

**Humano, creativamente humano.
Filosofía & arte para la vida, y a ras de suelo.**



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El cuento del amor platónico, por Víctor Bermúdez Torres

Decía Oscar Wilde que cuando los dioses quieren castigar a los hombres, les conceden lo que desean. Siempre deseamos lo que no tenemos... Y cuando lo tenemos, ¡qué decepción!... Volvemos a desear otra cosa, ir aún más lejos, siempre, infinitamente, porque, como lloraba el poeta Luis Cernuda, el deseo es "una hoja cuya rama no existe (...), una pregunta cuya respuesta nadie sabe". Somos el animal insatisfecho, siempre queremos más, porque estamos hechos de barro, pero también de esa sutil materia de los sueños. "Neti, neti", replicaban los sabios brahmanes a cada respuesta o acción de sus discípulos, "no es eso, no es eso". Nunca es exactamente eso lo que de verdad buscamos...

¿Qué nos hace tan disconformes? Sea lo que sea, es eso lo que nos mueve, lo que nos empuja a crecer. El *movimiento* es el *modo de ser* de lo que aún no somos, de lo que aún no somos *todo lo que realmente hemos de ser*. Pero: ¿A qué este anhelo de ser más, de ser otro (y lo mismo) mejor, de buscar, de querer comernos el mundo?

Buscar la perfección es, antes que nada, saber qué nos falta. Eso es fácil (basta mirarse en el reflejo de la conciencia un par de segundos), pero también es imposible: ¿cómo nosotros, barro inmundo, burbuja tan frágil, vamos a tener idea de esa *perfección* que sabemos no tener, y que por ello deseamos desde nuestro más improbable principio?...

Cuando una pregunta no tiene respuesta (o un deseo no tiene cura) lo mejor, siempre, es contar un cuento. Como este.

Cuenta el filósofo Platón que en un banquete de cuento, que celebraron unos nobles amigos en honor de uno de ellos (el más cuentista, pues era poeta), decidieron invertir la gracia y la luz del vino trasegado en hablar del amor. Y cuando fue el turno de Sócrates, éste contó lo que una sabia mujer, Diotima, le contó una vez acerca de lo que contaban del nacimiento de Eros, el dios del Amor. Cuenta este [cuento](#) de cuentos, que en un olímpico banquete, en que los dioses celebraban el nacimiento de Afrodita, diosa de la belleza (esa brillante faz con que espejean, aquí abajo, los celestes sueños), salió a tomar el éter, borracho de néctar, Poros, el *dios de los recursos*, y encontrose allí, en los jardines del palacio de Zeus, a la pobre Penia, *diosa de la carestía* que, olvidada por todos, vagabundeaba entre los restos del divino festín. Y he aquí que Penia, pobre pero no tonta, se aprovechó de la inconsciencia de Poros y solazándose con él concibió ese día un hijo, al que, por su naturaleza, pusieron de nombre Eros o Amor.

Esto es amor, dice Platón. El hijo de lo Mucho y de lo POCO, de la borrachera del Dios que Todo lo consigue y la mísera inteligencia de la Diosa que Nada tiene, de lo Perfecto olvidado de sí mismo, y de la Imperfección consciente de sí. Este hijo, el Amor, heredó por su divino origen el sueño de lo Uno y lo Completo, y, por parte de madre, la triste, pero no menos divina, rémora de lo Partido y lo Cojo. Y desde entonces Eros, hecho cuerpo, renquea y brinca por la Tierra atento a cada bella (y afrodisíaca) llamada del Cielo. Y es este Amor, en la forma de la flecha que nos excita y tensa por dentro, el Alma que a los hombres nos habita, animándonos a hacer Uno lo que dolorosamente nos parece Dos, apuntando con bizco y tembloroso esfuerzo de arquero a lo que paternalmente nos llama, desde la caverna o valle que vacío habitamos a la vertical llanura de los sueños. Deseo, alma vagabunda, sueño inasible de belleza, sombra del Sol que sostiene las espaldas del cielo, solo eso, desde que Platón lo dijo, con luminosa y parecida borrachera a la del dios padre, y la inteligente mentira de las palabras con que la madre Penia lo sedujo, es el Amor. Eso somos tú y yo. Y, por eso, ni tú ni yo. Quien lo pensó, lo sabe.



Víctor Bermúdez Torres, Mérida, abril de 2015

Primera versión publicada el 26 de septiembre de 2013 en [Filosofía para cavernícolas](#)



Chica pintando corazones en el cielo del muro de Berlín / Víctor Bermúdez Torres, Berlín, 2014



Pintadas en el muro de Berlín / Víctor Bermúdez Torres, Berlín, 2014



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Óvulos bajo cero, por David Cerdá

El pasado mes de octubre, [Apple declaró que se sumaba a la campaña de Facebook por la que financiaría la congelación de óvulos de sus empleadas](#). Su justificación: atraer y retener el talento femenino, y “darle poder a las mujeres en Apple para que realicen el mejor trabajo de su vida mientras cuidan a sus seres queridos y crían a sus familias”. La medida fue saludada desde el campo liberal como una mejora en los derechos de las mujeres, a más de, por definición, un incremento neto de libertad en la sociedad. Hoy queremos preguntarnos, desmenuzando estos argumentos, si es efectivamente así.

Lo primero que habría que abordar es si disponer de más opciones significa de facto incrementar la libertad. Sobre el papel, cuantas más alternativas tengamos a nuestra disposición, más libres somos. Sin embargo, tal premisa dista de ser cierta en todos los casos. Puede comprobarse con un experimento muy simple: supongamos que se nos ofrece a todos, en determinado momento de nuestra vida, la posibilidad de accionar, si queremos, una de cuatro palancas, cada una de las cuales conducirá a una circunstancia importante en nuestras vidas dentro de un decenio: que nos toque la lotería, que nos atropelle un coche, que nos veamos libres de enfermedades por treinta años o que nos ofrezcan el trabajo de nuestra vida. No sabemos qué palanca acciona qué, y podemos elegir si accionar una o ninguna de ellas. La cuestión es, ¿ha aumentado nuestra libertad disponer de ese juego de palancas? Diría que no: que el hecho de disponer de una nueva opción (alterar las circunstancias de nuestro destino), al no estar

acompañado del conocimiento necesario para optar por la mejor opción, no nos ha hecho más libres.

Tampoco somos más felices tras gozar de esas supuestas opciones nuevas. Como ha señalado convincentemente Barry Schwartz al analizar [“la paradoja de elegir”](#), no existe una correlación directa y automática entre número de opciones y felicidad. Naturalmente, hay un montón de aspectos básicos en la vida (alimento, opciones de desplazamiento, capacidad para escoger a quien dirigimos nuestros afectos, etcétera) en el que menos opciones significa más frustración. Pero, como el animal cognitivamente limitado que somos, ocurre a veces que gozar de ciertas opciones nos produce más ansiedad que satisfacción. Especialmente, como es el caso que tratamos, cuando no somos capaces de prever las consecuencias de nuestras elecciones.

El ser humano tiene unas limitaciones notables a la hora de saber cómo le va a afectar la decisión de hoy en su felicidad futura, y de hecho, tiene una fuerte tendencia a intercambiar contento para mañana por contento de hoy. Eso explica por qué somos un animal que se arrepiente con tanta frecuencia de sus actos, y por qué caemos en compulsiones y adicciones varias con relativa facilidad. El dulce de hoy mejor que el no colesterol de mañana; desmontar esta propensión requiere de un carácter al que no contribuye nuestra constitución natural. De modo que es muy posible que una mujer de 30 años que ha de tomar hoy la decisión de congelar sus óvulos o no sea relativamente negligente a la hora de calibrar los pros y los contras que habrá de arrostrar en el futuro si decide ser madre, digamos, a los 45.

Naturalmente, hay otra falacia, mucho más sonora, que está detrás de esta supuestamente “bienintencionada y progresista” medida de Appel o Facebook. Y es la que sostiene que los mejores años de una mujer, los más productivos, son los que corresponden a su treintena, y además cuando no tiene niños que “estorben” su productividad. Se trata de un eslogan economicista cochambroso, pues, de un lado, niega que la madurez aporte valor al trabajo, y de otro, apunta a que los hijos no enseñan nada de importancia que pueda aplicarse en un entorno laboral, sino que por el

contrario despistan y entorpecen. Desgraciadamente, desconozco si hay estudios que puedan desmentir esto; pero en mi propia experiencia, en la que he sido responsable de equipos con muchas mujeres con niños, puedo decir que la maternidad centra, encauza emocionalmente, y en general, tiene un efecto positivo en la productividad. La madurez, que tampoco está indefectiblemente ligada a la edad, resulta ser muy rentable; y no cabe duda de que, en términos generales, la maternidad hace madurar.

Hay otra premisa desgraciada que permanece oculta en el razonamiento de esta megacompañías ultramodernas, la cual se nos escapa a menudo por ser un dogma de la mentalidad economicista de nuestro tiempo: que ser productivo es más importante que ser fértil, que nuestra principal contribución a la humanidad sea la que efectuamos como empleados por cuenta ajena, y que todos nuestros roles vitales han de verse supeditados a entregar lo mejor de nosotros mismos (y quede claro que no es cierto que nuestra treintena sea nuestro mejor momento creativo y productivo) a las organizaciones para las que trabajamos.

Un apunte final sobre la libertad que atañe a la ingenuidad. Estas lustrosas compañías bien podrán escudarse en que ellas “solo dan la opción”, de modo que están sumando en todo caso, y en ningún caso disminuyendo derecho alguno. Pero no es cierto. Cualquiera que tenga un conocimiento somero de psicología social, y añadidamente, cierta experiencia en entornos corporativos de este calado, con sus culturas, sus presiones de grupo a la conformidad, sus juicios entrecruzados, etcétera, sabrá que aquellas mujeres que *no* opten por congelar sus óvulos y decidan ser madres pasarán a ser una segunda división en estas grandes corporaciones, en las que sobre el papel no serán discriminadas, pero en la práctica, por *no haber congelado*, serán señaladas como menos laboralmente agresivas, menos implicadas (“tus mejores años no nos los darás”), y por lo tanto, menos susceptibles de ser promocionadas, recibir mejores proyectos y superiores salarios, etcétera. Ya puestos, y para regocijo de los liberales simplones que establecen la ecuación más opciones=más libertad, propongo que las grandes

corporaciones ofrezcan a sus empleados que cumplan 60 años la opción de optar por un digno [seppukku](#), a cambio de que sus hijos veinteañeros entren en la compañía. Diremos que es una “medida efectiva para la incorporación laboral de las nuevas generaciones”, que hemos ofrecido una opción que antes no existía contribuyendo a la mayor felicidad de los individuos, y por supuesto lograremos el sueño de las grandes empresas, que no es sino carne fresca que lo dé todo y esté dispuesta a todo a la mayor gloria de los beneficios empresariales, la cotización en bolsa y la expansión multinacional.



David Cerdá, Sevilla, 7 de abril de 2015



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El falso muro de la fe, por David Cerdá

“Cuando creemos con la más firme fe que poseemos la verdad, debemos saber que lo creemos, no creer que lo sabemos”

Jules Lequier

En *Mila 18*, de Leon Uris, un ensangrentado y trémulo oficial recién llegado de una revuelta en el gueto se cuadra ante el *Untersturmführer* Dolfuss y le explica: “Hemos sido cogidos en medio de un fuego cruzado terrible”. Algo parecido le ha sucedido, según creo, a millones de seres humanos que se han enfrentado al fenómeno de la fe. En mitad del fuego cruzado de filósofos, teólogos, sofistas, literatos y mercaderes, pocos conceptos y experiencias han llegado hasta nosotros más acribillados por postulados equívocos e intereses ajenos.

La cuestión de la fe, en este siglo nuestro que experimenta un *revival* parcialmente convulso del hecho religioso, ha vuelto al primer plano que quizá nunca abandonó. Merece la pena dedicarle alguna reflexión adicional, uno, porque el grado de confusión general sobre “el modo de conocer” de la fe apenas ha menguado, y dos, por la imperiosa necesidad que tenemos de separar el grano de la paja, y derribar así determinados muros ficticios que nos impiden batallar juntos contra determinadas formas de criminalidad.

§

Debemos el análisis más lúcido de lo que es una creencia, y de cómo se distingue esta de una idea, a José Ortega y Gasset (*Ideas y creencias*). Fue él quien explicó que, mientras las ideas *las tenemos*, en las creencias

estamos (son ellas las que nos tienen). Nuestro vivir está montado sobre ciertas creencias; ellas son el *continente* de nuestras vidas. Vienen a ser “ideas que somos”, y por eso “se confunden para nosotros con la realidad misma”. Con las creencias, hablando con propiedad, no hacemos nada; ni siquiera las formulamos; aludimos a ellas como aludimos a la realidad. Ellas son nuestro suelo estable, nuestras “vigencias radicales”, en términos de Julián Marías (“Ideas, creencias y opiniones”; en *La estructura social*). Su importancia es más existencial que intelectual, hasta el punto que Marías estima muy problemática la existencia de una relación genuina entre ideas y creencias, que habitarían niveles diversos.

Así conceptualizadas, se entenderá que las creencias son ubicuas. Como señala Wittgenstein a propósito de la certeza, estamos todos en ciertas creencias porque de lo contrario moriríamos de circularidad. Quiere decirse que *no existen los increyentes*. Más allá de las opiniones que emitamos, las ideas que tengamos o los argumentos que engarcemos, todo *estamos en* determinados creencias.

Expuesto lo que constituye una creencia, ¿en qué consistiría la fe? Esbozo la siguiente definición: una fe es una creencia decisiva, esto es, fundante para el sujeto, un “salto epistemológico en el vacío”: algo que se conoce sin pruebas, un acto subjetivo al que se incorpora en mayor grado la propia voluntad (en el sentido opuesto a una prueba concluyente que “cae por su propio peso”), una forma de conocer basada en testimonios ajenos, cuya relevancia supone un marco para las decisiones vitales del sujeto. Voy a desgranar esta propuesta tomando pie en lo argumentado por diversos autores.

¿Qué modo de conocimiento entraña la fe? Pablo de Tarso define la fe como *Pragmatôn elencos ou blepomenôn* —“la convicción de lo que no se ve”— (*Hebreos 1:11*). José Ramón Ayllón define la fe como “una forma de conocer que no se apoya en la evidencia de lo que se ve, sino en la credibilidad del que ha visto lo que nosotros no vemos” (*Filosofía mínima*). Este es el rasgo

testimonial de la fe. Eugenio Trías (*Por qué necesitamos la religión*) se refiere al acto de “conceder crédito” que esta incorpora. Luigi Giussani (*El sentido religioso*) refuerza este matiz al afirmar que la fe es “adherirse a lo que afirma otro”. Tener fe es fiarse de alguien para conocer algo. Josef Pieper considera que la fe es un “acto personal de asentimiento” que consiste en “el hecho de creer” (*Defensa de la filosofía*). La fe es un “saber sin base objetiva que incorpora un asentimiento incondicional e ilimitado” *mediando un testimonio*; es “creer algo a alguien” (*La fe*). Pieper no deja de insistir, como sostiene Ayllón, en que la adhesión al testigo es decisiva.

Para John Caputo (*Sobre la religión*) la fe consiste en “creer en lo que parece increíble, lo que parece imposible de creer”. Para Javier Moreno la *pístis* o fe sería “cualquier adhesión a la que no precede examen o que apenas se apoya en un examen deficiente” (*Muchas religiones, una verdad: ¿podemos creer aún?*). Es interesante constatar que, para la buena parte de la humanidad (que nada entiende sobre en qué consiste la ciencia o cómo se hace), la física cuántica puede llegar a ser una fe. Y todavía hoy mucha gente visita al doctor en la disposición en que antes lo hacía al curandero.

Mathieu Ricard, monje budista y a un tiempo hijo de un adalid del racionalismo como Jean François Revel, define la fe como “una convicción íntima e inquebrantable que surge del descubrimiento de una verdad interior”, así como “un maravillarse ante esa transformación interior” (*El monje y el filósofo*).

José Ferrater, en su clásico diccionario filosófico, refrenda que fe y creencia comparten estrato: “en muchos textos filosóficos los términos ‘creencia’ y ‘fe’ son usados aproximadamente con el mismo significado”. Jacobi ya había igualado mucho antes la filosofía de la creencia a la filosofía de la fe. Ferrater dice que “la creencia es (...) un asentimiento dado por la voluntad”. El elemento voluntarioso también es recalcado por Pieper en el segundo de sus textos citados: “lo determinante no es la verdad de la proposición creída, sino la intuición de que es bueno creer”. Estamos ante un acto que brota de la

libertad y que no aspira a evidencias (en el sentido objetivo del término, como luego se clarificará). En términos de Karl Jaspers: tener fe es *querer creer*, una apuesta libre, insegura e incondicional, trascendente al saber. Tenemos que comprender, dice Sádaba, que el sujeto “quiere creer. Tiene voluntad de poder crear la creencia” (*De Dios a la nada. Las creencias religiosas*). Al comprender que estamos ante un acto de voluntad, además de ante una postura epistémica, admitimos que toda fe comporta tanto una serie de razones (no constatables, como dice Pablo de Tarso), como un deseo.

Toda forma de conocimiento es a la vez una experiencia; saber proviene de *sapere*, y este a su vez de *sapor* (sabor). En cuanto a esto, la fe tampoco constituye una excepción. Idear, comprender intuitivamente o concluir a base de argumentos son también experiencias. ¿Qué rasgos específicos engloba la experiencia de la fe? Principalmente este: el compromiso. Toda fe entraña un impacto relevante en el modo de vida de quien la alberga. Sin este atributo, estamos ante una creencia a secas y no ante una fe. Karen Armstrong (*En defensa de Dios: el sentido de la religión*) refiere que en el cristianismo, en sus orígenes, “la fe era un asunto de compromiso y vida práctica [que...] tenía poco que ver con la creencia abstracta o la conjetura teológica”. Armstrong se hace eco de la importancia de los elementos volitivos y vivenciales frente a los epistémicos. Su visión del componente “comprometido” de fe y creencias es clara: “Tienes que *comprometerte* con un símbolo de forma imaginativa, llegar a estar ritual y éticamente implicado con él y permitirle que efectúe un cambio profundo de tu conciencia. Este era el significado original de las palabras ‘fe’ y ‘creencia’”.

§

No han faltado, pese a todo, intentos de separar fe y creencia. Enrique Miret distingue fe y creencia del siguiente —y a mi parecer, confuso— modo: “Creencia es la exposición con ideas y palabras de lo que estamos convencidos que expresa en concreto y de modo conceptual nuestra fe”. Estimo que es una fórmula problemática por empujar la fe a un lugar

imposible, inexistente: a un escalón distinto del de las creencias. Fe y creencias comparten naturaleza, más allá de que su intensidad e importancia existencial difieran. Insistamos en que la fe implica una cierta disposición existencial, como afirma Erich Fromm en la obra antes citada: “tener fe requiere coraje, la capacidad de correr un riesgo, la disposición a aceptar incluso el dolor y la desilusión”; o como lo expresa Roger Garaudy: “lo importante no es lo que un hombre diga de su fe (soy judío, soy cristiano, soy musulmán, soy budista, etc.), lo importante es lo que esta fe hace de este hombre”.

Marià Corbí (*Hacia una espiritualidad laica*) también distingue creencias de fe, dando una definición de esta bastante oscura:

La fe es un hecho de conocimiento, pero es un don [...] Es un rayo de luz que, para nuestros hábitos de conocimiento es oscuro [...] Es una noticia oscura que genera certeza [...] La creencia, por el contrario, es la adhesión incondicional a formas y formulaciones que se consideran reveladas por Dios mismo.

Corbí define creencia como lo cautivo e impuesto y fe como iluminación; pero no ofrece argumentos suficientes para distinguirlas en el plano cognitivo o gnoseológico, que es, estimo, de lo que se trata cuando queremos hablar de certezas y grados de conocimiento. Sencillamente etiqueta unas creencias y otras, una fe y otra, abogando más tarde porque vivamos “nuestra cualidad específica en formas no religiosas”. Arrima el ascua a su sardina, en su tentativa de distinguir una espiritualidad genuina de sus formas cauterizadas.

“Certeza”, que en el Diccionario de la Real Academia es sinónimo de “certidumbre”, se define de dos formas: como un “conocimiento seguro y claro de algo” y como la “firme adhesión de la mente a algo conocible, sin temor de errar”. La fe no es cuestión de certeza en el primer sentido (de evidencia), sino en el segundo (de *fuerza* en el creer). Por eso afirma José Antonio Marina que “fe significa promesa”; por eso y por su raíz etimológica, que remite a *fiducia*. Aunque la fe sea una creencia que ocupe un lugar de

privilegio en nuestro entramado vivencial, no podemos reclamar para ella un mayor grado de “certeza”.

Tener fe es “creer fuerte”, lo cual no nos acerca ni un milímetro más a la verdad objetiva, intersubjetiva, compartible. De ahí que las consideraciones epistemológicas de la fe carezcan de sentido; cabe hablar de veracidad y no de verdad, y sobre todo, de intensidad, de compromiso personal. Caputo lo expresa con gran claridad: “Los fieles tienen que admitir que no *conocen* de manera cognitiva ni de ninguna forma epistemológicamente rigurosa aquello en lo que *creen* por fe (...) No disfrutan de determinados privilegios cognitivos ni de ventajas epistémicas”. Algo que, de cualquier modo, sabíamos ya desde Kant, quien expuso muy convincentemente que Dios, por no ser susceptible de demostración teórica, solo puede ser postulado desde una “fe moral”.

Ninguna fe es un saber, en ningún sentido no vago, epistémicamente serio. Y ello aunque reconozcamos, con William James, que la experiencia religiosa tiene ciertos trazos que propenden a la ambigüedad, puesto que “aunque semejantes a estados afectivos, a quienes los experimentan los estados místicos les parecen también estados de conocimiento”. De ahí que sostenga Dean Hamer (*El gen de Dios*), tras estudiar a muchos sujetos de vida marcadamente religiosa, que “no conocemos a Dios, lo sentimos”. Y a fin de cuentas, como tan bien expone Comte-Sponville (“Saber que creemos”), “si la fe es una gracia, como todos [los teólogos] afirman, no puede ser un saber. Nadie tiene fe en lo que sabe”.

Garaudy (*El diálogo entre Oriente y Occidente. Las religiones y la fe en el siglo XXI*) abunda en esta idea cuando afirma que “esta certidumbre confiada se llama fe, es decir, una razón militante consciente de los postulados que fundan sus hipótesis”. Una razón militante es un bello oxímoron, puesto que el signo distintivo de la razón es que no requiere de más apoyo para imponerse que su mera exposición. Racional es lo que puede exponerse simplemente de modo que todos, menos los obtusos, acordarían en ello. De

ahí que Garaudy tenga que acudir a esa calificación belicosa, que en todo caso, ya no es adecuado llamar *razón*.

Las reflexiones de John Henry Newman en *El asentimiento religioso* son muy esclarecedoras a este respecto. Newman se remite al concepto de *asentimiento*: “en la enseñanza de la religión se llama certeza a lo que yo he llamado asentimiento”. No sería ni una duda ni una certeza; se parecería más a la fe del carbonero; es decir, a un conocimiento invencible que es idéntico a una ignorancia invencible. Como el propio autor admite, “los hombres pueden dar su asentimiento a la ligera, o por mero prejuicio, o sin entender a qué dan su asentimiento”. Por eso, “la confirmación da importancia al acto complejo de la mente, pero el asentimiento le da fuerza”. Newman hace un uso turbio, pero enormemente extendido, del término “certeza”, por no quedarse con la segunda de las acepciones (“convicción”), jugando, por así decirlo, a dos barajas.

¿Qué determina el grado de certeza epistémica de una creencia? Dos aspectos: su verificabilidad empírica e intersubjetiva. Las distintas fes religiosas (como la fe en que somos amados, por ejemplo) no pueden invocar ni una ni la otra. Ya Wittgenstein explicó con prolija y desnuda minuciosidad que precisamente toda creencia (religiosa, ética), está más allá de lo empírico (y por lo tanto del lenguaje). Es, a su juicio, una elaboración posterior de ciertas emociones; la religión es expresiva y no cognitiva; popperianamente no falsable. Cierto que cientos de millones de personas albergan ciertas fes; pero no lo es menos que otros tantos cientos de millones sostienen cosas contrapuestas. La propia diversidad religiosa viene a confirmar que sus fes son creencias de una clase especial, y que nada tienen que ver, en principio, con la verdad en el sentido objetivo y compartible en que entendemos a esta.

§

Puesto que de lo que se trata es de calibrar la clase y profundidad del conocimiento que entraña “tener fe”, pienso que de poco sirve establecer

distinciones entre una “fe natural” y una “fe religiosa”, como lo hace Gustavo Bueno (*La fe del ateo*). Siguiendo su propio argumento: si la fe es, a la manera de Pablo de Tarso, creer lo que no se ha visto ¿qué diferencia habría entre la fe en el arcángel Gabriel (su existencia, su mensaje) y la fe en el futuro de la humanidad? Mi tesis es que no hay ninguna. Posteriormente, él mismo llamará la atención sobre el hecho de que “la dicotomía entre las materias de la fe religiosa y las de la fe natural es casi siempre demasiado simplista”.

De modo que no importa demasiado que la teología cristiana, por tomar tan solo la que nos resulta más cercana, denomine a la fe un “acto de conocimiento” (*Catecismo de la Iglesia católica*); o que sostenga que la “fe verdadera no es solo un conocimiento cierto (esto es, seguro) ... sino también una seguridad profundamente enraizada” (*Catecismo de Heidelberg*). La carga de evidencia de la fe es ficticia; es un espejismo que proviene de su fuerza, de nuestro compromiso. Por eso escribe Marina que esta clase de evidencias constituyen “fenómenos noérgicos” (de *ergon*: fuerza), por estar investidas de una fuerza que se impone al pensamiento. Los humanos hemos tenido una fe inquebrantable sobre los extremos más peregrinos. La doncella de Orleans, por ejemplo, tuvo la “certeza” de que Dios la había puesto en la Tierra para restituir al trono al Delfín de Francia. De ahí que el “escandaloso” intento de Wolfhart Pannenberg de enlazar indisolublemente Dios y evidencia, con toda su audacia y brillantez intelectual, solo termine escandalizando a quien no plante los dos pies firmemente sobre la epistemología más sobria.

La premisa más problemática respecto a la fe es siempre esta: postular que constituye un modo “distinto” de creer. Es lo que está explícito en la obra clásica del profesor Wilfred Cantwell Smith (*Fe y Creencia*). A su parecer, toda fe presupone un cierto “nivel de certeza”, que iría más allá de la mera creencia. Este autor escribe que “la fe presupone la corrección y veracidad de cierta proposición de la experiencia”. Es un ejemplo palmario de *wishful thinking*. Cantwell Smith ofrece una profusión de afirmaciones como esta en

su obra, carentes de cualquier sustento cognitivo o epistemológico. No obstante, sí sabrá ver que esta fe implica “compromiso, introducción, mientras que la creencia implica solo una aserción intelectual de que algo es verdadero y cierto”. Es decir: pese a crear un insostenible espacio epistémico exclusivo para la fe, sí acertó a ver que su forma de aprehensión reviste un carácter muy especial para quien lo contrae.

La fe no implica un modo más veraz de conocer, sino tan solo uno distinto, que además no es privativo de la fe religiosa. Todos los totalitarismos, por ejemplo, se han valido de formas de fe para sojuzgar a los seres humanos. El *Diamat* (materialismo dialéctico) fue llamado con justicia “Nueva fe”. En la Francia post-bélica, muchos sacerdotes, expuestos a la realidad de las fábricas, mudaron con naturalidad de fe.

Como subraya Luis Villoro, una religión no sea una “comunidad epistémica”, sino más bien una “comunidad sapiencial” (*Creer, saber, conocer*). El amor mismo, o mejor (y hay algo profundamente triste en tener que aclararlo), ciertas formas de amor, incorporan sin lugar a dudas la fe, como explica Kierkegaard en *Las obras del amor* con su característica vehemencia:

Si la infatuada sagacidad, que se jacta de no dejarse engañar, tuviese razón cuando afirma que no debe creerse nada que no se vea con los ojos de la carne, entonces en lo que primeramente habría que dejar de creer sería en el amor.

La fe religiosa es, obviamente aparte de su contenido, idéntica —en sus cimientos cognitivos y epistemológicos— al resto de fes, y por tanto no puede reclamar conocer con más intensidad o evidencia que el resto de los humanos que tienen fe en otras cosas. La *fides*, tal y como la describe Cicerón, es “la actitud perseverante y veraz ante los acuerdos celebrados”. Verdaderamente, uno cierra contratos con sus creencias, cuyo texto base podría ser: “explícame cómo funciona el mundo, y yo te mantendré”. Con tal subterfugio intercambiamos acciones y pensamientos por *seguridad*; una seguridad que por supuesto no tiene por qué ser falaz. Por la misma razón, carece de sentido que Juan Antonio Estrada hable en *Razones y sinrazones*

de la creencia religiosa de “la fe ciega en la racionalidad científico-técnica”. Todas las fes son iguales de ciegas, en el sentido de que son una apuesta, una creencia importante no trazable deductivamente. De ahí que chirrié que el autor nos invite a “comprometernos con una fe al menos razonable, plausible y convincente”, o que hable de “la fe como una actitud razonable”. Puesto que todo ser humano es epistémicamente muy vulnerable —ignora muchísimas cosas y pese a ello ha de seguir adelante y vivir—, por supuesto que el hecho de albergar fes es razonable, en el sentido de que no seríamos viables sin ellas. Pero más allá de ello, razonar y tener fe son modos muy distintos de conocer.

Estrada sabe que incluso allá donde hay un anhelo de sentido, no vamos a encontrar automáticamente más cantidad de verdad: “la necesidad de sentido hace comprensible la búsqueda religiosa, pero no la legitima, ni, mucho menos, convalida su verdad”. De ahí colige que “la religión es compatible con la duda”; ergo la fe, pese a lo que dice Newman (que jamás se avendría con Unamuno en este punto), es compatible con la duda. Y por lo tanto, una vez más, no puede ser una certeza, en el sentido del término emparentado con la verdad. Estrada expone con mucho pundonor una tesis a la que todos los filósofos deberíamos rendir honor: “habría que hacer un elogio de la duda en relación con las creencias, no solo de las religiosas”. Pues, especialmente “una teología después de Auschwitz tiene que ser *capaz de afrontar su no saber*”.

Por lo demás, no hay modo alguno de asignar “razonabilidad” ni a la fe ni a las creencias per se. Mientras exista la fe de los yihadistas y la “fe del carbonero”, ¿cómo hablar de una confianza que sea siempre razonable? Puesto que la fe forma parte de la biografía emocional de cada uno, dada su carga vivencial, resulta absurdo reclamar para ella un grado de certitud especial. Lo sabemos desde que Leon Festinger desenmascaró las *disonancias cognitivas*: aquello que más nos importa creer como cierto es digno de la mayor de nuestras sospechas. Eso no comporta su falsedad; tan

solo convoca, según la cita de Lequier que encabeza este texto, a hacer acopio de humildad sobre lo que *creemos saber*.

§

Algunos autores han querido, al contrario, enfrentar la fe a las emociones, al menos cuando aquella es vehículo de espiritualidad. El Raimon Panikkar de 1965 es aún presa de la clásica visión en la que la razón y las emociones se contraponen: dice que las últimas han de ser extirpadas para alcanzar el estadio espiritual más elevado, ya que “el aspecto sentimental es solo una apariencia, o, si se quiere, un velo externo que cubre dimensiones más profundas” (*Religión y religiones*). Justo al revés, Marina (*Dictamen sobre Dios*) sostiene que “la religión nace de un sentimiento: de una evidencia afectiva, y su valor va a depender del valor que atribuyamos a esa evidencia”. James, en su imponente clásico *Las variedades de la experiencia religiosa*, explica muy bien esta componente sentimental:

los estados místicos ... son excitaciones como las emociones amorosas o la ambición, regalos a nuestro espíritu por los que los hechos, antes objetivos para nosotros, alcanzan ahora una nueva significación y establecen una conexión con nuestra vida activa.

James lo remacha así: “Creo que el sentimiento es la fuente más profunda de la religión, y que las fórmulas filosóficas y teológicas son productos secundarios, al igual que traducciones de un texto a otra lengua”. Para Wittgenstein y los que le siguieron, la fe es en su totalidad emoción (una “creencia inconvencional”). James llega a afirmar que

la razón lógica del hombre opera en este campo de la divinidad exactamente como siempre ha actuado en el amor, en el patriotismo, en la política o en cualquier otro de los asuntos de la vida en los que nuestras pasiones y nuestras intuiciones místicas fijan de antemano nuestras creencias.

James explica que la razón no puede ni originar ni menos aún apuntalar la fe religiosa (“el razonamiento es un camino relativamente superficial e irreal

hacia la deidad”). Es una tesis decisiva que incide en que la fe religiosa comparte campo (psicológico, epistémico, existencial) con otras fes que nos resultan aparentemente más naturales —por exentas de polémica y por no ser base de mutuo enfrentamiento—. Reconocerlo es el primer paso para disolver términos de uso excluyente, como *creyente* y *fiel*.

Escribe David Hume en su *Investigación sobre el entendimiento humano*: “La creencia no es nada sino una concepción de un objeto más vívida, intensa, fuerte, firme y estable que cualquiera de las que la imaginación por sí sola pudiera lograr”. Y más adelante puntualiza: “pero esta facultad imaginativa jamás puede por sí sola producir una creencia; y eso hace evidente el hecho de que las creencias no consisten en ninguna naturaleza u orden especial de ideas, porque la imaginación no tiene límite alguno con respecto a eso, sino más bien en el *modo* de su concepción y en su *sentir* para la mente”. En la fe y la creencia, lo que hay es un modo peculiar. Hume lo abrocha así: “en la filosofía no podemos ir más allá de afirmar que *la creencia es algo sentido por la mente que distingue las ideas del juicio de las ficciones de la imaginación*. Las dota de más peso e influencia, hace aparecer de mayor importancia, fortalece en la mente, y constituye en los principios rectores de nuestras acciones”. Todo esto nos consta desde 1748.

§

Las denominaciones “creyente e infiel” han sido categorías de las que han pretendido apropiarse los teísmos más beligerantes como un modo de marcar su terreno y señalar el de sus enemigos. Pero se trata, como he tratado de argumentar, de un posicionamiento psicológica y epistemológicamente insostenible. No existe un “fenómeno de la fe”; no en un sentido fundamentalmente distinto a que exista un “fenómeno de la idea” del que naturalmente, nadie habla. Tener fe es un hecho trivial, esto es, humanamente prosaico, universalmente extendido entre los humanos; nada que nadie pueda esgrimir como factor diferencial. Es posible aplicar la atinada definición de Pablo de Tarso tanto a la religión, como al amor, al

porvenir de la humanidad o a las instituciones democráticas. Así, escribe Fromm que “la fe en los demás culmina en la fe en la humanidad” (*El arte de amar*).

No existen, pues, los *infieles*; todo el mundo alberga alguna y con frecuencia muchas *fiducias*. La experiencia de creer y confiar, de adherirse a bloques de conocimiento sin pruebas, en base al testimonio de los demás, ocurre en todas partes y a todos, del modo en que refiere Ortega en *Misión de la universidad*, “como las manos son un atributo de un hombre. El hombre a veces no tiene manos; pero entonces no es tampoco un hombre, sino un hombre manco”. La fe en Dios, la fe en uno mismo, la fe en la humanidad (quiere decir: en su bondad esencial, en su supervivencia, etcétera), o la fe en la justicia; solo cambian los contenidos de esos saltos en el vacío (creencias decisivas) que son las fes. Aunque Welte (*¿Qué es creer?*) estuviese en lo cierto y hubiese que aceptar que “la fe sigue siendo un salto”, ese es un salto que los seres humanos están, sea desde la religión o desde otras instancias, acostumbrados a dar, pues con mucha frecuencia adoptamos posturas existenciales agudas que están lejos de tomar basamento razones y hechos. Nuestros movimientos vitalmente más arriesgados, aquellos que finalmente marcan el curso de nuestras vidas, rara vez son planteados desde argumentaciones completas y nítidas, intersubjetivamente comunicables, por todos entendibles. Somos un animal propenso a las corazonadas; somos el único que decide, y no es raro que lo hagamos desde un sentimiento inexplicable. El propio Welte lo reconoce:

Así pues, progresamos en la realización de nuestra existencia, aunque solo sea avanzando a lo largo del camino, traspasamos de continuo la frontera que separa lo sabible de lo que no puede saberse. Pero ese traspaso es precisamente la condición para que pueda realizarse la existencia.

Pese a todo, esta *ubicuidad* de la fe y de las creencias, su frecuencia apabullante en todas las esferas de lo humano, o el hecho de que no existan niveles epistemológicos “superiores” ni “inferiores”, resulta ignorada hasta extremos que a veces cuesta trabajo entender. En el libro de entrevistas de

Antonio Monda (*¿Crees en Dios? Conversaciones sobre Dios y la religión*), se produce una escena con la escritora Paula Fox que lo ejemplifica con gran claridad: el entrevistador, presa del esquema en el que la fe propia es conocimiento y la ajena superchería, no entiende cómo la entrevistada manifiesta no estar impresionada por la relevancia de las creencias teístas en su país:

AM: Vive usted en un país donde el noventa por ciento se declara creyente en Dios.

PF: Es una cifra extraordinaria, pero le remito también a una estadística según la cual el sesenta por ciento de los americanos considera que el sol gira en torno a la Tierra.

AM: Perdóneme, ¿pero qué tiene que ver la fe con la ignorancia?

De un modo absolutamente fascinante, al entrevistador ni siquiera se le ocurre la posibilidad de que ambas sean creencias o fes. Sin embargo, eso es justo lo que son: creencias absolutamente equiparables en términos estrictamente epistemológicos. No hay una verdad “de mayor rango” (solo una “de rango distinto”) a la que apelar desde la fe.

Reconocer que solo creemos que sabemos y no que sabemos que creemos, es una afrenta no a la fe de nadie, sino al dogmatismo de cualquiera. El muro que separa a creyentes de increyentes no existe: es un holograma instalado por algunos sinvergüenzas y algunos criminales. Las denominaciones “creyente e infiel” han sido categorías de las que han pretendido apropiarse variantes beligerantes de teísmos y todos los totalitarismos que en el mundo han sido, como un modo de marcar su terreno y señalar el de sus enemigos, sea para recabar ciertos beneficios materiales, sea para hacer propagar la destrucción. Si retiramos a la fe su impronta exclusivista, ¡cuántas cosas podrían cambiar!



David Cerdá, 12 de abril de 2015



HCH 4 / Mayo 2015

Jerusalén, ירושלים, القدس , por Antonia Tejada Barros

Pitas, metralletas, sol, *hummus* (חמום), muros, torás, mezquitas, tirabuzones, hiyabs, *matzá* (מצה), especias, pistolas, cruces, tomates, sinagogas, banderas, uniformes militares, Yahvé, Cristo, Alá ... todo revuelto y a la vez bien separadito en esta fascinante y dura ciudad de unos 700.000 habitantes.

Jerusalén brilla por su caos, su suciedad, su bonita piedra blanca, su mezcla de acentos, sus colores, su buena comida, su historia y su intolerancia. En Jerusalén se mezcla lo antiguo y lo nuevo. A ratos recuerda a alguna ciudad de la India, con su desorden y su pobreza, pero con una agresividad y arrogancia "a la europea" teñidas de fanatismo religioso y sionismo.

Dentro y fuera de Israel, judíos y palestinos viven separados por cientos de kilómetros de muro; un muro alto y feo, parecido al de Berlín, pero con menos *graffiti*. El muro de Berlín medía unos 155 km. de largo y 3,6 metros de alto. Se dice que el muro de Israel medirá 650 km. (aún está en construcción) y su altura máxima es por ahora de 8 metros. Dentro de Jerusalén hay también trocitos de muro que rodean puntos árabes, "por seguridad". Cuando estaba en Jerusalén solía observar, desde la ventana, un pedazo de muro que acorralaba, dejando sólo un punto de entrada y salida, una pequeña aldea árabe. El muro hace recordar el gueto de Varsovia, aunque, como bien dice E. Randol Schoenberg, el Holocausto y el conflicto israelí-palestino no son ni pueden ser comparables.

El problema de la paz en Israel es un tema secundario para los judíos que viven en Israel. Ellos protestan cuando suben los precios de los alimentos y del alquiler, pero apenas salen a la calle para defender la paz y la dignidad.

Israel es un país en guerra y a nadie parece importarle. Los judíos saben que existe un 99 % de probabilidades de que sus hijos vayan a hacer el servicio militar obligatorio, con metralletas, uniformes militares, bombas y enfrentamientos (3 años para los chicos y 2 años para las chicas), y apoyan con su falta de crítica el lavado de cerebro de los jóvenes judíos, los cuales, a los 18 años, van orgullosos a servir a *su* patria, *su* pueblo y *su* país.

¿Cuándo podrán los judíos y musulmanes vivir en paz? Mientras haya fanatismo por los dos lados, la paz es imposible. Católicos y protestantes se mataron en Europa durante 500 años, y la diferencia entre el catolicismo y el protestantismo puede resumirse en unas pocas frases: los católicos creen en la Biblia (Antiguo Testamento y Nuevo Testamento), en los santos y en la tradición; los protestantes creen sólo en la Biblia; en el catolicismo el hombre cae por la corrupción y por la tendencia al pecado y es libre para hacer el bien y el mal; en el protestantismo el hombre es puro pecado y sólo es libre para hacer el mal; en el catolicismo la salvación se recibe en el bautismo y puede perderse por el pecado mortal (y ganada de nuevo por penitencia: muy cómodo para el verdugo e injusto para las víctimas); en el protestantismo la salvación es incondicional y depende sólo de Dios; el catolicismo cree en el purgatorio; el protestantismo, no. Se podría decir que la diferencia entre catolicismo y protestantismo es la misma que entre una manzana roja (no muy apetecible, por cierto) y una manzana verde (tampoco demasiado apetecible). Al fin y al cabo, católicos y protestantes comparten un mismo libro, un mismo dios y un mismo mesías.

En Israel hay judíos (75 %), árabes (20.7 %) y otras minorías (4.3 %). Los árabes israelíes son musulmanes o cristianos y son tratados como ciudadanos de 2ª categoría. Los árabes israelíes hablan hebreo, pero los judíos (exceptuando poquísimas excepciones) no hablan árabe. Los árabes israelíes son discriminados y "chequeados" continuamente. No pueden hacer el servicio militar, con la excusa oficial de que, en caso de guerra, no tengan que enfrentarse con sus "hermanos" los palestinos, jordanos, sirios, libaneses o egipcios. Sin embargo, los drusos (que viven en las montañas en Galilea y

hablan árabe) y los beduinos (que viven en el desierto –Néguev y Judea– y hablan árabe) sí que deben hacer el servicio militar.

En Jerusalén la mayoría de los taxistas es árabe. Recuerdo que un taxista nos contó que había sido apaleado 5 veces por ser árabe. En Jerusalén, el racismo se respira continuamente. Incluso los judíos que aparentan ser "de izquierda" (en Israel la izquierda y la derecha se definen por la "cuestión árabe y palestina", no por temas económicos) apenas se mezclan con árabes, no hablan siquiera el árabe y la mayoría ha cumplido los 2 ó 3 años de servicio militar. Abrazan más bien el *snobismo* que el humanismo.

En Jerusalén no existe el transporte público en Shabat (שבת) (desde el viernes cuando se pone el sol hasta el sábado por la noche, cuando salen 3 estrellas). Parece ser que el siglo XXI no ha llegado aún a este rincón del mundo. En Pésaj (פסח) está prohibido por el Tanaj (תנ"ך) comer cualquier alimento que contenga cereales fermentados. Así que los supermercados cubren durante una semana con papel blanco todos los productos "prohibidos": pan, galletas, pasteles, pasta, cerveza ... no vaya a ser que alguien se despiste, se coma una galletita en Pésaj y Yahvé decida otorgarle la muerte en el próximo Yom Kippur (יום כיפור).

Judíos y musulmanes no comparten ni el mismo dios ni el mismo libro. Pero sus religiones se parecen mucho y sus costumbres, también. Judíos y musulmanes son ambos circuncidados (los judíos, a los 8 días, los musulmanes, a los 5 años), no comen cerdo y siguen al pie de la letra sus escrituras. Es fácil ser un "buen judío" o un "buen musulmán" (sólo hay que cumplir con las reglas dictadas en las escrituras) y ser, sin embargo, poco humano (abrazar el racismo, el separatismo o el fanatismo). Judíos y árabes, ambos semitas, son, según el Tanaj y el Qu'ran, hermanos. El término semita es un término moderno sacado del Génesis (בראשית), primer libro de la Torá (תורה): Shem (שם) fue hijo de Noé [Noaj] (נח) y los pueblos que descendieron de Shem son los semitas. Shem tuvo 5 hijos: Eilam (עילם) - padre de los elamitas-, Ashur (אשור) -padre de los asirios-, Aram (ארם) -padre

de los arameos-, Lud (לוד) y Arpajshad (ארפכשד). Arpajshad fue el padre de Shelaj (שלח). Shelaj fue el padre de Ever (עבר). Ever fue el padre de Péleg (פלג) y Ioktán (יקטן). Péleg fue el padre de Reu (רעו). Reu fue el padre de Srug (שרוג). Srug fue el padre de Najor (נחור). Najor fue el padre de Téráj (תרח). Téráj tuvo 3 hijos: Avram (אברם), Najor (נחור) y Harán (הרן). Avram cambió su nombre por Abraham, se casó con Sarai (שרי), -que cambió su nombre por Sara (שרה)- y juntos tuvieron a Itzjak (יצחק). Los judíos son los descendientes de Itzjak. Itzjak tuvo dos hijos: Esav (עשו) y Iacob (יעקב). Iacob tuvo 12 hijos, que son las 12 tribus de Israel. Sara, la mujer de Abraham, antes de tener a Itzjak, era estéril, y entregó a su sirvienta egipcia Hagar (הגר) a su marido para que tuvieran hijos. De Abraham y Hagar nació Ishmael (ישמעאל). Los árabes son los descendientes de Ishmael. En el Qu'ran, Abraham (Ibrahim) no es judío sino musulmán. Hagar en el Qu'ran es una princesa egipcia y sirvienta de Sara. Sara y Hagar son ambas mujeres de Abraham (Ibrahim). Ishmael (Ismail) es hijo de Abraham (Ibrahim) y de Hagar. Itzjak, padre de los judíos, e Ishmael (Ismail), padre de los árabes, son, pues, hermanos.

Las tres principales religiones monoteístas, que tanto tienden a excluir, enfrentar y aniquilar, tienen muchos puntos en común. En el Qu'ran, Moisés y Jesús son profetas: "Creemos en Alá y en la revelación que nos ha sido dada a nosotros y a Abraham, Ismail, Itzjak, Jacob y las Tribus, y la revelación dada a Moisés y Jesús, y la dada a todos los profetas de su Señor: nosotros no diferenciamos entre uno u otro profeta" (Qur'an, 2:136). ¿Para qué, entonces, tanto odio, tanta desconfianza y tantas matanzas? ¿Tan importante es qué dios se lleva el premio de la exclusividad? Tanto el judaísmo, como el cristianismo como el islam deben aprender aún mucho sobre humanismo, espiritualidad, amor, respeto y tolerancia.

Pero no todo es fanatismo, metralletas y agresividad en Jerusalén. Hace tres años, durante el Séder de Pésaj pude hablar de filosofía y religión con el rabino Shlomo, una persona inteligente, repetuosa y tolerante. ¿Cómo es posible seguir cantándole a un dios que permite tanta atrocidad y barbarie?,

le pregunté. Conversamos e intercambiamos opiniones extremadamente diferentes.

La historia se repite y avanza en espiral: los cristianos fueron masacrados desde la muerte de Jesús hasta el año 380 (año en que el emperador Teodosio hizo del cristianismo, desgraciadamente para la Humanidad futura – Nietzsche estaría de acuerdo conmigo–, la religión oficial del Imperio Romano) y luego fueron los cristianos quienes se dedicaron a torturar, matar y masacrar a los infieles. Recuérdese que la Inquisición nació en 1184 en Languedoc y existió oficialmente hasta 1965 (en Roma). Los musulmanes han defendido en muchas ocasiones el islam con sangre, guerras y atrocidades y ahora son víctimas de la exclusión y de una creciente islamofobia, mezclada de racismo, estupidez e ignorancia. 6 millones de judíos fueron exterminados en el Holocausto (Shoá: שואה) y ahora los judíos que viven en Israel parecen haberse transformado en los estranguladores de sus vecinos árabes y palestinos. La historia avanza y se hunde, las atrocidades se repiten, la barbarie continúa, sólo cambian los escenarios y los protagonistas, los verdugos y las víctimas. Las tres principales religiones monoteístas siguen mutilando el pensamiento, siguen separando y siguen excluyendo, y el ser humano no aprende. ¿Por qué tendrá el hombre tanto miedo de pensar por sí mismo, de escoger y de vivir en libertad?



Antonia Tejada Barros, Madrid, mayo de 2015

Primera versión publicada el 23 de abril de 2012 en el [Blog de Antonia Tejada](#)



Calles de Jerusalén / Antonia Tejada Barros, 2012



Bandera ensangrentada / Antonia Tejada Barros, 2012



The Old City / Antonia Tejada Barros, 2012



Vidrieras de Chagall, Hadassah Medical Center Hospital / Antonia Tejada Barros, 2012



Spinoza en Jerusalén / Antonia Tejada Barros, 2012



HCH 4 / Mayo 2015

Los diálogos del vermú 1: Cuotas para mujeres, por David Cerdá

[Soy Sebastián, camarero del bar *Sócrates*, donde cada medio día nuestros parroquianos, que saben vivir, paran quince minutos para tomarse el vermú y departir conmigo. Yo tomo nota de nuestros diálogos, y los comparto con todos, por si a alguien más le pudieran entretener]

Parroquiano: A las buenas, Sebastián: ponme un vermú.

Sebastián: Sobre la marcha, caballero.

P: Estamos listos con lo de las feministas. Ya no basta con sus numeritos en la escena pública: ahora nos asediarán en nuestros propios trabajos.

S: ¿A qué se refiere?

P: A las dichosas cuotas. ¿Puede haber una idea más estúpida?

S: Se refiere a que se reserve un número de asientos en los puestos de responsabilidad a las mujeres, ¿verdad?

P: Precisamente. Menuda aberración.

S: ¿Quiénes han conseguido, a su juicio, que las cuotas sean sancionadas?

P: Lobbies peligrosos, como los de gays y lesbianas. No son trigo limpio.

S: ¿Un lobby, dice? Las cuotas han sido sancionadas como instrumentos de justicia por la UE, la ONU, y las leyes de muchos países avanzados, entre ellos el nuestro.

P: A mí desde luego no me han preguntado.

S: Pero eso no quiere decir que no sea el producto de un proceso democrático. Usted, como yo, escoge a sus representantes, estos a su vez emplazan a personas en ciertos cargos, y todos ellos tienen responsabilidades legislativas que tratan de poner voz a las sensibilidades del pueblo al que representan. Le concedo que esa transmisión de

voluntades dista mucho de ser perfecta; pero el proceso de decisión no deja de ser perfectamente democrático.

P: Ya, pero vamos a los resultados: mañana me van a despedir a mí para que mi puesto lo ocupe una mujer. ¿Hay derecho a eso?

S: ¿Conoce usted casos de eso? ¿Sabe de alguien a quien le haya pasado?

P: —Pensativo— No. Pero *podría* pasar.

S: ¿Quiere decir que sería legal que le despidiesen por tal motivo?

P: Pues no lo había pensado... No lo creo... ¿Tú qué dices, Sebas?

S: Que no conozco la redacción completa de la ley pero me arriesgo a decir que tal supuesto no se contempla. Que la mecánica propia de las cuotas se refiere a las vacantes que están por cubrir, y que se estima una adaptación sucesiva, no que se despida a ningún hombre con esa excusa.

P: Y bien: ¿qué me dices del asunto del supuesto lenguaje machista? ¿No es para volverse locos?

S: ¿A qué se refiere?

P: “Amigas y amigos”; “ciudadanas y ciudadanos”; “hermanas y hermanos”. ESO.

S: Analicémoslo. El uso del plural, que en castellano es hasta hoy masculino, ¿qué fines cumple?

P: Según cierto feminismo, y algunas instituciones públicas, es un uso denigratorio para las mujeres. Aunque a mí me contaron que era una cuestión de economía de lenguaje. Y la verdad es que se hace muy cansino escuchar según qué discursos...

S: Es verdad. Le pregunto: ¿quiénes son responsables de que la lengua mantenga su forma? ¿La Junta de Andalucía y las asociaciones civiles?

P: En absoluto. La Real Academia de la Lengua.

S: ¿Es esta una institución creada con fines represivos?

P: No me consta. Lo que hacen esos señores es tratar que los hispanohablantes cumplamos con ciertas normas necesarias para mantener un lenguaje pulido, de calidad, *esplendoroso*.

S: Pienso igual.

P: En eso estamos de acuerdo. Pero volvamos a las cuotas. No me negarás que son un instrumento negativo.

S: ¿En qué sentido?

P: En que son un engendro. *Prohiben*. Desbaratan el libre juego del mérito. ¡Nada mejor que una junta directiva formada solo por mujeres! Que gane el mejor: esa es mi filosofía.

S: Bien, estudiemos eso, porque en verdad, toda cuota es un instrumento político negativo (corrector). Tomemos un caso análogo: las cuotas para discapacitados.

P: ¿No estarás sugiriendo que ser mujer es una especie de discapacidad? ¡Cuidado, que te cuelgan!

S: Estoy sugiriendo justamente lo contrario: que ni mujeres ni personas con discapacidades son menos idóneos que el resto para suplir esos trabajos. Y no obstante, la ley establece que, en empresas de más de cincuenta trabajadores, el dos por ciento de los puestos los ocupen personas con alguna clase importante de discapacidad. ¿Cree usted que eso es justo?

P: Pues... Sí. Supongo que sí.

S: Pero, ¿cómo es eso? Tal cuota, de seguir su razonamiento, interferiría en el libre juego del mérito.

P: Pero es distinto: las personas discapacitadas se enfrentan a una discriminación.

S: ¿Qué quiere decir?

P: Que aunque a ti y a mí nos parezcan perfectamente capacitados para todo aquello que no interfiera con su discapacidad (que es algo de seguro aplicable a muchos trabajos disponibles en plantillas amplias), no es el caso de la generalidad.

S: Y en el caso de las mujeres, ¿eso no pasa?

P: Yo creo que no.

S: Entonces, ¿por qué existe eso que, en términos internacionales, se llama el *gender pay gap*?

P: ¿Qué es eso?

S: La constatación en casi todos los países del mundo, con diversos grados de gravedad, de una diferencia entre lo que cobran mujeres y hombres.

P: ¿Eso quién lo ha probado? No me fío.

S: Instituciones varias. De nuevo: está en la EU y en la UNESCO, y se habla de ello en el World Economic Forum. *Lobbies*.

P: Ya...

S: O tome la proporción de mujeres en puestos de responsabilidad en nuestro país, un irrisorio veinte por ciento ¿Diría usted que eso refleja “el libre juego del mérito”?

P: Pues ¡qué sé yo! ¿Qué tendría que ser, justo el cincuenta por ciento?

S: No, ciertamente. Pero tendría que parecerse. Yo diría que, por debajo del cuarenta, todo lo que no sea plantearse que hay otros factores en liza es un insulto a la inteligencia (no solo a la de ellas, sino a la nuestra).

P: ¿Y qué pasa si a ellas no les interesa?

S: Diría que pasa que esa es buena parte del problema. Las dificultades que tienen las mujeres para culminar su carrera en puestos de responsabilidad son importantes. Al hándicap del embarazo (es un impedimento físico, y si no se corrige, de efectos reales), hay que sumar los niños, que mayoritariamente son para ellas, y la casa, que en muchísimos países, igual. Esto no son clichés, sino hechos constatables.

P: Mezclas churras con merinas, Sebas.

S: No lo creo. Todas esas tareas compiten entre sí, y ya sabemos quién sostiene aún la mayor parte. Luego está el propio juego del poder, que es intensamente *testosterónico*.... Ya sabe a qué me refiero. A esos horarios y esas actividades lúdicas que compiten con la familia y que por fuera han de resultar poco atractivas a quien tiene más responsabilidades de cuidado humano.

P: Sí, me puedo imaginar una junta general de accionistas donde abundasen las mujeres. No sé si me gustaría.

S: A lo mejor la economía cambiaba, y las crisis financieras mudaban. A lo mejor.

P: Lo que te digo es que todo este asunto de prohibir y manipular la competición libre es una cochambre. Mucho mejor apostar por el largo plazo, por la educación, por instruir en la igualdad de veras y no por subterfugios legales.

S: También me lo parece. Pero ¿y mientras tanto?

P: ¿Mientras tanto, qué?

S: mientras tanto cambia la cultura y las mentalidades, de modo que la discriminación por causa de sexo desaparezca de las empresas y demás instituciones.

P: Pues mientras tanto, paciencia. No queramos cambiar las cosas de golpe y a las bravas.

S: “Paciencia”. Vaya: lo mismito que le dijeron los clérigos norteamericanos a Martin Luther King cuando este ingresó en la cárcel de Birmingham...

P: En todo caso, las cuotas pueden dar lugar a injusticias. En ciertos casos el mejor, por ser hombre, puede quedar fuera.

S: Pero todas las leyes son susceptibles de producir injusticias en casos particulares. Al intervenir sobre ciertas situaciones, se entiende no que en ningún caso pueden ocasionar un perjuicio, sino que, si son justas, de un modo claro solucionan más que lo que estropean. Con todas las leyes pasa igual.

P: No sé si me convence al argumento.

S: Volvamos a los discapacitados. ¿Usted votaría para que aquella ley a la que nos hemos referido?

P: No —Sorbe las últimas gotas de su vermú, y se palpa la chaqueta en busca de la cartera—

S: Una última cosa, caballero.

P: Dime, Sebas.

S: Es su manera de emplear el término *feminismo*. Da usted a entender que fuese la otra cara, el extremo de signo contrario al *machismo*.

P: Justamente. De ahí que lo encuentre odioso.

S: Pero se confunde. Déjeme que le muestre algo —Sebastián alcanza su socorrida copia del Diccionario de la Lengua Española, mostrando al parroquiano lo que apunta dicha voz—

feminismo.

1. m. Doctrina social favorable a la mujer, a quien concede capacidad y derechos reservados antes a los hombres.

2. m. Movimiento que exige para las mujeres iguales derechos que para los hombres.

machismo.

1. m. Actitud de prepotencia de los varones respecto de las mujeres.

P: ¿Dónde quiere ir a parar?

S: A que una cosa no tiene nada que ver con la otra. El machismo es un supremacismo, esto es, aboga por la superioridad de una mitad del planeta sobre la otra. No así el feminismo, que es una lucha en pro de subvertir una desigualdad, que trata de procurar una equidad. Percátense además de otra cosa: el primero es una *actitud*, mientras que el segundo es un *movimiento*.

P: ¿Qué diferencia hay?

S: Toda. Una actitud es una disposición individual, que por supuesto puede estar más o menos extendida. Puede permanecer o mudarse, en función de muchas circunstancias. En cambio, un movimiento es una forma de aglutinación de actitudes y propuestas que, uno, es eminentemente social, y dos, es constitutivamente transitoria.

P: ¿Quiere decir que está destinada a desaparecer, verdad? ¡Gran noticia esa!

S: Efectivamente. Todo movimiento nace para deshacer un desafuero, es por tanto siempre provisional, y su culminación conlleva que desaparezca. Es el mismo caso que el movimiento por los derechos civiles de los afroamericanos. De modo que ya ve: cuando el feminismo ya no exista, todos estaremos contentos.

P: ¿Y qué me dice de esas mujeres que van por ahí secuestrando a curas o violentando misas?

S: Pues que puede que se crean feministas, pero son fundamentalmente unas mamarrachas. El radicalismo no es inherente al feminismo; y aquel puede siempre ser condenado dentro de sus estrictos términos. Tampoco un yihadista es una persona religiosa, aunque lo sostenga, sino un criminal, ni quien asegura haber matado a su pareja por amor posee la más remota idea sobre lo que significa amar. Cuando el feminismo se hace supremacista, deja

de ser feminismo: el diccionario lo confirma. El feminismo radical existe; pero es el adjetivo, y no el sustantivo, el que conviene echar por tierra.

P: Hummm... Le daré una vuelta a lo que hemos hablado, Sebastián. Me ha encantado el vermú; qué mano te das, chico. ¡Hasta la siguiente!

S: A mandar, caballero, a mandar.



David Cerdá, 10 de abril de 2015



HCH 4 / Mayo 2015

Sobre la publicación de libros hoy, por Delia Aguiar Baixauli

Me complace escribir por primera vez sobre un tema que no es tan abstracto e indefinido como lo es la pobreza, la compasión, la verdad, etc., temas de los que me he ocupado hasta el momento presente. La publicación de libros es un ejercicio que nos queda muy cercano a los que nos dedicamos a las letras; a muchos escritores les habrá creado más de un conflicto y algún quebradero de cabeza.

Actualmente, son algunas las opciones de las que dispone un autor para que sus libros vean la luz, pero, en general, estas se dividen entre la publicación y la autopublicación. Ambas se convierten en el quid de la cuestión y compiten como dos equipos diferentes o casi como dos corrientes filosóficas opuestas, como compitieron, por ejemplo, empiristas y racionalistas. Dejando a un lado las comparaciones, la cuestión es que hoy en día existen muchas facilidades para que un autor publique su libro sin la aprobación de un editor, sin que exista esa figura mediadora entre una determinada obra y el público. Pero ¿quién es ese desconocido que se hace llamar editor y que, al menos hasta hace algunos años, gozaba de cierto estatus, y en las tertulias y reuniones literarias era admirado e incluso perseguido por los autores para lograr captar su atención con vistas a un posible contrato?

El editor es, en primer lugar, alguien que posee un capital para invertir en crear una editorial, del mismo modo que otros invierten en bolsa o en construir viviendas. Pero el capital no suele ser suficiente para ese tipo de negocio, que requiere de unos conocimientos sobre el género literario que se desea publicar en la editorial. No solo sería suficiente saber de gramática o de maquetación, sino también tener un cierto grado de cultura que permita

disponer de una visión del panorama literario de una época y un lugar determinados. Si no los posee, puede ayudarse de colaboradores o empleados que sí los posean, y hacer que sean ellos, entonces, quienes le asesoren a la hora de elegir qué publicar. Así, para un libro sobre informática, bien se podría mandar a un informático que lo lea y lo juzgue; y para uno de narrativa, a un narrador consagrado; y para uno de filosofía, a un filósofo; y si se trata de un libro de investigación, a alguien que sepa cómo se halla la cuestión investigada. Esta ventaja sería la que podría facilitar un editor, el factor puente, algo a lo que, a veces, no tiene acceso un escritor. Por desgracia, muchos editores carecen de estos conocimientos y no siempre se rodean de personal adecuado, por lo que la aparición de un libro queda a expensas de su sospechoso criterio. Una sociedad y su formación dependen, en parte, de estos editores, aunque el porcentaje de su influencia sea mínimo, ya que la educación impartida en escuelas y universidades carga con el mayor porcentaje. Pero, aunque sea mínimo, existe, como existe el riesgo de algunas radiaciones sobre el cuerpo humano.

Puesto que no hay tal cosa como una formación específica para ser editor, y puesto que puede serlo cualquiera (a veces, incluso los que escriben con faltas ortográficas), no es comparable la tarea de los editores a la de los médicos, no cabe un argumento de tipo “algún especialista tiene que evaluar si un libro merece ser publicado”. El día que exista algo así como una “Facultad de Edición” donde sus estudiantes y futuros editores se formen en esta tarea, como existe una Facultad de Químicas o de Biología, cuando haya personas verdaderamente calificadas para que, con conocimientos serios y profundos sobre la escritura en general y sobre la cultura de un país, sobre sus necesidades y sus inclinaciones —y no solo en labores de maquetación, para la que existen ya eficientes programas informáticos—, puedan juzgar con criterio y acierto o seleccionar a sus especialistas, entonces se podrá decir que la auto-publicación es un error, un saltarse las normas. Mientras tanto, el editor es tan apto como el autor para publicar libros.

Pero no seamos tan pesimistas y pensemos que el editor es un ser responsable y concienzudo que se ha formado, que goza del mejor gabinete de asesoramiento y que los años de experiencia en su trabajo le avalan. El autor debería ver en él, entonces, al verdadero evaluador de sus creaciones y, por tanto, confiar en su criterio. Uno de los argumentos que podría darse un autor a sí mismo para no auto-publicarse podría ser ese: “La obra debe haber pasado algún filtro, alguien debe haber apostado por ella, alguien tiene que haber confiado en mí como autor”. Ese papel del mediador y del “padrino”, por decirlo de alguna manera, es crucial para muchos escritores. Es como si la confianza en ellos mismos no fuera suficiente, como si necesitaran la mano que tire de su brazo para subir las escaleras.

La auto-publicación, entonces, ¿para quién queda? Queda para dos tipos de individuos que son completamente idénticos en un sentido pero opuestos en otro. Son idénticos en la autoconfianza, en la valoración positiva de sus capacidades, en la estima de su propio talento, pero sin duda tienen que ser diferentes en algo: la correspondencia entre el talento real y su creencia en él no siempre coinciden. Por decirlo alto y claro, no todo aquel que cree que ha escrito un buen libro lo ha escrito de verdad. Y esto es un hecho que puede comprobarse, ahí están los numerosos libros que salen a la venta y, lamentablemente, ni todos tienen la calidad suficiente ni están bien escritos. ¿Podría haber solucionado esto el mediador, es decir, un editor que juzgara? Es posible, pero, puesto que él tampoco es infalible, la cuestión quedaría sin resolver. Es bien sabido que son muchos los buenos autores —ya sea de narrativa como de filosofía— que nunca encontraron editor, que fueron rechazados una y otra vez y que, o bien tuvieron que morir sin ver publicada su obra, o bien tuvieron que rascarse el bolsillo para pagar una imprenta. Ante este problema ¿qué solución adoptar?

La más adecuada parece ser que sean los lectores quienes tomen la palabra y manifiesten lo que les interesa. Es decir, poner herramientas al alcance de cualquiera que tenga la suficiente confianza en sí mismo como escritor para que pueda publicar sus libros (como están haciendo algunas plataformas que

imprimen libros bajo pedido), y dejar que sea el lector quien se incline por una cosa o por otra, que sea él quien exprese cuáles son sus verdaderos intereses.

Pero hagámonos la misma pregunta que nos hacíamos sobre el editor. ¿Quién es el lector? El lector bien puede ser una persona golosa que, del mismo modo que come bollería o mariscos en abundancia —aun sabiendo que estos perjudican su salud—, consume libros de la más baja calidad, quizá solo porque le divierten o le entretienen, o según las modas, pero que de ninguna manera mejoran su calidad humana o su capacidad de comprensión. Encontramos entonces que defender esta especie de liberalismo de las publicaciones llevaría implícita la condición de renunciar a cualquier creencia en una labor educativa de la literatura, porque todo sería apto para ser legible, lo que para algunos supondría algo semejante a dejar que los enfermos se curen por sí mismos, se operen unos a otros o se administren los medicamentos que ellos consideren.

Pero ¿es acaso una tarea del editor juzgar y recetar remedios para esa sociedad, suponiendo que el escritor pudiera proporcionarlos? El editor no puede ser, al menos directamente, el supuesto protector de las conciencias de los ciudadanos como lo es de los cuerpos el médico. La tarea directa de la educación ha de estar en manos de un profesorado que, a su vez, siga los dictados de un Ministerio que, sin lugar a dudas, dirige la formación de los habitantes de una nación. La obra de un escritor solo puede ser un recurso más del que, si llegado el caso, se hacen eco los educadores, podrían estos sugerirlo o dictaminarlo para un grupo concreto de alumnos. El editor, pero también el escritor, si intentan más que eso, si pretenden abarcar demasiado o tener de antemano influencia sobre la sociedad, están perdidos ante un océano. El editor nunca es infalible, y el escritor tiene que vivir tranquilo, dar vida a sus intuiciones y conformarse con que su obra sea accesible. El punto final al trabajo del escritor no pasa por apretar la última tecla, sino por cerrar el círculo dando la posibilidad —y subrayo la palabra posibilidad— de que sus textos puedan ser leídos. Con esa mera posibilidad ya sería suficiente. La

mayor o menor promoción de sus libros, el número de ventas, el público que le sigue, etc. deberían ser cuestiones ajenas a él, que no le incumben lo más mínimo. El tiempo dirá si su trabajo era necesario, bien para entretener, bien para educar, incluso bien para perjudicar o malograr. La liberalización que tantas pasiones suscita hoy ha de existir con todas las consecuencias. Y, al fin y al cabo, si existe algún salvador, ¿no es cada uno el suyo?



Delia Aguiar Baixauli, Madrid, 3 de abril de 2015



HCH 4 / May 2015

A Matter of Life and Death (Part three), Brian Streett

A Matter
of Life
and Death

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This is a work of fiction. Although some characterizations may be based in part on real people, details are the product of the author's imagination and are not to be construed as real.

This is dedicated to the memory of Tova and Clara.
It is much easier to love after you have seen it done.

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Part One: There are many tales (*Published in HCH 2, January 2015*)

Part Two: Though only one at a time (*Published in HCH 3, March 2015*)

Part Three: Yet all together (*To be published in HCH 4, May 2015*)

Part Three

Yet all together

1

Actually, I can't figure out why all that stuff came up for me now. It was all so long ago, and as far as I'm concerned it was finished, and no longer had any interest for me. Maybe that's the stuff that always comes up for people at

times like this, but I expected something different. After all, it's said that when you are about to die your entire life flashes in front of you, and this was but the smallest part of it.

So here I am, lying on the kitchen floor, my head exploding, my breath labored, and all I can think of is this nonsense from all those years ago. Not my wife, kids, grandchildren, or the volunteer work I so loved in my last years – just this episode. It wasn't fair.

All right, why don't I just slow things down and force myself to think about what I consider to be important in my life, and stop thinking about this nonsense. Well, if I can think of anything with all the pain in my head. This is not one of those memories I want to cherish, but, hey, chances are it will all be over soon enough, so I'm just going to stay with what's important. I don't mean to say that if you keel over, have incredible pain in your head, can hardly breathe and can't move at all that it's not important – just that there wasn't a damn thing I could do about it, so rather than get caught up in the pain, I might as well just take a look at my life before I pass out and/or pass on.

Got to concentrate. I'll start with my wife. She's been on my mind so much lately. Ever since she died last year. Mornings, afternoons, evenings, there's always some reason for her to show up in my heart. Especially evenings. Nobody to sit and go over my day with. Though it usually feels like she's there. I carry on conversations with her and can convince myself that she's really answering me and contributing her share. It is so lonely to be without her after more than 40 years. And such a horrible thing to have your death dragged out over months. I'm really in a lot of pain now, but even so, it won't last much longer. That's so much better than having life drain slowly until you're nothing but a lab experiment for the doctors. True, my wife was able to maintain humanity right up until the very end, something which most people aren't fortunate enough to do. And she got to say good bye to our children and grandchildren and all her friends, which is a wonderful thing. But how

painful and degrading for her to go through all that. I'm glad that this isn't what's going to happen to me. And I've learned not to hold back what needs saying, waiting for a better time to say it which might never come. I hope and believe my kids and grandkids know how much I love them. The kids might not be sure they believe me totally, though I bet some day they'll understand things differently. I did with my parents. And grandkids don't have the same kind of need to wean themselves from their grandparents' worldview, so they'll be able to help their parents get it. But there's no time to deal with that now. Sure there were things I could have, should have done differently, that I cry over not having done differently, but they're done, and they're not going to be undone. Got to just get it, apologize, and move on. But I do love them and always will.

The phone just rang. Right on cue. Must have been one of my kids. Now I could tell you again how much of me you are. If I could only move to where the phone is and answer it. I love you!!!

It was lovely feeling that love there for a moment or two, but now the pain is coming through again, and it's even harder to breathe. Better get back to whatever needs to make its way through to my consciousness before there isn't any left. Wonder how I would describe all this to my wife at our evening talks. Not too easy to see the humor in it, unfortunately. I think I'd rather chuckle my life away than be so damn serious. But I guess serious is a part of it too. Volunteering in the hospital together with my wife, we saw a lot of people have to face death. They usually avoided it until they no longer could do so, but even so, there's a point where you can't do that any more. Since then I've been afraid to be like this and then suddenly discover that there was something that I needed to do, when I no longer was able to do anything. Like making a will. That's something else. Besides the indignity of being alive but not quite human, there's the indignity of what happens after you die. All the scavengers out to gobble up their share, and to fight the others for a share if they don't think they got enough. I don't think that would happen in my family. After my mother died, my brother divided the estate between the two of us,

and I knew I could trust him. Though I think in the end he gave me too much; he spent his own money to cover some expenses and he shouldn't have. But it's not that way in every family, and sometimes it comes as a shock. I mean sometimes when death is imminent, the family, maybe especially the in-laws, or maybe that's just who it's blamed on, sometimes already start haggling over what they're going to get. Even when they're in the same room as the soon-to-be-deceased. It's horrible to see such a thing. I think that even if the person is unconscious, and has been for a while, somehow, at some level they know that this is happening. So sad, so sad. So much better not to have this be an issue, even though I believe that my kids and their wives wouldn't have such thoughts and wouldn't act in this way. Still, I'm glad we made wills years ago.

I do love them. I wonder if I'll be able to look in on them after I die. Can my wife look in on me? Are you there now? Say something to me that lets me not feel this pain for a moment. Yes, I know that I won't be feeling it or anything else much longer, but it's your sense of humor that I want to experience now. All right, I'll settle for your optimism. Hooray, it will all be over soon! No more suffering. At least not from the body. I guess the family and friends will suffer from this, knowing what I went through, and maybe even from my not being here. Will I suffer when I see their suffering? Do you suffer when you see mine and theirs? I saw what they went through when you were sick and after you died. It certainly wasn't easy for them, but you were amazing at getting them to accept the situation. You are so wonderful, and I'm so lucky to have you here even after you've died.

It wasn't easy for me either. I still don't know if it makes it easier for me to feel your presence all the time, or if it makes it more difficult. I love having you with me, but then I remember that it's only a part of you, and I so much want all of you to be sitting across from me as we drink a cup of tea. I guess there isn't an answer, really. Is it easier for the kids now because you weren't part of their lives for so many hours every day, or is it harder because they know how much they missed? I don't know; I think it's just hard no matter what.

All right, enough with this bullshit. Stop this boring bullshit that you think about every day, and get to something hiding underneath, please. I mean, isn't dying a special occasion and not just another opportunity to spout the same old stuff? If you're not going to go any deeper inside, just die already.

Well, now that you remind me, it seems I'm doing just that. The pain's the same, but the breathing has definitely gotten weaker, and I am having trouble concentrating here. Pretty soon I'll start feeling sorry for myself if there's anything left of me to feel sorry. Oh, all right, I'll see if I can find anything that I really need to deal with before I die. Shit. This is not fun at all. I'd rather just feel the pain. Ouch! Maybe not, but it's close.

My head is starting to spin around. I know there's something important for me to concentrate on, but I'm not sure what. Or maybe it's better if I just stop all this thinking and let whatever is sitting inside come out of its cage. Am I willing for that to happen? Well, even if not, I don't know how much longer I'll have a say in the matter, so I might as well just accept things as they are. And anyway it will all be over in minutes, I'm certain. But even so, I'm not sure I'm able to just let it come out. Even now I'm resisting, trying to hang on to my right to be master of my consciousness. What a joke! Wish I could laugh, but no way that's going to happen. Yo! I feel like I'm on a roller coaster. Or maybe I've been on one all my life, and only now I'm getting off it. How can you tell which is which? Oh, the pain!

Dummy, don't get distracted now. What – do – you – still – need – to – say? I don't know, can't we just put it up on the screen and watch it; too much trouble to form words. Sure, why not?

Multiscreen, actually. As if I wasn't already dizzy enough. There goes another level of holding on; I'm getting much closer to free fall.

The screens were all working. I don't know how many were there, but what I really didn't understand was how I could tune in to all of them at the same time and follow everything that was happening. And still have a place in my awareness to ask how. Very strange. Maybe that was what the other 90 whatever percent of our brain was for. We waited until the last moments of our life to use it. Wouldn't it be something if we could have this kind of concentration and multi-awareness throughout our lives? Maybe it would make life even harder, who knows?

On the screens were, it appeared to me, randomly, though it probably wasn't, events covering my entire lifetime. They would play; I would acknowledge; then they would play again or move on to some other event. Events from childhood and adulthood; happy, sad or neither; where I was the hero or the villain. Or maybe both the hero and the villain. Or maybe when they happened I thought I was the hero and when I watched now I thought I was the villain, or vice versa. Just stuff that kept forcing its way into my consciousness, and stayed there for a while, and then disappeared.

After a while I think I discerned a pattern. I couldn't explain why they arrived in the order that they did, but they seemed to keep showing instant replays as long as I reacted to what I saw. When I started seeing the event as though it happened to somebody else and not to me, or when I was clear that I didn't want to observe it anymore, the time came for this particular event to disappear and the next one to show up.

Some of this was surprising. There were things which I thought were already meaningless to me, which I discovered were far from it. There were others for which I felt strong emotions when I saw them appear, but one showing was enough for them no longer to be of interest. There were events which I watched with a wide variety of emotions, and with each replay the emotions kept changing – love, hate, indifference, or whatever – with no particular progression which I could understand.

This all would certainly have amazed me if I had had the leisure to be amazed, but there seemed to be just enough going on to keep me totally occupied. In fact, when my emotions grew stronger and conflicted, or at any other instance when I asked myself why I acted as I had or when I saw a different way of acting which would have produced a better result, some of the screens shut down, I suppose because it would have been more than I could handle had they not.

So I looked at the happy moments, the sad moments, the times when I was an absolute asshole or idiot, the times when I insulted somebody needlessly (with or without intention), the times I was hurt by someone, the times I complimented someone who did not expect it or was complimented unexpectedly. The times when I expressed love or someone expressed love for me. The times when I had great physical pleasure or pain. And any and everything else that was potentially non-neutral. And I tried to put some order into all this.

But it made no sense. The best I could hope for was accepting that all this had been and that there was nothing left to say about it. Understanding seemed way beyond the scope of my abilities at this time. Still, I caught a glimpse here or there of something which might grow into being an explanation of what all this meant and what I was supposed to do with it. But it would have to wait for some other time for me to deal with it. Other time? What other time? Did I forget that I was just about out of time? Actually, I had forgotten that I was on the verge of dying until then, so I checked in with my body to see what was developing.

Not much was, in fact. I had almost no body sensations at all, except for maybe a little chilly feeling, which I suppose was a good deal more comfortable than the pain I had been having previously. I suppose my time had run out.

There I was in a large hall, filled with people. I had no idea how I had gotten there, but it seemed that many others there, maybe most, didn't seem to realize they were in a hall at all. Some yelled and screamed at some imaginary disaster, others acted as though they were enjoying a swim or a picnic, others seemed quite calm and comfortable even though their faces were bashed in and blood was dripping all over them. And then to each individual or small group, somebody would come over and start talking. I couldn't hear what was said, but the reactions indicated that it must have been important.

After a while, somebody came over to talk to me, a nice looking young fellow. He smiled and asked if I knew where I was.

Something clicked. I sat as though stunned for a long moment, then I began to laugh. Hysterically, I'm afraid. The young fellow was very patient and waited for me to return to my senses. I apologized and then said, "I don't think I've ever seen you here before, are you new?" He was somewhat taken aback, but recovered quickly. "Actually," he replied, "I am rather new, but I've been trained well, and you can trust me."

I smiled. "I'm sure of that," I said. "And I don't mean to imply otherwise, but I would like to see your trainer. Could you ask him to come over here for a moment, please?"

He looked at me somewhat askance, I felt, but replied pleasantly enough that he would bring over his supervisor.

When his supervisor approached I could see that he was, as I expected, my erstwhile trainer. And as he got close, he clearly recognized me also, breaking into a big smile. "Well, look who's back," he said. "Did you miss us?"

"I guess I did," I replied. "And it looks like you missed me, too, taking on a new trainee."

“You didn’t only make changes on your planet, but here as well. Some of the other interviewers also decided to take a vacation and live lives, feeling that it would support them in their work to get some of the insights that you had. We had to take on two new trainees and wait until they could act on their own before allowing the vacations. Actually, it has been fun training them, though very different from training you. They had totally different backgrounds. But enough chit chat. What will you be doing next? Would you like to rejoin us?”

I thought about that for a while before replying. “You still ask the right questions. Actually, I haven’t really thought too far in advance, but I certainly need my ‘bubble bath’. There are still several more things I need to unravel. After I do that, if I can, I’ll be able to look at what’s next, but not before then.”

The new interviewer who had originally greeted me looked quite lost, and the trainer filled him in on my past as an interviewer. Then he turned back to me. “Okay, go with him now, and when you consider yourself sufficiently debriefed, come find me.”

I began debriefing. I could still remember the events from my previous life that I had seen in those last minutes before dying, and particularly the ones which were just stuck. I still needed to learn to accept them somehow. I played them again, expecting from this new vantage point that acceptance would be quick and easy. But it wasn’t. I continued to replay the incidents over and over, making little or no progress. But here time was not a factor, and failure was not a possibility, so I stayed with each event, or group of events, until I started to get some sort of understanding as to where my ego had interposed itself into the situation, disguising itself as me. Then I could more clearly differentiate between myself and my ego, and slowly and painfully begin to disassociate myself from what I had considered to be me. There were times that I thought I would give up, and go back and live another lifetime to get a better understanding. But then I reminded myself that I had had enough lifetimes and did not need more, I could do this – time to get back to work.

When the first group of events disappeared, I thought I was almost finished. But that was not the case. Apparently there were several areas I needed to

get unstuck. If I could manage to do so in one area, then I believed I could do so in all areas, and that helped me continue with the work, but it went very slowly.

Finally, it seemed to me that everything was unstuck. I reran the events from this past lifetime and found a few places where replays were necessary, but usually only one or two. Where I had the most difficulty was in generalizing the love I had for those close to me, so that it could expand to reach all beings. For instance, I wanted to see my relationships with my wife, my children and grandchildren as special and different; not something there for the taking in relationships between me and anyone else, or between any individuals, for that matter. It was difficult for me to see that once ego was taken out of the equation, the kind of relationship I had with them would be universal, not special at all. I felt a sadness even entertaining the possibility. Yet I was eventually able to embrace the possibility for this kind of relationship to exist between all beings, and how wonderful it would be if this were so.

I felt like I had completed the task I had set for myself, and I left the debriefing chamber and went to look for my trainer. Along the way I came across some of the interviewers I had previously worked with, and we chatted. I could tell, even before they mentioned it to me, that there was something different about me, something I liked, but could not name or quantify in any way.

I found my trainer, who was busy with something, but freed himself and invited me in. He told me that I had been in the debrief for quite a long time, and asked if I had made progress. I told him that I felt that I had achieved my goal and was now quite happy. He then asked if I had thought about what was next for me. I hadn't, but instantly I knew what was right for me now.

"There isn't anything that jumps out at me to do, not on earth or any other planet, not here. I'd just like to go into retirement, and if anything comes up afterwards, I'll let you know."

He smiled. "I thought you might feel like that. I can't authorize such a thing. I'll set up an appointment with the boss, if you like." I had never met the boss and like everybody else I was in awe of her. But that was irrelevant. I told him I would appreciate his arranging the appointment.

He said that he would do so, but it would take some time. In the meantime, if I wanted, I could take a shift as an interviewer. I told him that a shift as an interviewer was okay; for that matter, if he wanted to send me back for another lifetime that would also be okay. For my part, though, I could just relax anywhere until called for the appointment.

My trainer decided to send me out as an interviewer. The work was easy, much easier than I remembered it. At some point I was told to finish up, I had an appointment with the boss.

4

My trainer and I sat in the boss's waiting room for a while. My trainer may have been a touch nervous, it was hard to tell. I don't think I was. Yes, the boss was intimidating, but I was there at my request. First my trainer went in and spent several minutes alone with the boss, then I was asked to join them. My trainer introduced us. The boss seemed pleasant enough, but her eyes seemed as though they were penetrating into the very depths. If there had been anything I was trying to hide, I'm sure it would have been found out. Fortunately, I wasn't hiding anything.

After a moment, the boss began. "We've never met, but I have read your file. And, of course, your trainer has talked about you before. I understand that you want to go into 'retirement', and I want to be clear about what that means to you."

I thought for a moment before replying, "Like when waiting for this appointment, I was willing to take a shift as an interviewer, I was willing to

return for another lifetime, but all I wanted to do was just be in the flow and not get caught up in anything.”

She stared even deeper into me, it seemed. “All right, I need to know that you do not and will not have any interest in experiencing further lifetimes or in returning to work as an interviewer. Think about this carefully before you answer me.”

“There’s nothing to think about. I feel that I’ve had all the lifetimes I need, and that my work as an interviewer is in the past. I can still do these things, I suppose, but I don’t see the point.”

The boss looked somewhat pensive. “Complete retirement is not an option. It is possible for you to ‘just be in the flow’ as long as you are not needed, but if you are called on for assistance I would expect you to give it.”

“What kind of assistance?” I wanted to know.

“You could be called upon for assistance by anyone who feels that they need your special knowledge to get on with their work. What you would have to do is let them have a glimpse of how you would be in their situation. They’ll need to take that glimpse and figure out what to do in their lives. You will have no further say in what they should do beyond that. Is this acceptable to you?”

“I’m pretty sure that’s what I want, but suppose I discover that this isn’t for me?”

More penetrating looks. “You need to be pretty certain that you like the arrangement before agreeing to it, but if you discover at some point that it is no longer working for you, you need to come to me. I’ll examine the situation and change your status accordingly.”

This was actually pretty much what I expected, and I had no way of knowing if after I got such a position I would be happy with it or not. I felt that I should

accept it and deal with anything unexpected that arose later. “I don’t know how I could be absolutely certain, but I suppose I’m as close to it as I can get. How will this work?”

She exhaled. “It will work very well, I hope. Structurally, this is what will happen. You will be transported to an estate, which you will control, but it will be tended to by your apprentice and other assistants. When you are called upon, you will allow those who call upon you to ‘be in the flow’ with you, which will allow them new possibilities in dealing with their problems. Simple, no?” Maybe to her, but not to me. “I don’t understand what an apprentice is supposed to learn from me, nor do I understand why anybody would want to call upon me and why doing so would help them deal with their problems.”

She took another look through me. “You are sitting here today because you have freed yourself of all ego constraints, including that of ego-compassion. Don’t you feel that the compassion you had for the people you interviewed now differed from what you had in the past? This is something which everybody must learn to do before they can even request ‘retiring’. Your apprentice has had a similar set of experiences to what you have had and has developed well, but there is still more work for him to do. The more he gets to know you, the more he will be able to see what that work is. The same is true for all the others who will call on you, directly or through your apprentice. What you have accomplished and who you are today will inspire them to make advances for themselves.”

I supposed that made some sense, but were there not already enough entities which could be called on? What did I add to the mix? “Thank you for saying that, but I still do not understand what is so special about me. In what way will having apprentices work with me instead of with some other role model, or craftsman or whatever, make a difference to them? Wouldn’t they be better off working with somebody who has experience working with an apprentice? What do I have to cause anybody to call on me rather than somebody else who has already been out there doing this sort of thing?”

Her reply was simple, “The job is for you to be you. You must agree that you are more experienced than anyone else at that. And you have developed a special talent which is important for some which is at least somewhat different from the talents of others. You have learned how to bring about the dissolution of obstacles merely by being yourself. Others do this, of course, but no one else has specialized in this to the extent that you have.

All right. I was convinced. I couldn’t come up with any additional questions or objections. Was the boss right about me? I hadn’t thought of myself in these terms before, but I doubted that she would make an error about this. I told her I was ready. She and my supervisor said goodbye, and I was transported to my new home.

And whatever happened after that is no longer my story to tell.

5

Or so I thought at the time. And I guess that was true for a while. How long a while I don’t suppose I’ll ever know. But at some point a kind of foggy awareness began to filter through. More like watching a movie than living through something, but an awareness nonetheless. I was able at some level to observe myself appearing at various events, sometimes even speaking, and to see that some individuals who were there were able to benefit from my presence.

This felt weird. I had no sense of continuity between events, and no sense of who I was at the events. And yet I functioned, and it seemed that I functioned acceptably. And what in me was it that knew that this seemed weird? I can’t answer that. Did the weirdness bother me? Hardly at all, though at some level I could feel some question or questions percolating through.

Have I explained this well? Let me try again: It felt like at the same time both there I was and there I wasn’t. If this makes no sense to you, well, it makes no

sense to me either. And yet it was so. And the very fact that it was so bothered me. But not enough for me to want to make any changes. I was still able to continue functioning in the same way, and presumably to continue being of benefit in the same way, and simultaneously I was also aware of an incompleteness in my understanding. I guess that captures the situation.

Then on one occasion I found myself sitting in the waiting room of the boss. I had no idea how I had arrived there, but that was not unusual these days. I also had no idea why I was there, which was also not unusual, but my presence there seemed strange to me, and I began wondering what the purpose of my being there was, and I again began to question the limitations of my understanding.

The boss greeted me and invited me into her office. I sat down and waited for her to let me know what this was about. "I think it's time we had a chat," she said. "Something about you seems a little different of late, wouldn't you agree."

Should I have been surprised? I don't know, but I wasn't. It had never occurred to me that the boss would be following up on my consciousness so closely, but nor was it surprising to find out that she had been. "I'd say that. Let's start with: there seems to be more of me to be different. I'm a lot more aware of myself and my surroundings than I was before. Why is that?"

"That's natural. At first just being in those surroundings took all your attention. Then as you became more used to things, you had attention to spare, some of which you directed toward yourself. What is more to the point is the result of your awareness. What are you going through?"

As you know, I'd been thinking about this for a while, but now I had to express my thoughts to the boss, so I thought a little more. Then: "Sometimes I just do, go, talk, be exactly like before I started to go through this. Then my actions are in the flow, and there isn't really any 'I' at all. Sometimes I wonder

about what I'm doing. My actions are still in the flow, but something may be holding back a little."

"So you are saying that you have throughout been able to act appropriately to your job, and to be able to do what you have agreed with no problems?" she asked.

That seemed correct to me. "That's the way I see it. But, surely you must be better able to answer that than I."

She smiled. "Yes, you have performed impeccably, but I wanted your interpretation of things. I also need to know that you can be counted on to act in the same way in the future. What do you have to say about that?"

"I don't know where all of this is leading me. I still feel that there is something there that needs working through, and I won't be able to answer about the future until I've worked through it."

Again she smiled. "Another good answer. Indeed, the reason we're here now is to discuss what you need to work through, and to see if I can help you move it along. Would you like to start?"

"I'd love to, but I have no idea where to start. It seems to me that I've just told you all I know about what's going on."

"In that case," she said, "let me take a crack at it." She went on matter-of-factly, "Your self-awareness feels to you like there's something else besides flow, an individuality which is just as basic as that which you considered to be uniquely basic to the way things are. This has caused you some confusion, and you are beginning to question if the nature of things is what you thought it to be. And you are beginning to wonder if it is appropriate for you to be fulfilling the function which you are fulfilling if you don't really understand the true nature of things."

Wow! That really floored me. Was she right? I called up all the feelings that had been percolating inside, all the questions. I sat there again examining everything from all angles, while she sat there smiling at me. It seemed to me that what she said made sense, though I doubt that I would have reached such an understanding at any time soon without her saying so.

“Thanks for your insights,” I told her. “I was nowhere near getting a handle on what was going on, and now it’s quite clear.”

“You’re welcome. You would have come to see this eventually, and my seeing it now is not all that special – many before you have gone through the same process.”

But where did that leave me? “And then what happened to them? Is it appropriate for me to continue doing the same job if I’m wondering if I should be doing it?”

“There is no single formula that fits all cases. If you get caught up in the desire to understand you may not be able to continue functioning the same as you are now, and you will delve more deeply into understanding. You will leave your job and seek a greater understanding. Having done so, you will then be assigned a new job, and you will certainly function admirably, at least until you begin to question your new understanding and find it incomplete. At this point you could again get caught up in the desire to go beyond the understanding you had and repeat the process. This could carry on forever – literally.

“Or, at any point along the way – including right now – you could become clear that understanding is limited, accept that, and continue functioning knowing that to be so.”

That was hard to listen to. What did it mean that the true nature of things was beyond my understanding? What did it mean that my ability to know myself

was beyond my understanding? Whatever confusion I had felt to that point was multiplied many times.

Eventually I was somehow able to accept the confusion and realize that I was again at a crossroads and would need to make a choice which would determine everything about me and my future. I realized that the choice needed to be made soon, but I wasn't quite ready to make it yet.

I said as much to the boss, who, of course, understood better than I did. We said our goodbyes. In the following instant I saw myself at an event with many individuals present. My presence there was of importance to them. I could sense that many wanted me to speak, and I did so.

6

I continued to think about the choice I needed to make. It bothered me to see it as about my understanding and its limitations. It was more comfortable for me to see it in terms of my ability to benefit others. I was then able to redefine the question before me, which took on a new shape: Should I continue to act in a way which seems to benefit others in reaching their destiny, even though I couldn't be certain that this really is benefitting them?

I was more comfortable with this question, but still could not come up with an answer which totally satisfied me. It certainly seemed like I was beneficial to others, but maybe I was leading them down the wrong path; how could I know? But any attempt to know would be doomed to failure – I might be able to learn something, but never enough, and while concentrating on attempting to learn more I would not be of benefit in the same way.

I was stuck. It had been a long time since I had been stuck like this, and I must say it wasn't a good feeling. And then I saw how silly I was being, and I laughed. And I started to sing an old song about a bear going over a mountain to see what was on the other side. When he got there he saw another mountain. And he's still climbing, and he's still seeing other mountains.

Aren't we all? What else is there?



Brian Streett, Jerusalem, 2014



HCH 4 / May 2015

On Serialism, Babies, and Arrogant Assholes, by Tussah Heera

What I'm about to write about today is based on a series of thoughts I've had over the past few weeks. In one of said weeks, there came a night when I found myself thoroughly unable to get to sleep, and as a result ended up thinking profusely in the wee hours of the morning out of frustration. The whole time, a certain topic discussed in history class simply would not leave my mind - can all music truly be considered music? Let me elaborate. If a composer so chooses to write a piece of such complex atonality and instrumentation to the point it becomes hard to distinguish it from plain noise, is it really music, or just that - plain noise? I'm straight off the bat going to say this before delving any deeper: though I will entertain parts of this discussion from all sides in the coming discourse, I may not come to any solid conclusions because I acknowledge that there simply are too many thin lines, so just chill out and keep an open mind, whether your jam happens to be Mozart or Stockhausen. Don't worry, your brains won't fall out in this case - it's just music, after all (or not).

In class, we studied serialism. Basically, serial music consists of controlling every aspect of the score - rhythm, notes, articulation, dynamics, etc. - in order to represent any natural entities or patterns, like mathematical or biological sequences. Milton Babbitt and Pierre Boulez are now widely considered the poster boys of this composition technique, and I regard the works of both with abundant fascination as a musician. Click [here](#) to see the actual patterns they conceived. Unlike other composers who wrote music simply inspired by math (a la Ligeti and Xenakis), Babbitt strove for a heightened sense of literalism in his works - an exact translation from mathematical to musical language. Though interesting and mentally

stimulating, his music was never adulterated from its purely mathematical form to be accessible or consequently, timeless - a fate that befell much music of the atonal era. As composer Steve Reich said in [In the Ocean: A Film About the Classical Avant-Garde](#), no postman today will ever whistle the "tunes" of Schoenberg (despite Schoenberg's own insistence of this scenario when he was alive), or any other atonal composer for that matter, partly because *there are no tunes*. Though the works themselves are extremely thorough, deep, erudite and worth studying to see the extent of how far patterns in music can go, the motives behind them make the composers, especially Babbitt, come across as little more than pompous old pricks, as I will now explain...

For obvious reasons, Babbitt is far better known today for his writings, namely a puritanical article titled [Who Cares If You Listen?](#) in which he demanded that music be regarded as no different than math and the sciences. He purposefully alienated audiences, and advised musicians to lock themselves up, compose solely for academic purposes and ignore the component of accessibility entirely. Music, to him, was an extremely serious art form, demanding sacrifices from those who so choose to devote themselves to it. According to him, it was your duty as a composer to write studiously and never emotionally, let nobody recognize you your entire life, die alone in misery in your crummy basement, have the police drag your stinking, rotting corpse to the morgue several weeks after your putrid martyrdom, and then reap the honor of having your name plastered all over the walls of exclusive universities in the "True Composers" hall of fame. If you instead chose to write for the public and actually make it your purpose to unite people through your music, you were little more than a musical prostitute, and precisely what was corrupting the American music industry, you communist socialist piece of shit, you.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm a big believer in originality, and it should be acknowledged that being a populist composer can sometimes carry the responsibility of feeling constantly indebted to the masses, unable to execute

your true visions. If you strip Babbitt's thesis of all its ridiculous, strident fundamentalism, you could see this point quite clearly. Discovery is a beautiful thing of any passionate person in any field, and the fact remains that hours of solitude in the basement are often what lead you to it. Einstein said he wished he weren't famous at times, because he felt it took away his time from his work. But music is a universal language - an art, not a pure science, which is what Babbitt fails to understand. Art, unlike the sciences, needs to communicate something and stir feelings inside you. All art is a perfect blend of emotion and science: a fundamental, infinitely complex part of nature deserving of detailed study, yet at the same time, a subjective entity with a million different modes of expression through the human mind. It requires activity in both the right and left sides of the brain. Therefore, one has the freedom to express this art through whichever side one pleases, and both are equally necessary for advancement. In this sense, I believe that the water has found its own level over the years: Stravinsky and Copland have contributed to music by filling our concert halls (right-brained music), while Babbitt and Boulez have contributed just as much by filling our university courses and scholarly textbooks (left-brained music). Win win, right?

As one can see, there's really not much room for disagreement on this topic. Everyone with a relatively reasonable mind can be on the same page for three simple facts: 1. New discovery is necessary and fascinating, and beckon those who are compelled by it, yet 2. Those who forsake the emotional aspect of art for discovery can't expect other artists and the general direction of the art world to sway their way, as the true nature of any art is subjective and 3. Unlike what Babbitt wrote, it truly is possible to have the best of both worlds, as many composers, such as Messiaen, have shown and continue to show today.

Unfortunately, there are (as always) some people who don't quite get it. You know, the jerks who try to make everything a divisive issue? Just take a look at the comments section on a YouTube video of [Pierre Boulez talking about his music](#), and you will find many gems from people of this kind. Here are my

favorites, the first of which, a comment written by an intelligent, eloquent person of the username dou40006:

"he is not dead yet? so that we can forget his annoying talks and worse his awful music, or rather this random noise. All that intellectual masturbation of serial music and other related experiments are a total musical failure. Its failure lies in the naive belief that you can just throw away centuries of musical evolution and decide that the music can be whatever the intellect decide it should be."

Intellectual masturbation. Who in the world could possibly disagree with that? To be fair, that's precisely the reason why Babbitt's article is so off-putting. Composing music solely for your own pleasure and mental advancement is your own right, and is, moreover, something that needs to be done, but seriously - if that's all you do with your life, nobody's going to give a fuck at the end of the day (no pun intended).

But right after the first few sentences, his point falls flat on its face. The "musical evolution" he talks about has always been powered by an "out with the old, in with the new" mentality - not by tenaciously adhering to the conventions of our predecessors. All major composers throughout the ages ended up "throwing away" the previous centuries in order to achieve their potentials. It is not a "naive belief" but rather an innovative one, and a part and parcel of any development. Just because certain music does not fit your personal ideals of what music should consist of, doesn't mean it's a "failure". A particular score's being music or not is, in fact, in the eye of the composer's beholder and depends on his/her intent. Boulez and Babbitt may be coming off as standoffish for trying to pigeonhole the art of music, but this nature doesn't stem from their music - rather, it stems from their *opinions*. From a purely musical standpoint, it's ultimately their choice to explain whatever they need to through their works.

At the same time, I must say there is nothing I hate more than artists who fake

depth and degrade their peers for approaching art in a different way than themselves. In some cases, there is no substance in their works, which rely on the premise that "boring, slow, and repetitive = depth". In this case, the composer should be subject to ridicule. But ridicule elicited from misinformation is never good. Some things, like Boulez and Babbitt's pattern music, take time and copious analysis to understand. The unfortunate part is that there is such a thin line between true erudition and its faux counterparts that one could either be too quick to dismiss meaningful art, or become so dogmatically faithful to a work, it leads one to find false meaning that doesn't exist. In simple terms, you want so dearly to find meaning that you start unconsciously making your own without rhyme or reason.

There's actually a simple way to get around all these crimes of over-generalization: **treat all music as it asks to be treated**. More specifically, approach music like Boulez's as you would an extremely complex math equation, while approach music like Chopin's as you would a transcendent work of art, such as Monet's beautiful lilies. Even though both types are technically classified as music, they require very different approaches in order to appreciate them.

Moving on. I scroll and find another commenter of the username grafplaten, who contrary to dou40006, waxes poetic and over-inclusive...

"works such as pierrot lunaire and marteau sans maître are as beautiful as anything composed by bach, mozart, schubert or debussy....those who are too narrow-minded to appreciate them are truly missing out.....as for the person who wrote that so-called "atonal" music makes babies cry: many kinds of music would make babies cry, but that says nothing about the quality of the music...i have witnessed that bruckner and wagner also make babies cry, so should we reject late romantic music, too? who cares what a baby thinks!"

Yeah, that's right! Screw you, babies, nobody cares what you think! You just popped into the world and now you're already music critics? Haha, very funny,

the only qualifications you have for that job are a bald head and an affinity for pooping on everything.

Jokes aside, what this dude is referring to is an [article by Stephen Strauss about a scientific study done in Canada in 1996](#), in which babies were made to listen to the music of Schoenberg and other atonal composers and scientists studied how they reacted. Click on the red words to read it. The result was just what you would expect: babies were quite disturbed by atonal music, and cried profusely. Now I don't have a problem with the premise of the study and the interesting scientific facts they cited about our ears preferring certain intervals over others (such as the "golden fifth"), but I have a huge problem with the title: "TONALITY FAVORED, STUDY SAYS". Well, no shit, Sherlock, thanks for enlightening me. The idea of atonal music, as championed by the Second Viennese School (Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern) was to declare tonality dead, and not care about what their audiences liked. They were well-aware that tonality was heavily favored, and viewed themselves as renegade reformers who sought to break the music industry by veering as far from tonality as possible. We don't need a study to figure out that tonality is loved by all - we need one to figure out *why*.

As for the first point grafplaten made, I wouldn't necessarily use the word "beautiful" to describe *Pierrot Lunaire* or *Le Marteau Sans Maître*. Thought-provoking? Yes. Innovative? Unquestionably. But "beautiful" just comes across to me as the wrong adjective to use, if not superficial. Would you describe an exceptionally well-made horror movie as "beautiful"? Or call a well-written book about a dark topic such as child slavery "beautiful"? No, you wouldn't. Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* is based on a collection of poems with extremely morbid thematic material. With its hair-raising harmonies and the slurred singing of the soprano (*Sprechstimme* in German), it might very well be the soundtrack to your nightmares. To call it "beautiful" is a notch above calling it "cute" - the word simply does not justify the gravitas of this music and other works like it. As for *Le Marteau*, it is more akin to a chemical experiment than a thing of beauty, so to treat it as the latter would do a great disservice

to the quest of understanding it. But since when did anyone find any depth in a YouTube comment?

Back to the topic of tonality and the human mind, what are the true evolutionary benefits of a preference for tonality? How many millions of years did it take for our ears to become so discerning? Was it to do with the fight-or-flight response - in caveman times, the scary, atonal sounds of a predator approaching, for example, contrasted with the melodious, tonal songs of birds signaling dawn? Is nature or nurture responsible? I was talking to my mom about this very subject, and together we wondered what would've happened if, instead of feeding my ears a diet of Beethoven, Chopin, Mozart, and Peter and the Wolf in my baby years, my mom had had Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, and the rest playing constantly on the stereo? Would I have grown up preferring their music over the tonal, mainstream kind? Say I finally grew older and discovered tonal music (much in the same way I discovered the music of Schoenberg just a few years ago). Will I still prefer the Second Viennese School, or simply hate my mom for making me listen to horrible, disfigured "music" for the formative years of my life? We will likely never find out the truth in my case, but as my mom said, it depends both on the baby and the environment the baby is in. She reckons I would've come to love both equally. That would've been great, and even though I was somewhat skeptical about that outcome at first, she does obviously know Baby Me better than I do so I'll take her word for it.

I'm not going to lie. I love some atonal music (a follower of my blog would know I have a special liking for Ligeti), but still have a knee-jerk reaction to music that is seemingly devoid of any structure. Still, being an open-minded person, I'm still aware that my tastes and understanding may change at any point, and there are reasons why I may not exactly grasp this music at first, second, or even third listen. Life in music is a constant journey, not a series of destinations that constantly demand on-the-spot opinions. It's not about pretending to like something when you truly don't either, it's about having the wisdom and patience to see things for what they truly are.

A police siren howls from outside. I'm suddenly briefly distracted, and look at the time on the microwave. An hour has gone by since I sat down to write this entire post, and it's already midnight. A long day came to an end a couple hours ago and another is imminent, but with so many thoughts in my head, the sleep I need isn't likely to come so easily...



Tussah Heera, L. A., March 13, 2015

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HCH 4 / Mayo 2015

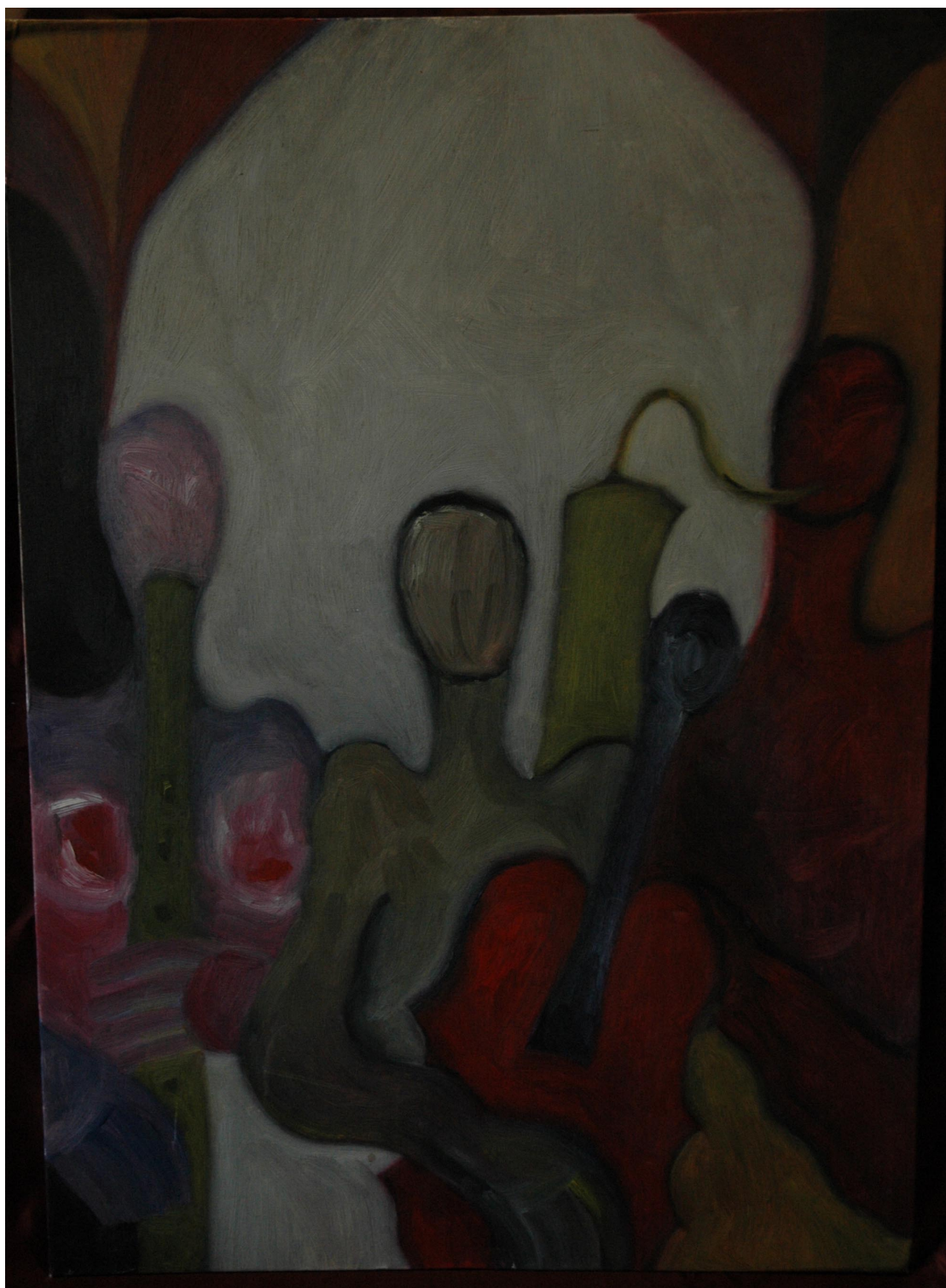
Den Haag–Barcelona–Madrid, por Antonia Tejeda Barros



Mishi, Den Haag, 2002 / Óleo sobre tela, 39,5 cm x 30 cm



Córdoba, Barcelona, 2003 / Óleo sobre madera, 56 cm x 34 cm



Rubato Appassionato, Barcelona, 2003 / Óleo sobre madera, 70 cm x 50 cm



Yael, Barcelona, 2006 / Óleo sobre madera, 56 cm x 34 cm



Dalí, Madrid, 2012 / Óleo sobre tela, 89,5 cm x 64,5 cm



Antonia Tejada Barros, Madrid, mayo de 2015



HCH 4 / Mayo 2015

**Tres destinos en una instantánea: hasta que el odio nos separe, por
Ángel Repáraz**



Fotografía perteneciente a *Selección de Poemas* de Juan Ramón Jiménez, que editó en Castalia (Madrid, 1987) Gilbert Azam. Reproducción con permiso de la [Editorial Castalia](#)

1

La fotografía con los tres caballeros ha capturado un momento de la historia de nuestro país y de su literatura, un poco como el insecto queda perennemente atrapado en la magia multimilenaria del ámbar. Es Madrid, es el número 8 de la calle Lista -hoy Ortega y Gasset-, y estamos en la terraza del domicilio del caballero del centro, Juan Ramón Jiménez (1881-1958). Es más que probable que corra el año de 1924 - en cualquier caso contamos con un *terminus ad quem*, puesto que JRJ ocupó aquella vivienda hasta 1927, en que se trasladó a Velázquez 96. El anfitrión esperaba la visita y ha calzado para la ocasión unos botines de dandy de dos colores, en aquellas fechas un poco pasados de moda ya; con algo de malicia podríamos imaginar que Zenobia ha estado caminando de puntillas por la vivienda hasta la llegada de los visitantes. La foto además es casi un indeliberado *acting out* del papel que a cada uno ha acabado asignando una convencional historia literaria. A la derecha, Pedro Salinas (1891-1951) parece incómodo en el interior de su chaqueta, que compensa con una corbata saltarina -prefería las verdes-; para posar ha echado los brazos atrás un poco desvalidamente - el encuentro tiene que haber sido muy formal. Sabemos que era hombre de una talla considerable, y algún amigo lo ha descrito como "siempre un poco perdido en sus ropas" (Guillermo de Torre), con cuellos holgados y un punto de propensión al sobrepeso. Era un hombre también algo urgente, activo, y abierto y cordial, pero también conocedor de las distancias, esa combinación de distinción y campechanía que, se lee, distinguía otrora a los madrileños. Un señorito no lo ha sido nunca, tampoco intelectualmente; en la España radicalizada, podemos pensar que también muy mal educada, de los 20 y los 30 era usual motejar así a profesionales como él, o su amigo de la izquierda, justo cuando por vez primera el país había desarrollado unas clases medias cultas. Cierto que Salinas y sus amigos experimentan por entonces una casi pública repugnancia por los usos del ejercicio político en aquel Madrid; los todavía jóvenes son orteguianos, además, y el propio Salinas registra en 1930 la "baja calidad moral del español".

Más convincentemente 'profesoral' es el hombre de la izquierda, Jorge Guillén (1893-1984). El catedrático universitario -como Salinas-, atildado y bien consciente de su relieve social, ha compuesto aquí un *habitus* facial y gestual muy procedente: “Veamos, jovencito, qué ha preparado Vd. para el examen..?” En el centro, algo retrasado y haciendo visera sobre los ojos con la mano izquierda, un JRJ muy bien trajeado parece el más dinámico de los tres (está en su casa). “Soy como un dolor enlutado y solitario que vaga mucho, al borde de una fosa”, ha escrito en el destierro¹; la frase, de un decadentismo bastante cursi, delata deformadamente una antigua visión de sí mismo.

2

Desde comienzos del siglo XX y por vez primera vez desde, quizá, el XVIII, España recupera su voz propia en Europa. Entre 1900 y 1930 unas cuantas ciudades importantes del país doblan su población, mientras que en el mismo arco de tiempo disminuyen muy sensiblemente tanto el analfabetismo adulto como el porcentaje de población activa ocupada en la agricultura. Las clases medias y burguesas experimentan un intenso auge con la Gran Guerra; en dos décadas 2000 españoles reciben pensiones para ampliar estudios en Francia, Alemania, Inglaterra. Y algo culturalmente decisivo: “la influencia de la Iglesia en el sector de la clase media que protagoniza esta revolución cultural es prácticamente nulo” (Santos Juliá). El fraude electoral y la corrupción como normalidad van cediendo la escena a formas culturales urbanas y crecientemente secularizadas. Hacia mitad de los veinte se detecta, por otra parte, una nueva sensibilidad artística, marcada en parte por las ideas de Ortega; varios de estos jóvenes colaboran desde pronto en su *Revista de Occidente*. La ciudad como motivo y contexto se instala en la literatura y el cine, el arte de la nueva realidad ciudadana. En junio de 1927 celebran el centenario de Góngora, y *La Gaceta Ilustrada* y *Revista de Occidente* dedican números extraordinarios al poeta cordobés.

3

1 Jiménez (1990: 38).

2 Gracia (2010: 21).

3 Pedro Salinas y Jorge Guillén (1992: 570).

Entre los tres representan una porción considerable de la poesía española del siglo pasado, y los tres han sido notables en el proceso de modernización de nuestro país. Salinas es en 1913 secretario de la Sección de Literatura del Ateneo, que preside Azaña. Hacia 1914 ha conocido a JRJ y escribe a la novia del “hombre admirable, tan lleno de nobleza, de sencillez, y de pensamientos puros”; desde 1918 ejerce en Sevilla, donde también traduce dos tomos de la *Recherche* de Proust. Es un buen organizador: en 1933 inaugura la Universidad de Verano de Santander, de que es propiamente el creador. Su *Correspondencia* con Guillén es una extensa novela de época - también un a modo de electrocardiograma de la peripecia que fue la relación de ambos con el *vate* consagrado.

Durante algún tiempo, y algo hiperbólicamente, ha sido visto JRJ como el decano de la literatura española moderna. No sin intensas similitudes con el papel de Stefan George en Alemania, por las fechas de la fotografía impulsa y cataliza el talento de los jóvenes -acoge a García Loca en Madrid y crea la colección que publica el primer libro de Salinas, *Presagios-*, ante quienes oficia de 'maestro': precisamente del grupo de poetas que han quedado como la generación del 27. Que por su parte han estado muy prestos en su autopromoción como grupo; centralmente Salinas, desde pronto muy consciente de formar parte de lo que acostumbra a llamar “la joven literatura”. El respeto literario de y a JRJ dura unos años; Salinas comunica a Guillén en 1928 que JRJ le ha hablado con muy expresiva admiración de la primera edición de *Cántico*.

De Guillén, un fino artífice del verso, se ha dicho que es el cantor, y con voz única, de la no presencia de la muerte, del gozo de ser, de la dicha. ¿Un poeta validable para nuestro presente? *Cántico* incorpora el poema 'Beato sillón', que contiene los versos seguramente más conocidos del autor: “El mundo está bien / hecho”. Dado que la poesía de Guillén está sorprendentemente bien hecha, no faltó crítico que le reprochara un optimismo utópico en una época dramática como pocas. De los tres de la fotografía será él el único que vuelva a España, de viaje y de forma discreta

al principio, luego para establecerse una vez restablecidas las libertades políticas.

4

Acabada la guerra, “la aparente paz encubría una represión furiosa y despiadada”²; pero también el exilio supuso para los tres en los inicios una seria crisis de reacomodación. Con ella, no obstante, cobrarán los tres una inesperada claridad de juicio, muy particularmente sobre los vencedores. Salinas incluye en 1950 a Antonio Tovar en “esa gentuza” y es feroz contra Torrente Ballester: una perspectiva complementaria sobre los santones que conocimos aquí quienes llegamos mucho después. Porque Salinas es el más lúcido en sus pronunciamientos sobre las consecuencias de la guerra: en cartas suyas de 1941 el franquismo es “una sangrienta farsa” a la que profesa un “odio absoluto”, un odio “creciente y yo creo que inagotable”. Tampoco Guillén es equívoco como observador político de la España que ve en su visita de 1949: “¡Franco, Caudillo del Estraperlo! [...]. El Estado es el propio corruptor de la nación, que vive forzosamente fuera de la ley.” Innecesario recordar que, complementariamente, en el exilio arrecian las pullas a JRJ, “el Divino de Moguer”, “tan melindroso”. Así, todavía en abril de 1951, el año de su propia muerte, escribe Salinas a Guillén: “Mi querido Jorge: De vuelta de mi expedición por Massachusetts me encuentro tu carta, con el inevitable texto de J. ¡NAUSEABUNDO! y perdona que acuda a la letra gorda. No tiene otro calificativo. Si en su poesía no logra esa grandeza que otros logran con los años, en insidia, bajeza y grosería, se supera por momentos. [...]. Pero este miserable anda siempre pavoneándose con las plumas de la ética estética, a ver si caen algunos incautos.”³ La angustiada herida de los trasterrados incorpora también estas cosas.

5

Han pasado unos 90 años desde la instantánea, suficientes para que se haya incrementado mayúsculamente la distancia entre el significado 'virtual' y el 'actual' de la(s) obra(s) de estos poetas. Precisamente por su historicidad nos

2 Gracia (2010: 21).

3 Pedro Salinas y Jorge Guillén (1992: 570).

cuesta conjeturar las preguntas a que esa poesía daba respuesta. Guillén alude en más de un paso de su correspondencia con el amigo al “nuevo Plutarco” que habría de historiar en el futuro sus vidas paralelas (tampoco tanto). Con o sin paralelismo, los *tres* destinos están ligados desde que Salinas, en carta a Guillén de enero de 1925 -todavía se dicen de usted- habla de “la larga sombra de Juan Ramón” (en la copiosa correspondencia que cruzan ambos durante largos decenios, sobre todo en América, es JRJ la persona más citada, después de los familiares). Inicialmente están los tres alejados de la política, y con desdén; Salinas a Guillén a finales de 1930: “Pero es que la política que España impone es de tan baja y zafia condición que arrastra detrás de su ejercicio todas las virtudes espirituales. Cuestión de salvación, apartarse. Instinto de conservación.”⁴ Todo esto tiene que haber pesado en su recepción ulterior por parte de una izquierda cegata, que los vincularía así a la 'tercera España'. Pero lo que aquí encontramos es dignidad y claridad política.

En 1932 Salinas define la poesía como “una aventura hacia lo absoluto”: el compromiso con el embeleso -un término muy de los amigos- del lenguaje poético ya se ha instalado firmemente, y en 1940 escribe a Guillén: “Toda la poesía parece un triunfo del ser, marchando, avanzando, contra el no ser.” Mejor no se puede explicar la pasión de una vida; por cierto que Juan Ramón tiene formulaciones parejas. Fue una aventura la de Salinas, efectivamente, y, desde la mitología privada de *La voz a ti debida*, el ensayo de un decir asintótico de la realización más elevada, la poética (su gran aventura vital, más fáctica, fue Katherine Whitmore desde el Madrid de los 30). JRJ no ha claudicado del algo oneroso sacerdocio de la Obra, tampoco de su ganga esteticista o sentimental. Félix de Azúa ha denunciado lo que en él “había de pelendrín, de mezquino y malicioso señorito de casino de pueblo de Huelva.”⁵ En el destierro menudearon sus bandazos neuróticos; a veces se proyectaba fantásticamente en el Goethe más 'ordenancista' y contable de sus días, con aforismos que recuerdan mucho a los románticos.

4 Pedro Salinas y Jorge Guillen (1992: 114).

5 de Azúa (2013: 53).

Volvamos a la fotografía, que adivinamos dorada por el sol de la tarde de un Madrid que a ratos vivía aún en la fábula de ser una “ciudad alegre y confiada”. Los tres escritores consumaron su obra literaria en América; JRJ, cuando tal era posible, como poeta y anhelante mentor generacional, ocasionalmente dictando cursos, Guillén y Salinas integrados en el mundo universitario y de la crítica de Estados Unidos. Hacia 1945 Guillén hace balance y lamenta la prolongada adhesión del grupo a las “lilas” de JRJ: “me remuerde la conciencia nuestro apartamiento -personal, no literario- de Antonio [Machado]. Dejamos a la mujer honrada y perdimos quince años con la hetaira.”⁶ Un tardío, pero desalentador reconocimiento.



Ángel Repáraz, Madrid, abril de 2015

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HCH 4 / Mayo 2015

La casa del duelo, por Delia Aguiar Baixauli

A Elsa

*Más vale ir a casa de duelo
que ir a casa de banquete;
porque él es el fin de todo hombre
y el que vive lo tendrá presente.*
Eclesiastés, 7

Oh, muerte, qué locura testimoniarte,
soldarte como un metal a la gran reja,
incluirte, asimilarte, custodiarte,
dejar que formes parte de los dolores del mundo
como uno más. Porque no eres uno más,
eres brutal de proa a popa,
el crucero de los ingenuos viajeros
que de pronto nos encontramos con tu ruido,
los que desconocían el sentido de las palabras *paliativo*,
amortajar, *sepulcro*...
Inocentes saltamontes en el lenguaje selectivo,
brincábamos despreocupados de concepto en concepto
hasta que dimos con la rama negra,

la del mordisco,

la de la savia envenenada y el pánico.

Ahora, este vocabulario inconexo no casa con el previo,

desarraiga, nos enmudece.

Acercarse al enfermo que discrepa con la muerte,

qué gran hazaña para los inexpertos,

torpes como pianistas aficionados

cuyos dedos tiemblan.

Así me acerqué yo al cuerpo cansado

en la cama de su dormitorio,

una amapola en un vaso al que olvidaron echar agua.

Ella bebió su agua y ya no queda, no queda,

y había pétalos caídos como orejas de elefante,

inmensos, de una languidez sobrenatural.

Cuánto dilema con las frases,

las que dije y las que aparecieron luego y hubiera querido decir.

Tanteaba con demasiado respeto,

como quien tocara los lóbulos a Dios para saber si lleva pendientes,

tanto respeto...

Pero ¿acaso alguna vez se podía alcanzar lo concluyente,

la conversación absolutamente resuelta,

el punto final en el que todo se resume?

En realidad quería preguntarte si recordabas a mamá,

era tan simple...

Pero tenía miedo, un miedo inexplicable por verte así,
con la muerte entrando en tu cuerpo desde los pies
como unas medias elegantes y a la vez destructivas,
con tus manos al aire queriendo coger algo invisible.

En un momento te descubriste y vi tu sexo
oscuro y ajeno a todo, pero ya inútil,
como si hubiera cumplido su tarea y te diera la espalda,
como si quisiera marchar a otro cuerpo a ser de otra
y seguir dando vida, fiel a sus labores.

Ignoro dónde te encuentras,
quizá en el mundo abismal del entremedias
horizontal y ancho hasta los bordes,
donde posiblemente se halla la primera sombra de la verdad,
lejos ya de nuestras escuetas representaciones
mancas y sordas, sometidas al tiempo y al espacio,
obedientes a las nociones de cambio y permanencia,
cerebro cuadrado que nos limita y que definitivamente rechazamos
como el ciego que entrega sus ojos de vidrio.

Y sin embargo,
qué fácil es ahora acariciarte la frente,
besar tus mejillas y tus manos con un amor extraño,
casi de laboratorio,

una especie selecta que no se destila entre los sanos,
como el pan blanco de las cordilleras heladas que descendiera desde las
alturas,
pan líquido en lugar de nieve.
Que tenga que venir la muerte para probarlo...
Y que tenga que padecer esto alguien para que el hombre despierte,
un chivo expiatorio que sucumbe
y congrega en torno a sus aullidos a la masa
de inefables incógnitas.

Pero es grande el amor que se aprende en esta escuela
donde el silencio previo a la muerte pesa,
la casa del duelo, reino de la unidad.
Allí, el delirio se mira con ternura,
los vivos se transforman en lo que creían imposible
y los héroes descansan junto a las tazas vacías.



Delia Aguiar Baixauli, Madrid, 27 de abril de 2015



HCH 4 / Mayo 2015

Para una Teoría Eléctrica del Arte (I): Teoría de circuitos, por Jordi Claramonte

Inicio este pequeño ciclo de artículos sobre Teoría Eléctrica del Arte en un discreto homenaje a mi formación como electricista. Sí, era en serio lo de haber estudiado Filosofía y Electricidad.

Y por supuesto se los voy a dedicar a mi compañero Pedro, de las tutorías de Fuenlabrada, que comparte conmigo el doble currículum y las múltiples pasiones.

I

Un circuito -en buena teoría eléctrica- es una red dotada de al menos dos componentes y que contiene, como mínimo, una trayectoria cerrada. En un circuito eléctrico podríamos encontrarnos con un conjunto amplio y variable de componentes tales como *fuentes, conductores, resistencias, interruptores, condensadores, inductores, etc...*

Obviamente, los componentes de un circuito estético pueden también ser muchos y variables. En nuestro contexto cultural podríamos decir que *artista, espectador, obra, institución, comisario, crítico, teoría estética, comunidades de gusto, etc...* resultarían concebibles como componentes, pero obviamente no es preciso que sean justo estos, ni que estén todos ellos presentes, ni que estén distribuidos del mismo *modo*, para saber que estamos ante un circuito.

Basta -repetimos- con que haya dos y basta con que entre estos dos, obra y espectador, artista y obra... haya una diferencia de carga y el consecuente intercambio de electrones.

Pero antes de meternos en detalle con los problemas de lo estético, será bueno que digamos algo más sobre los diferentes componentes de un circuito, y que insistamos en la medida en que estos pueden tener un diferente peso estructural y una diferente orientación funcional.

Es interesante considerar que en teoría eléctrica se considera que una *fuentes* es un componente que se encarga de transformar algún tipo de energía en energía eléctrica. Y digo que es interesante porque de este modo los electricistas nos ahorramos un montón de discusiones estériles como discutir cuál es el tipo de fuente por excelencia o si tu fuente es más grande que la mía. Podríamos entender que en nuestra tradición cultural reciente se han considerado como *fuentes* a los artistas y a las obras de arte, es a ellos a los que se ha atribuido normalmente la transformación de otros tipos de energía en energía estética. Pero nada impediría, desde luego, que eso cambiara, de modo que otros componentes del circuito como las comunidades de gusto o determinados lenguajes de patrones se convirtieran en fuentes.

Asimismo podríamos concebir -sin salir de nuestra propia cultura artística- cuáles podrían ser los elementos institucionales o mediáticos susceptibles de funcionar como conductores, semiconductores o interruptores en un circuito estético dado. En los dos últimos casos nos encontraríamos con una especie de resistencia estéril, que importará contrastar con las resistencias generativas que analizaremos enseguida.

II

Con esto bastaría para iniciar un acercamiento de orden estrictamente sistémico -y limitado a nuestra cultura artística- a lo que podría ser una pequeña teoría de circuitos. Pero resulta que queremos ir más allá,

obviamente porque vamos a complicar un poco más el asunto y a sostener una pequeña teoría sobre qué tipo de componentes resultan más explicativos para una teoría eléctrica del arte *tout court*, una teoría eléctrica del arte que vaya más allá de nuestras limitadas tradiciones y convenciones.

Una de las mayores expertas en arte tribal, Susan M. Vogel⁷ describía la práctica artística de los Baule, precisamente, en tanto que mediante una serie de prácticas y dispositivos mezclaban y ponían en contacto, *formando circuito*, una serie de componentes que ella caracterizaba como

- a) espíritus y poderes invisibles,
- b) objetos físicos ordinarios y
- c) esculturas altamente elaboradas.

Obviamente no vamos a pretender reducir los componentes del circuito estético-eléctrico de los Baule al de nuestra propia cultura, ni los nuestros al de la suya, por mucho que en ambas se manejen objetos cotidianos, objetos elaborados específicamente para estar en ese circuito e ideas abstractas o conceptos... No, más bien vamos a intentar que la puesta en común nos lleve algo más allá de ambos. Para ello sostendremos que para los Baule -como para nosotros o para Hegel- la experiencia estética se construye mediante la puesta en relación, en circuito, de componentes procedentes de estratos *diferenciados*. Con eso nos bastará de momento mientras nos damos la ocasión de exponer con todo detalle una teoría de los estratos. Y mencionamos a Hegel porque, como se recordará, el filósofo prusiano, con todo el ensimismado encanto del romanticismo idealista, explicaba el esquema básico del circuito estético más simple, como la "*aparición sensible de la Idea*"⁸. Sabemos que se tratará en Hegel de dar cuenta de una aparición-apariencia sensible que no pretende monopolizar lo estético, puesto

⁷ Citada por Dennis Dutton en "*But they do not have our concept of art*" en Noel Carroll (editor) *Theories of Art Today*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000, pág. 224

⁸ Obviamente no vamos a entrar en todo el idealista trazo implícito en la argumentación hegeliana y su limitada concepción de la aparición sensible como *Oberfläche*, superficie. Nos interesa ahora la parte lógica, relacional de su argumentación

que es sólo superficie⁹ exterioridad que el bueno de Hegel intentará eliminar por completo en la poesía y la música, como si estas artes fueran más puras que la arquitectura o la pintura... En cualquier caso, e incluso en Hegel, queda clara esta inevitable relacionalidad, este imprescindible ponerse en relación de componentes ontológicamente diferenciados.

La centralidad de este *ponerse en relación* ha quedado, por lo demás, claramente de manifiesto en el pensamiento estético que va de Kant a Mukarovsky, en la medida en que ha planteado la definición de las ideas estéticas en función de la imposibilidad de su *reducción a concepto*. Los conceptos, lógicamente, funcionan asociando aquello conceptuado a uno u otro de los estratos de la fábrica de lo real, así hay conceptos de lo orgánico, de lo psíquico, etc...

Vamos pues a sostener que lo estético, igual que lo eléctrico, funciona justamente como juego de facultades, como relación entre esos estratos y sus dispositivos -sean obras de arte o experiencias estéticas, fuentes o transformadores- si bien pueden tratarse bajo cualesquiera categorías, no pueden, de modo característico, reducirse a ninguna de ellas ni a sus conceptos correspondientes sin perder lo que son: *una carga relacional dispuesta en un circuito*.

III

Por supuesto que no han dejado de aparecer intentos por descomponer el circuito, segregando sus componentes e intentando explicar el todo mediante una parte que, al ser separada del resto, podríamos diseccionar mejor. De ese modo, podremos tener una experiencia estrictamente fisiológica, o realizar un análisis específicamente histórico o formal de cualquier obra de arte, limitándonos a escuchar tales y cuales frecuencias de sonido, o combinar estos o aquellos matices de escuelas y maestros, pero eso, siendo perfectamente legítimo en términos epistemológicos, ni constituye ni da

⁹ W. Biemel, *La Estética de Hegel*, Universidad de Colonia, 1962, pág. 150

cuenta propiamente de una experiencia estética. Hablaremos, sin embargo, de una experiencia -y de una reflexión- estética en cuanto incluyamos en el circuito al menos dos o tres de estos niveles o estratos de percepción y sentido, y en cuanto lo hagamos no de un modo acumulativo, como quien amontona fichas o cromos, sino en la medida en que esos diferentes estratos se pongan en juego mutuamente, hasta el extremo de que lo que aprendemos de uno de ellos nos viene dado a través de otro completamente diferente...



Jordi Claramonte, Madrid, 13 de junio de 2014

Publicado en el [Blog de Jordi Claramonte](#) el 13 de junio de 2014



HCH 4 / May 2015

Cambodia Black and White, by Pierre-Emmanuel Moingt

I do love Cambodia. I do love its people, its countryside, its atmosphere. While traveling around the country during my three stays between 2009 and 2012, I took thousands of photos with my reflex or compact camera. I loved the amazing hues of green of the ricefields during the rainy season, the orange clothes of the monks, the bright yellow of the temples...

During my last stay in Cambodia with Tania in February , I brought my Zenit Camera and took photos with black and white films. For the first time, I saw Cambodia without its colours: in black and white. Cambodia thus looked completely different to me, but as beautiful as before: light, shadows, contrasts and forms had something else to tell, something more powerful. I also realize that black and white photos look timeless, like the memories.

J'aime le Cambodge. J'aime son peuple, sa campagne, son atmosphère. En voyageant à travers le pays durant mes trois séjours entre 2009 et 2012, j'ai pris des milliers de photos avec mes appareils photos reflex ou compact. J'adorais les incroyables nuances de vert des rizières pendant la saison des pluies, les vêtements oranges des moines, le jaune brillant des temples...

Durant mon dernier séjour au Cambodge avec Tania en Février , j'ai apporté mon appareil photo Zenit et pris des photos avec des pellicules noir et blanc. Pour la première fois, j'ai vu le Cambodge sans ses couleurs: en noir et blanc. Ainsi le Cambodge m'a semblé complètement différent, mais aussi beau que par le passé. La lumière, les ombres, les contrastes et les formes ont quelque chose d'autre à raconter, quelque chose de plus fort. J'ai également réalisé

que les photos en noir et blanc semblent hors du temps, comme les souvenirs.



A proud posture (Battambang, Cambodia)



The tree that touches the sky (Siem Reap, Cambodia)



Glance (Phnom Penh, Cambodia)



Waiting for the time to pass (Siem Reap, Cambodia)



The wheel of time (Siem Reap, Cambodia)



Like a family (Battambang, Cambodia)



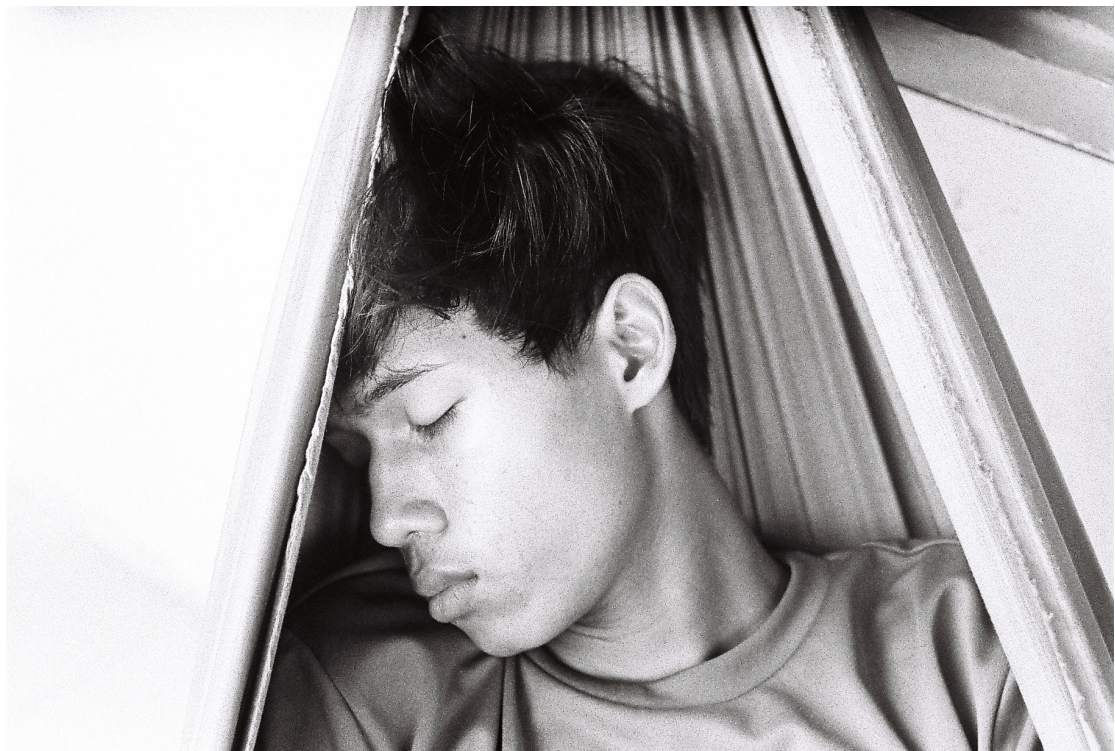
Silent music (Battambang, Cambodia)



The smell of grass (Battambang, Cambodia)



Looking through the centuries (Siem Reap, Cambodia)



Deep in thought (Battambang, Cambodia)



An endless movement (Phnom Penh, Cambodia)



Happy together (Phnom Penh, Cambodia)



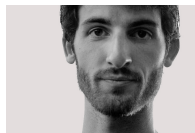
In the middle of nowhere (Siem Reap, Cambodia)



An unexpected meeting (Battambang, Cambodia)



Innocence (Battambang, Cambodia)



Photos & text by Pierre-Emmanuel Moingt, Cambodia, March 10, 2015

First published on March 10, 2015 in [No Boundaries](#)



HCH 4 / Mayo 2015

Agua y tierra, por Ivo Tejeda



Albatros de Frente Blanca (o de Salvin) (Quintero, Chile)

Este albatros posiblemente nació en las Islas Bounty en Nueva Zelanda, donde anida la mayor parte de esta especie. Es común verlo a lo largo de la corriente de Humboldt, frente a las costas chilenas, donde se alimenta. El de la foto estaba unos 30 kms. mar adentro, en Quintero.



Pimpollo (Lago Vichuquén, Región del Maule, Chile)

El pimpollo es de la familia de los zambullidores, conocidos así puesto que habitan sobre todo entornos acuáticos calmos, buscando comida y refugio en sus aguas. Este ejemplar es del Lago Vichuquén, en la Región del Maule de Chile.



Diucón (Isla Mocha, Chile)

Ave reconocible claramente por el color rojo brillante de sus ojos. Generalmente se le ve en busca de insectos en los árboles y arbustos. Este ejemplar es de la Isla Mocha.



Minero cordillerano (Valle Nevado, Región metropolitana, Chile)

Los mineros reciben su nombre por hacer sus nidos en cuevas; en el caso de los mineros cordilleranos, éstos generalmente habitan en las montañas de Los Andes, en alturas superiores a 2.000 metros. El de la foto es de Valle Nevado, en la Región metropolitana, a 3.000 metros.



Pelícanos (Quintero, Chile)

Común en las zonas costeras de Chile, el pelícano frecuentemente aprovecha los restos de pescado en las caletas. No por ello deja de ser impresionante, con su enorme bolsa bajo el pico. Al igual que el albatros anterior, estos ejemplares estaban frente a Quintero, mar adentro.



Fotografías & texto de Ivo Tejeda, Santiago de Chile, abril 2015



HCH 4 / May 2015

***Woman in Gold* premieres in Berlin, by E. Randol Schoenberg**

(First published on February 10, 2015 in [Schoenblog](#))



(Klimt: *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I*, 1907. Image in public domain; its copyright has expired)

Pam and I flew to Berlin for the premiere of the film *Woman in Gold* at the [Berlinale](#), the annual film festival in Berlin, Germany. It is an emotional return for me to the city where I lived for six months in 1987, on a Junior year semester abroad, studying math and German at the [Freie Universität Berlin](#). At that time the [Berlin Wall](#) still divided the city. Living in West Berlin was like living on an island, free and yet somehow trapped. The city has changed immensely in the 28 years since that time. But coming back has reawakened the old feelings I had as a young 20-year-old, returning to a city with great historical significance, for my family and for the rest of the world.

Back in 1987, I stayed in a tiny room (actually a former kitchen) in an apartment. This time we're in the fancy [Hotel Adlon Kempinski](#). The view outside our room (if you look to the left) is the amazing Brandenburg Gate. The first time I was here, you couldn't even get close to the Brandenburg Gate, since it was surrounded on both sides by the Wall and armed guards.

Just hours after arriving, Pam and I were invited to the Berlinale Dining Club for a dinner with other folks from *Woman in Gold*. On the way there, we ran into Helen Mirren at the elevator. She was super nice, just as she was when I met her in July in Vienna. She didn't go to the dinner, but director Simon Curtis was there and sat next to Pam. I was very excited to meet some of the German actors from the film, especially Justus von Dohnanyi. His father, the conductor [Christoph von Dohnanyi](#) is a wonderful interpreter of the music of my grandfather [Arnold Schoenberg](#). When I was at Princeton, I met him once in New York, after a performance of *Erwartung*. Christoph's father [Hans](#) and his mother's brother [Dietrich Bonhoeffer](#) were important members of the anti-Nazi resistance and were executed just before the war ended. Anyway, Justus is a terrifically nice guy and his performance in the film was probably my favorite, because he plays the Austrian attorney who opposed me in the Klimt case in just the way I experienced him.

On Monday, I went to the Weinstein Co. offices to pick up our tickets for the premiere. On the way, I walked through Peter Eisenman's [Memorial to the](#)

[Murdered Jews of Europe](#). It feels like a maze where you cannot see who is around every corner. Most times you see no one else. But as you walk through and look to the side, you see lots of other people walking through, or taking photos. It obviously works well as an attraction, and perhaps some people do think about the intended meaning as they are meandering through it. The concrete blocks do feel like giant tombstones, as if you are shrinking as you walk deeper into the field of stones. At the Weinstein offices in the Berlin Hyatt, I met a few of the publicity staff who had been sending me e-mails about the arrangements for the past few months. Simon Curtis, Helen Mirren and Ryan Reynolds were giving press interviews at the hotel, but I only saw Simon there when I checked in on him. Pam and I went out and visited the street where I lived back in 1987. I couldn't remember exactly which concrete apartment building was mine, but the church at the end of the street and restaurant were familiar.

Back at the hotel I ran into Anne Webber of the [Commission for Looted Art in Europe](#). Anne is an old friend and colleague. She really knows her stuff, and has managed to help recover hundreds of artworks over the years. The Weinstein Co. had invited her to attend the press briefing as an expert. Afterwards I saw Simon, who was waiting for my old friend Matt Weiner, the *Mad Men* creator, who was serving on the jury at the festival. We caught up for a bit, and it was fun to reminisce about our days as editors of the school newspaper way back when. We've both come a long way.

Pam and I got all dressed up. My friend Nick Meyer had suggested I wear a tux, and I figured I might as well go through with it, even though everyone else was probably going to be less formal. The film folks had a big press event, but I was not specially invited, so I figured I would have dinner with Pam and our guests before the screening that night. My old friend Sebastian and his wife Franziska came, as well as my cousin [Gabriel Loewenheim](#), an opera singer from Haifa who now lives in Berlin, and a last minute addition our friend's daughter Ariella Kattler-Kupetz, a student who arrived just a week ago on a semester abroad. Sebastian is a judge and told us about his trial that

day, involving a 500-lb man who had to be moved by the authorities out of his apartment just to attend the trial, which had to be in a special location because they could not get him up to the regular courtroom.

We made our way to the [Friedrichstadt Palast](#) for the premiere. We walked the red carpet, but even wearing a tux, not a single person figured out who I was. We got into our seats and waited for the show to start. The theater is huge, maybe 1,200 seats. Tim Schwarz and his wife Antoinette were in the row in front of us. Tim had produced the documentary on the Klimt case [Stealing Klimt](#), and was part of the reason the film got made since he was the one who told the story to Simon Curtis. Simon came on stage with Helen Mirren, Ryan Reynolds and Daniel Brühl to introduce the film. I was genuinely surprised when Helen called me out from the stage and asked me to stand. That was really nice.

Pam and I had seen a draft of the film in October, but not the final cut and we had not heard the music scored by Hans Zimmer for the film. Even knowing the film already, it was a different experience seeing it in a large theater on a giant screen. I felt I was paying attention very closely, more than the last time. Occasionally I saw a small mistake (they're driving the wrong way on the freeway) and made mental note, but at several places I really became extremely emotional. There is one line that I had given the writer Alexi Kaye Campbell, something my grandmother had said when she took us back to Austria when I was a teenager. [Gamma](#), as we called her, was nearly always happy, really never sad, morose, angry or mean. But as we rode the train into Austria she became misty-eyed and said "I'll never forgive them for not letting us live here." She loved her Austrian homeland. She was 33 when the Nazis came and she was forced to flee, on the day after [Kristallnacht](#). To her dying day she thought of herself as an Austrian, probably more so than her younger friend Maria, who was just 22 years old when she left. Alexi gave this line to Helen Mirren's Maria in the film, and when she said it, I almost lost it. Thinking of my grandmother has always done that to me. There is another scene in the movie, where Ryan Reynolds is at the Holocaust monument in Vienna and

gets that emotional hit. That was something that really happened. I was there at the unveiling of the monument, thinking about my grandmother and my great-grandfather [Siegmond Zeisl](#) who was murdered at Treblinka and just started crying. That's when I met my friend Thomas Lachs, who spotted me and realized I had a real connection and wasn't just there for the ceremony. Anyway, this happens to me, and it happened to me again and again during the film, which is I think a real testament to the emotional power of the performances, and to the emotions they were awakening in me. At several places I reached for Pam's hand and held it tight. The ending of the film, where young Maria, played wonderfully by Tatiana Maslany, says a final goodbye to her parents just shattered me. You just cannot be unaffected by [Allan Corduner](#) (Maria's father Gustav)'s farewell speech. It may be schmaltzy, but it works as a film. At least it works on me. An almost uncontrollable wave of emotion hit me at the end.

I suppose to some viewers it might seem maudlin to evoke these type of emotions in a film. But the audience seemed genuinely affected. The applause was thunderous and lasted a long time. Pam and I were brought back stage, and I hugged Simon and Alexi and thanked them profusely. Telling the story, telling Maria's story and the story of her family, of our families, was the prime mover for me during the entire ordeal. Now it was a huge film, and so many people would see it.

I seemed to be the happiest person backstage. I greeted executive producer Harvey Weinstein for the first time and he was a bit cool. I learned later that the first reviews had just come in, and were not as good as they had hoped. (More on that later.) At that time, I had only seen a very positive Austrian review, and was untroubled by any concerns for the reception of the film. I met Daniel Brühl, who was running the jury for the festival, and he told me that the applause for this film was greater than for any other film at the festival.

At the post-screening party, we took a nice photo with Matt Weiner and his wife Linda Brettler (whose younger sister Sandra was in my elementary school class). This will be a good one for the Harvard-Westlake Alumni magazin. We had fun at the party. At the end I sat with Harvey Weinstein and really introduced myself. He was busy on his iPad, doing whatever it is that he does to make his movies succeed. I only figured out later he was probably dealing with the reviews that had just come out. I told him not to worry. This story is charmed, and whatever touches it turns to gold.

When Pam and I got home, I looked for the reviews and saw some of the really not nice things published in [The Guardian](#), [Variety](#), [Hollywood Reporter](#) and [IndieWire](#), which were in stark contrast to the much more positive reviews in [Screen Daily](#) (“a classy real-life story ... thoroughly enjoyable”), [Huffington Post](#) (“stunning”), [HeyUGuys](#) (“a bonafide story of the underdog”), The Art Newspaper (“Helen Mirren shines as Maria Altmann”), [FlickFeast](#) and [London Evening Standard](#) (“heartwarming story of belated justice”), the German press [Der Spiegel](#), [Jüdische Allgemeine](#), [FilmStarts](#), the Austrian newspapers [Kurier](#), [Salzburger Nachrichten](#) and [Die Presse](#), and even the Italian press [Movieplayer.it](#) and [Sentieri Selvaggi](#). I think it is very interesting that the German and Austrian critics were positive about the film. It is not easy to make a Hollywood film about the Nazis that Germans will like, and this movie has a number of lengthy flashbacks to those times, with scenes of jubilant Austrians greeting Hitler’s arrival in Vienna, and various degradations imposed on Austria’s Jews, not to mention Maria and Fritz’s harrowing escape, which was very dramatically portrayed, but in some ways even less scary than what actually happened (the film doesn’t mention that Fritz spent weeks in Dachau before being ransomed out by his older brother, nor does it show the escape over the border to Holland, aided by a priest who was later murdered by the Nazis).

It seems likely that the jaded trade reviewers assumed that everything they saw had been “Weinsteined” to make it more dramatic. Certainly this was the

case in some scenes (Pam's water did not break when I was packing to go to argue in the Supreme Court, but she did call me from the hospital when I was in Washington just two days before my argument, because she went into premature labor at 29 weeks). But the reviewer's failure to appreciate how much of the film was true to life underscores the real need for a film like this to succeed. For them the emotional core of the film felt "manipulated," even one-sided. The reviewer for [Variety](#) Peter Debruge even complained that so many Austrians were portrayed as bad guys, and that viewers were not given an opportunity "to question Maria Altmann's case." [The Guardian](#)'s Ryan Gilbey was similarly offended by the portrayal of our Austrian opponents: "sinisterly obstructive officials who only just stop short of clicking their heels." If he only knew...

As far as the portrayal of Austrians is concerned, I think the positive reaction of the German and Austrian press leaves little doubt that the portrayal is accurate and plenty nuanced. ("Not least for our domestic education and a better understanding of the facts is 'Woman in Gold' therefore sure to become popular.") The character of Hubertus Czernin (played by Daniel Brühl), for example, is wonderful, and I liked very much how Alexi put [some of my own words](#) in Ryan's mouth for his final speech "There are two Austrias..." But one of the reviewer's own readers already had the best response: "This strange review seems to be a plea for more 'balance' in portraying Nazis."

I suppose it is always going to be difficult, after we have won, to show how hopeless the case seemed all along. It may seem "Weinsteined," and easy to dismiss or forget, when the reporter approaches Ryan Reynolds to assure him that he would lose the Supreme Court case, but then the reviewer didn't have to read this headline "[Court Likely Will Reverse Art Case](#)" in our legal newspaper after returning home from Washington. If the reviewer thought that watching us win was dull, he should be forced to suffer through the movie he apparently wanted to see — eight years of stonewalling with infuriating, procedural, counterfactual arguments and roadblocks. It is almost as if the reviewer wanted the filmmakers to have invented better arguments on the

other side, just to make the film more interesting. But on this point, the story is really the opposite of Stanley Kramer's great film [Judgment at Nuremberg](#), which perhaps explains why it wouldn't work to make the Austrian position more attractive than it was. As the reactions of the reviewers demonstrate, there are still plenty of folks who have a knee-jerk stance against restitution of stolen Jewish property. Some of them are [unabashed neo-Nazis](#).

I guess if you've read this far, you'll be inclined to trust me when I say that the negative reviewers seem to have some sort of axe to grind that has really very little to do with the film that was made. The [Hollywood Reporter](#) critic David Rooney liked Helen Mirren's portrayal of Maria, but thought Ryan Reynolds was too much of a "goy." Well, ok (no less than the stars of Barry Levinson's [Avalon](#)), but at least one other reviewer, [Mark Adams](#), found it an "engagingly subtle performance ... a nice change of pace and tone for the actor." Rooney didn't like Phipps & Zimmer's score and wished they had used Schoenberg. Yeah. But seriously, I realized early on that this story was not going to be told as an art-house movie. A nerdy grandson of Austrian exiles is not a protagonist that most people want to watch for two hours. Sure, I'd love to score the whole movie with the [Begleitungsmusik](#). But who else is going to come watch with me? As I recently told the [LA Times](#), I knew that I had to give up control and allow a certain amount of license if this story was ever going to be made into a film. Even my grandfather was once willing to [sell out to Hollywood](#). So, yes, this is not a small art-house flick with quirky directing and an experimental screenplay. But really, is that so bad? This is a story that countless people have told me they find inspirational. If that isn't a good enough justification for a Hollywood movie, what is?

Apparently [Variety](#)'s Peter Debruge just isn't that comfortable with the idea of people owning personal property. I thought the communist-capitalist debate had been sort of put to rest with the fall of the Berlin Wall, but I guess not. His review claims: "there's a monumental issue at stake here that the film scarcely acknowledges: Does (or should) anyone really own art? At a moment

when the music and movie industries have all but lost control of their own product and the public feels more entitled than ever to access such media for free, what does it mean for the world's most valuable paintings to remain in private hands?" [IndieWire's Jessica Kiang](#) seems to agree with this bizarre sentiment about the "thorny issue of art ownership," and thinks that Austria's "right to any sense of cultural identity" gets short shrift in the film. Seriously? Let's leave aside for the moment the fact that the portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer was purchased by the [Neue Galerie](#) in New York and is on permanent public display, and also that Klimt's copyright has expired and so the image can be plastered at will on college dorm rooms and used for [fridge magnets](#), [scarves](#) and [coffee mugs](#) sold throughout the world. Is the "monumental issue" really whether people get to look at a pretty painting, or is it whether we are okay with the idea that private property confiscated by the Nazis was never returned? I guess I (and the filmmakers) are guilty of mistakenly believing it was the latter.

Some of the reviewers didn't like Martin Phipps and Hans Zimmer's score, calling it "so much heavy-handed strings-and-pianos business." Personally I found their music unobtrusive and harmless, and maybe less Korngold-esque than I would have preferred. But none of the reviewers even bothered to mention the Mozart, Schubert and Schoenberg used in the film either. The short section from [Verklaerte Nacht](#) was nice, even if the concluding chord tacked on at the end was for me a bit jarring. Maria's husband Fritz, who always wanted to be an opera singer, would have loved his portrayal by the excruciatingly good-looking [Max Irons](#), and Maria, who always loved to quote operas (in the most unpretentious way), would have smiled at the Mozart aria sung by Fritz at their wedding.

None of the reviewers seemed to understand how difficult it was to make a film like this. How many films can you name that successfully cover 100 years of history? (Istvan Szabo's [Sunshine](#) is the only one I can think of, and it was problematic). Successful courtroom dramas are pretty much all completely invented or include scenes that are mostly impossible (I loved [A](#)

[Few Good Men](#), but you don't really get confessions like that in real life. And what lawyer didn't laugh at the "climactic" summary judgment denial in [Erin Brockovich](#)?). It's not so simple to make a legal drama that is accurate (this one has me on the wrong side of the room in the Supreme Court, and of course my partner Don and not Maria was sitting next to me — for all those making a nitpicking list). Let's remember that this 100-minute film had to cover the period from 1906 to 2006 spanning two continents, and include both Nazi times and a lawsuit going to the US Supreme Court. Is it really any wonder that Katie Holmes's part as my wife Pam is a bit perfunctory (but still cute)? Oh, and remember it required filming in two languages. Sure, I liked how Quentin Tarantino had his Nazi Christoph Waltz speak English, so that others couldn't understand him, during his interrogation of a French farmer in [Inglorious Basterds](#), but does anyone think that would ever have happened? It's not easy filming a story that takes place in two languages and this film does a really good job with it, or so I thought.

As a final example of the pettiness of the critics, in the Guardian, Ryan Gilbey really takes Alexi to task for one old joke: "It would have been a lot better for us all if Hitler had spent his life doing tacky paintings,' says Mirren's Maria, taking the stating of the bleeding obvious to a new level." Well, that's actually a joke that Maria said, numerous times, and I usually use it when I give my [speeches on the Klimt case](#). I've seen it attributed to the artist [Oskar Kokoschka](#). Did Gilbey really think Alexi invented it? But seriously, it's hard to read a critique like this from a guy who recently wrote, of his somewhat [confused past sexuality](#): "Those women were the only girlfriends I've had and the only women I've been attracted to. It just so happens that I made both of them pregnant, which has tended not to be the case when I've slept with men." Apparently a joke about "the bleeding obvious" is okay for him, but not for Maria Altmann.

So, I have to apologize to the critics who think that our true story is just too Hollywood to be true. What can I do about it? All I know is the audience seemed to love it. Harvey Weinstein told me that the ratings at their

screenings are off the charts. This is one of those films that is just going to have to defy the critics. Maria and I did it for eight years together, and we'll do it again.



E. Randol Schoenberg, L. A., February 10, 2015



HCH 4 / May 2015

Heath Ledger: a talented & wonderful actor gone too soon. A view into his art, by Antonia Tejada Barros

"I think in order to evolve as a person and as an actor, you need to be fearless somewhat. Push yourself and dare to be bad I guess. Don't be afraid to fail and I've failed many times, but ... failure teaches you how to succeed, I guess", Heath Ledger Interview, *Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica della Biennale di Venezia*, Sept. 2007 (RTL TV Croatia)

I have to confess that I've only discovered Heath Ledger about three months ago. Since I apparently live most of the time in another century (with no TV, no mobile—iPhone—iPod and no car), the existence of the wonderful Heath Ledger passed by me unnoticed. How I discovered this amazing and talented actor was purely by chance. One afternoon I wanted to watch something funny and light with my older kids Yael and Itay. I downloaded *10 things I hate about you* without really knowing what it's about. After watching the movie (a teen-comedy, entertaining and surprisingly different) I was wondering who is this young and charismatic actor who plays Patrick Verona. Then I found out about Heath and read about his brilliant career and his tragic death. I was enchanted by him and bought all of his movies on amazon.co.uk from 1999 until *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*. I've seen them all (and most of them many times) on our cinema projector. Many of Heath's portrayals are astonishing, brilliant, dark and profound. He has many faces and many voices. His most amazing and fun performances are, in my opinion, Jimmy (*Two Hands*), Patrick (*10 things I hate about you*), Ennis Del Mar (*Brokeback Mountain*), Casanova (*Casanova*), Dan (*Candy*), Robbie (*I'm Not There*) and the Joker (*The Dark Knight*). After *10 things I hate about you*, Heath turned down a lot of offers of romantic teenager movies, escaping from his heartthrob image, and turned down blockbuster offers such as Spider-Man: "I started to

feel like a bottle of Coke ... And there was a whole marketing scheme to turn me into a very popular bottle. And, you know, Coke tastes like shit. But there's posters everywhere so people will buy it. So I felt like I tasted like shit, and I was being bought for no reason"¹⁰. Heath always looked for challenging roles, took parts that would not bore him and showed us an incredible versatility reflected in his 16 movies: "I was boring myself before and the choices I was making were boring myself too, so I kind of wanted making it more interesting for myself too and more challenging and I wanted to learn more about life and myself"¹¹. But it wasn't only about getting bored; it was more about responsibility and freedom, that responsibility and freedom which Sartre, Frankl and other cool existentialists talk about: "I'd like to be responsible for my own actions. If you are going to paint a picture, you want to pick the colors yourself, and where and how they go"¹². It was a matter of choosing, and not of being chosen.

Right after I discovered Heath, I remembered that back in 2006 one of my best friends (who happens to be gay) told me about *Brokeback Mountain*. For some reason I didn't go to see the movie then. Now I am really sad, because otherwise I would have been able to follow Heath's career when he was alive.

Heath was born in Perth, Australia, on April 4, 1979 (all his fans know that). Before his first big role for the big screen (*Two Hands*), Heath appeared in 1992 (at the age of 13) in the movie *Clowning Around* as an orphan clown (uncredited) and in 1993–1994 in 3 episodes of the TV series *Ship to Shore* as a cyclist (S1, Ep.12 & Ep.13) and as an actor (S2, Ep.1). In 1996 he appeared in 26 episodes of the TV series *Sweat* as Snowy Bowles, a gay cyclist (yes, gay!), and, in 1997, in 11 episodes of the TV series *Home and Away* as Scott Irwin. The same year, Heath took the leading role in the 13 episode TV series *Roar* (an American production shot in Australia) as Conor. Also in 1997, Heath had small roles in the drama *Blackrock* (as Toby) and in the family movie *Paws* (as Oberon).

¹⁰ Lipsky, "Heath Ledger's Lonesome Trail", *Rolling Stone* # 996, p. 48

¹¹ Heath Ledger, Candy Press Conference Berlinale, Berlin, February 15, 2006. Part 4 of 6

¹² Lipsky, "Heath Ledger's Lonesome Trail", *Rolling Stone* # 996, p. 72

Then, in 1999, *Two Hands* came (released in Australia on July 29), an "Australian gangster comedy" (as Heath describes it¹³). Heath plays Jimmy, a hot, tender and simple guy mixed up with the Sydney mafia. Heath describes Jimmy as "a young guy that ... is growing up all his life in The Cross. His mum maybe was a prostitute ... his father is dead maybe ... basically he is in a world where he believes that this is his only path in life ... he meets a lovely young lady, Alex, and she opens his eyes and let's him see that there's another light at the end of the tunnel"¹⁴. *Two Hands*, a film "alla Tarantino" and, for some moments, "alla Jim Jarmusch", was the first movie filmed and based on Kings Cross (Sydney's red-light district): "It's something that we haven't really seen in Australia ... the gangster side of Sydney ... we see it on the Godfather, we see them driving around in their Rolls-Royces, but we don't see the Australian godfathers in their stubby shorts and singlets¹⁵ drinking VBs¹⁶..."¹⁷. The film is funny, strong and cool (with the exception of the "zombie scenes", which I didn't like at all), and the director (Gregor Jordan) and cast surrounding Heath (Bryan Brown, David Field and Rose Byrne) are amazing. Heath got a Best Actor in a Leading Role nomination in the Australian Film Institute for portraying Jimmy.

Right after *Two Hands*, Heath was casted in *10 things I hate about you*, a teen-comedy loosely based on the Shakespeare's play *The Taming of the Shrew*. The film was released four months before *Two Hands*, on March 31, 1999. Heath plays Patrick Verona, a charismatic, dark and tender teenager: "I loved *The Taming of the Shrew* and always wanted to play Petruchio, and this was the closest thing I could get"¹⁸. The film is funny and fresh, with a cool and angry Julia Stiles as Kat, Larisa Oleynik as Bianca, a funny David Krumholtz as Michael and a very young and a bit inexperienced Joseph-Gordon Levitt as Cameron.

¹³ Heath Ledger Interview. *Two Hands* (1999)

¹⁴ Heath Ledger Interview. *Two Hands* (1999)

¹⁵ British & Australian: A sleeveless garment worn under or instead of a shirt

¹⁶ Victoria Bitter: one of the highest selling beers in Australia

¹⁷ Heath Ledger Interview. *Two Hands* (1999)

¹⁸ Robb, Heath Ledger. *Hollywood's Dark Star*, p. 51

In 2000, Heath portrayed Gabriel in the epic movie ***The Patriot***, which premiered in the U.S. on June 27, 2000 and was released one day later. The movie is very patriotic and violent and really depicts life as black & white –a common American feature– (the "good" Americans *versus* the "bad" English). The whole American Revolution gets reduced to a fight between two men, which makes the movie a bit childish and not really convincing. Heath did all his own stunts and gave a beautiful performance.

A Knight's Tale (premiered in the U.S. on March 8, 2001 and released on May 11, 2001) is a fun movie for teenagers or for watching with your kids. Our daughter Yael (who is 9 years old) and our son Itay (almost 7) really love it. Even our daughter Dalit (21 months) likes to watch it because of the horses. I must say that this is probably the weakest of Heath's performances, but this is definitely due to the poor script. William's personality is a bit dull, there are dialogues that sound ridiculous and the love story has no magic whatsoever (there is no chemistry at all between Heath and the female character, played by quite a bad actress). Probably the most interesting character in the movie is Count Adhemar, the "bad guy", portrayed by Rufus Sewell. Nevertheless, just the action, the music (Queen and David Bowie) and Heath's smile make the film highly entertaining.

The Four Feathers was shown at the Toronto International Film Festival on September 8, 2002, it was premiered in the U.S. on September 17, 2002 and released three days later, on September 20, 2002 (9 months later than *Monster's Ball*, but it was made before *Monster's Ball*). Tired of his pretty boy image, Heath "took out the blond" and took the role of Harry (who appears bearded and dirty throughout a major part of the film). I don't especially like movies about honor, war and battles, but the director (Shekhar Kapur) and cast (Heath, Djimon Hounsou and Wes Bentley) of *The Four Feathers* are excellent. The landscapes and views of the desert are spectacular (most of the film was shot in Morocco). The movie reminds us of the horrors of war and imperialism, and tells a beautiful, admirable and human story about friendship

(between Harry –Heath– and Abou Fatma –Djimon Hounsou–) which transcends empires and religion. The love story is a bit dull, but the tenderness and charisma of Heath pulls it off. There is a scene of Heath jumping on a horse that is really spectacular. Heath was a great rider and did his own stunts, galloping on horses and camels.

Heath played a short but unforgettable role in *Monster's Ball*. The movie was premiered at the AFI Film Festival in the U.S. on November 11, 2001 and was released in the U.S. on December 26, 2001. Wes Bentley supposed to play Sonny, but he pulled out at the last minute and offered the role to Heath (they were then shooting together *The Four Feathers*). *Monster's Ball* is disturbing, depressing and a bit sick (father and son share the same prostitute), and it has lots of minutes of unnecessary porno scenes. In fact, I found by chance a porno website that has the "Monster's Ball Sex Scenes Compilation", a video that lasts 8'21", with the scene with Sonny –Heath– and the prostitute that lasts only one minute and then the 7'21" boring minutes of sex between Leticia –Halle Berry– and the racist-asshole Hank –Billy Bob Thornton–. I personally think that it would have been much more interesting to explore a bit more the relationship between Hank and Sonny (father and son) rather than to see so much tit and ass. Roberts says about *Monster's Ball* ironically: "Capital punishment, racism and graphic sex don't make for cosy family viewing"¹⁹. The movie was filmed in a real prison (the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, known as "the Farm") and the electric chair was real (although not in use any more) as well as the death row and cells. All the cast is amazing, but the performances of Heath, famous rapper Sean Combs –Puff Daddy– (Lawrence) and Peter Boyle (disgusting Buck) are especially impressive. Heath appears a total of only 13 minutes and 41 seconds on screen (I've timed it), but his painful portrayal of Sonny is really breathtaking. Until we see Sonny at the prison, he appears 4'43" on screen; his appearance in the execution sequence lasts 5'34"; the whole fight in the toilet lasts 1'36", and the fight in the house and the tragic end, 1'48". He did his work in two days.

¹⁹ Roberts, *A Tribute to Heath Ledger*, p. 50

The Sin Eater (released in Canada and the U.S. on September 5, 2003) – better known as *The Order*– started filming before *Ned Kelly*, but was released 6 months after *Ned Kelly*. It reunited Heath with director Brian Helgeland and actors Shannyn Sossamon and Mark Addy from *A Knight's Tale*. I am zero attracted to horror-thriller-cult movies. A long time ago I made the big mistake of watching *Angel Heart* (just because of Robert De Niro) and I had nightmares for a year. So, horror and thriller are not my favourite genres. I finally decided to watch *The Sin Eater* because I thought that it would make no sense to leave it out. Before watching it, I read some reviews that described the movie as boring and bad. What can I say after watching the movie? Well, I've never seen such a sexy priest, that's for sure, and Heath's sentences in Latin are definitely cute. But for an atheist like me and furthermore not a big fan at all of the Catholic religion and even less of the Catholic church, the whole Jesus–Christ–Virgin–Mary–Satan–Sin stuff feels boring and ridiculous. I had a hard time understanding the plot and, if not for Heath (the scene towards the end where he cries with pain is really touching), I would have stopped watching the movie.

Heath went to Australia to shoot ***Ned Kelly*** (which was released on March 22, 2003) and he reunited with director Gregor Jordan (*Two Hands*). Due to their friendship and the generous personality of Heath, Heath agreed to get paid only \$ 60.000 for leading the movie (an absurd sum of money compared with the \$ 1 million that he got paid for *A Knight's Tale* and the \$ 2 million that he got paid for *The Four Feathers*) –as a reference, for *10 things I hate about you*, when he was completely unknown in the US, he got paid \$ 100.000, much more than for *Ned Kelly*–. The movie has very nice cinematography (Oliver Stapleton) and beautiful shots of animals and trees, but is overly sentimental. The movie was very successful in Australia, where the legend of Ned Kelly is very much alive.

I didn't quite get ***The Brothers Grimm*** (shot in 2003 but released in Canada and the U.S. on August 26, 2005), a movie which I found far too scary for

children and too childish for adults, but the character of Jacob (portrayed by Heath) is funny and really nice to watch. At first Terry Gilliam gave the part of Wilhelm (Will) to Heath and that of Jacob (Jake) to Matt Damon, but both actors agreed that they preferred to reverse the characters. So, Heath ended up playing Jacob and Damon, Wilhelm. Actors Peter Stormare and Jonathan Pryce are brilliant and hilarious. Cinematographer Nicola Pecorini worked with Heath in *The Sin Eater* and told Gilliam on the phone: "This kid I'm working with, he's great! He's really good!"²⁰. Heath always had admired Gilliam's work (he loved Monty Python) and was thrilled to work with him.

Lords of Dogtown started filming on April 6, 2004 and was released on June 3, 2005. The film is based on the revolutionary skateboard legends called the Z-Boys and it was written by Stacey Peralta (a Z-Boy himself). Heath's portrayal of Skip Engblom is funny, flamboyant and really close to the true character. Engblom (who after seeing *The Patriot* absolutely wanted Heath to play his part) said that his own wife thought that Heath's portrayal of her husband was astonishingly accurate. This was great for Engblom's marriage as he claims that after the movie his wife had the feeling that she was sleeping with Heath. Heath used a wig and fake teeth to portray Engblom. All the actors had to learn to skate, which was kind of crazy, and Heath's passion for surfing and skating helped his character a lot. I got a bit bored watching the movie, since I found that the values and dreams of the young skaters were a bit superficial. Maybe it's a good movie for teenagers, I don't know. There is, by the way, a much better story about the Z-Boys. It's a documentary directed by Peralta himself and narrated by Sean Penn called *Dogtown and the Z-Boys* (2001). The problem is, of course, that it's without Heath. About the non commercial success of *Lords of Dogtown* Heath said: "I'd rather take the risk of making a movie that's not going to be commercially successful and may not be good but may be brilliant, I'd rather take those risks"²¹. In an interview where Heath is peeling an orange, the interviewer asks him about "the Heath flip", a skate move that nobody knew, and Heath explains: "The 'Heath flip' was the first trick I learned on the skateboard ... I

²⁰ Robb, *Heath Ledger. Hollywood's Dark Star*, p. 102

²¹ Heath Ledger, Robb, *Heath Ledger. Hollywood's Dark Star*, p. 107

thought everyone knew how to do it and apparently no one had heard of it before. They called it 'the Heath flip'²².

Then ***Brokeback Mountain*** came, which started filming on May 23, 2004 and was premiered at the *Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica della Biennale di Venezia* on September 2, 2005 and released in the U.S. on December 9, 2005. What else can I say about this wonderful and poetic movie and Heath's superb portrayal of a tormented gay cowboy that has not been already said? Director Ang Lee is amazing, the music (Gustavo Santaolalla) is touching and beautiful, the cinematography (Rodrigo Pietro) is exquisite and the performances of Heath (Ennis Del Mar) and Jake Gyllenhaal (Jack Twist) are really stunning. Anne Hathaway is quite good and poor unfriendly Ms. Williams couldn't even get the accent right. Although the movie was banned in China and got protests from stupid-right-wing-Republicans in America, the world, especially Europe, loved it. *Brokeback Mountain* was very important for the gay movement, but the point is that it is a love story, not a *gay* love story: "It transcends a label. It's a story of two human beings who are in love; get over the fact that it's two men –that's the point"²³. The film is based on a short story written by Annie Proulx (originally published in *The New Yorker* on October 13, 1997). The script was written by Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana. It was Ossana who was fascinated with Heath, when she saw him in *Monster's Ball*. MacMurtry says: "Diana [Ossana] asked that I watch the first 20 minutes of *Monster's Ball* to see Heath's performance (...) After seeing him in that role, I felt that he had what it would take to play Ennis Del Mar –he was that powerful"²⁴. About kissing another man (a stupid sexist question that many interviewers asked Heath), Heath said: "My biggest anxiety wasn't having to kiss Jake (...) It was a perfect script and Ang Lee was the perfect director. So the anxiety for me was – I didn't want to be the one to fuck it up"²⁵. Heath describes Ennis Del Mar as "[an] homophobic male in love with another man"²⁶. It is known that Heath got an Oscar nomination (Best

²² Heath Ledger, *Lords of Dogtown* Interview, 2005

²³ Heath Ledger, Robb, *Heath Ledger. Hollywood's Dark Star*, p. 108

²⁴ Robb, *Heath Ledger. Hollywood's Dark Star*, p. 108

²⁵ Lipsky, "Heath Ledger's Lonesome Trail", *Rolling Stone* # 996, p. 49

²⁶ Heath Ledger, Robb, *Heath Ledger. Hollywood's Dark Star*, p. 115

Performance as an Actor in a Leading Role) and that, unfairly, he didn't get the award. Even though all the *Brokeback Mountain* and Heath fans were probably very disappointed, it's very probable that Heath didn't care since he didn't believe at all in awards.

Casanova started filming on August 17, 2004, was premiered at the *Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica della Biennale di Venezia* on September 3, 2005 and released in the U.S. on December 25, 2005. It's a funny, tender, poetic & beautiful film about love, passion, changes and fighting for one's love. Heath is absolutely brilliant, sexy, exciting and wonderful in his role of Casanova. Jeremy Irons, Oliver Platt and Onid Djilili are also great. Director Lasse Hallström shows us, once again, his sensibility for describing tenderness, friendship and love. *Casanova* has beautiful music by Rameau, Vivaldi, Albinoni and other Baroque masters as well as exquisite costumes. The whole movie was shot in Venice, which gives the film a lot of beauty and splendor. Heath took the movie as a vacation. After *Brokeback Mountain* and before *Candy*, *Casanova* was a break from anxiety and drama: "[Shooting Casanova] ended up being a four-and-a-half-month guided tour. Every day we ended up being taken to the most beautiful parts of Venice to shoot. *Brokeback Mountain* and *Casanova* complemented each other. Making *Brokeback [Mountain]* was excruciating and *Casanova* was drinking wine and eating pasta, it was like a holiday"²⁷. This shows how amazing an actor Heath really was. His portrayal of Casanova is fresh, funny and marvelous, and could have taken millions of hours of preparation, drama studies and a lot of anxiety to any actor, but, for Heath, it was just natural and easy, because he was incredibly talented.

Then we have **Candy**, my favorite Heath movie. A masterpiece about love and addiction. It started filming on January 27, 2005 and was released on February 15, 2006. *Candy* is 1.000 times better than *Trainspotting* (and *Trainspotting* was really good) and 1.000 times less known than *Trainspotting*. *Candy* is a touching and strong love story full of despair, hope, regrets,

²⁷ Heath Ledger, Robb, *Heath Ledger. Hollywood's Dark Star*, p. 122

dreams & failures. The story does not try to judge, punish or teach. There are no good and bad guys. *Candy* is a human and honest portrayal of the hell of heroine, a story about real love and a movie that will break your heart into a million pieces. Heath describes the movie like "a film of love (...) not a story about heroine"²⁸. Heath explains: "Heroine is involved but I think that the beauty of this film [is that] it's not exploding heroine or glorifying it in any way (...) It's a tragic story of love"²⁹. Director Neil Armfield was a bit hesitant about using Heath as Dan, since he thought that Heath had a natural energy that was heroic, and Dan was grubby and edgy. But, again, it was Heath's performance in *Monster's Ball* that "got him" the role. Luke Davies (the writer of the book upon which the movie is based and screenwriter of the movie, together with director Neil Armfield) wrote a beautiful and touching article about Heath after Heath's death; he describes Heath as a talented, generous, kind and sincere human being, and says: "It was *Monster's Ball* that convinced Neil Armfield that Ledger was the one for *Candy*"³⁰. What attracted Heath to the project was the novel, which he describes like a "tragic love affair with both the drug and each other"³¹, the screenplay and the fact of being allowed to use his own accent, which he didn't do since *Two Hands* and *10 things I hate about you*: "shooting a film using my own accent was attractive ... I haven't done that for 8 years. I was looking forward to feeling liberated from ... having to perform with an accent ... It was a sense of freedom. I was able to mumble in my own accent, to breath in my own accent, to improvise freely"³². Abbie Cornish gives a breathtaking performance. Heath says about Abbie: "... she's incredibly talented ... She relies a lot upon ... instinct and the magic of the scene, and she keeps it real and she's a very grounded human being, very talented obviously, very beautiful... I could not have asked for a better *Candy*"³³. I must say that Abbie is the strongest and most brilliant female character of all of Heath's movies. I'd go further and say that two of the most

²⁸ Heath Ledger Interview, *Candy* DVD, Extras

²⁹ Heath Ledger Interview, *Candy* DVD, Extras

³⁰ Davies, "Heath Ledger. 1979–2008"

³¹ Heath Ledger Interview, *Candy* DVD, Extras

³² Heath Ledger Interview, *Candy* DVD, Extras

³³ Heath Ledger Interview, *Candy* DVD, Extras

beautifully portrayed love stories in cinema history are the ones of Ennis and Jack, and Candy and Dan. *Candy* is a real jewel. Director Armfield is awesome and the cast (Heath, Abbie and Geoffrey Rush) is superb.

I'm Not There started filming on July 30, 2006 and was premiered at the *Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica della Biennale di Venezia* on September 3, 2007 and released in U.S. on November 21, 2007. "I'm Not There" is a 1967 Bob Dylan song from *The Basement Tapes Raw: The Bootleg Series Vol. 11*. This absolutely brilliant movie, directed by Todd Haynes, is poetic, artistic and has a touch of Fellini's *Otto e mezzo*. Cate Blanchett, Christian Bale, Marcus Carl Franklin, Richard Gere and Ben Whishaw are all portraying Dylan. Colin Farrell, who supposed to play Robbie (Heath's character), pulled out at the last minute, and Heath offered to play the part. Heath's reasons for doing the movie, in his own words, were: "Firstly I greatly admired Bob Dylan for years and so to be someone connected to his story was enticing; and secondly the fact that Todd had written this incredibly dense hugely ambitious script which I found extraordinary beautiful, daring and I've seen his films and I've been [a] fan of his movies and I really thought that he was like the only one courageous and intelligent enough to pull it off"³⁴. Robbie's wife is Claire, played by Charlotte Gainsbourg, who gives a great performance. There is a lot of chemistry between Heath and Charlotte and the story feels very real. I must say that in all 16 movies that Heath made, there are very few actors playing the role of Heath's couple or love that manage to both give a brilliant performance and create a real romantic feeling; these very few actors are Rose Byrne, Julia Stiles, Jake Gyllenhaal, Abbie Cornish and Charlotte Gainsbourg. About if the movie *I'm Not There* gives you a better knowledge of Dylan, Heath says: "I don't know anything more about him than you do after doing this movie ... he's still happily a mystery to me"³⁵. Dylan and Heath had a lot in common. Two true artists who don't compromise their art: they draw their art by what they believe is good and important, and not by what the public believes is good and important: "I really appreciate the fact that Dylan was fearless in terms of not ... conforming

³⁴ Heath Ledger Interview. Venice Film Festival: Living in Italy & *I'm Not There* (Sept. 2007)

³⁵ Heath Ledger Interview. Promoting *I'm not There* – 1 (Nov. 2007)

to a public demand or a commercial expectation ... reinventing himself"³⁶. Heath saw in Dylan a really fearless artist. In a beautiful interview, four months before his death, Heath talks about the importance of not being afraid to fail and what failure teaches us: "I think in order to evolve as a person and as an actor, you need to be fearless somewhat. Push yourself and dare to be bad I guess. Don't be afraid to fail and I've failed many times, but ... failure teaches you how to succeed, I guess"³⁷. Terry Gilliam described Heath as wonderful and fearless. Fearless with capital letters³⁸. Even being such a great artist, Heath thought that it was obnoxious calling acting art. About his role in *I'm Not There*, he says that Robbie is in "a moment in time in which he's dealing with these two worlds: his professional life and his family life and [tries] to balance love and art, if you can call acting art, which I think is obnoxious"³⁹.

The Dark Knight was released on July 14, 2008, almost 6 months after Heath's death. The film started filming on April 2, 2007 and finished filming on October 19, 2007. I personally found the plot weak and the casting (besides Heath, Michael Caine and Morgan Freeman) not quite convincing. The love story between Rachel and the other guy (I forgot his name, since his character is so easy to forget) has neither magic nor depth. I think it could have been much more interesting to explore the relationships between the characters and to tell much more of the Joker's story instead of so many explosions, fights and guns. Nevertheless, it's a good movie for teenagers (although very violent) and for people who love comic-book heroes. The special effects are spectacular, and the Joker and the music (Hans Zimmer and James Newton Howard) are definitely the best of the film. Heath's portrayal of the Joker is so good that when he is not on screen the movie really goes down, and when he appears, one *cannot take the eyes off of him*. The Joker is so cool and brilliant that one really wants him to win the battle.

³⁶ Making of - *I'm not There* - Heath Ledger

³⁷ Heath Ledger Interview. *Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica della Biennale di Venezia*, Sept. 2007

³⁸ Too Young To Die: Heath Ledger

³⁹ Heath Ledger Interview. Promoting *I'm Not There* – 3

Although not a fan of comic books⁴⁰, Heath said that "the character of the Joker was too good to turn down"⁴¹. Heath wasn't a fan of blockbuster movies neither, but the character was too attractive: "in this monster machine of a movie, popcorn movie ... it was purely a character choice, I can honestly say that"⁴². He thought that Jack Nicholson's portrayal of the Joker was perfect ("To touch what Jack Nicholson did in Tim Burton's world would be a crime"⁴³), and he never compared himself to Nicholson because he really believed that the worlds of Tim Burton and Christopher Nolan are completely different, and therefore, incomparable: "It was an opportunity for a new version of the Joker"⁴⁴. Although Heath knew immediately after being asked to play the Joker how he wanted to do it ("I knew 5 seconds later exactly how to play it"⁴⁵), he locked himself up in a hotel room in London for 6 weeks in order to prepare his character, looking for the Joker's voice and looking for his laugh: "I locked myself away for 6 weeks in a room and I kind of came up with this creep"⁴⁶. He wrote a diary about the Joker he was going to portray with notes, drawings and photos of old Batman Comics, hyenas and *A Clockwork Orange*. His father shows the diary in the great German TV series-Documentary *Too Young to Die: Heath Ledger* (S1, Ep. 3, July 28, 2012). I bought the Documentary in English from the producers of the show and I can say that it is the best documentary about Heath that I've seen. Kim Ledger says, showing "the Joker" diary: "He galvanized the upcoming character in his own mind. That was typical of Heath ... this was just on a whole new level"⁴⁷. The diary ends with the words "Bye, bye", which are, after Heath's death, very painful. There are many stupid speculations about how portraying the Joker led Heath to exhaustion and death, but the truth is that, although the character required a high level of energy, "it was incredibly enjoyable"⁴⁸. Heath said in many interviews that he had a lot of fun playing the Joker: "The Joker was ...

⁴⁰ "I grew up in a house with lots of girls, so, there were very few Batman comics lying around ... that's probably the only reason why I never grew up reading Batman", Heath Ledger talks about the Joker (2007)

⁴¹ Heath Ledger talks about the Joker (2007)

⁴² Last Interview with Heath Ledger (Art Radio), December 3, 2007

⁴³ Heath Ledger talks about the Joker (2007)

⁴⁴ Last Interview with Heath Ledger (Art Radio), December 3, 2007

⁴⁵ Heath Ledger talks about the Joker (2007)

⁴⁶ Last Interview with Heath Ledger (Art Radio), December 3, 2007

⁴⁷ TV Series-Documentary *Too Young to Die: Heath Ledger*

⁴⁸ Heath Ledger talks about the Joker (2007)

the most fun I ever had ... probably ever will have playing a character"⁴⁹. He described the Joker as a "dark, very nasty ... psychopath, sociopath, mass-murdering clown"⁵⁰. The Joker was not only evil but something else: "He's not just gonna be scary ... there are [a] few surprises, I think"⁵¹. Sadly, Heath didn't see any takes or parts of the film, because the producers were very secretive about it: "I think the movie is going to be awesome. I'm very excited for it. I haven't seen anything. Nothing. They really don't want anyone to see anything. It's very secretive. But just from what I've seen first hand and just from what I've heard, I think it's going to be good"⁵². The movie is "In memory of our friends Heath Ledger and Conway Wickliffe". Wickliffe (1966–2007) was killed on set while filming a test run.

The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus is the *opus magnum* of Terry Gilliam and, tragically, the last performance of Heath. It started filming on December 8, 2007. On January 23, 2008, one day after Heath's death, the production stopped until February 17. Everybody wanted to finish the movie, to show Heath's last creation, so on February 18 filming begun again, and Johnny Depp, Colin Farrell and Jude Law came along to finish Heath's performance (later they donated all their salary –\$ 20 million– to Heath's daughter Matilda). In the movie there are two worlds: the real world and the imaginary world. Fortunately, all the scenes of the real world (which were shot in London) were already finished when Heath died. The scenes in the imaginary world were going to be shot in Vancouver. So, Tony, Heath's character, appears different every time he enters in the Imaginarium. Depp, Law and Farrell, apart from having some physical resemblance to Heath in the movie (same hair, same moustache, same goatee, same make-up), copied Heath's mimics in the movie, and the film does not get affected by the fact that there are "4 Tonys". The sad thing is that Heath does not appear much. Heath wears blue contact lenses in the movie, to "hide" the truth about Tony. At a certain moment during the movie, his lenses were supposed to fall out and show us the "real"

⁴⁹ Heath Ledger talks about the Joker (2007)

⁵⁰ Heath Ledger, *Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica della Biennale di Venezia*, Sept. 2007, Sept. 2007 (Talking about *I'm Not There* & the Joker)

⁵¹ Last Interview with Heath Ledger (Art Radio), December 3, 2007

⁵² Heath Ledger talks about the Joker (2007)

Tony with his real eyes. That scene was never shot. *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* is a magical, poetic and beautiful movie, with an incredible art direction (Caroline Smith), beautiful cinematography (Nicola Pecorini), brilliant costumes (Monique Prudhomme), an extremely poetic and marvelous music (Jeff & Mychael Danna) and an amazing cast (Heath –who improvised half of his dialog–, a superb Christopher Plummer, Andrew Garfield, Lily Cole, Verne Troyer, Depp, Law and Farrell, and Tom Waits shining in his amazing and funny portrayal of the Devil). Although I find the movie very beautiful, watching *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* is painful, because it feels like both the real and artistic proof of Heath's death. When Johnny Depp appears instead of Heath we really feel Heath's loss. At the end of the movie, instead of writing "A film by Terry Gilliam", Gilliam wrote in the credits: "A movie from Heath & friends". According to Gilliam, that was what the movie was. The film is in memory of Heath and of producer William Vince, who died 5 months after Heath.

Heath always pushed himself to his limits, acting-wise. He always wanted to surprise himself. Just like River Phoenix and Johnny Depp, he worked very hard to erase his pretty boy image and preferred looking for very different and challenging roles, where he could grow as an actor and as a person: "I always look for things that challenge me and ... teach me to be a more understanding, accepting human being and actor"⁵³.

Everyone who knew Heath talks about how amazing he was as a person and as an actor. In his interviews, Heath appears to be a really nice and down-to-earth guy: humble, bright and interesting: "He was a star ... who tried to preserve his naturalness in the spotlight (...) [he] was just totally transparent in his vulnerability"⁵⁴. And, then, he would transform in front of the camera.

Heath was very artistic in many fields. He was a great photographer and loved to take pictures and to film everything he could: "He was never without a

⁵³ Last Interview with Heath Ledger (Art Radio), December 3, 2007

⁵⁴ Gilliam, TV Series-Documentary *Too Young to Die: Heath Ledger*

camera, from when he was very young"⁵⁵. His father shows some of his artistic photos in *Too Young to Die: Heath Ledger*. Heath was a master in chess (he was state junior champion in Australia at age ten, and later in New York he used to play chess in Washington Square Park) and played poker really well: "He was good at everything he did", said Ellen DeGeneres⁵⁶. Heath was very athletic (played cricket and hockey for years, was a great swimmer, surfer, skater and rider). He was fascinated by Nick Drake whom also died at a very young age (26), in 1974, and thought about doing a movie about him. In addition, Heath created a music label called Masses Music Co. (known as The Masses) and directed several music videos, including "Cause An Effect" and "Seduction is Evil (She's Hot)", songs by Ledger's childhood friend, rapper No Fixed Abode, known as N'fa; "Morning Yearning", song by Ben Harper; "Black Eyed Dog", song by Nick Drake; and "King Rat", song by Modest Mouse (the video was unfinished when Heath died, but was completed by members of The Masses –Auber, Houk, Taglioli and Cline– and released on August 4, 2009): "I do have some wonderful distractions ... I have a music label and I direct music videos and so I immerse myself in a different industry which kind of keeps acting really fresh for me"⁵⁷.

Heath had a raw and huge talent for acting and a terrible taste in women. Interesting and brilliant as he was, it's weird that he didn't date exciting and intelligent artists but kept dating superficial and quite tacky models and actresses who became more famous for dating Heath than for their creative work. Heath said that he was in love with love, and appears to have had a tremendous need for being loved: "He was embarrassingly romantic, each time he fell in love", remembers Davies⁵⁸.

Many people close to him said that he was an incredibly generous person. He was highly admired and loved by other actors: Matt Damon said that Heath

⁵⁵ Kim Ledger, TV Series-Documentary *Too Young to Die: Heath Ledger*

⁵⁶ Fife-Yeomans, *Heath. A Family's Tale*, p. 240

⁵⁷ Robb, *Heath Ledger: Hollywood's Dark Star*, p. 179

⁵⁸ Davies, "Heath Ledger. 1979–2008"

was the best actor he ever worked with⁵⁹ and Daniel Day-Lewis dedicated to Heath his SAG Award (Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role) in a beautiful and touching speech 5 days after Heath's death⁶⁰. The cinema directors with whom he worked (Jordan, Kapur, Lee, Gilliam, Nolan...) all adored him and became good friends of his. Heath had a talent for developing strong friendships with the people he worked with. He wanted to enjoy his art, learn every day a bit more and work with brilliant and nice people: "I just wanna enjoy myself. I wanna learn more, I wanna work with good people, creatively and as people, really just good people"⁶¹. He cared very much about the human part of all human beings. He appreciated genius but, above all, he appreciated nice human beings. When he was working with Gilliam he said: "I think Terry Gilliam is brilliant and he's such a nice guy. I'm not interested in working with genius bastards"⁶².

Heath wasn't a celebrity campaigning loud for causes and charities, but he did contribute to nature, charity and peace. The music video "King Rat" is an artistic protest against the illegal whale hunts off the coast of Australia. Heath used to visit kids with cancer at the hospital where he was born, and donated money for several charities. In 2003 he opposed the entry of Australia in the Oil-for-Bush-Iraq war and called the Prime Minister of Australia John Howard "a dick"⁶³ during a TV interview.

⁵⁹ "I'm not being hyperbolic at all by saying this, but he's the best actor I have ever worked with (...) it's just terrible and it's not something that I'll ever get over nor do I think anybody who knew him could ever get over. He is a really, really special guy and I think to people who knew him it just felt like his light was just too bright for this place", Matt Damon talks about Heath Ledger

⁶⁰ "There are many actors in this room tonight including my fellow nominees who've given me that sense of regeneration ... Heath Ledger gave it to me. In *Monster's Ball*, that character that he created it seemed to be almost like an unformed being, retreating from themselves, retreating from his father, from his life, even retreating from us, and yet we wanted to follow him, and yet were scared to follow him almost. It was unique. And then of course in *Brokeback Mountain* he was unique, he was perfect. That scene in the trailer at the end of the film is as moving as anything that I think I've never seen. I'd like to dedicate this to Heath Ledger", Daniel Day-Lewis SAG Speech. Award dedicated to Heath Ledger (January 27, 2008)

⁶¹ Last Interview with Heath Ledger (Art Radio), December 3, 2007

⁶² Robb, *Heath Ledger. Hollywood's Dark Star*, p. 103

⁶³ Heath Ledger Opposing Iraq War (2003)

Heath died at the age of 28 (two months and a half before his 29th birthday) due to an accidental overdose of prescription pills –a combination of 6 different painkillers, sleeping pills and anti-anxiety pills (oxycodone, hydrocodone, diazepam –Valium–, temapezan, alprazolam –Xanax– and doxylamine). A real lethal cocktail indeed. This year he would have been 36 years old. To the general view that he may have been depressed or sad, people that were close to him state the contrary: "He was in good spirits and having a wonderful time on this Terry Gilliam movie"⁶⁴. Heath appears in his last movie much thinner, but Gilliam and Heath's co-stars in *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* denied that Heath was down and they were, like everybody else, surprised and crushed by his death. They talked about Heath's vitality, energy and strength. Gilliam said that, as soon as he would say "Cut!", Heath was making jokes and being friendly to everybody: "He kept everybody going ... He would lift everybody"⁶⁵. Gilliam joked that he was co-directing the movie with Heath, and Cole and Garfield agreed that he really did. Heath was always improvising and changing scenes, and this energy pushed everybody else: "Every take he would come back with something different and surprising, which makes the whole process of making a film much more fun"⁶⁶. "He was always ... energetic and generous"⁶⁷, said Cole. And Garfield added: "[He was] extraordinary. Full of life, a love for life, an energy which was contagious ... inspiring to everyone"⁶⁸. Nevertheless, when Heath came back to New York, he commented to Chopra that "he was a little depressed about not having seen his daughter"⁶⁹. Gilliam said after Heath's death: "Maybe life leaves it's scars, but I didn't see that many bad scars in his life"⁷⁰.

⁶⁴ Barron, "Heath Ledger, Actor, Is Found Dead at 28"

⁶⁵ Gilliam, Cole, Garfield & Troyer on working with Heath Ledger (2009)

⁶⁶ Gilliam, Cole, Garfield & Troyer on working with Heath Ledger (2009)

⁶⁷ Gilliam, Cole, Garfield & Troyer on working with Heath Ledger (2009)

⁶⁸ Gilliam, Cole, Garfield & Troyer on working with Heath Ledger (2009)

⁶⁹ Fife-Yeomans, *Heath. A Family's Tale*, p. 280

⁷⁰ TV Series-Documentary *Too Young to Die: Heath Ledger*

Although his life wasn't easy by the time of his death, Heath had a strong love for life and was full of projects (screenwriter Allan Scott was working with Heath on making a movie about a chess prodigy, based on Walter Tevis's 1983 novel *The Queen's Gambit*, directed and starred by Heath and the amazing Ellen Page). His father shows in *Too Young to Die: Heath Ledger* several scrips of projects that Heath kept for maybe doing in the future. The day after he died he was supposed to meet director Shekhar Kapur to discuss several projects. Heath and Kapur spoke on the telephone on Monday January 21. Kapur said: "I last spoke to him the night before he died ... He said he could not see me that night but really wanted to meet me the next day ... He made me promise that I would call him in the morning and wake him up. I tried..."⁷¹. Heath suffered from insomnia. In addition, he had a strong backache and a chest infection the days prior to his death that didn't allow him to sleep. Heath had several types of pills prescribed by doctors from different countries. Although no pill taken on its own was extremely dangerous, the combination of all together proved to be lethal. He took 6 pills (which is a lot), but he didn't take 30, which is common in suicides. His death was purely accidental. Heath died probably without suffering. In a program that discussed Heath's death, it was said that "he just stopped breathing"⁷². His father became one month ago the patron of Scriptwise⁷³, a non-profit foundation set up to educate people about the dangers of abusing prescription drugs.

Heath received more than 30 posthumous awards (including the SAG Award, the Golden Globe and the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor for his amazing portrayal of the Joker). Many people think that he won all these awards due to his unexpected death, but they forget that James Dean was also posthumously nominated for 2 Oscars for Best Actor in a Leading Role in 1955 (*East of Eden*) –the first posthumous acting nomination in Academy Awards history– and in 1956 (*Giant*), and he didn't win neither. In any case, Heath didn't care so much about awards and he always compared the cinema awards with a competition that would involve different sports: "Who is the

⁷¹ Robb, *Heath Ledger. Hollywood's Dark Star*, p. 190

⁷² Heath Ledger Death: CNN LARRY KING Part 1 of 2

⁷³ <http://www.scriptwise.org>

winner? It's such a surreal kind of concept to be competing ... whatever you are acting or directing ... everyone is kind of playing different sports and you start from different lines and you're finishing at a different spot"⁷⁴.

Heath is survived by his parents, his three sisters and his daughter Matilda (who is now 9 and a half years old and was two years and three months when Heath died). Heath's friend tattooist Scott Campbell spoke of how Heath would get really excited when talking about his daughter: "'Heath would get all excited ... and that excitement was so contagious' ... 'All the things he would do with her as she grew up. Like buying a garage in Brooklyn and setting up a big screen on the back wall, so he and Matilda could pull the car up into it and have their own private drive-in theatre'"⁷⁵. Heath loved being surrounded by friends: "There were always people coming and going at Mr. Ledger's place, drinking tea, using the computer and gathering around for dinner. Mr. Ledger was always manning the barbecue grill or making espresso. 'If he could cook at his house with an ocean of people laying on the living room floor watching movies, that was his heaven', Mr. Campbell said. 'That and his daughter, Matilda –she was everything to him'"⁷⁶. Two months before Heath's death he explained in a touching interview how having a child changed his view on death: "You also look at death differently ... It's like a Catch-22, like I feel good about dying now because I feel like I'm alive in her but at the same hand you don't wanna die because you wanna be around for the rest of her life. It's ... [an] interesting kind of set-up"⁷⁷.

His last interview (Art Radio), December 3, 2007 (one and a half months before his death) is painful to hear, because Heath said, when the interviewer told him that *Brokeback Mountain* was Heath's peak: "I'd like not to think about it as a peak [laughs], 'cause I'm only 28 and I've got [a] few more

⁷⁴ Heath Ledger, Candy Press Conference Berlinale, Berlin, February 15, 2006. Part 1 of 6

⁷⁵ Davies, "Heath Ledger. 1979–2008"

⁷⁶ Rice, "A Brooklyn Restaurant, in Heath Ledger's Memory"

⁷⁷ Heath talking about death (News of his death and a clip from an interview of Nov. 2007, promoting *I'm Not There*)

years"⁷⁸. When talking about his coming projects, Heath talked about reuniting with Terry Gilliam and also starring in *The Tree of Life* (2011) of Terrence Malick "and then I'll drop to the ground, dead, for a year"⁷⁹. About losing such a star and gifted artist, Rob Reiner said: "It's really tragic when somebody who's as gifted and talented is cut down at their early part of their career because we always think about what more they could have offered"⁸⁰. And Gilliam said: "I think that we all thought that this was somebody, without a doubt, who was going to be the greatest actor of his generation"⁸¹. Heath lived his life to the maximum. Davies wrote: "The sense of loss many have experienced since [Heath's] death is not just for what has gone, but for what would have been (...) he left not just traces but great swathes of himself. He was extravagant, in gesture and in action, in intimacy and on screen. But his friend the New York tattooist Scott Campbell ... says it was Ledger's kindness and sincerity, above all else, that came through at close quarters"⁸².

Heath was never satisfied with anything he did professionally speaking, and he said that he would do everything different, but he didn't feel any regrets because he found regrets, as Spinoza, to be a big waste of time: "I don't regret anything, because regrets I find them to be a waste of time because there is nothing you can really do about anything in life you regret, so, I appreciate everything big and small that I've been a part of"⁸³. About success, something that many actors and artists wrongly seek, Heath said: "What is success? ... For me, what a success is ... the only time that I'm alive and living and expressing and feeling and relating is when I'm on set and that time between action and cut and so that's the only thing that's important: how this experience is and how this experience will affect my life ... And everything that

⁷⁸ Last Interview with Heath Ledger (Art Radio), December 3, 2007

⁷⁹ Last Interview with Heath Ledger (Art Radio), December 3, 2007

⁸⁰ Heath Ledger Death: CNN LARRY KING Part 2 of 2 (2008)

⁸¹ *Too Young to Die: Heath Ledger*

⁸² Davies, "Heath Ledger. 1979–2008"

⁸³ Heath Ledger Interview, *Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica della Biennale di Venezia*, Sept. 2007 (RTL TV Croatia)

happens after that is just irrelevant"⁸⁴. To be honest with your art and to grow with your art, as an artist and as a person, isn't that the real success?

Heath's art made him immortal and his tragic death made him forever young. The world lost a huge talented actor on January 22, 2008. We're left with his 16 movies, most of them really great and all of them with an incredibly sensitive and charismatic touch: the wonderful art of the unforgettable Heath Ledger.



Antonia Tejada Barros, Madrid, April 30, 2015



Two Hands, 10 things I hate about you, The Patriot, A Knight's Tale, The Four Feathers, Monster's Ball, The Sin Eater & Ned Kelly / Photo by Itay Strete Tejada, Madrid, 2015

⁸⁴ Last Interview with Heath Ledger (Art Radio), December 3, 2007



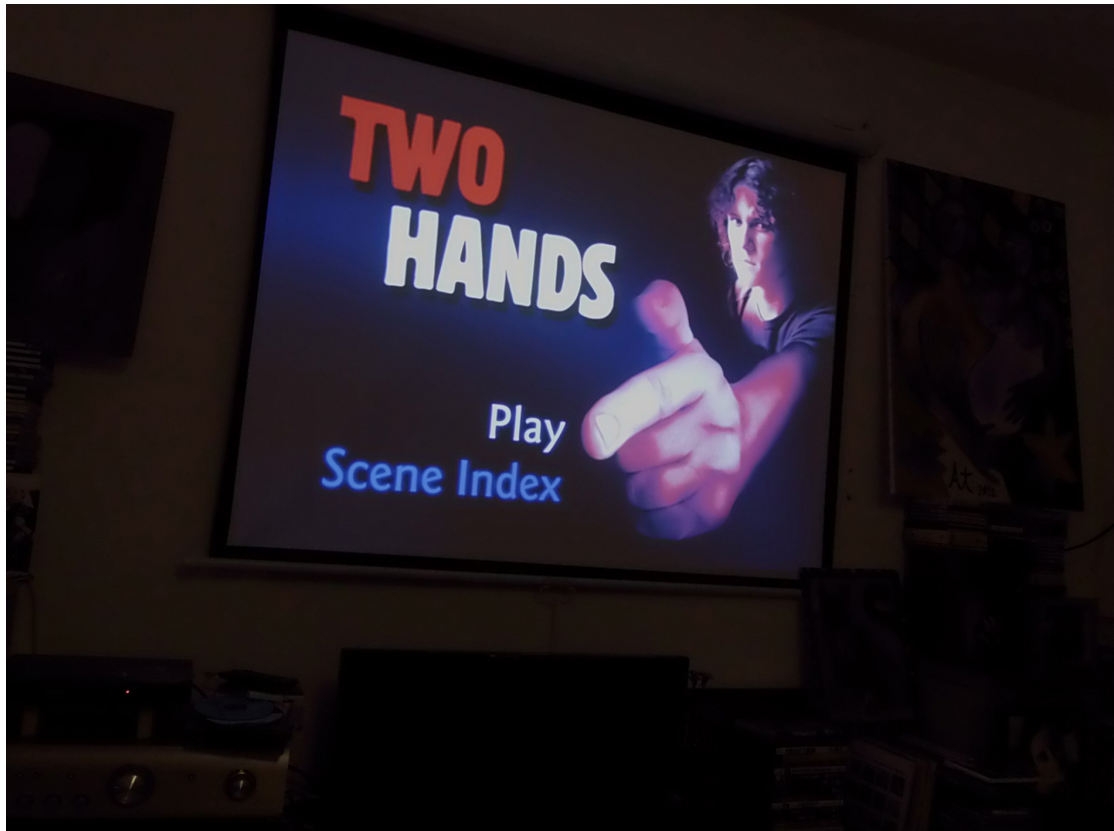
The Brothers Grimm, Lords of Dogtown, Brokeback Mountain, Casanova, Candy, I'm Not There, The Dark Knight & The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus / Photo by Itay Streett Tejada, Madrid, 2015



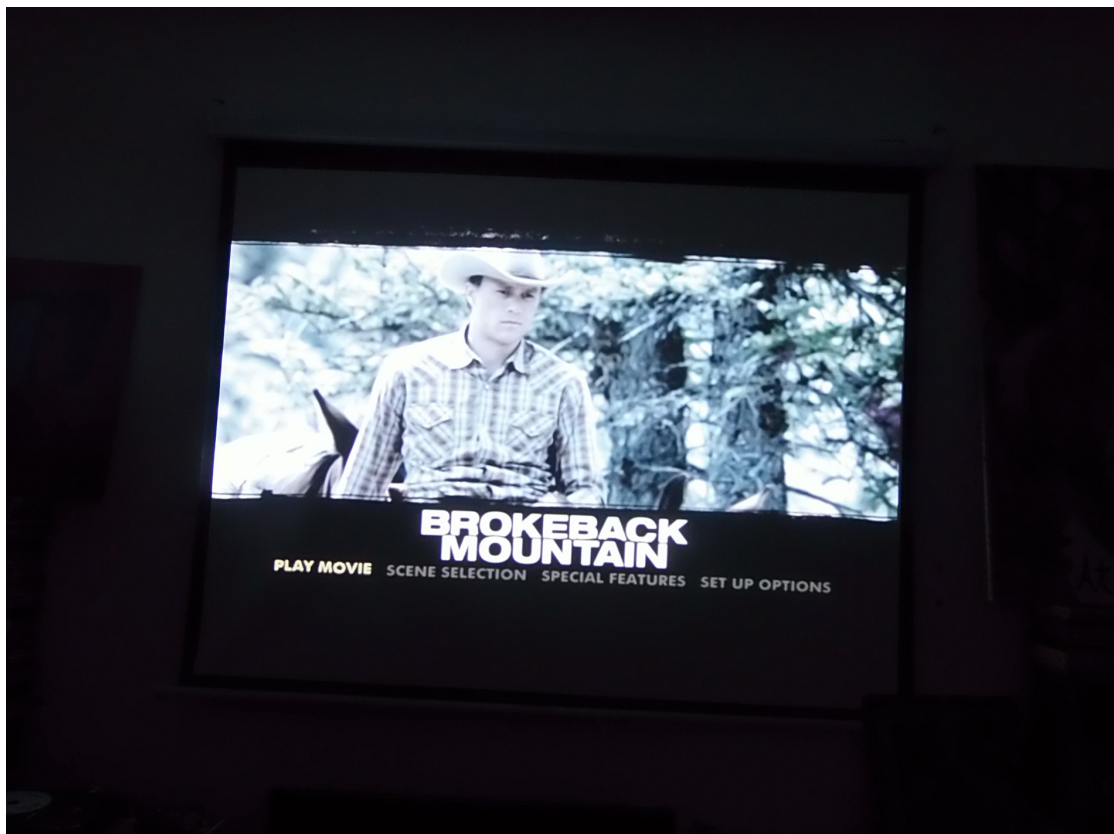
Heath's art / Photo by Itay Streett Tejada, Madrid, 2015



Reading about Heath / Photo by Yael Streett Tejada, Madrid, 2015



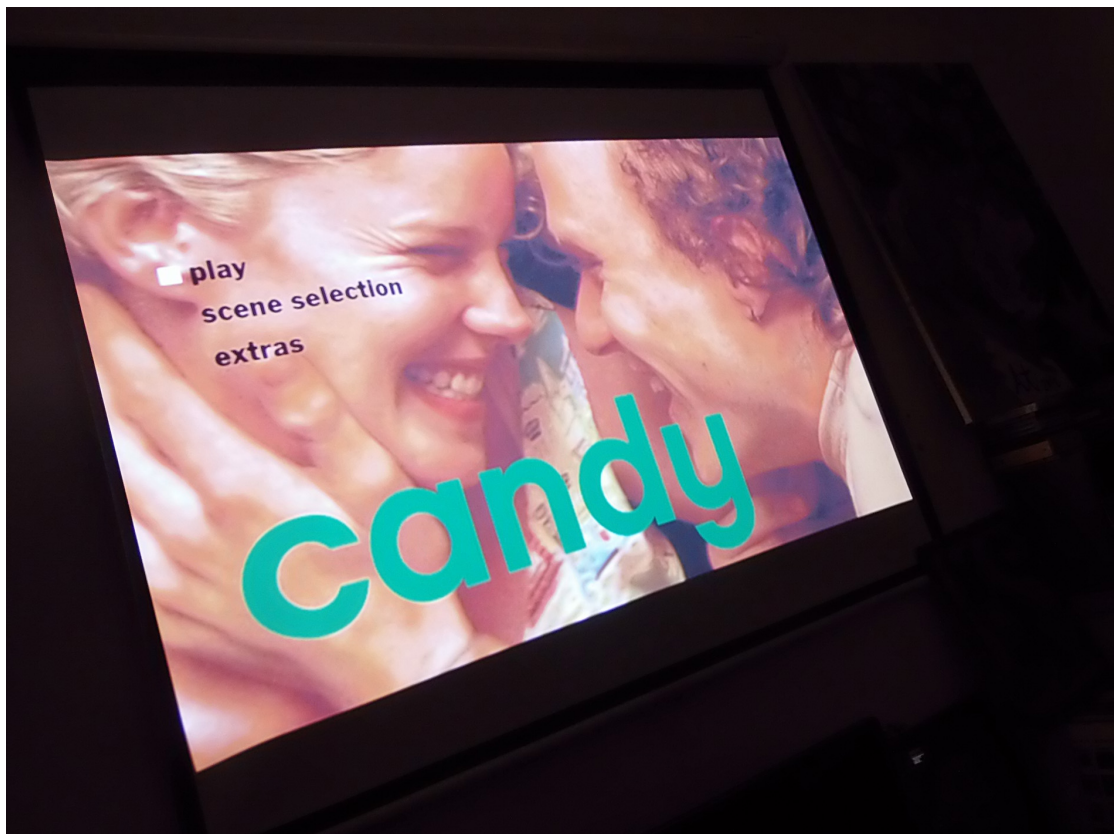
Watching Two Hands with our cinema projector / Antonia Tejada Barros, Madrid, 2015



Watching Brokeback Mountain with our cinema projector / Antonia Tejada Barros, Madrid, 2015



Watching Casanova with our cinema projector / Antonia Tejada Barros, Madrid, 2015



Watching Candy with our cinema projector / Antonia Tejada Barros, Madrid, 2015



Enjoying the Joker with our cinema projector / Antonia Tejada Barros, Madrid, 2015

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[Part 1 of 6](#)

[Part 2 of 6](#)

[Part 3 of 6](#)

[Part 4 of 6](#)

[Part 5 of 6](#)

[Part 6 of 6](#)

[Heath Ledger at the AFI Awards 2006](#)

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[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)

[Part 3](#)

TV Series–Documentary *Too Young To Die: Heath Ledger* (English version), Dag Freyer, S1 Ep.3, July 28, 2012

HEATH'S MUSIC VIDEOS

["Cause An Effect", N'fa Jones \(Directed by Heath Ledger\)](#)

["Seduction is Evil \(She's Hot\)", N'fa Jones \(Directed by Heath Ledger\)](#)

["Morning Yearning", Ben Harper \(Directed by Heath Ledger\)](#)

["Black Eyed Dog", Nick Drake \(Directed by Heath Ledger\)](#)

["King Rat", Modest Mouse \(Directed by Heath Ledger\)](#)

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HCH 4 / May 2015

Lemon Meringue Pie, by Eyal Streett

Welcome back! It's time for making some desert. Here's my recipe for lemon meringue pie. Hope you like it. Keep on cooking!

Ingredients

Crust

- 175 g cold unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 cups flour (white)
- 2 Tbsp. sugar (white or brown)
- 3 - 4 Tbsp. cold water
- 1 pinch of salt
- (1 cup beans or baking weights)

Filling + meringue

- 1/2 cup of fresh lemon juice
- Zest of half a lemon
- 400 g condensed milk
- 2 eggs separated and kept at room temperature.
- 1/3 cup white sugar

Instructions

First of all we'll make the dough for the crust. This recipe makes enough dough for 2 pies. You can keep one of them in the refrigerator for future use. Very useful to have around the house. So here's the recipe:

1. Mix the flour, sugar and salt.
2. Cut the butter into cubes.



The butter cut into cubes / Photo by Eyal Streett

3. Mix the butter into the flour (either with your hands or with a food processor). The flour will turn into crumbs.
4. Gradually add the water: start with one spoon. Mix the dough around. Then another spoon, etc. You want your dough to easily form into a ball.
5. Cut the dough in 2, form balls, wrap with plastic-wrap and keep in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours.
6. 2 hours later: take out your dough. Roll it out on a floured work surface. Carefully take the dough and put it in your pie pan. Set the dough on the whole surface (including walls) of the pan. Cut off any excessive dough.
7. Wrap the pan in plastic wrap and put it back in the refrigerator for half an hour.

Meanwhile we'll make the filling (we'll be using only the egg yolks for the filling):

8. Mix together the condensed milk and the yolks (2 yolks).
9. Gradually add the lemon juice: add some in, mix, add some more in, keep on mixing and so on.
10. Add the lemon zest and mix well. The filling is now ready.

Back to the crust:

11. Pre-heat your oven to 220° C.
12. Take out your pie pan and take off the plastic wrap. Using a fork, pinch the dough (surface and walls).



Pinch the dough with a fork / Photo by Eyal Streett

13. Cover the dough with a sheet of baking paper. Take a piece of aluminium foil that's double the size of the surface of the pie pan. Fold it in half and put it over the dough. Pour the beans over the aluminium foil.



I was out of beans, so I used soybeans / Photo by Eyal Streett

14. Lower the heat on your oven to 200° C and place the pie pan (with the beans) into a low part of the oven.

15. Once the dough gets a darker color (carefully peak under the aluminium foil), around 10 - 12 minutes, take the pan out of the oven, carefully discard the aluminium foil and the beans and set it aside to cool down a bit. Turn down the oven to 140° C.

Now we'll make the meringue:

16. Get the 2 egg whites (at room temperature) and put them in a mixing bowl.

17. Using a hand mixer, start mixing the egg whites on medium speed. Go on for a few minutes and slowly let the substance grow.

18. Once your mix starts forming soft points it's time to add the sugar. Gradually add the sugar, one spoon at a time, while mixing on high speed. Do not add all of the sugar at once.

19. By now your meringue should already be forming hard points. To be sure your meringue is ready it should pass 2 tests:

a) When you put it in between your fingers you can't feel any sugar grains.

b) Scoop some out with a spoon. Turn the spoon around. The meringue should stay on your spoon, denying gravity.

If your meringue didn't pass both of these tests then it's still not ready and you should continue mixing until it passes these tests. Patience. You'll definitely get there.

20. Take the pie pan (with the crust inside, of course), fill it with the lemon filling and top it all with the meringue. You should seal the top of the pie with the meringue.



Filling the pie with the yummy lemon filling / Photo by Eyal Streett



Adding this wonderful meringue on top / Photo by Eyal Streett

21. Put the pie back in the oven on a higher rack (the oven should be set on 140° as we did in step 15).

22. This should usually take around 8 minutes, but it depends on the oven: Let the pie bake. Keep an eye on the meringue. Once it starts browning the pie is ready. You can decide if you want your meringue baked a bit longer or not, but don't take it out of the oven until the first hints of brown appear on the tips of the meringue.



Here's the pie right out of the oven / Photo by Eyal Streett

23. Let the pie cool down for about an hour. As tempting as it might be to dig in, I recommend you keep it in the refrigerator for at least 6 hours before you sit down and have a piece of pie.



A yummy piece of lemon meringue pie / Photo by Eyal Streett
Different textures, all delicious. Forget about the calories!



Eyal Streett, Madrid–Toledo, April 2015



HCH 4 / Mayo 2015

Citas de Epicuro, Feuerbach, Frankl, Martin Luther King, Ortega, Sartre, Savater y Stravinsky

EPICURO: "... el más espantoso de los males, la muerte, nada es para nosotros, puesto que mientras nosotros somos, la muerte no está presente, y, cuando la muerte se presenta, entonces no existimos. Conque ni afecta a los vivos ni a los muertos, porque para éstos no existe y los otros no existen ya", Epicuro, *Carta a Meneceo*, en *Vida de los filósofos ilustres* de Diógenes Laercio, Libro X, 125, p. 561

FEUERBACH: "*Die Toren wähnen, daß sie erst nach dem Tode und durch ihn in den Geist kämen, daß geistiges Leben erst nach dem Tode entstände*", GW, Band 1, p. 325 ["Los necios presumen ilusamente que sólo después de la muerte y por ella llegarán al espíritu; que la vida espiritual sólo puede producirse tras la muerte". Feuerbach, *Pensamientos sobre muerte e inmortalidad*, p. 192]

VIKTOR FRANKL: "Wir haben den Menschen kennengelernt wie vielleicht bisher noch keine Generation. Was also ist der Mensch? Er ist das Wesen, das immer entscheidet, was es ist. Er ist das Wesen, das die Gaskammern erfunden hat; aber zugleich ist er auch das Wesen, das in die Gaskammern gegangen ist aufrecht und ein Gebet auf den Lippen", *...trotzdem Ja zum Leben sagen*, pp. 130, 131 ["La Historia nos brindó la oportunidad de conocer al hombre quizá mejor que ninguna otra generación. ¿Quién es, en realidad, el hombre? Es el ser que siempre *decide* lo que es. Es el ser que inventó las cámaras de gas, pero también es el ser que entró en ellas con paso firme y musitando una oración", *El hombre en busca de sentido*, p. 110]

MARTIN LUTHER KING: "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood", *I Have a Dream*, Lincoln Memorial, Washington D. C., August 28, 1963

ORTEGA: "La nota más trivial, pero a la vez más importante de la vida humana, es que el hombre no tiene otro remedio que estar haciendo algo para sostenerse en la existencia", *Historia como sistema*, p. 13

SARTRE: "... il n'y a pas de nature humaine, puisqu'il n'y a pas de Dieu pour la concevoir", *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, p. 29

SAVATER: "Lo que me interesa no es si hay vida *después* de la muerte, sino que haya vida *antes*. Y que esa vida sea buena, no simple supervivencia o miedo constante a morir (...) Porque vivir no es una ciencia exacta, como las matemáticas, sino un *arte* como la música", *Ética para Amador*, p. 127

STRAVINSKY: "Le phénomène de la musique nous est donné à la seule fin d'instituer un ordre dans les choses ... un ordre entre l'homme et le temps", *Chroniques de ma vie*, pp. 63, 64



Epicuro, Feuerbach, Frankl, Martin Luther King, Ortega, Sartre, Savater y Stravinsky / Antonia Tejada Barros, Madrid, 2015



HCH 4 / Mayo 2015

Pensadores y artistas nacidos en mayo y junio

Satyajit Ray (2 de mayo de 1921 – 23 de abril de 1992)

Sigmund Freud (6 de mayo de 1856 – 23 de septiembre de 1939)

Orson Welles (6 de mayo de 1915 – 10 de octubre de 1985)

Johannes Brahms (7 de mayo de 1833 – 3 de abril de 1897)

José Ortega y Gasset (9 de mayo de 1883 – 18 octubre de 1955)

Erik Satie (17 de mayo de 1866 – 1 de julio de 1925)

Bertrand Russell (18 de mayo 1872 – 2 de febrero de 1970)

Bob Dylan (24 de mayo de 1941)

Miles Davis (26 de mayo 1926 – 28 de septiembre de 1991)



Genios nacidos en mayo / Foto de Yael Streett Tejeda, Madrid, 2015

Marilyn Monroe (1 junio de 1926 – 5 de agosto de 1962)
 Federico García Lorca (5 de junio de 1898 – 19 de agosto de 1936)
 Diego Velázquez (6 de junio de 1599 – 6 de agosto de 1660)
 Alexander Pushkin (6 de junio de 1799 – 10 de febrero de 1837)
 Egon Schiele (12 de junio de 1890 – 31 de octubre de 1918)
 Igor Stravinsky (17 de junio de 1882 – 6 de abril de 1971)
 Jean-Paul Sartre (21 de junio de 1905 – 15 de abril de 1980)
 Fernando Savater (21 de junio de 1947)
 Marin Marais (31 de mayo de 1656 – 15 de agosto de 1728)



Genios nacidos en junio / Foto de Itay Streett Tejeda, Madrid, 2015