

TERENCE H. WILBUR-EN OROITZAPENEZ

(1924-2000)

Ondo gogoratzen naiz. 1980an izan zen, “Euskalarien Nazioarteko Jardunaldiak” Leioako Euskal Herriko Unibertsitateko campusean egin zirenean. Egunetako baten txango bat egin zen Gernikara, eta bertako zuhaitza bisitatzen ari ginela, ustekabean neure gurasoekin egin nuen topo, Lekeition uda ematen ari zirelarik zerbait egitera etorriak baitziren Gernikara. Orduan urrunetik aitari zein zen Terence Wilbur seinalatu nion, Los Angeles-ko Kaliforniako Unibertsitatean aurreko urteko urritik hain zuzen ere, irakasle neukana. Eta aitak haren patxada, begiratzeko era baketsua eta itxura orokorra –sendo, ile urdin eta kilotan apur bat sartua– esan zidan, “Franklin-ek esan ei zuen moduan, behin urte batzuk igaro eta gero jendaki bakoitza da bere itxuraren erantzule bakarra, eta zure irakasle hori hor ikusita lasai geratzen naiz, irakasle on baten eskuetan zaudelako.” Eta aita ez zen bat ere okertu, Terry –hala erizten genion betigizon ona zelako, laguntza ematen zekiena eta irakasle gisa bezala, hala lagun moduan beti hor zegoena. Izan ere, UCLA-n eman nituen lehenengo urteotan bera izan zen nire makulu nagusia eta geroagokoetan lagun ezin ordezkatzekoa, eta beti ere irakasle eta tesi-zuzendari zorrotza.

1924ko apirilaren 8an jaio zen Los Angeles-en. Unibertsitateko graduazio-titulua, mundu anglo-saxoniarrean ‘batxilergoa’ deritzona eta gure diplomatuen mailakoa dena, 1947an erdietsi zuen Berkeley-ko Kaliforniako Unibertsitatean, eta unibertsitate berean urte biren buruan magistergoa. Doktore izatera, Berkeley-n beti ere, 1954an helduko zen. 1952-tik 1953ra Massachusetts-eko Unibertsitatean egin zuen lan lektore moduan, eta 1953ko uztailaren batean UCLA-ko Germaniar Hizkuntzen Sailan sartu zelarik, 1991-ko uztailaren lean erretiratu zen arte bertan izan zen irakasle. Halandaze, 39 urtez lan egin zuen irakasle gisa, horietako 38 UCLAn. Hil, ostera, jaistaldi oso gogor bat pairatu eta gero 2000. urteko martxoaren 7an hil zen, 76 urte bete baino hilabete lehenago.

Interes eta kultura unibertsaleko gizona, hiru izan ziren beraren ikerketaren alor nagusiak: aleman hizkuntza, indoeuropar linguistika eta euskara. Nik dakidala ingelesez gain, alemanez eta frantsesez ondo moldatzen zen eta horretaz gain, gaztelania, euskara, Irlandako gaelikoa eta galesa ulertu eta irakurtzeko gai ere bazen. Bizitzaren azkenean, Andy bere bizi osoko laguna hil baino lehenago eta depresio betean sartu baino lehenago, Bernat Etxepareren liburuaren ingelesezko itzulpen eta argitaraldi batekin ari zuen luze, azkenean ordean, oso aurreratuta eduki arren, ez zuen bururatu ahal izan. Eta hor ederto ikus dezakegu Terry-ren beste alderdi bat, ingelesa zeukan jaiotzezko

hiztuna erabiltzeko maisutasuna, Hona hemen prosa miresgarri horren erakusgarri niri behin, 1986ko irailaren 28an bidali zidan eskutitzaren ondoko pasartea:

“Andy and I just returned from Ireland. For various reasons, a couple of which I’ll explain later in this letter, I had to go back. It is still **insula ultissima, corde meo carissima** for me. I also spent some of my happiest days there. It must be explained to you, a Basque who will understand, being Irish is not a matter of genetics, it is a religion unto itself. There is a line from Marianna Moore, when as a girl she tells her grandmother about a nice boy she has met: “He may be perfect, but he is not Irish.” As for me, the minute I smell the air of that land, I feel better. Although Ireland and Scotland had a miserable summer with nine weeks of continuous rain and terrible floods, when we were there the sky was bright and sunny and the temperature was never above 12C, for a heat-ridden Angeleno, heaven. We came back to the coolest September I have ever seen in L.A. Last Thursday it rained all day, winter rain. It was downright cold. July and August were unusually cool. We expect the blast of heat in October now.

I spent one school year in a terrible depression. I was in a funk and uninterested. Things had lost their flavor. I was bored stiff with everything. The subject material I had devoted my professional life to went dead on me. I sought the help of a psychiatrist. He helped me drag myself painfully through what I simply had to do. Perhaps I should have taken leave. Then I remembered what you had told me: “Why don’t you write a novel?” I took you up on it. That seemed to snap me out of the funk I was in. And I began to work. I was puzzled at first as to how I should proceed. Then the right idea came. Write a letter to Andolin and tell him what happened. Then the narrative flowed. I put the story in the form of a novel although it is primarily autobiographical. When I was very, very young, 19-21, I had a novel and extraordinary experience. I didn’t realize this until I was much older. At the time seemed quite natural...”



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Eta honelako hamaika ekar nitzake hona, hain ziren plazerrez gozatzekoak Terry-k lantzean behin, ni neu Euskal Herrira etorri eta gero, bidaltzen ohi zizkidan gutunak. Eskuzabaltasun horren ondorioz ez dira guti berak hezitako hizkuntzalari garrantzitsuak, hala nola Theo Vennemann, Mervin Barnes, Helmut Esau, Angela della Volpe eta Heidi Waltz. Eta liburuak baino ez aipatzearren, ondoko tituluak aipa daitezke beraren bibliografian:

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Bizitzako azken urteotako sufrimendu eta pairuak gaindituta, eta denboren erremateraino Andy bere betiko lagunarekin egonen den esperantzarekin, ez zait geratzen eskerrak adieraztea baizik: betiko zorientasuna aurkitu dukezulakoan, agur eta ohore zuri Terry, gizon ona.

Andolin Eguzkitza

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