahvao i koji su ljudi tihi i dobri i razumni*, since none of his lively and changeable characters meets the latter description. What then, we must finally ask, is the purpose of the Negromant's tale? I believe that the relation of the tale to the play, apart from the story of the mixed nature of humankind, is far looser than is commonly thought. The custom of introducing a play with two prologues, rather than with one, has an old literary tradition which at the time of Držić gained vogue. While the second prologue (the *antifatto*) summarized and completed the play, the first prologue was free to deal with

1990

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any fantastic or literary theme. The Negromant's story is a typical example of this literary form for it combined the popular tradition of fantastic tales with the most exciting and topical story of that age: the travels of discovery. The place where the two stories could meet was India the medieval account of which (in particular the legend of its riches, monsters, and of Prester John) has left an indelible trace in the folklore of all Slavic countries (but above all in the South), whereas the geographical travels of the 16th century must have made the most fascinating bulletins of the day (especially in a maritime city like Dubrovnik).

I shall conclude my paper by saying that *Dundo Maroje* reveals to us Držić's art at its fullest bloom. It is undoubtedly not only one of the most learned and masterful plays of its time, but also a work that shows us the many-sided facets of man, his eternal conflicts, and the most absorbing problems of the age. But its major gift is that it makes us not only think, but that it makes us laugh.



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