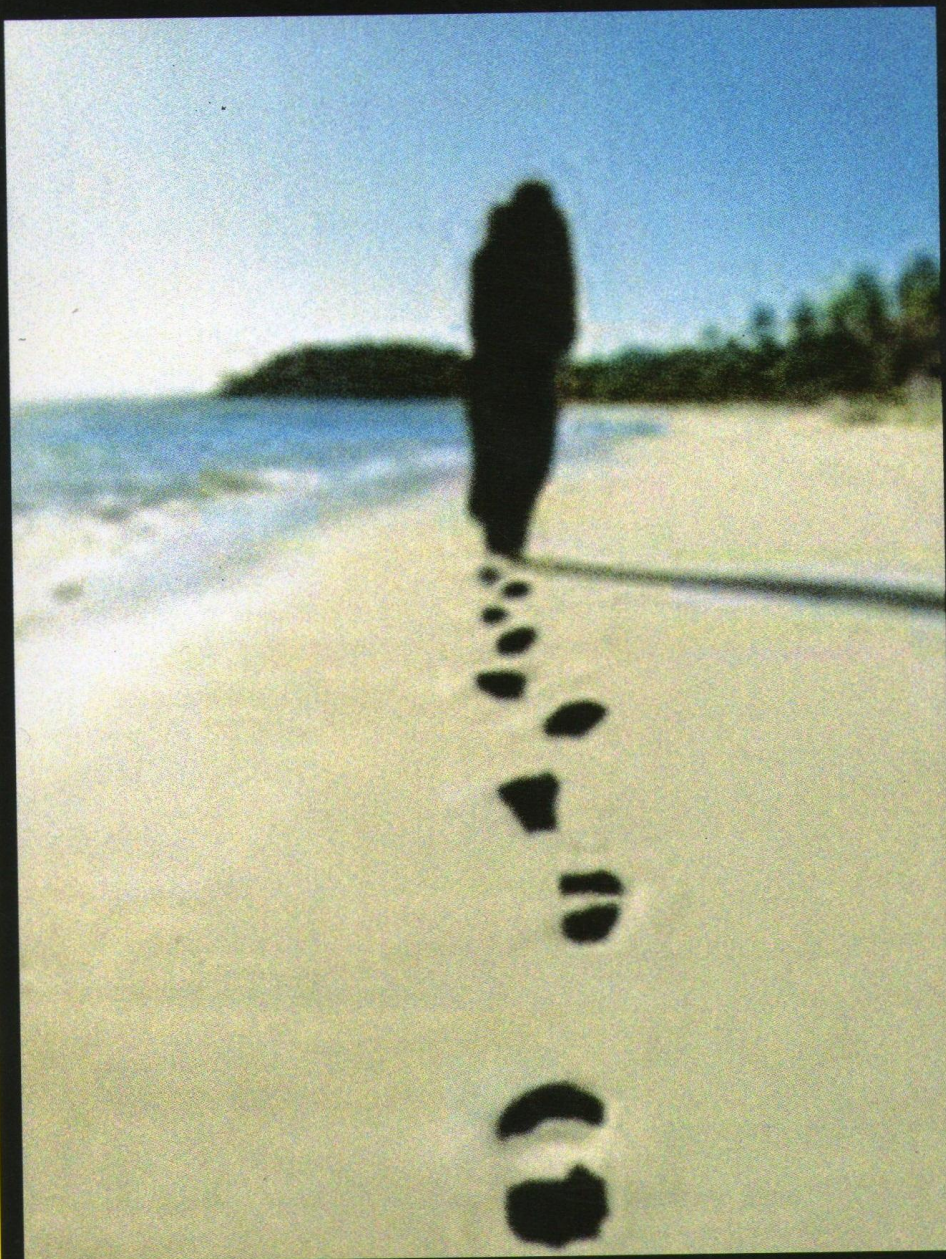


**PERO DAMCEVSKI KOCIN
MOTHER'S FOOTPRINTS**



**МАЈКИНИ СТАПАЛКИ
ПЕРО ДАМЧЕВСКИ КОЦИН**

Pero Damcevski – Kocin
MOTHER'S FOOTPRINTS

Перо Дамчевски - Коцин
МАЈКИНИ СТАПАЛКИ

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"MOTHER'S FOOTPRINTS"

By: Pero Damcevski -Kocin

THE DIASPORA PARADOX

If Diogenes was searching for finding "the man" on earth, Pero Damcevski - Kocin, is searching across land and sea, after gone ages and current history, to find, to regain, to ascertain what makes man a human being: the identity of the self-determination, of the ethnic and historic being, of the family, the country as a fatherland, the fatherhood of the family, God, that pre-mordial and eternal father of all...

This search is taking place in an age of global nomadic trends and contemporary communication accessibility, does not occur through genealogical research, but through ethical, aesthetic, and patriotic sentiments within the poetic reflection found in the collection of poems by Kocin, translated into English. That is why the paradox of this Macedonian poet in Australia, meanders through lights and shadows of the ages of his native people, through forces and fears in his spiritual pain while searching after his own identity within his people. The poetic-existentialist search is conducted by tracking the well-known historic, national and familiar status of outstanding figures, events and location in the Macedonian history, geography and anthropology, occasionally contrasted with Australian equivalents. Yet, the paradox of this poetic search continues to ponder deeper into the spiritual labyrinths, under the paradox of the emigration, to the diaspora issues, to the clashes of cultures, right in the hearts of the transplanted spiritual growth and its development under conditionally said "alien", yet newly accepted, adopted countries and expressions of the own new self-realization.

The exceptional values of the poetic paradox of the diaspora issue with Kocin, are contained in his virtuous, sincere, simple and honest, although occasionally rebellious and angry poems in Macedonian, poems about the soul of his own transplanted root, of his own clash with the realization that certain losses become irreversible, be it civilization related, historic or personal.

The style in this poetry collection made up of his two previous books: "Future Never to be" and "Macedonia Altar" presents an eclectic fusion between symbols of the Macedonian tragic past and its uneasy

present, and between the representational, impressionistic registering and reflection on the changes in the world that the poet left behind himself.

In the context of these changes, the poet writes about his personal conscience while also expressing the common, collective Macedonian awareness about the dangers that permeate through the tragic attempts to persist, against the odds of extinction of the sovereignty, stability and self-determination of the Macedonian nation. The paradox of the poet's power to recognize the signs of the degenerative changes of a world, are coming into conflict with his individual limitations to prevent those changes, particularly at a distance from another country, the continent of Australia.

There are numerous examples from the contemporary world literature dealing with the power and the powerlessness, the gains and the losses on the market of international migration and transfer of intellectual values. The International Struga Poetry Evenings Festival has addressed the nomadic aspect of the conduit and exchange of ideas, their theoretical and practical interdependence, reflected upon the poet's views on reality.

In the case of Kocin, the poetic search does express not only the demographic tendencies for a migration and exchange of spiritual, cultural, literary and historic knowledge, but simultaneously it follows an internal voyage and a self-examination of the own causality: what is sacrificed and what is profited when we distance ourselves from our own ethno-genetic and anthropological being, in that process of migration and separation, be it forced or optionally chosen after the own impulse.

The paradox of the writers and poets of the diaspora carries the stereotype of the hard connectivity between the original "spiritual culture" and the new soil of cultural "transplant". When poets move to another country, they leave their native land, culture and language across the continents and oceans, across collective entities and individual identities. What happens in the course of that process? In this question, the poet of the people's spirit, Kocin, contains the existential spirit of Hamlet, about the very meaning of being through the thunderstorms of destiny. Is a new freedom, justice, prosperity, and a point of view on reality without restrictions and repressions waiting on the other side of life, in the ethically and esthetically "promised", dreamed about worlds? Or, is the spiritual nomad becoming a medium of a tragic, gradual and unavoidable mixture of pictures of reality, or even dehydration of the awareness about the past identity - either related to the "old" world, or to the old love of any kind.

In Kocin's case the paradox turns into a Prometheus crucifix between the eternal, powerful and bright love for the world of his mother's home, love for his mother tongue, for his fatherland's world, and between his prophetic farsightedness and current realization that there is no return to the same source of the pre-mordial beauty, or to the old and new heroism and glory in his native country, that there is no new "lightness of being" in the old country from which he emigrated in 1978 to Australia, at the age of 36.

The poet Kocin narrates through his verse, while his poetic confession becomes more tragic with the very same realization that the land he has left, instead of becoming prosperous among the world democracies and the human rights achievements, instead recording victories in its sovereignty, national entity and cultural and literary presentation to the world, it stagnates in a catastrophic way or even digresses in its attempt to prove its historic, national and linguistic-literary authenticity. After all the variations on the themes of his two poetry collections, the poet Pero Damcevski - Kocin continues to persist by keeping his dynamic and patriotic impulse alive even in a foreign land.

The formula of his spiritual fluid in a different environment of the diaspora, or immigration, varies with each spiritual producer of intellectual values.

Solzhenitsyn has also tried to leave behind him his "Gulag", however the new world presented an old threat to the productivity of his soul: a dehydration of the inspiration that comes from his native land roots. That was the reason why Solzhenitsyn abandoned the experimental land of productivity, America, and returned to his pre-mordial "mother Russia", where his productivity is instinctive, and not commercial.

Kocin's inspiration acquires another dimension. His poetic voice becomes stronger the farther he is distant in space and time, while he himself is compelled to admit and accept what he wanted or expected the least: the reign of that "new world sadness" over him. His desire to return in his old age to his country, now beloved even more than when he left it, becomes a paradoxical impossibility, due to his family branching into the new "culture soil" as much as due to the dehydration of his old cultural roots.

Emi Tan, the contemporary American writer of Chinese descent, is another example from the world literature, where the culture shocks in her

family are being felt the hardest by her parents, that first generation of immigrants in the diaspora.

With enormous regret, we can see that Emi Tan pays that paradoxical process of "pro and contra cultural nomadic displacement" in her family and their cultural and social breakage, by losing her own health. The poet or writer, who becomes an offspring of the own family in the diaspora, almost inescapably becomes a target of that tight resistance against the stress of learning about the new, and the stress coming from the nostalgia after the old. At the beginning of her career Emi Tan seemed to be an enduring registrar of the paradox of the diaspora, but her physical health was undermined by the first challenge. For Emi there is no return from the USA to China, like for Solzhenitsyn to Russia in order to find rest for his spirit and body.

In Kocin's works we read, we experience another kind of the Sizifus syndrome: to be aware that the aspects of the "new" world do not inspire him more than the love for the old world of his mother, his father, his Macedonian heroes, his world of glory kept by his new sacred native land in the Balkans. But Kocin is a living and lasting instrument of the poetic sentiment who sings about his inheritance from the Macedonian spiritual and material culture, which has been faithfully served both by his restless poetic sentiment, and by his newly adopted country of Australia.

The graphic aspect of the paradox remains in the visionary realization of Kocin that across time and space, he can neither like Solzhenitsyn return, from Australia to live and write in Macedonia, so that he could find his peace, since he is crucified between continents and families. Neither like Emi Tan, Kocin is that much physically limited so that he could retreat with unanswered questions about where his soul feels happier.

Kocin continues to sing to the readers about his happiness that he draws from his love for the family and his native land. Kocin is also longing, like a seer in the future of the common and personal future, longing for the happiness of that old country, Macedonia. In the poet's pictures of the future, Kocin nevertheless remains a faithful lover.

Although his spiritual gift is compelling him to see the tragic, chaotic "disfiguring" of his old civilization, his Macedonia, to witness the silent extinction of the birth nest, Kocin still remains, continues to believe, like a wise child, that besides the church altar there is the altar of his native land, an altar that is not a nationalistic one, and is not a politicized one, but is an

altar of the very existence of a nation. Within that Macedonian nation, and beyond all temptations of the diaspora, beyond all paradoxical clashes, Kocin perseveres and believes to the degree of ecstasy, that Macedonia is his permanent "spiritual oasis", his love for the native land to which he serves with his vigil conscience, regardless to all the changes, beyond all new special and temporal dimensions.

The language, the mother tongue, that common denominator and a factor of unity for a nation, remains to be his Macedonian native language for Kocin, like for Isaac Bashevis Singer and his Yiddish variant of Hebrew in which he was writing and from which he was translated into English.

The poetic language of Kocin with its simplicity also follows the paradox of the diaspora: the harder the process of integration into the new cultural environment, and into the complexity of the adapting and the adopting of the changes, the more clear the need for a simplified expression, as a result of the rational imperative for a concise "clear and sound" balance of the meaning of the message. Hence the poetry of Kocin is liberated from academic eloquence, is not burdened by conventional yet changing "laws" of poetics, of theories and canons of the poetic symbolism, which sometimes leads to alienation. The poet Kocin has had enough to do with estrangements across the distance from his native land. His poetry is like a realistic painting of Freiburg, or the realism in the sculptures of Remington, with mixtures of the ethnic Macedonian voice of our enlightenment movement brothers Miladinov from the Macedonian Struga.

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