BARBARA WIDENOR MAGGS
Urbana

RELJKOVIĆ'S "SATYR" AND THE GEORGIC TRADITION: DIDACTIC POETRY IN 18TH-CENTURY CROATIA*

1

Toward the end of his satiric-didactic poem, *Satir iliti divji čovik* (*The Satyr, or the Wild Man*) (1762, revised ed. 1779), a work which was to become one of the best loved and most important Croatian writings of the 18th century, Matija Antun Reljković, citing Virgil, presents a long paraphrase of a passage from the *Georgics*. Only a very few of the many critical studies devoted to *The Satyr* take note of this, and the brief discussions of Reljković's debt to the Latin poet that I have seen refer only to the section obviously inspired by Virgil's lines.[1] But in fact the entire Croatian poem can be read as a kind of Georgic, conforming thematically not only to the Virgilian model, but also to the contemporary 18th-century version of the genre, a form which was extremely popular in Western Europe, especially in England and France. The relationship of *The Satyr* to the 18th-century Georgic tradition, a subject to the best of my knowledge, completely unexplored by Reljković specialists,[2] reveals much about the reception and working out of current Western European ideas in an

* Research on this topic was aided by an American Council of Learned Societies grant, which is gratefully acknowledged.

[1] References to Virgil occur in the following articles: T. Matić, *Slavonski selo u djelima hrvatskih pisaca potkraj osamnaestoga vjeka*, [in:] *Iz hrvatske književne baštine*, Zagreb—Slavonska Požega 1970, p. 305; I. Scherzer, *Bilješke o Reljkovićevu "Satiru"*, "Nastavni Vjesnik," 1894, no 2, p. 149; I. Milčetić, *Reljković u hrvatskoj književnosti*, "Vienac," 1881, no 13, p. 492; K. Georgijević, *Matija Antun Reljković*, "Zbornik Matice Srpske za Književnost i Jezik," 1967, no 15, p. 215. But see also the many other articles cited in *Bibliografija rasprava, članaka i književnih radova*, vol. I/2, Zagreb 1957, p. 684.

[2] J. Škavić (*Književnost u Slavoniji u XVIII. stoljeću. U povudu 175-godišnjice "Satira"*, "Republika," 1954, no 10, p. 251) notes in passing the similarity in the approach to nature on the part of Reljković and the English poet, James Thomson, but the Georgic as such is not mentioned.

area quite remote both geographically and spiritually from the source of these concepts.

Matija Antun Reljković (1732–1798), an army officer by profession, was born in Slavonia, the north-eastern part of present day Croatia. This area, most of which had been under Turkish domination for a century and a half before it became almost in its entirety a part of the Austrian Empire in 1699, was severely impoverished culturally and economically. Reljković's education began in a monastery school there, and continued in Hungary. Later his participation in the Seven Years War between Austria and Germany, an experience that provided him the opportunity to observe other countries, served, as Reljković himself explains, as a school in itself.[3] Taken prisoner in Germany he was quartered in the home of an educated Prussian where he had access to numerous Western European books. Returning to Slavonia at the end of the war Reljković produced a series of translations and original works designed to acquaint his own people with the literature and ideas of Western Europe. In addition to *The Satyr* Reljković's publications included the *Slavonske libarice* (1761, *Slavonian Primer*), an instructional book of hymns and prayers, translated in part from the French; *Nova slavonska i nimačka gramatika* (1767, *New Slavonian and German Grammar*); *Prava i pomljivo ispisana ovčarnica* (1776, *The Proper Sheepfold, Carefully Described*), a manual translated from the German on sheep-raising; *Postanak naravne pravice* (1794, *The Origin of Natural Law*), a translation of an adaptation of Hugo Grotius' *De jure belli et pacis* of 1625; and an original collection of moral anecdotes entitled *Nek je svašta* (1795, *Potpourri*). *Ezopove fabule* (*Aesop's Fables*), selections from the work of Aesop and Phaedrus were published posthumously in 1804,[4] and *Pilpajeve fabule* (*Pilpay's Fables*) and *Nauk političan i moralski od Pilpaj-bramine* (*The Political and Moral Science of the Brahman Pilpay*) appeared in 1875.

The Satyr, Reljković's most significant work, was published in 1762 in an edition of 1500 copies that sold out within two years. A second revised and enlarged version which ran to 3498 lines came out in 1779. The importance of *The Satyr* lay not in its poetic merit—few passages can lay claim to that, nor in the originality of Reljković's thought, but in the fact that the work brought new Western European ideas into

---

[3] M. A. Reljković, *Satir iliti divji čovik*, [in:] *Djela Matije Antuna Reljkovića*, ed. T. Matić, Vol. XXIII, Zagreb 1916, "Introduction" (1779 edition), p. 61, Stari Pisci Hrvatski. Subsequent references in the text of this paper are to the beginning lines of relevant passages in the Matić edition. Unless 1762 is indicated, the citation is to the 1779 version of the poem.

[4] Matić states that the edition of 1804, one that earlier scholars cited but which he was not able to locate, was probably not complete, and the following edition, that of 1875, also had omissions. See T. Matić, *Izdanja Reljkovićevih djela*, [in:] *Djela Matije Antuna Reljkovića*, p. XXV.

Slavonian life, and that it actually introduced secularism into Slavonian literature. Prior to *The Satyr* almost all writing in the area had been the product of the Roman Catholic clergy. The tremendous popularity of Reljković's poem, which succeeded in spite of its poetic failings because of its novelty and lively spirit, understandably caused great concern among those who felt the Church should maintain its monopoly on letters and who feared any break with tradition. Largely through the efforts of these conservative forces a literary polemic developed around the work, with other intellectual leaders, including some progressive clergy, taking Reljković's part.

Reljković blended the new and suspect ideas skilfully and rather inobtrusively into his discussions of two somewhat commonplace and disparate topics-farming and morality. As one scholar has put it, the poet wanted his countrymen to know in what way their husbandry was poor and their habits and folk customs harmful.[5] This twofold division of the subject matter of the poem corresponds neatly, in fact, to the two distinct though inseparable formal approaches that are combined in the work. On the one hand Reljković obviously thought of the poem as a satire. No doubt influenced by a 17th-century German satire by Johann Moscherosch, and a 16th-century Polish satyr poem by Jan Kochanowski, as well as by the tradition developed by Renaissance critics of associating satyrs with satire, Reljković created a unique species of enlightened 18th-century satyr, who explains to a Slavonian peasant throughout the work how his way of life could be improved.[6] Much of the poem is indeed satiric in nature, the shaggy wood god dealing with such moral problems as those presented by the overimbiber, lazy farm workers, niggardly wives and dishonest merchants. Local customs such as the *kolo*, the traditional folk dance, and various types of social gatherings which Reljković felt were outmoded and immoral because they encouraged idleness and led to amorous intrigues, also receive their share of satirical reproach.

Reljković, however, by no means confined himself to the satirical method of pointing out inadequacies. Direct, friendly precepts, especially in regard to farming, given by the satyr to the peasant, constitute a sizeable portion of the work. It is this didactic aspect of the poem, with its treatment not only of agriculture but many other topics, that would

[5] Milčetić, *op. cit.*, p. 492, note 1.

[6] J. Kochanowski, *Satyr, albo Dziki mąż*, Kraków c. 1564, reproduction, 1930; J. M. Moscherosch, *Les Visions de don Francesco de Qvevedo Villegas; oder, Wunderbahre satÿrische Gesichte, verteutscht durch Philander von Sittewalt, tc.*, Strasburg 1640. On satyrs and satire see R. C. Elliott, *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art*, Princeton 1960, pp. 102–104, and R. Macdonald Alden, *The Rise of Formal Satire in England*, Philadelphia 1899, pp. 38–39. For a discussion of the satyr figure and the satirical side of Reljković's poem see B. Maggs, *Reljković, Satyrs, and the Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Croatia*, "Slavic and East European Journal," 1976, no 20, pp. 437–450.

seem to justify the perhaps surprising classification of the poem as a Georgic.

The ancient classical conventions that lay behind each of the modes of the work—the Greek satyr myths and satyr plays, and the Latin Georgic poem—indicate Reljković's typical 18th-century taste. Fortunately each of these literary traditions, which only the few highly educated Slavonian readers of Reljković's day would have recognized and appreciated, also contain elements that must have appealed to the majority of the reading public. The close tie between the satyr and other folklore and mythological figures, especially the "Wild Man," known throughout the Balkan area, undoubtedly held great attraction for the Croatian peasant, whose enjoyment of folklore was as great as the tradition was rich. At the same time, the Georgic aspect of the poem with its attention to the lore of farming encompassed a second realm familiar to the unsophisticated peasant reader, who may never have heard of Virgil. The careful balance that Reljković maintained between his sophisticated literary sources and subject matter that was of compelling interest to the audience he wanted to reach is one of the remarkable features of the poem.

2

Virgil's *Georgics*, written between 37—30 B. C., a highly poetic treatment of the pleasures of rural life and of the prosaic details of agricultural work, embraced the overall theme of man's ability to use the forces of nature to his own advantage. The poem had at its core the immediate economic and political goals of restoring order in the agricultural situation which had been disrupted by recent Roman wars, and of presenting the stability and peacefulness of farming and of rural life as a part of the new spirit of the commencing Augustan era.[7]

Virgil's work was to inspire many poems celebrating the joys of country life during the Renaissance,[8] but it was England of the 17th and 18th century that found the Georgic a genre particularly well suited to its own needs and tastes. The desire of the new "Augustan era" for peace and political stability in the period following the execution of Charles I, the Restoration, and the Revolution of 1688 paralleled that of Virgil's Rome. British emphasis on practical knowledge and skills, an important aspect of the 18th-century Enlightenment, coincided with the Virgilian stress on man's responsibility and power to order his world.[9] And finally,

[7] J. Chalker, *The English Georgic: a Study in the Development of a Form*, Baltimore 1969, p. 8.

[8] L. P. Wilkinson, *The Georgics of Virgil: a Critical Survey*, Cambridge 1969, pp. 290—305.

[9] Chalker, *op. cit.*, pp. 10—15.

the growing 18th-century attraction to nature, and to a new interest in accurately and scientifically describing the environment, found the Virgilian concentration on the details of country life very much to its liking.

The new Georgic poetry was in character didactic and "descriptive," the term "descriptive poetry" coming to stand for verse that presented a wealth of nature detail, and also attempted to show the emotions that a particular scene inspired in the viewer. The themes varied from the general pleasures of rural life to more detailed treatment of country pursuits such as fishing or fowling, and even unrelated subjects such as education or navigation.[10] The possibility for digressions, a tradition firmly established by the Virgilian model, gave the form a flexibility which provided the poet with a great range of possibilities in regard to subject matter. The "city Georgic," exemplified by John Gay's *Trivia* (1715), which treats London in the Virgilian manner, and also by Swift's *Description of a City Shower* (1710), a burlesque of the form, illustrates a further adaptation of the genre.

The model for 18th-century English Georgic poetry, was to be James Thomson's immensely popular *The Seasons* (1730).[11] Saint-Lambert's *Les Saisons* (1769) which became the French prototype for the genre was only one of the dozens of poems inspired throughout Europe by Thomson's work.[12] Without departing from the central Virgilian theme of the superiority of rural living and man's moral responsibility to secure his own future, which made the work so well suited to contemporary tastes, Thomson included in *The Seasons* a whole range of other subjects that were in the forefront of intellectual life in his day. Among these were new humanitarian concerns, a deistic religious orientation, a belief in the progress of man, and also material pertaining to science, natural science, travel, and the development of trade.[13] In Thomson's hands the English Georgic became in fact a mirror of the interests of the Enlightenment period.

Translations of *The Seasons* soon began to appear, a German version in 1745, and the first complete French translation in 1759.[14] To the best of my knowledge there was no Serbo-Croatian version. Whether Reljković knew of Thomson's poem from the original, or from the German or

[10] D. L. Durling, *The Georgic Tradition in English Poetry* (1935), Port Washington, N.Y., 1964, pp. 108–121.

[11] J. Thomson, *The Seasons and the Castle of Indolence*, ed. J. Sambrook, Oxford 1972. Subsequent references will be to this edition.

[12] J. F. de Saint-Lambert, *Les Saisons. Poëme*, Amsterdam 1771. References are to this edition.

[13] See Durling on the appeal of the Georgic, *op. cit.*, pp. 56–57.

[14] *Herrn B. H. Brockes... aus dem Englischen übersetzte Jahres-Zeiten des Herrn Thomson. Zum Anhange des Irdischen Vergnügens in Gott*, Hamburg 1745; M. J. Bontems de Chatillon, *Les Saisons, poème traduit de l'anglais de Thomson*, Paris 1759.

French translations when he began writing *The Satyr* in 1761, has not, as far as I know, been ascertained. As Saint-Lambert's *Les Saisons* appeared only in 1769, Reljković could not have been influenced by the French Georgic when writing the first variant of his poem. It is quite possible that the Slavonian poet was in fact not familiar with any contemporary Georgic poetry, and that *The Satyr's* Georgic features derived solely from the Virgilian prototype. There is no doubt, however, that Reljković was very much in touch with the Western European ideological currents represented in this type of poetry, as an analysis of his work will show.

3

A comparison of Reljković's themes with those of the Virgilian and the later Georgic sheds some light on *The Satyr's* relationship to the genre. Reljković's approach to the subject of agriculture, the primary concern of the Georgic, provides an especially clear illustration of how a particular motif, of interest to the ancient world, as well as to Western Europe of the 18th century, could also be relevant for underdeveloped Slavonia. The concentration on rural life in *The Satyr* was not an expression of the "return to Nature" sentiment, as it was in England, but represented, more as it had in Virgil's *Georgics*, a serious plea for further development of agriculture. At the time Reljković was writing the poem the Austrian government was implementing a large scale economic transformation in the part of Slavonia along the border of the Ottoman Empire known as the "Military Frontier." Here, for various reasons, agriculture was to replace the traditional occupation of livestock raising. Persuading the peasants of the necessity of this change was one of Reljković's aims.[15]

Reljković dealt with the farming theme on several levels. One approach consisted of hard facts presented by the satyr to the Slavonian peasant: local methods were backward when compared, for instance, to those of Silesia and Saxony (1762, l. 1707; Virgil, too, often referred to the agriculture and produce of other lands);[16] the earth in Slavonia was harder to plow because the fields were too frequently left fallow (1762, l. 1801) too many oxes and men were needed to manage the plow (2905); the use of fertilizer would increase harvests (1762, l. 1799); pig raising was not economical (1981); stalls should be provided for the cows in winter (2021). Such was the advice for the husbandman.

This treatment of agricultural lore is reminiscent of Virgil's detailed descriptions of farming procedures, although Reljković's material (like

[15] R. Bićanić (*Matija Antun Reljković kao ekonomist*, [in:] *Počeci kapitalizma u hrvatskoj ekonomici i politici*, Zagreb 1952, pp. 25–31) presents a very valuable analysis of the economic background and motivation of Reljković's poem.

[16] *The Georgics of Virgil*, transl. C. Day Lewis, New York 1947, Book I, l. 56, Book II, l. 114. Subsequent citations in the text will be to this translation.

Thomson's) is less extensive than that of the Latin poet. But Reljković's particular concern with ways of improving traditional farming methods—he even advises the peasant to educate his children so that they can read the latest foreign books concerning agriculture (1762, l. 1847)—conforms to contemporary Western European Enlightenment views. In the model French Georgic, *Les Saisons*, Saint-Lambert was to provide a lengthy note on the growing significance of agriculture as a science, citing the comment in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) that the man who could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass grow where only one had grown before provided a more valuable service to his country than all the politicians combined.[17] Voltaire had repeated this idea in a letter of 1767.[18] Reljković's analytical verses on the Slavonian agricultural situation, like the Georgics of the Western European poets, incidentally, reflect another general 18th-century concern, the desire to make science—be it Newton's laws of physics, Harvey's circulation of the blood, or in this case the science of agriculture—poetical.

The satyr's practical recommendations for the farmer constitute the preliminary level of the development of the agricultural motif. Beneath this lies the larger, more significant question of progress, more exactly progress through the application of rationalistic innovations to various aspects of rural life. Reljković proposed not only changes in farming methods, but the reform of the social structure and social customs as well. He advocated, for instance, prohibition of the practise of dividing up the *zadruga*, or extended family farm, into ever smaller and more inefficient portions (2707), he suggested the election of a *starosta* or farm manager on the basis of merit and ability (2899), and called for more schools in the rural areas (633). His opposition to superstitious beliefs, such as the supposed magic known as *čaranje*, further illustrates his insistence on rationalism (1543).

The typical 18th-century belief in the supremacy of reason which inspires Reljković's poem also permeated Thomson's *The Seasons*. But *The Satyr's* direct demands for rational social change compare even more closely with those of Saint-Lambert, who, for example, advocated the abolition of the corvée or forced labor system ("L'Eté," p. 72—73, and Note 72, p. 99). Such rationalistic approaches to social life and organization, not novel in Western Europe, were considered quite radical in Slavonia, and Reljković encountered fierce opposition from his countrymen, particularly for his desire to break with certain age old Slavic cus-

---

[17] Saint-Lambert, *op. cit.*, p. 141, note 122; J. Swift, *Gulliver's Travels and Other Writings*, ed. L. A. Landa, Boston 1960, p. 109.

[18] Voltaire, *Correspondence and Related Documents*, [in:] *The Complete Works of Voltaire*, ed. Th. Besterman, Vol. XXXII, Oxfordshire 1974, Letter D 14206, June 1, 1767, p. 134.

toms. The literary polemic which *The Satyr* engendered is an indication of how outrageous Reljković's proposals appeared to other Slavonians.

Reljković appealed not only for a more rational organization of society, but also for new humanitarian attitudes—better treatment, for instance, of women, who well deserved the education they were just now beginning to receive (2247), who should be allowed to marry according to their own wishes (1401), and who should be treated fairly, not as slaves, by their husbands (1803). Reljković's attitude to the peasant as an individual represented in itself a new humanitarian outlook, as *The Satyr* was to be the first work in Croatian literature that treated the peasant positively rather than humorously.[19] Here too *The Satyr* shows its kinship to the 18th-century West European Georgic. Thomson's sympathy for the farmer who perishes in a blizzard ("Winter", l. 276), and Saint-Lambert's pity for the peasant woman whose baby dies in the fields while she is working ("L'Eté," p. 73—74), are among the many examples of the prevalent contemporary concern for humble and unfortunate people that emerges in these poems.

In the second edition of *The Satyr* Reljković couples his call for rationalistic progress in rural society with enthusiastic praise of the recent development of Slavonian towns and also of the increase in industry and crafts, such as silk spinning (2275, 3253). The Slavonian peasant's proud recital to the satyr of the improvements that have been made since their first conversation sixteen years earlier reflects a typical aspect of Enlightenment thought, and of Georgic poetry, the affirmation of man's ability continuously to perfect himself and his condition. But at the same time Reljković does not seem wholly committed to this "progress." A primitivistic nostalgia for the beauty and simplicity of a pastoral way of life, which seems to contradict his insistence on a break with the past, emerges in his paraphrase of the well-known section in Virgil's *Georgics* beginning "0 fortunatos agricolas," "O happy husbandman" (Book II, l. 458; Reljković, 3267). Virgil's lines, depicting the satisfactions of the country, show the life of the farmer to be far superior to that of the city dweller. Reljković puts it this way: among the many walks of life,

> najsrićnije jest stańe težačko
> i priprosto ono naselačko.
> (3269—3270)

The Croatian poet then adds the following portrait of the happy farmer finishing his day's work in the fields:

> Kad u večer veće rosa pade,
> i kada on svoje vrime znade,
> kada sunce za goru pobigne,
> i kad se dim nad selo podigne,

[19] Škavić *op. cit.* p. 251.

onda i on s posla ide kući
pak još piva sam putem idući.
Dočeka ga tude gazdarica,
a peńu se uza ńega dica.
(3343–3350)

Reljković concludes with an exhortation to the peasant to be content with his lot, and not to try to rise above his station.

It is not surprising that a modern Yugoslav economist, looking at Reljković's poem as a plea for Slavonian emergence from a feudal, patriarchal economic structure to a capitalistic system sees the idealized peasant scene as an inconsistency and anticlimax on the part of Reljković, the progressive reformer, and perhaps even as an expression of an unspoken fear of the capitalism that he was advocating.[20] In the light of economic analysis Reljković's primitivism seems indeed out of place. In terms of literary history, however, it adheres perfectly to the time-honored pattern of Georgic poetry. The conceptual difficulty presented by the "happy husbandman" on one hand and the emphasis on progress on the other is an integral part of the Virgilian Georgic. The Mantuan poet, while praising the progressiveness of the contemporary Iron Age, at times expressed a keen longing for the simple, peasant life, his image of which contained echoes of the Golden Age, the period before Jupiter sentenced man to a life of labor (Book II, l. 536).

The ideological conflict between primitivism and progress held a particular fascination for 18th-century Europe, and it is not surprising that the theme should be a prominent one in the Georgic of that period too. Thomson, for instance, who laid great stress throughout *The Seasons* on Britain's economic success, at the same time extolled the simplicity of a rural society, and while his notion of country life was represented primarily by a gentleman's rustic retreat, he too expressed his thought in terms of the "O fortunatos agricolas" passage ("Autumn," l. 1235). And Saint-Lambert, who like Reljković saw the hardships of rural life and the need for change, presented still another version of the Virgilian passage, showing the happy farmer content with the *status quo* ("L'Automne," p. 113).

In Reljković's poem, however, despite the primitivistic appeal of the old, simple, rural way of life, the main stress is in fact on the need for innovation. The satyr pairs his demands for rational reform with an equally firm insistence on the necessity for harder work. He shows his concern with this matter in his satiric vignette showing the peasants enjoying a long lunch, drinking brandy and smoking their pipes instead of finishing the plowing (2109), in his criticism of such folk institutions as the *divan* where men gather to sit and smoke (1183), as well as in his

[20] Bićanić, *op. cit.* pp. 63–64.

lengthy analysis of the division of human labor into three types, that of the farmer, the soldier and the priest (3027). Reljković's reproaches were prompted in part by the contrasts he had observed between working habits in Slavonia and Germany. The poet's insistence on hard work, incidentally, also paralleled the views of the Austrian Emperor, Joseph II (who was to become co-ruler in 1765 and Emperor in 1780). Attracted, although not entirely won over to the Physiocrat theory, which held that the wealth of a nation was dependent on its use of the land, and that only the agrarian class was productive, Joseph made numerous attempts throughout his reign to increase peasant productivity.[21]

But Reljković's recommendations for greater efforts in the fields may well have had still another basic source—the Virgilian formula "labor omnia vincet," the dominating motif of the *Georgics*.[22] While man had been ordained by Jupiter to a life of hardship and labor, in the long run, Virgil stressed, the need to work made his life worthwhile and satisfying. Agricultural labor was particularly gratifying. In Virgil's words:

> But calm security and a life that will not cheat you,
> Rich in its own rewards, are here...
> (Book II, l. 467–468)

Reljković elaborates on the same theme in his account of Creation and Adam and Eve's fall, as a result of which man was doomed to plow the land with difficulty and to sustain himself "with heavy sweat" (1723). Later in the paraphrase of the "O fortunatos agricolas" passage Reljković takes the positive Virgilian approach to this state of affairs, assuring the peasant that the land will repay him for his "effort and pain" (3381). In Thomson too the dignity of labor, through which alone come all of man's lasting and valuable achievements, emerges as a prominent theme.[23] Reljković's direct exhortation to his readers to work harder in the fields is of course poles apart from Thomson's detached survey of human accomplishments, but both reflect Virgil's basic concept.

The complex agricultural theme is complemented by other subsidiary motifs which are also characteristic of the Georgic, and which, like the discussion of farming, embrace such broad concepts as rationalism, humanitarianism, and the progress of man. While criticizing Slavonian conditions, for example, Reljković makes patriotism and pride in his homeland a key concern of his poem. Virgil's well-known passage in praise of Italy (Book II, l. 136), and Thomson's exalted description of England ("Summer," l. 1438) find a parallel in Reljković's opening apostrophe, which begins with these lines:

> Slavonijo, zemlo plemenita,
> vele ti si lipo uzorita,

[21] P. P. Bernard, *Joseph II*, New York 1968, pp. 43–44, *passim*.
[22] Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
[23] See Chalker, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

nakićena zelenim gorama,
obaļana četirim vodama.
Na priliku zemaļskogo raja
rike teku sa četiri kraja.
. . . . . .
A ti ležiš posrid ovih voda
kano jedna zelena livada.
(1–6, 65–66).

This passage, containing a picturesque catalogue of the rivers, cities and monasteries of the region is in fact quite pleasing stylistically. Reljković's encomium of his Slavic ancestors (73) recalls the traditional Georgic glorification of one's nation's past. But not only Slavonia is extolled. The typical Georgic panegyrics of rulers emerge in Reljković's frequent mention of the beneficence of Austria's Maria Theresa and Joseph. Referring to Maria Theresa as the Slavonian's "mother and Empress" (638), Reljković stresses the real concern of the Austrian rulers for the Slavonian people, and notes specifically their material assistance to the area in the form of sheep and horses (2339).

Theology and moral philosophy, two more topics of considerable importance to Reljković, also fit into the Georgic pattern. A large part of the Croatian poet's consideration of moral and ethical questions comes in the satyr's admonishments, often in satirical form, concerning personal shortcomings such as dishonesty or drunkenness. Other moral commentaries, however, appear in episodes and parallels, both formal features of the Georgic poem. Virgil, for instance, inserted in the *Georgics* the story of Aristaeus, and the beautiful Orpheus and Eurydice narrative with its many implications about life, death and resurrection,[24] and Thomson digressed with the account of the lovers struck by lightning, pointing the sad moral that it is often the innocent who are made to suffer ("Summer," l. 1169). Reljković too intersperses moral episodes that range from Biblical motifs such as the Adam and Eve story (1609), to the Aesopian fable about the disagreement between parts of the body (2957), to the South Slavic folktale about the Jakšić brothers, who tested their wives to see which one was really generous (2797). Virgilian type parallels figure along with the episodes among Reljković's ethical excurses. The comparison of the cooperation found among bees and among humans (2907), for instance, echoes the long section in the *Georgics* in which Virgil too speaks of the division of labor in the hive (Book IV, l. 149).

The religious orientation of Reljković's poem is that of orthodox Christianity. The poet frequently cites the Bible as a source of authority. While supporting religion and the Church throughout *The Satyr*, however,

[24] See Wilkinson's commentary on the meaning of this episode, *op. cit.*, pp. 108–120.

Reljković did make some minor criticisms of the clergy in the first edition of the poem (1762, l. 1319) which, not surprisingly, contributed to the battle of ideas that the work provoked. In the second version of the poem he tried to eliminate such offensive material.

Like Joseph II Reljković maintained his Roman Catholic faith, but at the same time favored many of the views of the Western Eropean *philosophes* pertaining to religion and society. Reljković accepted, for instance, as did Joseph, the concept of religious toleration. This is indicated by his joint listing, in his description of Slavonia, of the Roman Catholic and the Serbian Orthodox monasteries(29), a seemingly small but actually highly significant act in a time and place where religious rivalries were great.[25] Similarly, both Reljković and the enlightened Austrian Emperor favored the principle of the separation of secular and Church affairs, a belief which, as mentioned earlier, Reljković acted upon by daring to create a purely secular literary work.

As a Roman Catholic, Reljković differed in his religious outlook from many of the Western European Georgic poets. Thomson's poem, for instance, expressed the deistical point of view. But the religious philosophy of *The Satyr* did coincide significantly with a key idea found in Thomson's, Saint-Lambert's and also Virgil's Georgics, the concept of God's immanence in nature. Reljković's memorable description of a summer storm in the country, and his conclusion that the city dweller, sheltered from such excesses of nature, does not feel as close to God as does the farmer, provides a colorful example of this standard Georgic theme (p. 168, note to l. 3432).

The storm description is also noteworthy in that reports of weather conditions, particularly violent ones, are themselves a characteristic feature of the Georgic. Reljković's summer cloudburst bears a close relationship to the storms of Virgil (Book I, l. 311), Thomson ("Summer," l. 1104) and Saint-Lambert ("L'Eté," p. 74). In form, however, Reljković's account differs considerably from them all, appearing as one of a pair of prose footnotes devoted to good and inclement weather. (The characteristic Georgic love of contrasts, especially between beauty and horror, is incidentally exemplified in the juxtaposition of these two narrations.) Possibly added later to the body of the poem these prose notes may indicate that Reljković was trying continually to bring his work closer to the traditional Georgic model. Many of the features that have been discussed above, including the paraphrase of Virgil's "0 fortunatos agricolas" passage, appear only in the second edition of the poem. By the time of the writing of this version, 1779, Reljković might well have become acquainted with Thomson's poem, if indeed he was not in 1762, and with Saint-Lambert's too, and it may be that he was inspired by them to rework *The Satyr* along more Georgic lines.

[25] Milčetić, *op. cit.*, p. 515.

4

Along with the portrait of the green mountains and the rivers of Slavonia that open the poem and the Virgilian paraphrase concerning the peasant returning home at night, the prose notes on fair and foul weather constitute the major descriptive passages of the poem. In Croatian literature Reljković's dynamic prose descriptions are seen to represent a new and praiseworthy development.[26] But in comparison with the traditional Georgic, the hallmark of which, especially in the 18th-century version, is detailed annotation about the various aspects of nature, Reljković's poem, it must be admitted, is indeed lacking.

There are other aspects of *The Satyr* too, that differentiate it from the classic Georgic poem. Reljković, for instance, did not use the elevated style of Virgil and Thomson, but instead employed the familiar decasyllabic form of folk poetry, because as he himself explained, the Slavonian loved this poetry and was continually reciting it (Introduction, p. 62–63). Loftiness of tone was not, however, absolutely mandatory for Western European Georgic style poetry. Evidence of this appears in two anonymous Edinburgh poems, *The Har'st Rig* (probably 1786), and *The Farmer's Ha'* (1794), works which are not thoroughgoing Georgics, but which present Georgic themes in a realistic style, with a colloquial tone and dialect conversations.[27]

Reljković's most innovative departure from the Georgic model lies, of course, in his blending with the poem's typical Georgic features the second quite different mode, the satirical one, centering on the figure of the satyr himself. While satire is not characteristic of the Georgic, satirical qualities, sometimes in combination with the mock-heroic, do in fact appear in a number of British poems that also contain certain Georgic elements, such as William Somervile's *Hobbinol* (1740) and *The Bowling Green* (1727), and William Cowper's descriptive poem *The Task* (1785). The satyr himself sometimes appeared in the British Georgic, for example, in William Thomson's *An Hymn to May* (1740). Virgil had included fauns, the Roman mythological creatures closely associated with the Greek satyrs, in the invocation to the *Georgics* (Book I, l. 11). Traditional in the other "rustic" classical genre, the bucolic, the satyr figure, not surprisingly, could also be at home in the rural atmosphere of the Georgic. The usual role of the bucolic satyr in pastoral poetry or drama, however, was not to criticize or satirize society. Occasionally he did indulge in philosophical musings,[28] but more typically he blended happily into the idealized arcadian surroundings.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 512.

[27] Durling, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[28] See the speech of Silenus, the leader of the satyrs, in Virgil's Eclogue VI. L. Kamykowski (*Polski poemat satyrowy*, „Sprawozdania z Czynności i Posiedzeń

Closer in function to Reljković's analytical satyr is philosophical hermit who comments on morals and religious questions in Richard Savage's *The Wanderer* (1729). Like Reljković's figure the recluse serves within the context of a Georgic type poem as a primitivistic, critical observer from outside. But the use of such a formal device was not common among British Georgic poets, who usually directed their didactic precepts to their audiences personally. Reljković, in contrast, felt that Slavonian readers would be more amenable to suggestions coming from a seemingly objective figure such as the satyr. He explains in the introduction to the poem that satyrs were traditionally used to present satirical criticism because people tend to resent the gratuitous advice of a writer (Introduction, p. 66–67).

Through the figure of the satyr Reljković combined quite effectively both the satiric and the didactic-Georgic modes of the poem. A significant point of thematic convergence of both aspects of the work is the primitivism motif, represented not only by the "Happy Husbandman" of the Georgic, but also, in the satiric mode, by the crude but clever satyr, and the underlying connotations of the idyllic "Wild Man" or "Noble Savage." In spite of the satyr's pleas for rationalistic progress, and in spite of the painfully realistic references to the hardships of rural society, the satyr and the "Happy Husbandman" suggest a turning back to the simple way of life. The basic contradiction inherent in the attitude of both figures lends artistic tension to the poem. At the same time the conceptual agreement between the "Noble Savage" and the "Happy Husbandman" gives a subtle sense of unity to the work.

Regardless of his formal and stylistic departures from the standard Georgic poem, particularly his spotlighting of the satyr figure, Reljković, it seems to me, belongs incontestably to the Georgic tradition. Starting with a thematic framework similar to that of Virgil's *Georgics*, with its key idea of man's need and ability to control his universe, he incorporates into his poem such concepts as rationalism, humanitarianism, and progress that were central to the contemporary Georgic. The unique aspect of *The Satyr* is that these ideas are brought forcefully to bear on the specific problems of everyday life in Slavonia—poverty, ignorance, superstition, discrimination. Reljković is more of a reformer than the Western European Georgic poets. His didacticism is more earnest, more practical in nature than that of his colleagues. But his ideals and theirs are identical. *The Satyr*, then, like its Georgic counterparts in the West, emerges as a microcosm of the concerns of the Enlightenment era.

PAU", 1937, no 42, p. 122) sees Virgil's Eclogue VI as the inspiration for the philosophical satyr in the Polish poem *Satyr albo Dziki mąż* by Kochanowski. See „Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich," 1958, fasc. 1, p. 33.

„SATYR" RELJKOVICIA A TRADYCJA BUKOLICZNA. POEZJA DYDAKTYCZNA XVIII-WIECZNEJ CHORWACJI

STRESZCZENIE

Satyr albo Dziki człowiek (*Satir iliti divji čovik*, 1762, wyd. popr. 1779) kroackiego poety Matija Antuna Reljkovicia to satyryczno-dydaktyczny poemat dostarczający rad chłopom rolniczej Słowenii, jak mają sobie polepszyć życie. Podczas gdy satyryczny aspekt utworu można wiązać z tradycją satyrów i satyr mającą swój początek w literaturze greckiej, stronę dydaktyczną dzieła wolno odnieść do poezji bukolicznej. Ten właśnie gatunek, który rozwinął Wergiliusz, sławił radości wiejskiego życia, podkreślając potrzebę i zdolność człowieka do panowania nad swym środowiskiem. Zachodnioeuropejscy poeci XVIII w. ożywili tę formę, czyniąc z niej w dodatku nosiciela zainteresowań epoki Oświecenia i kładąc szczególny nacisk na pojęcie postępu, który można osiągnąć dzięki racjonalizmowi, nowemu humanitaryzmowi, powrotowi do natury i przywiązywaniu wagi do zagadnień moralnych i teologicznych.

Reljković cytując Wergiliusza ujawnia znajomość starożytnej bukoliki, ale nie wiadomo, czy znał współczesną zachodnioeuropejską wersję gatunku. Jednakowoż fakt, że jest zwolennikiem bardziej racjonalnego podejścia do uprawy roli, zmian w organizacji społeczności wiejskiej, skończenia z dyskryminacją, jego podkreślanie wszechobecności Boga w przyrodzie, jego moralne napomnienia, zwłaszcza w satyrycznych elementach poematu, dają jako wynik dzieło, które – opiewając specyficzne problemy nierozwiniętej Słowenii – tematycznie odpowiada ówczesnej zachodnioeuropejskiej bukolice.

Przełożyła *Grażyna Plater*