



The Gods Will Have Blood

Anatole France , Frederick Davies (Translator)

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Published in 1912, when Anatole France was sixty-eight, *The Gods Will Have Blood* is the story of Gamelin, an idealistic young artist appointed as a magistrate during the French Revolution. Gamelin's ideals lead him to the most monstrous mass murder of his countrymen, and the links between Gamelin and his family, his mistress and the humanist Brotteaux are catastrophically severed. This book recreates the violence and devastation of the Terror with breathtaking power, and weaves into it a tale which grips, convinces and profoundly moves. The perfection of Anatole France's prose style, with its myriad subtle ironies, is here translated by Frederick Davies with admirable skill and sensitivity. That *The Gods Will Have Blood* is Anatole France's masterpiece is beyond doubt. It is also one of the most brilliantly polished novels in French literature.

Anatole France was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1921.

The Gods Will Have Blood Details

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βασιλοφρονων, ο Εβαρστ φαντζεται μια πολιτεα που εδρεει η Δημοκρατα και ενα νας νος συμπαθς και φιλεσπλαχνος. λα αλλζουν με την ρδρυση των Επαναστατικν Δικαστηρων στα οποα καταδικζονται εις θνατον δια λαιμητμου οι αντιφρονοντες στο καθεστς του Ροβεσπιρου την εποχ της Μεγλης Τρομοκρατας. Ο Εβαρστ γνεται νορκος και στλνει εκατοντδες ανθρπους στο θνατο χωρς καμ α εξταση της υπθεσης και με λιγοστ ανπαρκτα στοιχεα. Το βιβλο χει φινλε αρχαας τραγωδς...

Το «Οι θεο διψον» του Ανατλ Φρανς ενα να βιβλο αριστοτεχνικ γραμμνο που αποδδει με απλυτη πιστητητα τα γεγοντα την εποχ του Μεγλου Τρμου στο Παρσι. Οι θεο λοιπν διψον για αμα, για θυσια, στε να χτιστε η Επανσταση, να εξολοθρευθον οι εχθρο του Ροβεσπιρου που σαν φδι φαγε την δια του την ουρ. Ο Φρανς δημιουργε πολ ενδιαφροντες χαρακτηρες που τους εντσει στο ιστορικ πλασιο με ιδιατερη μαεστρα, με ζωντανος διαλγους και ενδιαφρουσα ρο γεγοντων, το βιβλο αυτ ενα ταυχρονα τρομερ ενδιαφρον απ λογοτεχνικ ποψη και φοβερ χρσιμο απ ιστορικ. Μια ιδα ριζοσπαστικ πως η Επανσταση του '89, νας τυφνας που ξερζωσε το παλι, κατφερε να καταστραφε στο τλος με τους λανθασμνους χειρισμος των «αδιαφθρων φλων του Λαο». Διαβστε το για να χαρετε την μορφη γραφ του Φρανς και να ζστετε στο πετσ σας το τερατοργημα που γεννηθηκε απ τις στχτες της Βαστλλης, που τσο μοιζει με το τρομερ τερο κκκινο τρας...

Ντελακρου?, Η Ελευθερα οδηγε το Λα?: Αρχ της Επανστασης.

Αννυμου, Η εκτλεση του Ροβεσπιρου: Το τλος της Τρομοκρατας.

Jorge says

Anatole France con un estilo elegante, a veces excesivamente elegante para nuestro tiempo, crea una novela cuyo telón de fondo es la Revolución Francesa de 1789. Anatole France acomete esta gran novela cuando contaba ya con 66 años de edad y contando una gran cantidad de información acerca de este evento que le da un nuevo rumbo a Europa, ya que desde niño leyó de primera mano muchos documentos y libros acerca de la Revolución Francesa, debido a que su padre tenía una librería con un vasto acervo sobre el tema. Este escritor fue ganador del Premio Nobel de Literatura en 1921 y desde mi punto de vista ha ido cayendo en el olvido a pesar de su gran obra literaria.

Es destacable en primera instancia que todas las crónicas acerca de esta novela le otorgan el protagonismo indiscutible al personaje Evariste Gamelin, mediocre pintor y ciudadano discreto, de buenos sentimientos, poseedor de una gran nobleza y candidez, cuya personalidad y proceder se ven trastocados drásticamente por su nombramiento como Jurado durante la vorágine Jacobina. Es interesante analizar o ver desde la distancia el cambio de personalidad de este ciudadano para mutar en un ser despiadado, cruel y excesivamente enérgico. Gamelin se ve enajenado por un sentido de justicia emanado del Terror Jacobino y pierde su individualidad y sentido humano. Algo que se ha repetido a lo largo de la Historia en los regímenes

the events and psychology of participants in the Terror during the French Revolution. It has been translated into English under the titles *The Gods Are Thirsty* or *The Gods Are Athirst*. The main protagonist is Évariste Gamelin, a not very successful painter who lives with and with difficulty supports his widowed mother during this period of general physical deprivation. Gamelin is intensely patriotic, an enthusiastic supporter of the Jacobin left, and he becomes increasingly involved in politics, eventually rising to the position of judge on one of the tribunals trying and sentencing individuals accused of opposing the Revolution. Many historical personages are drawn into the narrative which seems accurate to historical events. The story traces Gamelin's transformation from a sincere and anguished participant in events to a rabid and arbitrarily vengeful persecutor of all those who in his opinion are dangers to the society he dreams of, his victims ultimately including people near and dear to him.

It is impossible for the thoughtful reader not to reflect on contrasts and parallels with political attitudes and actions of the present day and to sense that fanatical extremism, intolerance, and mob psychology are and will be present with us to the end of time. The veneer of civilization is thin indeed, and the temptation to scapegoat and demonize those who are different from ourselves, if only in ideas, convictions, and attitudes, is too easy and too inviting. Rationality and religion have generally proved to be insubstantial bulwarks against the propensities of our inner darknesses, and the hope and expectation that the future will be substantively different from the past often seems illusory.

This is a brilliantly written work, acute in its psychological sensitivity and perceptiveness. The characters are not simplified or caricatured, and there is much to recognize in ourselves and those around us. This is the first of Anatole France's books that I've read, and I'd like to read others. His French is lucid and easy to read.

Afkham says

I really enjoyed the book despite a not so perfectly translated version I had. It is meticulously detailed in describing people, their characteristics, opinions and behavior and also in describing locations. Though I find some statements a bit pretentious and not natural for that specific situation.

The similarity of people and the incidents throughout the time and place is unbelievable. While devouring every sentence, I was thinking of some people I knew who leaved in another country in another time, definitely far enough from French revolution; People who could be retrieved from the lines of *Les dieux ont soif*.

The odd and unique point is I don't think I ever despised or could despise any protagonist more than Gamelin! Yet I couldn't stop reading! Well done France!

Terry says

3.5 - 4 stars

What happens when we let an idea, an ideal of what humanity ought to be, perhaps even a good one of what it could be, consume us? What happens when the idea becomes more important than the people it is meant to represent? What happens when this idea becomes a god to be worshipped blindly and that god thirsts for

human blood in the name of necessity and perfection? Well, the answer is pretty self-evident I guess.

Anatole France's *The Gods will Have Blood* aka *The Gods are Athirst* shows just such a crisis, when the Revolution in France, meant to topple the unjust regime of monarchy and aristocracy in the name of the downtrodden people, became transmuted into a literal Terror, where madam Guillotine reigned supreme and all were suspect. Even those in authority were not safe from the accusing glances and denunciations of all and sundry, and the heroes and champions of liberty of today were all too soon the martyrs and victims of tomorrow. At this time of turmoil we are introduced to the young painter Évariste Gamelin, living in poverty with his widowed mother in a garret in Paris, dreaming of possible fame as an artist and ardently committed to the revolutionary cause. His neighbour, the *ci-devant* nobleman and secular philosopher Maurice Brotteaux, now makes children's puppets and reads his Lucretius, giving aid to his neighbours when he can and grumbling about the deceitful nature of the revolution and its adherents. Finally there is Élodie Blaise, the voluptuous daughter of a clever printseller who has thus far proven able to navigate the tempestuous seas of the revolution and still manage to make a profit amidst the poverty that surrounds her, who pursues the handsome young Gamelin with a desire that is almost bestial in its hunger.

We see Gamelin at first as a young man of great feeling and sensibility. Unable to bear the suffering of a young mother unable to feed her newborn child, he gives her half of his loaf, the last available at the baker's and he goes hungry while he gives his old mother the other half. He is smitten with ardour for the beautiful Élodie, but approaches her with only the most trepidatious of steps. Soon, however, we see that Gamelin's ardent sensibility is a double-edged sword, for it is that which has caused him to throw in his lot wholeheartedly with the Jacobins, willing to accept any sacrifice or demand made by them in the name of liberty, fraternity, and equality. Gamelin soon becomes a juror sitting in judgment over the many suspected traitors and conspirators that the Jacobins aver will be the downfall of all they have fought for. Some of these victims sacrificed in the name of the new government are former leaders and politicians like Danton and Desmoulins caught on the wrong side of the winds of politics, or generals unable to win the victories desired by the authorities against "the enemies of the people". In the true spirit of 'equality' espoused by the powers that be, however, the vast majority of these victims are merely poor souls caught in the net of avarice and fear that permeates the city. Denounced by friends and neighbours they are bakers and prostitutes, soldiers and priests deemed dangerous by virtue of an ill-considered utterance or the chance of being on the wrong side of a hungry mob waiting for bread at a bakery.

These courts soon become nothing more than a death machine, accepting that all accused are guilty and sending them to their deaths by the dozen (without the needless excess of examining evidence and questioning the accused) after mere single trials are deemed inefficient. The real tragedy of all of this is that this Terror was not simply the act of evil men, but of those of a normal, or even good character who were either too weak in the face of fear, too enamoured with the call of power, or too trusting in the aims of the Revolution to fight against it. Gamelin becomes a true believer. He adheres to the dictates of his party with a religious fervour and can placidly send to the guillotine all with whom he is presented for is it not the fault of these headstrong victims that such extreme measures are taken? It certainly cannot be that of the virtuous state that longs only for the regeneration of mankind.

Élodie soon becomes inordinately enamored of Gamelin. Added to his mere physical attractions are those of authority. This young man, who holds in his hands the power of life and death over all of Paris, becomes irresistible. Her dreams of love are mingled with those of blood, and at one point

...at the thought of the knife at her neck, all her flesh melted in an ecstasy of horror and voluptuous transport.

For his part Gamelin's mind becomes fevered and burdened by the weight of the enormity of his actions and it is only in the languishing arms of Élodie that he can find repose. These two youths, each thirsting for more

blood, though for decidedly different reasons, cannot truly rest and seem unable to understand the obvious reasons for their uneasiness and distress.

On the other side we see Brotteaux. A former aristocrat and man of pleasure who while he denies the truths preached on behalf of both God and man is contrariwise unable to accept the suffering of those he sees around him. Despite his professed creed of indifference we see him constantly aiding those in need in both small and large ways. Whether this is in the shape of the defrocked priest Père Longuemare who regrets his own cowardice at the Revolution's outset and admires the conviction of the atheistic philosopher with whom he has many a spirited argument, or the young prostitute Athenais who is by turns a lamb and a lion in the face of persecution, or even Gamelin's mother, sitting hungry in the empty garret she shares with her son the avenger, Brotteaux puts himself out for the individuals he meets in disdain for the great mass of the people...nothing more than a mob that thirsts for death.

Both sides of the spectrum will of course come into contention. Is it any wonder who, in the short term at least, will win? I'm uncertain after reading this who was worse, the idealists who promulgated the ideas that led to these acts of terror and death, or the fickle mob that heeded them thoughtlessly and became the true god of the title that thirsted for blood. This was an excellent examination of the period of the Terror in France. The various levels of society and points of view, the varied stresses that pushed on individuals making them act both more and less than human, are all well presented. Mankind in all its complexity is on view here in a pitiable tale of idealism and evil, a cautionary tale of the need to see the trees that make up the forest. If we forget that even the mob is made up of individual people, then we are destined to be nothing more than a mere atom in its makeup, a fragment of the nameless masses that are swayed by history instead of human affection.

The story ends with 'normalcy' apparently reinstated, the people freed from the tyranny of one set of revolutionaries and granted an apparent respite from the hunger of the guillotine. This respite will be short-lived and it is ironically the materialist Brotteaux who becomes an unwitting prophet. In an utterance which will be used against him by the very people he warns he foresees a day when "...one of these warriors you make gods of swallows you all up like the stork in the fable who gobbles up the frogs." The Revolution and the Terror were not the end of the upheavals France was to experience in these days. The cult of personality was also going to consume them in the name of a Corsican soldier with an iron will and a genius for war.

c?ng r?m says

rùng r?n r?n tóc gáy (dù ngu s? trình ?? v?n hóa kém trí nh? tan tác nên thi?t ra ??c h?i c?ng không bi?t m? nào là m? nào phe nào là phe nào và s? ki?n nào là s? ki?n nào...)
cu?i cùng sau nhi?u n?m, r?t nhi?u n?m, r?t r?t nhi?u n?m, ?ã thích ???c m?t nhân v?t nam trong sách, và lý do thích thi?t logic, b?i vì ông Brotteaux chính là th?y Huy

Richard Derus says

Rating: 3.625* of five

The Book Report: The journey through the Terror of the French Revolution made by artist Évariste Gamelin, aspiring bourgeois to Jacobin true believer to his inevitable fall after the *Coup de Thermidor*. One man's life journey explores the entire *amazing* and enthralling course of the defining break between the

strong shadow over the book, but rarely intrude directly. Indeed, it is often demonstrated that characters are concerned with the daily matter of earning a living or seducing a conquest, not politics. The closeness and contrast between mundane life and sudden, shocking condemnation to death is repeatedly, powerfully demonstrated. The arbitrary nature of Terror is a major theme.

I feel compelled to compare this novel with 'Les Misérables', which is deeply idealistic and in places idealises the sacrifice of life for abstract principles. (Naturally it bears noting that events in Les Mis begin more than twenty years after the Terror, which took place from 1793-4.) Although this is something of an overgeneralisation, Hugo tends to characterise social problems as institutional, requiring reform of structures. France appears uninterested in such analysis, rather he dwells on the personal level of struggle to survive. The characters in 'The Gods Have Blood' seem less aware of the institutions binding their actions than those of 'Les Mis'. On the other hand, France's characters are more human and less absolute. Their morals are definitely looser, too, which both rings true and adds piquancy. I loved the female characters energy and lack of tedious saintliness.

Many small moments in 'The Gods Will Have Blood' stand out as striking. Julie's fondness for dressing up in men's clothing. The artists' gallivant out to the countryside, seemingly idyllic until one member of the party jokingly calls the other by the name of a recently disgraced politician. The angry tirades of Athénaïs the baby-faced prostitute. The death of Citizen Trubert, who absent-mindedly said he was very well whilst coughing up blood. The prisoners playing at 'Revolutionary Tribunal', not only rehearsing their likely fate on Earth but also their punishments in Hell.

My favourite moment, though, is probably when the atheist epicurean Brotteaux invites a homeless priest to stay with him. Brotteaux refuses the priest's thanks, protesting that his kindness stems from, 'that egotism which inspires all men's acts of generosity and self-sacrifice' and also because, 'I've nothing better to do'. The friendly discussion between the two apparent philosophical opposites is fascinating. There and elsewhere, France rather subversively presents a determinedly cynical man who believes in nothing as seemingly the wisest character in the book. This is very interesting contrast to Hugo, whose avowedly cynical character Grantaire is described as a weak drunkard, who only achieves greatness by embracing death for an ideal (love, if not liberty). Whilst Brotteaux by no means benefits from his clear-eyed view of the Terror, France definitely paints him as admirable. He and Gamelin are contrasted powerfully by way of their thoughts and actions, although their eventual fates are identical.

I think that France has captured a perspective on the final phase of the French Revolution that I've not read before. 'The Gods Will Have Blood' is a brilliantly written novel, although the introduction claims it loses quite a bit in translation. I might try and get hold of a copy in French. For quite a short book, it feels very substantial. It'll stay in my mind, of that I'm sure.

Zohour says

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