Original Scientific Paper
УДК: 821.111.09-2 ШАФЕР П.
DOI: 10.5937/zrffp53-45056

"PERU IS A SILENT COUNTRY": A LOST OPPORTUNITY FOR CULTURAL EXCHANGE IN *THE ROYAL HUNT OF THE SUN*

Nataša R. TUČEV[1]
University of Niš
Faculty of Philosophy
English Department

[1] natasa.tucev@filfak.ni.ac.rs

Received: June 16, 2023
Accepted: September 29, 2023

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Keywords:
Peter Shaffer;
Aime Cesaire;
imperialism;
culture;
postcolonial studies.

Abstract. In his renowned *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950), Aime Cesaire points out that the kind of contact which was typically established when the European colonizers encountered other civilisations was not wholesome or mutually beneficial, as the Europeans rarely made any genuine effort to acknowledge the values and achievements of other cultures; instead, their focus was primarily on exploitation and material gain. Such dynamic is also evident in Peter Shaffer's play *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* (1964), where most of the members of the sixteenth-century Spanish expedition to Peru treat the Inca culture with hostility and disdain, or even regard some of its aspects as a threat which needs to be eliminated. The exceptions to this attitude may be found at the individual level, where some attempts at recognizing the cultural values of the Other are made by the protagonist, Pizarro, and the narrator, Martin. The paper examines these attempts, but aims to demonstrate that, in the final analysis, they also fail, so that Shaffer's play as a whole conveys a message that imperialist ambitions inevitably undermine any opportunity for a beneficial cross-cultural encounter. In addition to Cesaire, other authors in the field of postcolonial and ideological criticism, such as Chinua Achebe, Salman Rushdie, Edward Said, and Roland Barthes will also be referred to.

[2] Prepared as a part of the project *Scientific Publications in Teaching English Linguistics and Anglo-American Literature and Culture*, conducted at the University of Niš, Faculty of Philosophy (No. 300/1-14-1-01).

Introduction

Aime Cesaire (2000) begins his *Discourse on Colonialism* by arguing that it is of essential importance to ask the "innocent first question"—what is colonialism—and to establish what it is not. In his words, it is "neither evangelization, nor a philanthropic enterprise" (Cesaire, 2000, p. 32), i.e., it is not undertaken either in order to bring Christianity to the Third World countries, nor in order to improve the lives of natives and share with them the benefits of technological progress out of some altruistic motives. Instead, Cesaire points to the urge for economic gain and geopolitical domination as the primary motives behind the colonial enterprise. As he states, its chief actors were "the adventurer and the pirate", "the gold digger and the merchant", "appetite and force" (Cesaire, 2000, p. 33).

Seeking to refute ideological claims and official justifications regarding colonialism, Cesaire also points out that, significantly, it never had a positive role in placing different civilisations in contact. It is true, as he concedes, that if a culture is mostly isolated and without sufficient opportunity to become enriched through an exchange with other cultures, it will eventually lose its vitality and wither. Such a beneficial exchange is, in Cesaire's terms, "oxygen" for cultures, and being at a crossroads of various influences, the way Europe has been for centuries, enables a culture to thrive and develop. However, as Cesaire claims, in the process of colonialism there was no mutually beneficial exchange of intellectual, artistic or spiritual achievements. He argues that the indigenous African, American or Asian cultures did not gain anything positive from their contact with the European colonizers, but were in numerous cases irreparably damaged by it, or entirely wiped out:

> "I ask the following question: has colonization really *placed civilizations in contact?* Or, if you prefer, of all the ways of *establishing contact*, was it the best?
>
> I answer *no.*
>
> And I say that between *colonization* and *civilization* there is an infinite distance: that out of all the colonial expeditions that have been undertaken, out of all the colonial statutes that have been drawn up, out of all the

> memoranda that have been dispatched by all the ministries, there could not come a single human value." (Cesaire, 2000, p. 34)

In Cesaire's opinion, the colonizers' civilization does not end up being spiritually enriched, either, since the colonizers invariably view the non-European societies as inferior in every respect, and unworthy of getting to know or learn from. He argues that in this wholesale rejection and disrespect of the Other, the colonizers are guided by "the dishonest equation", according to which Christianity equals civilization and paganism equals savagery (Cesaire, 2000, p. 33). In the minds of the colonizers, a culture which is not based on the principles of Christianity is not a culture at all, so that the indigenous views on spirituality and crucial existential questions are simply scorned, or else experienced as a threat to the entrenched European mindset.

While the kind of beneficial exchange that Cesaire yearns for hardly ever occurred between the Europeans and the "new world" cultures they encountered, one notable exception was certainly the sixteenth-century philosopher Michele de Montaigne. Montaigne expressed great admiration for the Latin American indigenous societies in his writings; in his essay *On Coaches* (1580), for instance, he praises "the astonishing magnificence of the cities of Cusco and Mexico", as well as their dwellers' art and craftsmanship exhibited in creating various artefacts and ornaments. Mourning the ruthless way in which these societies were wiped out by the European invaders, he also points to the high moral qualities they had cultivated, and even argues that their moral superiority was the cause of their demise: "as to what concerns devotion, observance of the laws, goodness, liberality, loyalty, and plain dealing, it was of use to us that we had not so much as they; for they have lost, sold and betrayed themselves by this advantage over us" (Montaigne, 1580, p. 1). He discusses in detail the manner in which Atahuallpa, the emperor of Peru, was deceived and killed by the Spaniards, while simultaneously praising the Inca's dignity, his "frank, liberal and constant spirit" and his regal bearing and fortitude in the face of adversity (Montaigne, 1580, pp. 3–4).

It is likewise important to mention that more recently, in the field of post-colonial studies, there have been authors who have offered a somewhat different perspective on the issue of cultural exchange. They argue that, in spite of all the negative consequences of colonialism, it is still possible to recognize some beneficial effects it has had at the level of culture. In the text titled *The African Writer and the English Language* (1975), for instance, Chinua Achebe observes that it is due to the use of English that the authors throughout the African continent are capable of appreciating each other's writings and conceiving of the African literature as a unified body of work. He states that colonialism brought together "many peoples that had hitherto gone their several ways. And it gave them a language with which to talk to one another. If it failed to give them a song, it at least gave them a tongue, for sighing" (Achebe, 2006, p. 185). On a similar note, Salman Rushdie discusses the literature produced in the English language in the Commonwealth countries. He dislikes the term "Commonwealth Literature", viewing it as patronizing and potentially segregationist, and proposes instead

that all literary works written in English should be studied together. Such an approach, as he maintains, would effectively internationalize English literature, turning it into a "world literature" (Rushdie, 1991, p. 70).

However, the views and ideas discussed by Cesaire in *Discourse on Colonialism* appear to be most suitable for analysing Peter Shaffer's play *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, insofar as it dramatizes a failure of cultural exchange in the encounter between the European colonizers and an indigenous culture. The same as Montaigne, Shaffer focuses on the historical facts regarding the conquest of Peru, representing the crucial historical events such as the massacre of the Incas and the capture and eventual execution of Atahuallpa in the hands of the Spanish conquistadors. While the Spaniards are generally depicted in the play as unsympathetic towards the natives, showing no understanding or appreciation of their culture, certain attempts at exchange and mutual understanding still take place in the play. These motifs are in particular related to the dynamic between Atahuallpa and his captor, Pizarro, and to the character of the narrator, Martin, who demonstrates genuine interest in the Inca language and spiritual tradition. The following analysis will examine these attempts, but also point to their ultimate failure to alter the general course of events and the overall devastating consequences of imperialist exploitation and conquest.

The Encounter with the Inca Culture: Society, Religion, Language

In Shaffer's play, Pizarro is capable of an objective insight into the Inca culture due to his own cultural relativism, which leads him to view all cultural concepts from a detached standpoint, without ascribing absolute validity to any of them. In this respect, Pizarro appears to have the sensibility of a postmodern person living in a world without absolutes, even though the play is historically situated in the sixteenth century. He explains the origin of all man-made structures to his young page, Martin, in the following manner:

> "Men cannot just stand as men in this world. It's too big for them and they grow scared. So they build themselves shelters against the bigness, do you see? They call the shelters Court, Army, Church. They're useful against loneliness... but they're not true. They're not real…" (Shaffer, 1966, p. 30)

The origin of all institutions, in Pizarro's view, lies in our need to create "shelters", various forms of societal organization which give a familiar shape to our world and fend off the sense of existential loneliness. However, the institutions he mentions also constitute the social superstructure, whose essential role is to legitimate the power of the ruling class (Eagleton, 2002, p. 5). They are what Althusser calls Ideological State Apparatuses, instilling a set of preconceptions, norms and values in the members of a given society. In this particular case,

Pizarro points to their role in providing the Spanish military with an ideological justification for violence and conquest. Thus, for instance, Pizarro discards the notions such as "army loyalty" and "army tradition", arguing that they simply serve to conceal the conquerors' brutal impulses. When Martin claims that "a noble reason can make a fight glorious", Pizarro bitterly replies: "Give me a reason which remains noble once you start hacking off limbs in its name" (Shaffer, 1966, p. 31). The conquest of Peru, which is officially justified by the "noble reason" of saving the natives' souls and converting them to Christianity, soon comes down to hacking off limbs, revealing its true, atrocious nature.

Pizarro's detached, cynical perspective on the proclaimed values of the imperialist Spain still does not mean that he is capable of conceiving a viable alternative to the colonizing process. Edward Said makes a similar point about Joseph Conrad's character Marlow. As both the narrator and the protagonist of *Heart of Darkness* (1899), Marlow records the illusions of imperialism and its "tremendous violence and waste" (Said, 1994, p. 26). He also, as Said points out, dates imperialism and shows its historical contingency. In this manner, although Marlow himself cannot give us a full view of what is outside "the world-conquering attitudes" of the European colonizers, and cannot imagine an Africa which is not carved up into European colonies, his narrative permits the readers to consider such an alternative (Said, 1994, pp. 24–26). The same may be said of the character of Pizarro in Shaffer's play. It is this cultural relativism which enables him to be objective when considering the tenets of the Inca culture and the way they may be compared and contrasted to those of his home country.

One of the key differences between the two cultures, as presented in the play, may be summed up as communality vs. individualism (Block, 2019, p. 5). Apart from the elevated status of their king Atahuallpa—who is worshipped as a human incarnation of the Sun god—the Inca society is depicted as remarkably egalitarian. The Spaniards are baffled when they first encounter the Inca land-tillers, singing contentedly while working in the corn-field terraces; one of the conquistadors comments that it is the first time he has ever seen "people glad at working" (Shaffer, 1966, p. 44). Here, as the Inca headman explains, "all work together in families: fifty, a hundred, a thousand" (Shaffer, 1966, p. 44). All members of the Inca community are provided with means and material possessions in equal amounts and assigned the same duties: at an appropriate age, they protect harvest from predators, care for herds, serve as Atahuallpa's warriors, get married and are allotted additional land at the birth of their children; at the age of fifty they retire and are "fed in honour till they die" (Shaffer, 1966, p. 45), i.e., provided for by the community for the rest of their lives. The encounter with such a drastically different set of cultural values and societal rules is shocking for the Spaniards, who have been taught that it is natural to always crave more possessions and that greed is an inborn human trait. The

Incas, who are "not poor, not rich, all same" (Shaffer, 1966, p. 45) demonstrate by the very existence and functioning of their society that it is not so.

As Pizarro observes, "Here shames every country which teaches we are born greedy for possessions. Clearly we're made greedy when we're assured it's natural" (Shaffer, 1966, p. 45). This corresponds to Roland Barthes' explanation that ideology functions by turning *anti-physis* (that which is not natural, such as greed) into *pseudo-physis* (that which is perceived as natural, given and unalterable within the framework of a certain social system); it is this process of naturalisation of the dominant meanings and ideas that enables the imperialist class society to maintain its status quo (Barthes, 1991, p. 142). Given that the Inca society is based on a different system of labour division and distribution of wealth, it enables one to make subversive comparisons with the European societies, which is why it is perceived as threatening and eventually wiped out by the colonizers.

The difference between the two societies is closely related to the difference between their two corresponding religious systems. Church is one of the institutions Pizarro mentions in his speech to Martin, exemplifying human inclination to create "shelters"—social structures whose purpose is to give meaning and a sense of security in a chaotic universe (MacMurraugh-Kavanagh, 1998, p. 79). For Pizarro, such structures may be useful against loneliness, but he ultimately sees them as man-made, contingent and "not real". In addition, he is fully aware of the hypocritical role the Church plays in the conquest of Peru, justifying the slaughter of the Incas by representing it in religious terms as a holy war against the Anti-Christ, and absolving the soldiers who have committed atrocities. In the scene where the priests convince him to kill Atahuallpa, Pizarro rightly points out how far their attitudes have strayed from the original teachings of the Gospels:

> "How I hate you. 'Kill who I bid you kill and I will pardon it.' YOU with your milky fingers forcing in the blade... 'Rip!' you scream, 'Tear! Blind! In the name of Christ!' Tell me, soft Father, if Christ was here now, do you think he would kill my Inca?" (Shaffer, 1966, p. 125)

However, while Pizarro discards the official Church doctrine, it is evident that, throughout the play, he yearns for some other form of worship which would fulfil his spiritual needs. A number of Peter Shaffer's plays—most notably, *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, *Equus* (1973) and *Amadeus* (1979)—explore the motif of spirituality and human need for passionate worship. In the 1963 interview with Barry Pree, Shaffer likewise stresses the crucial importance of a positive belief, and criticizes John Osborne's writing because of a lack of such belief in his plays (Shaffer & Pree, 1963, p. 64). As Madeleine MacMurraugh-Kavanagh points out, when one of Shaffer's characters lacks an appropriate object of worship, or has no capacity for it, "he or she is swamped by a sense of alienation, is cut off from the life-affirming extremities of instinct and passion, and is depicted as only half-alive, drifting like a ghost towards a point of spiritual

crisis" (MacMurraugh-Kavanagh, 1998, p. 80). Pizarro is in such an alienated state through much of the play, and it is clear that his "hunt" referred to in the title is not a hunt for treasure, but for a new existential mode based on a new, positive faith he might embrace (MacMurraugh-Kavanagh, 1998, p. 86). This makes him attracted to the Inca religion, and hopeful that it may provide an answer for his spiritual crisis.

One of the most important characteristics of the Inca belief system, as presented in the play, is the concept of cyclical time. The centrality of the sun in their religion implies a sense of perpetual renewal, as the sun appears to rise every morning and is also inseparable from the cycles of nature. Thus, by means of their myths and beliefs, the Incas feel connected to nature and imaginatively and emotionally partake in its immortality. As opposed to this, the concept of time inherent in the Christian doctrine is linear: time is perceived as a path leading from birth to death, and from there onward to infinity in the afterlife, which is promised as a reward for the faithful. Having lost his faith, however, Pizarro only sees a path leading to death, feeling that there is nothing that would prevent or make bearable the inevitable passage of time. In his rhetoric, time is presented as a prison from which there is no escape:

> "That prison the Priests call Sin Original, I know as Time. And seen in time everything is trivial. Pain. Good. God is trivial in that seeing. Trapped in this cage we cry out, 'There is a gaoler; there must be. At the last, last of lasts he will let us out. He will! He will! But, oh my boy, no one will come for all our crying." (Shaffer, 1966, p. 115)

The Inca religion, as opposed to this, offers the sun as a physical, visible symbol of immortality, suggesting to Pizarro that within that spiritual framework transcendence of time may be possible (MacMurraugh-Kavanagh, 1998, p. 85). "'To a savage mind', Pizarro muses,

> 'it [the sun] must make a fine God. I myself can't fix anything nearer to a thought of worship than standing at dawn and watching it fill the world. Like the coming of something eternal, against going flesh. What a fantastic wonder that anyone on earth should dare to say: 'That's my father. My father: the sun!' It's silly – but tremendous…" (Shaffer, 1966, p. 65)

The appeal of the Incas' spiritual beliefs becomes even stronger for Pizarro when he befriends his prisoner, Atahuallpa, who offers to deliver him from his fear of time and death. The events in Shaffer's play leading to this moment correspond to historical records regarding the conquest of Peru; after they have massacred thousands of unarmed Incas in order to capture their sovereign, Atahuallpa, the Spaniards demand enormous ransom for him. They designate a room in which Atahuallpa is held prisoner and ask that his subjects fill it with golden artefacts. However, when the Incas comply, the Spaniards debate

whether to honour the deal, worrying that once Atahuallpa is released, he will start an uprising against the invaders. At this point, the play focuses on Pizarro's psychic condition. Feeling that everything is meaningless in the face of encroaching death, Pizarro sees no point in keeping his word. In his view, since death inevitably comes for us all, betraying and murdering Atahuallpa simply means that the Inca will die somewhat sooner.

During Atahuallpa's captivity, however, a friendship has developed between the two men, and when Atahuallpa becomes aware of the desperate, faithless state that Pizarro is in, he offers his captor to give him a new hope and a new faith:

> "Pizarro. You will die soon and you do not believe in your God. That is why you tremble and keep no word. Believe in me. I will give you a word and fill you with joy. For you I will do a great thing. I will swallow death and spit it out of me." (Shaffer, 1966, p. 133)

Atahuallpa willingly accepts to die at the hands of the Spaniards, believing that he is divine and that by getting resurrected he will provide Pizarro with a viable spiritual belief. While Atahuallpa cannot really come back from the dead, his self-sacrifice still has a significant symbolical and emotional value. Shaffer deliberately suggests parallels between Atahuallpa and Christ (the Inca emperor is thirty-three years old, and considered the son of god) in order to imply that there is also something Christ-like in Atahuallpa's willingness to die for love. Pizarro, however, wrongly chooses to believe in Atahuallpa's immortality literally, and is consequently devastated when his newly-found god is not resurrected after all. Still, at the end of the play, Pizarro is at least delivered from his obsessive fear of time and death (MacMurraugh-Kavanagh, 1998, p. 89), and reaches a profound psychological insight about the importance of empathy and our ability to create our own meanings and values in a world without absolutes. Crying for the first time in his life, he realizes that there is something miraculous and divine in the human ability to "make water in a sand world"; it is "some immortal business surely" (Shaffer, 1966, p. 138).

Although Pizarro and Atahuallpa manage to forge a close emotional bond, the reader is nevertheless made aware of the difficulties they face due to not speaking each other's language. This pertains to the other characters in the play as well, and may be interpreted as one of the ways in which Shaffer symbolically suggests the obstacles to meaningful communication and exchange between the two cultures. Instances of linguistic misunderstanding, misinterpretation and mistranslation abound in the play, contributing to an overall atmosphere of confusion and distrust, even among those rare individuals who attempt to understand the Other (Block, 2019, p. 5). The role of an interpreter is first assigned to Felipillo, a native South American boy employed by Pizarro. Felipillo, however, deliberately mistranslates, out of self-interest and for his personal gain, thus deepening the hostile feelings between the Spaniards and the Incas.

These mistranslations are first detected by Martin, who begins to study the Inca language of his own accord. Martin's willingness to understand the language of the Incas is coupled with his general interest in their culture, a trait which sets him apart from the majority of the conquistadors. In the end of the play, Martin grieves for the virtual erasure of the Inca civilisation, commenting on how the family groups which used to sing while working on the corn-field terraces are gone. Instead, under the Spanish rule, the enslaved natives work in the mines and "they don't sing there"; Peru has become "a silent country, frozen in avarice" (Shaffer, 1966, p. 138).

In spite of the language barrier, however, Pizarro and Atahuallpa in Shaffer's play find a way of connecting and communicating. In a symbolic acceptance of a new faith, Pizarro confesses his sins to Atahuallpa. The confession lasts for an hour, even though Atahuallpa does not understand a word of it:

> "As night fell like a hand over the eye, and great white stars sprang out over the snow-rim of our world, Atahuallpa confessed Pizarro. He did it in the Inca manner. He took Ichu grass and a stone. Into the Ichu grass the general spoke for an hour or more. None heard what he said save the King, who could not understand it. Then the King struck him on the back with the stone, cast away the grass, and made the signs of purification." (Shaffer, 1966, p. 134)

In this scene, as well as in several others, it is implied that our most profound insights and experiences may in fact be extra-linguistic; earlier on, Pizarro recalls a love episode from his youth, where for a brief period he stepped out of his customary role of a conqueror and a soldier. In that moment, when he and his beloved lay on the rocky shore of the Southern Ocean, Pizarro had a mystical experience of union with the natural world, which he later describes as being "right out of the net of words to catch" (Shaffer, 1966, p. 64). His confession to Atahuallpa is likewise an experience beyond language, which cannot be caught in a net of words. However, the same as his brief love affair, the exchange with Atahuallpa represents a divergence from Pizarro's customary mode of existence.

Conclusion

Aime Cesaire's astute observation that colonialism does not bring civilisations into contact is comparable to the insights offered by Peter Shaffer's play *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*. As a rule, the Spanish characters in the play are too focused on the prospect of material gain, conquering and exploiting the Incas, to give any serious consideration to the merits of the culture they are destroying. Cesaire's argument—that, in the eyes of the colonizers, only the societies based on the principles of Christianity were considered civilized—is also applicable to Shaffer's

play. Even though the Inca culture is highly developed, with some of its tenets even proving to be more enlightened and progressive than those of the European societies, this fact is not recognized by the conquerors. Quite the contrary, in Shaffer's play the Europeans regard the indigenous existential mode as a threat: the Inca communality is regarded as a threat to the European individualism, whereas the Inca religion, based on nature-worship, is regarded as a threat to the Christian doctrine of heavenly reward. This is why Pizarro sums up the values which the invaders strive to impose on the Incas as "Choice. Hunger. Tomorrow" (Shaffer, 1966, p. 126). "Choice" refers to the religious notion that one must choose between this world and the next, rejecting the earthly, physical life in order to save one's soul; "tomorrow" is another aspect of the Church doctrine, implying that the ultimate reward for one's obedience to the social structures awaits in the afterlife. "Hunger" is Pizarro's reference to the ideology of the European class societies, which instil in their subjects a belief that greed is an inborn human trait, so that one inevitably struggles to increase one's material wealth and climb up the social ladder. In the play, the Spaniards are astonished to realize that there is no such hunger among the Incas, due to their fundamentally different social organisation. Most importantly, the play shows that the indigenous people are not allowed to adhere to the values of their culture, but are given only two options: to accept cultural assimilation, or to be wiped out. This is congruent with Cesaire's conclusion that one cannot think of colonialism as a process whereby two cultures meet on equal terms and conduct a mutually beneficial exchange; instead, it is perceived by both him and Shaffer as an endeavour to dominate or completely annihilate the Other. As Peter Podol points out, this attitude is also damaging for the spiritual well-being of the colonizers, and "no true victor emerges from this clash of civilisations" (1984, p. 124).

Within the framework of imperialist conquest, as *The Royal Hunt* demonstrates, any individual effort to understand and appreciate the indigenous culture is thwarted, and proves to be of little impact in the general course of history. Thus, in spite of the bond of friendship which is forged between Pizarro and Atahuallpa, and Pizarro's desire to embrace the Inca religion, he will ultimately become Atahuallpa's executioner—being forced, through a net of complex historical and social forces, to destroy the very thing that has begun to endow his life with meaning (MacMurraugh-Kavanagh, 1998, p. 89). The same may be observed about Martin who, in spite of his genuine interest in learning about the Inca culture, ultimately fails to make any difference in the overall scheme of things. Addressing the audience as an old and embittered figure at the end of the play, Martin can be nothing more than a chronicler of the atrocious events resulting in the annihilation of an entire civilisation. Furthermore, the reader finds out that Martin has himself become one of the slave owners and landowners in the newly established Spanish colony. For all these reasons, Shaffer's play may be read as a presentation of a tragically lost opportunity for cultural exchange.

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Наташа Р. ТУЧЕВ
Универзитет у Нишу
Филозофски факултет
Департман за англистику

„Перу је земља без гласа": пропуштена прилика за размену међу културама у драми *Краљевски лов на сунце*

Резиме

У чувеном тексту *Расправа о колонијализму* (1950), Еме Сезер указује на то да се сусрети Европљана са другим народима у периоду колонијалне експанзије нису одвијали у духу међусобног упознавања и оплемењивања различитих култура. Колонијалну динамику по правилу је карактерисала тежња за експлоатацијом и извлачењем материјалне добити из земаља Трећег света, при чему су се Европљани ретко трудили да заиста упознају друге цивилизације и уваже њихове вредности и достигнућа. Такав однос према Другом сусреће се и у драми Питера Шафера *Краљевски лов на сунце* (1964), чију окосницу чине историјски догађаји везани за шпански поход на Перу у XVI веку. При сусрету са високо развијеном културом Инка, чланови шпанске експедиције реагују на њу са непријатељством и презиром, при чему поједине аспекте те културе чак доживљавају и као претњу

која се мора елиминисати. Тако начело заједништва, кога се придржавају Инке, постаје претња европском индивидуализму, док се религија Инка, заснована на обожавању природе, посматра као претња хришћанској доктрини спасења. Један упечатљив пример културних разлика везан је и за идеолошку представу карактеристичну за европска класна друштва, према којој се похлепа и друштвена амбиција посматрају као урођене људске особине. Стога су Шпанци изненађени када схвате да међу Инкама, захваљујући суштински другачијој друштвеној организацији, овакве тежње не постоје. Међутим, као што драма приказује, Инкама није дозвољено да наставе да негују вредности своје културе, већ су им понуђене само две опције: да прихвате културну асимилацију или да буду збрисани. Кроз заплет драме *Краљевски лов на сунце*, Шафер, такође, приказује неколико изузетака – то јест, појединачних напора да се домородачкој култури приђе са разумевањем и поштовањем. Ови покушаји, међутим, немају значајног утицаја на опште историјске токове. Тако протагониста драме, Пизаро, упркос пријатељству које склапа са Атахуалпом, поглаваром Инка, и упркос жељи да се приклони духовној традицији овог народа, на крају постаје Атахуалпин џелат, уплетен у мрежу комплексних историјских и друштвених сила које га приморавају да уништи управо оно што је његовом животу почело да даје смисао. Исто се може рећи и за приповедача, Мартина, који упркос свом интересовању за културу и језик Инка не успева да измени ток освајачког похода, нити да ублажи његове последице. Неуспех ових тежњи доприноси општем утиску који преноси Шаферов текст – а то је да империјалистичке амбиције неминовно осујећују сваки покушај добронамерне, позитивне комуникације са Другим. Отуд се ова драма може читати као репрезентација трагично пропуштене могућности за културну размену.

Кључне речи: Питер Шафер; Еме Сезер; империјализам; култура; постколонијална критика.