

GÓRECKI PENDERECKI DYPTYK / DIPTYCH

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Moonrise Press

V
A Spring Night / Frühlingsnacht
Hermann Hesse

*An den spitzen Dächern rinnt
Dämmerung und Mondschein nieder.*

*Down the sloping roofs
darkness and moonlight flow.*

The “night landscape” follows, again. The composer returns to the mood of the initial movement (*At Night* by J. von Eichendorff).

*Im Kastanienbaum der Wind
Reckt verschlafen sein Gefieder, [...]*
*In den Gärten unbelauscht
Schlummern mondbeglanzte Bäume,*

*Slowly, drowsily, the wind
spreads its wings in the chesnut tree [...]*
*Trees, immobile, sleep in gardens
in the eerie glow of the moon.*

This is a moment of reflection. The hero of the narrative — Krzysztof Penderecki — stops, contemplates in silence; it is a moment of afterthought. Let us, therefore, allow ourselves a certain digression, which, as it turns out, is in agreement with the philosophy of Hermann Hesse.

It is no coincidence that Penderecki chose the same Hesse poem that Richard Strauss used in his *Vier Letzte Gesänge*. Penderecki clearly points to his creative inspirations, to his search of his own path. He refers to the tradition of the symphonic song — Strauss, Mahler. He says: “we are at the point where the most creative thing to do turns out to be the opening of the door behind us.”⁵⁶ However, this is not about attempting to become a traditionalist. The composer says: “The words [...] from Thomas Mann’s novel are close to me: ‘The pattern of tradition comes from the depths, what lies below and that is what binds us. But the ‘I’ comes from God and belongs to the Spirit that is free.’”⁵⁷

The return to the source and the philosophy of the trees are equally important. “Let’s look at a tree: it teaches us that a work of art must be doubly rooted — in the earth and in heaven. No creativity can survive without roots.”⁵⁸

In an essay entitled *A Tree Without Gods*, Guido Ceronetti, an outstanding Italian writer, recounted the following story: “If a cedar tree older than the pyramids grows in a courtyard of an apartment building and does not allow to create parking spaces for cars of eleven attorneys, nine traders, three dentists, a photographer and a pediatrician, it is cut down without hesitation. If, however, there were a prophecy that after cutting this Lebanese cedar, the entire apartment building would fall into ruins, because

56 K. Penderecki, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

57 T. Mann, *Joseph und seine Brüder*, cited in Polish from *Czarodziej, Rzecz o Tomaszu Mannie*, Kraków: Oficyna Literacka, 1993, p. 274.

58 K. Penderecki, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

along with the tree the guardian deity of this place would die, then respect and fear would take over and no one would dare to touch the tree.”⁵⁹

The human soul suffers damage when a tree is cut. As James Watt wrote: “People destroy good trees to print bad newspapers.” “If Beethoven lived today, it is not known whether he would have written the *Pastoral Symphony*. And if so, it would have a different character. That’s why I decided to make a happiness pact with nature. And contrary to what the hero of Dostoevsky suggests, I p l a n t t r e e s” — wrote Penderecki [...] “Composing the garden has a lot to do with composing a work of music. Both here and there the constructivist imagination is of the utmost importance; the ability to think comprehensively, thinking about the whole. A garden is Nature ‘mathematized,’ just like music is a ‘mathematized’ emotion. I must say, however, that I feel much more confident as a dendrologist, than as a composer.”⁶⁰

To compose, you need to have a sharpened intelligence and awareness — let’s add, also have an imagination stretched to its limits — but at the same time you have to listen to your inner world. This condition was accurately formulated by the eminent writer, Amos Oz:

“When a person sits down to, let’s say, compose, he must be vigilant on the one hand and have sharpened senses like a gangster on the night of long knives, when every

59 G. Ceronetti, *Drzewa bez Bogów [Trees without Gods]*, transl. St. Kasprzyśiak, Kraków: Oficyna Literacka, 1995, p.25.

60 K. Penderecki, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

moment may turn out to be critical, and on the other hand must also, as it were, fall asleep. If he is only vigilant, he will not create any artworks. When he completely falls into the dream, music will not emerge either.”⁶¹

After this philosophical reflection, let us return to the spring night:

*Zögernd leg ich aus der Hand
Meine, warmgespielte Geige,
Staune weit ins blaue Land,
Träume, sehne mich und schweige.*

*Slowly, I put aside my violin
Still warm from playing
And of heavenly charmed Earth
I dream, I long, and I am silent.*

Spellbound, he dreams as a mature man who does not have the “falcon sight” anymore, but who looks ahead through a narrow line, the boundary between life and death, that pierces through shapes, figures, trees or houses that obscure it, and who sees them all the way to the horizon, and maybe even further ... where the distant shores of eternity emerge.

For Krzysztof Penderecki — let’s remember that he played the violin in his youth — this is the moment of reflection and contemplation in silence, the moment of purification, of reaching the essence of himself, the essence of music, the essence of things.

61 A. Oz, “Gangster w noc długich noży albo sen” [A Gangster on the Night of Long Knives, or a Dream], *Exlibris* 60, 1994, p. 2.

End of Autumn / Ende des Herbstes

Rainer Maria Rilke

(second stanza)

*Von Mal zu Mal sind all
die Gärten nicht dieselben;
von den gilbenden zu der gelben
langsamem Verfall:
wie war der Weg mir weit.*

*More and more
gardens are not the same:
yellowing into yellow,
slowly dying:
so late I came to this.*

Old age approaches inexorably, quietly. A person counts the passing days. Old age weaves a delicate spider web. Aging is the irreversibility of becoming, the pathos of existence, the source of memories and poetic elation. Old age is also consumption, because a human being has a coded rhythm of life, according to which the life energy is gradually exhausted, we live while slowly dying. Within the heart, though, everyone feels like an eighteen-year-old, only that in time she/he lives in an aging body, like a lovely mystery in a crumbling castle.

Nonetheless, hope and love remain.