

“ELUSIVE AS AN ELEGY, DARING AS DUSK”: PENELOPE SHUTTLE’S “MISSING YOU” AS CONTEMPORARY POETRY OF MOURNING

Due to humanity’s proclivity to mourn their dead, it is only natural that poetry of grief, such as elegy, proved to be one of the most resilient modes of poetic expression. During its long history, elegy has undergone numerous modifications, reflecting changes in both society and poetry. As it is more and more difficult to find solace either in nature or religion, contemporary elegists struggle with the expression of grief, often turning to irony or humour. Gender, too, plays an important role in the construction of mourning poetry, with the masculine elegy focusing on poetic competition and emotional substitution, and the feminine elegy relying upon connection and the process of recuperation instead. The paper analyses “Missing You”, a long poem from Penelope Shuttle’s collection *Redgrove’s Wife* (2006), investigating its status as a contemporary feminine elegy.

Key words: contemporary English poetry, elegy, feminist criticism, Penelope Shuttle

INTRODUCTION: MOURNING IN THE MODERN ERA

In a particularly farcical episode of the TV series *The IT Crowd*, a man steps out of his high-rise office window, having just discovered that the authorities have finally caught up with the irregularities in the company’s pension fund. Later on, a character delivering a eulogy at his funeral says, “Let me start by reading this poem that I saw in the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral*,” and proceeds to quote from W. H. Auden’s “Funeral Blues”, before being rudely interrupted by the return of the deceased man’s prodigal son, who first wails insincerely for his father and then gets into a limp-wristed fist fight with the vicar. While this scene serves as a great example of the over-the-top cringe humour typical of many a sitcom inhabiting our recent televisual space, it also speaks, on a deeper level, to our notion of grief and the expression thereof, in a way that seems particularly fitting for the cynical atmosphere of the twenty first century. The days when we would “weep for Adonais” were well and truly gone by the mid-twentieth century, destroyed by the

* bojana.vujin@ff.uns.ac.rs

realization, after the atrocities of the two world wars, that “death had undone so many”, and that perhaps the only thing a poet mourner could do, in the absence of any true comfort reached by the speakers of *Lycidas* or “Adonais”, was, in Peter Sacks’ words, to “hide further behind masks of irony” (qtd. in Twiddy, 2012: 6).

The events that occurred at the turn of the millennium, such as Princess Diana’s death or 9/11, have changed the notion of mourning even further: it has now become a “participatory, public spectacle” (Kennedy, 2007: 7). This theatrical nature of real-life tragedy makes it both more and less real: more, because technology enables us to instantly project ourselves into any event centred around a public death or grief; less, because our feeds are so over-saturated with the occasions for mourning that they start blending together, thus desensitizing us to true heartbreak. But even before the discourse on the pitfalls of social media became the ubiquitous cliché it is today, the notion of the (in)sincerity of literary grief was part of both poetic consciousness and critical landscape. As Ian Twiddy (2012: 19–20) rightfully points out, even Tennyson struggles with differentiating between the reality of past and the constructedness of memory, and explicitly admits it in section XXIV of *In Memoriam* (“And was the day of my delight / As pure and perfect as I say?”). Mourning, then, has a powerful ability to warp a person’s memories, and all a poet can do is deliver a version of the truth reflected by a funhouse mirror. Twiddy (2012: 20) further explains that “there is a case for suggesting that mourning inevitably involves artificiality, since achieving a substitutive image of the dead person involves adopting that image over what has been lost, or what is perceived to be the more real image”.

If even such classical elegists as Milton and Tennyson are not exempt from this dilemma, how can a modern author who is not only used to grief, living in “a profoundly melancholic age” (Žižek, qtd. in Kennedy, 2007: 7), but also highly attuned to the performative nature of the genre, offer poetry of mourning that comes across as believable and yet does not shy away from its inherent stylizations? A common solution is to pair feelings of heartbreak with black humour (Plath’s “Daddy” comes to mind; even though the poem is not an elegy per se, it still functions as a lament). Celeste M. Schenk, too, “notes strong tendencies in modern elegy towards ‘parody and inversion’ and ‘deliberate rupture of ceremonial patterns’” (Kennedy 2007: 7). While this may seem irreverent, one should bear in mind that elegy has always possessed a certain “inherent flexibility of form” (Twiddy, 2012: 14), that “death has always been ‘obscene’,” and that “elegists have always tried to order death and their grief into meaningfulness in whatever way possible” (Twiddy, 2012: 7). Writing about elegiac poetry, David Kennedy says

that it might have moved beyond its origins as a sub-genre of mourning poetry and become any form of art that expresses grief over any kind of loss. To support his views, he offers insights by other authors, such as John Hollander, who maintains that elegy is a mood, rather than a formal mode, and Dennis Kay, who calls elegy “a form without frontiers” (Kennedy, 2007: 2).

Elegy, thus, may once have been a poem “occasioned by the death of a person”, which, “unlike other forms of pure lament or memorial, frequently includes a movement from expressed sorrow toward consolation” (Preminger–Brogan, 1993: 322). Nowadays, however, the term has expanded to include works which mourn other kinds of loss, and which do not necessarily offer comfort. And no wonder – the flexibility of elegy means that even the common perception of it as poetry of mourning is actually a result of the form’s evolution over time. Its origins in classical antiquity denote a verse form, not a genre – Ancient Greek elegy was any poem written in the so-called elegiac distich (a hexameter followed by a pentameter), regardless of content. Unlike the sonnet, which has gradually expanded its thematic scope, but maintained its structure of fourteen lines, the elegy let go of its original form, but came to denote poetry of grief.

Delving much deeper into the history of the form would certainly be beyond the scope of this paper – both in terms of space and focus. Anyone interested in that would be better served by consulting the wealth of the available critical material (Peter Sacks’ *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats* and Jahan Ramazani’s *Poetry of Mourning: The Modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney* cover the chronological development of the genre). One element, though, that is of particular importance for the topic at hand concerns elegiac poetry in relation to gender, and it will be explored further in the next section.

ELEGY AND MASCULINITY

Writing about any kind of canonical poetry translates, almost exclusively, into writing about masculine voices. As Ian Gregson (1996: 6–7) notes,

Women poets have been concerned to show the extent to which the ‘unitary language of culture and truth’ actually imposes a masculinist vision on those, both men and women, who use it. ‘True word’ is a masculine monologue, a gendered monolith.

Similarly, Jane Dowson and Alice Entwhistle (2006: 242) state that “the fact of female authorship seriously disrupts the traditional dynamic of the lyric poem”. Elegy is no exception, as Schenk (1986: 13) explains:

The [elegiac] genre itself excludes the feminine from its perimeter, except as muse principle or attendant nymph. The funeral elegy is a resolutely patriarchal genre. It is modelled on archaic initiation rituals of younger man by an elder. In all cases, the elegiac initiation scene is a masculine one: since Classical times, the elegy has functioned as a ritual hymn of poetic consecration during the course of which a new poet presents himself as heir to the tradition.

This tradition in English poetry can be seen in Milton's *Lycidas* or Shelley's "Adonais", with the latter poem showing the degree to which poets are willing to go in order to construct a mourning scenario (the Keats of Shelley's poem has little in common with the real one, and the elegy reads more like a passive-aggressive spectacle of grief than an expression of heartfelt sorrow). Even Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, for all its genuine mournfulness, at times veers slightly too closely to the territory that Byron unforgettably dubbed the "Onanism of Poetry". What can further be observed in masculine elegy is the tendency among poets to try to outdo each other. The young poet mourning his older counterpart needs to be seen as a worthy heir to poetic tradition, "judged by the male gaze which symbolizes a power to which the elegist must submit and prove himself worthy to inherit" (Kennedy, 2007: 31). As women poets were for centuries systematically excluded from literary canon, their connection to tradition is not as strong, so "the need to outwrite or out-universalize one another is not manifest" (Dowson–Entwhistle, 2006: 201). Female elegists are no exception: unlike the male elegy, which can be seen as a poem of competition, "the female elegy is a poem of connectedness" (Schenk, 1986: 15).

Another important difference between the male and female elegy can be seen in its focus. Elegies written by men have traditionally tended to mourn and celebrate other poets (as can be seen in Hardy's elegy for Swinburne, Auden's for Yeats, or Lowell's for Crane), while serving as "a space for poetic initiation and succession" (Kennedy, 2007: 6). On the other hand, "women writers, lacking mentors, tend to mourn their personal dead rather than predecessor poets" (Schenk, 1986: 15). This can be seen in numerous examples, from the aforementioned Plath to Edna St. Vincent Millay, all the way back to Sappho. But what happens when the elegist mourns both a personal and a poetic loss? The lyrical sequence "Missing You", by the British poet Penelope Shuttle (1947), might provide an answer to that question.

DEATH AND POETRY: *REDGROVE’S WIFE*

The first sentence of the “About the Author” section on the back cover of Shuttle’s collection *Unsent: New and Selected Poems 1980–2012* states that she “has lived in Cornwall since 1970, and is the widow of the poet Peter Redgrove”. Her official website (www.penelopeshuttle.co.uk) also places these two facts at the very beginning of her biography, listing them as the two most important elements that inform Shuttle’s writing. At the end of the “About Penelope” section on the author’s site, the reader is directed towards her YouTube channel, which has only one upload – the video of Shuttle reading the poem “Missing You”, from the collection *Redgrove’s Wife* (2006).

There is absolutely no doubt that Penelope Shuttle is an important and idiosyncratic contemporary poet whose writing “conjures a world where the ordinary and the everyday are realised and enlivened through myth, magic and fantasy” (Wilkinson, 2007: para. 1). Her widely anthologised work includes prose, both fiction and non-fiction (such as two ground-breaking treatises on menstruation she co-wrote with Redgrove, *The Wise Wound* and *Alchemy for Women*), and numerous poetry collections. She chairs the Falmouth Poetry Group, one of the longest-running poetry workshops in the UK, and has often appeared as a judge in poetry competitions, events which she always looks forward to because they provide her with an opportunity to discover amazing new poets (Byrne 2005). Her earlier work is mostly concerned with the elemental, mystical, and transformative forces of poetry, weather, and nature, but since the death of her husband, mourning has become a significant theme in her verse. In an interview she gave to James Byrne in 2005, a year before the publication of *Redgrove’s Wife*, she describes what the collection is about:

The poems tell the story of those difficult years when P was diagnosed, around 2001, with Parkinson’s. But they are by no means all grim poems – there are love poems, landscape and weather poems, poems inspired by The Royal Mail, Richard Nixon, a spider, the lost Jews of Falmouth, parrots, fear, guide dogs, being rich, being poor, God, Matisse, and time; there’s a celebration of academic footnotes, and the first poems of bereavement. (Byrne, 2005: para. 2).

This is certainly an accurate description, however, the strongest impression is still that *Redgrove’s Wife* is poetry of grief. As is often the case with art, context is everything, and just the knowledge that this is Shuttle’s first collection after Redgrove’s death colours the reader’s perception of it. Take, for example, the title poem: it is comprised of snippets about the author’s personal and professional

preferences (she is not to be pitied or feared, she should be praised and dreamed about), and, as the note at the bottom of the page says, it was “written as wedding anniversary poem for Peter two years before he died” (Shuttle, 2012a: 152). And yet, it still reads as a bereavement poem, not least because it lent its title to the collection that most directly deals with the passing of her husband. Another element that contributes to the overall elegiac tone of the collection is an additional loss, that of Shuttle’s father. The two collections that followed *Redgrove’s Wife*, *Sandgrain and Hourglass* (2010) and *Unsent* (2012) also predominantly deal with loss, a deliberate choice on the author’s part, as can be seen from the following quote:

Redgrove’s Wife contained a number of elegies for Peter, and for my late father Jack Shuttle, who had also died in 2003. *Sandgrain and Hourglass* again contained elegies. *Unsent*, which contains all the poems from my 1998 *Selected Poems*, with further selections from the three subsequent collections, also contains a volume of sixty-two new poems. Whereas I had tempered my two previous volumes of elegies with poems covering a wide range of other Topics, *Unsent* is a book of elegies. I wished to include this volume in my *New and Selected Poems* to create a triptych of elegies. They seemed to fit naturally together. One theme which emerges in this third volume is the question – how long do you continue writing and publishing elegies? And I try to find and suggest some answers. There comes a time when I must cease ‘to weep on the world’s shoulder’. I’m sure I’ll continue to write elegies, for they are a way of continuing to talk to Peter, to Dad, ... but I don’t plan to publish any more elegies. (Though, as the old song has it, never say never!). (Shuttle, 2012b: para. 7–10)

True to her word, Shuttle speaks less of bereavement in subsequent volumes, though she has not completely stopped writing about Redgrove and her feelings of loss. As Sean O’Brien (2012) notes, the lives of Shuttle and Redgrove – whose relationship lacked the toxicity of the Plath–Hughes pairing, and was that of complementary spirits instead – were transmuted by their poetic imagination into an exotic realism. No wonder, then, that Redgrove’s death left such a mark on Shuttle and her poetry, as can be illustrated by her work “Missing You”.

TWENTY-FOUR WAYS OF LOOKING AT GRIEF: “MISSING YOU”

“Missing You” is a long poem, or better yet, poetic sequence, comprised of twenty-four short cantos, ordered by numbers, but otherwise unnamed. They are written in free verse and range in length from eight to twenty-two lines, arranged mostly into couplets and tercets. Intensely lyrical, they do not follow a narrative, focusing instead on the speaker’s expression of pain and grief. Most of them

address the unnamed “you” of the title, casting him as the emotional centre of the speaker’s world (“My tamer of doves, / my alphabet of the moon /.../ my blind man / and my seer /.../ my furious saint, / warrior of peace” (Shuttle, 2012a: 161)). The poem depicts the addressee’s importance through metaphor (“You’re the heart of when, / the pulse of where, / sleepy as motorway, / eager as an earthquake, / elusive as an elegy, / daring as dusk” (161)). Even these short glimpses into the poem seem to support Schenk’s theory of feminine elegy: although Redgrove was fifteen years older than Shuttle, and was, at least for a while, her mentor and frequent collaborator, “Missing You” casts him exclusively into the role of the dead lover, not literary predecessor; a personal, rather than poetic loss.

Furthermore, by conversing with the departed lover, the speaker of “Missing You” stays intimately connected with him, even though finding him is anything but easy, as poem 14 (in Shuttle, 2012a: 161–162) demonstrates:

I won’t find you in the featherbed of thought
or in the blip of the city
To find you I must be the bloodhound of love,
block capitals of the rain,
swift and slow at once,
because you’ll be everywhere I’m not
Suddenly I’ll be there beside you
as if all the time you’d been only four streets away

The addressee is, as cliché goes, gone, but not forgotten (“No one will forget you” is the closing line of canto 1) – there is, however, a caveat: the speaker must not look for him with her mind, tempting though it may be (“the featherbed of thought”); instead, she needs to let her heart’s pain guide her (“I must be the bloodhound of love”), so as to be near him again. There is a separation (“you’ll be everywhere I’m not”), but it is neither complete nor final. The speaker keeps insisting, throughout the sequence, upon the fact that she and the addressee form a natural, symbiotic union, as can be seen in canto 5 (pp. 157–158):

I used to be a planet,
you discovered me /.../
I used to be a forest,
you ran away to me
I used to be the sky,
you traipsed up mountains to touch me
I used to be a moon,
you saw by my light /.../
I used to be an atom,

you split me
I was music,
you often sang me

This is precisely the type of connectedness between the survivor and the deceased that makes female elegies a perfect illustration of the idea that the deceased continue their existence “in us” (Kennedy, 2007: 118). The female elegist, as Schenk (1986: 18) points out,

inverts or suspends the masculine elegiac in two ways: she both deconstructs the genre’s valorization of separation by means of apotheosis (by refusing resolution and the absolute rupture that is death), and she reconstructs by imagining new or alternative elegiac scenarios that arise from a distinctly feminine psycho-sexual experience.

Shuttle’s imagery is certainly sexual in nature – the addressee is the force that splits the speaker’s atoms, sings her music, discovers her planet; while the speaker is the light-giving moon, the sky that needs to be reached, a forest for him to get lost in. What is particularly interesting is how she uses nature, in an almost Romantic way, to denote the connection between the speaker and the deceased. Her poetry has been called “shamanistic”, and it seems that her lyrical persona serves as a conduit between nature and poetry. This can also be seen in poem 14 – the “block capitals of the rain” sounds almost like a chant, where nature (“the rain”) gets transformed into poetry (“block capitals”) through the speaker’s immersion into the world around her.

This kind of connection with nature would allow “Missing You” to function as a pastoral elegy and for Shuttle to be an ideal poet to revive the “myth of the regeneration deity” (Twiddy, 2012: 10), were it not for the fact that neither nature nor religion can provide any kind of solace for the speaker of her poem (“The rainbow is not enough, / nor the flood” (156–157)). Twiddy (2012: 14) mentions that “pastoral elegy is /.../ about change and accepting change”, with cyclical nature serving as a reminder that recovery is not only possible, but inevitable; however, “for some poets, this tendency to regeneration is horrific, and the cause of further grief.” This can be seen in the entirety of the “Missing You” sequence, as the motif of months going by and grief remaining persists (e.g. in the lines from 16: “Think of me without you, / stuck here forever between rainless May / and the drought of June”, or 18: “Autumn fans its tail without you / and spring bears its burden alone / Summer /.../ manages without you / and winter closes your many doors /.../ but in the gulf of August / days are where you left them” (162–163)). Nowhere is this as

apparent as in canto 19 (pp. 163–164), which devotes twelve of its thirteen lines to the months that have passed since the lover’s death:

Are you visiting the harems of April?
Travelling the great world of May?
Are you researching the archives of June?
Do the rains of July grieve you?
Are you saluting the landslides of August,
the independence of September?
Are you in unarmed combat with October?
Does November please you?
Is December your new best friend?
Are you hunting that grail, January?
Do you still have time for February?
Have you seen March,
celebrating the marriage of green and blue?

The cycle of nature is further accentuated by the listing of the months (April to March, in a parody of enjambment), while the monotony of time is depicted through repetition of questions, and particularly through the anaphora (“Are you...?”) that places the speaker in the position of one who always asks, and is never answered. Finally, the thirteenth line emphasises the ideas of union and loss – there is a marriage, but not the one that the speaker longs for. Moderns poets, even those as closely connected to Romanticism as Shuttle, have difficulty finding solace in regeneration. Nature and its cycles might have brought comfort to Wordsworth, but Shuttle is not consoled by the fact that her dead lover is now part of the Earth’s “diurnal course”.

“Missing You”, then, walks the fine line between traditional and subversive elegy, with the speaker stuck in the liminal stage of mourning, on the verge of crossing the threshold into acceptance and consolation. Kennedy (2007: 26) states that an important feature of elegy is that “it occurs in a place and at a time divorced from everyday reality” with “these places and times often [being] simultaneously conceptual and literal”. Shuttle’s elegy mentions months, but they exist in a limbo, offering no resolution. As for places, she often chooses pedestrian, corporate facilities whose uncanniness has been making us uncomfortable since at least Ginsberg’s “A Supermarket in California” – canto 2 has the speaker weeping in Tesco’s, Sainsbury’s, Boots, Asda, Woolworths, Clarks and Superdrug. Even the places that seem to have been designed for solace and problem-solving do nothing of the sort (“I wept /.../ in the library /.../ in the churches /.../ and in the House of Commons” (155–156)). This is typical of contemporary elegy, where the poets

“forswear traditional procedures of mourning, adopting deliberately unidealized settings” and grieving not only for the deceased “but also [for] the vanished rituals of grief and consolation themselves” (Sacks, qtd. in Twiddy, 2012: 6). Not even the sea, which has been a recurrent trope in elegy since Milton’s *Lycidas*, can bring comfort to the speaker of “Missing You”: “Don’t bring me the sea” (159). Shuttle emphasises the unnaturalness of grief, which, again, illustrates Ramazani’s idea that modern elegists tend to “attack convention and often leave their readers and themselves inconsolable” (Kennedy, 2007: 6). This can be seen in canto 15, which plays with idioms as if to say that any stability, even linguistic, is illusory: “I’m the leopard changing my spots, /.../ the elephant who forgets, /.../ the cloud without a silver lining” (162).

The overall impression of “Missing You” is that it hovers on the verge of being subversive – it refuses the transcendence and consolation of typical masculine elegy, insisting that any self-knowledge that the speaker gains is achieved through connection with the deceased, and not through psychic *agon* (Schenk, 1986: 17). On the other hand, it falls short of what Schenk (1986: 24) calls “the female elegist’s most characteristic subversion of the masculine elegiac”: the refusal of “the closure elegy conveniently provides, preferring /.../ the ‘violent sensations’ /.../ to the false and destructive finality of ‘conclusion’.” Shuttle’s speaker *wants* closure, and in canto 23 (2012a: 165–166) she states:

I’m letting go of you
year by year /.../
There is so much of you,
you will never completely cease, /.../
there’s no rush, no deadline,
time doesn’t matter,
its just that I can’t despair forever

When she finally lets go of the dead lover in poem 24, it is not because she has found peace, but because he is simply uncontainable (“No city working till late at night could keep you / nor the happy endings of the sea / The theatre sold-out every night couldn’t hold you, / nor the long disobedience of the truth”). She assures him that he will never be forgotten, and the reader is left with the impression that, although the words may have ceased for now (“all my schools closed for summer, / silent for weeks”), they are bound to return, “elusive as an elegy, daring as dusk”.

CONCLUSION: SOLACE AND SUBVERSION

Starting with Anglo-Saxon poetry, through Chaucer and early Renaissance authors (the aptly named Churchyard and Grimald), to Spenser and into the modern era, elegy has been one of the most resilient poetic modes in the English literature. This is not surprising; as humans, we have a propensity towards attachment, music, and poetry, and, faced with loss, we tend to combine those into expressions of grief. Contemporary elegy may have gone through certain modifications, particularly in light of the drastic changes that the last century brought into the world, but this basic sentiment still remains.

A traditionally patriarchal form, elegy has also undergone changes under the influence of gender re-evaluations, which resulted in the differentiation between masculine and feminine elegiac models. Thus, “eulogy and transcendence are the most salient features of the masculine elegy, and they arise directly from masculine patterns of competition, separation and individuation” (Schenk, 1986: 20). Feminine elegy, on the other hand, is “more concerned with attachment than separation” (Kennedy, 2007: 85), and places emphasis on recuperation over substitution. This is certainly the case with Penelope Shuttle’s “Missing You”: the speaker admits that she “can’t despair forever”, but the overall impression is that of gradual healing, not finality or resolution. Her later elegies, from the collection *Unsent*, still address the same loss, sometimes with humour (“just because I live alone / doesn’t mean / I have to listen to Radio Four” (239)), sometimes with tough love (“the standing stone of time / says to me – / *get a life, girlfriend*” (246)), and sometimes with affection and reason combined (“I love you, / even though / (forgive me) / I threw all your shoes away / eight years ago” (261)). Using elemental, natural imagery, and drawing on mythical, “shamanistic” practices, Shuttle’s poetry deals with grief in a way that allows for recovery, but subverts the notion of complete solace.

Even though Peter Redgrove, the subject of Shuttle’s elegies, was a fellow poet, he is represented as a “lost Lenore”: not a literary predecessor, but a beloved husband. This further cements “Missing You” as a work of feminine elegiac poetry – it mourns a personal loss, and approaches recuperation by invoking the connection between the survivor and the deceased. Shuttle has no pretensions to universalising her loss or speaking on anyone’s behalf (“I can’t cry anyone’s tears except my own, / can’t teach anything but my own ignorance” (156)). But the heartfelt expression of her elegies still evokes a genuine response in the reader, who feels the unnaturalness of a Redgroveless world (“like a rainbow without red”

(158)), thanks to Shuttle's richness of emotion and turn of phrase. And that is certainly a hallmark of a great poet.

Bojana Vujin

„NEUHVATLJIV POPUT ELEGIJE, NEUSTRAŠIV POPUT SUMRAKA”:

„NEDOSTAJEŠ MI” AUTORKE PENELOPI ŠATL KAO SAVREMENA TUŽBALICA

Rezime

Elegija je pesnički izraz sa bogatom tradicijom, koji je tokom svog dugog postojanja pretrpeo značajne promene. U antičkoj književnosti ovaj se termin odnosio na tekstove napisane elegijskim distihom, da bi kasnije počeo da označava poeziju koja izražava tugu, najčešće zbog nečije smrti. U engleskoj poeziji, elegija se, uslovno rečeno, pojavljuje još u anglo-saksonskom periodu, premda se njeno današnje značenje vezuje uz pesništvo renesanse i autore poput Edmunda Spensera. S obzirom na to da elegija najčešće izražava tugu koju pesnik oseća zbog smrti nekog od svojih prethodnika, može se reći da je ona vrlo patrijarhalan žanr, koji služi i kao ritual inicijacije u redove pesničkog kanona, gde se novi autor trudi da svojim stvaralaštvom prevaziđe mentora za kojim tuguje. Pošto su pesnikinje generacijama namerno isključivane iz kanona, kod njih retko kad postoji ovakav odnos prema prethodnicama, tako da se može reći da je ženska elegija poezija zajedništva, a ne poezija takmičarskog karaktera. Još jedna bitna razlika između „ženske” i „muške” elegije jeste u tome što u tradicionalnoj, muškoj elegiji, postoji jasan prelaz od tuge do utehe, dok ženska elegija često odbija rastanak sa predmetom tužbalice, a time i utehu. U ovom radu, analizira se ciklus kratkih pesama pod nazivom „Nedostaješ mi” savremene britanske pesnikinje Penelopi Šatl, s namerom da se utvrdi u kojoj meri on zaista može da se posmatra kao subverzivna ženska elegija, a u kolikoj kao tradicionalna tužbalica. Takođe, daje se osvrt i na ulogu elegije u poeziji ove pesnikinje uopšte i zaključuje da jedinstven način na koji ona izražava tugu i žaljenje svakako predstavlja jedan od razloga zbog kojih se Penelopi Šatl može svrstati u sam vrh savremene anglofone poezije.

Ključne reči: elegija, feministička kritika, Penelopi Šatl, savremena engleska poezija

REFERENCES

- Byrne, J. (2005, Summer). The Wolf Interview: Penelope Shuttle. *The Wolf Magazine*. Preuzeto 12. 1. 2018 sa: http://www.wolfmagazine.co.uk/10_interview_ps.php
- Dowson, J.–Entwhistle, A. (2006). *A History of Twentieth-Century British Women's Poetry*. Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Gregson, I. (1996). *Contemporary Poetry and Postmodernism: Dialogue and Estrangement*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kennedy, D. (2007). *Elegy (The New Critical Idiom)*. London–New York: Routledge.
- Linehan, G. (writer–director). (2007, 31 Aug). Return of the Golden Child. *The IT Crowd*. Season 2, episode 2. Talkback Thames–Channel 4 Television Corporation.
- O’Brien, S. (2012, 28 Dec). *Unsent: New and Selected Poems 1980–2012* by Penelope Shuttle – Review. *The Guardian*. Preuzeto 12. 1. 2018. sa: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/dec/28/unsent-penelope-shuttle-review>
- Preminger, A.–Brogan, T. V. F. (eds.). (1993). *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Schenk, C. M. (1986, Spring). Feminism and Deconstruction: Re-Constructing the Elegy. *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*. Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 13–27. Preuzeto 31. 3. 2018. sa: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/463660>
- Shuttle, P. (2012a). *Unsent: New and Selected Poems 1980–2012*. Tarsset: Bloodaxe Books.
- Shuttle, P. (2012b). Penelope on Writing Poetry. Preuzeto 31. 3. 2018. sa: <http://www.penelopeshuttle.co.uk/about-writing-poetry.html>
- Twiddy, I. (2012). *Pastoral Elegy in Contemporary British and Irish Poetry*. London–New York: Continuum Literary Studies.
- Wilkinson, B. (2007). Penelope Shuttle: Critical Perspective. Preuzeto 10. 1. 2018. sa: <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/penelope-shuttle>