

## Toetrede

### Liturgie van die Lig

Aansteek van die kerse

## Woorddiens

### Tema: Uit God gebore...

### Skriflesing: 1 Johannes 5:1-10

### Broodjies vir die pad

**Peter Bieri** (born 23 June 1944), better known by his pseudonym, **Pascal Mercier**, is a Swiss writer and philosopher.

#### Academic background

Bieri studied philosophy, English studies and Indian studies in both London and Heidelberg. From there he was awarded a doctoral degree by Dieter Henrich and Ernst Tugendhat for his work on the philosophy of time. After the conferral of his doctorate, Bieri worked as a scientific assistant at the Philosophical Seminar at University of Heidelberg.

Bieri co-founded the research unit "Cognition and Brain" at the German Research Foundation. The focuses of his research were the philosophy of mind, epistemology, and ethics. From 1990 through 1993, he was a professor of the history of philosophy at the University of Marburg; from 1993 he taught philosophy at the Free University of Berlin while holding the chair of analytic philosophy, succeeding his mentor, Ernst Tugendhat.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter\\_Bieri\\_%28author%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Bieri_%28author%29)



### A night train to Lisbon

*Pouveer*

2014-08-12

Na dese is ek 'n geswore Pascal Mercier "fan". Ek het min tyd om letterkunde te lees en gewoonlik "oorval" 'n boek my. En so was dit ook met *A night train to Lisbon*. In dié geval het die flik my eers oorval en daarna móés ek net die boek ook lees.

Dis een van die heel mooiste kunsfliks wat ek in my lewe gesien het. Dit val beslis in die uitsonderlike kategorie van *Bella Martha*, *Best Marigold Hotel*, *The piano*, *Death in Venice*, *Out of Africa*, *The English patient*, *Babette's feast*, *Chocolat* ... Daarvoor sorg die uitgelese besetting deur akteurs soos Jeremy Irons, Martina Gedeck en Bruno Ganz.

Dis altyd 'n groot uitdaging om grootse letterkunde wat dig en kompleks geskryf is, vas te vang in 'n draaiboek. Ek was onlangs in 'n interessante gesprek gewikkel oor die "tekortkominge" van Visconti se *Death in Venice* ten opsigte van die kompleksiteit en genuanseerdheid van Thomas Mann se boek. Iemand het die standpunt geopper dat 'n draaiboekskrywer nie die storie self mag verander nie. In Visconti se film het die draaiboekskrywer die hoofkarakter, 'n skrywer, in 'n komponis verander sodat die "Leitfigur" op Gustav Mahler se homoërotiese neigings gemunt kon word. Die sleutelromanrol van Mahler tesame met die opening van die

flik met Mahler se beroemde *Vyfde Simfonie* is sekerlik 'n trekpleister wat die film se sukses sou waarborg.

Dit is uiteraard moeilik om 'n roman in 'n draaiboek so te verkort dat die essensie van die letterkundige teks behoue bly. Die visuele produk van die draaiboekskrywer tree in gesprek met die teks van die boek.

Die realiteit is egter ook dat dit ongelooflik duur is om 'n film te maak en dat die mark as't ware "saampraat" in die agtergrond. Mense wat fliks kyk, hou van 'n "happy ending" – selfs al gaan dit om 'n treurige storie én selfs al word die film vir 'n uitgelese publiek gemaak. So is dit ook in die geval van *Death in Venice* en van *A night train to Lisbon*.

Die verandering of aanpassing van die storielyn is dalk minder steurend in laasgenoemde geval as in die geval van Visconti se weergawe van Thomas Mann se roman.

Mercier se boek het egter nie die romantiese "happy ending" van die flik nie. Ek sou nietemin sê: begin met die flik, want dit gaan jou meesleur. Dis soos 'n aptytwekkertjie om die wêreld van die goudsmid van woorde, Amadeu de Prado, te betree.

As die poësie van Fernando Pessoa tot jou spreek, dan sal die goudsmid se woorde wat Pascal Mercier vir Prado in die mond lê, sekerlik ook jou hart verower. Pascal Mercier is die éintlike goudsmid van woorde.

Ek het die boek in die oorspronklike Duits geles en dikwels gewonder hoe mens sulke mooi sinne ooit in enige ander taal kan vertaal sonder dat die poësie en musiek van die woorde verlore gaan – sinne soos "(D)azu war die bleierne Schwertekraft meiner Erziehung zu groß" (Daarvoor was die lood in die swaartekrag van my opvoeding te swaar.)

Die boek neem jou op 'n kragtoer deur die menslike psige en verhoudings. Dit gaan oor die ambivalensie van menslike optrede binne 'n diktatuur: dit skilder die grusaamhede van die veiligheidspolisie tydens die bewind van Salazar en hoe dit menslike keuses beïnvloed het. Is dit menslik om die lewe van Mendez, die slagter van Lissabon, te red omdat die eed van Hippokrates dit van medici veragterwyl hy mense laat folter tot hulle sterwe?

Maar dis 'n baie groter storie: dis nie net die storie van die Portugese adellike Amadeu de Prado nie, maar ook die storie van Raimund Gregorius, 'n filoloog van Bern wat toevallig Prado se memoires in 'n antikwariaat ontdek en dan spontaan sy spoor na Lissabon volg. Stukkie vir stukkie herlewe Prado uit die herinneringe van ander mense.

Die storie gaan oor keuses wat mense maak en of hulle ander keuses sou maak as hulle die tyd kon terug draai tot by 'n bepaalde vure in hulle lewensweg. Dit gaan oor 'n groot liefde wat verlore gaan nog voor dit eintlik begin het – dié van Prado en die beeldskone Estafânia Espinhosa, die vrou met die fotografiese geheue waarin alle name van die 200 mense in die weerstand gegraveer was. Dis hulle wat die angeliërevolusie in 1974 van stapel gestuur het. En dis ook die storie van Gregorius, van sy drome oor Persiese poësie en Isfahan en van Florence.

Mens wil nie dat die storie ophou nie, omdat die woorde mens so diep roer. Dis 'n boek wat mens soos 'n boksie met baie spesiale praline moet eet-lees – stukkie vir stukkie, en stadig, sodat dit lank kan hou.

<http://www.litnet.co.za/Article/a-night-train-to-lisbon>



"I revere the word of God for I love its poetic force. I loathe the word of God for I hate its cruelty. The love is a difficult love for it must incessantly separate the luminosity of the words and the violent verbal subjugation by a complacent God. The hatred is a difficult hatred for how can you allow yourself to hate words that are part of the melody of life in this part of the world? Words that taught us early on what reverence is?"

— Pascal Mercier, *Night Train to Lisbon*

"We leave something of ourselves behind when we leave a place, we stay there, even though we go away. And there are things in us that we can find again only by going back there."

— Pascal Mercier, *Night Train to Lisbon*

"Life is not what we live; it is what we imagine we are living."

— Pascal Mercier, *Night Train to Lisbon*

"Given that we can live only a small part of what there is in us - what happens with the rest?"

— Pascal Mercier, *Night Train to Lisbon*

"SOLIDAO, LONELINESS.

What is it that we call loneliness. It can't simply be the absence of others, you can be alone and not lonely, and you can be among people and yet be lonely. So what is it? ... it isn't only that others are there, that they fill up the space next to us. But even when they celebrate us or give advice in a friendly conversation, clever, sensitive advice: even then we can be lonely. So loneliness is not something simply connected with the presence of others or with what they do. Then what? What on earth?"

— Pascal Mercier, *Night Train to Lisbon*

"To live for the moment: it sounds so right and so beautiful. But the more I want to, the less I understand what it means."

— Pascal Mercier, *Night Train to Lisbon*

"To understand yourself: Is that a discovery or a creation?"

— Pascal Mercier, *Night Train to Lisbon*

"Disappointment is considered bad. A thoughtless prejudice. How, if not through disappointment, should we discover what we have expected and hoped for? And where, if not in this discovery, should self-knowledge lie? So how could one gain clarity about oneself without disappointment?"

...

One could have the hope that he would become more real by reducing expectations, shrink to a hard, reliable core and thus be immune to the pain of disappointment. But how would it be to lead a life that banished every long, bold expectation, a life where there were only banal expectations like "the bus is coming?"

— Pascal Mercier, *Night Train to Lisbon*

"NOBREZA SILENCIOSA. SILENT NOBILITY. It is a mistake to believe that the crucial moments of a life when its habitual direction changes forever must be loud and shrill dramatics, washed away by fierce internal surges. This is a kitschy fairy tale started by boozing journalists, flashbulb-seeking filmmakers and authors whose minds look like tabloids. In

truth, the dramatics of a life-determining experience are often unbelievably soft. It has so little akin to the bang, the flash, of the volcanic eruption that, at the moment it is made, the experience is often not even noticed. When it deploys its revolutionary effect and plunges a life into a brand-new light giving it a brand-new melody, it does that silently and in this wonderful silence resides its special nobility."

— Pascal Mercier, *Night Train to Lisbon*

"I would not like to live in a world without cathedrals. I need their beauty and grandeur. I need their imperious silence. I need it against the witless bellowing of the barracks yard and the witty chatter of the yes-men. I want to hear the rustling of the organ, this deluge of ethereal notes. I need it against the shrill farce of marches."

— Pascal Mercier, *Night Train to Lisbon*

"Don't waste your time, do something worthwhile with it."

But what can that mean: worthwhile? Finally to start realizing long-cherished wishes. To attack the error that there will always be time for it later... Take the long-dreamed-of trip, learn this language, read those books, buy yourself this jewelry, spend a night in that famous hotel. Don't miss out on yourself.

Bigger things are also part of that: to give up the loathed profession, break out of a hated milieu. Do what contributes to making you more genuine, moves you closer to yourself."

— Pascal Mercier, *Night Train to Lisbon*

"There were people who read and there were the others. Whether you were the a reader or a non-reader was soon apparent. There was no greater distinction between people."

— Pascal Mercier

"What did I know of your fantasies? Why do we know so little about the fantasies of our parents? What do we know of somebody if we know nothing of the images passed to him by his imagination?"

— Pascal Mercier, *Night Train to Lisbon*

"For that is the meaning of a farewell in the full, important sense of the word: that the two people, because they part, come to an understanding of how they have seen and experienced each other. What succeeded between them and what failed. That takes fearlessness: you have to be able to endure the pain of dissonance. It is also about acknowledging what was impossible. Parting is also something you do with yourself: to stand by yourself under the look of the other. The cowardice of a farewell resides in the transfiguration: in the attempt to bathe what was in a golden light and deny the dark. What you forfeit in that is nothing less than the acknowledgement of your self in those features produced by darkness."

— Pascal Mercier, *Night Train to Lisbon*