

Reality and Imagination, the Portrait of Solitude, Suffering, Desperation and Exclusion, through the Existential Consciousness in the Man's Character

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Abstract

Federigo Tozzi is a Classical Modern Italian writer of the Italian Literature in the early XXth century. The novel analyzed, The Clocks, is written by him and the central character is Bernardo Lotti a man who lives alone in his existence surrounded by clocks that are hanged on the walls around the house. The existential melancholy, ineptitude and loss, painful conception of the character's life are the demonstration of the XXth century's crisis in Europe and Italy. The writer tries to be evident with the modern myth of the impossibility of life between consciousness and the reality. The objects in this novel are vitalized and life was given to them. The character is seen through the mechanism of glance and the metaphoric use of the reality, an objective description by the writer and subjective interpretation of the consciousness from Bernardo. In the horizontal plane we have a slow trend and in the vertical plane a fast style, concentrated, with ellipsis of verbs.

Keywords: solitude, suffering, desperation, existential, malaise.

Introduction

Federigo Tozzi an avantgarde Italian writer of the twentieth century is considered by the Italian criticism a master of narrative expressionism (Luperini, 2001, 184) in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Tozzi a provincial writer from Siena is a representative figure of the cultural crisis that swept Europe in the first years of the 20th century. Regarding the topics covered and artistic values, his art as a novelist can be compared, on the European level of the art, to the great European writers such as Kafka, Joyce and Pirandello. According to the Italian critic Baldacci (1993, 105) if all his work is considered a diamond, the novels by Tozzi are the point of this diamond, and in the edition of "Corriere della Sera" newspaper of 25th March 1994 where Baldacci expresses that Tozzi is a provincial Kafka. The avantgrade Italian literature till the war period refuses genres such as novels and in fact, the first 25 years of the 20th century in Italy are characterized by breaking the previous tradition of literary and an approach of new topics such as the discovery of the unconsciousness, the individual identity crisis and incompetence/ineptitude. In Italy during this period are verified two parallel phenomena; the breakthroughs from the narrative tradition of cultivating the novel and the roman, and the re-establishment of the new novel on new narrative structures.

Tozzi in his early literacy writing fragmented voices of writers such as Jahier, Slataper, Boine, associates of the *La Voce* magazine. These writers represent the front line that develops a more destructive action than regenerated the new era that leads to fragmentism, as well as the refusal of novel and the roman. While some other authors of 70s, Svevo and Pirandello propose some alternative solutions to rejuvenate the different genres of the novel, Tozzi, an exponent of the 80s, follows a path that starts from the fragmentism to reach his novel on the establishment of new narrative basis. Tozzi proposes a new way to narrative a novel and a roman. He requires the establishment of a new interrelation with the public, seeking new ways of reading and finding new social interlocutors (Luperini, 2001, 52), taking into consideration the preference of the public and interest in novels as the novels used to be published on the third pages of newspapers as consumer products.

With perseverance and consistence to the public tastes, Pirandello and Tozzi fought together against fragmentisms and traditional writers. They did not abandon traditional narrative genres novel, but targeted to renew these genres from the inside and the modern Italian novelistic begins precisely with these two writers. Pirandello and Tozzi within the novels *Novelle per un anno - Short Story for one year* and *Giovani- Young* managed to write indisputable novelistic masterpieces of modern Italian.

Tozzi is a storyteller who connects the reality and the imagination (Benevento, 1996, 226) the autobiography, and narrative/short story, the spiritual life in function of representing "people" and "things" reaching to the novels such as *Gli Orologi - The Clocks* and *Campagna romana - Roman country*, which are some of the peaks in his art.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze and interpret the novel titled *The Clocks* which was originally published on, October 25, 1919 in *Novella* and later was involved in *Opere*, published by Mondadori in 1987.

The character's existential shock, melancholy and painful conception of life: the main character of the novel Bernardo Lotti, is described as a Nobel man in behavior and lonely, who appears as a pathetic and dignified emblem of a provincial bourgeoisie. He has been through some family disasters such as his wife's and children's death, and has almost reached the end of the parabola of his life. He lives alone, and the only ones that keep him company are the clocks, these fragile measurements of the time and a madman who is the other character in the novel and described only physically is named *limonaio* - the lemon man. The clocks in the house and the public clocks in the city with their ticking are the objects with which he shares the space and the moments of the day. He follows the same ritual every day, with the emergence of a walk in the garden house, lunch at the restaurant and returning home charging/clock working the clocks and gazing the clocks. A sufficient rent guarantees him a dignified, calm and without problems life. It is a facade balance which essentially conceals/hides a shocking existential concern of main character, Bernardo Lotti. In a sad background looms a double identity; between what appears in the surface and what is inside is the invisible secret of awareness. Bernardo's loneliness is reflected by his ratio of the objects, the clocks, with which, more than a property ratio, is connected by the simple fact of sharing with these objects, the same space. Bernardo kept in his house seven clocks, one clock for each room; only in the hall there were four. The desire to communicate with someone pushes Bernardo for attributing human characteristics to his own clocks, *un tic-tac come un respiro - a tic - tac like a breath; la voce qualche parola - the voice a few words*. But clocks, the projection of losing the character, take threatening aspects; almost *tagliare e uccidere - cut and kill* with its black hands of the clock. It is Bernardo's view that distorts reality in a frightening nightmare, thanks to the game of similes used masterfully by Tozzi such as; *si pareva che, parevano; come se; come*.

Dismantling the human condition reflected in a dry style, verbal ellipses, which are used in the function of providing rapid nervousness. According to Baldacci criticisms (1973, LII), Tozzi's characters *are not, do not feel and they sometimes appear*, such as they come back as anti-characters without strong individual features, symbolic emblems of universal human characters. Tozzi characters resemble Svevo and Pirandello's characters. Bernardo, the main character belongs to that category of human beings, but as drawn from life itself, they are unable to afford it, they alienated ending "*at the bottom of a well*" (Ulivi, 1969, 482) unable to emerge from the circle of the loneliness. The existential concern and what tortures Bernardo, is neither linked with the physiological mechanism of aging nor with the disappointment of already hit bourgeoisie. He dies with a family balance bankruptcy without heirs; he is unable to penetrate the mystery of existence and thus proves the identity crisis of modern man.

The observation mechanism: Bernardo's life is built with sequences, on one hand are described the gestures his behavior and on the other as opposed to those given in rituals which mechanically are repeated by the character. It has a casual friendship relation with a pale madman, which represents a human mirror of someone being set aside by society. Even the pale madman is incapacitated, but differently from Bernardo, he is young and has no economic opportunities. He spends two months a year in mental hospital. Two incompetent, ineptitude figures that fulfill their needs are set aside, are excluded, are sufferings, and are desperate and lonely. In contrast to madman, Bernardo has restricted his life in observation mechanism. In this observation mechanism, the eyes are the key element to guarantee the contact with the real, living ratio between the outside world and consciousness. Bernardo's eyes limit the existence of the lonely character and have contemplative and static function. Bernardo's staring eyes focus at the clocks. The clocks become alive, equipped up to a biological structure, with a breathing heart and words, mechanical metaphors of life suffering. As it has been documented the literary critic Paolo Getrevis (1983) - Tozzi regains the imagination of Poe turning the biggest clock in a killer figure, with clock hands as knife blades/ *lame di coltelli che avessero da tagliare e uccidere*- knife blades to cut and kill. Tozzi uses verbs *sembrare, parere, come se - seems, looks like, if*, to build artistically visible metaphors and to describe a nonsense reality, for example *pareva che avessero paura di quello, pareva che fosse sempre per sfasciarsi, le sue nere lancette parevano lame di coltelli* - it seemed that they were afraid of that, it looked like if it always was falling apart, its black hands looked like knife blades. The clocks are the only daily interlocutor of Bernardo's silence and appear as projections of non-adaptation, but, even as those humans who need to be seen and charged, feel submitters. Human existence is a mechanism that is subject to time and death is the end and, on the other hand, if the clocks unexpectedly lag the time, they cannot function. The unconscious output from the scene of Bernardo's biographical parable is given when suddenly it is

cut off in the middle of the life from death. *Ma la morte prese anche Bernardo prima di dargli tempo di avvedersene - But death took Bernardo without giving the chance to understand it.* Bernardo's death arrives unexpectedly and unmotivated, perhaps accelerated as it can be inutility understood in connection with the first part of the novel by the absence of love and solidarity with existence. Death is the only event with the real essential of Bernardo's existence and it is not accidentally recorded using present perfect tense, *prese* – *received*, compared to time described by using imperfect and filled with a repeated passage condition, and constant questions. *Qualche volta, questa solitudine gli dava da vero una disperazione melanconica, La tritezza più grande era quella di non avere né meno un figliolo. Morto lui, anche la famiglia Lotti spariva - Sometimes, this loneliness gave him a true despair of melancholy sadness. The biggest sadness was not having a son. Once he dies, the Lotti family disappears too.*

The reality described by Tozzi spins with a painful kind of conception of living/life, rocked by mystery, it is unable to penetrate the laws and acts to distort the objectivity of things according to the subjective filter of anxiety. The world is appeared to Tozzi as a mystery and must be presented as such in the literature. The vision of Tozzi is subjective and wrenching. Tozzi writes for the only reason because he doesn't know to explain the reality in contrast to the Naturalist who can give interpretations and explanations (G. Debenedetti, 1971, 255).

It can be said that we are dealing with a vision of expressionism and even hyperrealism in a personal fusion of fiction, visionaries and documentation. Tozzi, a provincial from Siena, is worth, according to the opinion that critic Debenedetti, to represent literature as the original exponent of the century XX, as Kafka did for Prague, Svevo for Trieste or Pirandello for Sicily, and reaches through the opening of a local geographical and anthropological microcosms to the macrocosms of the universal human condition. In his novel, Tozzi marks human crisis facing the impossibility of a naturalist mirroring of world. Tozzi through his art has found the existential shock as the man portrayed in the figure of Bernardo and giving the existential consciousness, the psychology that subdues life and things.

The breaking and the metaphorical use of the reality: in constructing the structure of the novel Tozzi does not respect the previous realistic and documentary tradition, but the physiognomy of the story and the novel, a merger between basic narrative structures, Verga model and incorporating an elliptical descriptive method without verbs and with incorporated parts, this was, firstly, as a consequence of the fragmentism given broader vocian expression (Luperini, 1995, 226). He constructed the analyzed short story in this article as human portrait of loneliness, melancholy and sadness and records his daily actions the seized with gestures, behavior and actions. And this is exactly the first innovation from Tozzi as in this way he allows the use of metaphorical reality leading us to a secret, conceptual and sentimental understanding. *Qualche volta ... per loro – Sometimes ... for them:* Tozzi as a narrator abandons right here the documentary cut and describes the inner life of Bernardo. His vision turns into a discovery and witnesses the cause of an existential concussions, facing a threatening reality that increasingly dominates man *quelli erano i padroni – they were the masters - the clocks* the only solution seems not visual, an implied hint of the desire for death and cancellation.

In the novel, it is neatly conducted with the continuous conjecture between objective description of the character and subjective interpretation. In the first plane of writing, the "horizontal" one which is linked to space-time resolution of Bernardo's life, Tozzi builds the structure of the novel, with a slow and dry gait in the first sequences. In other sequences he uses a fast and focused style, where predominates the ellipsis use of the verb to a greater effect of the realization of synthesis, *dopo mangiato- after have eaten* etc. While in terms of syntax, Tozzi, to divide the effects of the causes, frequently uses comma point, in order to isolate the end of the sentence and to give more importance. In the second plane, the "vertical", those of the meaning, Tozzi uses abstract phrases with multiple meaning; fills the empty spaces of action with lyrical phrases. Also it is noted the lack of causative conjunctives, the syntax regime is paratactic, everything placed in the same plane disappears and to be mentioned is the narrative hierarchy. All is submitted in subjective and troubling optics of the character and can say that we are dealing with an addicted subjectivism (Baldacci, 1993, 11). The scene in the novel follows the look from top to bottom. Tozzi uses indirect free speech; slows down the introduction the story by using of question and exclamation marks. Frequent use of these signs of speech is done in the function of announcing tension and passionate concerns (Tellini, 1972, 53). It is this moment of painful authenticity of the character who opposes to the truth of yarrow/internal stasis toward the external state to its daily movement that is only obvious. Tozzi realizes his deconstruction by destabilizing the logic of the story attire to enable the transmission of values between the possible and existential.

Bernardo's zero degrees existence is hidden in the charging and obsession of the clocks, with the appearance of someone being trembled and excluded from life. Even in physical contact with the outer world during the morning stroll in the garden of the city of Siena, which opens new perspectives for the character on the creation of new relationships, Bernardo sees

himself desperate, humble and excluded, confirming in this way his suffering loneliness and solitude. Bernardo gets affected by the supremacy of conscience: the area of his own shadow; penetrated by the darkness of the unconsciousness - according to Debenedetti – which allows us to interpret human behavior. And thanks to the excavation of the internal state in Tozzi's characters, it is avoided the flavor of fragmentism with vocian inspiration. And with an innovative experiment, Tozzi submits to the reader "more questions than answers", insists for "a narrative" as consumption of a "profane public and for more, hasty" (Tellini, 1972, 21, 35). The reader find himself in front of the necessity to meet in invisible use of elements of the story and the writer's reticence, actively cooperating in reading the text, realizing "an organic request and encouragement in the hermeneutic act of freedom of interpretation (Luperini, 1995, 226)".

In conclusion, it can be said that the novel analysis of Tozzi showed the particular compromises through which the unconscious logic becomes the syntax of the narrative which proves in the Italian art the closeness of the Tozzi's novels with those of Jyoce, Kafka and Pirandello, the Italian founder of modern narrative.

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