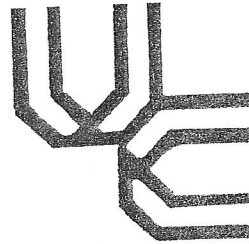


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PREFACE

The 9th Annual Cincinnati Conference on Romance Languages and Literatures holds a particular interest for those who participated in it, for it was the first Cincinnati Conference which had a specific theme: the Imaginary, the Fantastic and the Dream. Initial doubts about the new submission requirement were quickly put to rest by the number and quality of papers which soon inundated the conference office. The overall success of the conference was due to the combined labor of the graduate students in the Department of Romance Languages & Literatures at the University of Cincinnati. The herculean efforts of the conference chair, Danielle Raquidel, should serve as a model to her successors. The two hundred and twenty papers presented in ten sessions (sixty-two panels) were complemented by four prominent guest speakers (including three Taft lectures): Andrew McKenna, Loyola University; Anna Balakian, New York University; Louky Bersianik, Canada; and Ricardo Piglia, Argentina. Conference participants could also attend two plays (one each in French and Spanish), two receptions, and the annual banquet.

In the past decade, the graduate students in our department have worked hard to retain the high quality expected by the Conference's founders in 1981. The desire for excellence annually places the Executive and Managing Editors of the *Cincinnati Romance Review* in the inevitably difficult position of having to choose from among the many superior papers submitted for publication. This important (but thankless) task is made possible by a dedicated editorial board. Our readers' evaluations are critical in determining which papers get published, but--in the tradition of the conference--the ultimate decision rests with the Managing Editor, a graduate student, who works closely with the Executive Editor, a faculty member.

Volume IX of *CRR* contains fourteen articles chosen on the basis of their originality, erudition, and broad interest to teachers of the Romance Literatures. The selections cover seven literatures and span five centuries.

The first three articles treat different aspects of the imaginary and the dream in the sixteenth century. Ute Saine's study provides an original look at the oneiric origins of the New World in Ronsard's nature poetry--the bond between nature and the poet emphasizing that damage or destruction of the former necessarily diminishes the latter. A different type of "folie" from that of environmental destruction is the focus of Anne-Marie Geoghegan's article on Louise Labé. In Labé's *Débat*, Folie's stature equals that of the gods, Geoghegan argues. In a Nietzschean struggle between Apollonian and Dionysian forces, between "sagesse olympique et insouciance fantaisiste," Folie keeps her independence, serving as a mirror for the "folly" of mankind. We end the Golden Age with Mary Gossy's analysis of Cervantes's *Coloquio de los perros*. Gossy calls into question the (once) ruling gender's desire to control feminine discourse through naming the female object of their fears--in this case by labeling her a "witch." The witch, Cañizares, Gossy asserts, controls and subverts traditional narrative by changing the process of signification and by creating separate meanings and identities. In *Coloquio*, the supernatural female pierces the narrative armor of the male to "give birth to dogs and to discourse."

In a penetrating analysis Laurent Déchery explores the function of the dream in the works of Descartes and Diderot, specifically how they incorporate dreams into their respective philosophies. "Le rêve est créé par l'échauffement du cerveau, la maladie, la fatigue intellectuelle," states Déchery. The etymological origin of *rêve* is "extravaguer," "errer au-dehors." Descartes wants to guard against such extravagance, but Déchery questions whether this is possible if one is already "au-dehors." Jane Rush concentrates on Diderot's "extravagance" in creating utopian worlds, a non-traditional *Weltanschauung*, she affirms, "qui subvertit le texte et le rêve."

This subversive element of the supernatural is subsequently explored in three of Juan Valera's dramas. Valera's critical writings, Sue Moore states, emphasize the necessity of the fantasy world. Valera presents the "supernatural world as a legitimate motif for literature." His much maligned earlier dramas, including *Le mejor*

del tesoro, are distinguished by the use of fantasy, a successful element in his *cuentos* which "delights the reader," Moore concludes, "allowing one the luxury of being transported to another world simply to be entertained." Jean de Brunhoff transports his readers to the entertaining fantasy world of Babar, Reenstjerna informs us. Created originally as bedtime stories, the Babar tales are a cultural commentary on the French colonization of Africa, specifically the two philosophies behind French colonial activity: "assimilation and association." Reenstjerna maintains that the Babar stories support the French notion of *mission civilisatrice*, transforming the jungle into an urban utopia, an "African Bois de Boulogne."

The fictional dream world takes on a more sober image in Mauriac's *Thérèse Desqueyroux*. Thérèse's liberating dream, McGrath argues, distinguishes her from other heroines such as Emma Bovary and Manon Lescaut whose "silence" makes them captives of the narrative. Thérèse rejects the (male) literary heritage of "female-object-protagonists," thus enabling her to "define her own image." McGrath reinterprets *Thérèse* through the lens of the "Demeter-Persephone myth" and the psychoanalytic model of feminist critic, Luce Irigaray. The fictional dream image in Mark Frisch's comparative study of Borges and Nabokov emphasizes the artists' "self-definition" and "redefinition" over the mythological. Borges and Nabokov seek to define themselves through their respective cultures, Frisch declares, but their emphasis is on "multirealism" which places both authors on the "cutting edge" of changes in the structure of the modern novel. The resultant interpretations of reality delve into the "inner world of consciousness . . . [where] myths, legends, dreams and imaginative fantasies become valid raw material for literature."

Pedro Lange-Churión analyses the fantastic in Cortázar's "Puertas del cielo" by comparing three seminal works on the topic by Tzvetan Todorov, Irène Bessière and Rosemary Jackson. Lange explores "la relación que dichas teorías exponen entre el análisis de los textos fantásticos y el contexto histórico-ideológico . . ." Nina Hellerstein creates her own thematic model to explore the distinctive qualities of Henri Michaux's oneirism,

concentrating on the themes of "transformation" and "intervention" in his poetry. Dissatisfied with the imperfection of reality, Michaux transforms himself, or his surroundings, Hellerstein asserts, "to disturb the ordinary arrangement of things." By so doing, "he introduces the impossible logic of magic and the dream into a previously dull landscape."

The subversive aspect of dreams is given a political interpretation in Mary Rice's study of two plays by Buero Vallejo. Here, dreams serve as a means of escape for those who are oppressed by a dictatorship. Rice analyses the function of the dream in the plot and its effect on the audience. Buero Vallejo's dramatic techniques create an "interiorization," Rice argues, whereby "his use of dreams and fantasy . . . make the audience experience the inner working of a character's mind." In the following article, Marina Martín emphasizes the philosophical aspects of Borges's works, his familiarity with and appreciation of the British philosophical tradition, specifically that of Hume. In "La busca de Averroes," Martín asserts, Borges presents the reader with a "fantasía metafísica del argentino afanada en los temas teológicos más relevantes . . . temas todos ellos centrales en los *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* [de Hume]." The *Review* concludes with an excellent analysis by Sandra Cypess of two plays by Rosario Castellanos and Willebaldo Lopez, Mexican dramatists whose use of science fiction and "magical realism" serve as "a means to introduce historical figures," or rather, "iconic presentations," the "revenants" on the Mexican stage seemingly brought about by advances in technology.

Finally, a note of appreciation and respect for Professor Heather Arden, who is stepping down as Executive Editor of the *Cincinnati Romance Review*. Heather Arden's professionalism, erudition, and "medieval" (Pythonesque) sense of humor have greatly facilitated the publication of Volume IX of *CRR*. Her tenure was outstanding; we hate to see her go. Professor Enrique Giordano deserves special praise for editorial work far beyond a mere mortal's capacity. The department head, Judith Muyskens, is *always* a source of inspiration (and, occasionally, a source of funding). I should like to thank the members of the editorial board

and my Associate and Assistant Editors, Danielle Raquidel and Dale Hartkemeyer, both of whom spent endless hours proofing and reworking papers into the required style. Enormous thanks to Phyllis Oberacker whose keyboard wizardry is matched only by her patience. Luan Mizer contributed her computer expertise and was always ready with a smile and a helping hand--thanks.

Robin Rash
University of Cincinnati

DREAMING THE FOREST OF GATINE: ECOLOGY AND ANTIQUITY IN RONSARD

Ute Margarete Saine

The period of 1520-1550, coinciding with Ronsard's formation, was one of great turmoil. Besides a population explosion and political tensions arising from the Reformation, the massacres of the American native cultures were apt to cause nightmares in Europe. The slow demise of the Caribbean tribes was unspectacular, but Cortez's extermination of the peoples under Aztec rule in 1521 and Pizarro's liquidation of the Incas in 1531-1533 were fittingly called "boucherie comme sur des bestes sauvages," still late in the century, by Montaigne (*Essais* III, 6). Few realize that the sixteenth century was also a time of crisis for the European forest:

Everything in the European scene points to it. Wood was much used in buildings, even stone ones; all overland and sea transport was made of wood, as were machines and tools, the metal parts always being kept to a minimum; looms and spinning wheels, wine presses and pumps were made of wood, and most ploughing implements were wooden; the swinging plough was made entirely of wood, the plough usually had a wooden ploughshare fitted with a thin iron blade The fact that wood was used everywhere carried enormous significance. (Braudel 362-64)

Until the "Great Ordinance" of 1573, Braudel notes, French forests were rudely decimated both by noblemen wishing to increase revenues and by needy or greedy peasants. For, as he restates the argument, sadly valid for centuries, but disproved by ecology, "the forest was worth nothing until it was used."

Exploiting New World forests as soon as feasible after the removal of the natives, Europeans, needless to say, made no ordinance to protect those forests; nor is there one today, according to recent alarming news. Wood

Americas pervaded sixteenth-century consciousness.⁵ Only Chinard has called Ronsard's words "une protestation . . . contre les expéditions coloniales, une sorte de proclamation des droits des sauvages" (117). But he fails to notice that Ronsard was sensitive to the random destruction of the forest as a human habitat. Thus, in verse 396 of the "Complainte," Ronsard finally censors his own wish to live a second, new life "gaillard . . . en toute liberté" in Brazil, realizing that it would be at the expense of the natives and their world.

Ronsard could not have perceived the vulnerability of the American habitat without his personal lived experience of the European forest. Throughout his poetic career, he writes about forests, particularly Gâtine in his native Vendôme. At the age of twenty-six, he publishes the ode, "A la foret de Gâtine," while *Les amours* of 1552 contains the sonnet "Sainte Gastine." According to Ronsard, Gâtine equals the forests of Greek and Latin poetry, although, ominously, the great woodlands of the Mediterranean--in Castile, Dalmatia, and the Peloponnesus--had been destroyed long before Ronsard's day.

I shall briefly consider the Ode as being representative of Ronsard's texts about Gâtine before the Elegy. After a lyrical apostrophe, Ronsard describes the forest's utopian economy of the mutual gift between the female "forêt" and the poet, which obliterates the separation of "le Tien & le Mien," just like the American forest of the "Complainte."⁶ The poet's present to the forest is the poem itself: it will make her gigantic "cheveux verts" famous.⁷ Her gift to the poet, on the other hand, consists of the pleasant noises of water and air penetrating the earth, which form the subtext from which the poetic text emerges, as though dialogically. Based on this economic exchange, an erotic and creative symbiosis is established between poet and forest. The final verse pair, "Et ton bois ne sente jamais/La flamme sacrilège," evokes, dream-like, the trauma of destruction, recalling the "Complainte" and foreshadowing the final Elegy.

The chief poem I wish to examine here is that elegy of 1584 known as "Contre les bûcherons de la forest de Gastine," its spurious title appearing only in the posthumous edition of 1623. As the last poem of the last volume of poetry published in Ronsard's lifetime, as well

as the last poem of his elegy cycle, it must be considered his poetic testament. In it, fears and wishes about the future of Gâtine, about his poetic mission, and the fate of the American natives converge once more. Ronsard wrote the poem when large parts of Gâtine were being cut down at the behest of its proprietor, Henri of Navarre and Duke of Vendôme, the future king Henri IV.

Concerning the circumstances of this event, it is evident, first of all, that the famous ordinance of 1579, which Braudel cites as a kind of milestone in the protection of French forests, does not seem to have had any effect. That seigneurial rights outweighed any ordinances must be assumed to have been the rule at the time.

The erroneous title of the Elegy, naming the woodcutters, has led in the past to its being anthologized beginning with verse 19, "Escoute, Bûcheron (arreste un peu le bras)." However, Ronsard begins quite differently:

Quiconque aura premier la main
embesognée

A te couper, forest, d'une dure cognée,
Qu'il puisse s'enferrer de son propre baston,
Et sente en l'estomac la faim d'Erisichthon,
Qui coupa de Cerés le Chesne venerable,
Et qui gourmand de tout, de tout insatiable,
Les boeufs & les moutons de sa mere
esgorgea,

Puis pressé de la faim, soy-mesme se mangea:
Ainsi puisse engloutir ses rentes & sa terre,
Et se devore apres par les dents de la guerre.

(18:143, 1-10)

Despite his rejection of the "Bûcheron" title, Laumonier curiously views the Elegy as a whole as addressed to the woodcutters: he calls its beginning "la malédiction contre le bûcheron." Nevertheless, terms such as "baston," "gourmand," "insatiable," and "rentes," as well as the extended comparison with the destructive and ultimately self-destructive Erisichthon of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, are inapplicable to commoners such as lumbermen. To be sure, the words "main," "couper," and "dure cognée" seem to point to them. Yet if we examine how the woodcutters are referred to later ("arreste un peu le bras"), we realize

that "main" does not signal physical labor here, only "arms" do.⁸ The "chef" is to blame: as a messenger of the "head," the duke's "hand" has *mandated* (*manu datum) that the forest be cut, in analogy to the colonialist mandate to destroy forest and natives.

Reliteralizing the metonymy, the iron point ("s'enfermer," from "fer") of the "baton de commandement" is to impale the hand/ruler, perhaps killing him through blood poisoning, an incurable medical occurrence at the time.⁹ For he has blood on his hands. Ronsard's choice of the metaphor "insatiable" is equally deliberate. It alludes to the self-sufficiency of the "satiabile" Savages and to Ovid's Golden Age, "Aurea prima *sata* est, aetas." Besides "satisfy," "satus" from "serere" (to sow) produces the derivatives "seed" and "series"; negative members of the "satus" family include "insatisfait," "insatiable," and "désert," finally causing "le sang de nos forests" to be shed:¹⁰

Qu'il puisse pour vanger le sang de nos forests,
Tousjours nouveaux emprunts sur nouveaux
interests

Devoir à l'usurier, & qu'en fin il consomme
Tout son bien à payer la principale some.

Que tousjours sans repos ne face en
son cerveau

Que tramer pour-neant quelque dessein
nouveau,

Porté d'impatience & de fureur diverse,
Et de mauvais conseil qui les hommes

renverse. (11-18)

"Le bien" of the forest must remain unexploited. Ronsard disagrees with mercantilist doctrines of his day and also with Braudel, according to whom the "forest was worth nothing unless it was used." By transforming the forest/gold into capital, the Duke becomes cursed with "blood money" like Judas, his usurers devouring his principal.¹¹ A latter-day Midas, the Duke is consumed by gold as he has consumed the forest: *auri sacra fames*, the standard curse of the American conqueror.¹² In the treatment of the tree murderer, the American subtext manifests itself strongly: "Impatience" and "fureur," curses similar to the ones uttered against Villegagnon, now

destroy the Duke from the inside of his body as Erisychthon was devoured; he is far from the state "sans peine et sans soucy" of the Savages.

Only when the imprecations against the ruler seem to have failed, Ronsard appeals to the woodcutters directly, whom the reader imagines standing in the forest, ready to execute the mandate by executing trees:

Escoute, Bûcheron (arreste un peu le
bras)

Ce ne sont pas des bois que tu jettes à bas,
Ne vois-tu pas le sang lequel degoute à force
Des Nymphes qui vivoient dessous la dure
escorce?

Sacrilege meurtrier, si on pend un voleur
Pour piller un butin de bien peu de valeur,
Combien de feux, de fers de morts, & de
destresses

Merites-tu, meschant, pour tuer des Deesses?
(19-26)

"Escoute" as well as "un peu" address the lumberman in an almost folksy tone. The poet beseeches him to see the dripping blood of the dryads and nymphs peopling the trees. For his benefit, Ronsard echoes oral and written sources, throughout millenia common to many cultures, in which trees have been identified with humans, and humans with trees, the ones being born out of or metamorphosed into the others. Moreover, the fact that "tree" is masculine, but Dryad, Nymph, Muse, and "forêt" feminine, suggests also an erotic fusion. The "sacrilège meurtrier" is the same, whether cutting down Mexicas, Mayas, and Incas like trees, or killing Gatine's trees like humans. While it becomes the Duke to perish in war, the woodcutter deserves to hang like a common thief. Ronsard leaves his dissuasion open-ended, as though hoping that the suasion of the remainder of the Elegy will be more effective, producing the reader's involvement in a poetic text through which all the subtexts resonate.

The elegiac part properly speaking of the Elegy consists of an apostrophe of Gâtine:

Forest, haute maison des oiseaux bocagers,
Plus le Cerf solitaire & les Chevreuls legers

Ne paistront sous ton ombre, & ta verte
 criniere
 Plus du Soleil d'Esté ne rompra la lumiere.
 Plus l'amoureux pasteur sur un tronq adossé,
 enfant son flageolet à quatre trous persé,
 Son mastin à ses pieds, à son flanc la houlette,
 Ne dira plus l'ardeur de sa belle Janette:
 Tout deviendra muet, Echo sera sans voix:
 Tu deviendras campagne, & en lieu de tes
 bois,
 Dont l'ombrage incertain lentement se remue,
 Tu sentiras le soc, le coutre & la charrue:
 Tu perdras ton silence, & haletans d'effroy
 Ny satyres ny Pans ne viendront plus chez toy.
 (27-40)

After the anthropomorphic periphrasis, "haute maison des oiseaux bocagers," resounding with the splendors of Gâtine, the elegiac "ne plus" will dominate the following seven verses. The first death of the forest strikes the fauns, just as Erisychthon had first killed the animals. Summer sun, no longer refracted (*rompre*) by the mane of the female *forêt*, will devastate everything: the desert then brings about human death and the death of culture, which Ronsard in the earlier Gâtine poems had defined as dreams transformed into artistic creation in and by the forest. When the shepherd no longer sings, as Ronsard did in Gâtine, a silence pervades the desert, which is no longer the pregnant poetic silence of the forest (39), but a dead silence, the silence of death. The locus for the poet's dream work, where he found his own voice in dialogue with river and forest, is abolished. Without images or voices, neither poetry, nor art nor music is created any longer.

Ronsard then prophesies Gâtine's future. The abundant greenery will be transformed into an overpowering agricultural geometry, anticipating the *esprit géométrique* of the succeeding century, cutting the forest to the quick with the plow. The Savage "qui à grands coups de soc la terre n'importune" comes to mind, but will remain impotent as a utopian model until the eighteenth century.

Now Ronsard intones les Adieux, the highly charged poetic gesture in times of turmoil. As an analogue of the

Noble Savage, Ronsard takes leave of his life as he takes leave of the forest. In the doubly elegiac words, superimposing the poet's and the forest's impending death, myths of a remote Golden Age are fused with dreams from Ronsard's recent short life:

Adieu vieille forest, le jouet de Zephyre
 Ou premier j'accorday les langues de ma lyre,
 Ou premier j'entendi les fleches resonner
 D'Apollon, qui me vint tout le coeur estonner:
 Ou premier admirant la belle Calliope,
 Je devins amoureux de sa neuvaîne trope,
 Quand sa main sur le front cent roses me jetta,
 Et de son propre laict Euterpe m'allaita.
 Adieu vieille forest, adieu testes sacrées,
 De tableaux & de fleurs autrefois honorées,
 Maintenant le desdain des passans alterez,
 Qui bruslez en Esté des rayons etherez,
 Sans plus trouver le frais de tes douces
 verdurez,
 Accusent vos meurtriers, & leur disent injures.
 Adieu Chesnes, couronne aux vaillans
 citoyens,
 Arbres de Jupiter, germes Dodonéens,
 Qui premiers aux humains donnastes à
 repaistre,
 Peuples vrayment ingrats, qui n'ont sceu
 reconnoistre
 Les biens receus de vous, peuples vrayment
 grossiers,
 De massacrer ainsi nos peres nourriciers.
 (41-60)

The forest, a toy of the winds, is full of pre-rational, oneiric voices and movements: the music of the lyra, the whizzing of arrows: Calliope is the Muse "of the beautiful voice." The poet is being suckled by Euterpe, the Muse of "delight" (*terpein, amuser*). The evocation of a mythologized childhood is followed "de tableaux & de fleurs," suggesting human culture. But ominously, "autrefois" is invaded by "Maintenant": a scorching sun, the thirst of walkers-by, apt punishments for their murder of the forest. "Adieu chesnes" resumes the beginning of

the poem. Because humans have proved ungrateful for the abundance from a utopian economy of the gift, ecocide is equated with parricide. As "peres nourriciers," the patriarchal version of "nourrice," the trees appear once more in their androgynous quality as mothers and fathers simultaneously.¹⁴ Ultimately this ecocide and parricide will bring about the unwitting suicide of the human race. For the "peuple incogneu," living or dying with the forest, includes everyone, Brazilian and European alike.

Because only "la Philosophie" provides a less than desperate outlook, Ronsard adds a--Stoic and Lucretian--postscript:

Que l'homme est malheureux qui au monde se
fie!

O Dieux, que veritable est la Philosophie,
Qui dit que toute chose à la fin perira.
Et qu'en changeant de forme une autre
vestira:

De Tempé la vallée un jour sera montagne,
Et la cyme d'Athos une large campagne,
Neptune quelquefois de blé sera couvert.
La matiere demeure, & la forme se perd.
(61-68)

By attributing geological repercussions to the felling of Gâtine, Ronsard underscores the cataclysmic potential of this, and any, ecocide. As the ocean becomes a field and the valley a mountain, Ronsard poetically anticipates the science of geology to develop in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but at the same time rejects the mathematization of the natural sciences, especially their application to exploiting the earth, European as well as colonial. The problem of earth and nature, juxtaposing European and Savage during the "first dramatic phase of colonization," which fuels Ronsard's poetry about the forest of Gâtine, will reemerge transposed as the relationship of the human race to the cosmos in Pascal's scientifically founded pessimism, before the enlightenment restates it again in almost Ronsardian terms.

NOTES

¹*Essais* III, 6. For twentieth-century European reactions to the American genocide, see Le Clézio.

²Ed. Laumonier 10: 33-34; verse numbers will directly follow each quotation.

³According to European custom, North and South America are considered as one continent, a view that has certainly facilitated the mythical formation of the (homogeneous) "Bon Sauvage" substituting for the actual diversity of the "homo americanus."

⁴Cave (11), claims that Ronsard's ideas are "revived . . . 300 years later." This seems to be an oversight.

⁵See Armstrong on the Golden Age in Ronsard.

⁶See Marcel Mauss.

⁷We are reminded of Baudelaire's "La géante." Nobody to my knowledge has worked on the relationship between Renaissance nature poetry and the intense magical forests of the sixteenth-century *Danube School* painters, which seem inspired by Ronsard.

⁸Due to the changing labor process and the analysis of the human use of tools, e.g. by Marx, "hand" increasingly signifies "manual labor." Yet the "arm" metonymy still exists, e.g. in "bracero" for farmworkers in the 1950s.

⁹See Starobinski.

¹⁰Note the metaphorical confusion typical of patriarchal cultures: even the Golden Age has to be engendered and sowed, destroying the forest, the very thing Ronsard inveighs against.

¹¹"Chef" and "capital" have the same etymology.

¹²The mercurial Ronsard has also written the more mercantilist "Hymne de l'or," attributing culture to economic wealth.

¹³A poetics of the farewell topos throughout the ages merits to be written.

¹⁴Concerning androgyny in Ronsard, see Cave 244-50.

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"FOLIE" DANS LE DÉBAT DE FOLIE ET D'AMOUR DE LOUISE LABÉ

Anne-Marie B. Geoghegan

Louise Labé fait partie, avec Maurice Scève et Pernette du Guillet, de la triade poétique lyonnaise du seizième siècle. L'oeuvre de Louise Labé, publiée en 1555, comprend de la poésie et de la prose, le *Débat de Folie et d'Amour*, son petit conte philosophique et l'épître dédicatoire qui le précède.

Le côté passionné et sensuel de celle qu'on appela "La Belle Cordière" jaillit de ses vers qui ont fait sa renommée et sont restés célèbres. Bien que sa prose ait eu moins de succès, certains critiques en ont cependant perçu la richesse et l'originalité.¹ D'après Charles Boy, "le *Débat* est un petit chef-d'oeuvre, laissant loin derrière lui, comme pensée, l'ensemble des vers de Louise Labé" (*Oeuvres* 2, 7).

Une des grandes originalités de Louise est la place qu'elle a accordée au personnage de Folie dans son *Débat*. Que faut-il entendre par "folie"? D'où ce concept a-t-il surgi avant d'envahir notre littérature au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance? Quel est le sujet du *Débat*? Quels sont les attributs que Louise prête à "Folie" et les conclusions de l'auteur?

Folie, en tant qu'imagination créatrice chez l'homme, peut être vue de deux façons: d'une part elle peut naître soit de nécessité soit d'un besoin vital et résulter en des inventions pratiques ou des organisations sociales ou politiques; d'autre part elle peut jaillir d'une pure activité mentale, désintéressée et superflue et produire des oeuvres artistiques. Cette activité est souvent subconsciente ou inconsciente et équivaut à la fureur divine dont a parlé Platon, à la folie créatrice débridée et malade romantique, aux paradis artificiels baudelairiens et à l'écriture automatique surréaliste. Souvent imagination, inspiration et création conduisent à un affrontement perpétuel entre folie et raison, fantaisie et sagesse, intuition et connaissance, illusion et réalité, débordements et modération. Ces antagonismes s'opposent dans tout le *Débat* grâce au thème magique de

la folie que Louise y utilise.

Le concept de folie n'est pas nouveau à la Renaissance et remonte à l'Ancien Testament où le fou s'oppose au sage qui lui, a connaissance de Dieu et conduit sa vie selon Ses lois. Le fou, au contraire, se trouve en marge de la société et doit être guidé sur le droit chemin.²

Le Nouveau Testament avait d'ailleurs opéré un retournement dans l'attitude envers la déraison: la folie était devenue la sagesse du vrai sage. Le vrai péché était de ne pas être fou. Saint Paul décrit d'ailleurs cette "folie de la Croix."³ Ce revirement aboutit au "paradoxe du christianisme" et au triomphe éclatant du fou sur le sage. Un autre aspect d'importance capitale venait donc s'ajouter à la notion de la folie: le rapport, le jeu continuels entre folie et sagesse, et qui dit sagesse dit raison:

La folie devient une forme relative de la raison, ou plutôt folie et raison entrent dans une relation perpétuellement réversible qui fait que toute folie a sa raison qui la juge et la maîtrise, toute raison sa folie en laquelle elle trouve sa vérité dérisoire. Chacune est mesure de l'autre, et dans ce mouvement de référence réciproque, elles se récuse toutes deux, mais se fondent l'une par l'autre.

(Foucault 41)

Au Moyen Age le fou, être grimaçant, monstrueux et dément, envahit les moeurs. Il participe aux carnivals et aux foires et occupe une place de choix à la cour. Personnage principal des farces et soties populaires, il est un véritable objet de dérision. Irrationnel, non-conformiste et iconoclaste, il jouit donc d'une liberté entière sans égard pour la hiérarchie sociale ou l'ordre religieux établi.

Présence fantastique et inquiétante, la folie envahit à la Renaissance les arts et les lettres. C'est l'époque de Jérôme Bosch et de Brueghel; et celle du *Narrenschiiff* de Brant (1492), de l'*Eloge de la folie* d'Erasmus (1509) mais aussi de Rabelais, de Cervantes, tous fascinés par la folie. Le "fool" occupe aussi la scène dans de nombreuses pièces de Shakespeare.

C'est dans cette atmosphère que Louise écrit son *Débat de Folie et d'Amour* où elle attribue à Folie un des rôles principaux. Le meilleur résumé du *Débat* se trouve dans l'*Argument* où est exposée l'intrigue au début de l'oeuvre:

Jupiter faisoit un grand festin, ou estoit commandé à tous les Dieux se trouver. Amour et Folie arrivent au mesme instant sur la porte du Palais: laquelle estant jà fermee, et n'ayant que le guichet ouvert, Folie voyant Amour jà prest à mettre un pied dedens, s'avance et passe la premiere. Amour se voyant poussé, entre en colere: Folie soutient lui appartenir de passer devant. Ils entrent en dispute sur leurs puissances, dinites et préseances. Amour ne la pouvant veindre de paroles, met la main à son arc, et lui lasche une flesche, mais en vain: pource que Folie soudein se rend invisible: et se voulant venger, ôte les yeus à Amour. Et pour couvrir le lieu ou ils estoient, lui mit un bandeau, fait de tel artifice, qu'impossible est lui ôter. Venus se plaint de Folie, Jupiter veut entendre leur diferent. Apolon et Mercure debaten le droit de l'une et l'autre partie. Jupiter les ayant longuement ouiz, en demande l'opinion aus Dieux: puis prononce sa sentence. (7)

Les participants à la scène qu'érige Louise sont des figures mythologiques, sauf Folie, que la poétesse élève au rang des Dieux, afin qu'elle aille de pair avec eux: "Je suis Déesse, comme tu es Dieu . . . mon nom est Folie" dit Folie à Amour (13). Devons-nous déjà y voir la préférence qu'a Louise pour l'audacieuse Folie?

Les autres personnages principaux sont Jupiter, l'hôte et le maître de tous les Dieux; Amour, et sa mère Vénus, déesse de l'amour et de la beauté. Pour régler le différend des parties en litige, Apollon se fera le défenseur d'Amour, et Mercure sera celui de Folie. Ces deux avocats si dissemblables, Apollon et Mercure, mettent immédiatement en relief deux points de vue différents. Apollon, Dieu de la lumière et de la vérité,

s'oppose à l'astucieux et subtil Mercure, messenger de Jupiter et Dieu des voleurs. Tout le *Débat* est dominé par leur confrontation et, plaidant la cause de Folie, Mercure conclut:

Ne laissez perdre cette belle Dame, qui vous ha donné tant de contentement avec Genie, Jeunesse, Bacchus, Silene, et ce gentil Gardien des Jardins. (78)

Folie est décrite en compagnie de Dieux tels que Génie, esprit latin qui veillait sur chaque individu; Jeunesse, mère de Folie d'après Louise; Bacchus (Dionysos), Dieu du vin et des débordements excessifs; Silène, fils de Mercure, compagnon de Bacchus et Priape, "le gentil Gardien des Jardins," Dieu de la fertilité et de la fécondité. En termes nietzschéens le conflit entre Apollon et Mercure représente la contradiction entre le mythe apollonien et le mythe dionysiaque⁴--entre réalité et illusion, modération et débordements, connaissance et intuition, sagesse olympique et insouciance fantaisiste, sérieux et comique, raison et irrationalité. Ce choix de personnages constitue un outil ingénieux pour explorer les deux versants qui s'affirment et s'affrontent, se nient et se complètent dans tout désir, toute manifestation ou toute création humaine.

Cet élément d'alternance se retrouve dans la structure. Le débat permet en effet à Louise de mettre en place toute une comédie humaine en miniature qui dialogue en grands discours. De sa plume agile et piquante, elle donne des traits humains à tout ce petit monde et "leur prête une individualité distinctive" (O'Connor 98-99). Apollon et Mercure, par exemple, font preuve d'une éloquence sentant les exercices de plaidoirie, et devancent *Les plaideurs* de Racine.

Bien que le débat soit un genre suranné au 16ème siècle, le contenu en est moderne. "Folie," rappelons-le, y est mise à l'honneur, et sa voix provocante et ironique dévoile les ridicules et les travers des hommes, leurs illusions, les incertitudes de la raison. Cette même voix s'élève sur un fond sérieux pour prononcer un plaidoyer convaincant et élogieux pour l'individu. Grâce à elle, Louise proclame tout haut et avec allégresse, "son hymne à la folie de l'existence" (Giudici 44).

Quels sont les attributs de Folie qui, malicieuse, occupe joyeusement la scène du *Débat*? Louise a été fortement influencée par l'*Eloge de la folie* d'Erasmus et comme le "prince des humanistes" elle a écrit une oeuvre "libérée du moralisme et de l'eschatologie" (Lefebvre 267). Avec sagacité et de façon humoristique et satirique, Louise observe, relève et décrit les actions et les manifestations de Folie, mais sans but moralisant. Mettant l'accent sur l'homme et ses folies, elle ne juge jamais son héroïne.

Pour Louise, Folie est aussi ancienne que l'homme, qui "commença sa vie par Folie" (57). On peut imaginer l'homme primitif qui, suivant ses instincts et guidé par son inspiration, "sa folie," dompta le monde extérieur, fit preuve d'ingénuité et d'invention pour assurer sa survie. Louise donne une description amusante du "Bon Sauvage" ne suivant que ses caprices et ses instincts et qui petit à petit est devenu un être sociable avec ses lois, et ses dirigeants:

Les plus esventez d'entre eus . . . se sont fait couronner Rois de quelque feuillage de Chesne. Et croissant l'ambicion, non des Rois . . . mais de quelques mauvais garnimens qui les suivoient, leur vivre ha esté séparé du commun. Il ha fallu que les viandes fussent plus delicates, l'habillement plus magnifique . . . Et, ou est la plus grand' Folie, si le commun ha à une loy, les grans en ont pris d'autres pour eus. Ce qu'ils ont estimé n'estre licite aus autres, se sont pensé estre permis. Folie ha premierement mis en teste à quelcun de se faire creindre: Folie ha fait les autres obeïr. (57-58)

C'est bien Folie qui, à l'aube des temps, a poussé certains hommes, par leur supériorité physique ou leur esprit d'initiative, à s'imposer aux autres pour les gouverner. Ici, de façon cocasse, Louise montre que la vanité peut être à la source de l'héroïsme et du pouvoir. Elle fait aussi une critique des folies sociales, notamment de la vie de cour où "quelques mauvais garnimens," favoris ou courtisans, guidés par l'ambition et la cupidité, ont une influence nuisible sur les princes. Louise ici

devance Rousseau: la société corrompt, et pour elle la plus grande folie est un régime basé sur l'inégalité, l'injustice et la force. N'est-ce pas aussi folie que de suivre et d'obéir aveuglément? L'épisode des moutons de Panurge devait être présent à l'esprit de Louise. Comme Rabelais, elle soulève le problème de la liberté individuelle et du libre choix. Folie peut donc parfois être maléfique.

Cependant, à côté de ces attributs négatifs, Folie a aussi son côté positif et est étroitement liée au progrès humain. Louise donne de nombreux exemples de "fous"--un célèbre conquérant, Alexandre, des philosophes, des astrologues et des savants, tous poussés par une "folle curiosité." Leur "folie" individuelle, leur ingéniosité sont à la source de tout avancement humain. Louise affirme d'ailleurs et démontre que le fou, duquel rayonne une énergie vitale intense et efficace, est plus estimé que le sage:

Mettez moy au monde un homme totalement sage d'un coté, et un fol de l'autre: et prenez garde lequel sera plus estimé. Monsieur le sage atendra que lon le prie, et demeurera avec sa sagesse sans que lon l'apelle à gouverner les Viles, sans que lon l'apelle en conseil . . . Le fol ira tant et viendra, en donnera tant à tort et à travers, qu'il rencontrera en fin quelque cerveau pareil au sien qui le poussera: et se fera estimer grand homme. (59-60)

Une fois de plus, la Belle Cordière décrit deux attitudes différentes dans la conduite des affaires humaines: le sage qui oscille et le fou qui agit. Le sage, en effet, est rempli d'hésitations qui troublent son jugement et de crainte qui le détourne de l'action. Il s'isole dans sa sagesse qui devient pure folie et aveuglement. Le fou, bien plus lucide et alerte que lui, se débarrasse des obstacles, prend des risques et passe à l'action. L'intention de Louise est claire: elle se moque de la sagesse aliénante et paralysante, des ratiocineurs sentencieux, des longues considérations philosophiques stériles. Pour elle l'expérience est plus souhaitable et le fou qui agit a plus de mérite que le sage qui réfléchit

trop.

Louise fait un éloge lyrique et vibrant de la Folie, "mère des hommes," qui participe à la grande marche du progrès pour améliorer leur confort et assurer leur bonheur. Folie incontestablement est le moteur du monde, et le progrès dont elle est la cause touche tous les domaines.

De plus, les imperfections des hommes, vraies folies, constituent des bienfaits car ils les poussent non seulement à survivre mais aussi à se dépasser. Parmi ces défauts Louise relève l'aveuglement de l'homme, dont elle se rit:

Que dureroit mesme le monde, si elle [Folie] n'empeschoit que lon ne preuit les facheries et hazars qui sont en mariage? Elle empesche que lon ne les voye et les cache: à fin que le monde se peuple tousjours à la maniere acoutumee. (60)

Dans cette satire comique du mariage, Louise affirme que Folie est aussi nécessaire dans le mariage que l'amour. Ainsi les hommes, aveuglés par Folie aux inconvénients du mariage, continuent à s'unir par les liens matrimoniaux et ainsi assurent la propagation de la race humaine.⁵ La même faculté d'illusion permet d'ailleurs à l'homme de surmonter les déconvenues de l'existence.

C'est Folie également, avide d'incessantes actions et d'engagements parfois périlleux, qui pousse les hommes à la découverte de nouveaux mondes:

Qui ust traversé les mers, sans avoir Folie pour guide? . . . Et toutefois par là, sont communiquées les richesses d'un païs à autre, les sciences, les façons de faire, et ha esté connue la terre, les proprietz, et natures des herbes, pierres et animaus. (60)

A cette époque de découvertes, la Belle Cordière rend un hommage enthousiaste aux explorateurs. Leur curiosité, leur courage et leur esprit d'initiative, ont permis l'élargissement des limites étriquées du vieux monde et ouvert un univers neuf et sans limites. De

nouvelles cultures, des façons de penser différentes, des moeurs variées, mettaient en relief la relativité des choses, des valeurs et des anciennes croyances.

La folie des grandeurs, l'esprit de compétition, qui pourraient aussi être considérés comme des aberrations humaines, sont en fait à la base de l'histoire et de nombreux accomplissements humains:

Tout cela seroit peu, si les hommes ne trouvoient en ce monde plus fols qu'eus, ne dressoient querelle contre les morts. Cesar se fachoit qu'il n'avoit encore commencé à troubler le monde en l'aage, qu'Alexandre le grand en avoit vaincu une grande partie. Combien Luculle et autres, ont ils laissé d'imitateurs, qui ont taché à les passer . . . faire Colosses de bronze et pierre, arcs trionfans, Pyramides? Et de cette magnifique folie en demeure un long tems grand plaisir entre les hommes, qui se destournent de leur chemin, font voyage expres, pour avoir le contentement de ces vieilles folies. (63-64)

En effet Folie, divinité puissante, dote certains hommes d'une force prométhéenne qui les pousse à dépasser ce que les "grands" de ce monde ont déjà accompli. Folie conduit le choeur joyeux de toutes les inventions humaines. Elle constitue un élan vital qui fait que l'homme dompte la nature pour le progrès de l'humanité, et y érige des travaux gigantesques et des monuments somptueux dont les vestiges témoigneront pour les futures générations, de la grandeur des civilisations passées. Elle émule ainsi le penchant humaniste pour les glorieux vestiges de l'antiquité. Trois ans après la publication des oeuvres de Louise, Du Bellay publie les *Antiquités de Rome* (1558) où il exprime sur une note d'une imposante noblesse la beauté mélancolique et grandiose des ruines romaines.

Folie est aussi à la source de toute énergie créatrice et inspiratrice de tout art. Louise fait allusion ici à l'une des fureurs divines chères à Platon: la fureur poétique qui inspira les auteurs de "Tragedies, Comedies et Saltacions [pantomime]," écrit Louise faisant l'éloge du théâtre, des jeux, des fêtes et des divertissements (62). Véritable

écho de l'humanisme riant de Rabelais qui fait et aime rire. Louise écrit un vigoureux manifeste de la gaieté, car Folie est allégresse, joie et fantaisie, préférable à la raison, froide, bourrue et renfrognée. Eternelle bataille entre deux notions antagonistes qu'évoque une fois de plus Louise sur un ton amusé:

Il y aura grand' diferece entre le recueil [l'accueil] que trouvera un fol, et un sage. Le sage sera laissé sur les livres, ou avec quelques anciennes matrones à deviser . . . Les jeunes Dames ne cesseront qu'elles n'ayent en leur compagnie ce gay et joly cerveau . . . Le sage sera loué d'elles, mais le fol jouira de leurs privautez. (64)

D'après Louise, en amour le fou a plus de succès car son exubérance, son enthousiasme et sa légèreté lui prêtent un charme incomparable. Ainsi dans le couple antithétique que forment Amour et Folie y a-t-il un personnage supérieur à l'autre? Tout le plaidoyer de Mercure tend à démontrer que Folie n'est pas inférieure à Amour, mais qu'elle oeuvre pour lui. Folie trouble et enflamme les coeurs et inspire les comportements et les débordements extravagants des amoureux. C'est bien elle aussi qui tire toutes les ficelles de la stratégie amoureuse. "Amour donc ne fut jamais sans la compagnie de Folie et ne le sauroit jamais estre," dit Mercure (77). Tributaires l'un de l'autre, Amour ne pourrait vivre sans Folie, et Folie ne pourrait exister sans Amour qui est souvent sa raison d'être.

En conclusion, Amour et Folie se lient et se complètent. Leur union constitue la vie. Louise, par la bouche de Jupiter, ne punit pas Folie d'avoir rendu Amour aveugle, puisque le verdict veut que les deux personnages vivent "amiablement ensemble." Celle qu'elle appelle "cette Folle jeunesse" sera l'élément fort de ce couple curieux. Jupiter l'ordonne: "et guidera Folie l'aveugle Amour, et le conduira par tout ou bon lui semblera" (79). L'alliance, "l'ancienne ligue" entre les deux ennemis ne devra pas être brisée. Elle symbolise les facettes infinies et complexes du coeur humain: ses faiblesses, son irrationalité, sa faculté d'illusion qui lui permet de surmonter les difficultés de la vie et de se

dépasser, mais aussi ses aspirations les plus hautes, son élan créateur et l'amour qu'il porte en lui. Sa sagesse et sa folie.

Ainsi, grâce à Louise et à d'autres écrivains célèbres de son époque, le personnage de Folie pénètre dans la littérature. Folie, dans le *Débat*, devient symbole de "fureur divine," source de toute inspiration, de toute ingéniosité humaine et de tout foisonnement de la pensée. Force prométhéenne, elle équivaut à un élan vital énergétique, dynamique et puissant. La petite fable de notre Lyonnaise constitue un hymne à la folie de l'existence et un éloge vibrant de l'être irrationnel et créateur qu'est l'homme, plein de sagesse dans sa folie.

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NOTES

¹A consulter ces critiques qui se sont intéressés à la prose de Louise Labé: Charles Boy 7-9 (toutes les citations des oeuvres de Louise Labé se référeront à cette édition et pour faciliter la lecture du texte nous avons adopté respectivement: "s," "u," "j," "et," au lieu de: "f," "v," "i," "&"); Karine Berriot 200-1; Enzo Giudici 34-48; Stanislaw P. Koczorowski 19-27; Dorothy O'Connor 97-100.

²Pour une étude approfondie sur la folie voir Michel Foucault, Pierre Jacerme, Walter Kaiser, Joël Lefebvre, Barbara Swain, Enid Welsford.

³I. Cor. 21-25.

⁴Ces idées sur le mythe apollonien et le mythe dionysiaque sont développées par Friedrich Nietzsche dans "The Birth of Tragedy".

⁵Louise s'est inspirée de l'*Eloge de la folie* d'Erasmus pour cette idée. Voir Berriot 333, n. 153.

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**WITCH STORIES, BODIES, AND THE
MAKING OF NARRATIVE IN CERVANTES'S
COLOQUIO DE LOS PERROS**

Mary S. Gossy

There is a witch named Cañizares at the center of *Coloquio de los perros*.¹ Her function in the narrative has been described by Alban Forcione as follows:

We have reached the monster at the *center* of the *labyrinth*, and, as we move through the *aborted* anagnoresis and witness the two dogs *groping* futilely for a correct exegesis of the prophecy that holds the promise of *release*, the narrative *grinds* toward a halt, leaving us with the impression of a dreamer mesmerized by a *relentlessly oppressive* nightmare. The briskly paced *flow* of episodes . . . [is] suddenly suspended, and the analytical texture of the work *thickens* toward the *density* of a metaphysical treatise. The *tightening involutions* of the tale, its continuing *thrusts inward* [. . .] appear to be approaching a *climactic dead center of convergence*, and the narrative itself seems to exert that *menacing, constrictive force* that we observe everywhere in the imaginary space of the novella and that becomes *stifling* in the *tiny cell* and in the spiritual *abysses* [. . .] from which the hag vainly attempts to extricate herself.² (59)

In this fragment the witch is seen as the center of evil in the text, as the opposition to Christian redemption. But the language that describes her in the quotation above reveals the degree to which readers often identify heterodox femininity with evil. Because of the episode of Cañizares, "we plunge into the most profound strata of meaning infolded in the tale" (60). The vocabulary chosen to illustrate evil is precisely that associated with paranoid descriptions of female sexuality. Cañizares appears here as an all-devouring womb. The only way to

escape the "tightening involutions" of this "climactic dead center" is to "plunge into the infoldings" in order to get at meaning. In other words, the only way to cope with the menace and horror stimulated by the unfathomable uncertainty that is the untold is to penetrate and name it, to fill in its gap with meaning. In the case of Cañizares, this name will be "witch." The female body that produces and undermines discourse in the *Coloquio* may be controlled if Cañizares is named a witch. The epithet "witch" has a strong taboo value; it also contains an unerring value judgment that keeps its bearer within manageable semantic confines. Once a woman is defined as a witch, society knows what to do with her: she can be imprisoned or extinguished once she is identified.

At this point it may prove useful to review the plot of the *Coloquio* in order to see what frightening feminine mayhem is at the origin of this desire to categorize and to name. The *Coloquio* is framed by the tale of the *Casamiento engañoso*. It is, according to the ensign Campuzano, a transcription from memory of a nocturnal conversation between Berganza and Cipión, two watchdogs at the Hospital de la Resurrección. Campuzano overheard it, he says, while recovering from his cure for the syphilis he contracted from his deceitful marriage.

In terms of literary history, the *Coloquio de los perros* is seen as Cervantes's answer to, and development of, the tradition of the picaresque in Spanish literature. Since the publication of *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes* in 1554, the picaresque had been a burgeoning genre. Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* in particular has echoes in Cervantes's story (Cervantes 1, 28). Like the hero of Alemán's picaresque, Berganza's first recollections are of life in Sevilla; also Berganza narrates episodically, in first-person, his servitude under various low-life masters: how he, from association, falls into a life of crime, and then is finally lead to a life of penitence--in this case, as a watchdog and alms-collector for the Hospital de la Resurrección.

Also like a conventional pícaro, Berganza had what critics of the picaresque uniformly call a "doubtful" birth.³ The doubtful paternity of the pícaro, which is the direct result of his mother's unbridled sexuality, is a standard trait of the picaresque novel. In the *Lazarillo*, the

Guzmán, in Quevedo's *Buscón*, a pattern is established for the picaresque: True to its rhetorical parallels with the legal *relación*, or official account of one's life, the picaresque must begin with a statement establishing who the protagonist's parents were or might have been.

Invited by Cipión to go first, Berganza begins to tell his story in the orthodox way:

Paréceme que la primera vez que vi el sol fue en Sevilla, y en su Matadero, que está fuera de la Puerta de la Carne; por donde imaginara (si no fuera por lo que después diré) que mis padres debieron de ser alanos [. . .]. (245) [It seems to me that the first time I saw the sun was in Seville, in the slaughterhouse district, which is outside the Gate of Flesh; from that I would imagine (were it not for what I'll tell you later) that my parents must have been mastiffs.]

The form of providing a genealogy for himself is present, but Berganza shows that his birth is doubtful in two ways—first, that like many a pícaro, he is not sure who his parents are; and second, that he is not sure where he was born. Every verb relating to his birth is in the subjunctive mood, and everything he says is undermined by the contrary-to-fact "si no fuera por lo que después diré" (245) [if it were not for what I will say later]. The act of narrating is linked somehow to his problematic birth, and is undermined by it. This association of narration and birth is reinforced by the beginning of the *Coloquio*. In its first sentences, the dogs problematize, in the space reserved in the picaresque for elaboration of paternity, their entry into language.

They construe their ability to talk as something that "pasa de los términos de la naturaleza" [goes beyond the bounds of nature] (241). They find even stranger the fact that they are capable of reasoning, that they are self-conscious (242). And yet both dogs admit that this opportunity is something that they have wanted for a long time (Cipión says, "de mí por largos tiempos deseado" [desired by me for a long time]). Berganza adds:

y aún de mí, que desde que tuve fuerzas para

roer un hueso tuve deseo de hablar, para decir cosas que depositaba en la memoria. (244) [And even by me, because since I was strong enough to gnaw a bone I had the desire to talk, to say things that I had stored up in my mind.]

So it appears that the dogs were only mute before this miracle; that they had previously acceded to consciousness, but could not articulate sounds into language. Desire and language are commingled in their commentary; when they speak, they become aware of the lack of speech they suffered, and of its possible loss again. It appears that at some point they have moved into what Lacan calls the Symbolic, and become split-subjects capable of language and of desire.⁴

Their first utterances are dominated by an awareness of lack. That this sensation should accompany the accession to language is not surprising since, according to Lacanian theory,

Symbolization starts, therefore, when the child gets its first sense that something could be missing; words stand for objects, because they only have to be spoken at the moment when the first object is lost (Lacan, *Feminine* 31).

That lost first object, which in Lacanian theory is identified with the unitary bliss of the mother-child dyad, is what Berganza will tell you later, "lo que después diré."

After these mysterious asides about his problematic beginning, the form of Berganza's story becomes more traditionally picaresque. He tells about all the masters he has served to date. There are ten of these episodes; but in the midst of them, after the fifth and before the sixth, there is a story; it is the account of Cañizares.

Berganza has been working as a dancing dog for a street performer. One day they arrive in Montilla, and begin to put on a show in front of a hospital. His master exhorts him to ever higher leaps in honor of various scabrous local personages, finally commanding him to do some more "a devoción de la famosa hechicera que dicen que hubo en este lugar" (290) [in devotion to the famous sorceress who they say used to be in this place]. As soon

as these words leave his lips, the hospitaler, an old woman, yells,

¡Bellaco, charlatán, embaidor e hijo de puta, aquí no hay hechicera alguna! Si lo decís por la Camacha, ya ella pagó su pecado, y está donde Dios se sabe; si lo decís por mí, chocarrero, ni yo soy ni he sido hechicera en mi vida; y si he tenido fama de haberlo sido, merced a los testigos falsos, y a la ley del encaje, y al juez arrojadizo y mal informado; ya sabe todo el mundo la vida que hago, en penitencia, no de los hechizos que no hice, sino de otros muchos pecados, otros que como pecadora he cometido. (290) [Liar, cheat, charlatan, son of a whore, there's no sorceress here! If you say it about Camacha, she's already paid for her sins, and is God knows where; if you say it for me, liar, I am not, nor never have been a sorceress in my life; and if I have the reputation of having been one, thanks to false witnesses, unfounded judgments, and a misinformed judge; now everyone knows what kind of life I lead, in penance, not for the spells I did not cast, but for many other sins, which I as a sinner have committed].

After this outburst the performer shuts down the act, and his frustrated customers leave, doing exactly what the woman wanted to avoid: "Fuese la gente maldiciendo a la vieja, añadiendo al nombre de hechicera el de bruja, y el de barbuda sobre vieja" (291) [they leave cursing the old woman, adding the name witch to that of sorceress, and that of bearded to crone].

Thus, the introduction of Cañizares is in the context of naming and fixing meaning, despite the attempt to avoid imposed names and meanings. (If she is pinned down as a witch too early, she will be unable to tell her story.) In her turn, Cañizares names the dog--she calls him, "Hijo, Montiel" (291) and tells him to come to her room that night, so that she can tell him about his life. He is terrified and confused, but curious--so he goes that evening to meet her. She greets him like a long lost

friend, and immediately launches into a biography of la Camacha de Montilla, the famous witch to whom his master alluded earlier with such disastrous results. One of her great skills (among hymen-mending and changing the weather) was that of turning human beings into animals.⁵ Cañizares is jealous of this skill and says:

lo que me pesa es que yo ni tu madre, que fuimos discípulas de la buena Camacha, nunca llegamos a saber tanto como ella; [. . .] Tu madre, hijo, se llamó la Montiel, que después de la Camacha fue famosa." (293) [what bothers me is that neither I nor your mother, who were disciples of the good Camacha, ever came to know as much as she did; [. . .] Your mother, son, was called la Montiel, who was almost as famous as Camacha.]

So, Berganza's mother was a human being, one of a trio of famous witches (Amezúa y Mayo 451-61). La Camacha even assisted as midwife at his birth, and when she discovered that his mother had delivered dogs instead of babies, said that she would cover it up if their mother would keep it quiet, because "este perruno parto de otra parte viene y algún misterio contiene" (294) [this canine birth comes from somewhere else and has some mystery in it]. Years later, on her deathbed, Camacha confessed that it was she herself who had turned the babies into dogs, out of jealousy and fear that their mother would surpass her own magical skills.

After revealing the source of the dogs' ability to speak, Cañizares begins a long disquisition on her past as a witch, full of details of sorcery and spells, with elaborate commentary on the Sabbath and the unguent witches use to get there (295-301). This conjunction of explanations of the origin of speech and of witchcraft is highlighted by the fact that Cañizares proceeds to tell a story immediately after the revelation. She, like the dogs, finds the power to speak through some kind of sorcery. Thus, unlike any other woman in the *Coloquio*, she narrates her own story.

Cañizares is both inside and outside the dominant society. She works in the beneficent and Christian profession of hospitaler, but in the evening, fully

conscious of her contradictions, she anoints herself with witch's unguents. Her sorcery effects a change which is, at least, efficacious for herself--her spells bring her the power to create a subversive narrative within the main story.

The specific name she gives to this discourse-producing magic is *tropelía*:

sé que eres persona racional y te veo en semejanza de perro, si ya no es que esto se hace con aquella ciencia que llaman *tropelía*, que hace parecer una cosa por otra. (292) [I know that you are a rational person and I see you in the form of a dog, but that this is done with that science that they call *tropelía*, which makes one thing appear for another.]

According to L. J. Woodward, *tropelía* is not a substantial change, but rather "an apparent change brought about by trickery" (82). The witch knows how to make one thing appear as another--in other words, *tropelía* gives control over the processes of signification, and sidesteps binary opposition in order to produce multiple and simultaneous differing meanings (talking dogs), identities that are never certain (are the dogs enchanted babies?), and endlessly deferred definition of these ecstatic signifiers, as posited in Camacha's prophecy:

Volverán en su forma verdadera cuando vieren con presta diligencia derribar los soberbios levantados y alzar a los humildes abatidos por poderosa mano para hacerlo. (294)
[They shall return to their true form/when they see with ready diligence/ the throwing down of the elevated proud/and the lifting up of the downtrodden humble/by a hand powerful to do it].

The prophecy indicates an inversion of hierarchies but not a release from hierarchalized structures. When the proud are cast down, they become "downtrodden"; when the humble are lifted, they become "elevated"--the cycle of dominance continues. The resonances of the

passage with Virgil and the Magnificat⁶ are ironic--Camacha's words promise not restoration, but rather an endless repetition of oppressive structures, to those who would seek to end the effects of her *tropelía*. The end of illusion, of *engaño* and *tropelía*, would be the end of fiction.

The insistence on naming Cañizares a witch has a function specifically related to an untold story: It helps to divert attention from the central fact of production of narrative in the text, which is that of motherhood.⁷ Deciding the identity of a multiply-meaning, elastic gap puts an end to narrative. One of Cañizares's functions in the *Coloquio* is to protect the gap of its origin from being filled in with a meaning that would weld it immovably into the dominant narrative's framework. This gap is the story of the origin of mystery in discourse, the unknown, unreadable absence that invisibly affects and stimulates the making of text. It is that which, in the quotation that began this discussion of the *Coloquio*, is metaphorized as an uncontrollable womb, and is represented in the text as the untold story of Montiel's delivery. The witch is a powerful emblem of sexuality in the western consciousness, but every one of reproduction. She is accused of making men impotent, of procuring abortions, and of killing infants. These fantasies are undermined in the *Coloquio* by the fact that one witch, Camacha, (like, historically, many women persecuted for witchcraft)⁸ is a midwife, and the other, Montiel, is a mother who is not married. Montiel is not permitted to tell any story--all she can do is narrate with her body, by giving birth. She is as deeply embedded in this narrative as Celestina's friend and mentor Claudina is in the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*. In both cases, these are women who are outside of the control of patriarchal society. The texts seem automatically and unconsciously to censor the independent friendships of deviant women, upon whom, like it or not, they depend for their narrative energy; the actions of deviant women motivate the narrative. It is true, as Camacha says, that this canine birth comes from somewhere else and contains some mystery: but it is a birth nevertheless. These weird women bring life, not death, to the narrative. As Cipión says at the beginning of the story, the dogs' discourse and the gap it marks move beyond the bounds of nature--not because

Campuzano fathers a narrative without a woman, but because two supernatural women give birth to dogs, and to discourse.

The separation from the body of the mother that is necessary under the terms of the dominant narrative is what makes it possible for Cipión and Berganza to speak. This separation, entrenched in the ambiguity and stories within stories that form the narrative, and enfranchised by the repression of the functions of non-patriarchal midwife and mother, leaves the untold story of Montiel untold. The gap surrounding the birth of the babies and the speech of the dogs is protected by the confessions of Cañizares, who tells her own subversive witch story, one that can be tolerated because its definition can be controlled by the textual order in place in the dominant narrative.

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NOTES

¹This essay appears in an extended and slightly different version as part of Chapter 4 of my book *The Untold Story*. All quotations from *Coloquio de los perros* are from Miguel de Cervantes, *Novela del casamiento engañoso* and *Coloquio de los perros*, in *Novelas ejemplares*.

²Forcione sees the Cañizares episode as the central one of the work. It is interesting to note that there were, historically, a group of women called "las Camachas" accused of witchcraft in 1571 in Montilla in the province of Córdoba. For further information, see Huerga. Agustín G. de Amezúa y Mayo also discusses them in his *Cervantes* (456-58), and in addition thoroughly comments on the meaning of witchcraft in Cervantes's time (461-80). I have italicized in this quotation from Forcione the words that I think belong to a connotative field that might be allied to a paranoid response to female sexuality.

³See, for example, González-Echevarría (15-26).

⁴In Lacanian theory, the Symbolic is that realm which a subject enters when, cognizant of lack, he posits

signifiers to represent the lost object. Babies move into the symbolic when, at first conscious of their difference from their mother, they must use signifiers to take her place. Language functions in the symbolic as a third term that breaks the mother/child dyad. See Mitchell and Lacan, *Ecrits*.

⁵That this skill was commonly attributed to witches is confirmed by a chapter on the matter in Kramer, Part 2, Chapter; 8, Question 1.

⁶Avalle-Arce and others think that there may be allusions to the *Aeneid*, Book 6, "Parcere subiectis et debellare superbos" and to Luke 1: 51-52 in the prophecy; Cervantes, *Novelas ejemplares*, 3, 294 n. 236.

⁷For a thorough exposition of the narratology of the "untold story" see my *The Untold Story*.

⁸See the *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part 1, Chapter 11 and Part 2, Chapter 13.

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**POESIE ET PHILOSOPHIE:
LA FONCTION DU REVE CHEZ
DESCARTES ET DIDEROT**

Laurent Déchery

I) Histoire et Méthode

... l'homme n'est peut-être que le monstre de la femme, ou la femme le monstre de l'homme

(Diderot, *Oeuvres philosophiques* 328)

Cette étude est née d'une rencontre et d'un étonnement. Elle s'inscrit donc dans la double tradition qui fait converser les morts et qui place l'étonnement à l'origine de l'interrogation philosophique. La rencontre se fait entre Descartes et Diderot; la surprise vient de ce que leurs philosophies respectives s'organisent à partir du rêve. C'est l'histoire de cette rencontre et de cette surprise que nous proposons ici.

La double méthode que nous utiliserons se voudrait un peu à l'image de ces deux auteurs. Une lecture réflexive abordera les textes de Descartes et de Diderot en y appliquant leurs catégories et leurs théories respectives (car nous pensons qu'un texte offre à la fois des énoncés et les principes de leur énonciation); cette réflexivité représente aussi le moment propre et inaugural de la philosophie cartésienne: celui du sujet pensant qui retourne en soi-même: *cogito*. Une traduction réciproque célébrera à notre manière la rencontre onirique des deux auteurs. Nous nous proposons donc de lire quand cela sera possible et sans considération pour la chronologie Descartes avec Diderot, mais aussi Diderot avec Descartes. N'est-ce pas la méthode de l'inversion préconisée par Diderot lui-même? Cette lecture réciproque est fondée sur la pensée même de Diderot: pensée relativiste, pensée du passage à la limite, du mélange des genres, pensée du dialogue, de l'autre. Cette manière de penser, Kant la résumera dans une lettre à Mendelssohn: "penser pour soi-même et en même temps à la place des autres" (Nancy, "Logodaelus" 28).

II) Description: les lieux du rêve

... Oui, si l'on examine bien les fous, dit Bloculocus, on sera convaincu que leur état n'est qu'un rêve continu (Diderot, *Oeuvres romanesques* 161)

Puis, examinant avec attention ce que j'étais, et voyant que je pouvais feindre que je n'avais aucun corps, et qu'il n'y avait aucun monde ni aucun lieu où je fusse...

(Descartes, *Discours de la méthode* 148)

Notons rapidement une distinction entre "rêve" et "songe." Diderot emploie les deux termes mais il utilise plus généralement "songe" quand il en parle "théoriquement." Dans *Les bijoux indiscrets* les rêves de Mangogul et de Mirzoza renvoient à leur simple narration. Quand Bloculocus est appelé pour en faire l'interprétation, le chapitre s'intitule "Songes." La distinction demanderait une étude beaucoup plus approfondie. Pourtant, elle nous paraît éclairante quand nous nous penchons sur l'étymologie des deux termes, et l'emploi d'un vocabulaire limitrophe par nos deux auteurs. "Songe" vient de la même racine que "somme" et "sommeil"--*somnium*; *somnus*; bas latin *somniculus* "léger sommeil." Le songe c'est l'état même du sommeil. Le mot est plus ancien; il sera écarté progressivement par "rêve." "Rêver" vient d'un ancien *esver* qui signifie vagabonder jusqu'au XV^{ème} siècle--*desver* veut dire perdre le sens, être fou. *Esver* vient du latin *aestuare*, bouillonner, agiter. "Rêver" prend donc son sens de vagabonder, aller ça et là, errer, mais aussi d'agiter, de bouillonner.

Or, que ce soit Descartes qui rêve, que ce soit d'Alembert, que ce soit Mangogul, tous sont dans le même état de fatigue, de maladie, d'énerverment, d'agitation, d'excitation, voire même de folie passagère. Par ailleurs, le terme qui revient sans cesse sous la plume de Descartes comme de Diderot est "extravaguer" et le substantif "extravagance". Extra-vaguer, étymologiquement, errer au dehors. "Cela est de la plus haute extravagance et tout à la fois de la philosophie la plus profonde," écrit Diderot à Sophie Volland (*Correspondance* 2: 226). "Rêver" et "extravaguer" ont la même étymologie, car *esver* se rapporte au latin populaire *exvagus*, *vagus* signifiant errant, vagabond.

"Rêver" c'est au sens propre errer, extravaguer, vagabonder au-dehors; mais au dehors de quoi? Si la pensée de Diderot identifie philosophie et extravagance, vers quel dehors cette philosophie va-t-elle nous faire errer? Au dehors de quoi ou au dehors de qui le rêve nous met-il? Et comment pouvons-nous dire ici "je", ou "me"? Y a-t-il, par exemple pour Descartes, un "je" qui rêve? Le "je" est chez Descartes, l'affaire est connue, chose pensante. Si la pensée définit l'âme, si le "je" est un "je" pensant, de quoi peut-il rêver, et où rêve-t-il? Où erre-t-il? Où est l'erreur?

L'erreur se définit toujours chez Descartes par le corps, les sens, l'imagination. Faire une erreur, c'est se soumettre au tribunal du corps sensible, au lieu d'ajuster ses idées au niveau de la raison. Errer c'est être corps; extra-vaguer. L'au-dehors où le rêve nous fait errer, ne serait-il pas tout simplement chez Descartes, le corps? L'ailleurs du "je" que la seconde méditation définit comme chose pensante pourrait bien représenter le corps. La philosophie comme discours sans corps (métaphysique au sens étymologique) serait donc vouée à l'idéalisme. Contrairement à Diderot qui la rapproche de la divination et qui la recherche, Descartes veut se prémunir contre l'extravagance, bref contre le rêve et la folie. Mais peut-on faire autre chose qu'errer quand on est au-dehors? L'errance n'est-elle pas le propre du dehors, du mouvement et de l'absence de finalité? Pour ne pas errer, il faut revenir en soi-même, trouver un point fixe ("un point archimédien") que l'on ne quittera pas; pour éviter le vagabondage infini du doute, il faut avoir un point de départ fixe (le *cogito*), des repères, un garde-fou (la Méthode) et un but ("établir quelque chose de ferme et de constant dans les sciences"). Quel va bien pouvoir être la place du rêve dans une philosophie qui se construit contre lui; qui, dans la recherche de la certitude, c'est-à-dire l'absence de doute, veut prévenir tout retour du rêve en le repoussant au-dehors? Au commencement, il n'en était pas ainsi; au commencement était le rêve. Le scandale, vite étouffé, oublié, de la philosophie de Descartes vient de ce qu'elle naît de trois rêves auxquels il accordait lui-même la plus grande importance. Il appelait cette journée du 11 novembre 1619, le moment le plus important de sa vie, et fit, à son propos, un pèlerinage à Notre-Dame de

Lorette; ces trois rêves lui donnèrent l'intuition des fondements d'une science admirable; cette intuition est celle de l'unité du savoir fondée sur l'unité de la pensée. Réactivons ce scandale que les Malebranche, les Huygens (qui parlent de "grande faiblesse" et de "superstition") et tant d'autres ont reproché à Descartes. Toutes ces personnes illustres s'accordent pour dire que le rationalisme dans son principe même ne peut pas reposer sur les trois rêves faits par le jeune Descartes; problème philosophique donc; mais peut-être aussi problème de critique littéraire. Essayons de le relire autrement. Ce scandale ne serait-il pas aussi celui d'oser vouloir lier une oeuvre à une vie? Le scandale serait de vouloir retrouver l'irretrouvable, le toujours déjà perdu, le contingent, l'empirique, le sur quoi la pensée n'a peut-être pas de prise; nous avons nommé *le corps*.

Du rêve chez Diderot, qu'en est-il? Il apparaît à trois endroits majeurs: premièrement, dans un lieu qui unit philosophie et physiologie (autrement dit la pensée et la matière, l'âme et le corps), principalement dans *Le rêve de d'Alembert*. Deuxièmement, en littérature où il est lié à la philosophie (en général définie comme abstraite ou idéaliste), principalement dans *Les bijoux indiscrets* dont les personnages rêvent presque toujours de philosophie ou à cause de la philosophie. Troisièmement, en peinture où il est lié à la question de la vie, principalement dans les *Salons de 1765 et de 1767*. Nous nous efforcerons de comprendre en chemin l'articulation possible de ces trois lieux: à savoir du rêve, de la vie et du corps.

III) La rencontre.

Elle [l'âme] est en liberté et elle est folle! Si elle était née avec des idées métaphysiques, comme l'on dit tant d'écrivains qui rêvaient les yeux ouverts, ses idées pures et lumineuses de l'être, de l'infini, de tous les premiers principes, devraient se réveiller en elle avec la plus grande énergie quand son corps est endormi: on ne serait jamais bon philosophe qu'en songe

(Voltaire, *Dictionnaire* 393)

Comment? rêver sans fièvre! cela fait peur . . .

(Sévigné, *Lettre du 6 Avril 1672*)

Comment Descartes et Diderot se rencontrent-ils? Premièrement, leurs rêves interviennent toujours en relation à la philosophie. Descartes trouve dans trois rêves (le 10 novembre 1619) les fondements d'une science admirable; trois rêves dont il donne lui-même l'interprétation alors qu'il rêve encore, et dont le dernier lie la philosophie, la sagesse et la science dans deux objets: un dictionnaire et un *corpus poetarum*. Dans les *Méditations métaphysiques*, le rêve intervient à l'intérieur d'un discours réputé philosophique, comme moyen de mise en doute.

Mangogul, dans *Les bijoux indiscrets*, rêve d'avoir trop parlé de philosophie avec Mirzoza--et pas de n'importe quel sujet: de l'âme que la favorite place ironiquement dans les pieds--question classique, mais qui n'est pas neutre pour nous, des rapports de l'âme et du corps. Le rêve de Mangogul porte sur deux espèces de philosophie: celle qui privilégie l'âme (la philosophie idéaliste ou la métaphysique), celle qui privilégie le corps (la philosophie expérimentale ou empirique). Mirzoza ne rêve pas de philosophie mais des beaux-arts, en particulier de poésie, plus exactement de poètes, plus précisément encore d'une galerie de bustes représentant principalement des poètes. La visite se fait sous l'égide de Minerve qui les présente comme ses favoris. D'Alembert enfin rêve de matière vivante, de sensibilité, d'abeilles, bref de la vie.

Deuxièmement, le rêve est créé par l'échauffement du cerveau, la maladie, la fatigue intellectuelle. Chez Diderot c'est d'avoir trop pensé abstraitement (c'est-à-dire sans le corps et sans exemples) que le cerveau se fatigue et donc rêve. Mangogul "se couche sur des idées creuses." D'Alembert a de la fièvre. Descartes est pris d'enthousiasme (*cum plenus forem enthusiasmo*), Baillet dit: "le feu lui prit au cerveau." La fatigue, la fièvre, la maladie comme cause du rêve est un lieu commun du dix-septième et du dix-huitième siècles. Le texte du *Rêve de d'Alembert* commence ainsi: "Bordeau: 'Eh bien! qu'est-ce qu'il y a de nouveau? Est-ce qu'il est malade?'" Ce qu'il y a de nouveau c'est justement qu'il est malade; ce qu'il y a de nouveau c'est, narrativement et dramatiquement, qu'il va rêver. Voilà réaffirmée la liaison essentielle du rêve et de la fièvre. Deux possibilités donc, soit la philosophie rend malade (mais

quelle philosophie?), soit la maladie rend philosophe (mais quel philosophe?), à moins que ce ne soit poète.

Troisièmement, le rêve est utilisé explicitement comme instrument de pensée servant à la finalité de leurs philosophies respectives (par exemple dans les *Méditations* comme auxiliaire dans l'entreprise de mise en doute systématique et dans les *Salons* comme procédé de critique d'art). Pour Descartes, le rêve servira à repousser le corps, les sens et l'imagination hors du champ de la certitude; pour Diderot à mettre en scène le thème central de sa philosophie, celui de la vie. Comme l'a montré J. Chouillet c'est afin de promouvoir la vie de l'oeuvre d'art que Diderot se sert du rêve comme critique (Chouillet 245-56). Le lien avec d'Alembert n'est pas difficile à définir si l'on réalise que l'artiste est celui à qui est réservé l'honneur de créer. Faute de créer la vie, il créera des simulacres. Pygmalion est donc ici le paradigme de l'art. Or c'est de la statue de Falconnet intitulée *Pygmalion aux pieds de sa statue qui s'anime* dont se sert Diderot pour représenter le problème du passage de l'inanimé à l'animé, autrement dit de la création. Création artistique ou naturelle, la question de la vie s'inscrit dans l'axe de la création et s'exprime, chez Diderot, par le rêve.

Diderot répète qu'il est impossible de distinguer l'expérience du rêve de celle de la veille là où Descartes s'efforce de conserver une distinction entre les deux. Si le rêve est classiquement lié au problème de la connaissance et de la réalité du monde extérieur, il est aussi et peut-être plus essentiellement, non seulement lié au corps, mais aussi au corps absent. Tout se passe comme si le corps absent de la veille rationaliste reprenait sa revanche dans le rêve matérialiste. D'Alembert est un mathématicien (comme Descartes) qui pense des abstractions. La bonne philosophie (celle qui se fait en tenant compte du corps) figure le retour de l'oublié, de l'exclu (du corps) de la mauvaise philosophie.¹ Il se passe la même chose pour Descartes en ce sens que le rêve parle toujours de ce qu'il élimine pendant la veille: du corps (le *corpus poetarum*, le corps nu ou le corps de verre des *Méditations*). Qu'est-ce qui est rêvé aussi bien par le Descartes habité par l'enthousiasme poétique de 1619, que par Mangogul ou d'Alembert? Le corps (le *corpus*, l'expérience, la matière

sensible . . .). Qu'est-ce qui disparaît dans le rêve devenu instrument du Descartes philosophe des *Méditations*? Le corps. Affirmons ici que pour Diderot, le rêve est la seule manière d'intégrer le corps que Descartes voulait éliminer. Que signifie donc la liaison fondamentale du rêve, du corps et de la vie? Diderot est ici le seul à nous répondre par la bouche de d'Alembert rêvant: le corps est la vie. Dire que Diderot est matérialiste c'est assurer l'identité entre le corps et la vie; le reste vient après. Le reste, c'est-à-dire la pensée. *Le rêve de d'Alembert* ne parle que du corps animé c'est-à-dire du corps vivant. Mais cette vie du corps, il la rêve. Le corps vivant se rêve et c'est dans le rêve que le corps vit le mieux.

IV) La Séparation.

Si Descartes est devenu Descartes c'est qu'il a passé tout un hiver, déterminant pour le monde, à rêver seul et en silence dans cette chambre chauffée qu'on appelait le poêle (Duhamel, *Manuel*)

. . . du philosophe qui médite ou qui s'écoute dans le silence et l'obscurité. (Diderot, *Oeuvres philosophiques* 272)

Ces points de rencontre peuvent paraître bien superficiels et nous serions bien peu diderotiens si nous n'examinions les différences qui séparent la position du rêve chez Descartes et Diderot. Descartes, auteur, raconte son rêve; c'est une histoire réelle, une biographie. Diderot ne rêve pas, il fait rêver un de ses personnages. Il faudrait, pour effacer cette distinction fondamentale, que Descartes devienne lui-même personnage; personnage de sa philosophie. Pour cela il suffit d'ouvrir *Le discours de la méthode*: "J'étais alors en Allemagne. . . je demeurais tout le jour enfermé seul dans un poêle, où j'avais tout loisir de m'entretenir de mes pensées." Descartes, auteur, est aussi le personnage de son *Discours*, disons, en employant ses propres mots, de sa fable. Pourquoi Descartes, auteur, narrateur, et seul personnage de sa narration élimine-t-il, de sa fable, le rêve du Descartes historique, dix-huit ans après alors qu'il en reconnaît l'importance formidable? Qu'est-ce qu'il y a dans ces rêves qui empêche Descartes de les

intégrer au *Discours de la méthode*? Il y a, nous l'avons déjà vu, une possibilité d'errer, il y a du corps.

Inversement, d'Alembert ne serait-il que Diderot, personnage ou personne rêvant? D'Alembert dans son rêve s'adresse au philosophe, parle presque en lieu et place de Diderot. Mais quel est le sens d'un Diderot qui rêve puisqu'il dit éveillé la même chose dans *L'entretien entre Diderot et d'Alembert*? "... en le relisant, il m'a pris une fantaisie d'en faire un second," fantaisie qu'il appelle un "éclaircissement" (*Correspondance* 226). Ces deux dialogues ont-ils le même résultat? D'Alembert doit rêver ce que dit Diderot éveillé parce que le discours éveillé ne peut pas donner toute sa consistance à la pensée du Diderot du premier *entretien*. D'Alembert doit rêver parce que la vérité est toujours affaire de croyance (et non de certitude comme chez Descartes). Pour Diderot, le vrai est lié à la croyance (sauf en mathématiques); le pour n'est jamais égal au contre: la croyance est un balancier et le retour à l'équilibre un signe du vraisemblable. Descartes ne veut que de la certitude (du mathématique) et fabrique des fables pour le montrer. Descartes veut un équilibre absolu. *L'entretien* s'ouvre sur la question de la croyance et se ferme sur celle du scepticisme. L'union des contraires, de la matière et de la vie, c'est ce qu'il y a proprement d'incroyable. Aussi, pour comprendre et pour croire à l'identité de la matière et de la sensibilité, il faut rêver. Le rêve est le lieu où la croyance s'affermir en conviction, où le cru prend possession du croyant. "Only in the dream are we likely still to have the experience of a stone feeling, or of a marble statue being transformed into living flesh," explique clairement Vartanian ("Phenomenology" 219) en citant par la même occasion Bordeu: "Toute abstraction n'est qu'un signe vide d'idée... de là le besoin... d'en venir à des exemples. Lorsque, après une longue combinaison de signes, vous demandez un exemple, vous n'exigez autre chose de celui qui parle, sinon de donner du corps, de la forme, de la réalité, de l'idée au bruit successif de ses accents en y appliquant des sensations éprouvées" (Diderot, *Oeuvres philosophiques* 369 [C'est nous qui soulignons]). En permettant d'échapper aux signes vides de la métaphysique et des mathématiques, le rêve se pose comme le style du corps et de la vie.

Il reste une différence d'importance quant à la situation du rêve chez les deux auteurs: elle est originaire (au sens de la biographie) et périphérique chez Descartes; elle est centrale et médiatique chez Diderot. Le rêve est un catalyseur chez Diderot; ce n'est qu'un symptôme chez Descartes. Il est facile de résoudre cet écart. Il suffit de comprendre que dans l'histoire des idées, le renversement de Descartes n'est pas Locke ou Newton, c'est Diderot. Diderot est le symétrique inverse de Descartes. Je n'en prendrai ici pour preuve que l'ordre d'exposition des deux auteurs: Diderot commence par là où finit Descartes. Il faut à Descartes six méditations pour retrouver le corps sentant qu'il avait perdu à la première. La première réplique de d'Alembert se termine en remplaçant Dieu par la sensation. Diderot met à jour ce que Descartes ne peut exprimer que comme symptôme. Dit autrement, Denis est l'analyste de René. Le rêveur de Diderot ne pouvait être que d'Alembert le géomètre. Descartes rêve; son style se voudra mathématique (idéal de l'objectivité). Diderot fait rêver un mathématicien pour exposer sa philosophie du divers et de la différence; son style sera le dialogue, idéal de l'intersubjectivité (car l'inverse de l'objectif n'est pas le subjectif mais l'intersubjectif). Descartes rêve seul et en silence, alors que l'on peut lire dans *Le rêve de d'Alembert*: "le plus grand bonheur que (je) puisse imaginer" c'est celui "de confondre mes sens avec les sens, mon ivresse avec l'ivresse, mon âme avec l'âme d'une compagne que mon coeur se choisira, et de me reproduire avec elle et en elle (*Oeuvres philosophiques* 377).

V) Qui parle? Qui rêve? Le jeu des personnages.

Bordeu: Est-ce vous qui parlez?

Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse: Non, c'est le rêveur.

(Diderot, *Oeuvres philosophiques* 289)

Si Descartes privilégie le "je" et si le rapport je-tu constitue la trame même du texte diderotien, il nous faut savoir qui parle dans *Le discours de la méthode* et dans *Le rêve de d'Alembert*. Dans celui-là c'est le "je" qui pense. Le discours philosophique qui ouvre la modernité est celui qui dit qu'il dit "Je" ("La proposition je suis, j'existe est nécessairement vraie, toutes les fois que je la

prononce, ou que je la conçois dans mon esprit," (Descartes 275) et qui s'inscrit paradoxalement dans l'écriture impersonnelle des mathématiques. Est-ce parce que ce "je" est pur qu'il n'est pas moi? Trop pur, c'est-à-dire sans corps? Qui parle dans *Le rêve de d'Alembert* (la question pourrait se poser pour tous les textes de Diderot)? Diderot à travers Julie de l'Espinasse, Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse et d'Alembert à travers Bordeu? Le jeu des voix dans le *Rêve* est si complexe, si fragile, si changeant qu'il est quasiment impossible de répondre à cette question; il court, il court le sujet du discours et n'est jamais là où on l'attend. Est-ce dans l'absence d'identification que la question "qui parle?" trouve son sens? A moins que ce ne soit le corps rêvé.

Le rêve de d'Alembert ressemble fort, avant la lettre, à la mise en scène peu orthodoxe d'une analyse freudienne. Nous y avons un patient allongé: d'Alembert en position de quasi-hypnose. Quelle meilleure situation pour l'analysé que celle de parler en rêvant et de rêver en parlant; comme si le rêve se narrait lui-même directement, en faisant l'économie du passage par la veille qui doit peut-être se résoudre à être toujours cartésienne. D'Alembert, le logicien, "trouve dur à croire" que les contraires cohabitent, s'unissent et se mélangent. Il fallait que d'Alembert rêvât pour qu'il crût à la pierre qui sente. L'identification des contraires est une question à la fois de science, de philosophie, de logique et de poétique. De science parce qu'elle traite du passage de l'inanimé à l'animé et parce qu'"il n'y a rien de précis en nature" (311), de philosophie parce qu'elle traite du principe de non-contradiction, de poétique parce qu'elle traite du mélange des styles. C'est la question même que pose Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse à Bordeu dans la *Suite de l'entretien*: "Que pensez-vous du mélange des espèces?" Et le docteur lui-même de dire que la question est de physique, de morale et de poésie. La remise en cause des limites est une constante de la pensée et du style de Diderot.

La philosophie et la logique (celles de Descartes et de d'Alembert) sont toujours fondées sur une logique aristotélicienne, sur les trois principes d'identité, de non-contradiction et du tiers exclu. Or toute la pensée de Diderot est ici de brouiller les identités, les genres, les

personnages, d'affirmer la proposition et sa négation, d'inclure le tiers, l'autre, le différent. Le rêve était le meilleur moyen de réaliser ce programme. La philosophie du rêve de Diderot est structurée par une logique non aristotélicienne où l'identité n'est plus celle du *cogito* cartésien, où le principe de non-contradiction ne joue pas, où le tiers (Julie, les monstres) n'est pas exclu. La différence entre la situation onirique chez Descartes et chez Diderot le montre: c'est la différence qu'il y a entre mon rêve propre qui est (dans mon souvenir) sans référence au sommeil et le rêve d'autrui qui est d'abord perçu comme endormi (Kaufman 100). La réflexivité (nous allions dire l'introspection) de la position cartésienne se circonscrit dans le fait que l'auteur est le rêveur qui interprète lui-même son rêve alors qu'il rêve encore. Diderot ne rêve pas; c'est autrui, placé devant nous endormi qui rêve. C'est parce qu'il s'offre d'abord à nous comme corps endormi qu'il dévoilera l'intersubjectivité de son rêve. Parce qu'il joue à la fois le rôle de l'interprétant et de l'interprété, Descartes rêvant est comme Descartes savant: il se suffit à lui-même.

Nous avons aussi un docteur: Bordeu. Or ce docteur est partisan du laisser-faire, je dirais du laisser-dire; du laisser-faire et-dire la nature qui n'est autre que le corps. Etre médecin pour Bordeu signifie être à l'écoute du corps malade. Bordeu a, comme médecin, le rôle du sage, du savant, du philosophe, de l'homme complet; comme tel, il intègre les contraires: il est la raison mais il rêve. Il peut finir la pensée de d'Alembert rêvant et de Julie quand elle commence à extravaguer. Serait-il omniscient parce qu'il sait rêver lui-même éveillé; ou parce qu'il laisse faire la nature? A moins que ces deux questions n'en fasse qu'une puisque "il n'y a pas de différence entre un philosophe qui rêve et un médecin éveillé." Et pour cause puisque un docteur s'occupe du corps; le philosophe, lui, doit dormir pour parler du corps, pour que le corps parle. S'ils ne sont pas différents, c'est donc qu'ils parlent tous deux du corps ou le laissent parler.

Enfin il y a une tierce personne: Julie de l'Espinasse, en position de relais dans la narration, de lectrice, d'interlocutrice et aussi d'amante, de voyeur qui assiste au plaisir pas entièrement solitaire de son amant, en y

prenant du plaisir sans trop savoir ce qui en est. Tiers non exclu, elle montre par sa présence même le changement qui opère dans la logique diderotienne. Pourtant Julie est aussi un double dans la mesure où elle répète ce que dit d'Alembert. Jusqu'à ce qu'elle ait une voix propre qui juge et dit à l'autre de se taire. La situation est encore plus complexe si on la prend dans sa dimension narrative parce que le personnage de Julie n'est pas donné une fois pour toutes. Il y a non pas transfert, mais inversion, renversement des rôles: Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse évolue, change, revient sur ses positions.

Julie change dans le rêve: elle commence comme Descartes et elle finit comme . . . une extravagante? La question de son unité, de son moi est si claire qu'elle est sans raison. Il y a des questions si évidentes pour Julie de l'Espinasse qu'elles tiennent par elles-mêmes, comme le *cogito*. Julie parle Descartes. La première extravagance vise la métaphore de l'araignée. "Je dis extravagances; car quel autre nom donner à cet enchaînement de conjectures fondées sur des oppositions ou des ressemblances si éloignées, si imperceptibles, que les rêves d'un malade ne paraissent ni plus bizarres, ni plus décousus?" (Vartanian, "Phenomenology" 226) Parler métaphoriquement ce serait donc extravaguer, errer en dehors; en dehors du sens propre; dans les deux sens du terme *sens*, parce que la métaphore est définie dans la Lettre sur les aveugles comme application d'un terme spécialisé à un sens sur un autre des cinq sens (par exemple "une couleur chaude"), et parce que l'en-dehors du sens propre est le sens figuré. L'extravagante Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse file la métaphore de l'araignée qui est aussi métaphore d'elle-même en ce qu'elle lie ce qui est éloigné; elle trace ainsi le réseau du sens et de la vie. Il faut savoir extravaguer, sortir du sens propre, pour trouver la métaphore qui donne à voir, par identité de structure, la vie du corps. Autrement dit, la vie du corps est la vie du langage qui se dit dans la métaphore onirique.

VI) Comment le dire?

Heureux le géomètre, en qui une étude consommée des sciences abstraites n'aura point affaibli le goût des beaux-arts; à qui Horace et Tacite seront aussi familiers que

Newton; qui saura découvrir les propriétés d'une courbe et sentir les beautés d'un poète; dont l'esprit et les ouvrages seront de tous les temps, et qui aura le mérite de toutes les académies.

(Diderot, *Oeuvres philosophiques* 180)

Si la vie se dit le mieux dans le rêve, quel est le style du rêve? Quel rapport y a-t-il entre le rêveur et le style du rêveur? Dans l'affirmative, les meilleurs rêveurs sont par définition les femmes et les poètes car "les comparaisons sont presque toute la raison des femmes et des poètes" (Diderot, *Oeuvres philosophiques* 307); faut-il ajouter le rêveur et le fou? Si la métaphore appartient en propre au rêve, la poésie sera le genre qui réalise le mieux le discours de la comparaison. La poésie est métaphore, c'est-à-dire, étymologiquement, application à l'autre. La métaphore met ensemble ce qui est éloigné. Comme il n'y a rien de précis dans la nature, le poétique devra être refus des limites univoques, fixes et *a priori* pour s'organiser à l'image même de la nature. Chez Diderot, le corps fonctionne comme la pensée. Il fonctionne par la mise en contact qui caractérise la métaphore; c'est pourquoi la logique de la cause et de l'effet est remplacée par une logique de l'apposition et de l'association. Qu'est-ce que penser pour Diderot? C'est énoncer des phénomènes conjoints (nécessaires ou contingents, c'est-à-dire géométriques ou historiques). La pensée est non pas syllogistique ou déductive, elle est associative. D'Alembert: ". . . On ne conçoit pas trop . . . comment nous formons des syllogismes, ni comment nous tirons des conséquences." Diderot: "C'est que nous n'en tirons point: elles sont toutes tirées par la nature. Nous ne faisons qu'énoncer des phénomènes conjoints . . .". (*Rêve* 279) La sensibilité est identique à l'entendement, le corps à l'âme parce qu'ils sont tous régis par la même loi: celle de l'association.

Quel rapport la métaphore entretient-elle avec le corps? La métaphore est rapprochement: la métaphore est dépassement de ce qui est propre. En revanche chez Descartes, le propre est fable (*Mundus est fabula* signifie à la fois le monde et le propre est fable); le propre, le monde comme propre, relève étonnamment du discours de la fable et non du discours rationnel. La métaphore se dit par rapport à un sens physique. La métaphore rend

possible le passage d'un sens à un autre. Comme application d'un sens à un autre, elle incarne la figure même du mélange (mélange des voix, des objets, des espèces, des genres du discours). On comprend mieux la raison pour laquelle, à chaque fois que l'on introduit une métaphore dans *Le rêve de d'Alembert*, le locuteur demande à son interlocuteur de s'approcher. Le texte de Diderot joue ce qu'il dit et dit ce qu'il dramatise. La métaphore constitue essentiellement, comme le rêve, la proximité, le rapprochement. "Nos rêves ne sont que des jugements précipités qui se succèdent avec une rapidité incroyable, et qui, rapprochant des objets qui ne se tiennent que par des qualités fort éloignées, en composent un tout bizarre" (*Oeuvres romanesques* 160). Métaphorique par nature. Mais le rêve dans la mesure où il ne s'oppose pas à la veille (comme l'illusion à la réalité) devient partie intégrante d'une expérience totalisante. Le rêve est non seulement présent dans la veille mais nécessaire à sa plénitude. Le discours philosophique complet n'est pas celui de la veille (Diderot redeviendrait Descartes) mais celui qui sait utiliser le style du rêve, le style métaphorique, comme extravagant. Dès lors la déraison est intérieure à la raison, la folie à la santé. Et il nous faut conclure que la métaphore n'est plus le privilège du rêve, ou du poète, ou de la femme, mais qu'elle devient le lieu même du discours.

La pensée est d'abord mémoire et ensuite comparaison des idées entre elles que la mémoire retient dans le jeu de l'association. La comparaison est-elle association? La pensée serait donc toute métaphorique. Elle ne serait pas raison mais comparaison et déraison (comme le montrent les personnages de d'Alembert rêvant ou du *Neveu de Rameau*). La tâche de la pensée est d'élaborer l'unité du divers de la vie. Si la pensée associative et comparative se trouve à son plus haut degré dans le rêve, ce travail de réunification appartient stylistiquement à ce dernier. Comment la vie hétérogène et le corps multiple peuvent-ils se dire si ce n'est dans et par le rêve?

VIII) More Geometrico et causerie.

C'est de chercher les premières causes et les vrais principes dont on puisse déduire les raisons de tout ce qu'on

est capable de savoir. (Descartes, *Oeuvres* 560)

Notre discours est toujours en deçà ou au-delà de la sensation. (Diderot, *Oeuvres philosophiques* 370)

La philosophie de Descartes semble écartelée entre deux extrêmes: un idéal géométrique (le *more geometrico*) et ce que l'on pourrait appeler "l'histoire de mes pensées," entre l'anonyme absolu (le mathématique) et le subjectif absolu. Le mathématique comme style se présente comme mode d'exposition propre de la philosophie cartésienne. La manière géométrique est la seule propre, la seule adéquate pour qui cherche la certitude.

Il y a dans la philosophie de Descartes au moins deux points de résistance contre sa tentative de réduction à la pensée pure: la volonté d'oublier les trois rêves fondateurs de la science unitaire et le doute comme point de départ d'exposition des *Principes* qui sont censés être présentés synthétiquement, doute auquel répond la justification d'ouverture des *Principes* "que nous avons toujours été enfant avant que d'avoir été homme." Cela signifie que le corps est premier; qu'il faut donc l'oublier au moins une fois pour le reprendre en totalité par la pensée. Le mouvement opéré par la pensée cartésienne est celui du renversement du chronologique par le logique, de la dissolution de l'historique par le rationnel. Or la philosophie est double pour Descartes: elle est soit historique et donc incertaine, accidentelle, subjective, soit scientifique et donc intemporelle, certaine, déductive, didactique. La philosophie comme science est certaine et comme telle doit adopter le style même d'exposition des mathématiques (axiomatique, déductif . . .). C'est pourquoi le paradoxe d'une philosophie mathématique et subjective disparaît: le sujet de Descartes est un sujet pur, à l'image des idéalités mathématiques qu'il promet.

Nous retrouvons dans *Le rêve de d'Alembert* cette opposition de l'histoire et des conséquences, du narratif et du déductif, de ce qui se raconte et de ce qui se tire. Comme par hasard, Julie préfère les histoires, les conséquences peuvent attendre. C'est là toute la différence entre causer et composer. (Causer est infini et superficiel, composer fini et profond.) Se mettre à la

place de l'autre définit une position mouvante qui remet en question les moyens de son énonciation. C'est pourquoi les genres littéraires sont toujours remis en question chez Diderot. Le dialogue comme mise en scène de l'intersubjectivité (il n'y a pas de discours solitaire) remet en cause les limites du philosophique pur, du littéraire pur, du poétique pur, etc. (bref, de tout ce qui est propre, *mundus*). Satire, mélange ou pot-pourri, le résultat s'appelle, comme avec Socrate, une conversation amicale. "Nous ne composons pas, nous causons" dit Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse. Composer, c'est savoir où l'on va grâce à une méthode; causer c'est se laisser aller au hasard des rencontres en s'exposant à de nouvelles manières de voir. Converser signifie s'écarter du droit chemin, extravaguer. L'écart, comme le *clinamen* de Lucrèce, est créateur de nouvelles formes. Rêver c'est s'écarter: l'écart est le style même de Diderot, chemin de traverse, conversation. Le passage de Descartes à Diderot s'illustre par le passage de la symétrie du jardin à la française au labyrinthe du jardin à l'anglaise. Le refus de la composition philosophique qui n'est que squelette, qui n'invente rien parce que tout y est déjà (comme dans un jardin à la française), qui est refus de l'irruption du nouveau signifie la possibilité même de la création qui est identique à la vie. La philosophie doit être poétique parce que sa tâche est de penser la vie.

IX) Conclusion

... le prodige, c'est la vie, c'est la sensibilité; et ce prodige n'en est plus un.

(Diderot, *Oeuvres philosophiques* 303)

Lier Descartes et Diderot par le rêve c'est poser le problème de la vie comme discours et poser le problème du discours de la vie. Comment dire la vie? Ou encore, comment faire pour que créer la vie soit la même chose que dire la vie? Et qui doit dire la vie qui se crée? N'est-ce pas à celui qui crée la vie de la dire? Et si c'est Dieu, que dit-il? Si c'est l'animal, comment parle-t-il? Si c'est le philosophe, ne doit-il pas être poète et physiologue? Le discours philosophique a pour tâche de penser la pratique et le savoir du poète et du physiologue en ce qu'ils articulent tous deux la question de la création

de la vie et de la vie comme création.

Descartes fonde le sujet pensant dans et par une fable qui se veut unique, la seule vraie, la seule certaine. Le résultat c'est que le corps est une machine, car celui qui fonde la vérité sur soi-même, oublie l'autre; et celui qui oublie l'autre, oublie son corps. Diderot crée des êtres vivants dans un rêve. A côté de l'artiste (pour qui c'est le rêve qui donne la vie), du physiologue qui se veut continuateur du "travail" de la nature, le philosophe est, non pas créateur, mais penseur de vie. Il le fait, et ne peut le faire que dans et par le dialogue et non dans la fable du discours solitaire qui emprunte ses modèles aux mathématiques.

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NOTE

¹Voltaire le disait en d'autres termes: "les rêves sont les intermèdes de la comédie que joue la raison humaine. Alors l'imagination se trouvant seule fait la parodie de la pièce que la raison jouait pendant le jour." *Voltaire's Notebooks*. 2: 260.

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LE FANTASTIQUE DANS LE RÊVE DE D'ALEMBERT

Jane Rush

Le rêve de d'Alembert constitue une oeuvre charnière dans la production littéraire de Diderot et se situe esthétiquement entre le *Neveu de Rameau* et *Jacques Fataliste et son maître*. Composé en 1769, le texte est disposé en trois volets (ou trois "entretiens") qui s'imbriquent thématiquement et formellement.

Diderot propose dans cette oeuvre fantaisiste (oeuvre qu'il qualifia à bon escient de "folie" et "d'extravagance") une conception entièrement matérialiste de la vie. Cependant, à cause du caractère incomplet des sciences naturelles à cette époque, une philosophie de la nature systématique demeure inaccessible, voire hypothétique. Par conséquent, il n'est pas surprenant de retrouver dans la philosophie de la nature de Diderot une part importante accordée au fantastique: les monstres qui déambulent à travers les pages du *Rêve* ne présentent que la dimension la plus extraordinaire du système naturel diderotien. D'autre part, en accentuant le potentiel des sciences naturelles, l'auteur n'hésite pas à créer de nouveaux mondes où sont introduits des éléments de science-fiction et d'utopie qui se rangent facilement dans le champ opérationnel du fantastique. Diderot ne cache pas d'ailleurs la valeur conjecturale de son entreprise. Le matérialisme est envisagé comme un outil de travail, une option séduisante qui "se borne," dira Starobinski, "à évoquer la science possible" (22).

Aussi Diderot choisit-il d'explorer les hypothèses de sa vision du monde dans le cadre d'un dialogue philosophique qui n'a rien de traditionnel. L'élément-clé qui subvertit le texte est le rêve. Situé dans le second entretien (le panneau central du triptyque), le rêve peut être envisagé comme un espace comique ou une structure carnavalesque qui influe sur le texte en entier. L'objet de cette analyse sera donc d'examiner plus spécialement ce deuxième entretien, cette espèce de chèvre-pied esthétique qui enchaîne imperceptiblement

conversation et rêve et qui permet au fantastique de s'épanouir dans le cadre d'une oeuvre qui puise ses sources dans l'abondante littérature carnavalesque, notamment la satire ménippée et le dialogue socratique. Le rêve proprement dit retient dans sa composition certains éléments de la satire ménippée *fantastique*. La situation incongrue en est la caractéristique la plus évidente. Le rêve lui-même, bien qu'il soit décrit par le médecin Bordeu comme "un moment fébrile qui n'aura pas de suite (38)," façonne, en réalité, une situation exceptionnelle: une matinée extraordinaire fait suite à une nuit extraordinaire.

Le choix de d'Alembert comme transmetteur du rêve présente un découronnement des plus carnavalesques et assure une première source de comique. L'incongruité savoureuse qui existe entre le tempérament prudent et sceptique de l'individu et la situation cocasse dans laquelle il se trouve se résout par l'anéantissement total de cet esprit cartésien. En effet, il y a malice parodique à avoir choisi d'Alembert comme titulaire du rêve. Soucieux de l'opinion publique, le célèbre mathématicien est dépeint dans un moment de délire, de surexcitation physique et émotionnelle qui le fait extravaguer--la nuit étant d'ailleurs propice au déclenchement d'émotions sous-terraines. Toutefois, comme le fait remarquer Aram Vartanian, ses propos décousus possèdent une qualité oraculaire (224). Sous l'effet du rêve, d'Alembert joue le rôle d'augure, devinant en quelque sorte une vision fictive de la nature, anticipant les transformations possibles avant même que la nature ne les ait entamées.

La conception matérialiste de la nature qui se dégage du rêve n'offre pas une image statique de celle-ci comme à l'époque classique. Au contraire, la nature se présente comme dynamique et étrange--une nature sans cesse en voie de transformation dont les péripéties, par leur vitesse, anticipent un monde futur. En effet, la nature qui est décrite par le géomètre est mue par ce que Diderot appelle "la sensibilité universelle." Source d'unité dans la nature, sa présence se fait sentir à différents niveaux: elle régit aussi bien l'univers particulier de l'homme que les grandes étendues du cosmos. Aussi le rêve, par son caractère condensé et dramatique, est-il capable de résumer, à travers les propos d'un académicien, les grandes lignes du

matérialisme diderotien:

Pourquoi suis-je tel? C'est qu'il a fallu que je fusse tel... Ici, oui, mais ailleurs? Au pôle? mais sous la ligne? mais dans Saturne?... Changez le tout, vous me changez nécessairement, mais le tout change sans cesse.... Tous les êtres circulent les uns dans les autres, par conséquent... tout est en un flux perpétuel... Ne convenez-vous pas que tout tient en nature et qu'il est impossible qu'il y ait un vide dans la chaîne? Que voulez-vous dire avec vos individus? Il n'y en a point, non, il n'y en a point... Il n'y a qu'un seul grand individu, c'est le tout. (66-71)

Déjà ces quelques remarques exposent la vision totalisante de Diderot. "Tout tient en nature," affirme d'Alembert.

Pour élaborer ces hypothèses, Diderot crée, par le biais du rêve, un langage onirique qui est celui du désir. Il s'agit d'un discours "naturel" insoumis au contrôle de la raison et à tout système culturel et social. Comme le signale Leo Spitzer, le rêve reflète stylistiquement les tensions sexuelles qui caractérisent aussi bien l'ordre cosmique que l'ordre individuel (151). Le style coupé, en staccato, dénotant l'intensité et le trouble des émotions, se transforme d'autre part en lyrisme exaltant qui va de pair avec l'expansion et l'étendue des sentiments. Ayant singularisé son style en y évoquant le côté naturel et inconscient de l'homme, à savoir son aspect sexuel, Diderot place l'accent sur la régénération qui assure le "tout." En effet, la reproduction est un aspect essentiel au renouveau de la nature.

Dans un premier temps, d'Alembert décrit la régénération naturelle en termes cosmiques: il sera question de la fécondation des êtres et de la description d'une nature perpétuellement créatrice. Le désir "souterrain," tout en contribuant au lyrisme du texte, présente donc un envol imaginaire qui transporte d'Alembert sur Saturne et Jupiter--en somme dans un univers "utopique" où existent des polypes humains. Le géomètre, dans son rêve, fait fi des limites physiques du temps et de l'espace et crée un nouveau monde qui

dépasse les bornes d'une nature connue pour s'étayer dans le fantastique et anticiper un monde virtuel.

La vision dépeinte par d'Alembert est des plus fantastiques, rappelant les voyages émanant des satires ménippéennes. L'univers utopique autour duquel gravite le rêve est nettement anti-scientifique: il serait plus juste de parler de science-fiction que de science. Ironiquement, l'énergie sexuelle si bien évoquée dans le style s'exerce de façon étrange dans l'univers virtuel rêvé par d'Alembert. En effet, la reproduction sexuelle s'effectue mais elle est fondée sur une absence de désir individuel: c'est un univers où l'homme et la femme se reproduisent indépendamment l'un de l'autre, "les mâles se résolvant en mâles, les femelles en femelles":

L'homme se résolvant en une infinité d'hommes atomiques qu'on renferme entre des feuilles de papier comme des oeufs d'insectes, qui restent un certain temps en chrysalides, qui percent leurs coques et qui s'échappent en papillons, une société d'hommes formée, une province entière peuplée des débris d'un seul, cela est tout à fait agréable à imaginer. (52-53)

Comme le constate Erita Hill, non sans ironie, "d'Alembert dreams of novel, ingenious ways of reproduction on other planets" (78). La reproduction sexuelle à la d'Alembert devient, non plus sujette à des lois physiques, mais aux lois de l'imagination et de l'hypothèse.

Il s'ensuit que la notion d'un moi ou d'une identité personnelle est mise en question dans un univers où l'existence des parents est considérée un élément superflu. D'Alembert, lui-même un enfant trouvé, définit dans son délire onirique un nouvel univers où le moi n'existe plus et où l'individu est sérialisé:

Une chambre chaude, tapissée de petits cornets, et sur chacun de ces cornets une étiquette: guerriers, magistrats, philosophes, poètes; cornets de courtisans, cornets de catins, cornets de rois. (54)

Il y a réduction du phénomène biologique à l'absurde: le moi se trouve codifié, étiqueté et mis en éprouvette. Le travestissement de la reproduction sexuelle implique une usurpation du sentiment de liberté et de choix, un abaissement comique qui ridiculise et parodie le désir individuel. Aussi l'acte solitaire de d'Alembert qui met fin à son rêve constitue-t-il l'option parodique réservée à l'individu. En effet, les postulations philosophiques de ce dernier sur le flux et le reflux du cosmos s'achèvent par un acte isolé où le grand mouvement de la nature est récolté et enfermé "dans un flacon... envoyé de grand matin à Needham" (57). L'acte solitaire n'est qu'une copie caricaturée de la vision cosmique.

Cette "fin" de rêve indique bien la position ironique de l'individu d'Alembert. Le rêve, tout en valorisant un discours arbitraire, primitif et même érotique, se traduit par une désintégration de l'identité culturelle et historique de ce dernier. Le d'Alembert qui rêve d'un cosmos en devenir n'est pas le d'Alembert réveillé qui ne se souviendra plus de ses "extravagances." Son moi est nécessairement scindé: il y a un écart entre les hallucinations de son rêve et ses propos de géomètre.

L'ironie du personnage doit toutefois être comprise dans un contexte plus large où "rêve" et "réalité" font également partie de la nature. Il s'agit, en quelque sorte, des deux côtés de la même médaille. Le "moi" de d'Alembert se perd dans le paradoxe d'une nature totalisante où l'état de veille et l'état de rêve constituent deux états interdépendants. En effet l'hypothèse matérialiste qui prône cette vision englobante de la nature est manifeste. L'unité de la matière constitue la chaîne sourde vers laquelle tend toute l'oeuvre et se traduit par une esthétique de l'amalgame (Daniel 41). L'image de l'essaim d'abeilles, évoquée par d'Alembert en proie au délire, vient immédiatement à l'esprit. Tout en décrivant le paradoxe fondamental de cette nature, à la fois "une" et "diverse," continue et contiguë, cette image permet de signaler la coloration fantastique issue de l'esprit fertile de l'auteur.

Le choix de l'essaim d'abeilles est ingénieux car il offre l'avantage d'être un "tout" composé d'une "infinité" d'insectes. Cependant, à travers l'imagination déréglée du malade, l'image subit des transformations extraordinaires. Pour en arriver à la conception de l'unité

continue et non contiguë, Bordeu, contribuant au délire du médecin, suggère d'amollir les pattes des abeilles pour les coller ensemble et en faire "un seul et unique animal" (47). La manipulation des abeilles est reprise par Mlle de Lespinasse (qui est "adroite comme une fée" [49]) lorsque d'Alembert la supplie de couper le "seul et unique animal" en morceaux sans pour autant détruire l'unité essentielle de l'être.

Cette idée est relancée et prend toute son étendue lorsque l'essaim d'abeilles devient en quelque sorte un monstre naturel, un animal "à cinq ou six cents têtes et à mille ou douze cents ailes" (46). À travers cet exemple, Diderot a créé dans la tête délirante de d'Alembert une image carnavalesque de la Nature--une nature manipulée et transformée au gré de la fantaisie de ce dernier sans égard pour le temps et l'espace. *Homo faber* par excellence, d'Alembert a pour but d'insister sur l'unité essentielle d'une nature qui est néanmoins "fantastique" dans sa diversité.

Ces considérations ne sont pas le domaine exclusif du rêve mais se trouvent également incorporées dans le dialogue. En effet, le second entretien ne se limite pas au rêve mais est agrémenté d'un dialogue qui a lieu entre le docteur Bordeu et Mlle de l'Espinasse. Comme le remarque Georges Daniel, leur conversation au chevet d'un d'Alembert malade et délirant se veut la contrepartie intelligible de l'état de rêve. Se poursuivant à l'état de veille, le dialogue s'avère au départ sérieux et raisonnable. La méthode de connaissance semble d'ailleurs s'inspirer de la maïeutique socratique (Daniel 32); en effet, l'ignorance feinte de d'Alembert et l'ignorance réelle de Mlle de l'Espinasse provoquent un accouchement d'idées qui se remarque à plusieurs reprises à travers l'entretien et qui relève du dialogue socratique.

L'essence du dialogue socratique se trouve dans son caractère "intuitif": le génie (ou "démon") de Socrate se manifeste. Cependant le dialogue de Bordeu et Mlle de l'Espinasse n'est pas divinatoire en tant que tel: il ne l'est qu'en fonction du rêve. Le dialogue du second entretien doit donc être envisagé par rapport au rêve qui incite la conversation et constitue une source d'inspiration brillante et irrationnelle pour les interlocuteurs.

En effet, les spéculations fantastiques du rêve

touchent au discours des autres interlocuteurs. Le docteur Bordeu et Mlle de l'Espinasse se trouvent, pour ainsi dire, aspirés dans le rêve. Ceci est le résultat de la structure particulière du rêve qui peut être divisé en deux mouvements. Le premier moment du rêve est une transcription produite par Mlle de l'Espinasse. Comme elle le signale elle-même, "cela m'a paru si fou que, résolue de ne le pas quitter de la nuit et ne sachant que faire, j'ai approché une petite table au pied de son lit, et me suis mise à écrire tout ce que j'ai pu attraper de sa rêvasserie" (39-40). Le deuxième moment du rêve n'est pas transcrit et s'effectue en présence de Mlle de l'Espinasse et du docteur venu voir le géomètre indisposé. Le rêve est donc structurellement "dédoublé."

La transcription de la première partie du rêve est des plus complexes et met en relief la discontinuité et le décousu du rêve. En effet, le premier jet "griffonné" par Mlle de l'Espinasse est une "copie" de rêve, une redite verbale qui tente de reproduire les moments d'un rêve qui a eu lieu la nuit précédente. Toutefois une certaine ambiguïté se remarque dans cette "redite." L'introduction du "je crois" fait déjà état d'une incapacité de reproduire le rêve dans son aspect originel. Mlle de l'Espinasse, comme porte-parole du rêve, devient problématique. Sa fonction de copiste, écrivant tant bien que mal ces folies "qui ne s'entendent qu'aux Petites-Maisons" (52) ainsi que sa participation au rêve en présence du docteur, font de celle-ci un personnage dispersé qui s'inscrit bien dans la structure ironique de ce rêve carnavalesque.

Le médecin, de son côté, se distingue par ses qualités d'augure qui lui permettent d'anticiper les propos mêmes du rêveur et dans ce sens, de collaborer pleinement à cet esprit de conjuration évoqué par le rêve. Il réussit même à étonner Mlle de l'Espinasse: "J'en suis confondue," dit-elle, "c'est cela et presque mot pour mot" (48). En somme, l'exactitude des propos du docteur n'est qu'une autre forme de transcription comparable à celle de Mlle de Lespinasse.

En collaborant donc au rêve, ces deux personnages, tirés de la réalité contemporaine du dix-huitième siècle, mettent leur identité en question. Ils récuse leur valeur historique en se perdant dans le rêve. Il en résulte un dédoublement des personnages qui deviennent scindés

comme le rêveur.

Cette aspiration dans le rêve produit un dialogue imprégné d'images et de conjectures fantastiques voire monstrueuses. La chronologie est subvertie et fait place à un temps indéterminé. Les parois qui divisent illusion et réalité, nature et culture, sont détruites. En effet, le contenu matérialiste et les images qu'il suscite sont d'ordre carnavalesque. Créant une atmosphère de licence, ces images répudient toute vision conventionnelle de la vie et de l'autorité.

D'ailleurs ce rêve "matérialiste" et "déterministe" n'est pas une simple compilation d'observations scientifiques. Emta Hill insiste sur la qualité troublante des images qui peuplent ce texte: "Diderot cannot argue his materialism systematically by compiling the neutral record of his scientific observations. He floods his work with fantastic imagery, with the disordered visions of a man's dreams" (75-76).

Pour insister sur les prodiges dont est capable la nature, Diderot centre son argument sur les monstres, l'aspect le plus désarmant du texte en général et du second entretien en particulier. Faisant allusion à certains monstres mythologiques--il mentionne, entre autres, Ajax et Diomède, Amphitrite, Castor et Pollux--l'auteur ne fait que rehausser la qualité extraordinaire du système naturel. Comme le remarque Mlle de l'Espinasse, "le cyclope pourrait donc bien ne pas être un être fabuleux" (86). Ainsi, l'Hermaphrodite, les Siamois de Rabastens, le trépanné de la Peyronie, voire même le Cyclope, sont des exemples physiques "naturels," tirés de la réalité contemporaine, mais qui seraient bien placés dans un cirque. *Le rêve de d'Alembert* peut en somme être envisagé comme un univers "naturel" peuplé de monstres et d'êtres étranges dignes de la foire. Jouant avec les notions de réel et d'irréel, typique du spectacle forain, Diderot présente à travers ce choix d'images ambiguës l'expression la plus évidente de sa conception de la nature.

Le monstre est donc le résultat d'une série de dédoublements et de fusionnements propres à la nature. Cette idée est d'ailleurs très bien résumée par le docteur Bordeu:

Doublez quelques-uns des brins du faisceau, et

l'animal aura deux têtes, quatre yeux, quatre oreilles, trois testicules, trois pieds, quatre bras, six doigts à chaque main. Dérangez les brins du faisceau, et les organes seront déplacés: la tête occupera le milieu de la poitrine, les poumons seront à gauche, le coeur à droite. Collez ensemble deux brins, et les organes se confondront; les bras s'attacheront au corps; les cuisses, les jambes et les pieds se réuniront, et vous aurez toutes les sortes de monstres imaginables. (88)

Ceci toutefois ne récuse en rien les prémisses d'une nature "une." En effet, la nature retient son unité intégrale, accommodant même les aberrations monstrueuses, car dans la perspective diderotienne de la nature, les monstres font autant partie du système naturel que les êtres communs:

L'homme n'est qu'un effet commun, le monstre qu'un effet rare; tous les deux également naturels, également nécessaires, également dans l'ordre universel et général. (69)

Ainsi le sentiment de désarroi et d'ambivalence devant l'écart monstrueux est tempéré par son incorporation dans l'univers naturel qui est lui-même paradoxalement monstrueux et fantastique.

Le dynamisme transformateur de la nature, en insistant sur ces dédoublements et ces fusionnements monstrueux, en insistant en somme sur la métamorphose, exclut toute notion d'essence. N'offrant pas de normes, la nature diderotienne est elle-même un spectacle de foire, une illusion, un rêve.

Le rêve et le dialogue qui l'accompagne produisent un lyrisme qui s'achève dans une sorte d'opéra-comique insolite. La présentation des personnages et de l'argument philosophique valorise l'esthétique de l'amalgame mentionnée précédemment. Comme les petites abeilles dans leur essaim, les personnages suspendent leur identité et deviennent des êtres similaires qui, selon Georges Daniel, émettent le même son de cloche. Cette indistinction des voix, issue de la qualité onirique du texte, produit une écriture "musicale":

il ne s'agit pas d'interprétations diverses mais d'une convergence de voix (Daniel 72). Rêveur et amis participent à une même vision de l'univers et forment un véritable chœur de sosies.

Par conséquent, le second entretien est la parodie d'un dialogue socratique: un anti-dialogue (Daniel 13). Le statut de philosophe et du discours philosophique est subverti. Ce qui débuta par une opposition entre le rêveur et la dame devient, sous la tutelle de Bordeu, une chorale de voix accordées au même diapason. Il n'y a pas de héros: ce sont plutôt des anti-héros. Les trois individus partagent le même argument philosophique et ainsi il n'y a pas à proprement parler de dissension.

Dans le cadre du dix-huitième siècle, il est également possible d'interpréter ce texte comme une parodie de l'opéra pastoral tant prôné par Rousseau dans sa *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles*. En effet, le caractère idyllique de la fête foraine où règnent innocence et gaieté, danse et chant, "où la joie est une" (Baudelaire 378) fait place à un spectacle où "combinaisons contre nature" constituent le point central du texte et cette question, comme le remarque Bordeu, "est de physique, de morale et de poétique" (152).

La solution poétique est symboliquement représentée

à travers l'image carnavalesque du "chèvre-pied," image privilégiée du dernier entretien mais qui pourrait également s'appliquer à la forme même du texte. Le chèvre-pied résume bien la tonalité fantastique du texte ainsi que l'esthétique de l'amalgame qui informent l'oeuvre. En effet, dans *Le rêve de d'Alembert*, il y a fusionnement de l'aspect philosophique et de l'aspect littéraire. La démonstration philosophico-scientifique se trouve intégrée dans un contexte spécifiquement littéraire. Il semble d'ailleurs évident que c'est grâce à l'aspect esthétique et littéraire du texte, et à son appel au fantastique, que les problèmes posés par le matérialisme atteignent, de par leur caractère hypothétique même, une densité poétique incontestable.

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**GNOMES, MAGICAL CLOUDS AND BUDDHA'S WIFE:
THE USE OF FANTASY IN VALERA'S DRAMA**

Sue Moore

The dramas of Juan Valera have long been ignored, and yet this enigmatic and scant body of work provides a fascinating glimpse into this nineteenth-century realist's attraction to and use of the stylistic element of fantasy. In three of the seven dramas, there are supernatural appearances and occurrences that are essential to the plays. They are the means by which the author resolves conflicts and provides the desired outcomes, and they prove to be fundamental in communicating his ideas.

Through Valera's writings as a drama critic, we become aware of his concept of the supernatural world as a legitimate motif for literature. The key to proper presentation of the fantastic is making it seem possible, and the power to perform this transformation lies in the artistry of the author: "El arte, el ingenio, la magia, pues, de un autor dramático, consiste principalmente en hacernos aceptar lo que en realidad es inverosímil, como verosímil y natural en el mundo encantado de la fantasía" (2: 960). So convinced was Valera of the value of fantasy that he passionately lamented its disappearance as a poetic resource. He mourned its loss to the literature of his own era because of the disdain and ridicule accorded it by contemporary realists and naturalists:

Pasó la edad de la fantasía; pasó la edad de la fe; vivimos en la edad de la razón. Adiós mitología, religiones, metafísicas, milagros, magias, teúrgias, querubines, demonios, duendes, etc. La Poesía, despojada de toda esta riqueza que era suya, y que tan cara y respetada la hacía a los hombres, no recibe de ellos sino desdén y sofiones, y, no pudiéndolos sufrir, decide matarse. (2: 816)

Composed by a mature author from the ages of fifty-four to seventy-nine, Valera's seven plays enchanted the

author himself, but his critics have not been kind. Julián Marías comments that Valera wrote "Algún teatro no muy teatral" (155). Ernesto Giménez Caballero echoes this sentiment: "Sus contemporáneos le estimaron como crítico y novelista. La generación siguiente, la del 98, le retiró su estimación. Como poeta y dramaturgo, no le estimó nadie" (146). A particularly condescending condemnation of Valera's theater comes from Genover y de Balle: "*Tentativas dramáticas*, las tituló el autor. Y frustradas, Sr. Valera. Porque no a todos llama Dios por los mismos caminos. . . . En una palabra, Sr. Valera: que su Musa ha cometido adulterio" (350). Ruiz Cano writes that Valera was unique as a playwright for writing theatrical pieces, none of which was for the theater, but rather for an elite reading public (134). Yet, it is in this much berated body of work that we find a surprising tie with the same elements of fantasy that greatly contribute to the allure and success of Valera's short stories.

Optimistic and confident of his gift and aptitude, Valera completed the first of his plays in 1878. It was a zarzuela entitled *Lo mejor del tesoro* and was a source of personal artistic pride. The author was encouraged by what he had written and was convinced of the merits of his zarzuela. He produced two additional dramas in the same year, *La venganza de Atahualpa* and *Asclepigenia*. He considered these plays to rank among the best of his literary achievements (1: 1245). In 1880 Valera wrote *Gopa*, his fourth drama, and then he was to forsake his dramatic writings for the next sixteen years. At seventy-two years of age, in poor health and blind, he resumed his work as a playwright; however, in none of the last plays do we find any of the elements of fantasy that dominate the earlier theatrical pieces.

The first of the Valerian dramas, *Lo mejor del tesoro*, was conceived as a result of the author's attraction to fantasy. He tells us in the prologue to his *Tentativas dramáticas*:

Escribí, pues, una zarzuela, tomando asunto de un cuento de *Las mil y una noches*, adornándolo y bordándolo con todos aquellos perfiles que más a propósito me parecieron, e imitando, a mi manera, los dramas fantásticos

de Carlos Gozzi, que él llamó *fiabe* (1: 1244)

It is precisely the use of fantasy that distinguishes *Lo mejor del tesoro*, for it is the prominent feature of the setting and supplies the cast of supporting characters and provides key elements of the plot.

In the setting of this play, as in many of Valera's other works with significant elements of fantasy, there is a link with the Orient. The first act takes place in Bactra, an exotic and ancient city of Asia, with the final scene occurring in a subterranean wonderland of riches located beneath the palace gardens. The second and third acts take us far, far away to a jungle and to an enchanted forest on the imaginary peninsula of Bacú, and the final scene returns us to the underground treasure room. Sherman Eoff attributes Valera's use of the Orient to several factors: first, it is one of the many areas of knowledge with which he was familiar; second, he wanted to spread to Spain the Oriental renaissance that had taken place in the rest of Europe; third and most importantly, the Orient allowed the unhampered release of his imaginative ideas. This was because of its remoteness and Western lack of familiarity with Oriental history (193-94). Also regarding the appearance of the East and its connection with the fantastic in Valera's writings, we cannot ignore the biographical connection. In speaking of the influence of Valera's Andalusian upbringing and his studies in Granada, Gallego Morell says that "la diaria visión de los palacios de la Alhambra le condiciona una literatura en continuo escape hacia sueños orientales" (31).

The cast of characters in *Lo mejor del tesoro* is as rich, varied and fantastic as the settings for the play. The principal characters are a cross section of believable human types surrounded by a supporting cast including a slave with magical powers, gnomes, salamanders, strange and fantastic bandits and undines. Of extreme importance is the offstage presence of Zacubulú, king of the genies, as we shall see.

In terms of the play's action, we encounter a magical world of impossible happenings. Zeyn is a restless prince whose deceased father left him a coffer containing a magic hoe and instructions to strike at the foot of a

sycamore tree. The earth gloriously opens up to reveal an underground cave filled with gems and gold. There are nine niches and eight idols. An inscription reveals that the missing idol is worth all the others put together but to find it requires a dangerous journey to Bacú. There the genie king Zacubulú gives Zeyn a magic mirror and sends him to find the perfect woman. Zeyn finds Sita and must take her, unblemished, to the genie, for she is to become Zacubulú's bride. During the journey to the genie's kingdom, Zeyn and Sita predictably fall in love. In the midst of an enchanted forest, they declare their love and are immediately punished by supernatural forces. Bizarre bandits kidnap Sita and wound the prince who is promptly swallowed by the earth. Back in Bactra after a tremendous earthquake, Zeyn comes through the wall of the underground treasure room, for gnomes have cured his wounds and transported him there. He tells of the love he searched for, found and lost, and his mother says the genie king has left the ninth idol to reward him for his ideals. It is Sita. The gnomes reappear with salamanders and undines and they all dance for joy.

The use of fantasy in this drama delights the reader, allowing one the luxury of being transported to another world simply to be entertained and underscoring the optimistic nature of the author. Ironically, it also provides some of the major drawbacks for the work, which has never been produced. First, there is the large cast of secondary figures which would have significantly increased production costs. A second hindrance to its production would have been the physical difficulties encountered in staging the fantastic episodes. There is no doubt that these illusions could have been achieved; however, they also would have added to the expense. The third and most significant obstacle to the acceptance of the drama was also directly related to the extensive use of fantasy. It simply was not in keeping with the literary tastes of the times. Ernesto Giménez Caballero illustrates this:

Mucho más impopulares resultaron sus versos y sus dramas fantásticos. . . . En época de dramos de Echegaray, en que todo es locura o santidad, Valera concibe un teatro

bello e ideal a lo Gozzi, y escribe sus poemas dramáticos en Bactra, en Capilavastu, sacando del Extremo Oriente imaginaciones encantadoras. (148)

When he composed this elaborate fairy tale for the stage, Valera chose to disregard the late nineteenth-century Spanish audience's partiality for realism. Yet he was not ignorant of the necessary connection between the dramatic artist and a participating public: "El poeta dramático no es como un autor de libros, que puede escribir para un público inmortal y hasta apelar al fallo de los hombres venideros; el poeta dramático tiene que agradar al vulgo de su época" (2: 259). Valera himself pointed out that in the struggle to adapt a work to appeal to the contemporary audience, it is the dramatist who must make all the concessions (2: 880). However, this is precisely what he refused to do. In his charming *zarzuela* filled with every imaginable fantasy, he did not cater to the public's current preference. He tried to turn back time to a previous era of appreciation for more romantic tendencies, but he was incapable of forcing upon the audience something it already knew it did not want.

The next Valerian drama with an appreciative use of fantasy is *Asclepigenia*, his third play. This is the only theatrical piece about which the author himself commented extensively, and it is the dramatic work of which he was most proud. It was Valera's conviction that this was "de lo menos malo que he escrito yo en mi vida" (1: 1245). This is also the only play to receive widespread critical recognition. Luis González López (269), Leopoldo Alas (271) and Manuel Azaña (126) concur that it is among Valera's best works. Despite the laudatory remarks of the critics, this play has only been given a single performance, and that was in Madrid in 1928.

There is a marked difference in the way the author uses fantasy in the first play and in this one. In *Asclepigenia* it has a very limited use and is employed because of the historical Proclo's practice of the art of theurgy. Proclo was a fifth-century Greek philosopher who professed to work miracles through divine spirits summoned by sorcery and who aspired to a mystical union with the One. Valera liberally embellishes his

story. His Proclo has abandoned the material world in order to arrive at supreme intelligence and the essence of that which is eternal. Satisfied that he has reached his ideals, he seeks a reunion with the woman from whom he separated because her physical attractiveness would have hindered his spiritual growth. In the meantime, she has taken several lovers, in each of whom she finds certain qualities that satisfy the desires left unfulfilled by Proclo. The hero realizes the error of his restrictive philosophy, but his mistake has lasted a lifetime. Therefore, Valera resorts to the supernatural to provide an unrealistic but happy ending. Throughout the one-act play, the elderly Proclo brags of his theurgic abilities, but it is only in the last scene that the actual practice of magic is presented. The decrepit and ridiculous hero waves his staff in the air, traces with it circles and other magical patterns and mutters unintelligible incantations. In the center of the stage is formed a wondrous white cloud with red, gold and mother-of-pearl hues. The *deus ex machina* is introduced with the parting of the magic cloud to reveal, bathed in light, a lame and blind Pluto and a bizarre but resplendent Apollo. Thus the ancient gods have been called upon to furnish the beauty, youth and wealth that Proclo can no longer offer.

While *Asclepigenia* is filled with witty satire, allegory, historical allusions and extensive symbolism, its elegance and culture are at times overwhelming. The polished and careful prose becomes tedious, especially in the many passages based on philosophical theories. The excessive erudition often interferes with the ability to comprehend the play. Although many critics acknowledge the merits of the drama, they do not praise it as a theatrical work, but rather as something to be read and studied. The author himself predicted its failure as viable theater, and his heroine best states its limitations:

Temo, sin embargo, que ese diálogo que Proclo anuncia sea una extravaganza sin amenidad y sin viveza, donde nosotros figuremos no como seres reales, sino como personajes alegóricos . . . que para seguir viviendo juntos se entregan a brujerías y supersticiones. (1: 1281)

This same quote reveals a startling debasement in the author's use of the stylistic element of fantasy. Whereas in *Lo mejor del tesoro* it has a lofty role and adds genuine charm to the play, in *Asclepigenia* it comes across as artificial, almost as an afterthought. Fantasy has been reduced to a mere contrivance used to resolve an embarrassing predicament.

Gopa, the fourth drama, is the last in which the author employs fantasy or the supernatural. This unusual philosophical dialogue is based on the historical framework of Sidarta's marriage to Gopa and his Great Renunciation in order to search for a higher ideal. Again Valera goes beyond reality and fabricates what history does not provide. Much of his play centers on the inner strife of the heroine, her desire to keep her husband with her and her decision to support the noble but idealistic future Buddha. Once more the author turns to the supernatural to move the action forward and to resolve the conflicts. Valera wants to condemn the excessive spirituality, self-mortifications and deprivations adopted by Sidarta as the means of showing mankind the way to virtue and peace. He wishes to emphasize the Buddha's failure to free humanity from the evils of poverty, sickness and suffering. Since he cannot do this within the timeframe of the Buddha's life, he needs to move time forward. Consequently, in the third scene the setting changes from Capilavastu, India, in 593 B.C., to Frankfurt, Germany, in 1866. Thus the author has transported us halfway around the world and has bridged a time span of 2,459 years. A character called the Author is composing a drama about the Buddha's wife and asks Dr. Seelenführer, a spiritualist who has mastered the ability to evoke the souls of the dead, to summon her spirit so she can be interviewed. Seelenführer dramatically gestures with his hands as though ten magnetic charges are flowing from his fingers. Through the use of a medium, Gopa is able to appear after twenty-five centuries of death. The supernatural return of the heroine enables Valera to conclude the action begun thousands of years earlier.

Gopa is disappointing whether considered as a theatrical event or as a text to be read. Two of the three scenes are totally devoid of the tongue-in-cheek humor usually present in Valera's dramas. Rare instances of

witty sarcasm are not enough to salvage the third scene. It is marred by long, solemn and dull dialogues used to express complicated philosophical arguments. These oppressively academic discussions are cumbersome and so slow down the action that they render the play lethargic. The severely limited stage action would produce a tedious viewing experience. Another serious drawback to the work is the unstimulating use of the supernatural. It is the same affected presentation of a miraculous solution that we saw in *Asclepigenia*. Unfortunately, in *Gopa* it has less impact and even less grace, for there is no wondrous illusion involved. Also absent are the symbolic depth and the humor provided by the appearance of the gods in the previous play. This time we have only the personality change of the medium to indicate the miracle. It proves to be an unsatisfactory clarification of the situation. In fact, it weakens the play because the spirit gives an uninspired and lengthy monologue and then departs. As a result, the supernatural detracts from rather than augments any positive dramatic force.

Even though Valera utilizes fantasy and the supernatural to different degrees in the three dramas discussed, the theme of ideal beauty and ideal love is the same, and fantasy and the supernatural are the means by which the author makes his statement. It is not coincidental that these plays are set in the Orient, for this mysterious backdrop adds to the development of his ideas. Eoff notes that all of Valera's writings based on the Orient conspicuously share this theme (22). The dramas are no exception.

In *Lo mejor del tesoro* even the title is an allusion to the priceless, yet elusive, perfect love to the search for which the hero decides to dedicate his life. The hunger that torments his soul cannot be satisfied by the different types of love offered him. He will not be lulled into accepting carnal love, attainable love, magical, familial or spiritual love. Zeyn's quest cannot be fulfilled by any of these separate loves, but rather requires a beautiful combination of them all. When Valera has Zeyn and Sita fall in love, he is rejecting the principle that spiritual love is enough, and it is fantasy that allows their union. A benevolent genie gives up his bride to reward the hero's courage in following his dreams. It is as if Valera

acknowledges that a solution through reality is not possible; and, of course, Valera's own lifelong search for artistic perfection parallels Zeyn's pursuit of ideal love. Robert Trimble emphasizes this connection:

Almost without exception, every fictional character is a partial self-portrait of Valera himself. All of the poetic concepts of the author--success, virtue, honor, glory, love, immortality--are incorporated into his artistic presentations of people striving for the creation of these ideals, struggling against contrary obstacles. (267-68)

In his own goal of creating beauty, Valera often despaired, overwhelmed at the task, but he, like his hero Zeyn, was unwilling to compromise his ideals. He was incapable of intentionally debasing his art in order to appeal to the masses. He faced the negative reaction of critics and the public. He was to be disheartened by the harsh realities of what the Spanish public would accept: "no hay corriente magnética entre el público y yo. Yo tengo mi pequeño público . . . Al resto del humano linaje no le caigo en gracia. No valgo, pues, para autor dramático, y me resigno" (*Correspondencia* 140). For him there was no magical escape from the personal defeats and frustrations. Valera's intervention through fantasy was to allow his hero a kinder fate than the author's own.

Similarly, in *Asclepigenia* we see the same use of fantasy to soften the outcome of the action that carries the message. Proclo finally understands the foolishness of denying the beauty of physical love, and this is how Valera expresses the idea that spirituality and virtuosity carried to extremes are not compatible with real life. *Asclepigenia* venerates Proclo's genius but also recognizes her own physical and material needs. Proclo's pursuit of a totally mystical existence and his view of the flesh as an enemy of the soul are an aberration of nature. According to Carmen Bravo Villasante, the reason for Valera's ardent rejection of platonic love was his own unhappy liaison with Lucía Palladi:

De la prueba del fuego del amor platónico

que sufre Valera sin morir, le queda un aborrecimiento para toda su vida hacia esta modalidad del amor, a la que combate por falsa, artificiosa y antinatural. Ha debido sufrir tanto por causa del amor platónico que ni siquiera le va a conceder honores literarios. El amor platónico es una hipocresía o un fallo de la naturaleza. (47)

The reality of nature is that Proclo, having realized his error, is now too old, debilitated and infirm to give the physical passion that would make their union whole and complete. Once again, what reality denies, fantasy provides. Rather than abandon his hero to the true consequences of his mistake, the kindly and compassionate Valera has Proclo summon the gods to permit the protagonists' happiness.

In the case of *Gopa*, the author uses the supernatural to moralize, but even fantastic occurrences cannot bring about a happy ending for his heroes. Valera is bound by the constraints of history. The theme of pursuit of the ideal is apparent through the Buddha's vision of a better world. Equally clear is the theme that there must be a balance between the spiritual and the worldly aspects of life. The real Sidarta abandoned his wife Gopa in order to follow a path of self-denial. The restrictions of the historical framework do not allow Valera to present his lesson without altering reality, for there is no evidence that Gopa ever renounced her husband's ideals. In order for the author to use these historical characters to relay his disapproval of excessive spirituality, he resorts to the supernatural. He has Gopa's 2,500-year-old spirit rail against her husband's absurd doctrine. She rejects the concept of a mystical love devoid of the qualities necessary to satisfy human needs, and she rebuffs Dr. Seelenführer whom she recognizes as the reincarnated Buddha. The supernatural provides the condemnation of the extremist and escapist doctrines, but it is too late for the heroes. Mankind must take heed. For real people, fantasy and the supernatural can bring about no changes.

Valera's expressed admiration for dramatic fantasy, its pivotal use in providing the outcome to the plot, and the role it plays in conveying a favorite theme emphasize the importance of fantasy and the supernatural in his dramas.

It also calls attention to yet another aspect of the complex craft of Juan Valera. His use of fantasy succeeds when he creatively allows it to blossom fully as he does in *Lo mejor del tesoro*. When he uses a functional fantasy that is uninventive and underdeveloped, as he does in *Asclepigenia* and *Gopa*, predictably, it fails. Paradoxically, in these three plays, written within two years of each other, we experience the best and the worst of Valera's use of fantasy. The continuing enigma of this disparity lies in explaining why Valera could, on the one hand, be so charmed by fantasy and yet only a few years later so abuse its use.

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FRANÇOIS MAURIAC'S
THERÈSE DESQUEYROUX:
 A LIBERATING DREAM

Susan McLean McGrath

"The essential female tragedy," states Adrienne Rich, "is the loss of the daughter to the mother, the mother to the daughter" (237). An integral part of recent studies on the female experience has been the recognition of mothers and daughters, the familial relationship neglected by classic psychoanalysis and camouflaged in traditional fiction.¹ For example, Luce Irigaray, the French psychoanalyst and writer, in her personal, theoretical essay, "And the One Doesn't Stir Without the Other," penetrates into the mysteries of the female tragedy through a direct-discourse monologue.² Addressing her mother, Irigaray writes:

With your milk, mother, you fed me
 ice. And if I leave, you lose the reflection of
 life, of your life. And if I remain, am I not the
 guarantor of your death? Each of us lacks her
 own image; her own face, the animation of her
 own body is missing. And the one mourns the
 other. My paralysis signifying your abduction
 in the mirror . . . I, too, a captive when a man
 holds me in his gaze; I, too, am abducted from
 myself. Immobilized in the reflection he
 expects of me. Reduced to the face he
 fashions for me in which to look at himself.
 Traveling at the whim of his dreams and
 mirages. Trapped in a single functioning-
 mothering. (66)

Her retrospective monologue is rooted in archetypal discourse; it echoes the mythical mother-daughter tragedy of Demeter and Persephone. Separated from each other, mother and daughter are captive objects in a man's reality rather than subjects of their own vision.

The French novel is rich in female protagonists, characters like the *Princesse de Clèves*, *Manon Lescaut*

and *Emma Bovary*. Yet these female characters are not subjects of the texts, capable of narrating their own reality. Instead, they are silent, captive objects narrated by the text. As a result these heroines remain absent to themselves: "Each of us lacks her own image." Each finally disappears into religious or physical dissolution.

One female protagonist, however, breaks out of the paralyzing silence imposed by the tradition of female-object-protagonists. *Thérèse Desqueyroux*, François Mauriac's heroine, rejects her heritage. She succeeds in finding her own face, the animation of her own body is no longer missing; she is able to define her own image. The present study will reinterpret *Thérèse Desqueyroux* through the mediation of the Demeter-Persephone myth. The mother-daughter relationship illustrated in this myth has offered new direction to literary criticism.³ Accordingly, Irigaray's insightful unraveling of the relationship's complexities will also serve to open up *Thérèse Desqueyroux*.⁴ Three themes essential to the female experience are put into sharp focus: the abduction from/of a self-image, the tension between assimilation and individuation, and the creative mechanism by which this tension is resolved.

Thérèse Larroque, like many of her literary ancestors, has been abducted from herself; with the sanction of her father she has been taken into Bernard's world to become *Thérèse Desqueyroux*, "une femme de la famille." She experiences the fate of *Kore the Maiden* and protectress of the young life of the crops who, given by her father Zeus, is carried off by Hades to become *Persephone*, queen of the underworld. Our first impression of *Thérèse* confirms her death-like existence as an object in a man's world. Against a backdrop of crepuscular shadows, she resembles the souls in the underworld who are but pale reflections of their former personality: "Les deux hommes observèrent la jeune femme immobile, serrée dans son manteau, et ce blême visage qui n'exprimait rien" (8). Even though her father and lawyer are talking about *Thérèse*, they are disturbed by "ce corps de femme qui les séparait, ils le poussaient de coude" (9). "La femme perdue de soir," "sa face de brûlée vive," "sa figure décomposée": recurring throughout the period of her abduction, these images reinforce the portrait of *Thérèse*, a soul abducted from

itself.

But in what sense has Thérèse been abducted from herself? Irigaray's monologue suggests the essence of the absence when she writes: "And if I leave, you lose the reflection of life, of your life . . . my paralysis signifying your abduction in the mirror." The loss of the mother signifies paralysis for the daughter. Although mother and daughter are individuals, Irigaray's mirror image suggests a fusion of their two identities so intimate that separation entails a kind of nonexistence for both. Demeter, Kore's mother and the goddess of fertility, was absent from Kore when she was abducted by Hades; and Thérèse's mother has been absent since infancy. Separated from her mother, Kore was picking flowers when, according to the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, "the earth produced as a snare for the fair maiden a wonderful and radiant narcissus. The girl was astounded and reached out with both her hands together to pluck the beautiful delight . . . [but at that moment Hades] snatches her up in his golden chariot and carries her away in tears" (Morford 218-19). All that remains in the underworld of the god Narcissus, who was unable to find a real substance in his reflected image in the water, is the flower. It serves as a mirror for Kore. Attempting to grasp the flower, she is like the beautiful young god reaching out to an illusory self: in the absence of her mother, Kore has no real self-image; that is, she has been abducted from herself.

Separated from her/mother's self-image, the daughter is easily taken away. For Thérèse, getting married to Bernard also verifies the absence of a feminine self-image. Not only is Thérèse's mother absent, her maternal grandmother is also an unknown woman—all that Thérèse knows of her is that one day she went away. The stifling ambiance of Thérèse's wedding day, then, seems tied to the abduction not only of the daughter but also of the mother from the daughter. The pure, paradise-like existence of her youth is abruptly transformed into "cette ineffaçable salissure des noces" (26). Thérèse feels lost. Like Kore, she has no real self-image to grasp for protection. Never having had the reflection of her mother, she was condemned from childhood. Defenseless, she allowed herself to begin descending "une pente insensible, lentement d'abord,

puis plus vite" (28) into Bernard's kingdom of Argelouse, an extremity of the earth like the underworld of Hades. The nothingness of the underworld leaves its sign: the wedding guests describe Thérèse as "laide et même affreuse . . . Elle ne se ressemblait pas" (44). She is now understandably shrouded in shadow. Thus, for both Kore and Thérèse the period of joyful, undefined maidenhood presages a period of self-absence, a death-in-life existence: "Matinées trop bleues: mauvais signe pour le temps de l'après-midi et de soir" (27).

Thérèse is thereby forced to view herself as Bernard's object; her mirror is Bernard's vision of the wife and mother. Irigaray speaks for Thérèse: "Immobilized in the reflection he expects of me. Reduced to the face he fashions for me in which to look at himself." The notion of finding her definitive place as Bernard's wife instills a deceptive sense of peace in Thérèse during her engagement. She soon realizes, however, that perceiving herself essentially as Bernard's wife precludes happiness. The wedding night is as suffocating as the wedding day was: "Ce monde inconnu de sensations où un homme la forçait de pénétrer" (45), it signals the absence of pleasure ("jouissance") for Thérèse and the need for a vigilant game of deception. During the honeymoon, Thérèse is compared to a feeding trough for Bernard, a young pig. As wife, Thérèse accepts her role as the submissive, silent object of Bernard's pleasure, feeling abandoned "comme sur une plage, . . . rejetée, les dents serrées, froide" (47). The honeymoon, then, sets the stage for Thérèse's suffocating existence at Argelouse, the island where the rest of her life will be consumed.

And before the end of the honeymoon, signs of the inevitable pregnancy impose themselves. While for Thérèse these signs reinforce her sense of self-loss, they elicit respect from Bernard because they guarantee an heir (not heiress) to the endless expanse of Desqueyroux pine trees. Thérèse, like Irigaray's female, becomes "trapped in a single functioning--mothering." She is forced to relinquish her individual existence: "aux yeux de la famille le fruit attaché à mes entrailles comptait seul" (104). Now, when Thérèse focuses on her mirror image, she sees only her dead face: she sees not only the wife, the abducted daughter (Kore), but also the mother (Demeter) abducted from herself.

The intermingling self-identities of mother and daughter surfacing in Thérèse parallels the Demeter-Persephone myth. When the two goddesses are depicted together, it is often impossible to identify them individually; Demeter and Persephone are presented as two persons though one goddess. The fertility rites of both were similar; moreover, Persephone's cult often joined to Demeter's. The essential female tragedy stemming from the intertwined identities of mother and daughter is dramatically illustrated in the relationship between Thérèse the mother and Marie her daughter.

Thérèse is at least the third generation of silent, unknown mother-daughters, a heritage she willingly passes on to her own daughter. Whenever we see Thérèse with her daughter, Marie is asleep; the past participle "endormie" defines the daughter in relation to her mother. Even though Thérèse spends entire evenings watching Marie sleep, it is a negative maternal presence that engenders this kind of unconscious existence in the daughter. The animation of the daughter's own body is missing because, as Irigaray writes accusingly, "And never having known your own face, didn't you nourish me with lifelessness?" (64). Marie is a physical replica of Thérèse and she is also the replica of an undefined self-image: "L'oreiller noie un profil encore informe" (138). Irigaray explains: "Wandering without identity, discharging upon me this endless and at each step excruciating, wandering of yours. In me, shaping your destiny of an unknown" (66). Just as Thérèse passed on a striking physical resemblance to Marie, so too does the mother pass on a strong sense of spiritual identity to the daughter: Marie is the stand-in for Thérèse's absence. The daughter is the guardian of her mother's nonexistence, laments Irigaray.

The drama inherent in the mother-daughter relationship, then, centers on the tension between identification and separation. Both mother and daughter, Thérèse is trapped by the need for each. Even though Thérèse prefers that Marie not look so much like her and that once Marie's flesh had been detached from her own they would no longer possess anything in common, she is powerless to undo their intimate resemblance. When Thérèse contemplates suicide, looking at Marie brings tears because she realizes that, even though she does not want Marie to disappear with

her, their destinies are inseparably intertwined: "Je m'en vais,--mais cette part de moi-même demeure et tout ce destin à remplir jusqu'au bout" (138). Yet this realization does not deter Thérèse from wanting to abandon her daughter. In imitation of her grandmother, she is willing to have her own photographs burned to allow Marie to forget her.

Consequently, Thérèse-the-mother as well as Thérèse-the-daughter experiences the underworld's suffocating existence. Cold and barren, it is a period of sadness and mourning for the absent self. She languishes through two such seasons, each marked by meanders in the woods: the first, anticipating Marie's birth in January, the second, lamenting Marie's abduction by Bernard in October. Significantly, Thérèse's errant walks during the second barren season parallel Demeter's wanderings in search of her absent daughter Kore. When Kore was taken from her, Demeter punished man by keeping the seeds deep within the earth. She took flight and for nine days wandered about on earth in search of her daughter. Disguised and reticent, she stopped in Eleusis where she refused to eat ambrosia, drink sweet nectar or bathe her body, for she was consumed by longing for Kore.

Separation from her daughter causes emptiness and sadness for Thérèse as well: "sa douleur devenait ainsi son occupation" (156). Scattered throughout the text, a vocabulary of nonexistence defines Thérèse: detachment, indifference, nothingness, mirage. Totally removed from her self/daughter, Thérèse withdraws into the isolation of her room and into aimless, nocturnal walks in the familiar forests. But now the forest is nothing but a thick, silent, barren mass reflecting Thérèse's dead face: "J'ai été créée à l'image de ce pays aride où rien n'est vivant" (124). She refuses to eat, drink or bathe, sleeping uncovered in front of an open window, awakening too chilled and lifeless to cover herself up. By December she has transformed herself into a skeleton, a pale reflection of her former self.

The story of Thérèse, therefore, dramatizes the tension inherent in the mother-daughter relationship: mother and daughter both desire and mourn separation. They are living mirrors of each other. Marie's heritage is the same as Thérèse's; she too will be abducted from her self/mother. "And when I leave," concludes Irigaray, "is

it not the perpetuation of your exile?" (66). Since the mother is also (her mother's) daughter, the loss of the one to the other is also the loss of the one to herself. Unlike the mother-son relationship which works toward separation, the mother-daughter relationship quivers between assimilation and individuation. From this perspective, Mauriac's novel seems to enclose a continuum of paralyzed/paralyzing and abandoned/abandoning mothers/daughters.

Thus far, the immobilizing nature of the mother-daughter relationship for Thérèse has been established. But echoing the Demeter-Persephone myth which is founded on the cycle of death and renewal, the relationship is also liberating. Kore returns from the underworld. Mother and daughter are reunited, but not in the same relation. Kore is resurrected not to regress to her former identity as her mother's mirror image, but rather to give voice to her own new personality as Persephone. Because of Kore's inconsolable pleas for her mother and Demeter's unyielding resolve to withhold the crops, Zeus finally commanded Hades to liberate Kore. But as they parted, Hades offered her a pomegranate seed symbolizing an enduring union between Hades and Persephone: henceforth she must return to the underworld for one-third of the year. Restored to each other, mother and daughter are in one sense Demeter-Kore, two persons in one goddess. And yet they have arrived at a turning point where each must understand how to create her own mirror image, how to endure during the cold seasons of separation. Irigaray affirms: "Out of you in me, me in you. I'll leave us. I'll go into another home. I'll live my life, my story" (63). Thus, Kore has passed through death into renewal in the new spring which Demeter gratefully grants to man, and more importantly, into rebirth of a new self.

The mythic cycle of death and renewal is also the structure of Thérèse's story. Thérèse comes out from the underworld of Argelouse into the birth of a new self in the upperworld of Paris. Finally, her father and husband grant her the freedom she has so intensely longed for. However, before they separate, Bernard offers a symbolic pomegranate seed by inviting Thérèse to rejoin him in the dining room for meals: to preserve the family's honor there will be no divorce and Thérèse must return

periodically to Argelouse to be seen with Bernard. Henceforth Thérèse will enjoy participation in the fulfillment of both winter and spring. Only temporarily reunited with Marie, Thérèse is finally able to confront the mother-daughter image. Realizing she would soon become bored with Marie's presence, Thérèse is ready for separation: "Je serai impatiente de me retrouver seule avec moi-même" (165). Thus, Thérèse has passed through death into the renewal of a new spring--Bernard leaves her in Paris in March--no longer the object of either a man's or a mother's vision.

What remains to be examined is the mechanism by which Thérèse's new Paris identity is realized. For the most part, indirect discourse sustains *Thérèse Desqueyroux*; Thérèse's thoughts and actions are narrated by the text. And for a good reason. As long as Thérèse remains object of another rather than subject of self, she is narrated by a third person. For example, in order to apprehend herself Thérèse imagines an unrestrained confession to Bernard that regresses into her childhood. But even though the narration unfolds with chronological coherence, it has been doomed from the outset. Finally coming face to face with Bernard, Thérèse realizes that her confession was projected onto an unreal Bernard: "Durant tout ce voyage, elle s'était efforcée, à son insu, de recréer un Bernard capable de la comprendre, d'essayer de la comprendre" (123). Not only is the audience for Thérèse's attempted self-perception a man, it is merely a linguistic fabrication. Consequently, the recollection of Thérèse's past depends on the voice of the narrator, a narrator who, moreover, is unable to bring about Thérèse's resurrection.

Since Thérèse never forged her own self-image before her abduction, her rebirth out of darkness cannot be secured by (linguistic) re-creation of the past: "Quand j'aurai atteint avec lui ce défilé où me voilà, tout me restera à découvrir" (63). Thérèse can, however, abandon her narrated past in order to narrate her own future, for it is the creation of an independent identity, not the re-creation of a dependent one, that is at the heart of the Demeter-Persephone myth. Thérèse's rebirth in Paris reflects metamorphosis from the object of indirect discourse into the subject of direct discourse.

Two major interruptions in the indirect discourse

indicate the mechanism of Thérèse's resurrection. Not surprisingly, they are born out of her two cold seasons. In October during one of her random walks before Marie's birth, Thérèse meets Jean Azévédo. Unlike Thérèse's father and husband, Jean is intellectually alive and opens up for Thérèse the possibility of a new way of life in Paris. Accordingly, whenever conversations with Jean are recalled, it is Thérèse herself who speaks. This cold season is interrupted by hints of light from the upperworld that awaken Thérèse to thoughts of liberation. Thérèse begins to imagine the contrast between Paris, a kingdom whose law is to become oneself, and Argelouse, where one is condemned to deception until death. According to Jean, the worst kind of depravity is to deny oneself. Expressions like "be oneself," "accept oneself," "confront oneself," and "liberate oneself," linger long after Jean himself has gone back to Paris and instill in Thérèse the concept of self-creation: "Être soi-même, mais nous ne le sommes que dans la mesure où nous nous créons" (69).

Significantly, Thérèse's attempt to poison Bernard comes between the two seasons of nonexistence. It is as if in ridding herself of Bernard's presence, Thérèse could reverse her self-image as object. However, because liberation depends on self-creation, not on the elimination of Bernard, it is only after passing through her own death and resurrection that she can enter the upperworld of Paris.

Consequently, when direct discourse intrudes a second time, it outlines the mechanism of a new identity. During the cold season of Marie's abduction, Thérèse engages her own voice in a monologue that constructs a new self-identity. Lying awake at night, she creates a restaurant setting where she joins in the experience of other women. She speaks, able to explain her heart to someone at last. She is delighting a circle of attentive faces; a woman responds: "C'est comme moi . . . j'ai éprouvé cela, moi aussi" (149). A journalist takes her aside and tells her she should write all that happens in her so that he can publish the diary of a contemporary woman. A young man attracted to her drives her home and she enjoys ("jouir") his young body next to hers. But she leaves him to have dinner with a woman friend. Thérèse imagines herself alone in Paris, dependent on no one, yet free to

create her own web of relationships.

The fertility goddess intercedes through the masses of pine trees to transform Thérèse's dreams into reality. The forest comes alive, telling Thérèse the time is right to leave the underworld. Thus, sitting alone on a café terrace in Paris, Thérèse begins to realize her reveries, thereby completing the cyclic process. She has been reborn as her own subject, capable of narrating her own self-image. Liberated from her niche as a narrated female character, she understands the need for self-creation. Ironically, the legacy of the mother-daughter abduction is an independent face. "This breach of silence," affirms Irigaray, "where we constantly reenvelope ourselves in order to be reborn. Where we come to re-learn ourselves and each other, in order to become women, and mothers, again and again" (67). The immobile, huddled female shadow of the first page of the novel disappeared into a smiling, contented woman who will be assimilated in "le fleuve humain, cette masse vivante qui allait s'ouvrir sous son corps, la rouler, l'entraîner" (180). Like Irigaray's personal, direct-discourse essay, Thérèse's self-reflexive discourse surpasses the third-person narrator of the disappeared French female protagonist, thereby opening up her experience as a woman.⁵

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NOTES

¹In the 1970s, some feminist writers adhered to classic psychoanalytical paradigms in attempting to reconcile the mother-daughter relationship. See, for example, writers as diverse as Nancy Friday in her popular text, *My Mother/My Self: A Daughter's Search for Identity* and Marie Cardinal in her novel, *Les mots pour le dire*.

²Luce Irigaray is one of several revisionary writers who sought new psychoanalytic models to redefine female relationships and subject-formation. Other theorists who have discussed (female) gender development are Julia Kristeva, Benoîte Groult, and Hélène Cixous in France, and Nancy Chodorow, Carol Gilligan, Dorothy

Dinnerstein, and Jessica Benjamin in America.

³For a recent discussion of Demeter and Clytemnestra as adult female counterparts to the oedipal narrative of maternal attachment and separation, see Hirsch 28-39.

⁴Generated by an earlier examination of the role of the female protagonist in the French novel of the period 1930-1955, the present study focuses on the mythical/narrative structure of *Thérèse Desqueyroux* rather than directly on the arena of feminist studies. For this reason, consideration of Mauriac *qua* male author or *qua* Catholic is beyond its scope.

⁵It is a pleasure to acknowledge financial support provided by a Lilly Grant for the preliminary research of this study.

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PARADISE OR PURGATORY: THE CITY IN FRENCH AND BRITISH CHILDREN'S FANTASY LITERATURE

Frederick R. Reenstjerna

City-building is arguably one of the characteristics that sets human beings apart from other organisms. While some animals--most conspicuously the social insects--might also modify their environments in colonial organization, their activities are inflexibly rote functions. Humans alone have the capacity for flexible social and physical organization of communal activity. The political entity, i.e., the collective group of human beings in concerted action, is a "humanizing" characteristic of organization (Reenstjerna and Andes 35-36).

This paper studies representative French and English children's fantasy literature to identify salient characteristics of each culture's attitudes toward the urban experience. In general, French literature will be shown to welcome urbanization and city life as a critical civilizing force. English literature, by contrast, will be shown to reflect that culture's bias against the city as a center of evil--in opposition to the pastoral pleasures and better-quality life provided by a more rural existence.

Cultural values are often highlighted most clearly in the fire of inter-cultural conflict. A popular series of children's books, the Babar stories of Jean de Brunhoff, yields valuable insights into French attitudes about their colonial endeavors in Africa. Colonialism is a profound interaction between two peoples--not the unitary, dominating structure sometimes presumed by Western observers. The phrase "European colonialism" hides a range of subtly differing approaches among the various nations adventuring in Africa and Asia. Countries under British domination developed in markedly different ways from countries under Spanish, Portuguese, or French rule. Hence, "de-colonized Africa" is no more monolithic than colonial Africa.

The impact of colonialism upon the colonizer is a subject only recently studied. Imagine a Britain--and a British literary tradition--without an India. While the

British colonial tradition is more familiar to American readers, the French tradition--especially in Africa--has yielded as profound a result as the Anglophone hegemony.

Jean de Brunhoff, author of the Babar books, was born in Paris in 1899 and died of tuberculosis in Switzerland in 1937. His national and subsequent international fame came after publication of the first Babar book in 1931. The Babar books were a departure for children's literature in format, since they were large-format books which included both illustrations and hand-lettered captions by the author/illustrator (at least, in the first French editions) (SATA 59).

The stories did not originate with de Brunhoff, but rather with his wife, Cecile. Cecile de Brunhoff, née Sabouraud, was a pianist and a daughter of a prominent Paris physician. According to their son, Laurent de Brunhoff, the stories were created by Cecile as bedtime stories for the de Brunhoff children. Jean de Brunhoff later heard about them, and from these he developed the series concerning Babar and his adventures in the Great Forest (Kunitz and Haycraft 57).

The first three books are the most essential to an understanding of their representation of French public opinion concerning colonies. As with all literary-dramatic series, several episodes are necessary for the characters to establish their identities and interrelationships. In *The Story of Babar*, the initial contact is made between Babar and an outside culture. At first, Babar lives with his mother in an idyllic environment that can readily be compared to Rousseau's "State of Nature." There is no violence in this jungle, only harmonious relationships among the various animals. However, Babar's mother is then killed by hunters (whose appearance, in pith helmets and hunting suits, begs comparison to either English or German "sportsmen"), and Babar runs away to escape the hunters. He leaves the Great Forest and immediately finds himself in a town whose inhabitants and architecture are decidedly French. Babar is first impressed with the clothes being worn by the inhabitants. He then makes the acquaintance of the Old Lady, who will figure prominently in future stories and in the symbolic motif of the African Francophone colonial relationship. The Old

Lady is a benefactress, who acts as guide to tutor Babar in the social graces. His thoughts, and the nature of their first encounter, are very revealing:

He says to himself: "Really, they are very well dressed. I would like to have some fine clothes, too! I wonder how I can get them?" Luckily, a very rich Old Lady who has always been fond of little elephants understands right away that he is longing for a fine suit. As she likes to make people happy, she gives him her purse. Babar says to her politely, "Thank you, Madam." (de Brunhoff *Story*, 10-11)

Notice that in this first interaction between Babar and the Old Lady, her personality is established as a benefactress, and that she sees immediately her role is as a tutor, bringing this jungle creature into civilized society. Notice, also, that this desire to become civilized is openly admitted by Babar--he is impressed by the city, and by the dress of its inhabitants. This initial dialogue establishes the rationale developed in subsequent books, as the Great Forest and the elephants are increasingly "civilized" ("civilized" here meaning converted to Francophone culture).

With this gift from the Old Lady, Babar is able to realize his dream of Westernization. He goes to a department store where he is fitted with a suit of clothes and has his photograph taken. Babar then returns to live with the Old Lady in her house. The Old Lady also gives Babar an automobile for excursions into the countryside: "She gives him whatever he wants," de Brunhoff writes (*Story* 21).

Even though Babar wants the clothes and material trappings of bourgeois society, and even though he participates in the salon culture of the city, he thinks longingly of his home in the Great Forest. But he never expresses any desire to give up the quality of life in the city; he longs only for some of his friendships from the Great Forest.

After two years, Babar encounters two elephants running into the city--his cousins, Celeste and Arthur. He immediately buys clothes for them (to fit them into middle-class French society), and shows them the city.

When they must return to the Great Forest, Babar decides to return with them. He bids the Old Lady farewell and returns to the Great Forest in his automobile. The parting is sad both for Babar and for the Old Lady.

At this point, the king of the elephants dies, and a council of elders convenes to name a successor. While they are deciding, Babar arrives in his automobile with Celeste and Arthur. Cornelius, the oldest of the elephants, recommends Babar as king.

"My good friends, we are seeking a King. Why not choose Babar? *He has just returned from the big city, he has learned so much living among men.* Let us crown him King." (de Brunhoff *Story*, 38 [emphasis added])

Babar and Celeste are crowned King and Queen of the elephants. After their wedding, they depart in a balloon on their honeymoon, thus concluding the first story.

The distinctly French quality of Babar's life--the importance of civilization--is introduced in the third story, *Babar the King*. Babar comments on the beauty of a sunrise scene beside a lake in the Great Forest; he wants to be able to view this scene from his window every morning when he awakens. It is important to note that he does not want to preserve the natural environment, but he wants to encase it as a work of art for this viewing. With the assistance of the Old Lady (who arrives with a caravan of clothing and supplies for all the elephants), he decides to build a city on the shore of the lake. The city, Celesteville, becomes the capital and cultural center of the elephant kingdom. With the establishment of Celesteville, all of the elephants are able to enjoy the benefits of French bourgeois society. The city includes not only houses and shops, but parks--the Great Forest tamed into an African Bois de Boulogne (Reenstjerna and Peters 8).

These stories of Babar and his adventures point up two basic philosophies motivating French colonial activity in the late nineteenth and interwar decades of the twentieth centuries. These twin ideas were assimilation and association. To the extent that developments within the Kingdom of the Elephants mirror actual French

society--and this is very evident in the work in Celesteville--the stories deal with the philosophy of assimilation. Also, however, by emphasizing the Old Lady's role as tutor to Babar and the elephants, the stories show the ideals of association--separate entities, joined by a common Francophone cultural heritage. Ideally, the joining of colonial and Frenchman takes place in the city--as they share that ultimate pleasure of civilization, the sidewalk café.

Ludwig Bemelmans's poetical works about his character, Madeline, reinforce the French view of urban life. Madeline finds the city to be a place of adventure, but safe adventure--there are no threats such as Babar faced in the untamed Great Forest. One might also see the Germanic face of Gallic culture in *Madeline*, as the girls march down the city streets in neat columns and ranks under the stern but benevolent watchfulness of the nuns who manage the school.

As *Madeline* indicates, a critical characteristic of the (Francophone) city is order. This is a collective existence, but it is a structured collective existence. Within the order of the city, individuals have liberty to express themselves. The disorder and chaos of the non-city is uncivilized, and therefore un-French. The French believed strongly that their colonization was a *mission civilisatrice*: the "civilizing" of native peoples "whose way-of-life seemed, from a Parisian perspective, to be primitive, barbarian, or even non-existent" (Betts 39).

The fantasies of Babar and Madeline are different from Rousseau's fantastic worlds just a century and a half earlier. How was this transition made from the apparent romanticism of the State of Nature to an urban utopia? Partly, the answer is that French civilization envisioned the Noble Savage of Rousseau as a potential *tabula rasa*, an open tablet upon which "correct" ideas could be written. The Noble Savage could retain--even enhance--his nobility by adopting the ways of French sophistication. There was not a commitment to the State of Nature as a goal, but as a starting place. This view was strengthened by the urbanization associated with nineteenth-century industrialization.

The French city was the haven of civilization, the respite from wild and dangerous jungles. By contrast, the British experience with urbanization was negative, even

anti-social. As the center of the Industrial Revolution, the British experienced wrenching social changes for which they were totally unprepared. Friedrich Engels's studies of urban British poverty were part of the underlying rationale for Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*. Dickens's fiction revealed the city as a destroyer of childhood--childhood being the metaphor for ultimate innocence.

The British anti-urban sentiment was thoroughly ingrained into the culture, exhibiting itself in fantastic as well as in realistic fiction literature. C. S. Lewis's series, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, is a representative British work that begins with three children fleeing the city. Although that episode has a specific danger--the German air attacks on London at the start of World War II--there is a generalized malevolence emanating from cities throughout the series. In his most divergent novel of the series, *The Horse and His Boy*, Lewis tells a tale-within-a-tale about an evil ruler whose city is the center of oppression against sturdy, honorable people who populate the countryside. Lewis's series concludes with his novel, *The Last Battle*, in which the Lion leads his followers in the establishment of an idyllic rural existence.

Similarly, *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett achieves restoration of virtue in its characters through the reconstruction of an abandoned, walled garden. Carpenter observes that Burnett created "a work of fiction which, more clearly than any other single book, describes and celebrates the central symbol of the Arcadian movement in English writing for children" (188). Set as an antithesis to the *Secret Garden*, where a girl restores psychic well-being in a family by rebuilding a garden, is *The Little Princess*, with an urban setting. The heroine of the latter novel lives an idyllic existence in rural British India. Trouble befalls her when she moves to London, her father dies, and she leads a Dickensian life as a charmaid in a boarding school.

Although the Victorian experience with industrialization is a catalyst for Arcadian fantastic literature, the nineteenth century is not the source of British rural cultural values. Historically, Britain evolved into nationhood through a series of affiliations of fiefdoms. The king maintained his power through the

allegiance of nobles whose power bases were their castles and private lands. Furthermore, English rule particularly emphasized the decentralized distribution of power throughout the nation. Under Henry II, the notion of the "King's Peace" established a basis for local enforcement of royal power. The evolution of English "courts" came from the practice of visitations by the monarch or local noble to special locales throughout their realm or jurisdiction (Maitland 108-14).

French national history, by contrast, is essentially the story of the expansion of Paris. Beginning with the Duchy of Paris, later French kings enlarged their territorial holdings by annexing adjacent provinces. French royal power was increasingly centralized, not decentralized as in England. The power of the king was the power of court, and the nobility's power developed from proximity to the king. Therefore, although the chateaux were their economic bases, the nobles used these economic bases to support their life at court. The ultimate example in French history, of course, is Louis XIV, who used the power of proximity to the king as a tool for control of the nobility. French law similarly evolved into a much more centralized model than the English legal tradition.

Within the French mind, therefore, civilization became equated with city life--and with one central city in particular. This model was carried into nineteenth-century colonialism, and it was the unspoken ideal of the *mission civilisatrice*. Notice how many cities around the world are described as the "Paris" of their region: Saigon, the Paris of the Orient; Dakar, the Paris of Africa; Beirut, the Paris of the Middle East. These characterizations are not mere hyperbole, they are recognition of the French urban ideal as the hallmark of its culture. Even Jules Verne, nineteenth-century master of fantastic literature, had to create a city at the bottom of the sea. While that is not the most likely place to expect an urban experience, it is understandable within the French context of a central-urban mythos.

The *mission civilisatrice* was no mere excuse for imperialism; it was an integral element of French thinking. Charles de Gaulle, in his memoirs of World War II, noted the centrality of French Africa in his plan to establish a Free French war effort. He wrote,

"Participer avec des forces et des terres françaises à la bataille d'Afrique, c'était faire rentrer dans la guerre comme un morceau de la France" (90; emphasis added).

Notice his choice of "un morceau de la France," rather than "un morceau de l'Empire." Africa was not some isolated source of exploitation; it was as much a part of France as Provence or Brittany. The French colonial vision was critically different from English colonialism. Rather than being a "white man's burden" in the spirit of Kipling, the French colonial spirit was more one of assimilation of all cultures into a Parisian-urban civilization. De Gaulle showed this unified view of Francophone civilization in his description of Felix Ebouée, then Governor of Chad. "Cet homme d'intelligence et de coeur, ce noir ardemment français, ce philosophe humaniste, répugnant de tout son être à la soumission de la France et au triomphe du racisme Nazi" (91; emphasis added).

DeGaulle's description reflects the French attitude, the viewpoint of the Old Lady in the Babar stories. From the point of view of the colonized--the viewpoint of the Babar character--adoption of Francophone ways was equally absorbing. In July 1940, De Gaulle sent a telegram to Ebouée, requesting a situation report on the potential for Chadian support of the Free French movement. "Il m'adressait, en réponse, un rapport circonstancié, annonçant son intention de se rallier publiquement, exposant les conditions de la défense et de la vie du territoire que la France avait confié à sa garde, demandant enfin ce que j'étais en mesure de faire pour lui permettre de porter, sous la Croix de Lorraine, ses responsabilités" (92; emphasis added).

Compare the relationship between De Gaulle and Ebouée, described in the above passages, to Babar's representations to the Old Lady:

"And what are we going to do next?" asks the Old Lady. "I am going to try to rule my kingdom wisely," answers Babar, "and if you will remain with us, you can help me make my subjects happy." (de Brunhoff, *Travels* 48).

The English decentralized model likewise shows itself in former British colonies. First, the fact that no cities

are described as the "London" of their region or nation attests to the de-emphasis of urban life as a critical component of British culture. Second, and more importantly, British colonies were developed as agricultural regions. Tea from India, sugar from Barbados, indigo and cotton from South Carolina, and in this century, coffee from Kenya, reflect the British propensity to a "squirearchical" society. Caribbean plantations were amplifications of the English country estate. The rural ideal was the seat of power as well as the "good life" in English reality and mythology. As an example from nonfiction, consider Elspeth Huxley's autobiography, *The Flame Trees of Thika*. Huxley reminisced about a combination of reality and Arcadian fantasy as a British family established a coffee plantation.

This is not to say that all English literature rejected urban models. As Thesing observed in *The London Muse*, the urbanizing experience of the Industrial Revolution had a profound impact on English poetics. However, the urban-centered literatures tended to favor realism over speculation or fantasy in English writing. Similarly, all French literature was not "urban-centered," and not all urban encounters were favorable--witness the fate of *Les misérables*.

A mirror-image question for further research might be to compare the roles and philosophies of landscape gardening in English and French cultures. Michael Waters has completed a pioneering work in English garden study, examining both styles and theories of gardening revealed in Victorian texts. Quite probably, a similar study of French attitudes toward gardens and landscaping revealed in French literary texts would emphasize the formal, structured, palace garden as opposed to an open-fields type of landscape that occurs in so many English writings. For the French, even the garden must be civilized with walls and structures, as in the palace gardens at Versailles, or in Babar's royal park.

Hugh Carpenter, in his *Secret Gardens*, points out a continuum in British children's literature from the earliest Arcadian fiction up to Tolkien's work. The Edwardian, pre-1914 world, he demonstrates, was marked by hostility to the urban experience. He points out that Tolkien's *Hobbit* can be viewed as a rural idyll filtered through the experience of World War I, which

created desolate landscapes and increased fear and mistrust in the world.

Every myth has a basis in the experience of the culture envisioning that myth. Myths may be viewed in the Jungian sense as a reflection of the collective subconscious, the shared memories and experiences of groups of peoples. The existence of such a collective subconscious can explain similarities between such dispersed Indo-European creation myths as the Hindu and Norse stories. Fantasy literature is a special application of the mythic process; it draws upon the same collective-subconscious images.

The French passion for a unitary, centralized urban experience may be unique among Romance literatures and cultures. Although Italian culture has a strong urban emphasis, lack of national unity until comparatively recently prevented focus on one urban area. In fact, the definitive urban area, Rome, is today a city-state independent of Italy. Simultaneously, there is a significant non-urban experience reflected in Italian culture and literature. This trend comes from the villa-centered culture that arose after the destruction of the Roman Empire, and which gave rise to the feudal system of medieval Europe. Spanish culture has many trends influencing its literature, including the fact that seven centuries of its history were marked by Islamic occupation of its urban areas.

These selected works from French and British children's literature are representative of these nations' divergent cultural attitudes about urbanization. Perhaps Napoleon should have described England as a nation of farmers rather than a nation of shopkeepers. The two national literatures reflect fundamentally different attitudes about centralization in government, and government's intervention in individual life.

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**BORGES AND NABOKOV'S *LOLITA*:
REALITY AS FICTIONAL DREAM IMAGE**

Mark Frisch

Jorge Luis Borges's contribution to North American fiction has been mentioned with some frequency. The reasons behind the confluence of the Argentine's ideas and methods and the contemporary North American novel are diverse and complex. They derive, I would argue, from the New World experience. A number of North American/South American literary relationships seem to be molded by a need for self-definition and a search for redefinition. On the one hand, authors such as William Faulkner, Sherwood Anderson, Eduardo Mallea, Juan Rulfo and others find it necessary to portray and project their relatively new and marginal cultures into the mainstream in order to define themselves as first-rate artists. Many of them also seek to redefine the nineteenth-century conception of reality and representation. Borges is a factor in this latter tendency in particular. An explanation of these concepts, a careful study of Borges's vision and techniques, and a discussion of some short stories and their link to Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* illustrate how self-definition and redefinition delimit Borges's impact on Nabokov and on U.S. fiction.

Before beginning a discussion of Borges and some of his short stories, more needs to be said about the workings of self-definition and redefinition. A number of different twentieth-century North American and South American writers have made an attempt at self-definition. Living in the New World, these authors have found it necessary to define their relatively new and evolving culture in order to establish themselves as significant fiction writers. They have used various methods and techniques to achieve this end, including utilizing the mythical raw material of their heritage and/or defining a community within their culture to establish a sense of literary place and time. Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner, Agustín Yáñez, Juan Rulfo and Gabriel García Márquez, among others, have

succeeded in different ways in establishing themselves in this manner.

Both Borges and Nabokov are concerned with defining themselves through the definition of their culture or community, but that is not the dominant quality which links them. Nevertheless, in stories such as "El Sur" or "Biografía de Tadeo Isidoro Cruz" Borges's Argentine roots are clear through the projection of the gaucho and the values associated with him. Although Borges employs mythic images extensively, many of his stories are set in and reflect an Argentine vision. Similarly, Nabokov's *Lolita* incorporates numerous characters who are representative of U.S. culture and scenes from the American suburban landscape.

Consequently, critics have come to accept *Lolita* as an "American" novel. Humbert Humbert and Lolita spend two years travelling through the byways of the United States, living in rickety motels and passing through blighted, suburban, commercial settings. From one perspective, the encounter between H.H. and Lolita is a meeting of Old World tradition, corrupted and perverse, and New World innocence, crude and unrefined. The fact that Lolita escapes from H.H. on Independence Day, July 4th, further underscores this communal/cultural backdrop. Yet, while both Borges and Nabokov draw on the background of their communities to flesh out their work, their tendency toward redefinition is much more prominent and important to the confluence of their vision and methods.

The need for redefinition is the common ground which links these two authors. In a search for a redefinition of art and reality, what I refer to as "multirealism" is central.¹ Multirealism is the redefinition of the concept of art and reality from the nineteenth century and helps to explain the changes in the structure of the modern novel. As representatives of the New World, Borges and Nabokov have been on the cutting edge of those changes, as the New World is looked to for innovation and new direction.

There are five qualities which distinguish multirealism, all of which apply to the works in question here to varying degrees. First, multirealism transcends the singular definition of positivism and the definition of traditional modern realism. It is a more expansive

concept which suggests new spheres and new modes of experiencing and interpreting reality. Instead of focusing only on the exterior world of class conflict, it also emphasizes the inner world of consciousness. Myths, legends, dreams and imaginative fantasies become valid raw material for literature. As a result there is a multiplicity of conceptions of man, of nature, of myth, of dream, of madness, of poetry and of sexuality. Second, multirealism affirms the independence and autonomy of the literary work of art. Third, authors experiment more with language and manipulate it in various ways. There is a dissolution of certain logical patterns of language in this movement away from the logic of positivism and, as a result, juxtapositions and verbal montages abound as authors begin to tell less and show more. Fourth, a change in the conception of time occurs. In place of a projection of narrative time as chronological, the past and the present often coalesce or are juxtaposed and time displays cyclical, fragmented or repetitive tendencies. Last, taken to its extreme, all reality becomes a fiction and man is seen as a fictionmaker who creates systems, religions, philosophies and realities to help her or him to understand and come to terms with her or his world. An implication of this conception is that the universe is neither orderly nor rational, but rather random and incomprehensible.

All of these qualities of multirealism run through the works of Borges and Nabokov. A summary of some of the most important ideas associated with Borges's vision and a discussion of his short story, "La forma de la espada," underscore the link between these two New World authors and the role of redefinition in particular in that link.

Borges resists any exact philosophical classification, because he tends to view all philosophies as fictions, as man's feeble attempt to order an absurd, formless, labyrinthian universe which conforms to no laws. The symbol of the chaotic labyrinth appears repeatedly in his stories. His characters often search for the hidden meaning of existence and if they reach the center of the labyrinth and discover it, they seem invariably to die, perhaps because of the realization of the horror of that universe (Dauster 147). Stories such as "La lotería en Babilonia" or "La biblioteca de Babel" reflect the

labyrinthian, chaotic nature of the universe and the rule of chance in our lives. Nevertheless, Borges states that while he prefers not to define himself philosophically, if he had to, he would call himself an idealist (Dembo, "Interview" 317). He seems to identify especially with the idealism of Schopenhauer. He views the world as though it were a dream or a series of illusory mirror images. This is especially evident in a story like "El Sur" where the line between the real and the dream world becomes indistinguishable when different aspects of Juan Dahlmann's self are projected. Along these lines, Borges asserts at one point:

The nature of the world is hallucinatory We have dreamed the world . . . we have dreamed it strong, mysterious, visible, ubiquitous in space and secure in time; but we have allowed tenuous, eternal interstices of injustice in its structure so we may know that it is false.

(McMurray 55)

Borges has been a central figure in redefining the concept of reality and representation in art, and this is evident in his attitude toward literature. He sees it as always a fiction and reality as fictitious. Thus, the literature which fabricates its own world is the most creative. His works argue for erasing the border between reason and fantasy, between dreaming and being awake, between play and anguish, and between the I and the not-I. Yet Borges is really neither a nihilist nor a pessimist. The impossibility of understanding the divine scheme does not preclude questioning, searching, conjecturing and creating human fictions and schemes to assist one in adapting to the world.

Borges's concept of character and identity also merits some discussion, for his understanding and portrayal of the self and of human personality are related to the labyrinth. Problems of identity and personality are central to his message. The labyrinth is not only a metaphor for the world, but also a maze which challenges man's uniqueness (Garzelli 105). Form and content are one in his stories: The content suggests that the universe and man are a maze in which personal identities are

elusive, and the form reaffirms this. Storytellers are both hunters and hunted, creators and created. The exchange of roles suggests the myth of the Minotaur and the labyrinth from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In that tale, the Minotaur, who is half bull and half man, is hunted, and in his imprisonment in a labyrinth becomes the creator of a labyrinth and the hunter himself. The exchange of roles between hunter and hunted, witch doctor and son in "Las ruinas circulares," Juan Dahlmann on his deathbed and Juan Dahlmann dueling with a gaucho for his life, or narrator and antagonist in "La forma de la espada," is the key to human personality. Human personality is composed of its characteristics and its opposite. Hero becomes coward and creator becomes created, yet the labyrinth remains. It is the central clue which allows for shifting identities. Man's need to create fictions and labyrinths is more real than a personality, and thus the maze subsumes the singular sense of self.

"La forma de la espada" is a story in which form and content are unified in this manner and work together to undercut the story line. By doing so, they call into question what we know, what one can know and what one is. This is clear from the introduction of the narrator early on. The intradiegetic heterodiegetic narrator (or first person narrator-witness who tells someone else's story) is called "Borges."² We can assume that he is a fictional creation of the author. However, by using his own name, Borges, the author suggests that there is no distinction between "reality" and fiction. The narrator of the story-within-the-story is referred to as "El Inglés." There are a number of other implications right from the beginning which call into question the details of the story we are about to be told. El Inglés's story is related second-hand by Borges, and Borges mentions that he was drunk when it was related to him. Borges also suggests that el Inglés's Spanish "era rudimental, abrasilero" (*Obras completas* 491) and says that el Inglés told his story "alternando el inglés con el español y aun con el portugués" (*Obras completas* 492). All of this serves to undermine the verifiability of the story which is about to be told.

The story is about a man's encounter with a coward and the coward's betrayal of the cause, but it is also a criticism of dogmatic philosophies and fixed realities and

an affirmation of a fluid self. In this story, Borges asks el Inglés about the scar on his face. El Inglés agrees to explain its origin. He says that he is not English, but rather Irish. He explains how he was working for Irish independence and how a man named John Vincent Moon appeared on the scene one day. Moon has dogmatic beliefs about Marxist dialectical materialism. When confronted with an enemy soldier, Moon freezes from fear and is saved by el Inglés only after being wounded. El Inglés brings him to a farm. Because of his wound, Moon cannot go down to the lowest floor. The description of the farm is significant because it relates back to the theme and structure of the story. The place:

abundaba en perplejos corredores y en vanas antecámaras. El museo y la enorme biblioteca usurpaban la planta baja: libros controversiales e incompatibles que de algún modo son la historia del siglo XIX. (*Obras completas* 493)

The maze-like description of the farm brings to mind the labyrinthian library of "La biblioteca de Babel" which symbolized the pluralistic, chaotic universe. The reference to the controversial and incompatible books which compose the history of the nineteenth century stands in contrast to Moon's dogmatic, monistic espousal of the truth of Marxism. The reference to Moon's inability to descend to the library and museum level because of his wound suggests a contrast is being established between Moon's limited monistic vision and el Inglés's pluralistic attitude.

The contrast between the two opposing personalities is played out further when el Inglés realizes that Moon is once again plagued with fear after seemingly recovering:

Me abochornaba ese hombre con miedo, como si yo fuera el cobarde, no Vincent Moon. Lo que hace un hombre es como si lo hicieran todos los hombres. Por eso no es injusto que una desobediencia en un jardín contamine al género humano; por eso no es injusto que la crucifixión de un solo judío baste para salvarlo. Acaso

Schopenhauer tiene razon: yo soy los otros,
cualquier hombre es todos los hombres,
Shakespeare es de algún modo el miserable
John Vincent Moon. (*Obras completas* 493-4)

The narrator expresses a concept of man and of the self in which everyone contains his or her opposite. The implication is that we contain the best and worst of all men and that the self is not unified and comprehensible, but rather indefinable. This concept of the self and of humanity is underscored again when el Inglés relates that Moon betrayed his comrades to save himself, and then el Inglés declares to Borges that he is actually John Vincent Moon. This revelation that el Inglés is Moon raises questions about the nature and meaning of identity and about what actually is true or verifiable in the story. Are the two characters actually two separate people, or is Moon an alter-ego of el Inglés, as the sun is to the moon? Form and content coalesce as not only the plot line but also the identity of the characters becomes unknowable. As we shall see, this is quite similar to Nabokov's *Lolita*, where the line between murderer and murdered, between Humbert Humbert and Clare Quilty is indefinable and where there is a very strong sense that one is a creation and alter-ego of the other. All of this serves to affirm the autonomy of the literary work and to undermine the belief in a fixed reality which a mimetic literature mirrors.

Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* reflects a number of the ideas and methods of Borges. Nabokov confirmed this in an interview when he admitted an interest in Borges and his works (Toffler 44-45). Nabokov was born in 1899, the same year as Borges. After his family fled the Russian Revolution, he lived in France, Germany and England before moving to the U.S. Nabokov's works often emphasize levels of reality, the play of mirror images and the self-sufficiency of the aesthetic. Language games and word plays permeate his writing. *Lolita*, written in English and generally classified as one of his "American" novels, captures many of these features.

The novel is Humbert Humbert's personal account of his relationship with his twelve year-old step-daughter, Dolores Haze, otherwise known as Lolita. As the novel opens, Humbert is in prison awaiting trial for the murder

of playwright Clare Quilty. A literature professor of French background, Humbert Humbert (H.H.) comes to the U.S. after inheriting some money. While looking for a room, he is immediately taken with his "nymphet," Lolita, and rents a room from Lolita's mother. But it is the concept of the nymphet, rather than Lolita in particular, with which he falls in love. He marries Lolita's mother to be near the young girl. When his wife, Charlotte Haze, is killed in an accident, he takes custody of Lolita. She actually seduces him the first time. They live and travel together for two years before she runs away with the playwright, Clare Quilty. H.H. does not realize who has stolen her. After a number of years, he receives a letter from Lolita. She is married, pregnant, and is requesting some money. H.H. goes to talk with her. When he learns that it was Quilty who stole her away, he kills him. Yet, as this tale is told, there is a constant parodying, patterning, series of coincidences, word plays, and self-referential comments which undermine the surface plot and call into question the nature of the self and the line separating imagination and reality.

In regard to the composition of what is called reality, Nabokov's own comments offer some insight. In his essay appended to the novel, "On a Book Entitled *Lolita*," he states that reality is "one of the few words that mean nothing without quotes" (314). In one interview he also asserts: "Really, nobody knows whether the world is realistic or fantastic, that is to say whether the world is a natural process or whether it is a kind of dream, a dream that we may or may not share with others" (Tanner 40). Along these same lines but in a different context he states:

I think that what I would welcome at the close of a book of mine is a sensation of its world receding in the distance and stopping somewhere--there suspended afar like a picture in a picture: *The Artist's Studio* by Van Bock. (Dembo, *Nabokov* 28)

In another interview he asserts that reality is an "infinite succession of levels, levels of perception, false bottoms and hence unquenchable, unattainable" (Poirer 349).

This notion of reality as an elusive and indefinable fiction and its corollary view of the universe as chaotic are very much a part of the texture of *Lolita* and are expressed through the structure, theme and language of the work and its characters.

As in Borges's "El Sur" and "La forma de la espada," the dissolution of the line between the "real world" and the dream-like or imaginary world is closely linked to the labyrinth of the self. In a later novel, *Ada*, Nabokov suggests his indebtedness to Borges in making reference to an author named Osberg, an anagram of Borges, who wrote a novel, *La gitánilla*, which is very much like *Lolita*. The notion of imprisonment in the work is closely tied to the question of the nature of the self (Field 320). *Lolita* is H.H.'s prisoner until she escapes on Independence Day. He is her prisoner as well. He was Charlotte's prisoner during their marriage and she was his. Like Moon, H.H. is a prisoner of his own past, of the disrupted childhood romance that he is tragically condemned to repeat and complete. Both characters must struggle to reconcile that past with their present life.

H.H.'s effort to escape from the prison of passion in which he is incarcerated has a dual function. It is the axis around which the doubling theme revolves with its emphasis on the elusive sense of self, and also it underscores the moral quality of the work. The mirrors and mirror images which run through the novel contribute to the doubling theme (Scheid 129-30). The number "342" on the Haze house in Ramsdale and on the room in "The Enchanted Hunters" where H.H. and *Lolita* have their first sexual encounter is one example. That is also the number of motels that H.H. says that he has searched for clues. Quilty's cars which seem to be following H.H. also have their doubles. H.H.'s childhood lover, Annibel Leigh, is a double of *Lolita*, and also suggests Edgar Allan Poe's poem, "Annibel Lee." Similarly, Humbert's first wife dies in childbirth, as will *Lolita*. *Lolita* creates her own double as well when she explains her momentary disappearance by saying she met a former girlfriend whose name was also "Dolly." Furthermore, Gaston Godin's friend is called "Harold D. Doublename," and the psychiatrist who writes the foreward is John Ray Jr (JR jr).

The moral aspect is expressed through the central

doubling of the work, the opposition of the two Humberts (Field 323). There is the one who is an acknowledged pervert and child molester. And, there is the other who feels a tragic responsibility for what he has done to *Lolita* and who, upon confronting the pervert, Quilty, calls himself Dolores Haze's "father." In murdering Quilty, this latter H.H. eliminates the darkest shadow of himself and then relates the story of his life. The killing is seen as necessary so the other Humbert can live. Thus, H.H. moves from the opening pursuit of *Lolita* as the passion of his loins to the closing expression of his pure love for *Lolita*.

The references to Quilty as H.H.'s darker double are subtle, but extensive. The extradiegetic homodiegetic narrator, H.H., withholds the identity of *Lolita*'s kidnaper until the end, but he disperses clues throughout. Early on, H.H. states that "I am said to resemble some crooner or actor chap on whom Lo has a crush" (45). While tracking and preparing to kill Quilty, he says he is free to "destroy my brother" (249). After meeting Rita, the alcoholic divorcee, he gives up the search for Quilty and implies that he was a figment of his imagination when he states: "the fiend was either in Tartary or burning away in my cerebellum" (261). Tartary is a reference to Tartarus, the infernal regions of mythology. When he enters Quilty's house to commit the murder, he finds it filled with mirrors that reflect back upon himself, and he sees that Quilty is wearing a purple bathrobe "very like the one I had" (296). As the two fight over the gun, they blend into one: "I rolled over him. We rolled over me. They rolled over him. We rolled over us" (301). The implication is that the self is not a whole, but rather a labyrinth in which every man or woman contains within himself or herself the seed of his or her opposite. In Borges and to a lesser extent in Nabokov, this translates into an emphasis on identity rather than character (Merivale 299-300). Thus, the line between the self and "other" becomes merged as Humbert Humbert struggles with the labyrinth of identity.

The novel contains an abundance of carefully controlled, self-conscious references and associations that separate the work from a mimetic, "real" world. Early on in the novel, H.H. laments: "Oh my *Lolita*, I have only words to play with!" (34) The novel is an

elaborate game of words that are deftly employed to affirm that this story is a work of the aesthetic imagination and is totally separate from the world. H.H. undercuts his own reliability in the opening pages when he states that one must be "an artist and a madman" (14) to appreciate nymphets, and then he relates his bout with insanity (36). Thus, the line between the real and the imagined, between the sane and the insane, dissolves.

The reference to the work-within-the-work is another device which functions to underscore that this novel is a fictional creation of the imagination (See Appel's Introduction to *Lolita*, xxix). H.H. and Lolita have their first sexual encounter at The Enchanted Hunters. But Clare Quilty writes a play entitled *The Enchanted Hunters* in which Lolita participates. The repeated references to reflections and mirror images such as H.H.'s double name, Hour Glass Lake, the mirror in The Enchanted Hunter's room, or the mirrors in Quilty's glass castle point to the self-referential nature of the work and underscore its independence as a work of art. The fairy tale quality of the novel also works to this end.³ The plot itself follows the format of a fairy tale: deception, enchantment, metamorphosis. Names and places, such as The Enchanted Hunters or H.H.'s gift to Lolita of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*, are other examples. Quilty is described as the "Erlkönig," the word for the King of the Elves in Goethe's poem by that name. Quilty lives on "Grimm Road." And the list goes on. H.H.'s merger of the dream world and the waking world at key moments such as the first seduction at The Enchanted Hunters serves the same purpose. And even the killing of Quilty has a comic and surrealistic exaggeration about it that removes it from the realm of "reality." All of these devices serve to emphasize that man is a fictionmaker, that this story is a product of the imagination, and as H.H. states of the central theme of *The Enchanted Hunters*, "that mirage and reality merge in love" (203).

Thus, Jorge Luis Borges and Vladimir Nabokov have been central figures in the redefinition and reinvention of reality and representation. It seems that Nabokov may be indebted to Borges: While Nabokov admits having read Borges and makes playful and ironic references to him in later works, both men's visions seem to have

evolved at about the same time, and both are responding to the demands and expectations on them as New World writers. Their similar methods include their projection of reality as a fiction, their labyrinthine concept of order, identity and character, and their emphasis on man as a creator of fictions. Together these two literary artists on different continents have played a pivotal role in the redefinition of reality and representation.

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NOTES

¹My concept of Multirealism is distinct from but is indebted to the concept of Superrealism of Cedomil Goic. See: *Historia de la novela hispanoamericana*, 177-83.

²My terminology for the narrators ("intradiegetic heterodiegetic" or first person narrator-witness who tells someone else's story and a story within a story, and "extradiegetic homodiegetic," a narrator who tells his own story as the main story) are taken from Gerard Genette's lucid discussion of narrators and narration in: *Narrative Discourse*; in particular, see 227-62.

³See *The Annotated Lolita*, 346, for a detailed documentation of fairy tale references in the work.

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LO FANTASTICO EN "LAS PUERTAS DEL CIELO"
DE JULIO CORTAZAR: LITERATURA
DE EVASION SEMANTICA

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Cortázar ha calificado su cuentística como fantástica. Sus cuentos son aludidos por la crítica como cuentos fantásticos o como cuentos neo-fantásticos; las diferencias cualitativas entre ambas categorías las mencionaremos más adelante. Queremos aquí analizar el cuento "Las puertas del cielo" a la luz de las elaboraciones teóricas más representativas que se han hecho de este tipo de literatura. Consideraremos en este trabajo el aporte de Todorov por ser su teoría el primer enfoque sistemático que se ha hecho de una modalidad literaria tan compleja. Cuando el corpus teórico de Todorov nos limite o resulte insuficiente para el análisis del cuento de Cortázar, nos valdremos de las teorías de lo fantástico expuestas en los trabajos de Irène Bessière y Rosemary Jackson. Dichos trabajos no se limitan a un análisis diacrónico, como sucede con el de Todorov; antes, la relación que dichas teorías exponen entre el análisis de los textos fantásticos y el contexto histórico-ideológico que enmarca la producción de este tipo de literatura, nos da una óptica mucho más amplia y coherente. Para Rosemary Jackson, por ejemplo, la literatura fantástica es subversiva; en su espacio se subvierten prohibiciones que yacen sepultas en el inconsciente colectivo de una determinada sensibilidad histórica. Para Irène Bessière, lo fantástico consiste en una modalidad narrativa por medio de la cual se expresan las metamorfosis culturales e intelectuales que caracterizan un determinado período histórico.

El espacio como paradigma del relato.

En este cuento de Cortázar el narrador-protagonista, Marcelo, nos relata retrospectivamente, y con un tono sarcástico, sus reflexiones en torno a la relación de Mauro, su amigo pese a las diferencias sociales, y una tanguera, Celina. Al final del cuento, Mauro, todavía abrumado por la muerte de su esposa, se encuentra con Marcelo en un night-club de mala muerte. Repentinamente, entre un caldo de humo, música y

sudor, ambos parecen percibir a una Celina espectral.

Si tratamos de darle jerarquía a diversos índices que saltan a la vista en el plano sintagmático del cuento, podríamos trazar un paradigma en el que el espacio que enmarca a los personajes del relato es de suma importancia para entender la estructura del mismo. Digamos que el espacio del que hablamos es uno polarizado; por un lado tenemos un espacio mimético representado por Marcelo, Mauro y Celina, y por el otro tenemos un ficticio representado por la aparición de Celina. La relación que existe entre ambos polos del paradigma espacial progresa de ser una relación de oposición a ser una de complementariedad. En el primer caso lo real niega lo ficticio y vice versa; pero a medida que el discurso del narrador protagonista avanza, la relación de oposición se convierte en una de complementariedad. En este caso, los dos polos del paradigma se recusar de tal forma que los contornos que antes diferenciaban el espacio como real o ficticio terminan anulándose. Ya lo real no es antinomia de lo irreal; al contrario la realidad pasa a afirmarse dentro de la ficción. En el sintagma que configura el título del cuento se nos da el primer indicio de esta polarización espacial: las puertas connotan una apertura cuyo umbral nos introduce en un espacio desconocido, el cielo. De la misma forma Celina abre los ojos para acabar de morirse, lo cual funciona dentro del texto como un sintagma oximorónico que indica, una vez más, apertura después de la muerte. En otro momento, la descripción que hace Marcelo de Celina ya amortajada, crea una atmósfera que si no fuese por el uso del verbo "parecía" bordaría en lo sobrenatural: "... me miraron desde el fondo oscuro, donde la cama parecía estar flotando en una jalea de membrillo." Ante esta situación, Marcelo entiende que el espacio de la muerta es ahora infranqueable: "... ni siquiera Mauro podría entrar en paz a sentarse al lado de Celina"; por eso Marcelo decide buscar a Mauro que "... seguía del lado nuestro." La adjetivación del espacio mimético con el posesivo "nuestro" sirve para oponer los dos polos espaciales. La transformación de dicha relación de oposición en una de complementariedad sucede cuando lo que aparece como el espectro de Celina, en el "Santa Fe Palace," irrumpe en el plano mimético. Tenemos entonces un hecho

insólito (la aparición de Celina) cuya disrupción de la realidad obliga a que el narrador-personaje conjeture sobre el lado (espacio) en que se encontraban él y Mauro: "Estaba de este lado, el pobre estaba de este lado." La repetición del imperfecto da al final del cuento un halo de ambigüedad: en la primera frase no sabemos si el narrador se refiere a sí mismo, a Mauro, o a Celina. Aunque en la segunda frase de la oración sabemos que Mauro es el sujeto, la ambigüedad persiste. Después del hecho insólito no importa realmente de qué lado, o en qué espacio están unos y otros; la percepción de Marcelo del hecho insólito como una Celina espectral, desfronteriza los dos espacios, el real y el ficticio, y de estar polarizados al principio del relato, pasan a recusarse.

Evasión semántica en "Las puertas del cielo"

Para Todorov la literatura fantástica está caracterizada por ciertos elementos de los cuales el más importante sea quizá la duda o la vacilación que un narrador-protagonista experimenta ante la manifestación de un hecho insólito. El narrador-protagonista duda ante un hecho al cual, de momento, no le encuentra una explicación racional. Si, en el transcurso del relato, se explica el hecho insólito racionalmente, el relato se resolverá hacia lo fantástico extraño; si, en cambio, a lo insólito del hecho se le clasifica dentro de una categoría sobrenatural, el relato se orientará igualmente hacia una resolución fantástica-sobrenatural. Pero si el hecho insólito no se orientara hacia ninguno de los dos polos, estaríamos entonces en el ámbito de lo fantástico puro, o, según Todorov, lo neo-fantástico (133). Es importante aclarar brevemente las diferencias entre lo fantástico y lo neo-fantástico. Para Todorov, por ejemplo, lo fantástico no incluye el plano mimético. La duda que se le presenta al narrador-protagonista oscila entre lo extraño y lo sobrenatural. Para Rosemary Jackson e Irène Bessièrre lo fantástico viene a representar lo que Todorov define como neo-fantástico. El problema radica en el criterio que estas dos críticas utilizan para definir lo fantástico. Rosemary Jackson al incluir un nivel mimético en el campo de acción de lo fantástico transgrede y amplía los límites establecidos por Todorov (lo extraño y lo sobrenatural). Lo fantástico para Jackson se da en la disrupción de ese plano mimético por un hecho que no

tiene que ser necesariamente sobrenatural. Lo mismo sucede con Irène Bessièrè. Para Bessièrè los "verosímiles" ideológico-culturales que estructuran lo mimético se recusan con los elementos que estructuran el hecho disruptor o insólito. Así, por ejemplo, en "La metamorfosis" de Kafka no se plantea ningún tipo de vacilación ante el hecho de que Gregorio Samsa amaneció convertido en una cucaracha; al contrario, el plano mimético de la realidad pequeño-burguesa de la familia Samsa se recusa con el hecho insólito (la metamorfosis de Gregorio) en la aceptación y cotidianaización de dicha metamorfosis. El problema que presenta la amplitud de esta definición de lo fantástico consiste en que cualquier obra que posea un elemento transgresor de lo mimético puede ser considerada como fantástica. De hecho, para Irène Bessièrè "Rayuela" de Julio Cortázar es literatura fantástica; asimismo, la obra de Sade puede considerarse como fantástica según Rosemary Jackson. Si aclaramos aquí este punto es porque el cuento de Cortázar analizado en este artículo (y su cuentística en general), aunque fundamentalmente neofantástico, participa un poco de ambas tendencias. Pero para el propósito de este artículo bástenos afirmar que las divergencias entre Todorov, Jackson y Bessièrè son básicamente de nomenclatura: lo que es fantástico para Irène Bessièrè y Rosemary Jackson es neofantástico para Todorov.

Para Todorov, el hecho de que el relato fantástico se articule en la enunciación de un "yo" personaje es importante para que se logre el efecto psicológico que esta modalidad literaria produce en el lector. El lector duda, junto al narrador-protagonista, ante el hecho insólito, estableciéndose así un nexo afectivo entre narrador-protagonista y lector que explica el impacto particular que produce la lectura de lo fantástico. Sin embargo, en la lectura de "Las puertas del cielo," dicho nexo no se establece completamente, porque a la percepción e interpretación que Marcelo hace del hecho insólito, el hablante básico yuxtapone la percepción e interpretación de Mauro sobre el mismo hecho. Mientras que Marcelo ve en el hecho insólito la aparición del espectro de Celina, Mauro se asombra por el abismal parecido que esa mujer, que aparece en el "Santa Fe Palace," guarda con su difunta esposa, sin

llegar nunca a considerar la posible manifestación de un hecho sobrenatural. Podríamos entonces afirmar que Marcelo y Mauro funcionan, respectivamente, como índices representativos de los dos límites dentro de los que, según Todorov, se da lo fantástico: lo sobrenatural y lo extraño. Para cada uno de ellos la duda sobre el hecho se resuelve de una u otra manera. Para el lector, sin embargo, la vacilación ante el hecho disruptor no puede resolverse exclusivamente por una de las dos tendencias, porque su vacilación proviene de una manipulación que efectúa el hablante básico sobre los puntos de vista de Mauro y Marcelo. Dicha manipulación consiste en una yuxtaposición de las miradas, o de las percepciones disímiles, que Mauro y Marcelo tienen del hecho insólito; y el hablante básico no ofrece ninguna resolución definitiva a dicha oposición. De esta forma, la estructura del cuento queda abierta al indeterminado número de significados que el lector pueda conjeturar.

Hay otro nivel en el discurso de Marcelo que complica aún más la posibilidad de enmarcar el cuento de Cortázar dentro del esquema teórico de Todorov. Marcelo no sólo se nos presenta como narrador-protagonista del cuento; también se nos presenta como escritor: "Ahora (ahora que escribo) . . ." (119). Su versión de los hechos parte de un distanciamiento de ellos para después referirnoslos de una forma subjetiva. La alusión que Marcelo hace en el cuento a las fichas de notas es una buena ilustración de este proceso de distanciamiento; en ellas Marcelo se constata ante el lector como un espectador cínico y distanciado del mundo de Mauro y Celina:

Fui, pero estuve todo el tiempo pensando en Celina. Era feo reconocerlo, en realidad lo que hacía era reunir y ordenar mis fichas sobre Celina, no escritas nunca pero bien a mano (110)

En mis fichas tengo una buena descripción del "Santa Fe Palace" (113)

(Para una ficha: estudiar, siguiendo a Ortega, los contactos del hombre de pueblo y la técnica) (114)

"Silogística perfecta del humilde"

pensé. Celina muerta, llega madre, chillido madre." Me daba asco pensar así, una vez más pensar lo que a los otros les bastaba sentir . . . (108)

La visión subjetiva que Marcelo nos da de la realidad a través de su escritura introduce también niveles de ironía que, entre otras funciones, intensifican la distancia que existe entre su espacio y el de Mauro y Celina. El cielo de Celina, su cielo "duramente ganado," ha sido, previamente, comparado por Marcelo con un infierno virgiliano. Hay algo de subversivo en el discurso de Marcelo en la medida en que éste subvierte la realidad cotidiana, adjudicándole dimensiones que a otra mirada hubieran simplemente escapado. Se entiende que la transformación que la mirada de Marcelo ejerce sobre la realidad que lo circunda estriba, por un lado, en el deseo de compensar una realidad que le parece insuficiente y limitante; y por el otro, en el deseo de recuperar un orden perdido con la muerte de Celina: ". . . no que me importara tanto la muerte de Celina sino más bien la suspensión de un orden, de un hábito necesario" (17).

El hecho de que el narrador-protagonista nos narra un pasado desde el presente de su escritura--"ahora (ahora que escribo)"--enfatisa aún más el elemento subjetivo de su historia. El lector no puede entonces confiarse ciegamente de este narrador. Si prestamos más atención a la versión que Marcelo nos da del hecho insólito, podríamos trazarla a momentos anteriores a su aparición. El narrador parece estar jugando con la reacción del lector. Al final de un cuento que lleva por título "Las puertas del cielo," aparece una mujer en el umbral creado por el humo concentrado en el interior de un antro nocturno. Marcelo ve en esa mujer el espectro de Celina; una Celina que, liberada por la muerte, conquista al fin las puertas de su cielo, cielo que sacrificó al casarse con Mauro y al entrar a formar parte de un mundo de señora pequeño-burguesa. Marcelo, narrador-protagonista con conciencia escritural, fragua toda una urdimbre de relaciones que culminará con la aparición del espectro de Celina en el "Santa Fe Palace"; y este punto es obvio en la relación de identidad que Marcelo establece entre el "Santa Fe Palace" y Celina:

Yo pensaba en Celina, tan en su casa aquí, justamente aquí donde Mauro no la había traído nunca . . . de pronto me di cuenta como el Santa Fe era Celina, la presencia insoportable de Celina . . . A esta hora, metido sin vuelta en el Santa Fe medí la grandeza de Celina, su coraje de pagarle a Mauro con unos años de cocina y mate dulce en el patio. Había renunciado a su cielo de milonga, a su caliente vocación de anís y vales criollos. (118)

Como ya lo señalamos, todas estas pistas, por medio de las cuales Marcelo manipula al lector, van a desembocar en la percepción del hecho insólito como uno sobrenatural (el fantasma de Celina). Pero dicha percepción, repetimos, se da sólo ante la mirada de Marcelo.

Con esto último queremos introducir un concepto que tanto para Rosemary Jackson como para Irène Bessièrre viene a ser uno de los elementos estructuradores de la literatura fantástica. Jackson afirma que en la topografía temática de lo fantástico entreveremos una preocupación marcada con problemas oculares; sobre todo en la cultura occidental en la que ver es sinónimo de entender ("to see the point," verle sentido a algo, etc.). El sujeto ("I") se construye partiendo de las experiencias que el entorno le imprime, primordialmente, a través de la vista ("the eye") (83-86). El logocentrismo característico de la cultura occidental parte de un empirismo en el que la observación precluye cualquier tipo de formulación de hipótesis. Si lo percibido visualmente es discernible a la razón, lo distorsionado, lo invisible, no lo es. De allí que gran parte del repertorio temático de lo fantástico tenga que ver con lo espectral, con lo que es visualmente inasible; y, según Jackson, con todo aquello que habita en una región paraxial:

A paraxial region is an area in which light rays seem to unite at a point after refraction. In this area object and image seem to collide, but in fact neither object nor reconstituted image reside there: nothing does . . . This paraxial positioning determines

many of the structural semantic features of fantastic narrative (19)

Pero si lo espectral del objeto fant6stico es importante, lo que lo hace posible--la mirada que percibe dicho objeto--es igual de importante para entender la din6mica de lo fant6stico. Seg6n Rosemary Jackson, esta mirada en la mayorfa de los casos es la de un narrador-protagonista:

The uncertain vision of the protagonist of the fantastic is spread to the reader through a conflation of narrator and hero. The protagonist's blurred vision is the most objective perspective that is possible. (84)

En el cuento de Cort6zar, el espectro de Celina, o su doble, aparece en medio del espesor de humo de cigarros y de fritangas que se ha concentrado en la pista de baile del "Santa Fe Palace." Asf Mauro como Marcelo advierten el hecho. Pero la mirada de Marcelo, condicionada por su subjetividad, proyecta en el hecho la aparici6n de un espectro: Celina conquistando su duro cielo de tanguera. Sin embargo, a la mirada de Marcelo se yuxtapone la de Mauro quien no alcanza a ver en el hecho ins6lito m6s que el increfble parecido que una mujer tiene con su difunta esposa. Entonces, a quien realmente se le presenta el problema es al lector; el lector no sabe que creer, no puede atenerse a una resoluci6n exclusiva porque el mismo texto no la ofrece. Y es que la literatura fant6stica contempor6nea (neofant6stica), como afirma Ir6ne Bessi6re, es una literatura de evasi6n sem6ntica (184). En la yuxtaposici6n de las dos miradas, el hablante b6sico despoja el significante (la aparici6n de un mujer) de un significado preciso, dejando asf el cuento abierto a la ambigüedad. Aun cuando el lector se identifique con la mirada del narrador-protagonista, la situaci6n no deja de ser ambigua porque, como apunta Ir6ne Bessi6re:

. . . en la indeterminaci6n de la descripci6n de lo ins6lito, las visiones, lo

espectral, lo fantasmag6rico funcionan como simples fndices narrativos que no caracterizan el acontecimiento en sf mismo, lo cual, a su vez, hace del hecho fant6stico algo, si bien impreciso, tambi6n sugerente. (183)

No se quiere decir con esto que la literatura fant6stica no tenga significado alguno; antes lo que se afirma es que su significado a nivel de la historia es polivalente. La literatura fant6stica funciona dentro de una semi6tica connotativa (Bessi6re 183-86). Dicho sistema de connotaci6n se afirma en el doble estatus del narrador-protagonista; como en todo sistema connotativo, el plano de expresi6n est6 constituido en sf mismo por un sistema de significaci6n. La enunciaci6n de Marcelo conforma el plano de expresi6n del cuento, pero Marcelo es tambi6n protagonista del relato. Asf, ese doble estatus facilita la posibilidad de que Marcelo-narrador pueda reflexionar sobre las acciones (registradas en el enunciado del relato) de Marcelo-protagonista, y vice versa. Es en este plano de expresi6n desde donde Marcelo enuncia, ambigüamente, la aparici6n del hecho ins6lito: "Yo digo: Celina; pero entonces fue m6s bien saber sin comprender, Celina ahf sin estar . . ." (121). Despu6s de ver en el hecho el espectro de Celina, Marcelo enuncia su interpretaci6n del mismo:

. . . Me qued6 inteligencia para medir la devastaci6n de su felicidad, su cara arrobada y estúpida en el parafo al fin logrado... Nada la ataba ahora en su cielo solo de ella, se daba con toda la piel a la dicha y entraba otra vez en el orden donde Mauro no podfa seguirla. Su duro cielo conquistado (122)

En el plano de contenido del sistema connotativo, el hecho ins6lito, visto en la enunciaci6n de Marcelo como algo sobrenatural, no es m6s que un fndice narrativo, un significante vacfo, "espectral"; el significado de dicho significante es una inc6gnita: ¿Es el espectro de Celina o una manipulaci6n de Marcelo (narrador-personaje que presume de escritor)? Precisamente, la mirada de Mauro le confiere una presencia ffsica al hecho ins6lito,

solidific6ndolo, de esta forma, m6s all6 de las especulaciones de Marcelo. En el "Santa Fe Palace," Marcelo y Mauro alcanzan una comunicaci6n subrepticia fundada en la percepci6n com6n del hecho disruptor:

. . . Me parece que fue en ese momento que los dos nos alcanzamos en lo m6s hondo. Ahora (ahora que escribo) no veo otra imagen que una de mis veinte a6os en Sportivo Barracas, tirarme a la pileta y encontrar otro nadador en el fondo, tocar el fondo a la vez y entrevernos en el agua verde y acre. (119)

Es despu6s cuando Mauro ofrece una interpretaci6n del hecho ins6lito que antagoniza la de Marcelo: "¿Vos te fijaste como se parecía?"

Volviendo a la idea del paradigma espacial que expusimos anteriormente, Marcelo ve a Mauro de este lado, del lado de lo mim6tico: "Estaba de este lado, el pobre estaba de este lado y no alcanzaba ya a creer lo que habíamos sabido juntos. Lo vi levantarse . . . buscando a la mujer que se parecía a Celina." En esta 6ltima frase Marcelo refiere, en estilo indirecto libre, la interpretaci6n que Mauro da del hecho disruptor. Pero al decir que Mauro estaba de este lado, ¿qu6 implica el narrador-protagonista de este relato?, y ¿De qu6 lado est6 6l? Marcelo no est6 ya ni de un lado ni del otro; su mirada desfrontera la escisi6n que separa el espacio mim6tico del ficticio. As6, ambos espacios se recusan en una complementariedad que permite que el orden alterado por la muerte de Celina se reestablezca por medio de la incursi6n, y luego la aceptaci6n casi cotidiana, de la ficci6n en la realidad: "Yo me estuve quieto, fum6ndome un rubio sin apuro, mir6ndolo ir y venir sabiendo que perdía su tiempo, que volvería agobiado y sediento sin haber encontrado las puertas del cielo entre ese humo y esa gente" (122-23).

La yuxtaposici6n de las dos miradas deja la posible significaci6n del hecho disruptor en la indeterminaci6n; entre una y otra mirada se yergue un silencio, un vac6o narrativo que deja la obra abierta al lector, invit6ndolo a conjeturar posibles resoluciones. Esta característica del cuento de Cort6zar nos muestra la literatura fant6stica como una escritura que trata de evadirse

sem6nticamente. Y esta evasi6n sem6ntica hace de lo fant6stico (contempor6neo) una expresi6n est6tica de nuestras metamorfosis culturales; precisamente en un per6odo hist6rico en el que todo sistema de significaci6n yace abierto.

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THE THEMES OF TRANSFORMATION AND
INTERVENTION IN FOUR POEMS
BY HENRI MICHAUX

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In this study I propose to treat the relationship between humor and oneirism in four poems by Henri Michaux, taken from the collection *La nuit remue*. All four poems—"Encore des Changements," "La Jetée," "Conseils aux Malades," and "Intervention"—have similar subjects, which I have called "transformation" and "intervention," utilizing terms suggested by the poet himself. These two types of activity are in fact two aspects of the same imaginary experience: the poet rejects the imperfect reality which presents itself to him, and undertakes to modify it according to his needs or desires. The intimate relationship between humor and dream in Michaux's creation appears in a privileged, emblematic fashion in these poems of "transformation" and "intervention."

From the beginning of his career, dream and oneirism are major elements of Michaux's poetry; his interest in fantasy, in the unconscious, in the "other" self which is obscured by daily reality, his rejection of logic and reason, and his exploration of altered states of consciousness through drugs, show the importance of this influence. Like the Surrealists, he utilizes dream images and sensations to negate the deadening effects of habit, daily life and "normality." However, Michaux's oneirism is of a particular kind, very distinct from Surrealist experimentation with automatic writing and the passive opening up of the unconscious. Instead of exploring his dreams as they flow from his unconscious, he takes direct possession of the forces of magic and dream within himself. As Sarane Alexandrian puts it, "Michaux ne s'inspire pas de ses rêves . . . il fait mieux, il utilise directement les forces qui les engendrent . . . Il ne cherche pas à égaler le modèle nocturne, mais à le dépasser, à le rendre caduc" (469). He introduces the control and awareness of the conscious mind into the dream-scenarios of the unconscious, voluntarily

observing and exploring those parts of himself which are the most completely free of control and reason. This peculiarly lucid character of Michaux's oneirism is linked to his preference for daydreams over night dreams, as he explains in *Façons d'endormi, façons d'éveillé*:

Vastes, variés, repris cent fois, tantôt avec la paix d'un lac, tantôt animés, excités, dynamisés, bouillonnants de vie, mes changeants rêves de jour s'adaptaient souplement à mes besoins. Je m'y démenais en actes imaginaires, je m'y adonnais. J'y vivais, attrapant adversaires et le rêve lui-même à bras-le-corps. Je m'y abandonnais, y vivais, magnifiant il est vrai, plus que moi-même magnifique. (82-83)

The magic, wish-fulfilling, amoral omnipotence of the dreamer is most fully mobilized in the daydream. As a result of this liberty, the poet is free to direct and orchestrate it, to exploit its incomparable, haunting power, compensating thus for the limitations and inadequacies of life and of his own person.¹

When we turn to the four poems which are the subjects of this study, it becomes clear that the phenomena of transformation and intervention are the products of Michaux's daydream activities. In all four texts, we start with an initial situation of boredom, limitation or illness: the poet is imprisoned in the narrow space of his sickroom, in the pain of illness, or in the boredom of "normal" reality.

Depuis un mois que j'habitais
Honfleur, je n'avais pas encore vu la mer, car
le médecin me faisait garder la chambre.

Mais hier soir, lassé d'un tel isolement,
je construisis, profitant du brouillard, une
jetée jusqu'à la mer. (129)

Thus, the poet seeks to free himself from the limitations of his situation by "transforming" himself or his surroundings in order to disturb the ordinary arrangement of things. In so doing he introduces the impossible logic of magic and the dream into a previously dull landscape.

Miniature elephants appear from nowhere and hang curtains from his sickroom, camels suddenly are transported from the desert to transform the atmosphere of Honfleur, strange fairytale creatures emerge from the sea, and the poet himself passes through a multitude of disturbing and incessant metamorphoses.

The term "intervention" summarizes the voluntary aspect of these imaginary actions; intervention is Michaux's way of participating actively in the functioning of things, of asserting his own power to create and to modify the natural order. He escapes his confining sickroom by inventing a jetty that leads to the sea; he avoids fatigue by creating his own animal and vegetal companions; and he "intervenes" in the social and natural environment of Honfleur because he finds it boring. "J'étais donc à Honfleur et je m'y ennuyais. Alors résolument j'y mis du chameau. Cela ne paraît pas fort indiqué. N'importe, c'était mon idée" (143). In "Encore des Changements," a mysterious power, identified only as "on," is the agent of the poet's dreamlike metamorphoses. Yet the enigmatic quality of this "on" suggests that it comes from within the poet himself; it is brought on by the suffering of his illness. Split in two, he possesses a powerful double who imposes upon him these interventions in the principle of his own bodily and mental coherence. "A force de souffrir, je perdis les limites de mon corps et me démesurai irrésistiblement" (123). In all four poems, whether the transformations are voluntary or involuntary, the frontier between the self and the world is shown to be fundamentally permeable: the omnipotence of the dreamer is mobilized to counteract the limitations of the poet's material situation.

The poet's imprisonment in his physical and metaphysical limitations, and his desperate recourse to the power of fantasy and oneirism in order to escape from them, have potentially tragic overtones. Yet all of these poems are fundamentally humorous: the clarity and control which are an essential part of Michaux's style and approach to life, when juxtaposed with the unreal and fantastic phenomena of his oneiric interventions, create a comic effect. "Rarement, je vois quelque chose, sans éprouver ce sentiment si spécial . . . Ah oui, j'ai été Ça . . ." (126). The basic oneiric

experience of transformation and intervention is both profoundly dreamlike, and exceedingly funny.

This comic component of the "transformation and intervention" phenomenon takes similar forms in the four texts. All of the changes the poet introduces into his initial situation are highly improbable and fantastic; but the mysterious logic of the dream becomes comic by taking the form of a sudden intrusion of the exotic into the banal workaday world of French bourgeois life. The elephants of "Conseils aux Malades" and the camels of "Intervention" are the clearest examples; but in the two other poems as well, we meet strange creatures who bring a whiff of distant places and worlds into the poet's constricted universe. When he himself undergoes transformation, the forms he is forced to pass through are predominantly dramatic, exotic ones such as boa, bison, whale or even a flash of lightning. "Quelle histoire quand je suis changé en éclair! C'est là qu'il faut faire vite, moi qui traîne toujours et ne sais prendre une décision" (126).

The comic quality of these exotic intrusions into normal life comes in large part from their excessive, sudden nature: the brusque introduction of camels into the Norman seaside landscape creates a grotesque contrast between two worlds which have suddenly collided. The resulting contamination of the picture-book Norman fishing village by the hot, dry, North African desert world of the camels eventually takes on a satiric tone; Michaux is poking fun at the bourgeois world of tourists, fishermen and merchants.

Je les introduisis d'abord les jours de grande affluence, le samedi sur la place du Marché. L'encombrement devint indescriptible et les touristes disaient: Ah! ce que ça pue! Sont-ils sales les gens d'ici! L'odeur gagna le port et se mit à terrasser celle de la crevette. On sortait de la foule plein de poussières et de poils d'on ne savait quoi.² (143)

Another element of this comic contrast between bourgeois reality and exotic dream adventure is the role of animals; the presence of the camels implies not just cultural difference, but also the difference between

human and animal. In three of the four poems under study, the oneiric phenomena of "transformation" and "intervention" take the form of animals: the elephants of "Conseils aux Malades," the multiple animal forms assumed by the poet of "Encore des Changements," and the camels we have just mentioned. Critics have noted Michaux's fascination with the animal world, his attraction to non-human forms of intelligence, his ability to invent marvelous and fantastic new forms of life.³ Frequently these creatures appear as monsters, manifestations of his fears and hidden obsessions; but the animals of the poems under study here are on the whole the poet's allies and friends, since they enable him to escape a human reality he finds oppressive. The poet welcomes the particular qualities of each creature--the camels' odor and shedding coats, the elephants' sympathetic expression and energetic activities with their trunks--as a restful or stimulating "dépaysement"; but this quasi-celebration of their animality is also very comic. In "Conseils aux Malades," he experiments first with flowers and finds them not sufficiently animated:

Je les remplaçai par des éléphants (de petite taille), ils montaient et descendaient comme des hippocampes puis, s'accrochant à un pli par leur trompe, me regardaient de leurs petits yeux qui comprennent.

Mais moi, promptement lassé--et puis je suis si paresseux--je détournais les yeux en leur disant: Eh bien, maintenant, voulez-vous, parlez-moi de trompes. Ils ne parlaient pas, mais tout de même réconforté par leur présence--cela vous garde, un éléphant--je m'endormais plus facilement. (133)

The humor here is created by the image of the tiny, clumsy jungle creatures busily traveling up and down the poet's sickroom curtains, hanging by their trunks and ultimately providing him with a feeling of comfort and well-being which one would rather have expected to come from hot tea or a solicitous human companion: "Cela vous garde, un éléphant."

In "Encore des Changements," animals are only one of the many forms assumed by the poet in his incessant,

hallucinatory voyage, but once again their particularly "animal" qualities are brought out in an essentially comic fashion: "Souvent je devenais boa et, quoique un peu gêné par l'allongement, je me préparais à dormir" (124). The humor here comes from the struggles of the human narrator with the difficulties which each successive form imposes upon him, from the juxtaposition of human emotions and animal identity. Thus the role of animals, in these poems, constitutes another meeting point between the oneirism and the humor of the texts: the animals are essential parts of both, since their presence is fantastic and inexplicable, and they bring with them a fresh, non-human perspective which contrasts comically with the humdrum "normal" world.

If we turn now to the techniques of composition which contribute to the humorous effect of these texts, we find once again that there are important meeting points between humorous and oneiric aspects. One important technique which contributes much to the humor of the poems is Michaux's use of literary parody. All of these poems are in prose and are presented as "récits," narrations of notable incidents in the poet's life. This narrative element allows him to parody other forms of narrative, such as adventure stories and fairy tales. In "La Jetée," the poet witnesses a mysterious old man pulling out of the sea an accumulation of riches which recalls numerous fairy tales dealing with the magic powers of the sea.

A présent, dit-il, que je suis vieux, je vais en retirer tout ce que j'y ai mis depuis des années. Il se mit à tirer en se servant de poulies.

Et il sortit des richesses en abondance. Il en tirait des capitaines d'autres âges en grand uniforme, des caisses cloutées de toutes sortes de choses précieuses et des femmes habillées richement mais comme elles ne s'habillent plus. (129)

In "Encore des Changements," the sea is once again the basis of parody: the poet's metamorphoses take him through a violent and exciting series of events involving whales, harpooners, captains, tempests and capsizing

ships, during which he struggles, like the valiant captain, to be *à la hauteur* of his different roles, and fails each time. In "Intervention," the poet's situation of boredom and confinement in the bourgeois environment of workaday northern French urban life evokes Baudelairean and Flaubertian *ennui*, and the camels, together with the choice of the Norman Honfleur, suggest a parody of Emma and "bovarysme." This satire extends to religion, since the "train de voyageurs" which the poet sends forth in the same poem shoots forward, suspended over the water like Christ, "sauvé par la foi" (144). And in all four poems, Michaux's humorous attitude towards the dream-like, fantastic phenomena he is describing suggests that he is parodying his own contemporaries, the Surrealists, with their deadly serious cultivation of dreams and oneiric creative processes.⁴ The humor of these different forms of parody is juxtaposed with the oneiric dimension of the poems, and both humor and oneirism are intensified by their coexistence. The atmosphere of Surrealist dream exploration, of fairy tale or adventure story, adds to the feeling of unreality created by the poem, but it also brings out the essentially comic, playful nature of the poet's diverse transformations and interventions. In the same way, the Flaubertian *ennui* of "Intervention" makes the "camel" solution even more unbelievable.

The poet's use of familiar, informal language is another element in the humor of the poems. The tone is oral, as if the poet were addressing us directly as friends and witnesses; yet what he is evoking for us is so impossible that the juxtaposition accentuates the feeling of improbability.

Ah! si je pouvais mourir une fois pour toutes. Mais non, on me trouve toujours bon pour une nouvelle vie et pourtant je n'y fais que des gaffes et la mène promptement à sa perte. (126)

This juxtaposition of a "realistic" attitude and an impossible situation is, in fact, one of the most important elements in the style of the four poems. In "Encore des Changements," the poet appears confused but resigned: his humble, submissive attitude contrasts with the wildly

implausible situation he seems obliged to accept. Because of this contrast, the poet's resignation appears as inappropriate, and this "décalage" increases both the humorous and the oneiric aspects of the poem.

The subject of the poet's attitude towards himself and his experiences raises the question of irony and its role in these texts. In certain situations, the poet seems to be judging his own reactions, to be stepping back to make a commentary on his problems and emotions. In these situations, rather than humor, we have a kind of ironic detachment, an undermining of his original position. This ironic attitude is particularly evident in "Intervention": "J'étais donc à Honfleur et je m'y ennuyais. Alors résolument j'y mis du chameau. Cela ne paraît pas fort indiqué. N'importe, c'était mon idée" (143). This position of ironic detachment is particularly important at the end of the four poems, as if the "narrating" poet were now separating himself from the person who has experienced the adventure. He makes fun of the elaborate construction he has just created, from the point of view of the "non-construction" which constitutes the end of the poem, reminding us that both beginning and ending are in his power. "Quant à moi, grelottant de fièvre, comment je pus regagner mon lit, je me le demande" (130).

However, the typically ironic scission between the two personae of the poet, the narrator and the "hero" of the poem, does not result in a negative, critical undermining of the entire imaginary adventure, because the narrating poet remains in control of the poetic voice. Thus, the ironic endings do not diminish the impact of the transformation and intervention phenomena. On the contrary, these experiments have been successful, they have resolved the poet's immediate problems of boredom and pain, and this solution continues even though the poet is now free to abandon his extravagant constructions. In its emphasis on the power and freedom of the poet's voice, above any particular critical or normative intention, the role of irony in these texts would seem to conform to what Howe, studying irony in "Plume," describes as "unstable" irony, which "does not resolve issues or aim at correction, but undermines the reader's assumptions and values, as well as normal narrative practice" (903). Lang also discusses this non-

dualist form of irony, which she calls "humor" and defines as "this postmodern tactic of disconcertion—which is . . . a demystification of the traditional concept of meaning as a transcendental signified . . . it rejects the postulates underlying the classic concept of irony (primarily, the primacy of signified over signifier and the ipseity and autonomy of the subject) and serves to reassert the power of language in the constitution of 'reality' and of the *cogito*" (194). Although Lang's particular definition of "humor" is not the one used in the present study, her view of its function, tying in with Howe's remarks on irony in Michaux's works, suggests that both humor and irony have an autonomous, playful, basically positive role in these four poems.

Throughout our study, we have identified one particular element as central both to the humor and to the oneirism of these four texts: the mechanism of juxtaposition. The juxtaposition of a realistic tone or framework with a fantastic, impossible series of events emphasizes their impossibility, and at the same time creates a constant situation of comic incongruity. This phenomenon of incongruity was identified centuries ago as one of the basic sources of humor: according to the "incongruity theory," expectations are suddenly disappointed, two incompatible realms are suddenly forced to coexist, and this incongruity creates a pleasurable reaction we experience as humor.⁵ Freud, who saw many differences between the functioning of humor and that of the dream, nevertheless perceived a resemblance in their common function of releasing tensions. As W. Sypher shows, this function depends in large part on the presence of incongruity, on its capacity to disrupt normal thought patterns and rational life. The essential quality of humorous and of dream incongruity is the role of freedom, liberation and play.

The dream is nonsensical and free, having none of the logic and sobriety of our waking selves; the very incongruity of the dream world is comic. Freud interprets the dream and the jest as a discharge of powerful psychic energies, a glimpse into the abyss of the self. (Sypher 198)

The interaction between oneirism and humor in the Michaux texts we have studied is best summed up by Michaux himself in a passage from *Façons d'endormi, façons d'éveillé*. Speaking of daydream and its role in his life, the poet shows that it contains within itself both humor and transformation, since these are forms of liberation: liberation from one's normal identity and from the obligation of taking this normal reality seriously.

Le jeu est ici, le vrai jeu. Pas de règles,
ou changeantes constamment. C'est l'humeur
joyeuse qui compte, qui va prendre en main
l'affaire de la vie, la retirant aux devoirs et
aux impératifs.

Jeux à chacun selon son envie, sa vraie
envie, et se transformant à mesure qu'elle
met au jour de nouvelles envies, envies sorties
de l'inépuisable désir de transformation.

En quelques minutes, dès que ça y est,
on s'y débarrasse de semaines ou d'années de
gravité, de sérieux, de faux sérieux. (199)

Play is the ultimate liberation in which humor and oneirism meet: the transformations and interventions we have studied are efforts to recapture the incomparable satisfactions of the child and the dreamer's play.

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NOTES

¹For studies of the dream in literature and the Surrealist movement, with references to Michaux, see Alexandrian 467-70 and Pierrot 121-47. For Michaux and oneirism, see especially Broome's introduction to *Magie*, 33-5, his study *Michaux*, 43-54, and Maulpoix 183-87.

²Another implicit source of the humor in the role of camels in this poem is the colloquial meaning of "un chameau" in French: it is often used to mean an unpleasant, nasty, purposely difficult person. Michaux is

playing on this meaning when he speaks of disturbing the social order in Honfleur by introducing these annoying creatures. This idea was proposed by members of the audience at the Cincinnati Conference on Romance Languages and Literatures, where this paper was delivered on May 19, 1989.

³For the role of animals in Michaux's work see Murat 67-69, and Lascault on the theme of "monsters." The multiple metamorphoses in "Encore des Changements" recall Oriental doctrines of reincarnation such as Michaux might have met during his trip to the Far East, suggesting another source for the concept of non-human intelligence in the experience of "transformation."

⁴I am indebted for this idea to Professors Anna Balakian and Yvette Bozon-Scalzitti, who suggested it during a discussion of this paper at the Cincinnati Conference, mentioned above, note 2.

⁵The incongruity theory is discussed by Morreall 6, 45-64, 130-36; and MacHovec 34-38, among others. The definition of humor is obviously an extremely complex and delicate issue which has been debated since classical antiquity, at least; I do not pretend to exhaust the discussion, even in relation to the Michaux texts I am considering here. However, the incongruity theory presents itself as the most appropriate and useful one to deal with the basic comic mechanisms in these four texts.

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**DREAMS AS SUBVERSION IN
AVENTURA EN LO GRIS AND
EL SUENO DE LA RAZON**

Mary Rice

One of Buero Vallejo's primary goals throughout his career as a playwright has been to create different means for the audience to identify with his protagonists. This identification goes far beyond the classic Aristotelian catharsis to become, at times, a total immersion in the point of view of one character, similar to the effect produced by a first person narrator in a novel or short story. While Buero has employed a variety of techniques to create this interiorization, one of the most effective is his use of dreams and fantasy to make the audience experience the inner workings of a character's mind.

The purpose of this essay is to examine the way that Buero has used dreams to immerse his audience in the minds of his characters, particularly those who live under the oppression of a dictatorship. I will focus my analysis on two plays, *Aventura en lo gris* and *El sueño de la razón*, in which dream sequences play a fundamental role in revealing the anxieties and frustrations felt by the protagonist due to his ideological conflict with a totalitarian government. The questions I hope to answer are: 1) what function does the dream scene serve in advancing the action and message of the play, and 2) what effect might the dream scene produce in the audience? I will first examine these two plays in light of what the dream sequence contributes to an understanding of the text as a whole. It will then be shown that the dreams form a part of the subversive element in Buero's theatre, an element which opposes the excesses and abuses of absolute authority and appeals to the audience on both conscious and subconscious levels.

In *Aventura en lo gris* the two acts of the play are separated by a dream interlude. The action takes place in a shelter for refugees near the border of Surelia, a fictitious country that has been invaded. In the first act several people arrive at this shelter to spend the night,

hoping to leave the country by train the next morning. Among the refugees are the former dictator of Surelia and his mistress (in disguise), a university professor, an army sergeant, a laborer, a rich woman, and a soldier travelling with a young woman and her baby. Conflicts develop on a material level, over the scarce supply of food, and on a more ideological plain, as the professor and the dictator discuss whether it is better to be a dreamer or a doer. Between the two acts, all the refugees except the dictator share a collective dream that reveals to the audience and to each other their true anxieties and motivations, and in which the woman with the baby is killed. In the second act, the characters awaken to find that Isabel really did die during the night, murdered by the dictator. Carlos, the soldier who was accompanying her, takes justice into his own hands by shooting the dictator. Having discovered that there will be no train and that the enemy is closing in on them, the others escape on foot, leaving the professor and the dictator's mistress to care for the baby, who is too weak from hunger to make the journey. At the end, they are able to persuade the soldiers to spare the child even though they must face a firing squad.

The ideological conflict between Goldman, the dictator, and Silvano, the history professor, forms the dialectical tension that motivates the dramatic action. Silvano is portrayed as a dreamer, in opposition to Goldman, the doer. We see Goldman as a hypocrite, a master of persuasion, who convinced his country that he would lead them in their fight against the enemy invaders, while in reality he placed his fortune in foreign banks and is now leaving the country incognito. Silvano, who published information exposing the government's preparations for defeat, was accused of being a dissident and defeatist, fired from his chair at the university, and left to the mercy of those whose blind patriotism let them believe whatever Goldman told them. Silvano explains what happened:

Muy astuto el Gobierno, ¿eh? Así mataba dos pájaros de un tiro. Los sectores del país que simpatizaban conmigo no podían quejarse, ni menos crear conflictos: ni siquiera se me encarcelaba. ¡Pero al dejarme en la calle se

estaba invitando a los más fanáticos a que me lincharan! Mis propios alumnos apedrearon mi casa. He tenido que esconderme aquí y allá . . . En fin, la culpa la tuve yo, por imbécil. Estos no son tiempos de explicar Historia . . . sino de hacerla. (129)

When Goldman and Ana, his mistress, first arrive at the shelter they awaken Silvano from a dream. His propensity for dreaming is related to his inaction as he explains to them that he has preferred to wait there for two days without eating rather than continue on foot to the border fifteen kilometers away. "¿Qué quiere que le diga? Un profesor de Historia es sedentario. El conocimiento de tantos siglos agitados le vuelve indolente" (130). As night falls dreaming becomes the subject of conversation. Silvano asserts his belief in the importance of dreaming. "Aprender a soñar sería aprender a vivir" (158). He also suggests that the content of one's dreams informs future behavior. "¿Soñamos mal porque nos portamos mal durante el día, o procedemos mal en la vida porque no sabemos soñar bien?" (158). If this is the case, he reasons, many problems would be avoided if a group of people were able to dream the same dream.

Los sueños serían entonces como una prolongación de la vida, pero más desnuda, más impresionante: soñaríamos lo mismo y el choque de nuestros egoísmos los haría irrealizables. Nos veríamos tal como somos por dentro y quizá al despertar no podríamos seguir fingiendo . . . Porque en el sueño es donde tocamos nuestro fondo más verdadero. ¡En el sueño, y no en la vida! (159)

Goldman calls Silvano's ideas utopian, claiming that dreams distort life and that it is better to meet things face to face. "Los sueños deforman la vida. Y a la vida hay que mirarla cara a cara" (157). He assures the group that he never dreams and will have no part of Silvano's fantasy.

The dream interlude reflects many elements from the first act while at the same time anticipating events yet to

occur in the second act. As the dream begins, Silvano is seated on top of a mound, perhaps symbolic of the academic ivory tower. Ana enters in a nurse's uniform, signifying her altruistic nature, which has been repressed by her relationship with the dictator. She tells Silvano that she can't share her dreams with Goldman because he never dreams, he only devours. She invites Silvano to come down and share her dream, but he wants her to come up to him. They reach for each other, but their outstretched hands are unable to make contact. Meanwhile, Carlos desperately searches for Isabel, claiming to be the father of her child, while smirking enemy soldiers in the windows belie his claim. The wealthy Georgina tries to seduce first Carlos then the laborer, offering her riches and her body in exchange for protection and food. The laborer's food is requisitioned and rationed out to everyone except Silvano, who refuses to descend from his superior position. Thinking the sergeant is Goldman, Silvano tells him he will lose his war because he doesn't know how to dream. As he says this, the professor realizes that he himself has forgotten how to dream, but Ana helps him by reminding him of the idyllic dream he had mentioned earlier. The enemy soldiers reappear, claiming to be the wingless angels of Silvano's dream. As Isabel enters screaming and Carlos says that he must kill her, Silvano finally comes down from his mound, but too late to save Isabel. The dream ends with Silvano saying, "Que esto sea un mal sueño mío" (188).

The dream reveals a fundamental problem of the intellectual. Silvano sits atop his mound, distanced from the world around him and thus able to see it more clearly. His superior knowledge is of no use, however, as long as he remains uninvolved. He fails to prevent Isabel's death because of his reluctance to act. When he awakens, he comes to the realization that it is not enough to be a dreamer while men like Goldman are in power. The dream has shown him that he must act on his knowledge. "No se puede soñar; no se debe soñar dejando las manos libres a quienes no lo hacen. Aunque, al final, sea el soñador quien desenmascare al hombre de acción" (208).

Ana's role in the dream and her subsequent actions provide the key to the viewer's response to this play. Ana

has been Goldman's mistress and secretary for 15 years. Yet in the dream she reveals her dissatisfaction with him. Her nurse's uniform signifies her desire to help others, demonstrated earlier when she defies Goldman's orders and shares food with Isabel and Silvano. Her desire to share her dream with Silvano, her attempts to reach him, and her ability finally to grasp his hand anticipate her support of him in opposition to Goldman and her ultimate decision to stay with him to save Isabel's baby. Ana's transformation and eventual choice are also the audience's. Caught in the dialectical opposition of contemplation versus action, she chooses to act on the ethical principles of the intellectual, thus bridging the gap between the oppositions. Her choice is justified by the fact that she is able to save Isabel's child from execution.

Much of the same idea is dramatized in *El sueño de la razón*, a later play of Buero's which also contains a significant dream scene. This work focuses on the Spanish painter, Francisco de Goya, and the events of December, 1823. Fernando VII has just gained absolute power in Spain and the most fanatical of his supporters are persecuting the liberals who opposed him, much in the same way as Goldman's followers persecuted Silvano. The king has intercepted a letter from Goya to his friend in which the painter openly criticizes Fernando. Against all advice, Goya refuses to ask for the king's pardon or leave Spain. He remains in his farmhouse, isolated by his deafness and haunted by imagined voices, painting his fears and fantasies on the walls of his house. Near the end of the play we find him asleep, in the posture of his famous etching, "El sueño de la razón produce monstruos."

As Goya dreams, animal figures from his etching--a bat, a cat, two pigs and a bull--carry out a macabre parody of the Inquisition, accusing the painter of a multitude of sins, not the least of which involves his opposition to the king's absolute power. "Por judío, masón, liberal, jacobino, insolente, impertinente, reincidente, pintor, masturbador, grabador . . . Te entregamos al brazo secular" (198). The secular power to whom they transfer Goya is Leocadia, his housekeeper and mistress. She is about to execute their sentence by slitting his throat when she is interrupted by a violent pounding on the door. The figures of Goya's nightmare

flee, promising to return. Goya believes the pounding on the door signals the arrival of the winged men of his drawings, beings he claims really exist and will some day come to save Spain from the power of tyranny. As with Silvano's wingless angels, the corresponding reality proves to be the antithesis of his hopes.

The scene which follows is the brutal realization of Goya's nightmare. The pounding at the door, which he somehow intuitively senses, is in fact the king's soldiers breaking into his home. They beat and gag him, then dress him up in the *sambenito* used for those being tried by the Inquisition. The soldiers then loot his house while Goya is forced to watch their sergeant rape Leocadia. Since the audience is made to share Goya's deafness, the entire act of terrorism occurs silently. Nevertheless, the animal sounds Goya imagines clearly link this scene with his dream, signifying that the soldiers are the monsters whose behavior, sanctioned by the king, is produced because Spain is caught in a nightmare of terror. As a result of this violent attack on his home, Goya finally admits defeat and is willing to ask for the king's pardon and permission to leave the country.

In both *Aventura en lo gris* and *El sueño de la razón*, the intellectual confronts the dictator, or as Ricardo Doménech puts it, we see "la colisión entre el poder absoluto y la *intelligentsia*" (184). The dream sequences in both plays serve to illustrate the powerlessness of the intellectual. Silvano may see things more clearly from his superior position but he is unable to prevent Isabel's death. Goya is likewise powerless to protect himself and his mistress against violent attacks sanctioned by the king. While neither is capable of preventing or stopping the monstrosities committed by their governments, they ultimately are the ones who sit in judgment on the dictator. It is Silvano who proves to the world, in this case a microcosm of seven people, that Goldman is nothing more than a brutal murderer. And even though Goya appears defeated, his paintings remain as an enduring condemnation of Fernando's reign of terror.

Let us now return to the questions posed at the beginning of this paper: What dramatic function is served by the inclusion of a dream scene? In his article "Realism and the Cinema: Notes on Some Brechtian Theses," Colin McCabe discusses the categories of

progressive, subversive and revolutionary elements in a text, all representing varying degrees of opposition to the dominant discourse. The dreams in these two plays fit into the second category, that of subversion. As McCabe explains, "Within the classic realist text the dominant discourse can be subverted, brought into question--the position of the subject may be rendered problematic" (19). Excluding the dream interludes, *Aventura en lo gris* and *El sueño de la razón* are classic realist texts. On the surface both plots depict Greimas's "contractual" narrative structure:

contract (or prohibition)-->violation-->punishment
(Selden 60)

Silvano and Goya rebel against authority, and in the end they are defeated. Silvano defeats the authority against whom he rebelled, but he is in turn executed by another authoritarian power. Goya must finally submit to the authority of the king. Nevertheless, the dream sequences in both plays serve the function of subverting the dominant ideology by revealing the atrocities resulting from absolute power.

What effect might these dream sequences produce in the audience? As noted earlier, one of the outstanding characteristics of Buero's work is his creative use of theatrical devices to position the audience in a particular point of view. This is done throughout *El sueño de la razón* by forcing the audience to share Goya's deafness. The dream scene actually positions the audience inside the dreamer's subconscious mind, thus providing more direct access to his thoughts. As Wright explains in her book on psychoanalytic criticism, "In narrating a dream the dreamer already acts as his own biased interpreter" (25). However, in a theatrical representation there is no narrator mediating between the dream and the spectator; the audience assumes the primary position of the dreamer himself. It then becomes the task of the audience to assign meaning to the dream.

In his essay "Psychopathic Characters on the Stage," Freud addresses the issue of "how the audience's understanding of the repressed material will affect their response. If too much gets through, resistance will come into force and the spectator will not allow himself to be

drawn in" (quoted in Wright 33). In the case of Buero's plays, the "repressed material," or the subversive element, to use McCabe's terminology, is revealed in the dream. The true repression comes not from the dreamer, but rather from the political climate of postwar Spain when these plays were written, which would not permit the playwright to express any direct opposition to Franco's dictatorship. Buero's strategy of historical distancing, setting the action in the previous century or in a fictitious country, allowed him to make veiled allusions to the current political situation. While these allusions are easy enough to see when one is looking for them, the dream scenes might also have a more subtle persuasive effect on the audience, even on those less inclined to share the playwright's liberal ideology. As Freud noted, "A different strategy is required to draw in the spectator who does not consciously wish to be the person on the stage, one which takes account of an unconscious satisfaction" (quoted in Wright 35). In the dream in *Aventura en lo gris*, Silvano's desire to leave his safe position in order to help Isabel may kindle a similar noble motivation in the audience. The subsequent revelation that Isabel died at the hands of the dictator, together with Ana's rejection of him, positions the audience in opposition to Goldman, the symbol of absolute power. In *El sueño de la razón*, the direct connection between Goya's nightmare and the soldiers' attack leaves the audience in total identification with the victim, and thus in opposition to the absolute authority. The fact that Goya is aided at the end by the king's own censor, Father Duaso, demonstrates that intellectuals on both sides of the conflict must make an ethical stand against the abuse of authority.

As I have shown in this discussion, Buero's use of dreams allows the audience to experience his character's deepest preoccupations and anxieties. The audience is drawn into sympathy with the victims of political oppression and perhaps also with the ideology expressed by these characters. While on the surface the protagonists appear defeated, their dreams convey their concerns to the audience, who, it is hoped, will leave the theater with a clearer understanding of the evils of absolute authority and a desire to oppose them. Buero explores the role of the intellectual in an authoritarian state, but this role is never clearly defined. It is left to

the audience to resolve the dilemma of action versus contemplation by their own participation in the political order.

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BORGES: LECTOR DE UN PROBLEMATICO HUME

Marina Martín

La crítica no ha pasado por alto un hecho que se ha aceptado unánimemente: la familiaridad de Borges con la tradición filosófica británica.¹ Conocida es su abierta simpatía hacia el pensamiento del obispo irlandés, G. Berkeley; explícito el interés que en él suscitan los estudios de John Wilkins sobre el lenguaje. No ha sido observada, sin embargo, su aceptación, no menos asumida, de los principios críticos con los que Hume cuestiona los postulados filosóficos de la época. Conviene, pues, señalar que la presencia de la filosofía humeana en la obra de Borges requiere más atención de la que hasta ahora se ha venido dando. No menos importante es la versión que Borges ofrece de un pensamiento tan discutido hoy en día, como es el de Hume. "La busca de Averroes" no es ajena a estas observaciones y, de hecho, merece especial interés. Es, pues, necesario ahondar en su contenido con más detenimiento, no sólo porque es uno de los relatos borgianos más abandonados por la crítica, sino porque presenta la fantasía metafísica del argentino afanada en los temas teológicos más relevantes, como son el problema del mal, la caracterización de los atributos divinos, y la validez racional de la prueba teleológica, temas todos ellos centrales en los *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. Si consideramos lo que esta obra póstuma representa en la doctrina humeana, y la continua polémica que ha suscitado en la crítica filosófica, la lectura que Borges hace de los *Dialogues* se nos presenta como una de las interpretaciones más atractivas y sugerentes que se han dado en este campo. Conlleva, por otro lado, una visión de la filosofía humeana que esencialmente no difiere de la suya propia ni en perplejidad ni en ironía. Borges traslada la temática de los *Dialogues* a un contexto histórico diferente, como es el mundo de Averroes, para ilustrar una vez más las premisas de su propio pensamiento. Presentar dicha temática en relación con "La busca de Averroes" es el

objetivo de este ensayo.

En sus alusiones al filósofo escocés, Borges ha incluido también referencias a la obra de sus críticos, destacando a Norman Kemp Smith.² Teniendo en cuenta la abundante y polémica bibliografía dedicada a Hume, y el aparente carácter conflictivo de su doctrina, especialmente de sus *Dialogues*, Borges habla en "La busca" de un "todavía problemático Hume" (*El Aleph* 97). En el contexto de ambas obras las razones que "prefigura" Averroes, admiradas por Abulcásim, traducen metafóricamente las que Hume pone en boca de uno de sus personajes, Philo, en su ataque al argumento teleológico (*El Aleph* 97).

La justificación racional de la creencia religiosa en la doctrina humeana encuentra su centro de controversia en la supuesta identificación Hume-Philo. A pesar de no haber un acuerdo general en la aceptación de dicha tesis--i.e., la identidad que el autor, Hume, guarda con uno de sus personajes, Philo, polémica figura y probable protagonista de la obra--aquella se apoya en una observación importante: Philo es el personaje de los *Dialogues* que más se acerca a Hume en tanto que cuestiona la prueba teleológica de la existencia de un Ser Supremo, apelando a los principios distintivos del pensamiento humeano. Los supuestos contrincantes de Philo, Cleanthes, defensor de la justificación racional de la prueba teleológica, y Demea, representante de la ciega e intransigente aceptación ortodoxa del dogma religioso, son presentados a través de la cándida pluma del joven discípulo de Cleanthes, Pamphilus, narrador y transcriptor de los *Dialogues*. En "La busca de Averroes" los personajes más destacados son, al igual que en los *Dialogues*, tres: Averroes, Farach y Abulcásim. Este último, calificado por sus detractores como "blasfemo," figura irónica y polémica, encuentra su claro paralelo en la postura de Philo. Irónicamente, tanto Borges como Hume crean en estas obras un entramado de voces que se complementan, cuyas diferencias terminan siendo más aparentes que reales.

Norman Kemp Smith ofrece una de las tesis más lúcidas y convincentes a favor de la identificación Hume-Philo en el detallado estudio introductorio que acompaña a su edición de los *Dialogues*. Borges no está muy lejos de aceptar esta tesis en "La busca" al subrayar

la **problematicidad de Hume**. Esta observación puede muy bien aludir a la postura tan intencionadamente ambigua que Hume concede a Philo en la última parte de los *Dialogues*. ¿Qué sentido tiene su aceptación final de un argumento por él refutado victoriosamente? ¿Qué forma de doctrina deísta recomienda a través de Philo? ¿Qué sentido irónico yace en la ambigüedad de su postura? Sin olvidar éstas y otras muchas dificultades de exégesis, nos interesa señalar la manera en la que Borges integra la postura de Philo en "La busca." Dado que uno de los rasgos más definitorios de Hume, a través de Philo, es el carácter escéptico de su doctrina, cabe preguntarse qué relación guarda con el escepticismo que caracteriza a la obra de Borges.

Jaime Alazraki señala como tema principal de "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" lo que él denomina "tragedia epistemológica" (8). Dicho apelativo resume, sin agotar su doctrina, el Libro I de *A Treatise of Human Nature*, sin duda uno de los textos que subyace como referencia constante en "Tlön," y constituye esencialmente la postura de Philo. "La busca" tampoco escapa a esta clasificación. Encabezando las observaciones finales de dicha obra, Borges indica que su intención fue "narrar el proceso de una derrota" (*El Aleph* 103). Falta saber si es éste su único objetivo, o si bajo dicha afirmación se encuentra otro factor no menos definitorio del pensamiento borgiano. En efecto, Borges, como Hume, subraya el carácter arbitrario y conjetural que acompaña a toda clasificación humana del universo. En "Tlön" se nos indica que "un sistema **no es otra cosa que** la subordinación de todos los aspectos del universo a uno cualquiera de ellos" (*Ficciones* 23; las negritas son mías).

Paralelamente, Philo, en su ataque a la creencia del universo como obra, como **reflejo**, de un designio divino, arguye que "Thought, design, intelligence, such as we discover in men and other animals, is **no more than** one of the springs and principles of the universe" (*Dialogues* 147; las negritas son mías). ¿Acaso la mente humana no incurre en una ingenua parcialidad al tomarse como modelo de la naturaleza? "Is a very small part a rule for the universe?" (*Dialogues* 149). Philo acompaña la ironía de esta crítica con la observación de que la inexplicabilidad de la existencia del mal viene ocasionada por una visión antropomórfica que adjudica atributos

morales a la Divinidad. En "La busca" Borges presenta dicho planteamiento dentro del marco platónico que confiere al discurso de Averroes para después volver burlonamente las observaciones sobre sí mismo.

Junto a la ironía latente que preside a nivel simbólico "el arduo propósito" de Averroes, Borges subraya su carácter estético: "Reflexioné después, que más poético es el caso de un hombre que se propone un fin que no está vedado a los otros, pero sí a él" (*El Aleph* 104). El reconocimiento de esta derrota epistemológica está presente en la poética dramatización de la vida humana con la que se cierra el Libro I del *Treatise*. Junto a estas reflexiones Hume no olvida incluir, con gesto de irónica aceptación, el siguiente comentario: "These are the sentiments of my spleen and indolence; and indeed I must confess, that philosophy has nothing to oppose to them, and expects a victory more from the returns of a serious good-humor'd disposition, than from the force of reason and conviction" (*Treatise* 270).

Los *Dialogues* tampoco están desprovistos de esta nota humorística que, tarde o temprano, emerge en el pensamiento de Hume como uno de sus rasgos distintivos. La desconcertante postura de Philo, al final de la obra, viene caracterizada por el humor con el que reduce la divergencia de posturas de filósofos y teólogos a mera **disputa verbal** (*Dialogues* 217). Borges no parece ser ajeno a dicha observación. Cabe, en efecto, la posibilidad de interpretar "La busca" a la luz de la tesis con la que Philo resume la larga disputa entre posturas ortodoxas y heterodoxas. En este sentido Borges incorpora dicha tesis para ilustrar, tanto en "La busca" como en "Los teólogos," una constante de su propio pensamiento. Cabe suponer que bajo el explícito intento de registrar una derrota, Borges oculte un ulterior objetivo. ¿Es el escepticismo el único rasgo definitorio de su obra? ¿Acaba este último por agotar todas sus dimensiones? Curiosamente, este planteamiento ha originado un punto de controversia bastante significativo. Gisele Bickel subraya la imposibilidad e inutilidad de compilar una visión borgiana del mundo: "Toda tentativa de encontrar una coherencia, un centro en la obra de Borges queda defraudada; el centro se desplaza continuamente, y toda reducción a un punto no puede ser más que a un punto de interrogación" (295). Sostiene, a

su vez, que la naturaleza dialéctica de la obra borgiana permite "una variedad inagotable de interpretaciones" (297). Dicha afirmación coincide, en gran parte, con el problema **todavía no resuelto** que Selby-Bigge señala en su frecuentemente citado comentario:

Hume's philosophic writings are to be read with caution. His pages, especially those of the *Treatise*, are so full of matter, he says so many different things in so many different ways and different connexions, and with so much **indifference** to what he has said before, that it is very hard to say positively that he taught, or did not teach, this or that particular doctrine. (*Enquiries* vii; las negritas son mías)

Considerando la complejidad señalada como característica de la doctrina humeana, agrega: "This makes it easy to find all philosophies in Hume, or, by setting up one statement against another, none at all" (vii). La problematización, pues, que Borges apunta en "La busca" sobre Hume puede, en principio, aplicarse a su obra no sin menos fundamento.

La lectura que Borges hace de los *Dialogues*, especialmente de Philo, se incorpora en "La busca" en dos dimensiones, la escéptica y la dogmática. Según sostiene Richard Popkin, se trata de una ambigüedad personificada en la figura que expresa la única forma de "pirronismo consistente": Hume-Philo (385).

La necesidad de la afirmación, como condición impuesta por la vida misma, es una propiedad constante de la obra humeana no menos significativa que su dimensión escéptica. Borges mismo trae este tema a colación aludiendo, explícitamente en varias ocasiones, a la crítica que Hume hace del "ingenioso" Berkeley y de los escépticos; crítica consistente en apuntar que los argumentos de ambos "no admiten la menor réplica y no producen la menor convicción."³ El vínculo que une a Borges con esta tesis parece reafirmarse en la exposición de su propio pensamiento, de su propia perplejidad: "La imposibilidad de penetrar el esquema divino del universo **no puede**, sin embargo, disuadirnos de planear esquemas humanos, aunque nos conste que éstos son provisorios" (*Otras inquisiciones* 105; las negritas son mías).

Escepticismo y dogmatismo coinciden en la ambigüedad de una postura que Richard Popkin define como "split personality" (407). Esta doble dimensión, imagen reflejada de "el otro, el mismo," confluye como característica de "La busca" y de la lectura que Borges hace de los *Dialogues*, en una concepción panteísta.

Sin olvidar la variedad de enfoques que "La busca" permite, cabe la posibilidad de concebirlas en un mismo marco de referencia. Se trata de una postura que hace coincidir la ortodoxia con la herejía, el dogma con la razón escéptica; una postura para la que las diferencias son más ilusorias que reales. En este sentido, "Los teólogos," "La busca" y los *Dialogues* vienen a exponer un mismo hecho. En las tres obras la rivalidad de actitudes, claramente manifiesta a veces, secreta y vengativa en otras, acaba siendo ridiculizada. El creyente ortodoxo y el heresiarca llegan a confluír en una misma postura: Juan de Panonia en "Los teólogos," Abulcásim en "La busca" y Philo en los *Dialogues*.

El secreto antagonista de Juan de Panonia, Aureliano, mantenía que "las herejías que debemos temer son las que pueden confundirse con la ortodoxia" (*El Aleph* 38). Sin duda, dicha observación anticipa la postura en la que incurre Juan, tachada por Aureliano de "herejía panteísta." Jaime Alazraki señala al respecto la importancia de este hecho: "The pantheistic notion, by equalizing the orthodox with the heretic in a paradox woven with the theologies of all times, has an unquestionable revealing function, and the fantastic story gains a far-reaching significance" (24).

Paralela a la oposición de posturas ortodoxas y heterodoxas, "La busca" y los *Dialogues* ilustran el contraste entre la vertiente racionalista-dogmática, por un lado, y la místico-escéptica, por otro. La postura de Averroes viene definida en oposición a la del asceta persa Ghazali, autor de *Tahafut-ul-falasifa* (destrucción de filósofos). Sin olvidar las diferentes versiones que pueden darse al pensamiento de Ghazali, Johann E. Erdmann lo relaciona con una tradición en la que "Philosophy declares bankruptcy in passing over into scepticism and mysticism" (367).

En su artículo "Borges the Heresiarch Mutakallimun," Djelal Kadir indica que "It is only a circumstantial detail that makes a heresiarch of the Argentine and an example

of orthodox piety of the Arab" (465). A pesar de las diferencias epistemológicas que caracterizan el pensamiento de Borges y de Ghazali, ambos son "teólogos"--mutakallimun, según el contexto terminológico de la época de Ghazali--en tanto que se proponen interpretar, según Kadir, un libro "which holds within the secrets of the universe" (464). La divergencia de actitudes estribaría, en este caso, en que "For Alghazali, the book is a copy of an increate original--the archetypical Koran; for Borges it is a representation, a symbol of the universe, or the universe itself" (464).

Uno de los aspectos que conviene subrayar en esta tesis, que remite a un punto de controversia común a "La busca" y a los *Dialogues*--i.e., la prueba teleológica de un Ser Supremo--es precisamente que pone de manifiesto una temática implícita en las dos obras. Se trata, en definitiva, de concebir el ordenamiento de medios a fines, presente en la naturaleza, bien como un producto de una mente divina y, por tanto, trascendente, o como principio inherente a la naturaleza misma. Borges señala este problema a través del lenguaje metafórico que caracteriza la imaginada discusión en casa del alcoranista Farach. Anticipa veladamente la controversia sobre la prueba teleológica aludiendo a las dificultades del proyecto, ya que se trabajaba sobre "la traducción de una traducción" (*El Aleph* 94). Esta es, dentro del pensamiento platónico, la definición metafórica del arte como obra humana.

En el *Sofista* Platón desarrolla la tesis con la que se abre la discusión en los *Dialogues* y en "La busca" al suponer que "There are two kinds of making and production, the one human and the other divine" (Platón 276). El interés que en Borges suscita este tema rebasa los límites de "La busca." En "Del culto de los libros" alude, citando a Thomas Browne, a las dos fuentes--Libros--del conocimiento de la Divinidad inmersas en la cultura occidental: "La Sagrada Escritura y aquel universal y público manuscrito que está patente a todos los ojos" (*Otras inquisiciones* 114).

"La busca" y los *Dialogues* ofrecen básicamente una misma divergencia de posturas. La nota discordante en la aceptación del dogma establecido viene dada, aparentemente, por Abulcásim y Philo. Sobre ambos recae un ambiente de odio y desconfianza que concibe el

escepticismo que los dos comparten como resultado de una actitud frívola, evasiva e irrespetuosa. Lo sorprendente de su postura, sin embargo, es que ambos apelan a la tradición, intentando erigir la fe en el dogma sobre la razón escéptica. Farach en "La busca" y Cleanthes en los *Dialogues*, presidiendo como anfitriones la discusión, reclaman ser los legítimos representantes del dogma religioso. Ambos, a diferencia de Abulcásim y de Philo, se acercan más a una postura que admite la posibilidad de un conocimiento racional de la Esencia Divina.

Cleanthes, incapaz de refutar la devastadora crítica de Philo, formula repetidamente, apenas sin variación, su argumento:

Are you not aware, Philo. . . . that it is by no means necessary that theists should prove the similarity of the works of nature to those of art; because this similarity is self-evident and undeniable? . . . What more is requisite to show an analogy between their causes, and to ascertain the origin of all things from a divine purpose and intention?

(*Dialogues* 152)

En su esfuerzo por mostrar a Philo el peligro de asumir en materias religiosas una postura de radical escepticismo, Cleanthes señala, como resultado, la progresiva destrucción del dogma religioso. Si en un principio "all panegyrics on the excellency of faith were sure to be interlarded with some severe strokes of satire against natural reason," el abuso de este principio ha hecho coincidir, según Cleanthes, al escéptico con el ateo (*Dialogues* 138). De ahí que, con aire de indignación despreciativa, pregunte:

Is the name, without any meaning, of such mighty importance? Or how do you MYSTICS, who maintain the absolute incomprehensibility of the Deity, differ from sceptics or atheists, who assert that the first cause of All is unknown and unintelligible?

(*Dialogues* 158)

Similar acusación de blasfemia recae sobre Abulcásim. Con fino humor, en ocasiones desapercibido por una crítica literaria un tanto precipitada, Borges irónicamente muestra la inflexibilidad e **incoherencia** que acompaña a dicha acusación: "Sus detractores, con esa lógica peculiar que da el odio, juraban que nunca había pisado la China y que en los templos de ese país había blasfemado de Alá" (*El Aleph* 96). Mary Kinzie en su ensayo "Recursive Prose" hace notar que "such logic ultimately encircles orthodoxy as well as spite" (17). En este sentido la tirantez de relaciones presenta mayor dramatización en los *Dialogues*.

Apelando sutilmente a una de las azoras, Abulcásim evade una situación que le calificaría de "impostor" o "infiel." La tradición en la que se apoya afirma la imposibilidad de conocer los designios divinos, pues "con el Señor están las llaves de las cosas ocultas" y no hay ser, por simple e insignificante que éste sea, que no se halle registrado en "Su Libro" (*El Aleph* 96).

Llegado un momento de intensa controversia en los *Dialogues*, Cleanthes da rienda suelta a su hostilidad: "Choose then, your party, Philo, without ambiguity or evasion: Assert either that a rational volume is no proof of a rational cause, or admit of a similar cause to all works of nature" (*Dialogues* 194). Excluir todo tipo de razonamiento en este caso sería, según Cleanthes, "afectación" o "locura," rechazar la prueba, por otro lado, supondría un acto de "frívola infidelidad" (*Dialogues* 154). La respuesta, esta vez, viene dada por Demea, representante de la más estricta ortodoxia, que, como Philo en su postura escéptica, intenta erigir la fe en el dogma apoyándose en la incomprendibilidad de la naturaleza divina. En este caso Demea se limitará a repetir sin variación las ideas que Philo expone desde el mismo comienzo de los *Dialogues*, a saber, que los atributos de la Divinidad "are perfect, but incomprehensible. And this volume of nature contains a great and inexplicable riddle" (156).⁴ Dicha afirmación coincide con la postura escéptica de Abulcásim al mantener como dogma que "el Señor es perfecto en sus obras e inescrutable" (*El Aleph* 96).

El principal punto de divergencia remitiría, en última instancia, a la concepción de la Divinidad en términos de trascendencia o de immanencia. Aun así, la disputa sigue

siendo para Philo "verbal." Bajo esta perspectiva, cabe interpretar el error terminológico de Averroes como insignificante. Panegírico y sátira, por un lado, tragedia y comedia, por otro, no serían sino expresiones de una misma realidad: el mundo como espectáculo que Dios concibe, representa y contempla. Así, lo que el escepticismo "problemático" de Borges busca, al igual que los metafísicos de "Tlön," no es la verdad, ni siquiera la verosimilitud, sino el asombro.

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NOTAS

¹Hasta ahora se ha venido subrayando principalmente la relación que Borges mantiene en gran parte de sus obras con la doctrina de Berkeley. Ejemplifican dicha tendencia, entre otros estudios críticos, Ana María Barrenechea en *La expresión de la irrealidad*, Martín Stabb en *Jorge Luis Borges* y Ronald Christ en *The Narrow Act*.

²*Otras inquisiciones* 170. Norman Kemp Smith es, sin duda, uno de los críticos más eminentes. Subraya el factor naturalista en la obra de Hume, a diferencia de lo que generalmente se había mantenido. En este caso es el naturalismo, no el escepticismo, el rasgo predominante de dicha doctrina.

³Borges, "La postulación de la realidad" en *Discusión* y en "Assumption" 194. También en "Tlön" (*Ficciones* 20). En dichas ocasiones Borges cita a Hume:

This argument is drawn from Dr. Berkeley; and indeed most of the writings of that ingenious author form the best lessons of scepticism which are to be found either among the ancient or modern philosophers. . . . He professes, however . . . to have composed his book against the sceptics as well as against the atheists and freethinkers. But that all his arguments, though otherwise intended, are in reality merely sceptical appears from this, that they admit of no answer and produce no conviction. (*Enquiry* 155)

⁴Demea con frecuencia llega a parafrasear a Philo con exactitud. El texto citado corresponde a las ideas que Philo desarrolla en la segunda parte de los *Dialogues*. Véase pág. 142 como ejemplo.

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**SHADES OF THE PAST:
REVENANTS ON THE MEXICAN STAGE**

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Mexican literature is known for its use of fantasy and magical realism both in the narrative and drama. Science fiction, with its reliance on pseudoscientific facts, has not been as frequently mined as a source of inspiration. My paper analyzes two plays that share the apparatus of science fiction as a means to introduce historical figures who meet with contemporary characters. In both *El eterno femenino* (1975) by Rosario Castellanos and *Malinche Show* (1977) by Willebaldo López, the past is not evoked through symbols, as in texts by Elena Garro or Carlos Fuentes, nor as direct recreations of historical periods, as in the plays of Rodolfo Usigli or Vicente Leñero. Rather, iconic presentations of the named historical figures are brought on stage as revenants through processes related to advances in "technology." By using revenants on stage, Castellanos and López highlight the coercive power of recurring cultural paradigms. In exploring this theme within the conventions of fantasy, the writers emphasize that the accepted cultural conventions are as artificial and as destructive as the imaginary technology.

Although Castellanos, for one, has expressed the ideas she recreates in her play in essay form, the special qualities of the dramatic genre enable her to approach the spectator in a more direct fashion.¹ As Arthur Miller reminds us, drama is "dynamic, it is always on the move as life is, and it is perceived like life through the motions, the gestures, the tones of voice, and the gait and nuance of living people" (232). The conventions of drama enable both Castellanos and López to resuscitate the dead characters and present them with credibility by means of living actors so that the spectator perceives them on the same level as the so-called "real" characters.

Castellanos makes use of another traditional convention when she places her fantasy within a realistic frame. The protagonist Lupita goes to the beauty salon to get her hair done, a prosaic act made special because

it is also her wedding day: "Se trata de una ocasión muy especial: viene hoy a peinarse para su boda" (31). Lupita has entered a liminal period considered a rite of passage for patriarchal woman; liminal is used here in the sense that Victor Turner gives the term, as a complex and dramatic period in which one is moved in accordance with a cultural script (13). During the period of transition, however, it is possible to generate "new myths, symbols, paradigms, and political structures," (Turner 99) which Castellanos attempts to do by first deconstructing the institutionalized myths and paradigms within the fantasy world.

A salesman, the only masculine figure in the realistic frame, enters the beauty salon in order to sell a new technological apparatus, a symbol of progress, he claims (24). The device, likened to a flea by the salon owner,² turns out to be an electronic disk that fits into the dryer to stimulate carefully programmed dreams especially designed to prevent women from suffering their greatest danger, thinking (28). Lupita is chosen to try out the device in recognition of her liminal state. The salesman as the masculine figure is active and inserts the device into the machine while Lupita is the passive female who awaits being serviced, the metaphoric equivalent of the role of the female in the sexual act approved by the patriarchy. The dream chosen to prepare her for the new phase of her life is "¿Qué me reserva el porvenir?" (31).

The salesman assures the ladies of the salon that in order to eliminate all risk, the dream script has been carefully created not by any human, but by "una máquina, una computadora, un cerebro electrónico. Lo que no se puede equivocarse nunca" (32). His masculine confidence in science is soon belied when the apparatus does malfunction and produces not the dreams that are obligated by the patriarchal script but images that show the nightmare of gender relations for the Mexican female. The dream sequence that completes Act I involves Lupe in key episodes that could take place after matrimony: the wedding night, the announcement of her pregnancy, her relations with her husband and children. In all scenes, life is satirized to show the hypocrisy upon which male-female relations are based. Lupita awakens in a state of shock from the images of her dream, calling them "una horrible pesadilla" (69). Despite her protests,

she is convinced to sit under the dryer once more, which motivates the scenes of Act II.

The electronic device is reprogrammed and this time Lupita's dreams revert to images from the cultural script of Mexican history. Just as the subtext deconstructed in Act I is the traditional view of married life and motherhood, this second act recreates episodes that satirize the traditional legends of Mexican history. Her temporal journey is cut short, however, by an electric blackout, which darkens the salon and, of course, stops the gadget from functioning. Because of the technological problem that precludes the use of the dryer, Act III departs from the device of the dream sequence to use another mechanism to produce cultural images. Instead of interior images from Lupita's unconscious, Castellanos playfully follows the opposite technique and makes use of slides on a screen to project the new script to be censured. The realistic motif that initiates the action of Act III has to do with Lupita's disastrous hairdo. Because of the damaged dryer and the lack of electricity, Lupita is advised to try on different wigs to cover her own hair. Each time she puts on a wig, an image of another female role is projected on stage, from the old maid, to the prostitute, to the professional woman who attempts to combine a career with marriage. Each role shows the problems of the individual woman who is forced to conform to a script that dictates actions according to the dominant patriarchal ideology. When Lupita enters into the role of the prostitute, for example, she discovers that a lone woman cannot "work the street" independently; she learns that a male figure is in charge of the social organizations of prostitutes, and for his protective presence he shares in the profits. When Lupita enacts the role of the professional woman, this image, too, is shown to be tied to patriarchal ideology. Her dialogue reveals that she is the modern woman whose professionalism and independence serve only as a veneer to cover such traditional feminine attributes as submission and dependency. She is ready to abdicate her professional role to "seguir el ejemplo de su madre o de su suegra" (180).³

Castellanos chooses the figure of Lupita dressed in the role of the pseudo-professional woman to initiate the metatheatrical scene that criticizes the play's analysis of

patriarchal women. In an ironic inversion of critical roles, Castellanos has Lupita, the fictive character, censure Castellanos the author for the play's satiric presentation of women's roles. She calls the work an attack on the values that Mexican society intends to pass on down to future generations of women:

el ataque [del drama] es específico y va dirigido contra la abnegación de las madres; contra la virtud de las esposas; contra la castidad de las novias; es decir, contra nuestros atributos proverbiales, atributos en los que se fincan nuestras instituciones más sólidas: la familia, la religión, la patria. (182)

However, the irony of that discourse is evident to the spectator, for the myth that the women of the past supported the fixed institutions of family, religion, and nationhood, has already been patently contradicted in the act dedicated to resuscitating the women of history. As part of her attempt to change the image of eternal woman, Castellanos first shows that the women of the past were not the archetypes of accepted female activity of the present period. In returning to historical women who have been reified, she reverses the usual process whereby the individual instance is raised to the level of general validity, and forces the immortal images of institutionalized myths to regain their mobility and dynamism. She demystifies the eternal images frozen in time by using the art medium that best represents happenings in time--the theater (Arnheim 589).

The shades who return to life in the second act are the seven key women who influence contemporary female behavior. Each woman comes from a different time period and has been immortalized in history to represent behavior patterns to be either emulated or rejected: Eve of the Bible, the instigator of Man's fall from paradise, initiates the review; the Mexican legendary figures include La Malinche of the Conquest, Indian interpreter for Cortés; Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, the Baroque poet; doña Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez, a patriot in the period of Mexican Independence; the Empress Carlota; Rosario de la Peña, for whom the poet Manuel Acuña was said to have committed suicide; and Adelita, made famous in

corridos about the Mexican Revolution. Sor Juana, considered the most literate and outstanding intellectual woman of Mexico, declares that these consecrated images are nothing more than the result of a version she calls "estereotipada y oficial" (87). She proposes that the women present their own version of their "momento culminante," since they have suffered a distortion of their images at the hands of others. They will present themselves "como lo que creemos que fuimos" (87).

Each female protagonist reenacts key historical events from her point of view, presenting very different versions from the history books. Each scene shows that the coercive power of patriarchal ideology has not changed through the years, though the signifiers used to present the signified may differ, depending on the century. Thus, when Carlota explains that she and Maximilian went to Mexico with a mission in order to "redimir a los mexicanos, reconciliarlos y unirlos, civilizarlos" (121), La Malinche's retort reminds us how the oppressors keep repeating an unchanging, constant script: "Exactamente lo mismo que decían los ideólogos de Hernán Cortés" (121). When Adelita proves that the generals from opposing sides in the Mexican Revolution were equally corrupt and self-interested, Sor Juana, ever the voice of irony, concludes: "Pero los libros de historia dicen que la Revolución triunfó" (136). Adelita's response shows that the temporal changes have not brought progress:

Si hubiera triunfado ¿estaría esta muchacha [Lupita] aquí? ¿Existirían aún muchachas como ella, con padres como los de ella, con novios como el de ella, con vida como la de ella? (137)

Adelita expresses clearly the idea that the status of women has not been altered through the years. Again, it is Sor Juana who interprets what they see: "No es siquiera diversión; es, si acaso, una mera versión" (108). Sor Juana acknowledges that the history books are the creations of instituted authority, which has had the power to insert into discourse the images of patriarchal ideology. The theoretical base of Sor Juana's comment, and by extension, of the play itself, can be found most clearly in Michel Foucault's succinct explanation that "it

is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" (100).

We can now appreciate the thematic importance of the dream sequence that brings together women from all periods of Mexico's national history. The accounts of the revenants confirm that the paradigms that have conditioned women have not changed throughout the centuries, despite the progress of science and technology.

Like Castellanos's play, *Malinche Show* highlights the coercive power of both technology and recurring cultural paradigms. López uses another innovation within the fantasy genre to bring out the historical situations that set the paradigms for behavior. From Castellanos's small, flea-like device, his technological tool fills the stage as a huge, monster-like machine with many parts. Two arm-like protuberances hold up the figure of La Malinche. Not a puppet or avatar, but the original woman from the sixteenth century who has been brought to life, along with Cortés, because of her importance to the economic plans of the country. She has been made the star of a TV show, which is designed to convince the Mexican masses to participate in the modern consumer society and to forget the anguish of their reality. Reality is equated with economic underdevelopment and juxtaposed with fantasy, defined as "otro mundo ajeno al suyo" where one is distracted by the pleasing images offered by mass communication media (56). Since La Malinche has been defined in Mexican mythology as the woman who allowed the other world to enter Mexico, she has become the spokesperson or the tool of the exploitative forces that would encourage Mexicans to enter into the "other world" of foreign-made fantasy.

The three people who work the machines and attempt to control La Malinche's activities are called *Prestanombres*, "Name-lenders," a created word defined in the text by La Malinche as the people who "prestan su nombre y meten inversionistas clandestinos a nuestro país" (30). They are shown to be just as much governed in their actions as they would wish to control La Malinche; they are stand-ins for the Triumvirate who are the actual masters. The power of the real rulers is shown semiotically by their position above the stage on the upper part of the machine. A parody of the Trinity, the unholy threesome is composed of a Gringo, a nun, and a

European who alternates the language he speaks (German, Italian, French), thereby symbolizing the major European forces that influence the culture and economy of Mexico.

The question that comes to mind is why keep La Malinche and Cortés alive as supernatural figures, why not use metaphors or avatars as other writers have done? For example, the playwright Emilio Carballido in *Ceremonia en el templo del tigre* names the Indian servant "Marina," La Malinche's hispanicized name, to recall the conquest as a subtext for contemporary interactions.⁴ Elsewhere I argue that Elena Garro, in *Los recuerdos del porvenir*, uses the characteristics associated with La Malinche as a subtext to comment on male-female relations in Mexico ("Figure of La Malinche"). The texts of Carlos Fuentes have also been analyzed in detail for the many avatars he includes that show how the historical past remains a vital part of the Mexican present.⁵ Just as with the play of Castellanos, López's rupture of the conventions of reality is purposeful. By using the technique of having the historical figures on stage to represent themselves in their symbolic role, López reverses the stylistic process of tropism, as he shows the metaphor made literal. Their iconic presence on stage indicates that their patterns of action continue to exist in Mexico today; La Malinche, who functioned in the sixteenth century as "la puerta del país a las peores intenciones que vienen del extranjero," still acts in her TV show as "la madre de las fuerzas inversionistas del país" (15). Cortés was the foreign invader who raped the country with no regard for its well-being, a pattern of action he continues to approve of for the Spaniards in Mexico. Just as López reverses a traditional stylistic process by making a metaphor literal, he applies the pattern of reversal to character development, theme, chronology, and structure, in order to upset and invert the established paradigms.

Thematic and character reversals are seen when La Malinche rebels against her use as a *malinchista*, and becomes instead the conscience and interpreter for nationalist Mexico. La Malinche explains to Cortés the current situation that many strangers are taking everything out of the country and leaving the natives with nothing; he is disturbed to realize that groups other than

the Spaniards are being allowed to conquer the country. Although La Malinche still is the interpreter for Cortés, thematically she represents not the interests of Cortés and the foreigners, but the nationalist perspective. The signifier "La Malinche" breaks away from the fixed signified that the patriarchal triumvirate has worked hard to maintain. Other examples in the text reinforce the distance between signifier and signified that is necessary in order to contravene the fixed paradigms of behavior.

As proof of the multiplicity of perspectives, one action is shown to have different interpretations. For example, La Malinche asks Cortés to kill her because she no longer wishes to go on serving as a symbol of exploitation. Yet the female Name-lender interprets the interchange as a case of attempted suicide for love, a Romeo-and-Juliet paradigm that distorts the action (34).

The configuration of the proxemic code also serves to destroy ready acceptance of the patriarchal paradigms. During the interchange in which La Malinche introduces the topic of exploitation, both she and Cortés address the audience constantly while they talk. The direct address to the public involves the spectator as a judge in the action and as an accomplice in the rejection of the pattern under scrutiny. For example, La Malinche tells Cortés that the Name-lenders allow the foreigners to "llevar nuestras riquezas, dejando a la gran mayoría de los mexicanos en la miseria. (Al Público) ¿o no?" (30). She tries to distance the audience from the Name-lenders and what they represent. At the same time she prods them into judging the adverse effects of the activities of the Name-lenders.

Temporal reversal occurs when the course of activity in the first act leads to the resurrection of Cuauhtémoc, the Indian leader whom Cortés defeated. In contrast to the events of historical "reality" in which the Indian disappeared as a power after the Conquest, the Indian leader reappears from the depths of the underground at the end of Act I and continues to interact with his conquerors in Act II. Cuauhtémoc wants to take advantage of his presence as a revenant to mistreat Cortés in the same way as the Spaniard had handled him. Though their interchange is humorous, the comical effects do not conceal the thematic intention of his appearance: to contradict the constant paradigms of

behavior established in the world of verifiable reality. The fixed, authoritarian world as a system of representations is made suspect, its artificiality is emphasized, and its necessary predictability is made questionable.

In the final scene of *Malinche Show*, the rebellion of La Malinche against the advances of science and technology seems to have been accomplished when she finally succeeds in dying. Yet it is not the end of the play, for López takes the opportunity to warn his audience that the "hijos de la Malinche," made famous by Octavio Paz's *El laberinto de la soledad* have been programmed to continue her patriarchal role. A Martín Cortés is retrieved, said to be just one of the many Mexicans found outside the TV studio--the synecdoche for all the mestizos born after the union of La Malinche and Cortés. He takes the dead Malinche and dresses her up so that he can continue using her as a way to encourage *malinchismo* for his own benefit. The utter cynicism of Martín's act of exploitation of his own mother is another warning of the coercive nature of the cultural paradigms.

In their exploration of the myths and metaphors--the whole of symbolic activity--both López and Castellanos recognize that symbolic activity does more than merely express reality, it actively structures experience as well. As social anthropologists following the rhetorician Kenneth Burke remind us, "figurative language is taken to be often fully *programmatic* in that as it expresses the structural paradigm which generates behavior within a given social tradition, it dictates action" (Crocker 65). Actions within Mexican society have been dictated by the acceptance of established cultural paradigms as an eternal truth. By joining together the two concepts--the pseudo-science that contradicts verifiable reality, and the historical figures that remain as a recurring present--López and Castellanos suggest to the spectator that both ideas can be rejected, the fantasy and the perception of a repetitive past. Since the acceptance of a recurring past negates the possibility of a real present or future, López and Castellanos dramatize the potentiality of a transformation in Mexican cultural patterns in their deconstruction of the tightly bound paradigms. The answer for the future is not in the past nor in the panaceas of futuristic technology, but in facing the

realities of the present, the real needs of the people to be treated with respect and humanity.

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NOTES

¹See for example the essay, "Otra vez Sor Juana," first written for the newspaper *Excelsior*, October 26, 1963, and reprinted in *El uso de la palabra* in 1974 after her untimely death. (All translations from the Spanish are mine.)

²It is interesting that Castellanos used the image of a flea, for that recalls the famous farce of Georges Feydeau (1862-1921), "La Puce à l'oreille" (1907; A Flea in Her Ear), which exploits marital conflicts and patriarchal images of woman, the very portrait that Castellanos attacks.

³Castellanos exhibits here her profound grasp of female psychology, for her stage directions--the secondary code--describe the type of woman that the psychologist Joan Rivière analyzed in "Womanliness as a Masquerade."

⁴In "Changing Configurations," I refer to the uses of Marina and the conquest as subtext.

⁵Several articles refer to Fuentes's use of Mexican myths and history as a subtext for a contemporary narrative, including Luis Leal, "History and Myth in the Narrative of Carlos Fuentes," and Malva Filer, "Los mitos indígenas en Carlos Fuentes."

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