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PREFACE

All of the works presented in this volume were read at the XIV Cincinnati Conference on Romance Languages and Literatures. In a certain way, therefore, these 24 articles represent the 290 papers defended during the mentioned event. Each one of them has a unique purpose and merit, and as a whole they serve to reflect the wide range of topics covered in our conference.

Since the risks of misinterpretation are implicit in every metonymy, the objective sought by the process of selection was to produce a balanced and synthesized image of last year's conference. This meant that the diversity that traditionally defines our annual meeting would sometimes decide the exclusion of works otherwise worthy and excellent. With such a large span of topics to cover, only a few articles could represent each area. This has been, with no doubt, the most painful part of the editors' job. Although the Cincinnati Romance Review has been growing in size for the last couple of years, the task of self-limitation is still our most difficult.

We would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to Prof. Jean-Charles Seigneuret--our Executive Editor--and to all the members of the Editorial Board for their generous collaboration. Special thanks must be made to Donna R. Taylor, responsible for the formatting, layout and word processing of this issue.

Luis Gabriel-Stheeman
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COMIC REBIRTH IN MACHIAVELLI'S *PRINCE AND CLIZIA*

Bertina Loeffler

Renaissance scholars widely acknowledge Niccolò Machiavelli's challenge to traditional notions of morality. They likewise concur that Machiavelli informs both his political writings and his comedies with moralities distinct from those of his classical and medieval predecessors. In both genres, he does not aim at the affirmation of Christian virtue, but instead, *virtù*. Usually defined as the strength of mind and the ability to meet challenges, *virtù* calls for a flexible reaction to the ever-changing forces of *fortuna* that threaten to undermine the security of both the state and subject. While acknowledging the intersections of "heroic" and "civic" *virtù* which inform Machiavelli's writings (Plamenatz 218), scholarship has maintained the traditional distinction between the political and comic genres within his *opus*. This paper will contest precisely the notion of comic alterity in Machiavelli's writing. Specifically, I will argue that *The Prince* (1513), his most widely known political treatise, functions as a comedy by means of its regenerative end. For the genre of comedy makes manifest the agenda of Machiavelli's political writings. Only as a comic hero may Machiavelli's prince fulfill the desired objective of uniting and redeeming the Italian peninsula from foreign domination.

The final chapter of *The Prince* makes Machiavelli's reformatory intentions especially clear. The chapter's title, "An Exhortation to Grasp Italy and Set her free from the Barbarians" ("*Exhortation ad capesendam Italiam in libertatemque a barbaris vindicandam*") already underscores the need for Italian liberation from the foreign forces on the peninsula.¹ Throughout the chapter, he implores his envisioned "savior," Lorenzo de' Medici, to adapt his political maxims and to "cure" a "sickened" Italy by liberating her from "barbarian tyranny" ("*barbaro dominio*") (*Works* 1: 96). Likewise, his repeated use of the word "redemption," or "*redenzione*", and its cognates accentuates *The Prince's* optimistic conclusion.

The salvation of Italy and elevated status of de' Medici projected by *The Prince* coincide almost completely with the characteristics of the Western comic tradition. For example, comic resolution in the form of "wish-fulfillment" (Frye 167) traditionally materializes in the final act and results in a "higher," new society that "carries the promise of a new beginning in life" (Salinger 13). Renewal, the *telos* and final cause of comedy, in turn produces the "inevitable" comic "happy end" (Frye 170). By imitating the literary prince, de' Medici fulfills

Machiavelli's "wish" for Italian unity and thereby transforms Italy from its "beaten, despoiled . . . and devastated" condition to the dominant power on the peninsula (*Works* 1: 93). In *The Prince's* concluding chapter, Machiavelli envisions a newly united and redeemed Italian society crystallizing around its founder, de' Medici.

Ironically, the comic renewal projected by both his political comedy *The Prince*, and *Clizia*, the latter of Machiavelli's two domestic comedies (1525), necessitates death. In both cases, only the fall of one generation and the rise of another makes new birth possible. For example, the prince establishes his new kingdom only after the "death" of once powerful and competing kingdoms, while Cleandro, the son of Nicomaco and Sofronia, assures familial regeneration through his marriage to Clizia and replacing his allegorically "deceased" father as family patriarch.

Unlike *Clizia* however, *The Prince* must be considered a "problem" comedy, since the potentially cruel and violent means of political death, requisite to ensure political regeneration, remain absent from the domestic comedy. An analysis of the nature and function of death in *The Prince* and *Clizia* reveals how violence distinguishes political from domestic succession. At the same time, the distinction suggests an intersection of public and private space that problematizes the apparent division between them.

The transfer of power from father to son was the well-established means of domestic succession in Renaissance Florence. The strong patrilinearity of Florentine families assured a relatively uninterrupted and undisputed continuum of male authority. The allegorical "death" of Nicomaco, for example, neither ruptures the smooth continuation of the human experience, nor prematurely alters possession of power. As the newlywed son, Florentine-society expects Cleandro to replace his father as the head of the domestic hierarchy. As such, Nicomaco's "death" becomes an anticipated reality of human experience and represents an integral element of the human life cycle, not a violent interruption of it.

Generational succession of political power, on the other hand, was neither uninterrupted nor undisputed. Machiavelli refutes its validity. In the political sphere, he argues, the position of the father guarantees nothing about the effectiveness of his successor. Generational succession, according to Machiavelli, usually results in de-generation. As he explains in Chapter Two of the first *Discourse*, when a society "set up princes by inheritance and not by choice, the heirs quickly degenerated from their ancestors . . ." (*Works* 1: 197).² Historical examples confirm his distrust of hereditary succession. He writes in *The Prince* that Commodus, son of the great Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, and Antonius, hereditary successor to the skilled Emperor

Severus, failed to rule as effectively as their fathers and quickly lost their empires due to their own ineptitude.

Machiavelli insists that patrilinearity contributes nothing to the transfer of power in the political sphere. Instead, he repeatedly valorizes innate ability and *virtù* as the only reliable source of securing power. He writes in *The Prince*, "Those defenses alone are good, are certain, are durable, that depend on yourself and your own abilities."³ The most effective prince relies not on his lineage, but on his own ability, or "heroic" *virtù*, to create a position for himself by first destroying established powers. The "generational rupture" (Schnapp 663) necessary to ensure political rebirth and dependent on the prince's own skills, diametrically opposes the continuity of domestic patrilinear succession.

However despite the constancy of domestic succession in sixteenth-century Florence, the continuum of the private power-transfer was not exempt from potential "rupture." The plot of *Clizia* for example, centers around the "crisis of succession" in which the satisfaction of Nicomaco's sexual desire for the young ward Clizia, and the consequent "unnatural pairing of an elder man with a younger woman [,] would lead to . . . the dissipation of patrimony" (Schnapp 674). By prioritizing the fulfillment of his own sexual desire over his son's marriage to Clizia, Nicomaco threatens not only to compromise his patriarchal authority both in and outside the home, but also to disrupt the continuum of familial succession. Without a bride and subsequent offspring, Cleandro cannot regenerate the family name.

Unlike the opposing military forces which threaten political succession, aberrant sexual desire which threatens familial succession can be non-violently "conquered." By means of her civic *virtù*, Sofronia is able to cool Nicomaco's desire and ensure patrilinearity. By humiliating him before the entire household and threatening publicly to disclose his "dishonorable" pursuits, Sofronia coerces him into resuming his duty as patriarch. This in turn secures the comic rebirth that precludes any potentially "tragic" consequences of his fixation for the young girl. If Nicomaco complies with Sofronia's demands, she in turn promises the returned allegiance of all household members, which his single-minded sexual pursuits have alienated from him. "We'll all return to you," she assures him (*Works* 2: 861).⁴ Skillfully and non-violently she dissipates the threat to generational succession resulting from the potential disruption of "the continual flow from old to young" (Di Maria 209). She spoils Nicomaco's attempt to reclaim youth and vitality and thereby "invert the familial hierarchy by playing the role of the male in a fertility rite naturally reserved" for youth (Raimondi 232).

The comic rebirth inherent in political succession relies on violence

not only to destroy established power, but also to maintain newly acquired power. The "theatricality" of princely violence, Machiavelli argues, strengthens the allegiances of the new prince's subjects and military forces to him. Throughout his writings, Machiavelli maintains the importance of "appearances," and the dichotomy between appearance and reality. Representation, and the "politics of image" become primary means of power for the prince. By staging spectacles of violence, the prince makes himself appear viciously brutal. In doing so, he inspires fear in his subjects that consequently ensures their allegiance to him. As a result, "power becomes in part, if not entirely, an effect of the representational illusion of truth" about the prince (Kahn 199). Nevertheless, this illusion of power ensures the obedience of both the populace and the militia to him.

Machiavelli again confirms his conviction with historical examples. Hannibal, he writes in *The Prince*, was well-known for his displays of "inhuman cruelty." This viciousness made him feared and consequently "respected in his soldier's eyes" (*Works* 1: 63).⁵ Like Hannibal, Machiavelli's prince "theatrically" ensures his rule by using "carefully calculated displays of violence to make himself appear a figure of fearsome, awe-inspiring" power (Rebhorn 127). As the comic hero, the prince acknowledges and capitalizes on the benefits of both representational and real acts of violence to unite and restore the Italian peninsula.

In the domestic sphere, the theatricality of "honor" replaces that of "violence" as the most effective means of strengthening the allegiances which ensure succession. The social importance of the family's idealized public "appearance" provides enough incentive to contain potential discord and unite all household allegiances around the patriarch. The importance of public image derives directly from the particular social circumstances of Renaissance Florence. Already in the fifteenth century, Florentine males "frequently established [their] own independent household and possessed [their] own property privately" (Goldthwaite 257). The independence from previous generations provided a unique opportunity for non-aristocratic citizens to "ennoble" themselves by means of capital gain and self-made reputation. Gradually, the "family" became a representational ideal rather than a reality of social life. By the sixteenth century, the fictionalized, aristocratized notion of "family" became the "principal criterion" for social nobility in Florence (Goldthwaite 268). This concern for reputation, an extension of the "Renaissance cult of personal fame" (Martínez 142), became intrinsically valuable for the identity of the Florentine family and the continuity not only of the family name, but also of the community at large.

The danger of public humiliation for the middle-class family directly

informs Nicomaco's decision to end his pursuit of Clizia and acquiesce to Sofronia. Only the threat of "going public" with the "private" convinces him to resume his rightful position and duty as family patriarch. Public disclosure of his licentiousness and domestic "shame," or "*vergogna*," would irrevocably damage not only his "appearance" as a noble Florentine merchant, but also his family's public image, both of which would compromise their valued social status. For this reason, when Sofronia threatens public exposure he immediately ceases his sexual pursuits and resumes his "honorable" duties. He promises her, "I'm prepared not to go beyond the limits you set, if only the thing doesn't get known," or "*non si risappia*" (*Works* 2: 861). The vital importance of public image to a family's position in Florentine society provides enough incentive for Nicomaco to resume his role as an "honorable" Florentine gentleman. Thereafter, he dutifully returns to his business affairs and his "dignified and honorable pastimes," his "*diporti grave e onesti*."

Consequently, Nicomaco calls off the active pursuit of his sexual desire and his son Cleandro marries Clizia. Their marriage assures patrilinear succession, extends the family "honor" to the next generation, and in so doing, aggrandizes it all the more. Linking the name of the Florentine family with Clizia's noble Neapolitan ancestry simultaneously strengthens the "appearance" of nobility and expands it beyond the parameters of Florentine society. As with the prince, the illusion of image strengthens the family's "appearance" which in turn ensures succession and regeneration.

The conscious exercise of violence differentiates the political from the domestic sphere for Machiavelli. However, the reformative aim of his political comedy unites it with his domestic comedy, and as such, problematizes the distinction between public and private space. As a comic writer, Machiavelli's political ideas take on a different light. He was greatly influenced by the Polybian theory of historical events; the circularity of their growth, ruin, and recurring growth. Indeed, both comedies revolve around the concern for succession. However, the exclusion of individuals from this cycle due to their mortality led to Machiavelli's anxiety about regenerating both the Florentine and Italian polity. As he writes in the third *Discourse*, "It is most certain that there is a limit for the existence of all things in the world" (*Works* 1: 419).⁶ Yet the "happy end" of comedy asserts an optimism for the future and for the human ability to exercise control over the malignancy of time, negative *fortuna*, and exclusion from the Polybian continuum. Although the life of the individual and the state both have a beginning, a middle and end, neither restricts its life to the time-series of physical events. Both the state and its subjects can ensure the "projection of self into the future through offspring" in the form of

citizen-sons and familial heirs (Pitkin 250). "Heroic" and "civic" *virtù* attest to Machiavelli's affirmation of human agency to produce the political and domestic heirs that ensure the regeneration of the individual and the Florentine state, respectively. Informed by *virtù*, both comedies attest to Machiavelli's conviction of reality, self, and Florence. Their projected renewal confirms his belief that human beings can indeed sustain both social and private order. Inherently redemptive, the comic genre provides the vehicle through which Machiavelli extends this optimism and ensures both political and domestic rebirth.

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NOTES

¹ All translations of Machiavelli's works have been taken from Allan Gilbert's 3 Volume collection, *The Chief Works and Others* (Durham: Duke UP, 1989). Citations are parenthetically referred to as *Works*, followed by the appropriate volume and page number. Original Italian cited from Feltrinelli's 8 volume *Opere* (Milano: 1965) and referred to parenthetically as *Opere*.

² "Ma come dipoi si cominciò a fare il principe per successione e non per elezione, subito cominciarono li eredi a degenerare dai loro antichi, . . ." (*Opere* 1: 131).

³ "E quelle difese solamente sono buone, sono certe, sono durabili, che dependano da te proprio e dalla virtù tua" (*Opere* 1: 948).

⁴ ". . . tutti noi vi torneremo" (*Opere* 8: 162).

⁵ ". . . sua inumana crudeltà, la quale, . . . lo fece sempre nel conspetto de' suoi soldati venerando e terribile" (*Opere* 1: 71).

⁶ "Egli è cosa verissima come tutte le cose del mondo hanno il termine della vita loro; . . ." (*Opere* 1: 379).

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GRISEL Y MIRABELLA: A LA LUZ DEL DEBATE MEDIEVAL

Mercedes Roffé

La pregunta por los rasgos distintivos del género ha preocupado a casi todos los críticos que abordaron la ficción sentimental. En cuanto a la delimitación del corpus, el haber agrupado textos tan dispares como *Siervo libre*, *Proceso de cartas* y *Questión de amor* bajo un mismo rótulo ha resultado hasta ahora un recurso falsamente económico. No parece casual que entre los críticos que propusieron desistir de la tan mentada unidad genérica se encuentre Antonio Gargano, editor de *Triunfo de Amor*, obra habitualmente soslayada en los trabajos de conjunto.

Lo que me propongo en este trabajo es encarar una sola de las obras consideradas más representativas del género, *Grisel y Mirabella*, de modo que el imperativo de dar cuenta de una variedad de obras no me prive de la posibilidad de analizar un texto en particular, si se quiere en su atipicidad, en su unicidad, o en lo que considero su pertenencia a una hermandad genérica diferente: el debate literario.

El debate ocupa en *Grisel* una notable proporción del espacio textual--Patricia Grieve calculó las dos terceras partes. Sin embargo, los estudiosos de Flores no le han dedicado, hasta ahora, una pareja atención crítica. Barbara Matulka fue la única que estudió el debate en profundidad, en especial el debate central entre Torrellas y Braçayda: rastreó la procedencia de los abogados; desmontó gran parte de los argumentos que los personajes esgrimen, y abordó su significación ideológica en el marco de lo que ella llama "the feminist quarrel in fifteenth century Spain" (5). En menor medida, Menéndez Pelayo (58) y Carmelo Samonà (121) reconocieron también la importancia del debate en el texto.

Antonio Gargano observa aun el equilibrio que se da en *Grisel* entre debate y elemento narrativo. En el otro extremo del espectro crítico, Dinko Cvitanovic concluye que "el epígono del debate feminista en sí no aporta nada realmente decisivo a la novela de Flores" (206), opinión con la que Patricia Grieve y Marina Brownlee parecen coincidir. Según Grieve, "[t]he accusations which each debater 4[Braçayda y Torrellas] hurls at the other have nothing to do with the actual case at hand" (58); según Brownlee, el debate entre los abogados "have literally nothing to do with the attitudes projected by *Grisel* and *Mirabella*" (202).

Estas opiniones nos enfrentan con dos hechos relevantes para la historia crítica del género sentimental y de *Grisel*. Por un lado, los trabajos de conjunto sobre la ficción sentimental que incluyeron a

Grisel como pieza clave del género obliteraron más de la mitad de la obra. Por otro, parece evidente que cada vez que se intenta analizar *Grisel* como ficción sentimental, hay algo de la coherencia interna del texto que se pierde o no se percibe. ¿Qué repercusiones tiene la obliteración de todo aquello que en *Grisel* es debate a la hora de considerar la pertenencia genérica del texto y a la hora de delimitar los rasgos que definirían el género sentimental? *Grisel y Mirabella* ¿es una ficción que incluye un debate? ¿es un debate "envuelto" en un marco narrativo? En todo caso, ¿cuáles son los elementos provenientes de la tradición de la disputa que se incorporan al relato? Más aun ¿hasta qué punto es necesariamente el componente narrativo el que estructura la secuencia de debates?

Los libros de texto de literatura española suelen hacer mención de los debates medievales que han sobrevivido en nuestra lengua.¹ Tanto en el caso de lo que Alan Deyermond ha llamado "el género perdido," como en el caso específico de los textos acerca de la condición de las mujeres, los debates en español confirman la pertenencia de una parte importante de la literatura de la Península al acervo cultural europeo. Con antecedentes esporádicos desde el siglo iv, y tras un primer auge durante el renacimiento carolingio, el debate literario florece en Europa a partir del siglo xii, cuando la disputa se institucionaliza como método de investigación y enseñanza universitaria. Desde entonces, los debates sobre distintos temas proliferan en latín tanto como en lenguas romances, anglosajonas y eslavas.

Una tradición muy temprana es la de los debates entre el Invierno y el Verano, que se inicia con el poema atribuido a Alcuino, *Conflictus veris et hiemis* (*Poetae latini*, 1: 270-4). En debates entre estaciones, flores o bebidas, el poeta suele balancear los pros de elementos pertenecientes a una misma categoría.² En ocasiones, sin embargo, el debate empieza con la loa de uno de los elementos y termina con el panegírico del otro (Hanford, "Debate" 328), una estructura que será frecuente y a partir de la cual se podría llegar a predecir el resultado de una disputa desde el mismo comienzo. Es el orden que sigue Santo Tomás en la *Suma teológica* y es, también, el orden seguido por Juan de Flores en el debate central entre Braçayda y Torrellas. El lector familiarizado con la estructura del debate podría prever desde el primer parlamento de Braçayda, y precisamente por ser ella la primera en exponer sus razones, la ulterior derrota de las mujeres.

También se conservan en diferentes lenguas distintas versiones de disputas entre el Agua y el Vino, el Alma y el Cuerpo y el Corazón y el Ojo.³ La tradición acepta, junto a debates sobre problemas filosóficos o legales, una serie de disputas entre profesiones--la Navegación y la Agricultura, el Cura y el Lógico--o entre monjes de dos órdenes rivales--como el De Clarevallensibus et Cluniacensibus.⁴

Estos textos suelen incluir secciones de muy distinto tenor, que rechazan cualquier separación tajante entre lo cómico y lo serio, la doctrina y lo trivial. En ciertos casos, disputas consideradas hasta ahora meros ejercicios escolares, admiten análisis, como el de Michel-André Bossy, que recuperan la significación de esos textos como vehículos de la confrontación entre los distintos sectores de la burguesía naciente en el seno de la sociedad medieval (xiv-xv).

Si nos remontamos a la primera realización del debate sobre el tema del clérigo y el caballero, nos encontramos con el bellissimo texto latino *Altercatio Phyllidis et Florae*, de la segunda mitad del siglo xii.⁵ El poema empieza con una referencia a la estación (la primavera) y la hora del día (la aurora). Sigue la descripción de las dos jóvenes, semejantes en todo--en estirpe, en belleza, en edad, en hábitos y costumbres--: "sola differentia modus est amoris." Luego de sentarse a la orilla de un río, en un lugar tópicamente ameno, las dos muchachas empiezan a conversar: Phyllis suspira por su amante, un caballero; Flora responde, entre risas, que su amiga ama a un mendigo, y alaba en cambio la gracia de su propio enamorado, un clérigo. La disputa se desencadena, cada muchacha rebate lo que sostiene su compañera y afirma seguidamente los pros de su propio amante. Al cabo de una veintena de estrofas, Flora propone someter el caso al juicio de Cupido, y ambas se trasladan al Paraíso donde reside el dios. Amor tiene sus propios jueces: "Usus et Natura," que fallan a favor del clérigo, como el más apto para el amor.

De la segunda mitad del siglo, o de principios del xiii, es la reelaboración francesa *Le jugement d'Amour*. Las doncellas se llaman aquí Florence y Blanche fleur. El autor se extiende en la descripción de los vestidos y del palacio del dios Amor, y agrega un episodio que Menéndez Pidal sintetiza así:

el dios Amor reúne los barones de su corte para que juzguen el pleito de las dos doncellas, y el Esperver, el Ruiseñor, la Alondra y demás aves entablan una segunda discusión del tema, la cual termina con un duelo, en que el pequeño Ruiseñor, campeón del clérigo, vence al corpulento Papagayo, campeón del caballero. (70)

Menéndez Pidal observa que las distintas versiones de los textos sobre el clérigo y el caballero siguen una doble vertiente: mientras algunas reducen la contienda verbal y se explayan en los elementos descriptivos y narrativos, otras tienden a desarrollar más la disputa. En todas ellas, sin embargo, se empieza con una disputa individual y luego, ante la imposibilidad de llegar a un acuerdo, se somete el caso a una segunda instancia, un juicio público. En la versión latina el dios Amor confía

sentencia a sus jueces. En el *Jugement* y en las versiones anglosajonas y romances, el dios la delega a un tribunal de barones. El *Jugement* introduce una variación relevante: en el debate público no son ya las doncellas sino sus representantes, las aves, las que toman la defensa de un bando u otro.

Este tipo de estructura en dos partes, donde a la primera corresponde la discusión de un caso individual a cargo de los directos interesados, y a la segunda un juicio público ante un juez o una corte, en que el tema se eleva a una categoría general, y cuyas partes se delegan a la pericia de representantes, es la que encontramos en *Grisel*. En esta obra la disputa individual sobre quién fue más responsable de la conquista amorosa tiene lugar en el combate de generosidad entre Grisel y Mirabella, donde cada enamorado se culpa a sí mismo. Al no arribar a la verdad esperada por el Rey, el consejo propone una segunda disputa, ahora pública, sobre quiénes tienen, en general, mayor responsabilidad en la conquista, si los hombres o las mujeres. Aquí no son ya los enamorados los que debaten sino sus representantes, el poeta misógino por la parte de los varones, Braçayda por la de las mujeres. La relación entre el combate de generosidad y el debate-juicio queda motivada no sólo por las necesidades de la trama sino también por ciertas constantes del debate como género literario.

La derivación del debate en un juicio o proceso, como la que encontramos en *Grisel*, no se conoce antes del siglo xii, pero ya en el siglo siguiente, señala Batiouchkof, "il fut mis en vogue par Rutebeuf, par Cardri et autres trouvères" (517). Los debates en que la disputa se somete a la autoridad de un juez o una corte son numerosos. Cupido, Júpiter, Dios o un rey son los personajes que con mayor frecuencia garantizan con su autoridad la solemnidad de la escena y la ecuanimidad de la decisión.⁶

La evolución del debate literario también da cuenta de otra de las características formales de *Grisel* que no ha hallado satisfactoria repercusión entre los críticos. Me refiero a la articulación, en un mismo texto, y alrededor de un debate central, de otros debates menores, como el que precede, en *Grisel*, al duelo entre Grisel y el otro caballero, o el intercambio de réplicas entre el Rey y la Reina tras la determinación de la sentencia contra Mirabella. En sus páginas sobre el debate del Alma y el Cuerpo en la tradición anglosajona, Rosemary Woolf observa que

... in the twelfth century a development took place in the Body and Soul tradition--a development perhaps even more important than the transformation of monologue into dialogue--whereby the theme, instead of being a short and isolated anecdote, became a large and flexible framework, with

all the traditional death themes accumulated into the reproach of the soul. This transition was of very great literary importance, firstly, because through it separate themes became organized into a dramatic whole (93)

La integración que observa Woolf en los debates anglosajones sobre el Alma y el Cuerpo de varios tópicos relacionados con el tema de la muerte--la descripción del entierro, el *ubi sunt*, y el *quid profuit*--,⁷ es paralela a la que se opera en *Grisel* cuando alrededor del debate central sobre la responsabilidad en la conquista amorosa se incluye un motivo cortés como los temores y los riesgos a los que se expone el enamorado, tema de la disputa inicial entre Grisel y el otro caballero. El debate entre la Reyna y el Rey sobre el cumplimiento de la sentencia queda asociado a la tradición como confluencia de otros motivos tópicos de disputa. En primera instancia, ese debate constituye un ejemplo más de la confrontación entre Piedad y Justicia, otro tema tópico de debate en la Edad Media. La intercesión de la Reyna ante el Rey por la vida de Mirabella no puede sino recordar la intercesión de María ante Cristo por la salvación del Alma en los debates del Alma y el Cuerpo. La asociación de la Reyna con María se estrecha aun más si pensamos en el lamento de la Reyna por su hija como reelaboración del *planctus* de María en los debates entre María y la Cruz.⁸

Quedan por trazar otras relaciones menos obvias entre la *quaestio* central de *Grisel* y *Mirabella* y la *quaestio* tópica de los debates entre el Alma y el Cuerpo. Batiouchkof señala que los debates entre el Alma y el Cuerpo que tienen lugar durante la vida del hombre se remontan a una tradición cristiana, basada en la Epístola a los Gálatas (5,17), en la que se oponen las obras de la carne--los vicios--a los frutos del Espíritu--las virtudes. La relación entre el Cuerpo y el Alma en los debates anglosajones se expresa, según Woolf, a través de dos imágenes recurrentes: una es la del caballo y el jinete; otra es la del Alma y el Cuerpo como esposo y esposa o como pareja de amantes. Lo que subyace bajo esta imagen es, como bien señala Woolf, el presupuesto patrístico de que la mujer debe ser gobernada por el marido, como el cuerpo por el alma, y el peligro que implicaría la inversión de esas jerarquías. Las oposiciones paulinas cuerpo/espíritu, vicios/virtudes se homologan así a otra oposición tópica: esposa/esposo. Los debates literarios que, como el de Flores, plantean una oposición entre hombres y mujeres, asimilan la ecuación patrística cuerpo:vicios:mujer::espíritu:virtudes:hombre.

La polémica entre el Alma y el Cuerpo suele girar alrededor de un motivo: *el grado de responsabilidad que a cada uno le toca en relación con el pecado*, de lo cual se derivará *el castigo que se le impondrá a*

cada una de las partes después de la muerte. El debate planteado en *Grisel y Mirabella* sobre *quién tiene la mayor responsabilidad en la persecución amorosa*, si el varón o la mujer, y de acuerdo con ello, *qué castigo se le impondrá a cada uno*, reelabora, pues, la *quaestio* central de los debates del Alma y del Cuerpo. Tanto en estos debates como en el de Flores se plantea el problema de la responsabilidad ante el pecado, uno en el seno del individuo (el alma o el cuerpo), otro en el seno de una pareja o de la sociedad (Grisel o Mirabella, varones o mujeres). Ambas cuestiones caben en el marco de una concepción de ascendencia paulino-agustiniana, según la cual los elementos de ambos pares de opuestos se corresponden uno a uno, como los elementos de una homología. El texto de Flores queda de este modo asociado no solamente al debate como género, sino también, más específicamente, a una de sus vertientes más enraizadas en el problema religioso-moral del pecado y la culpa.

La estructura del texto de Flores se comprende así en el marco de la tradición del debate literario. El combate de generosidad, en tanto debate individual, deriva en el juicio público en la corte, siguiendo la estructura de tantos otros debates anteriores. La relación entre el debate individual entre Grisel y Mirabella y el debate central entre Braçayda y Torrellas y, sobre todo, la tan cuestionada pertinencia de éste, se aclara ahora, a la luz de los múltiples debates que se inician como un enfrentamiento entre dos personas, tipos o elementos que, incapaces de llegar a un acuerdo, deciden someter el caso a un juicio público. El hecho de que en el segundo debate no sean Grisel y Mirabella sus propios abogados sino que a cada parte se le asigne un defensor idóneo--Torrellas y Braçayda--, tiene, como hemos visto, antecedentes tales como las aves del *Jugement* francés, o el diablo y el ángel en los debates del Alma y el Cuerpo. El debate literario informa el texto de Flores procurándole a la historia de Grisel y Mirabella un modelo estructural en el cual los pasajes narrativos y los cuatro grandes módulos dialógicos quedan motivados no sólo por el devenir de la fábula sino también por la tradición del debate como género literario.

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NOTAS

¹ Véanse el debate del *Cuerpo y el Alma* y sus sucesores, la *Disputa entre un Cristiano y un Judío*, *Elena y María*, las diversas versiones de la *Disputa entre el Amor y un viejo*, el debate del *Agua y el Vino* incluido en *Razón de amor*, entre Seso y Corazón en el *Sueño* de

Santillana, entre Pobreza y Fortuna en el *Corbacho*, y entre Razón y Voluntad en *Triste Delectacion*.

² Véanse el *Rosae Liliique Certamen* de Sedulio Scoto (*Poetae Latini*, 3: 230-1), y el poema de Walafrid Strabo (s.ix) (Raby, *Oxford* 316-7).

³ Véanse en edición de Wright el *Goliae Dialogus inter Aquam et Vinum* (87-92), una versión francesa del siglo xiii (299-306) y un poema español del s. xvii (306-10); una versión latina (95-106), una anglo-normanda (321-333) y tres versiones inglesas (334-49) del debate entre el Alma y el Cuerpo; y las versiones del debate entre el Corazón y el Ojo publicadas por Wright (93-5) y por Raby (*Oxford*, 389-90 y 310-21).

⁴ Véanse el debate *De Navigio et Agricultura* (*Poetae Latini*, Vol. 4, part. 1, 244-6) y en Wright (251-7 y 237-42) un debate entre el Cura y el Lógico y otro entre monjes de dos órdenes contrarias.

⁵ Véase Raby, *History* 290-4; Menéndez Pidal, 69.

⁶ En *La Disputoison du Vin et de l'Jaue* la disputa tiene lugar en la corte de Cupido (Hanford, "Debate" 330); la *Bataille des Vins*, de Henri d'Andeli, se desarrolla ante el Rey Felipe (332); en *Goliae Dialogus inter Aquam et Vinum*, Tetis y Liaeus llevan su causa ante un tribunal.

⁷ En dos versiones del debate sobre el Alma y el Cuerpo, se incluye una arenga final sobre el Dogma de la Redención (Batiouchkof 525); en una versión provenzal, al debate entre el Alma y el Cuerpo sigue un debate de los órganos contra el Cuerpo, y un tercer debate entre el ángel y el diablo (535); en una versión de Bonvesin da Riva, al debate entre el Alma y el Cuerpo le sigue un debate entre los órganos, y derivado de éste otro entre el corazón y el ojo (341).

⁸ Sobre los debates entre María y la Cruz y el plantus de María véase Yeager.

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LE MOYEN DE PARVENIR DE FRANÇOIS BÉROALDE DE VERVILLE: UNE ENCYCLOPÉDIE À L'ENVERS

Bernd Renner

Le moyen de parvenir de François Béroalde de Verville est une œuvre extrêmement complexe. Dans le titre, l'auteur nous dit lui-même qu'il s'agit d'une sorte d'encyclopédie. C'est avant tout le sous-titre qui souligne cette entreprise ambitieuse: Œuvre contenant la raison de tout ce qui a esté, est & sera: avec demonstrations certaines & nécessaires, selon la rencontre des effets de VERTU." Le cas est cependant loin d'être aussi facile que le titre le laisse supposer puisque l'encyclopédie en question se distingue considérablement de tout texte de ce genre qui fut écrit avant ou sera écrit après. Nous proposons une étude de la table des matières de la première partie du *Moyen*--qui comporte 62 chapitres--pour élucider le problème de catégorisation que pose cette œuvre.

En guise de remarque préliminaire, il serait avantageux de comparer brièvement cette fameuse table avec les éléments structurants des "romans" de Rabelais, un précurseur, d'un côté, et ceux de l'*Encyclopédie* de Diderot et D'Alembert, des successeurs, de l'autre côté. Chez Rabelais, les titres des chapitres sont descriptifs, voire de véritables résumés de l'action tandis que l'*Encyclopédie* est schématisée à un très haut degré car les entrées, consistant en général d'un seul mot, suivent l'alphabète. Béroalde se situe entre ces deux grands textes, non seulement temporellement mais aussi épistémologiquement. Ses titres ne sont plus descriptifs comme ceux de Rabelais, mais ils ne suivent pas d'ordre logique apparent non plus comme chez Diderot.

La seule table des matières de Béroalde constitue une encyclopédie en elle-même car il s'agit, à quelques exceptions près, d'un recueil de termes techniques et de mots-clés pris des différentes catégories du savoir universel de l'époque: rhétorique, grammaire, linguistique, mathématiques et religion pour n'en énumérer que les plus importantes. Tous les termes semblent se suivre sans aucun ordre préétabli. Au premier abord, il paraît donc justifié de constater qu'on a affaire à une encyclopédie "anti-encyclopédiste" dans le sens traditionnel du terme, qui suppose la présence structurante d'un schéma assez rigide. Par conséquent, on pourrait dire, au moins en tant que point de départ, que le système de notre auteur repose sur le manque apparent de tout système.

Ceci dit, il faut tout de suite constater que l'on peut bel et bien dégager un certain système, aussi codé et anti-traditionnel qu'il soit, si l'on quitte la surface et se met à regarder cette fameuse table de plus

près. Sa structure générale est la première chose à sauter aux yeux grâce à la place plus ou moins étrange d'un grand nombre de titres. On s'attendrait par exemple à la "Conclusion" à la fin de l'ouvrage tout en s'en apercevant plutôt au début (chap. 13); en outre, le "Résultat" (chap. 25) précède la "Cause" (chap. 31), le "Poinct" (chap. 2) ouvre le livre au lieu de le clôturer et le "Sommaire" (chap. 57) est suivi de cinq chapitres.

Ce procédé d'arranger les chapitres semble choisi au hasard. Pourtant, si l'on se souvient de la prédilection des humanistes pour l'encodage de leurs textes, on peut tout de même essayer de discerner un système, au moins jusqu'à un certain degré, dans cette table appelée complètement obscure par la plupart des critiques.¹

"Cause" (chap. 31) et "Minute" (chap. 32), par exemple, se trouvent tout au milieu du texte, les deux étant reliés par la phrase "[...] c'est assez causé [...]" (137) au début du chapitre 32. La "cause" et, par conséquent, l'origine sont donc situées au point de fuite de cette première partie, entourées symétriquement par d'autres symboles de la genèse tels que le "Chapitre général" (29) et la "Généalogie" (34).

Après cette excursion au centre du texte, on va proposer et essayer de justifier la division suivante: Les chapitres un à douze constitueraient une sorte d'introduction, la partie principale s'étendrait du chapitre 14 au chapitre 49 tandis que les chapitres 51 à 62 formeraient la fin, la "Conclusion" (13) et le "Commentaire" (50) fonctionnant comme des transitions entre les différentes parties. Cela nous donnerait une symétrie parfaite (12+1+36+1+12), qui ne détruit pourtant pas la thèse de l'envers, la seule position de la "Conclusion" (et de beaucoup d'autres chapitres) soulignant cet aspect.

La qualification du chapitre 13 comme transitoire est assez évidente. A la fin du chapitre précédent ("Vidimus", 51), on apprend que "CE LIVRE EST LE CENTRE DE TOUS LES LIVRES" juste avant d'accéder à la partie principale. La "Conclusion" même nous prépare davantage à ce qui attend le lecteur:

Recevez donc ce present, ce passé, ce futur, beaux & fidelles esprits, vous y trouverez un insigne profit; attendu que tous les livres qui furent jamais faits, ou seront faits par hommes ou femmes, filles ou garçons, ou neutres, sont signez, ou marquez, ou paraphrasez, ou predictions de cestuy-cy tant naïf, clair & evident, lequel est la fin finale & intelligible de tous; & ainsi tous ne sont & ne seront que interpretations des secrets icy exposez, & qui ne se trouvent que par dessein en ce beau petit abundant moule de perfection exemplaire. (54)

Après avoir esquissé son projet encyclopédique--et implicitement celui de l'envers, déjà par la seule position de la "Conclusion"--Béroalde est donc à même d'entamer la partie principale de son livre. Pour soutenir cette thèse, il ne faut pas manquer de voir que la conversation du banquet ne commence véritablement qu'au chapitre suivant, "Correlaire", et que les personnages célèbres ne se mettent à parler qu'au chapitre 15, "Dessein".

Le chapitre symétrique à la "Conclusion" serait alors le "Commentaire", qui terminerait la partie principale. A nouveau, la fin du chapitre précédent fait une allusion à ce qui va suivre lorsque Petronius dit: "Cela me fait souvenir de la fortune de frere Ian de Laillee nostre amy defunct; il sera possible tantost icy" (247). Ces remarques s'enchaînent à la fin d'une des multiples histoires dans l'histoire et illustrent ainsi le problème principal de l'auteur et des célèbres invités en nous fournissant implicitement le titre du chapitre suivant, un des leitmotifs de l'ouvrage: *comment (se) taire?* Tout énoncé, toute histoire en évoque d'autres. Evidemment, Béroalde ne trouve pas la bonne réponse non plus et, par conséquent, continue à écrire.

Le chapitre 51, "Distinction", donc le début de la fin, fournit un excellent exemple du côté anti-encyclopédique du texte à travers la satire de la recherche de la vérité absolue qui se manifeste dans le renversement et la déconstruction du concept de la pierre philosophale:

A cause dequoi il advient toujours quelque disgrâce a ces pauvres innocens, & leur tombe quelque eschet, tesmoin celui qui preschoit à Dampierre quand nous y chercions la *pierre philosophale*, avec tous ces barons de Normandie, & que nous beusmes le bon vin que Nabot avait persuadé à Monsieur de Chansegré d'y faire apporter pour en faire la poudre de projection; il y avait blanc & rouge, c'estoit faire la *pierre* pour la projection de l'argent & de l'or potable; j'avais avec moy mon *Pierre*, qui estoit un bon *Vaurien*. Le Dimanche venu nous ouïsmes le sermon d'un Cordelier, qui avoit un ulcère en une jambe; & le theme de son preschement estoit: *modicum*, qu'il repeta plusieurs fois; ce qui fut cause que mon valet fortit, disant; "Que diable avons-nous affaire si le *maudit con* lui a fait tort: les *faucons* engendrent les mauvis, & les mauvis les *fauxcons*. Quand ce moine fut guari, il s'en alla, & prit congé du cul & de la teste, comme c'est la coutume. (250-251, mes italiques)

Comme partout dans ce livre, tous les ingrédients se mélangent: les causes, les résultats, les pierres et même les cons! La vérité absolue

n'est qu'un mythe dont le cerveau humain n'est pas à même de venir au bout. La plupart des titres de la partie finale suggèrent l'absence de cette vérité, d'un tout homogène qu'on peut maîtriser: "Distinction", "Partie", "Section", "Epistre", "Théorème", "Stance". Mais Béroalde ne serait pas Béroalde s'il se laissait catégoriser si facilement. On n'est donc guère étonné de voir au moins trois titres qui vont à l'encontre de notre théorie, à savoir "Canon" (55), "Sommaire" (57) et "Absolution" (59). Ils peuvent néanmoins être interprétés comme l'exploration des limites extrêmes de l'incertitude en laissant même celle-ci incertaine.

De pareils éléments se trouvent déjà dans "l'introduction", ce qui renforce l'aspect symétrique. Les deux seuls termes mathématiques des parties initiales et finales respectivement suffisent pour démontrer la progression vers l'incertitude, "Axiome" étant remplacé par "Théorème". En outre, des chapitres tels que "Question 1" (1), "Paraphrase" (3), "Coqalagne" (9) et "Circoncision" (10) donnent une description plus adéquate de ce que l'auteur tâche de faire, c'est-à-dire de tourner autour du centre inaccessible d'une vérité absolue et d'intégrer tous les sujets possibles sans nécessairement créer des transitions ou un ordre logique.

En regardant de plus près les chapitres 9 et 10, on trouvera d'amples illustrations de ce qui fut dit au cours de cette étude. En fait, "Coqalagne" décrit le style du texte tellement bien qu'il pourrait servir comme sous-titre du livre. Le chapitre même est une excellente illustration de son titre. Janis Pallister a bien vu cette qualité du *Moyen* et remarque: "Le *M de p* is a long series of digressions" (67). Voilà le lien avec la notion de la paraphrase, elle aussi un trait caractéristique du style de Béroalde et le titre du chapitre 3, qui, comme la plupart des titres de l'introduction, sert à annoncer la couleur tout en se trouvant exemplifiée au sein du chapitre qu'il intitule. En l'occurrence, la grande paraphrase qu'est le chapitre 3 est due au manque de savoir du narrateur: "[...] les petarades sentoient je ne sçay quoy de la musique ancienne [...]" (9). En plus, "L'Autre", incarnation de l'incertitude et de l'instabilité, y paraît pour la première fois. Neil Kenny fait une observation très intéressante à son sujet:

Difference has even invaded the stable identity of the interlocutors, for their voices are different from the historical personae they designate. Moreover, one of the 'voices', enigmatically called 'L'Autre', may be different each time it recurs. (Kenny 145)

Le concept de l'envers, qui nous fait voir le manque de certitude et de stabilité en renversant notre ordre artificiel, se reflète donc également

dans les personnages du texte. La manière béroaldienne de se servir des "célébrités historiques" fait évidemment penser au chapitre XXX du *Pantagruel*, où Rabelais présente des personnages historiques d'une façon similaire. Dans les deux textes, le renversement du savoir commun, des idées reçues et, par conséquent, de la certitude est exprimé par la divergence entre, d'un côté, la présentation et les paroles des interlocuteurs célèbres, telles que les deux auteurs les fournissent, ainsi que, de l'autre côté, l'attente du lecteur.

Terminons par le chapitre-clé du texte, "Circoncision", qui illustre l'argumentation de notre étude et fournit à la fois un concept théorique important de l'écriture:

[Vous] trouverez en ces textes & memoires *meslees* de toute sapience, moyens, elemens, & enseignemens à bien vivre, les *meslanges* que vous trouverez sont survenus à cause de l'antiquité de ce volume, & des annotations, apostilles, & interpretations qui y estoient mises, & le Gentilhomme qui le transcrivit pour vostre avancement en toute sagesse a tout escrit d'une suite, *meslant sans distinction glose & texte*; ainsi que quand vous estes à table, vous qui ne jusnez pas, vous mangez des viandes prises deça & dela, selon l'occurence. Quant aux jusneurs de Caresme, ils mangent par couches, comme les bonnes femmes qui mettent des herbes à distiller; ils mangent le potage, puis des eschaudez au beurre frais, des entrees, des pois, des feves, des harangs, des pruneaux, puis le poisson, puis le dessert, & tout à cause du jusne. Je vous assure que ce livre estoit simple & net, beau comme le jour, ainsi qu'il est encores, bien qu'il soit *peste-mesle* de notes & considerations à la façon du bon homme Guyon, qui à l'âge de cent ans se mit à vivre capuchinement; il avait esté page de chez le Roy, puis il estudia, fut à la guerre, se fit Cordelier, s'en retira pour estre huguenot, se fit sçavant, devint Ministre, mangea tout, puis se mit à demander sa vie: on luy donnoit de tout ce qui luy falloit, qu'il mettoit en son escuelle, pain, chair, souppe, potage, vin, sert, dessert ensemble; & on luy disoit, "Pourquoy ne mangez-vous & boivez d'ordre & à part? - Ha ha, disoit-il, ...puis qu'ils se doivent *mesler* au ventre, il n'y a point de danger de luy envoyer tout déjà *meslé*." De mesme cecy doit estre *meslé en vostre cervelle*, il le vous faut bailler tout *meslé*; le personnage qui vous produit en toute honneur ces saints memoires de perfection, a pensé que *le texte ne valloit pas mieux que le commentaire*, parquoy il les a fait aller ensemble. Donques soit que vous le lisiez ou non, ou que vous commenciez icy ou là, n'importe, ce livre est par tout plein de fidelles instructions &

sens parfait, tellement que c'est tout un par où vous le lisiez. Il est un *globe* d'infinie doctrine, il y a autant à apprendre en lieu qu'en l'autre. (35-37, mes italiques)

Ce passage résume parfaitement la nature du *Moyen*. Il se distingue des livres traditionnels par son manque de schéma traditionnel. Ceci dit, il devient logique de présenter tout d'une manière mélangée et non pas linéaire. La façon béroaldienne d'écrire semble donc plus proche d'une véritable réflexion de la vie, qui ressemble plutôt à un chaos qu'à une construction clairement organisée. Il crée son propre univers sur le modèle du monde dans lequel il vit. Cette comparaison est renforcée par la métaphore du globe. Kenny de remarquer que l'écriture de Béroalde "represents increasingly the *meslanges* of the human mind itself. The mind comes to be conceived as yet another area of sublunar nature in which flux and variety outweigh order and uniformity. The mixed, fragmented structure of the miscellanies represents explicitly and implicitly the mind of both reader and author" (145).²

L'auteur donne alors l'impression d'avoir accès au cerveau humain où tout le savoir de l'humanité est emmagasiné sans être dans un ordre net qui faciliterait sa disponibilité. C'est "l'état naturel" du savoir accumulé qui, dans toute sa richesse, exige un effort considérable de tout usager pour le rendre accessible. Nous revoilà à la notion d'une encyclopédie anti-encyclopédique.

L'aspect de la "satyre universelle", comme dit Pallister citant Béroalde dans *Le palais des curieux*, se trouve renforcé par le fait que "mélange" fut souvent utilisé pour désigner la "satire" (Pallister 43-44). Kenny de conclure:

The Guyon passage elaborates the traditional definition of *satura* as a dish of mixed foods. Satire is so commonly associated with mixture in the period that it can even be denoted simply by the term *meslange*. The *satura* metaphor can designate a mixture either of genres . . . or else of tones . . . *Le moyen* is a *satura* in the sense of a *meslange* of both tones and genres. Satire becomes, like the miscellany, a meta-genre which can contain a range of heterogeneous forms: symposium, dialogue, *conte*, question, . . .

Béroalde's *satura* metaphor does not designate *Le moyen* as a mixture which will be neatly unravelled when it enters the reader's mind. (152)

Ces observations relèvent en même temps du caractère paraphrastique du texte, qui se distingue par ses énumérations encyclopédiques de

synonymes. De cette manière, l'auteur accomplit son but de tourner autour d'un centre inaccessible, qui ne se laisse exprimer que par l'intermédiaire d'euphémismes, qui ont fréquemment tendance à souligner le côté satirique du *Moyen*. La discussion des "Membres d'Amour" (37), prise également de la "Circoncision", va élucider ce problème et en même temps illustrer à nouveau les multiples rapports entre titre et contenu des chapitres:

[N]ous vetillons pres le feu, & la belle pour se chauffer haussa un peu la euisse & sa chemise pour faire *con-voi-tison*, parce qu'elle y avait froid, dont je m'estonne, pource qu'il fait bien chaud là où il ne fit jamais froid, & où il y a toujours du feu. Je luy dy, "Belle, cachez vostre *Cela*;" elle me dit, "Qu'est-ce que mon *Cela*? - C'est vostre *minon*. - Qu'est-ce que mon *minon*? - C'est vostre *petiot de delectation*. - Qu'est-ce que mon *petiot de delectation*? - C'est celui qui a perdu de l'argent. - Qu'est-ce qui a perdu de l'argent? - C'est celui qui regarde contre bas. - Qui est celui qui regarde contre bas? - C'est vostre *petit crot à faire bon bon*. - Qu'est-ce que mon *petit crot à faire bon bon*? - C'est vostre *chose*. - Qu'est-ce que mon *chose*? - C'est vostre *Con*. - Qu'est-ce, qu'est-ce? - Je le diray à Madame." (38, mes italiques)

Voilà un exemple excellent de synonymes et de jeux de mots tournant autour d'une seule chose.

En conclusion, on peut constater que deux des aspects-clés du texte, à savoir l'impossibilité d'accéder à une vérité absolue ainsi que l'envers, qui rétablit un ordre plus naturel des choses et fonctionne donc comme une sorte de révolte contre la linéarité et la clarté artificielles imposées à la vie, se reflètent déjà dans la table des matières, dont les titres témoignent bel et bien d'un rapport avec le contenu des chapitres. Il résulte presque logiquement de tout cela que l'écriture fragmentaire de Béroalde a été qualifiée comme "postmoderne", ce qui a certainement contribué à la redécouverte de son œuvre au vingtième siècle.

NOTES

¹ Voir par exemple les commentaires de Janis Pallister.

² Kenny 148. Voir aussi son commentaire à la page 150, qui souligne l'analogie entre les tâches de l'estomac et du cerveau: "This separation and ordering of mixed food is analogous to the gradual processing of the mixed and heterogeneous text by the reader's mind."

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LA CRÓNICA DE CHAC-XULUB CHEN: EL SUJETO PRÁCTICO DEL "A SABER" COMO ESTRATEGIA NARRATIVA DEL DISCURSO DE LA CONQUISTA

Matías P-Miñambres

El objeto cognoscitivo,¹ "los saberes" que circulan en el eje de la comunicación discursiva entre el narrador/narratario de *La crónica de Chac-Xulub Chen* de Ah Nakuk Pech, consiste--como nos asegura Miguel León-Portilla, compilador de esta crónica maya del *Reverso de la conquista*²--en referir, contar, relatar "algunos de los hechos principales de la Conquista" (85). El autor de esta crónica, escrita en la segunda mitad del siglo XVI, fue un testigo ocular de los hechos que refiere. La presencia directa del narrador durante los sucesos narrados no evita, no obstante, la necesidad del uso de estrategias legitimadoras de su versión de la Conquista. Vamos a tratar de mostrar cómo el narrador empuja y manipula al narratario con el latiguillo del "a saber:" "Así vista, la manipulación se define por una dimensión contractual" (Lozano 82). Dicho con otras palabras: la fuerza del "a saber" permite al narrador de esta crónica poner al narratario en una posición de no-poder no-aceptar la verdad de su versión de los hechos narrados.

Aquí lo que nos interesa es la "jugada" que el narrador pone en juego con el fin de legitimar "el objeto de valor" intercambiado: su versión de la Conquista y/o la verdad de la versión de los hechos narrados. Más concretamente, tratamos de ver la actitud del narrador-destinador en su relación, o "contrato fiduciario,"³ con el narratario-destinatario, la cual "pone en juego un hacer persuasivo" (Greimas y Courtés 174). El "decir-verdad" del narrador necesita de una manipulación de su discurso cognoscitivo para que sea efectiva la comunicación y por consiguiente el "creer-verdad" del narratario se haga efectivo: "El saber no encuentra su validez en sí mismo, en un sujeto que se desarrolla al actualizar sus posibilidades de conocimiento, sino en un sujeto práctico que es la humanidad" (Lyotard, *La condición* 69). Humanidad representada aquí en el "a saber" que abarcaría a todos los integrantes de la comunidad a la que pertenece el narrador.

Resumiendo, el "hacer persuasivo" del narrador tiene que elegir una estrategia narrativa en la "operación cognoscitiva" que se lleva a cabo obligatoriamente en el eje de la comunicación de toda práctica discursiva. Nuestra proposición localiza este "sujeto práctico" del saber dentro de la expresión textual "a saber" que validaría la versión de la Conquista del narrador de *La crónica de Chac-Xulub Chen*.

Queremos mostrar que la estrategia narrativa usada en esta crónica, el "hacer persuasivo," sustenta y/o legitima "los hechos de la Conquista"

desde una posición manipuladora o locus enunciativo de poder anclado en el "sujeto práctico" del "a saber." Esta estratégica jugada del narrador fuerza a aceptar el objeto de conocimiento intercambiado en su simulacro de comunicación con el narratario. La intrusión-función del "a saber" en la relación de la historia contada por el narrador está localizada en el nivel de comunicación del discurso: entre las dos instancias del "contrato fiduciario," entre el "hacer persuasivo" del narrador y el "hacer interpretativo" del narratario.

La instancia legitimadora desde la que se posiciona el narrador para comunicar su saber coincide muy significativamente con la isotopía-recurrencia central materializada en el "a saber." Recurrencia que, por otra parte, da coherencia al texto. Los diccionarios definen esta expresión como: "esto es, que se sepa, como sabes muy bien, esto es así ..." Expresión que se hace eco del saber social-colectivo del "sujeto práctico que es la humanidad" del mundo de la comunidad donde habita el narrador. "Mundo natural" que es incorporado a través del "a saber" al "mundo ficticio y/o posible" de la narración de los hechos de la Conquista. Esta citación impersonal-universal "tiene como única función afirmar--manteniendo la exigencia de correferencialidad semántica con el yo de la cláusula performativa--la realidad del mundo ficticio" (Reyes 98). Citación estratégica que legitima "la competencia" del narrador cuya jugada se apoya en la sabiduría colectiva-impersonal encarnada en el "a saber."⁴

La fuerza de la colectividad que habita el "a saber" desafía y seduce la competencia del narratario presionándole a aceptar la versión de los hechos narrados a partir de una doble estrategia. Jean Baudrillard describe brillantemente las dos caras de la estrategia del narrador afirmando que:

Challenge and seduction are extremely similar. And yet is there not a difference? The challenge consists in drawing the other within your area of strength, given that there can be an unlimited escalation. Whereas the strategy of seduction consists in drawing the other within your area of weakness, which will also be his or hers. (162)

El narratario no está en posición de enfrentarse a las dos caras del "sujeto práctico" que habita el "a saber" esgrimido por el narrador. Es decir, la manipulación es doble y por tanto el "efecto de verdad" buscado por el narrador más efectivo.

Esta frase, "a saber," "es una frase descriptiva, . . . o sea, regida por el criterio de lo verdadero y lo falso" (Lyotard, *La posmodernidad* 53). Frase que, por otra parte, le viene al narrador como anillo al dedo para sus propósitos. Tanto el valor semántico, su significado universal,

como su naturaleza pragmática se adecúan a la perfección con la necesidad legitimadora y la naturaleza temática de su discurso.

El narrador de esta crónica seduce y provoca a lo largo de su relato al narratario con su "a saber." Esto es: "por un lado el narrador presupone la competencia de su lector Modelo; por otro lado, en cambio, la instituye" (Eco 80-81). Esta expresión lexicalizada confirma y legitima la autoridad del narrador y consecuentemente lo pone en situación de explicar "la causa y la razón" primera de la Conquista desde el privilegio del poder narrativo autoconferido por el "a saber." Esta causa-razón permitiría explicar el cambio experimentado en su mundo que condujo a la situación presente desde la que se cuentan los hechos de armas de los españoles. La instancia narrativa de esta crónica está situada temporalmente después de la cristianización que comenzó casi simultánea a la conquista militar "en 1545" en "Zacá:" "Allí fue donde llegaron los padres que empuñaban a nuestro redentor Jesucristo en sus manos . . . aquí . . . estábamos atrasados de que viniera el cristianismo" (92).

Estas dos caras, esta doble estrategia persuasiva del "hacer-parecer-verdad" del "a saber," el toma y daca del acicate legitimador del narrador homodiegético, también recibe apoyo y/o se hace ayudar de la colectividad convocada con el "desembrague cognoscitivo" del "nosotros, aquí, en los cupules" (89). La manipulación en la imposición del "contrato fiduciario," síntoma de actitud del discurso del narrador, funciona como estrategia narrativa en consonancia con la focalización subjetiva-homodiegética de testigo de los hechos. Desde esta perspectiva, el "a saber" se convierte en una de las señales o marcas pragmáticas de la personalidad del narrador, de lo que hace al decir.

Se puede decir que la instancia manipuladora del "a saber" se combina con la búsqueda de una relación de causalidad de la Conquista: "Y ésta, a saber, fue la causa de que se conocieran [los españoles] en la comarca . . ." (89). La razón de "la causa" de la llegada de los españoles, el descubrimiento de Aguilar, pertenece "al conjunto de las reglas que debe respetar un discurso si se propone conocer y hacer conocer un objeto (su referente)" (Lyotard, *La posmodernidad* 73). La Conquista de los españoles es la causa y razón del estado actual de los cupules a los que pertenece el narrador. Narrador que se supone está tratando de explicar y comunicar su versión de los hechos a un narratario de su comunidad que podría ser colectivo.

El narrador indica su situación intradiegética dentro de la acción de la conquista en el primer párrafo: "Entonces yo conté ante el príncipe que había venido . . ." (89). Este saber personal no es garante de la firma del "contrato fiduciario" por el narratario, lo cual hace necesaria la declaración de verdad universal: "Y ésta, a saber, fue la causa de que

se conocieran en la comarca" los españoles que trajeron el cambio a su mundo.

Al afirmar que la aprehensión de Aguilar es la causa primera de lo que vendrá después, el narrador presupone que en otro tiempo la existencia de los españoles fue desconocida. Es decir, la llegada de los españoles presupone un cambio radical y drástico en su mundo que se trata de comunicar y explicar en esta y otras crónicas del *Reverso de la conquista*. Esta presuposición está afirmando las diferencias ocurridas en su mundo con la introducción del cambio a tratar, es decir, la irrupción de "los señores extranjeros" en su mundo y el consiguiente trastorno efectuado por el descubrimiento hecho por Jerónimo de Aguilar.

La autoridad que se arroga el narrador a través de la afirmación declarativa mencionada, "y ésta, a saber, fue la causa," pretende ser válida en el mundo exterior a la narración apoyándose en el "sujeto práctico" que habita el "a saber." Esta expresión conforma la base desde la que se legitima *La crónica de Chac Xulub Chen* y desde la cual se hace posible la aceptación y firma del "contrato fiduciario" sólo posible desde el "creer-verdad" del narratario. El desafío del "a saber" esgrimido por el narrador no excluye la seducción del narratario, ya que le da la oportunidad de intervenir en la narración como posible corrector disidente de su versión de los hechos. Intervención sólo posible en el caso de que tuviere algo que añadir o negar. Posibilidad dudosa debido a las características pragmático-semánticas del "a saber:" del latiguillo legitimador del narrador.

Esta postura retórica del narrador marca la importancia en la transmisión histórica de la "propia realidad" llevada a cabo en una sociedad comunal. Es decir, el narrador combate la posible duda que se pudiere levantar en el narratario buscando al mismo tiempo el consenso: "El consenso que permite circunscribir tal saber y diferenciar al que sabe del que no sabe (el extraño, el niño) es lo que constituye la cultura de un pueblo" (Lyotard, *La condición* 45). La duda sobre la verdad de los hechos narrados echaría por tierra la firma del "contrato fiduciario" sólo posible a partir del consenso. La posible duda tiene su razón de ser en la relatividad (o arbitrariedad) inherente en la presentación de la "propia realidad" del narrador: "El discurso de la verdad ya no funciona, pues, del antiguo modo en que la palabra 'dada,' el juramento 'prestado' bastaba para garantizarlo" (Greimas 128). La fuerza del "a saber," con su estrategia relativa a la seducción-desafío de los posibles "saberes" del narratario, combate esta posible duda a lo largo de toda la relación de los hechos narrados en *La crónica de Chac-Xulub Chen*. Si el narratario, como suponemos, pertenece a la misma comunidad que el narrador, el acatamiento del objeto de valor intercambiado en el eje de la comunicación discursiva

tiene que ser total. Si no fuera así, el narratario se estaría excluyendo de su propio mundo. Exclusión que le pondría en situación de extraño, "de extranjero," al negarse a reconocer el saber social de la comunidad expresado por el "sujeto práctico" que habita el "a saber."

Las dos caras esgrimidas por el "a saber" del narrador, esto es, la seducción y el desafío, son simétricas de dos posibles actitudes del narratario en cuanto a los hechos narrados: la de la aceptación o la del rechazo de la firma del "contrato fiduciario." La densa sociabilidad que preside las comunidades pre-modernas a las que pertenece el narrador, las que para la mayoría de sus miembros eran el universo en el que la totalidad de la vida estaba inscrita, no permitiría vivir dentro de su seno a ninguno de sus miembros estigmatizado como extranjero; por lo cual el narratario obviamente preferirá la firma del contrato a la autoexclusión que provocaría su negación.

Este tipo de construcción recurrente, "a saber," goza de gran prestigio y relevancia dentro del marco de la discusión epistemológica sobre la relatividad del marco de la transmisión del conocimiento que se produce en la realización del "contrato fiduciario." Su importancia está ligada tanto a la fuerza del infinitivo atemporal, en relación con las características universalizadoras de este tipo de expresiones lexicalizadas, como al uso pragmático que se hace de esta expresión en el habla de todos los días. No olvidemos que "la causa-efecto" es central a la explicación-relación de los hechos de la Conquista de esta y otras crónicas. Es decir:

Si entendemos "crónica" [como Reyes] en su sentido más frecuente y general, el de relato completo de unos acontecimientos realmente sucedidos, contados en el orden lineal del tiempo, de modo que la secuencia temporal explique las relaciones de causa-efecto o al menos garantice la comprensibilidad de los hechos. (215)

El determinar la causa primera de la Conquista se inserta, así pues, dentro del deseo del narrador de querer explicar las razones que desencadenaron el posterior aluvión del "hombre de hierro" en América, como diría Américo Castro.

La posición narrativa creada por la invocación a la autoridad del "a saber" une al narrador y al narratario en un núcleo compacto que se manifiesta, como ya observamos, por las referencias a "nuestra tierra" (89), a "nosotros, aquí, en los cupules" (92). Este locus colectivo de la enunciación, fundamentado sobre las bases manipulativas del narrador, puede así pedir una aceptación general de la legitimidad del juicio acerca de la causa de la Conquista (el descubrimiento hecho por

Aguilar) y las consecuencias-efecto del cambio sobre el mundo que aparece en la historia.

A lo largo del relato el narrador está haciendo algo más que decirnos cómo son las personas y los sucesos de la historia contada. Su intrusión o intervención con la expresión "a saber" está mostrando su autoridad narrativa que se sustenta en la complicidad y aceptación inapelable del narratario acerca de la autoridad del saber colectivo.

El propósito de la retórica del "a saber" consiste en crear un grupo de iniciados: una audiencia que "sepa las cosas" para así poder llegar a una explicación de los cambios experimentados en su mundo desde la llegada de los "comedores de anonas:"

Este año se terminó de llevar el katún; a saber, se terminó de poner la piedra pública . . . Se ponía en pie la piedra pública años antes de que llegaran los señores extranjeros, los españoles, aquí, a la comarca. Desde que vinieron los españoles fue que no se hizo nunca más. (89-90)

La llegada de los españoles habría puesto punto final a una de las actividades en las que la forma de vida comunal se reconoce más intensamente. Vida comunal marcada en este ejemplo por el "se" impersonal. Vida comunal que colapsaría sin duda con la llegada de "los señores extranjeros."

El desafío y la seducción del "a saber," así pues, compensa la focalización interna de la instancia narrativa y compromete la verdad individual del narrador con el "decir-verdad" universal-comunal legitimado desde el saber colectivo del "sujeto práctico." Este distanciamiento de la instancia narrativa a través de la retórica del "a saber" conecta, en fin, la experiencia exterior del texto con el narratario-oyente-lector puestos en situación de aceptar sin rechistar el mensaje-objeto transmitido. De esta manera el narrador homodiegético suple su relatividad individual, en cuanto al conocimiento de los hechos, al mismo tiempo que desarrolla la jugada legitimadora de su relato. Y de esta manera también, el objeto de valor intercambiado en el eje comunicativo del discurso, la relación de los sucesos de la Conquista, se transmite haciendo posible y efectiva la firma del "contrato fiduciario" de *La crónica de Chac-Xulub Chen*.

NOTAS

¹ "En semiótica, el adjetivo cognoscitivo sirve de término especificador; remite a diversas formas de articulación del saber: producción, manipulación, organización, recepción, asunción" (Greimas y Courtés 59). La mayor parte de nuestra nomenclatura de análisis, y que aparece entrecomillada en el texto, sigue de cerca el citado *Diccionario razonado de la teoría del lenguaje* de A. J. Greimas y J. Courtés.

² Todas las citas de *La crónica de Chac-Xulub Chen* las hacemos siguiendo *El reverso de la conquista* de Miguel León-Portilla.

³ "El contrato fiduciario pone en juego un hacer persuasivo por parte del destinador y, en compensación, la adhesión del destinatario: de esta manera, si el objeto del hacer persuasivo es la veridicción (el decir-verdad) del enunciador, el contra-objeto--cuya obtención se da por descontada--consiste en un creer-verdad que el enunciador otorga al estatuto del discurso-enunciado" (Greimas 174).

⁴ Aquí entendemos competencia como "conocimiento implícito o explícito de las reglas psicológicas, culturales, y sociales, presupuestas por la comunicación" (Greimas 69).

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ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING HÉRACLIUS IN CORNEILLE'S HÉRACLIUS OR THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF NOT BEING DEAD

James J. Byrnes

In *Héraclius* Corneille continues his examination of what he termed "implete" dramatic situations, situations that permit him to explore the functioning of desire in all of its obfuscatory power. The world depicted in this play is characterized by an ontological richness that posits Being over circumstantial meaning. The constitution and measure of values generated by the imbroglios of desire, the choice of models and the "interindividual" erection of obstacles plunges the universe of the play into an extreme confusion; a confusion from which the final revelation can emerge after a crisis in which all individual and societal values are put in doubt, denied or menaced by a lack of differentiated identity--misapprehension, incest and parricide conjoin to threaten the ground of an intergenerational system of exchange.

Corneille's tragic theater shapes a discourse of subjectivity that brings into confrontation the meaning of self, kinship, society, and kingship, but is not simply reducible to this confrontation. Corneille's perceived role as propagandist of State order and social degree is shown to be a truism in need of continual interrogation. The world of the play has to await what appears to be a providential moment at the end of sustained disorder, a disorder from which can finally be disentangled the imbricated relationships of power and family relation. The logic of the tragedy is clearly a logic of the mimetic mechanism that has as its *telos* the maximum "natural" imbrication of incest and violence and its purgation. The final words of the play--"Montrer Héraclius au peuple qui l'attend" (*Héraclius* V.7. 1916), summarize both the action and the underlying sustaining collective momentum of the play and its congruent dilemma. The cruxes of the play can only be penetrated by an attention to the role of desire and violence within the process of victimization that negotiates a complex valuation of death and desire in all of their interactions. The trauma of temporality and mortality is dramatically resolved by the memorial, collective reunification around a pivotal absent discourse that symbolically constitutes the integrity and perpetuation of the community.

In *Héraclius* the threat of incest expresses the anarchic effect of the mimetic crisis that undermines the parentarchal¹ political order, depriving it of the authority to adequately form essential distinctions and to mediate between life and death. The temporal and ontological dilemmas of Corneille's play are resolved in an overarching action that individuates and re-identifies the characters along with their intentions

and actions. The Byzantine confusions and exchanges of identity that precede Héraclius' ascension to the throne are driven by the play of desire as it erects and transgresses the borders that delimit *nomos* and *phusis*. The crisis of doubles inspired by the radical difference of the usurped Maurice dead and the usurping Phocas alive is generated by what Girard has explored as a seemingly contradictory mythic fear of sameness and symmetry. Hierarchic order breaks under the weight of rivalry: the king sees heroes and subjects as rivals. The logic of mimetic conflict emerges when the king is reduced to the category of the same with his subjects. Exchanges with the other incline towards indifferentiation and the attendant thirst for differences which flow from it. When the ethos of self-sacrifice fails to promote emulation there is a turn to sacrifice *tout court*. Corneille's work depicts the obscured entanglements of death in life through collective processes of violence generating the foundations of social order.

The title of Calderón's play from which Corneille likely took several ideas, *En esta vida todo es verdad y todo mentira*, fits this play which is both logical and obscure; indeed obscured by its very logic--a logic of imitation itself wherein values constitute themselves by revealing their destruction, where a true discourse of verified relations is re-established through noise, false report, and falsified relation. The disorder of the world of the play permits Corneille to analyze the way a political system can create itself out of the very disorder that seems to prevent it from forming. The elements of disorder (from the necessary perspective of a future equilibrium that emerges) appear necessary to the establishment of the future equilibrium. All of the elements of this disorder--the "bruit" of the crowd, the calls to vengeance, the desires that call to acts of incest and parricide, the lack of stable identities carry the world of the play to a crisis that crystalizes the demonstration of a renewed truth. Only a subversive violence, finally a purgative violence, could assemble the collective force of the people around a new and true authority by putting an end to the dedifferentiation in which all tend to resemble one another, even those who represent the spectacle of the uniqueness of the differentiated "royal" family.

The fall into dedifferentiation that follows upon the usurpation by Phocas of his rival Maurice makes recognition of the ties of consanguinity impossibly complex. Phocas attempts to impose an absolute perspective centered upon himself which would join a past purged of crime and a future built upon his designs. The impotent attempt to install a counterfeit regime of silence is undone by the counterpowers it provoked. The range of forces in this political world continuously eludes his will to dominate and to carry out his flawed plans. The dizzying spiral of reciprocal ambivalence, generated by the fear and desire of parricide and incest, governs the timing and structure

of the resolution of the crisis. All law is thrown into question, leading to the confusion that surrounds the anxiety focused on the taboos of incest and parricide. Where kinship has become mystified, the violent forces unleashed must either engulf all or else re-establish a new order of siblinghood, parenthood, and thus, a new order of state power that delimits life in both the profane and sacred realms.

By trying to begin again in a mythic present day purged of his violent crimes, by eliminating the legitimate royal family, by attempting to assure a future dominated by his law, by attempting to re-establish a social hierarchy that he himself violated--he insures not only his own downfall but the re-establishment of a renewed order. Phocas' violence generates a contagious counter-violence that threatens total confusion, unknowing incest and parricide. He is obliged to hide the truth of his lack of legitimacy. Phocas' attempt to judge the falsely loyal and loyally false Leontine and to establish the truth of identities and the communication of relations beneath the ruses is expressed in his dialogue with Exupère, whose earlier evocation of the uncontrollable meaning of the public execution of Héraclius has deferred Phocas' desire for maximum public violence--he recognizes his inability to control a display of power and vengeance and to fully determine the representational economy of that scene of public performance. The dilemma that Léontine's anti-Solomonic choice presents delimits the inflexible multiple bind to which Phocas has delivered himself up to. Killing kin becomes the means of preserving the foundation of kinship.

The desired obscurity of the main elements of the play is clarified in a more explicit vocabulary by the work of Girard, which permits us to decipher the logic of desire that Corneille has dramatized. The generalized substitution of doubles incarnated in the seemingly infinite regress hiding the truth of the birth of the enemies/friends, the domination of violence and death over individual desires, the confusion of orders and identities do not permit the full flourishing of individual heroism. Declared public motives serve as masks to personal ambition, sacrificial goals and the darker purpose of vengeance. The desire to follow an ethical model is realized in the explicit violation or transgression of that model. The moral order ceases to cohere under the usurping act of Phocas.

Death and the tomb dominate the world of the play. It is the work of death that regulates the collective rite of passage, delimiting the values and creating power; death that is "always already" at work, whether in an idealized or "real" state. Death is associated with the "bruit" of social disorder from the beginning and is the agent of its renaissance--it is a by-product of social disorder and a sacred disseminator of order. The spread of terror is coterminous with the spread of social "noise"; nothing can silence the noise or tame death

except a collective/social process. Despite the efforts of Phocas, the social dimension of death is beyond the power of an individual to control. The attempt to hide the distinctions between truth and falsehood, guilt and innocence is frustrated by a redemptive collective push to clarity that clears the exchange of communication which Phocas bootlessly seeks to control. Even the late Maurice is able to communicate explicitly through a letter, a letter that is, at first suspect, as is all communication in this fallen world.

The unavoidable fact of Maurice's death and the fact that the choice of a husband for Pulchérie is invested by death brings death into dramatic and political synchrony with life. This intricate exclusion/inclusion of death is done against death in a world saturated by that same death. The usurper recognizes the instability of his throne, founded on the unquiet deaths of his rivals. Phocas has tried to put death out of the way in the proper tombs in order to reign without fear. But it is death that reigns posthumously, that determines the possibilities of a post-morbid world, that decides the identities which bind not only the living to the dead, but the living to each other.

The foundation of his state cannot be hidden, nor can it be silenced. Death defines power; individual deaths are not under an individual's control--it is the individual who is defined by death and subject to it. The only stable classification of doubles is based on their core relation to the dead and the idealized system of symbolization founded on it. The lineage that passes through the tomb tends to obscure the spectacle of power that Phocas seeks to display. He must instead hide from the display of his excess of violence--the assassination of all the members of the family of Maurice who could become obstacles. He commands no countervailing power or ritual that could incorporate the memory of that death to his advantage--except to co-opt it in an idealized marriage.

He is in the classic situation of the impure, the polluted--he is apart, separated from all, for his protection, for their protection--until that moment when the violence that he had engendered is polarized back onto him. Death is perceived as being the active agent within the liminal world of the play. The legacy of vengeance is represented, not only in the perpetuation of the surviving memory of that death in the minds of the loyal subjects, but also in the authoritative letters intruding upon the discourse of present conflict. The living cannot communicate with the dead, but the dead can communicate through them. Life becomes the medium of death's message. It is the public noise that resuscitates Héraclius whose death was "trop certaine": "Il nomme Héraclius celui qu'il ressuscite" (*Héraclius* I. 2. 34). This public is a present danger whose undecidability before the spectacle of death convinces Phocas to forego a public execution of Héraclius. Death is

also present as the solution to incest.

The dynamic of this process follows the mythic tracks of "la ronte antique" made explicit in the works of René Girard. The doubles, the transgressions of fundamental prohibitions, the destruction and restoring of social equilibrium by the mechanism of victimage is seen in the "anti-festival" unleashed by the crimes of Phocas, which results in his expulsion and his death as those chaotic forces converge upon him. Even the final execution unfolds according to the classic stages, with the usual rounded-up suspects (prisoners, conspirators--i.e. the marginal) of a well-wrought collective murder that leaves no one guilty --except the focus of evil of the dramatic world. At the right time, in the right way, with the right people, in the right dose, with the right victim, violence can, at least seem to, work its demystified magic transforming all elements in a socially cathartic purification and forgetting of a shared violence.

The paradigmatic process of rivalry, violence, crisis and victimization that is occasioned by the snowballing transgression of essential taboos and a hyperbolic degeneration of identity finally aborts the hubristic designs of Phocas by the very excess of his desires: not just to usurp power but to immortalize himself symbolically by projecting his identity into the future of the State and absorbing the identity of his rival through the incorporation or elimination of the next generation of his lineal descendants. By doubling back on the problem of heroic action, it is shown by Corneille that heroic action is no longer be one of dramatic Promethean effort, but the communication of the essence of the heroic actor. The lucid consciousness of heroic merit and the uncontrived display of royal power are shown to be dependent on the ethos of social mediation and the political geometry that configures it.

The parallels between Phocas dead and Maurice alive in his own progeny imply the whirligig nature of time as it exhibits the different stages and perspectives of the processes of vengeance, expiation and social order. Moments of sterility, death and bereavement are buried under the desire for communal reconciliation underlying the dramatic teleology of the polity. The motivating valuations that the characters attach to life, death, kinship, love and loyalty are shown to be radically grounded in an overarching scheme of exchange that shifts within a cycle of sacrifice. Phocas' dreams of immortality are terminated in his exclusion from power as Maurice is symbolically resurrected in the reconciliation of his descendant's authority and his Kingdom. The tomb of Maurice is the foundation stone of the political order; the closing gesture is an opening to a nexus of peace, ordered individuation, stable identity and legitimacy. Hierarchic distinctions are affirmed by a violence tamed and channeled outside the circle of society and the cycle of rivalry. Incorporating death through social

rituals allows for a metamorphosis of values, a symbolic immortality that cloaks the fact of death, and thus limits social violence.

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NOTES

¹ See Marc Shell 40. Parentarchy as order based on one's relationship to one's parents in a given political order.

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LA MODERNIDAD DE *EL QUIJOTE* EN LA CONCEPCIÓN NOVELÍSTICA DE BAJTIN

Marcelo Paz

Todos los problemas en torno a la creación novelística están en esa novela inagotable que es *El Quijote*, la mejor que se ha escrito nunca.

Paul Auster

El adjetivo "moderna" está presente en la mayoría de los trabajos destinados a ponernos al tanto del sentido de la "inagotable" novela española. Ellos coinciden en que es éste uno de sus rasgos sobresalientes, algunos llegan a señalarlo como la contribución que la separa de las que la precedieron. El número se reduce considerablemente cuando, una vez utilizado el término, la crítica debe volverse a la incómoda tarea de aclarar un concepto que parece alimentarse y pervivir como una consecuencia natural de su oscuridad o plurisignificación. La respuesta al interrogante que se abre cuando, evitando el reflejo tranquilizador de "hacer moderna" la novela de Cervantes, tratamos de precisar la palabra, supone lidiar no sólo con la temática de lo moderno, sino también, y en su ramificación terminológica, con los conceptos de modernidad y modernismo.

A la tarea de precisar se han abocado destacados estudiosos, en un desarrollo que parece haber culminado con la creación de un nuevo término: la postmodernidad. La cuestión, lejos de haber sido resuelta, requiere una actitud crítica consciente de la inestabilidad de los espacios a poblar. Pido por tanto, que lo que sigue sea leído sólo como una de las infinitas lecturas que la inacabable novela de Cervantes posibilita.

Proponemos lo moderno surgiendo de la comprobación de una manera de ver la vida y de la articulación de esta "forma" en el género que nos ocupa. Intentamos un repensamiento a partir de la filosofía bajtiniana de la novela, más que la aplicación analítica de un corpus teórico cuya consecuencia fundamental sería el abandono de los substratos ideológicos de su discurrir. En la concepción bajtiniana del género novelístico, la unión de la novela y lo moderno no es ajena a sus ideas. Por el contrario se destaca la íntima relación entre el surgimiento de la novela como género literario y el advenimiento de lo que llamamos era moderna. La contemporaneidad del género novelístico lo convierte en el único, según Bajtin, que continúa en desarrollo, que está todavía incompleto (7). La novela, a diferencia de los otros géneros mayores, es posterior al acaecimiento de la escritura y del libro (la novela como artículo de consumo: otro signo de lo moderno). Teniendo en cuenta ese dato esclarecedor lo moderno del

género se torna evidente. El carácter escritural y textual que posee la novela, el cual no puede compartir con ningún otro género, introduce un elemento sustancial a la idea moderna de la novela: la incursión del lector y su actividad como consumidor de una nueva mercancía, es decir el proceso de lectura.

La trascendencia del factor lectura es central en la novela de Cervantes. Alonso Quijano es un "lector" que ha perdido el juicio como consecuencia directa de la "lectura" de libros de caballería; hay una segunda parte en la cual los personajes son "lectores" de un libro que cuenta las aventuras de un tal Don Quijote, libro en el cual intentan cotejar su "lectura" con la "realidad" del caballero que se les presenta ante sus ojos (una presencia no mediatizada, ahora, por el texto). Sin olvidar, por supuesto, la lectura que nos permite estas realizaciones, por dentro (a partir del "Desocupado lector", en la posibilidad de una inversión de la marginalidad del prólogo) o por fuera (cuando nos enfrentamos a las tapas del libro para "abrirlo" y dejar así de confiar en la exterioridad de la "desocupada lectura") nosotros lectores ejercitamos maravillados una actividad que nos hace cuestionar el dentro-fuera de la tarea que nos (des)ocupa. El libro y el ser humano como ente lector son esenciales en el advenimiento de la era moderna. La consideración de este factor es intrínseco al surgimiento de un género que se va haciendo en una nueva realidad escritural cuya contracara es el proceso de lectura. Estos dos componentes adquieren sólida evidencia en *El Quijote*, cuya afinidad con lo moderno, en tanto novela, surge de su propia génesis. Ya que la novela, según Bajtin: "is not merely one genre among other genres . . . [it] is the only developing genre . . . that was born and nourished in a new era of the world history and therefore it is deeply akin to that era" (4). Todo "desocupado lector" de *El Quijote*, aunque como nosotros esté ejercitando la lectura en las postrimerías de la modernidad e incluso ya entrada su cuestionada sucesora, la postmodernidad, no puede dejar de percibir el carácter "novel" de este relato. Estamos ante lo que Bajtin llama "the drama of literary development," que se está produciendo en el discurrir de la historia, una historia que refleja como ninguna las tendencias de un nuevo mundo todavía en formación (7). Según Bajtin la novela es: "the only genre born of this new world and in total affinity with it" (7) y sin duda en *El Quijote* la correspondencia entre ese nuevo mundo y su propia conformación (pensamos tanto en el acuerdo crítico sobre el "realismo" de la obra, como en los componentes que tienden a superar esa estética) la convertiría en la novela de todas las novelas. En su desarrollo de una filosofía del género novelístico, Bajtin es receptor y propagador de la incuestionable importancia fundacional y multiplicadora--en cuanto a su proyección futura--que la novela de

Cervantes va a ejercer dentro de la historia del género. Junto a Rabelais constituye uno de los máximos creadores del discurso novelístico.¹ Fueron ellos quienes supieron recoger formas heredadas de la antigüedad clásica y del helenismo: la parodia, la ironía, las formas transvestidas, lo que Bajtin llama "popular laughter," la sátira, el elemento cómico, lo carnavalesco... para plasmarlas a una realidad que por primera vez no constituía el residuo de una antigüedad glorificada, sino el centro dinámico de un mundo totalmente nuevo, signado por el protagonismo del ser humano. Es *El Quijote* dentro de los trabajos de Cervantes y de la novela en general, el que potencia con más apertura las posibilidades del género.²

Me interesa señalar la importancia que Bajtin le otorga a la novela que nos ocupa, el modelo más puro y clásico de novela. Quisiera destacar, sin embargo, que la supuesta cristalización de *El Quijote* como modelo novelístico no la reduce a una categoría puramente canónica. La imposibilidad radica en la naturaleza misma de la novela, en una afinidad anticanónica derivada de la flexibilidad formativa de un género que, en tanto moderno, implica un cuestionamiento de la regla de oro del desarrollo de los otros géneros literarios: la canonización. En el nacimiento del discurso novelístico tiene fundamental importancia la destrucción del canon; "The novelization of literature does not imply attaching to already completed genres a generic canon The novel . . . has no canon of its own. It is, by its very nature not canonic. It is plasticity itself. It is . . . ever questing, ever examining itself and subjecting its established forms to review"(39). El carácter modelo de *El Quijote* no significa de ninguna manera la cosificación de formas narrativas que se van repitiendo a lo largo del desarrollo literario. Contrariamente, la novela de Cervantes, en tanto novela potencia las capacidades creativas, alejando lo que Bajtin llama el "drama," el devenir del desarrollo literario, de una mera repetición de formas. El despegue se produce como resultado de una particular reflexión sobre la existencia y el tiempo, según Bajtin: "the inconclusive present begins to sense a greater proximity to the future than to the past"(40). Esto ocurre en su opinión desde el mundo antiguo y durante el Helenismo, especialmente en las manifestaciones de lo carnavalesco y en la conversión ahora "heroica" del presente.

Qué mejor ejemplo del presente y de la realidad sentidos como heroico comienzo, como una nueva "caballería," que la heroica figura de Don Quijote y la real existencia--no por eso menos heroica--de Sancho. La incursión de la realidad es uno de los datos más comúnmente señalados para caracterizar la novela moderna; el aporte bajtiniano, sin embargo, es el que nos pone al tanto de lo inconcluso de ese presente. En la visión del pensador ruso, la realidad deja de ser

aprehensible por medio de sistemas unitarios y se despliega en toda su inacabable capacidad creadora.

La filosofía de la novela de Bajtin puede ser entendida a la luz de tres conceptos globales, medianamente sistematizados por Morson y Emerson. Su consideración no implica una reducción, por eso quisiera que fueran entendidos aquí como propagadores de un haz de luz que, volcado sobre el pensamiento bajtiniano y luego vertido sobre la novela de Cervantes, permita una mayor claridad a la hora de cuestionar el sentido de su particular concepción novelística. Traducidos al español estos conceptos son: "prosaísmo," "infinitud" y "diálogo." Los dos últimos fueron extensamente utilizados por Bajtin, en tanto que "prosaísmo" constituye un término de su propia creación (15).

Los conceptos señalados aclaran el proceso de novelización que Bajtin percibe en los géneros tradicionales y en la literatura toda. La posibilidad de una existencia novelística estaría determinada por la presencia rectora de estos tres contenidos, que habitantes de la realidad y trasladados al texto, determinan un proceso de novelización. Su presencia en la novela de Cervantes es de fácil reconocimiento y de amplia extensión. Lo "novel," el carácter moderno de la novela, estaría dado por una profunda incursión de lo prosaico, del diálogo y de una clara consciencia de lo inabarcable del mundo, de su invencible infinitud. Estos elementos, si bien presentes desde los orígenes de la literatura, adquieren su máxima potencialidad con la llegada del mundo moderno, en el cual la novela de Cervantes funciona como el primer exponente claro de esta nueva visión.

Consideremos ahora individualmente y de manera breve cada uno de los conceptos y el modo como se presentan en la novela. En cuanto a lo prosaico, un primer entendimiento habla de un tratamiento que privilegia la prosa por sobre la forma poética, concepto central del pensamiento bajtiniano. Esta elevación de lo prosaico, por otra parte, impone una forma de pensamiento que destaca la importancia de lo ordinario, de la experiencia vivencial directa sobre el acontecer común diario. En cuanto al primer sentido, resulta de perogrullo destacar la realidad prosaica de *El Quijote*; sin embargo, es importante subrayar en esta materia la necesidad de no trasladar las formas del análisis poético a una realidad tan diferente como la que constituye la prosa. Ésta impone una consideración particular, "the prosaic of prose" (Morson and Emerson 19). El favorecimiento de lo prosaico trae aparejado también una atención especial hacia el lenguaje cotidiano, lo que determina la destrucción de una de las premisas de la poética; es decir, la equivalencia entre lo artístico y lo poético y como consecuencia de esto, la igualación de la prosa a los discursos no literarios. La visión del lenguaje ordinario--responsabilidad del formalismo ruso--como algo automático, homogéneo y no creativo

choca inmediatamente con el nivel artístico y la alta esteticidad que el lenguaje común tiene en obras "literarias" como *El Quijote*. La obra de Cervantes es una precursora destacada, una de las primeras en la incursión de este elemento tan moderno y en esto el "caballero" es indudablemente Sancho. En cuanto al segundo entendimiento de lo prosaico, Morson y Emerson explican: "If one thinks prosaically, one doubts that any aspect of culture . . . could be organized tightly enough to exhibit an all encompassing pattern"(28). La relación entre esta lógica y la obra de Cervantes es clara. Percibimos un pensamiento prosaico desplegado en la negación, o al menos la sospecha, de un mundo sistematizado. La inmensa apertura de *El Quijote* tiene que ver con un cuestionamiento de los sistemas de valores de un pasado--el ideal caballeresco, la escolástica medieval, la primacía del saber elevado por sobre el vulgar, la suprema autoridad del soberano--que tenían una intención totalizadora y que no pueden ahora en el espacio moderno expresar una realidad dinámica y desordenada. De una manera análoga el proceso se produce metaliterariamente, en el cuestionamiento de los sistemas (totalizantes) de modelos literarios anteriores--la novela caballeresca, la novela picaresca, la novela pastoril, la épica, la lírica, etc.--a través de esta nueva consciencia literaria que es la novela, que es *El Quijote* mismo. Señalemos brevemente algunos ejemplos de este cuestionamiento literario: la alteración paródica del género caballeresco, lo que Jameson llama "the realistic demystification of the older kinds of transcendent narratives" (410); la intención paródica de los sonetos introductorios, que siendo sonetos de la máxima perfección no pueden ser vistos como meros sonetos, ya que en ellos, como destaca Bajtin, el soneto deja de ser género para convertirse en "objeto de representación," para convertirse en el "héroe de la parodia;"(51) y finalmente la ironía que supone, actuando lúdicamente sobre el concepto de erudición, la interposición de autores: Benengeli, el traductor, el sujeto de la narración y Cervantes (¿padre o padrastro?). La sola lectura nos hace incursionar en el camino de un creador que "pensaba prosaicamente" tanto en su vida como en la conceptualización de la literatura.

En cuanto a la "infinidad," dicen Morson y Emerson que Bajtin no sólo sostenía que el mundo era un lugar en desorden, no explicable por sistemas, por el carácter cerrado y totalizante que ellos padecen, sino por sobre todas las cosas un lugar abierto. Lo infinalizable se relaciona con valores centrales a su pensamiento: innovación, "surprisingness," lo genuinamente nuevo, apertura, potencialidad, libertad y creatividad. La novela representa la textualización de estos valores y *El Quijote* representa, quizá, uno de los primeros intentos de discusión de la posibilidad de libertad en un mundo no sujeto a leyes preestablecidas. Don Quijote y Sancho recorren un camino signado

por la búsqueda de la libertad y un "orden" que está más allá de una aplicación ciega de valores. La libertad se actualiza en su absoluta ocurrencia en cada una de las aventuras; por eso, Don Quijote puede otorgarles la libertad a los galeotes que "merecen" (en otro mundo, uno de entendimientos finales) la condena que van a padecer. En este acto hay un intento de contemporizar la existencia de un cierto orden y el ejercicio de la libertad, lo que ocurre necesariamente en lo irrepetible de cada suceso. Lo "inagotable" de esta novela está en la propia inagotabilidad del mundo y en ella tienen cabida "todos los problemas en torno a la creación novelística." Cervantes era consciente de estar fundando un género cuyo dato sobresaliente es la capacidad autorreflexiva, una escritura que se refiere a sí misma, otra marca de lo moderno.

El último concepto central de la concepción bajtiniana, según Morson y Emerson, es el diálogo. En su pensamiento, diálogo significa "una clase especial de interacción" que no debe confundirse con la argumentación ni con el diálogo expresado composicionalmente a través del signo que señala el discurso directo. Bajtín se está refiriendo aquí al diálogo que surge necesariamente desde una confrontación externa, para provocar lo que denomina "creative understanding." Lo esencial para la obtención de una comprensión creativa es la existencia de un diálogo entre distintas realidades y para que esto se produzca es necesaria una visión desde afuera, desde lo otro. En palabras de Morson y Emerson: "Outsideness creates the possibility of dialogue, and dialogue helps us understand a culture in a profound way"(55). La palabra, un discurso, el lenguaje, se "relativizan" a través de un proceso de dialogización. Su ausencia determinaría un lenguaje autoritario y absoluto que es extraño a la novela en su determinación genérica. Son numerosos los niveles dialógicos existentes en la novela que nos ocupa. Entre los más claros está el que existe entre el lenguaje propio del género caballeresco y el lenguaje vulgar que predomina en las embajadas de Sancho. De esta manera *El Quijote* se constituye en uno de los modelos más puros de novelas dialogizadas por la confluencia de infinidad de registros, lenguajes y géneros que, dialogando entre sí, se relativizan provocando en acto lo que potencialmente yacía en la propia identidad. El elemento dialógico es aquí tan central, que la elaboración del prólogo está realizada a manera de diálogo, diálogo que se produce no sólo con un amigo, sino literariamente con formas canonizadas en la tradición escritural y que son ahora cuestionadas e ironizadas: la inclusión de sonetos, epigramas, elogios, alarde de erudición, actitud latinizante, etc. En ese diálogo "amistoso" hay un diálogo, poco amigable a veces, con la tradición.

Pretendimos en este trabajo revisar la etiqueta "moderna" de la obra de Cervantes, en un intento de leer lo moderno como el resultado de

una nueva ordenación en las maneras del narrar. Manera prosaica, infinalizada y dialogada que se fusiona en una economía cuestionadora de la estabilidad de unos términos que en los comienzos del siglo XVII eran sumamente noveles (autor/lector), en el substrato de un mundo que empieza a engañarse ejercitando una mirada de pretendida inspiración futurista y de impulso progresista (engaño y pretensión de las cuales nos comunica la reflexión postmoderna). La participación en este engaño por parte del Quijote y del Sancho de Cervantes es por lo menos ambigua, sus posturas contribuyen de una manera problemática a la inspiración y al impulso de ese nuevo orden que la modernidad trae aparejada porque el optimismo que viene con ella comienza a ser minado juntamente con su aparición. Cervantes intenta resolver el conflicto planteado por la actitud moderna traduciéndolo al ejercicio novelador, lo cual se convertirá en uno de los datos más sobresalientes del mundo moderno, hasta cuando, llegado el fin de la modernidad, se nos informe de la crisis de la novela moderna.

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NOTAS

¹ Bajtin no deja de destacar el aporte cervantino, ver página 80.

² Bajtin sitúa en la novela de Cervantes dos conceptos--heteroglosia y dialogía--centrales a su teoría del género y que son parte fundamental del impulso novelístico del español. Para una mayor comprensión de ellos ver página 324.

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SEMIOTICS, SIMULACRA, AND THE CONSUMERIST RHETORIC OF STATUS IN MOLIÈRE'S *CÉRÉMONIE TURQUE* AND FLAUBERT'S *CHÂTEAU DE LA VAUBYESSARD*

Larry W. Riggs

Terry Eagleton has said that bourgeois dreams of power and status tend to be foolish fantasies (100). This is certainly true of the bourgeois fantasies lampooned by Molière and Flaubert. Part of the problem with these fantasies of *social mobility* is that the *aristocracy* has been the only available model for those aspiring to higher status or greater power. As the aristocracy ceased to be the functionally dominant class, it began to dominate semiotically, as a model of consumption and display for those desiring high social status. Molière and Flaubert are among the writers who expose the great irony of modern social mobility: having destroyed the aristocracy as social substance, the bourgeoisie restores it as *style*, as *phantasm*.

The enemy class provides, after all, the only available semiotics of status. Thus, ambitious French bourgeois have found themselves obliged both to vilify and to imitate aristocratic life, defining progress as *generalizing* a level of material consumption that was rightly regarded as abusive when it was the prerogative of a *minority*. The aristocracy was defined by its relative freedom from the material constraints of common life (Ewen and Ewen 120). Generalizing such freedom and calling it "democratization" give rise to certain absurdities. By the way, we must admit that somehow providing to everyone the means to consume with the abandon of aristocrats is also *our* social ideal.

To appreciate fully representations of consumption and social mobility in Molière, and especially in *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, we must remember that it is in the seventeenth century that Louis XIV's minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, begins the commercial exploitation and international marketing of the French aristocratic veneer or, as we would call it, "lifestyle" (Ewen 27). Colbert's family was in the cloth trade in Reims. Molière, too, of course, like his *bourgeois gentilhomme*, was from a cloth-merchant family.

We must see Monsieur Jourdain and, later, Emma Bovary, as archetypal consumers who believe they can "alchemize" their identities by acquiring and displaying the signs of higher social status. The detachment, commodification, and commercial circulation of *décor* associated with status are already discernible to Molière as key elements in the culture and economy of modernity. He joins La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère in showing that, in an already somewhat uprooted, mobile society, individuals are judged more and

more by their ability to display goods. Sumptuary laws become both more common and more impossible to enforce at the dawn of the modern era. This reflects anxiety about the irreversible loss of an order, the blurring of identities.

The rise of wealth and social status based on money and the monarchies' power to confer social mobility, often in direct exchange for money, are concomitants of early modernity which concerned many literary figures. In fact, mobility of all kinds is seen by several seventeenth-century writers as threatening to destabilize both individuals and society. La Rochefoucauld says, disapprovingly, that kings can make new social identities the same way they *coin money*. La Bruyère describes the frenetic lives of those hungry for social mobility. Such performative frenzy made the semiotic, arbitrary nature of the social structure discernible. The *theatrum mundi*, a common *topos* of the seventeenth century, comes, for some writers, to designate both increasing agitation in the context of competitive exchange and decreasing real differentiation. The homogenizing effects of centralization create enormous anxiety and intensify competition for the signs of increasingly marginal distinctions. In *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, Molière clearly elucidates the money-knowledge-mobility nexus: his ridiculous would-be *parvenu* hires teachers to teach him the words and gestures--the *exchangeable signs*--which will make him "noble." Nobility itself has, in effect, become a commodity.

It is symptomatic that the seventeenth century was the heyday of alchemy and other forms of instrumentalist magic and the historical scene of modern science's birth, as well as marking the advent of the international market in commodities. The inherent logic of modern *consumption* is that of instrumentalist magic, and modern ideas of wealth have something in common with the desire to change lead into gold. In the seventeenth century, with the development of a world market, demand-creation became integral to ideas of prosperity. Linkage of motive, desire, and dreams to consumption as the means for commoners to achieve a happier way of life is a major element in modernization (Ewen 47). Though their *judgments* of this sort of progress are diametrically opposed, Voltaire and Rousseau will later agree that civilization itself is driven by the constant creation of new desires.

Monsieur Jourdain tries to take advantage of the fact that identity is a social, semiotic creation. He is a farcical Faust, and his *maîtres* are Mephistophelean figures who pander to his desire for a metamorphosis. They purport to sell him "knowledge" that will give him access to sex and power by enabling him to pass for a noble. He aspires to the prestige and irresistibility of a Dom Juan.

The *maîtres* are already functionaries in a commodity economy of

pimps and panders. They exploit Monsieur Jourdain's "foolish fantasy" of a world in which consumption, or the metaphorical *ingestion* of semiotic "nourishment" through purchase, can achieve metamorphoses. Monsieur Jourdain confidently believes that the *maîtres'* knowledge has magical power and that he can buy it. Thus, of course, it is most fundamentally *money* and the act of spending it that are invested with the old ambitions of instrumentalist magic.

Monsieur Jourdain is seduced by pander-teachers who exploit their client-pupils' belief that, in a world of signs, knowledge and display can open the kingdoms of the imagination and make hallucinations real. The commercial and psychological nexus is named when the *Maître de Musique* says that Monsieur Jourdain's "visions de noblesse" are "une douce rente" (507) for the *maîtres*.

The idea that metamorphosis through ingestion, and by extension through the purchase of commodities, is an important modern fantasy permits us more clearly to see consumption of commodities as inctonymic feasting. The general modern conversion of the world into resources, or *raw* material, thus appears to be metonymic hunting, gathering, and cooking. The concomitant conversion of the material world into a semiotic system or text seems to realize a fantasy of power by "raising" us to the level of abstraction. The consumer of commodified signs enacts the fantasy that it is possible to operate above the ineluctably material world where supplies, and therefore appetites, are limited. Monsieur Jourdain, by acquiring "knowledge" directly from his mentors, expects to be transformed.

Thus, modern civilization should, as Rousseau argues, be seen as the unleashing of limitless appetite: when appetite is sublimated or removed from the physical realm of limits, it knows no bounds, since bounds would have to be aspects of physical reality. As a device for displaying the signs of appropriately disciplined *taste*, the body becomes the instrument of an insatiable appetite for commodities. We act as if we really *were* living in a world of words. However, even the production of words, and certainly the production of commodified objects, *consumes* real energy and real matter. The use of burgeoning technical power in the seventeenth century to construct physical environments that are also, or even primarily, symbols--Versailles is the leading example--accompanies the investment of the State with the authority and the duty to produce social transformations. Versailles is a theme park--Absolute Monarchyland--as well as a real place where people had to live, and which thus channelized their lives. Social mobility takes place in, as it helps to create, a social and material world which is a *simulacrum*. It is a semiotic system whose materialized structure conditions the range of real possibility.

Not only does Monsieur Jourdain hire teachers to teach him the

exchangeable signs of "nobility," but he also commissions a tailor to make him clothes that will proclaim his new identity. He has already learned the essential modern "skill" of regarding education as the key to social mobility and commodified objects as the material from which identity is made. He is trying to learn to focus his desire--his "taste"--on the commodities for which he must yearn if his performance of a new identity is to be persuasive. It is no accident that a key to his illusory social metamorphosis will be financing a banquet. Flaubert, too, will explicitly link the consumption of signs with eating.

Le bourgeois gentilhomme clearly argues that social dislocation and the desire for social mobility permit and require the commodification of qualities and create the modern consumer of signs. Monsieur Jourdain's teachers are in the business of training him for the consumption of commodities, or of educating his taste. His relationship with them is paradigmatic: he is their *client*, and he transfers onto them his *desire*. His primordial need is precisely the need for their expertise in guiding the formulation of his needs. He is thus a prototype of the modern consumer of training for social mobility. He believes that his body can function as the location for a display: wearing the right costume and speaking the right words can transform his social being.

In one of the play's most famous scenes, Monsieur Jourdain displays his newly acquired knowledge of the terms *prose* and *vers* as elements in the collection of purchased attributes he is amassing. His self-flattering delight in fragments of "knowledge" looks forward to Flaubert's Bouvard and Pécuchet, as his effort to buy the means to social transformation and gratification of his desire looks forward to Emma.

Monsieur Jourdain's final "ascent" into the semiotic paradise is accomplished by the *cérémonie turque* in Act IV. This Act begins with the feast Monsieur Jourdain has been seduced into paying for, thus cementing together the physical and metonymic forms of consumption. The scene is set for the *cérémonie* in which Monsieur Jourdain's avid "swallowing" of signs will transform him into a disembodied cloud of credulity. This mock-ceremony, which uses exotic-seeming language, gestures, and costumes to persuade Monsieur Jourdain that he is being ennobled, parodies actual mechanisms of social transformation. It allows Monsieur Jourdain to believe that he is a free signifier whose meaning is both powerfully substantial and easily transformed. At the same time, it enables Molière to point out that social mobility has the effect of detaching ethics from identity and undermining stability. Monsieur Jourdain is ready to believe that a hyper-production of signs creates transcendental power.

This semiotic fireworks show is both a comic celebration and a

warning. It underlines the self-defeating aspect of mobility and its power to destabilize relationships and undermine ethics. It also places Molière in the lineage that has led to Jean Baudrillard's critique of consumer culture as converting society into a system of meaningless but impenetrably real simulacra. The play both defines major issues in 1670 and looks forward to the treatment Flaubert will give to the theme of mobility as a guiding value in the comedy of social desire. When critics understand Molière's powerful critique of emerging modernism as mere conservatism, or as an apology for the *status quo*, a golden opportunity to enrich our understanding of ourselves and our culture is missed. What Molière denounces is precisely the foundation, and therefore the blind spot, of our own ideology: the belief that progress, defined as substitution of a constructed world for the given one, is both inevitable and desirable.

Emma Bovary is another Faustian client of seducers who pander to her social ambition. The effects of commodified signs fabricated by social manipulators are analyzed most thoroughly in the la Vaubyessard incident of *Madame Bovary*. This episode is recounted in Chapter viii of Part I. Here, Flaubert presents something that had been an archetype of French social history since Colbert's time: an "aristocratic" veneer is used as a means of seduction and dominance. In fact, this chapter brilliantly analyzes the construction and functioning of simulacra, of illusions objectively manufactured by social forces and, in effect, *made real*: la Vaubyessard shows that social representations are both fictitious and powerfully real. Representation constitutes what it signifies when the image is consented to--"swallowed"--by its audience. The ball is a ritual, performed in a constructed environment, whose essential purpose is to hide the means and motives of its constitution. Indeed, its seductiveness makes its victims unable to think of social constructs as motivated manipulations. It is a particular seduction that participates in a culture and politics of seductions. Emma's orgasmic waltz with the Vicomte reproduces in her the vertiginous ecstasy of Monsieur Jourdain when he is made a "Mamamouchi" (532).

The la Vaubyessard chapter follows those wherein we discover how Emma has learned to do what William Leiss calls constructing the landscape of desire (6). The linkage among education, reading, and consumption is established when the narrator says that the old maid who passes romantic novels to the convent girls "*avalait de longs chapitres*" of the novels (my emphasis). The analogy between Emma's psychological processes and those of the commercial economy is revealed when Flaubert says of her that "*Il fallait qu'elle pût retirer des choses une sorte de profit personnel*" (70).

Emma regards printed words and commercial commodities as

talismanic tokens magically related to happiness. Her education and Monsieur Jourdain's have similar effects. The Church's mythology and the old maid's novels have encouraged Emma to regard herself as a free signifier whose meaning can be transformed by the metaphorical ingestion that is reading, purchase, and display. Her body-as-clothes-horse is conceived as displaying the commodities she has bought--*on credit*--as if they were the emanations of a process of nourishment. Buying on credit, of course, is itself an element in the delusive imitation of aristocratic habits. Emma learns a cultural "skill" which is confused with natural perception: acting as if one lived in a "world" made of signs.

La Vaubyessard is a romantic novel in three-dimensional space. The overture to the episode, whose link with the previous chapter is emphasized by its theatricality--"Ils arrivèrent à la nuit tombante, comme on commençait à allumer des lampions dans le parc"--is a sumptuous feast. Like Monsieur Jourdain, Emma is prepared for an illusory metamorphosis by an actual banquet. Representations of aristocratic life's past glories abound in the chateau's decor. The fact that the castle is "de construction moderne" (80) and partially hides the ruins of the original chateau emphasizes the aristocracy's historical transformation from function to phantasm, even for the nobles themselves. The ball is a representation, even as it is a real event. The motives of this production are carefully disguised. The Marquis d'Andervilliers opens his castle to the public because he is running for office. Having been Secrétaire d'Etat in the Restoration--itself a simulacrum!--he wants to reenter politics. Running for office, like any merchant or manufacturer, is hardly aristocratic; the Marquis treats his own nobility as an instrumentally valuable veneer.

Emma's culturally induced disability, her entrapment in a factitious reality, is underlined when Flaubert says of her that she "fit sa toilette avec la conscience méticuleuse d'une actrice à son début" (82). Emma conceives of herself as both a consumer and an item on the menu at a banquet of signs. Like Monsieur Jourdain in his mock-Turkish costume, Emma, in her waltz with the Vicomte, spins toward a semiotically-induced ecstasy in an orgy of display. The "trou" (89) opened in her life by the ball, like the hole later burned through her entrails by the poison she greedily swallows, admirably symbolizes the lack, the abstract and therefore illimitable *appetite*, that obsesses the consumer of signs. In Emma's life, the simulacrum obliterates all else: "aux fulgurations de l'heure présente, sa vie passée, si nette jusqu'alors, s'évanouissait tout entière" (85). This experience is explicitly tied to literal consumption: at the moment being described, "Elle mangeait . . . une glace au marasquin" (85). The semiotics of social display is as poisonous as the arsenic.

So, the "post-modern" self, journeying ceaselessly through the possibilities of identity, signification, and exchange, is born from the early modern coupling of instrumentalist knowledge with a politics and economy whose legitimacy depends on the generation of exchangeable wealth. The desire for unlimited social fluidity depends on the constant slippage of social signifiers. Consuming and exchanging signs of status is the key skill in a culture of mobility. However, this competitive desire for difference, as Rousseau certainly foresees, actually fuels a relentless process of *homogenization*. The signs change, but the rituals of consumption and exchange vary less and less. Freedom turns out to be an iron discipline, and mobility is circular. Monsieur Jourdain and Emma, hypnotized by the "visionary lullaby" (Ewen and Ewen 14) of modernity, live within the circle, the cultural and psychological pirouette, traced by the semiotics of purely stylistic metamorphosis.

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LOPE DE VEGA'S PEASANT HEROES

Deborah Compte

The Spanish Golden Age plays depicting the virtues of country living, particularly the peasant honor plays such as *Fuenteovejuna*, *Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña*, and *El alcalde de Zalamea* are among the most well known and celebrated works of Spanish theater, part of the "canon" of Golden Age drama. The Spanish rustic hero continues to be the subject of much critical attention as his appearance on the seventeenth century stage is unique and distinguishes Spanish theater from the European dramatic tradition of the period. And it is Lope de Vega in particular, in distinction from most of his contemporaries, who offers us the most remarkable examples of a humble rustic character endowed with dignity and prestige.

Why did the peasant appear as an appealing and powerful figure on the stage? And what were the dramatist's intentions? To what can we attribute the *villano's* rise from the *pastor bobo* to a heroic figure? Is the praise of country living and its inhabitants a reflection of Lope's personal love for the country, as Kathleen Gouldson suggests? Is Lope motivated by a pioneering democratic spirit underscoring "the right of every good-loving person to dignity, self-respect, and the respect of others"(66) as Wilson and Moir posit? Is the peasant exalted because of his purity of blood, as Américo Castro has shown? Was Lope simply echoing "tired literary clichés"(75) as Dian Fox states, drawing from the pastoral tradition and the well known antithesis of city and country? Are the plays essentially socio-political propaganda plays designed to uphold the seigniorial-monarchical system and maintain the status quo, as Maravall, Díez Borque and others have affirmed? Or do they reflect the need to return to the country, restore agriculture and its revenues in response to Spain's terrible economic climate of the day, as Salomon shows in his landmark study of the literary peasant?

I will argue that while most of these interpretations are in fact quite valid, Lope was articulating and dramatizing deeper philosophical and humanitarian issues. A moral ideal clearly underlies the socio-political and economic factors, and it is that which gives the philosophical richness embodied in many of Lope's rustic heroes. The doctrines that some critics see as evidence of the conservative political agenda of Lope's drama and Spanish Golden Age theater in general are also tied to venerated philosophical traditions. For example, "quedarse en su estado", "no asumir a más" may have the effect of propaganda in supporting the status quo, but this is not their primary function in the plays. In focusing on the man of humble origins, Lope was responding to respected literary and philosophical traditions, accessible and familiar to his audience. In this paper I will focus on two of Lope's

lesser known plays, *El cuerdo en su casa* and *Los Tellos de Meneses*. Both deal with the peasant as hero and define him as a being capable of moral rectitude and a model of virtue, reason and contentment. I will examine the philosophical and literary underpinnings of Lope's characterization of these rustic figures and show that they emerge as moral spokesmen whose exemplarity is found in their ethical values, the values traditionally allied in antiquity with country living.

One of the most appealing characteristics of the rustic country setting depicted in these works is the pervading sense of harmony found therein. The countryside in its simplicity, vitality and productivity reflects the perfection and order of the cosmos. As an integral component of this universal design of accord, man is happiest when he regulates his life according to the rules of nature. The exaltation of the simple, rustic life is an ideal celebrated in antiquity by Horace, and Lope does not hesitate to exploit the imaginative power of its most illustrious classical formulation in these works. Both Mendo and Tello el viejo, the rustic protagonists, enjoy the simple pleasures of the rural environment and pattern their daily routines to the rhythms of nature. In a central scene of *Los Tellos*, the protagonist's description of his life attuned to nature's norms imitates the Horatian *beatus ille*:

¡Cuán bienaventurado
 Puede llamarse el hombre
 Que con oscuro nombre
 Vive en su casa, honrado . . .
 Yo salgo con la aurora
 Por estos prados...
 Vuelvo, y al medio día
 La comida abundante
 No me pone arrogante . . .
 Cuando la noche baja,
 Y al claro sol se atreve,
 Cena me aguarda breve,
 De la salud ventaja; (518-19).

In this lyric affirmation of the blessings of the simple life, Lope underscores the peasant's affinities with the natural rhythms of his environment, arising at dawn, partaking of the rich abundance of his surroundings, and actively participating in its cultivation. The glorification of the peasant in his affinities with nature recalls the ancient Stoic ideal of the simple, unassuming life in which one is content with the modest provisions offered by one's rural environment, yet ever thankful for its beneficence. While the bountifulness of nature is seen as a reflection of God's providence, the productivity of the land

is explicitly linked to the industriousness of its inhabitants, and attests to the strong work ethic of the rustic people. Both Tello el viejo and Mendo farm their own plots, are vigilant over all aspects of its cultivation, and contrast their tireless labor with the idleness of the nobles. The daily diligent activity in which the protagonists are continually engaged again recalls a Horatian ideal which surfaces in his *Epodes* and *Epistles*.¹ Fray Luis de León also expresses the satisfaction derived from working one's own land in his famous lyric poem, "La vida retirada".²

While the *comedia* may well have carried out the social function of encouraging a new interest in agriculture and promoting the values of labor, within the philosophical context of these works, Lope directs his attention to the moral value of the virtue of work and how it avails man's inner character. The rustic protagonists are richly rewarded for their industriousness, yet the benefits they reap are spiritual as well as material. Because nature responds so liberally to their efforts, they are able to provide amply for their families and live independently of others. The satisfaction of living by one's own hand and of being content with one's provisions has nothing to do with material interests, but points instead to the exalted Stoic principle of spiritual self-sufficiency: one must follow nature and desire nothing. In the *Epistulae morales*, Seneca discourses on the virtues of self-sufficiency:

Necessities are procured with little pains; it is the luxuries that require labor. Seek not out the makers of artificial things, but follow Nature. Nature did not wish us to be distracted over many things. She equipped us for whatever she forced upon us.
(270)

In *Los Tellos* Tello el viejo advises his ambitious son to ignore the false attractions of the world and rather appreciate the natural fruits of his surroundings, as he himself does. Similarly, Mendo rejects the external signs of wealth and status that his *hidalgo* neighbor Leonardo urges him to acquire in favor of the simple, yet ultimately more satisfying, provisions of his fields. The positive moral values attached to the self-sufficiency of the peasants in these plays reveals Lope's concern for man's inner nature. Because they esteem and are grateful for the blessings of nature, the patriarchs emerge as exemplars of ethical perfection. They wisely set the proper priorities, live independently, and conform to the Stoic principles of nature as norm and the virtue of personal autonomy.

The principal focus of these plays is the moral exemplarity of the village patriarchs who, in the idyllic confines of a solitary rustic environment, emerge as models of exalted philosophical values. Lope

takes pains to underscore the virtue, humility, generosity, and natural wisdom of his protagonists.

The nobility of virtue is one of the basic tenets of the Stoic tradition, championed in numerous classical and Renaissance philosophical treatises.³ Lope's characters prove to be models of the Stoic patriarch in their reiterated recognition of the importance of virtue over the various false values which are held in high esteem by society. The rational pursuit of virtue is considered the highest good and brings about the inner peace which is prized so highly by the protagonists. Tello el viejo exalts the spiritual rewards reaped by righteousness in an early monologue which establishes the moral tone pervading the entire work, "Siempre de hacer la virtud / Resultó al alma quietud" (519).

The characters' worth and ultimate contentment are based not on transient externals such as wealth, power, or a patent of nobility, but rather on the authentic merits of man, moral rectitude and the life according to reason. The characters must therefore look within themselves for the source of their well-being, and their heightened concern for the quality of their interior lives is one of the principal features distinguishing them as ethical beings. The necessity of self-knowledge as a guiding moral principle was a central tenet of classical philosophy, and it was proclaimed widely in Renaissance humanist treatises. Henry Ettinghausen notes that Erasmus emphasizes the importance of self-knowledge in his *Enchiridion militis christiani* and that Luis Vives expresses similar notions in his *Ad sapientiam introductio* (6). Lope's contemporary, Francisco de Quevedo, is perhaps the major Spanish proponent of the Senecan ideal of self-knowledge, and Ettinghausen notes that in *La cuna y la sepultura*: ". . . we . . . find the largely Stoical notions that the only worthwhile object of study is to be sought 'dentro de ti mismo'" (85). Lope's protagonists seem to embody the very essence of these principles. They are wise men of integrity and virtue who strive to attain the Stoic ideal of goodness through proper living.

The ethical ideals exalted in his patriarchal heroes are similarly developed in Lope's critical treatment of the theme of honor in these works.⁴ While honor in the Spanish theater is usually charged with social resonances such as rank and lineage, both Mendo and Tello el viejo exemplify a higher, less conventional kind of honor, which is based entirely on the individual human dignity that accompanies and distinguishes righteous living. In *El cuerto* Sancho and Mendo draw attention to the distinction between true dignity and the specious honor based on social status and supported by an elaborate program of ceremonies within society. Such ceremonies may in fact be little more than the display of empty pretensions, as Mendo affirms: "Comedimientos fingidos/ Descomedimientos son. / Nunca tuve por

valor / Que el hidalgo y caballero / Me quite, padre, el sombrero, / Para quitarme el honor" (456). Tello el viejo also cautions his son against the foolishness of pursuing worldly gain and honor, "¡Ay, Tello! la perdición / De las repúblicas causa / El querer hacer los hombres / De sus estados mudanza" (512).

In his pursuit of moral excellence, the ethical man shows no concern for social or economic advancement. Lope's protagonists prefer the peace of a humble existence in which they voluntarily reject luxuries and self-serving ambitions. Indeed, the fundamental dramatic conflict of *El cuerdo en su casa* derives from the consistently developed interplay between the foolish ambitions of the *letrado* Leonardo and the unassuming, practical wisdom of the *rústico* Mendo in his refusal to follow the false dictates of honor through dress, furnishings, and meaningless courtesies.⁵ Mendo's honor is based on personal worth and individual integrity. While Leonardo urges him to buy a title with the wealth he has amassed from his years of diligent labor, Mendo has no need for such external and ultimately vacuous displays of fortune. In a comic, yet poignant conclusion Mendo cleverly rescues the social reputation of the supposedly superior *hidalgo* Leonardo. Mendo's prudence, discretion, and right values distinguish him as the true *cuerdo en su casa*, as Leonardo and all those around him affirm Mendo's natural goodness, sense and practical wisdom.

In considering the philosophical dimensions of the plays, the pursuit of reason, moderation, temperance, and introspection stand out as additional qualities which ennoble the rustic protagonists and enhance their characterization as ethical men. The examination of man's inner nature, I would argue, is one of the primary issues of these works, and Lope recalls very rich literary and philosophical traditions in creating a humble figure who represents a higher moral order. As illustrated above, Lope evokes the meditative tones of the Horatian and Stoic traditions and successfully incorporates various of their fundamental doctrines into these works. The peasant heroes emerge as models of goodness, humility and classical moderation. They live their lives in accord with the natural rhythms of nature, are content with their status as peasants, and emphatically reject all luxuries. Their daily existence is one of virtuous industry and quickened mental activity, as they reflect upon the true essence of man and represent it perfectly in their exemplarity. While there is no doubt that the elevation of the peasant is tied to historical, socio-political and economic circumstances as so amply documented by such eminent Hispanists as Castro, Salomon, and Maravall, I would agree with Riano and Varey who state, "Golden Age plays are literary conceptualizations, and not socio-economic documents" (28). The philosophical richness of such characters as Mendo and Tello el viejo underscores the moral ideal underlying these

works and Lope's interest in exploring the spiritual essence of man.

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NOTES

¹ See, for example, Horace's *Epistles*, Book I, Epistle 14 and his Second Epode.

² Antonio de Guevara also comments on the benefits of work in his famous treatise, *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea*.

³ Hiram Haydn affirms, "Stoicism. . . held as its central ethical principle the government of life by reason in the pursuit of virtue" (473). The scholar points to the teachings of Cicero and Seneca in this respect. Henry Ettinghausen also discusses the ideal of virtue as it appears in Quevedo's works and shows its basis in Christian thought through the examples of Job and Paul (34,110). Ettinghausen also notes the importance of virtue to Seneca, Epictetus, and Juan de Herrera in his *Epicteto español* (63,110).

⁴ Zuckerman-Ingber considers *El cuerdo en su casa* in her examination of Lope de Vega's honor plays (94-100).

⁵ See Jaime Fernández's article for an study of the importance of the peasant's *discreción* in *El cuerdo en su casa*.

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"LOVERS OF SELF:" INCEST IN THE ROMANTIC NOVEL

Allan H. Pasco

Although some have said that "incest is best kept within the family," I want to remove it from this intrafamilial privacy and consider it as a part of what might be called a "social disease" in the French society of the Pre-Romantics and Romantics. I shall suggest that because incest—incest implied or inferred, incest averted, incest committed, incest revealed—was one of the dominant themes in the art of the day, we can conclude that Romantics were obsessed with incest and that we are probably justified in believing that it constituted a serious, widespread, and destructive problem with significant impact on the whole social organism. Such a study is not easy. Recorded history from 1750 through 1850 has left us with little in the way of statistics about much of anything. Figures on immigration are little more than guesswork. Figures on suicide until 1825 are cobbled together from partial records, diaries, and a liberal use of Ouija boards. But these statistics are models of exactitude in comparison with what we have concerning incest. Indeed, even today with our admirable success at designing, administering, and validating research instruments, whether questionnaires or other kinds of surveys, the test samples and statistics on incest remind one of physicians who were expected to diagnose favorite concubines by taking the sultan's pulse. As Maisch put it, "Whilst it can be said with certainty that incest occurs in all Western societies, only very unsatisfactory and barely comparable data on the frequency of its occurrence are available."¹ The most common statistical base comes from people in analysis and counseling. Kinsey built his sample from prisoners. Other sociologists pass out questionnaires to their students. The unreliability of such data are clear and need no elaboration. Still, these samples of incest victims provide far more numerous and far more reliable data than what remains from the period that interests me, where we have virtually nothing. Jean Renvoizé has pointed out, "[W]e can never know for sure exactly what used to happen behind the bushes, in the tent or under the pile of skins. We don't know what is happening today, so how can we be certain of what happened some thousands of years ago?" (32). Here, he is commenting on anthropologists' speculations about our primitive ancestors, but the general point remains true for speculations about our grandfathers and grandmothers. It certainly holds true for the inhabitants of France two hundred years ago.

The matter is not quite hopeless, however. For some things, as recent historians like Eugen Weber have demonstrated, we have a body of cultural materials that in some areas at least, appears to be quite

trustworthy. I refer to the novels of the day. Granted they are presented as fiction or, at best, romanticized autobiographies, and one must read between the lines, interpreting in accordance with other facts that come to us from other sources. And granted that they lack a good deal in their ability to please today's sensibilities. Few of the novels that I shall refer to today can still be read with pleasure. But as I hope to demonstrate, the social realities that are represented in great novelists like Bernadin de Saint Pierre, Balzac, and George Sand appear in the work of less known writers, as well.

Incest was not invented by the Romantics. The myth that assumed such importance in Freud's assessment of the human psyche was given its most important formulations in fifth century B.C. by Sophocles in *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Colonus*. In France it was most notably picked up by Corneille (1659), though there was at least one previous *Édipe* by Jean Prévost. And Voltaire's *Édipe* (1718) attracted so much attention that it elicited a parody by Dominique five months after the first performance. Interest in incest was apparently growing, since the title character of the Abbé Prévost's *Cleveland* (1732-39) falls in love with Cécile, whom he later discovers to be his own daughter. Nonetheless, one would hardly claim that either Oedipus or incest itself was a major subject and even less an obsession in the period's literature. By the late eighteenth century, however, when Ducis wrote his *Édipe chez Admète* (1778) and *Édipe à Cologne* (1797), the theme of incest had become a commonplace.²

I turn to the period's literature less as art than as an instrument for understanding and, indeed, diagnosing one of the pathological ills of Romanticism. I am convinced that no other means serves as well to plumb the fantasies of an age, since no other artifact strives so consistently to express the inexpressible, to imply the unspeakable. Novels are particularly useful, for they include long passages of social commentary and provide characters with the space to expand on their feelings and fears. Often artists were not conscious of the forces that were driving them to be what they were. Nonetheless, their paintings, poems, plays and novels leave little doubt of what people were really like in a particular period, of the impulsions that characterize them for future generations. We need to be sensitive to those images, attitudes, characters, and stories that are repeated in works by the same and different artists, that overlay one another, that then form a consistent pattern, a complex. For such purposes, the aesthetic value matters little. Literature, however, is particularly important for a study of incest, since incest is a shameful, hidden reality that seldom comes to the surface except when it is read in the context of other literature and other sociological realities.

By turning to Romanticism, I am condemned to immersion in the

limpid pool that served Narcissus to fall in love with himself. Self-interest, self-love, self-obsession, self-centeredness, such are the most salient features of the age. No longer particularly concerned with the general needs of humankind, Romanticism was the great age of the individual, where the needs of the self were privileged, where liberty, as Benjamin Constant would have it, became the "triumph of individualism" (quoted from Waller 93). Romantics invented a particularly tautological grammar. The grammatical subject was the first person, the subjective ego, which moved in a regular way through the verb "to be" to the verbal object, the objectified ego. While Louis XIV supposedly said, "Après moi, le déluge!" the Romantic was far more absolute, "Après moi, rien!" Though it is true that Romanticism can accurately be understood as an opposition to Classicism, the opposition of imagination, feelings, and individualism to reason, universals, and discipline, it is primarily the glorification of the self.

It is a cliché of anthropology to note that incest is virtually a universal taboo. It was a taboo for the Greeks, and it has been a taboo for the French. Exceptions are wrapped up in otherworldly beings like gods and pharaohs, or in those moments when the society temporarily suspends the rules in celebratory festivals of worship or repentance. There are exceptions in fantasy life, if Freud be believed, and one is consequently not surprised to find that the lascivious fantasies of the Marquis de Sade and other pornographers include this taboo among the many violations.³ There is no doubt that Restif de la Bretonne's fantasy life, and a significant part of his voluminous writings, are dominated by incest, especially by that of brother-sister and, later, father-daughter. As Pierre Testud clarifies, while we cannot be certain that incest was actually committed with his sister, Geneviève, there is no doubt of his attraction, and his incestuous relations with his daughters Agnès and Marion are virtually certain (*Rétif* 636-52). Still, although Restif wrote several things that seem to me important in understanding the pathology of Romantic incest, he never joined Sade and Diderot in an attempt to concoct a philosophical justification. Sade has Roland explain to Justine, "[T]he more the restrictions that we break seem respectable, the more the pleasure is enhanced. How delectable are the pleasures if it is his mother, if it is his sister, if it is his daughter."⁴ In *La philosophie dans le boudoir* (1795), Dolmancé reminds his student, Eugénie, that the families of Adam and Noah were incestuous, and far from being repulsed he claims that incest is very natural. After all, "If love . . . is born from resemblances, what could be more perfect than that between brother and sister, between father and daughter?" (3.420). Such reasoning pushes Diderot's chaplain to agree with the Tahitian, "[I] grant you that perhaps incest does not offend against anything in nature."⁵ It is worth noting,

however, that when Sade's *Crimes de l'amour* (1800), particularly "Emilie de Tourville" "Florville et Courval," and "Eugénie de Franval," focus on incest, the theme keys the destruction of characters' families, the institution that the period took as the quintessential foundation of society.

One cannot consider incest without turning to Rousseau. Here, I think his relationship with Maman detailed at length in *Les confessions* is less important than the seminal, though implicit, description of an incestuous family in *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (1761). As Bernard Guyon says, *La nouvelle Héloïse* is exceptionally important to the history of the French novel. To some degree this is revealed by the sales, which were unusually good. Rey admits to having sold 10,000 copies in the first year, and there were hundreds of editions between 1761 and 1800 (2.xviii-xix). But it is even more important to note the way its themes and devices dominated nineteenth-century literature. As is most often the case with father-daughter incest, Julie d'Etrange's father is extremely authoritarian. His insecurity is perhaps revealed by his fanatical insistence on the importance of hereditary nobility. Certainly he will not entertain a marriage between the low-born Saint-Preux and his daughter. Although only a minority of incestuous fathers are violent, when M. d'Etranges becomes so agitated that he beats his daughter, one suspects his real motive may be jealousy: "[M]y father . . . whose fury was only waiting for a pretext, threw himself on your poor friend. For the first time in my life, I received a slap, and it was not the only one. Giving himself up to his anger . . . he beat me mercilessly, although my mother had thrown herself between us, had covered me with her body, and had received some of the blows meant for me" (174-75). Finally Julie fell and hit her face on a table leg. She began to bleed, and the father's passion is spent. Tony Tanner is correct to conclude, "The attack could hardly be more sexual" (124).

If what Julie calls "[m]y fall, my blood, my tears" (2.175) does not suffice to encourage the thought of rape, Rousseau then shows us the reconciliation. M. d'Etranges pulls her onto his lap.

All this was done so quickly, and by such a seemingly involuntary movement, that he almost seemed sorry a moment later. But I was on his lap; he could no longer change his mind, and what was even more disconcerting for him, he had to hold me in this embarrassing position. All this was done in silence, but now and then I felt his arms press against my sides with a rather poorly suppressed sigh. I do not know what false shame kept these paternal arms from abandoning themselves to these sweet embraces. There was a certain reserve that he dared not give up, a certain confusion that he

dared not overcome that put between the father and his daughter this charming embarrassment that modesty and love cause in lovers. . . . I could no longer ward off the tenderness that was overwhelming me. I pretended to slip, and to stop myself I threw an arm around my father's neck. I leaned my face against his venerable cheek, and in a moment it was covered with my kisses and bathed with my tears. I sensed from those that flowed from his eyes that he himself was relieved of a great distress. (175-76)

Later, in the post-script, Julie tells us that the next day she became so ill while in her mother's room that "[I] was obliged to go back to bed. I even noticed . . . I fear . . . ah my dear! I am very afraid that yesterday's fall may have had a more fatal consequence than I had thought. Thus everything is finished for me; all my hopes abandon me at the same time" (178). Here, we join Tony Tancer in understanding that Julie's and Saint-Preux's love had progressed well beyond holding hands, and we recognize that she has miscarried her and Saint-Preux's baby. According to recent psychologists, the father in father-daughter incest is often of the type Rousseau describes. The offender, like M. d'Etranges, may have major difficulty in controlling his impulses and have a low tolerance for intimacy. He frequently shows poor judgment, may be abusive—perhaps physically abusive—and has frequent conflicts with people in and out of his family.⁶ Certainly, the paternal characters that we meet in Gothic novels are most commonly of this variety, and incest is one of the most important of the infractions around which the plots turn. Literary incest may have nothing to do with blood relationships, and indeed that is not necessary. Incest has recently been defined as "any sexual activity—intimate physical contact that is sexually arousing—between nonmarried members of a family."⁷ Incest, in short, may include both consanguineous and affinitative sex.

As an example, one might think of Horace Walpole's classic *Castle of Otranto*, first published in 1767 and translated into French two years later. There, Manfred, prince of Otranto, decides to impose his will on his dead son's fiancée, Isabella. Even if the prince had not already been married to Hippolita, the Anglican Church of the day would not have allowed Manfred to marry his son's fiancée.⁸ The frisson comes from Manfred's determination to break the laws of heaven and earth, despite repeated warnings from family and friends, and have his incestuous way with the girl. Finally, he stabs his daughter to death, mistaking her for the stubbornly resistant Isabella; he is revealed as a false claimant for his estate; and his castle soon crumbles about him. Manfred's justification resides in his need for an heir, now that his son has died and his wife has become sterile, but the impression grows that

he wants more than an heir, more than to satisfy his lust; basically narcissistic, he wants to duplicate himself.

I do not wish to suggest that the abusive father-daughter pattern is limited to the imported Gothic novel and its French imitations. I've already mentioned Sade's *Justine*, where Roland took delight in abusing his sister. Stendhal also exploited the topos in his account of "Les Cenci" (1837). His narrator attributes François Cenci's abuse of his sons and daughters, culminating in repeatedly raping his daughter while his wife looks helplessly on, to rebellion against heaven. In such instances incest is the "unforgiveable sin," the sin that rises above all others to challenge God himself, the sin for which there was no redemption. Still, despite these home-grown examples, without any question, the British Gothic novel was a major factor in the widespread appearance of incest in France at the end of the eighteenth century. Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), translated in 1799, Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797), translated in 1798, Joseph Fox's *Santa-Maria, or, The Mysterious Pregnancy* (1797), translated in 1800, and many others all depend for much of their affectivity on incest.

The seductive father is also common. Restif's prurient imagination provides the best model for this topos. With but few exceptions, his writings catalogue his autobiographical narrator's winsome seduction of legions of young ladies, of whom it turns out that a significant number are his daughters. Usually the protagonist-narrator claims to be unaware of the relationship during the seduction proper, though late in Restif's life as his incestuous obsessions become acute, his writings are considerably more explicit. Even when his protagonist is involved with a young woman of no blood relationship, he cloaks the affair in simulated paternity. Expressions like: "My dear daughter!" . . . "My much loved papa!" abound (*Nicolas* 2.503).

A number of George Sand's novels play discretely on father-daughter incest. *Indiana* (1832) opens to what is apparently a typical evening at the home of Colonel Delamare, a choleric, aging industrialist suffering from rheumatism and married to a lovely young girl named Indiana. We learn gradually that her devoted friend, Sir Ralph, knew her as a child on *l'île Bourbon*. When her father died, he took her under his wing, determined to be a father for her. Here in France, however, though completely devoted to Indiana, the phlegmatic Sir Ralph is clearly out of his element, unable to protect the girl from her desperate search for happiness that throws her in the unworthy arms of a neighboring philanderer. Much later, after the death of her husband and incredible trials, Sir Ralph and Indiana find each other once again and return to Bourbon Isle, determined to commit suicide together. Sir Ralph takes the last few moments before throwing themselves off a promontory to reveal to her that beneath his cold

exterior there lies a burning love for her. When he first saw her as a child, he says, "I made you my sister, my daughter, my companion, my student, my society" (*Indiana* 322). Although he occasionally dreamed that she would one day become his wife, he was content to be her father. "My kisses were those of a father" (*Indiana* 324). "[Y]ou were nothing but my child, or at most my little sister" (*ibid.*). He raised her (*Indiana* 329). "I was happy; I was a father" (*Indiana* 325). Unfortunately, his family forced him into an unhappy marriage, and when his wife died, Indiana had been married off to Delamare. But all is well, at last, for they have formed a suicide pact. Consequently, "I am now your brother, your spouse, your lover for all eternity" (*Indiana* 336). The chapter ends without any indication that suicide can be avoided, and when the next one opens with them happily married, we are left to guess what might have snatched them from the abyss into which they were ready to throw themselves. In a sort of second life, Ralph, the father, has married his child. Of course, there is nothing illegal about this marriage. Ralph and Indiana are not related by blood, he is not her guardian, and she is not coerced. But the titillating breath of incest wafts across their adventure.

Although mother-son incest is rare in the Romantic literature, and indeed in reality,⁹ it does occur. Ranked by awfulness, it is considered the worst, which perhaps explains why Oedipus has had such power on the collective imaginations of psychologists and psychiatrists, if not the rest of society. Mentions of the "horror of incest" usually refer to mother-son incest (Renvoizé 34). Authors struggle to make it acceptable either by removing its sexuality or by having characters avoid it by learning of their previously unknown relationship. Beaumarchais makes good use of the topos in his *Le mariage de Figaro* (1784) by rendering impossible the marriage with Marceline that Count Almaviva and the complicitous Judge Bridoisson intend to force on Figaro. When the engaging Figaro is saved for his much loved Suzanne, the joy is only more complete on considering that, with the revelation of Marceline as his mother, he is also preserved both from an ugly, old hag and from the horror of incest.

Maternal incest is nothing if not obvious in George Sand's *François le champi*, though the author does what she can to make the close mother-son bond unobjectionable. "I will be his mother" (*François* 247), Madeleine says of François, the abandoned child that she took in. He continually refers to her as his "dear mother" (*François* 363); she calls him "my child" (*François* 372). Although as Richard B. Grant has argued, Sand struggles to desexualize the relationship, among other things by putting the planned marriage off in "a nebulous future, after the novel's close," readers will remember that early in their relationship the boy "wound around her legs like a small snake" (*François* 245).

Grant appropriately emphasizes the phallic nature of the image, for it prepares the incestuous outcome of their relationship.

By far the most common examples of French literary incest are between siblings. Although psychologists long claimed that this was in reality the most common variety, it is a striking fact that their conclusion is not born out by their data. This has been explained primarily as an indication that such incest may not cause the psychological damage that brings patients into counseling and, thus, into data bases.⁹ While it is unquestionably true, as Leonhardt claimed, that "For in all world literature intercourse between brother and sister—in contrast to father-daughter relationships—is portrayed as something perhaps socially undesirable, but basically moving and lovable" (quoted from Maisch 20), it seems in this case, at least, that literature may not reflect reality.

Madame de Souza's *Eugène de Rothelin* (1808) helps to understand somewhat better the reasons why people of the Romantic period were so attracted by intrafamilial or, specifically, affinitative incest and why they were so certain that it was inevitable. Eugène has fallen desperately in love with his second cousin Athénaïs de Rieux, whom his father forbids absolutely to marry. The young people's love grows, there seems little doubt that they are destined for one another, but the elder M. de Rothelin remains adamant: "Never will Athénaïs be my daughter" (386). He finally explains his reasons. Years before he married Eugène's mother Amélie without knowing that she was passionately in love with her first cousin Alfred. She was indeed so much in love that she died on hearing of his death and while giving birth to Eugène. Amélie's aunt, who raised her, surely knew of this love for her son, and she should have told M. de Rothelin. Not to have done so was dishonorable.

The way Eugène's problems are resolved so that he may marry Athénaïs is unimportant for our purposes. I want instead to focus on the love of Alfred and Amélie that caused all the trouble, a love so strong that it could be denied only at the cost of their lives. The reasons for this passion are not emphasized. Had the key not previously appeared in dozens upon dozens of novels, I could easily have passed it by. The explanation comes when Alfred's mother explains that "[f]rom his tenderest years, he . . . was admitted to our salon. Alfred, Sophie, Amélie remained in their apartment, and only came into mine when their father was absent. They established a sort of family off on its own" (*Rothelin* 393).

People of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France had a conception about what made for a perfect love that differs significantly from our own. For them true love was a matter of likeness. If a boy and girl were very similar, if they had had common experiences, if they

had the same likes and dislikes they stood a good chance of establishing the kind of love that lasted. Today, we have a different understanding. Although we do not really believe that opposites attract, we have learned that the best marriages are between people of similar cultural background who have complementary rather than similar gifts and personalities. Talkers marry listeners, leaders need followers, left brain domination seeks right brain talents. But the Romantics felt that the very best marriages were made of mirror images. In that age of individualism, they sought in effect to marry themselves and in marriage to replicate themselves. Today we might call it cloning. Sade's logic followed the prejudices of his day when he wrote that love is born from resemblances, in a passage quoted above (*Philosophie* 420). Restif, as well, shows rare insight in a similar passage, "Could it be true that in love, it is not the object that we love but the momentary charm that it gives our own existence . . . So that I loved myself through Jeannette, though Mme Parangon, through Madelon Baron, through Zéphire, through Nécard, through Louise and Thérise! . . . Ah! we are all Narcissuses!" (*Nicolas* 2.213). It is surely purposeful that Mme Parangon's given name is Colette, which as Pierre Testud points out is the feminine form of Colas, the diminutive of Nicolas, or that another of Restif's fictional mistresses bears the name Edmée, which is the feminine form of Edme, Restif's second given name (*Nicolas* L1560-62n2). Because Restif's desire for himself was so strong, he followed the ancient pattern and used his art to create an object for his love. Ovid might well have been talking about Restif, and indeed about the whole period of the Romantics, when he judges Narcissus: "Foolish boy," he says. "He wants himself" (*Metamorphoses* 3.30-31). None of them could, of course, do as René dreamed: "Oh! if I had been able to share the transports that I experienced with another! Oh God! if you had given me a woman that met my desires; if, as with our first father, you had brought me an Eve drawn from me" (*René* 215).

As the amazing frequency of incest in the literature of the day reveals, there can be little doubt that the perversion held sway in the fantasy life of many who bought Romantic novels and tickets to Romantic plays. Moreover, it seems possible, perhaps even probable, that the model of incest that appears in many Romantic works reflects reality. I say probably since we have no accurate figures of incest. There are good reasons for believing that the Romantic period had a significant problem with incest. Numerous, recent studies make it clear, for example, that the homes of sex criminals are usually filled with hard-core pornography, thus indicating that while there may or may not be a direct relationship of cause or perhaps even of effect, fantasy is in some way linked to actions and to reality. To this degree,

recent experience would support Freud's linking literature with the dream life of authors. There is surely a similar relationship between people's purchases and the imaginative life they live. Previous ages had depended on complacent benefactors to subvention publication. As the reading public expanded in the late eighteenth century and on through the nineteenth century, publishers were forced to please a broad public by providing them with what they wanted. This made it possible for writers like Victor Hugo, Honoré de Balzac, and Eugène Sue to make fortunes, and it also gives us a reasonably reliable indication that readers were willing to buy what the day's authors wrote. The prevalence of incest in Romantic literature leaves no doubt that readers were clearly and indisputably attracted by the theme of incest, since literature that represents incest sold by the cartloads.

Furthermore, we know that a number of the period's writers had seriously suspect relationships. I have already mentioned Restif de la Bretonne's life and fantasies. He is not alone. The consanguineous and affinitative incest that imbues Chateaubriand's *Atala*, *René*, and *Natchez* (1826) doubtless grows from the author's affection for his sister Lucile. Rémond has even suggested that for Chateaubriand "there is no love that is not incestuous" (7). Numerous critics have wondered about the incestuousness of George Sand's numerous affairs with younger men and about the very questionable relationship that she had with her son, Maurice. In a widely quoted text that he wrote in 1835 or 1836, Stendhal's autobiographical narrator tells of his childhood desire to cover his naked mother with kisses (*Henry Brulard* 29). The relationship of Bernadin de Saint-Pierre and his sister Catherine was particularly intense, though perhaps not physically incestuous (Spaas). And Balzac's affair with the older Mme de Berny whom he called "Maman" lasted for many years. There are, in short, a number of reasons for believing that the incest prevalent in Romantic literature was a major factor in society.

Still, there is a curious fact that brings the literary implication of incest into question. It comes to mind because so many Romantic novels mention that the passionate love they detail involves lovers who were raised together from their earliest years. The work of E. Westermarck, Melford E. Spiro, Havelock Ellis, Robin Fox, and others, however, make love between such partners seem unlikely.¹¹ As Robin Fox summarizes, "The intensity of heterosexual attraction between co-socialized children after puberty is inversely proportionate to the intensity of heterosexual activity between them before puberty" (*Red Lamp* 50). Put into more comprehensible language this sentence means simply that families that are closely knit from childhood rarely develop incestuous relationships. Twitchell puts it very simply, "Familiarity does not breed contempt; it simply does not breed at all"

(247). Although the supporting evidence for this theory includes anthropological work among a number of peoples, let me merely mention the studies done on the kibbutzim. Yonina Talmon, in particular, found not one case of two people reared in the same peer group that had married. Moreover, she was unable to find any record of a love affair between members of the same peer group. Joseph Shepherd's later consideration of the records of 2,769 kibbutz marriages comes to the same conclusion. As Fox concludes, "[B]earing in mind that the elders of these kibbutzim *wanted* their children to marry, his findings are staggering" (*Red Lamp* 47-48).

The lack of exceptions in the kibbutz studies might raise significant doubts about the conclusions I reached concerning incest among the Romantics were it not for what we know about the way children were raised in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. If the children were raised together from their earliest years, as the novelists so often say, they would probably not have fallen in love and married. Had they been co-socialized from their tenderest years, they would undoubtedly have followed the pattern of the kibbutzim, but, as has been pointed out in a series of studies on French wet-nursing practices, most children were not raised together in the loving surroundings of their families. They were instead sent away to the wet-nurse and were most often out of the home for from two to four years of age.¹² Chesnais points to a decrease in child abuse after 1880 (183). It is perhaps worth mentioning that the use of wet nurses had declined throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and virtually ended in the 1890s with the Pasteurian revolution that led to sterilized feeding methods. The long paternal absences of significant portions of the population as they moved around France in search of employment would also have hindered establishing an appropriate relationship with their children. As Roche points out, until mid-nineteenth century the constant migrations include significant numbers of men that were alone. Later their families would more frequently accompany them. In short, there is a very good chance that incest was endemic in the France of the Romantics. While I would not want to suggest that the Romantic novel was responsible, there seems little doubt that it reflected an established social reality. It may even be that incest was to some degree responsible for creating readers that were willing to spend hard earned francs to share the pathetic lot of incestuous and pathologically depressed Romantic heroes.¹³

NOTES

¹ Maisch, *Incest* 86. See, also, Young 1-5.

² I am grateful to Robert Anderson who has generously shared his knowledge of eighteenth-century theatre with me. See, also, Hesse-Fink.

³ Henry Miles estimates that incest was the third most common fantasy of the Victorian pornographers—*Forbidden Fruit* 6. For a brief listing of incest in 18th and 19th century English literature, see, Montague Summers 391-92. It was also an important part of the *Sturm und Drang* literature, and, of course, of Byron's and Shelley's writings.

⁴ 3.282. Sade repeats the gist of several of the statements cited below in his *Aline et Valcour* (1795, composed during his 1784-89 stay at the Bastille) 5.121-22.

⁵ *Supplément* 496. According to Vernier Diderot probably first drafted the text in 1772 and revised it sometime in 1778-79, though it was not published until after his death.

⁶ See, e.g., Anderson and Shafer; Renvoizé, *Incest* 85-87. For additional studies of the characteristics of such offenders, which may differ from those I cite in relation to M. d'Etranges, see, Dabney 1-13.

⁷ Justice 25. For a brief discussion of other definitions, see, Mary de Young 1-2.

⁸ The relevant page from a 1760 *Book of Common Prayer* is reproduced in Appendix A of Sandra Dianne Sandell, "A Very Poetic Circumstance": Incest and the English Literary Imagination 1770-1830," diss. U of Minnesota, 1981, 176. If Manfred had not already been married to Hippolita, his marriage to Isabella would not have been a crime in France, except insofar as he was coercing the girl to submit to his will.

⁹ Meiselman maintains, however, that it is rare (298-99), as do others, e.g., M. de Young 66; Maisch 97.

¹⁰ Meiselman 75-79; Twitchell 249; Fox, *Red Lamp* 49-51, 162-63.

¹¹ Fox, *Red Lamp* 50. The only objection that I have been able to find to this impressive body of work concludes that there would be no taboo if there were a natural aversion (e.g., Maisch 45-46), which strikes me as unconvincing unless one takes "natural" for "genetic" which was not the meaning of any of the above work.

¹² Sussman 20-22, 101-29; Senior; Fay-Sallois; Crubellier 41-42; Jacobus studies the importance of nursing to revolutionary rhetoric; my article considers the effect of wet-nursing practices on literature. "Rousseau's *Emile* (1762), which praised the practice of mothers' keeping, nursing and caring for their children, had a short term effect on the upper classes, but by 1783, according to Louis-Sebastian Mercier, the fashion of maternal nursing among Parisian women had

passed" (Pasco 102), and maternal nursing was not the general practice in either lower, middle, or upper-class families of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France—Crubellier 39; Sussman 27. Stone points out that contrary to France, the practice died out in England by the end of the eighteenth-century (431-32).

¹³ See, e.g., Benward and Densen-Gerber, and Wiehe. For a useful bibliography concerned with the victims of incest, see, Dabney 14-47.

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**ALBUM CUBANO DE GÓMEZ
DE AVELLANEDA:
LA ESFERA PÚBLICA Y LA
CRÍTICA A LA MODERNIDAD**

María C. Albin

Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda inicia un artículo de la revista *Album cubano* con la frase: "Mucho se ha escrito sobre la mujer y mucho resta que decir todavía" (34). Estas palabras anticipan uno de los desafíos a que se enfrenta la crítica hoy en día: producir lecturas nuevas de las obras de las escritoras canonizadas para develar su dimensión pública. Para lograr tal empresa, es menester restituir los textos de estas escritoras al contexto histórico del que emergen.

El aporte de las mujeres al periodismo es una historia que aún resta por escribirse, especialmente en América Latina, donde la prensa es el vehículo que emplean las escritoras para entrar en el diálogo público (Greenberg 173). Durante el siglo XIX, se da en las nuevas naciones de la región una estrecha relación entre periodismo y modernización. En el caso de Cuba y Puerto Rico, últimas colonias españolas, la prensa se convierte en órgano de la élite criolla ilustrada para fomentar sus medidas reformistas y modernizadoras (González 15).

Este trabajo estudia la revista que Avellaneda funda y dirige durante su estancia en Cuba de 1859 a 1864: *Album cubano de lo bueno y de lo bello*, publicada por la Imprenta del Gobierno y la Capitanía General. Después de una larga ausencia de 23 años, la escritora criolla regresa a su isla natal en compañía de su esposo, el coronel español Domingo Verdugo; ambos integran la comitiva en que viene el nuevo Capitán General Francisco Serrano, cuya gestión gubernativa facilitó el desarrollo del movimiento reformista en la colonia. *Album cubano* debe ser estudiada en el contexto de esta etapa reformista de la historia colonial de Cuba: la revista representa el comentario de Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda al proyecto nacional, en su estatuto de discurso siempre reactualizable. La publicación, al ocupar el lugar de un texto secundario, produce un desfase en el discurso (lo cual, a su vez, insta una posibilidad abierta para hablar) desde el que pueden formularse discursos nacionales alternativos.

En el "Prospecto," Avellaneda revela que la revista constituye un humilde aporte a la articulación del proyecto nacional, cuyos pilares son la obtención de reformas frente al gobierno metropolitano, y la modernización de todos los ramos económicos:

Mas vemos que mientras la industria viene á auxiliar con sus triunfos los triunfos de las ideas, que el telégrafo, el vapor, los ferrocarriles, enlazando al mundo, difunden las luces, . . . resaltan igualmente revelaciones de adelantos de un órden superior, que completan el gran cuadro de la civilización cristiana . . . y por eso cuando anhelantes de llevar nuestro humilde óbolo al tesoro de progresos que enriquece a Cuba, nos decidimos a fundar un modesto periódico (cit. en Escoto 166)

La publicación cumple dos propósitos: sirve de medio de difusión de la comunidad imaginada de la nación; y crea una esfera pública alternativa ("counter-public sphere")¹ que permite el acceso del género femenino a un espacio discursivo contestatario, desde el cual participa en el debate nacional y cuestiona el proyecto modernizador.

La crítica al proyecto modernizador no se hace esperar: en el "Prospecto" se arguye que el progreso en la agricultura, la industria y el comercio, es decir, la prosperidad material, debe ser complementada con adelantos de orden intelectual (cit. en Escoto 166), y más adelante se declara que la moral preside el programa de la revista (166-7). Desde las primeras páginas de la revista, la escritora criolla destaca que *Album cubano* es una publicación redactada por mujeres y dirigida principalmente a una audiencia femenina (cit. en Escoto 167). Con su poema "A las Cubanas" inaugura la publicación: texto escrito como un prolongado apóstrofe a sus compatriotas en que concierta un pacto fraternal entre ella y las mujeres de la isla. El editorial "Lo bueno y lo bello," escrito por Avellaneda, abre *Album cubano* con una explicación del título de la revista: lo bueno corresponde al mundo moral en su relación con la libertad humana; esta última es regida por la ley divina que ilumina la razón y establece la armonía. Se deduce que "*Lo bueno . . . es todo aquello que la ley moral muestra á la razón como verdadero, justo y conveniente*" (*Album* 3). En cambio, lo bello pertenece al dominio intelectual porque el artista, por medio de su obra, imita la belleza perfecta creada por Dios (3), pero lo que capta la atención del lector en el editorial es la declaración de que en *Album cubano* "dominará . . . un pensamiento *esencialmente religioso*" (4).

Avellaneda emplea como estrategia retórica el discurso religioso para emitir su crítica al proyecto modernizador basado exclusivamente en la filosofía positivista. Cita a cuatro filósofos, historiadores y poetas franceses para legitimar su saber sobre el mundo moderno, a la vez que éstos le sirven de fundamento en su cuestionamiento del proyecto nacional. La primera autoridad en la que se apoya es el historiador de filosofía Víctor Cousin (1792-1877). Es muy probable que la escritora

derivara el título de su revista de la obra teórica más importante de Cousin: *Du vrai, du beau et du bien* (1853), ya que sus definiciones de lo bueno y de lo bello parecen ser extraídas de la misma.

Cousin, promotor del eclecticismo, afirma en el prefacio de su obra que éste es un método histórico y una aplicación de la verdadera filosofía: el espiritualismo (9). El pensador francés fue el primero en utilizar el término "espiritualismo" para definir su postura polémica frente al positivismo; de ahí que condene el ateísmo y el materialismo. Alega que el espiritualismo es el aliado natural de todas las causas nobles; subordina los sentidos al espíritu, restituye el sentimiento religioso y conduce al arte genuino, así como a la forma de gobierno auténtica (9). Como vemos, en el pensamiento cousiniano confluyen espiritualismo y política, siendo esta filosofía la base del buen gobierno.

El gesto de citar al pensador francés en el editorial con que se inicia la revista, implica la voluntad de Avellaneda de incorporarse al debate nacional, ya que en torno a las doctrinas propagadas por Cousin, se da en Cuba una de las más importantes polémicas filosófico-políticas del siglo XIX. José de la Luz y Caballero (1800-62), considerado el introductor del positivismo en Cuba, protagonizó el debate filosófico-político que se inició en 1838 y duró hasta 1840, con una serie de artículos refutando las enseñanzas de Cousin en el *Diario de la Habana*. En el *Elenco* de 1840, obra destinada en gran parte a combatir a Cousin, escribe que el despertar el interés en la juventud cubana por el estudio de las ciencias naturales y las matemáticas es una "tendencia, a un tiempo científica y patriótica de nuestras doctrinas" (cit. en Vitier 2: 117). Llevó la negación del eclecticismo al dominio de la política alarmado por la doctrina del "optimismo histórico" cousiniana que veía en la historia la forma en que se manifestaba el gobierno de Dios en la tierra. Para Luz las ideas de Cousin resultaban perjudiciales para la nueva generación porque detenían el desarrollo de los estudios científicos del país, además de fomentar la aceptación pasiva del régimen colonial en la isla.

La especificidad ideológica de Avellaneda frente al proyecto civilizador propugnado por los ideólogos de la modernización consiste en adoptar el espiritualismo de Cousin como el discurso filosófico que subyace en el programa de la revista y el asumir la postura del catolicismo liberal. Es significativo que Avellaneda concluya el editorial que da comienzo a la publicación de *Album cubano* con una reflexión en torno a una cita de Lacordaire, quien al asumir una postura de catolicismo liberal favorece el nexo entre la ciencia moderna y la religión. De ahí que el espiritualismo y el catolicismo liberal de Avellaneda se constituyan en estrategias retóricas para incorporarse al debate del proyecto nacional, a la vez que pone en entredicho la incipiente secularización de la sociedad burguesa.

El artículo que sigue al que inaugura la publicación *Album cubano* se titula "La Cruz," escrito por Virginia Felicia Auber: comienza mostrando la cruz como un símbolo del programa que sustenta la revista, pues declara "¡Nada simboliza tanto lo *bueno* y lo *bello* como el sagrado signo de la Redención!" La cruz se erige en emblema de la modernidad al reemplazar a sus iconos: el ferrocarril, el vapor, el telégrafo y otros adelantos tecnológicos. El signo religioso se transforma en un medio para expresar un contenido profano: un proyecto alternativo de progreso basado en la moral cristiana que se contrapone a los que formulan los patricios modernizadores de América Latina, en especial al proyecto civilizador de Sarmiento (1811-88). En el artículo, la cruz se erige en estandarte del progreso, ya que "no solo ejerce la cruz una misión de paz y de consuelo; también la ejerce de civilización. Los misioneros la toman en una mano . . . y van por su medio á derramar la luz en las tinieblas de la barbarie" (8).

El proyecto civilizador de Sarmiento consiste en regenerar la barbarie por medio de la educación secular y de la política inmigratoria que colonice los desiertos para crear una nueva raza, exenta de los vicios de la herencia cultural española. La base moral del proyecto sarmientino es laica: tiene sus fundamentos en la asociación y el contrato, principios político-morales que rigen la sociedad anglosajona. Por lo tanto, el plan civilizador de Sarmiento combina el liberalismo racionalista con un positivismo práctico que no se ampara en la filosofía espiritualista.

La educación popular y secular, cimiento del proyecto civilizador, es cuestionada en dos artículos de *Album cubano* titulados "La instrucción pública y la propagación de la ciencia" y "Del carácter y trascendencia de la Educación Popular en las sociedades modernas." En el primer escrito, se habla del objetivo de la instrucción pública: la propagación de la ciencia. Se enfatiza que el ilustrar al hombre en la ciencia es encaminar a la gran familia humana hacia la perfección; sin embargo, se recuerda la verdadera misión de la enseñanza: educar para la virtud y la felicidad (225-6). En el segundo artículo se propone una pedagogía nacional en la que la educación del pueblo para el progreso no está subordinada a la ciencia, sino basada en el principio moral y religioso, capaz de combatir las esesiones de la sociedad moderna (292-3).

En *Album cubano* aparecen tres artículos de Avellaneda sobre la mujer: uno trata de la importancia de la mujer en los anales de la religión y los dos restantes están dedicados a las cualidades del carácter del género femenino. En los artículos recurre al discurso del cristianismo para legitimar la participación de la mujer en la historia, y sugiere que la esfera legítima del género femenino en política no debe circunscribirse al hogar, sino que debe incursionar en el dominio

público reservado a los hombres: "¡Y eso que la mujer no está admitida á tomar parte en los intereses públicos, ni ha tenido jamás un Capitolio!" (35).

Avellaneda propone la teoría de que la potencia afectiva de la mujer la dota de una esfera de acción, cuyo amplio alcance resulta imposible precisar (227). Entre los ejemplos de mujeres sacados de la historia, menciono algunos por ser ilustrativos de una característica que Benedict Anderson atribuye a la nación como comunidad imaginada: la voluntad y el derecho de morir por el país que prevalece entre los miembros de la fraternidad horizontal de la nación (7). Este sacrificio militar, encarnado en la figura masculina del soldado, le es vedado a las mujeres, limitadas a su función de madres de los ciudadanos.

El primer ejemplo, extraído del Antiguo Testamento, es el de Débora, juez, profeta y gobernante, quien ayuda a dirigir las huestes israelitas en contra del ejército opresor. Otro caso de la historia antigua es el de las espartanas que rehusan acatar la orden del senado de refugiarse en la isla de Creta, donde se hallarían a salvo de las tropas enemigas. Al referirse a las espartanas, escribe Avellaneda: "blandiendo espadas en sus blancas manos . . . no obedecerán nunca un decreto que las deshonra, pues todas están dispuestas á vencer ó á morir con sus conciudadanos" (227). El decreto es el interdicto que degrada a las mujeres al prohibirles la plena participación en la defensa del territorio nacional, y con ello se las excluye de la fraternidad. La transgresión del decreto se constituye en la afirmación de la mujer como ciudadana, dispuesta a sacrificar su vida junto a los soldados, sus conciudadanos. Avellaneda resalta la imagen de la mujer soldado con otros ejemplos: el de Bobolina, la ilustre griega, que defiende su patria del poder invasor turco (228); y el de la esposa de Germánico, que en ausencia de su marido, ocupa la posición de general. Respecto a este último caso, Avellaneda declara: "Verémos . . . dejar el lecho, en que acaba de ser madre, para reanimar con su voz á las huestes del campamento" (228).

El último de los tres artículos se inicia con el reconocimiento del cristianismo como discurso que proclama la igualdad de la mujer, y acto seguido, retoma el tema de la disposición del género femenino para ejercer la autoridad civil y política. Avellaneda elogia el gobierno de las ilustres princesas de Rusia por haber extendido los límites y primacía del Estado, por la supresión de tormentos, el fomento de reformas, y el alentar el estudio de las ciencias y las artes (260). El programa de gobierno de las princesas puede leerse como un texto que se superpone a otro, pero que deja ver por su transparencia: el discurso que encubre a medias es el de una propuesta alternativa para redefinir el proyecto modernizador formulado en Cuba durante el mando del General Serrano. Para la escritora, el fomento y desarrollo

del movimiento intelectual de un país debe integrarse al plan de progreso, pues argumenta que, en América, las mujeres defienden los adelantos culturales amenazados "de sofocación en unas partes por la preponderancia de los intereses materiales y en otras por las disensiones civiles" (261). Concluye el artículo reiterando la capacidad privilegiada con que están dotadas las mujeres para el gobierno y lo evidencia recordando que "en las naciones en que es honrada la mujer, en que su influencia domina en la sociedad, allí de seguro hallareis civilización, progreso, vida pública" (262). En cambio, arguye que en los países en que no se toma en cuenta al género femenino, predomina la barbarie y la ruina moral (262).

Avellaneda alude al General Serrano en el último párrafo del editorial "Revista literaria" que cierra la publicación de *Album cubano*. Alega que bajo su administración el movimiento intelectual de la isla prosperará porque el "exclarecido prócer" goza de una "justa reputación de hombre ilustrado, favorecedor de todo progreso legítimo, y tan amante de *lo bueno y lo bello*" (380). El progreso legítimo al que se refiere la escritora es el que se formula en la revista: éste no se apoya en la filosofía positivista, sino en el orden moral y religioso que propaga el espiritualismo cousiniano; e incluye a la mujer no como símbolo nacional, sino como ciudadana y agente del quehacer histórico.

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NOTAS

¹ Rita Felski explica la lógica de una esfera pública alternativa del género femenino: "The logic of the feminist counter-public sphere must thus be understood as ultimately rational, in a Habermasian sense . . . in the procedural sense of engendering processes of discursive argumentation and critique which seek to contest the basis of existing norms and values by raising alternative validity claims" (12).

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SEAGULLS IN THE MIND: REALISM IN ROBBE-GRILLET AND BALZAC

Margaret W. Blades

In 1961 Alain Robbe-Grillet proclaimed a "new realism," which he hoped would go beyond the confines of the traditional novel (read Balzac) and would find a new audience. The issue of what realism is and had been for the nineteenth century French reading public became important in a series of Robbe-Grillet's essays, collected in *Pour un nouveau roman*, and opened the battle between the traditional critics and the New Novelists. With Roland Barthes' *Critique et vérité*, a whole generation of French critics joined the fight over definitions of the novel and creative writing in general, the new critics attacking what they saw as a stultifying set of unwritten principles which governed not only fiction, but criticism of both classical and twentieth-century texts in all genres. In his critical essays, Robbe-Grillet takes a writer's critical stance in assessing the contemporary state of both fiction and criticism. Unfortunately, Balzac is the object of the attack, representing as he does for Robbe-Grillet convention and the conventional novel. In this paper I intend to discuss the Robbe-Grilletian and Balzacian versions of realism, their points of contact and their divergences, with a view to clarification of their differences.

Although the New Novelists included Nathalie Sarraute, Claude Simon, Michel Butor, Marguerite Duras, Robert Pinget, Alain Robbe-Grillet, and sometimes the aloof Beckett, they did not issue any manifestoes as a group or speak with critics as a group; rather, each of the writers wrote occasional pieces in the French or Parisian literary press and articles or essays in which they each tried to define their novelistic practices.

Robbe-Grillet, probably by default, being the most theatrical of these writers, and the most willing to deal with the press and critics publically, became the spokesman for them. He tried to respond for all of them, as well as for himself, to criticisms that the New Novelists had left behind a tradition of novelistic practice that dated from the nineteenth century novel--particularly Balzac--and had ruined a "good read" for a public avid for good stories, believable characters, and lush descriptions.

But Robbe-Grillet tried to define what the New Novelists wanted to do and what these experimental writers felt was possible in the novel. In "Nouveau roman, homme nouveau" he enumerated what the new novel set out to do:

Le nouveau roman n'est pas une théorie, c'est une recherche.
Le nouveau roman ne fait que poursuivre une évolution

constante du genre romanesque.

Le nouveau roman ne s'intéresse qu'à l'homme et à sa situation dans le monde.

Le nouveau roman ne vise qu'à une subjectivité totale.

Le nouveau roman s'adresse à tous les hommes de bonne foi.

Le nouveau roman ne propose pas de signification toute faite.

Le seul engagement possible, pour l'écrivain, c'est la littérature.

(114-120)

This statement was the closest the New Novelists came to subscribing to a Manifesto which could include all of their work. Meanwhile, Roland Barthes wrote of Robbe-Grillet that the object in his novels is no longer a "foyer de correspondances" (a meeting of correspondences, in the Baudelairean sense), nor a "foisonnement de sensation et symboles", but rather was "une résistance optique"--an optical resistance (*Les critiques de notre temps et le nouveau roman*) Barthes said that Robbe-Grillet's fiction remained on the surface of the object, and was without alibi, thickness or depth; it was a refusal of anthropomorphism. The object, Barthes continued, in Robbe-Grillet's fiction was neither allegorical nor double nor opaque. Finally, the aim of Robbe-Grillet, for Barthes, was to assassinate the classical object à la Balzac.

I have slid from discussing the critical writings of Robbe-Grillet to a discussion of Barthes on Robbe-Grillet's fiction, but the fiction and the theoretical writings of Robbe-Grillet are two sides of the same debate. I'd like to turn now to what Robbe-Grillet said about Balzac, which properly speaking is a way of seeing whether Robbe-Grillet in fact understood Balzac and early realism in France. Did he give Balzac his due?

In "Une voie pour le roman futur" (*Pour un nouveau roman*), Robbe-Grillet asserts that the public sticks to the bourgeois novel and it is thus difficult to imagine what an entirely new literature would be. "La seule conception romanesque qui ait cours aujourd'hui est, en fait, celle de Balzac" (15). A "good" novel is the study of a passion, and has been since the time of Balzac. Most successful recent novelists, says Robbe-Grillet, could copy long passages of *La princesse de Clèves* or of *Le père Goriot* without awakening suspicion in the reader--consumer. These writers--the reproducers of Balzacian-style novels--bank on such eternal verities as the human heart and the signifying object for their effects.

The vocabulary of the critic, according to Robbe-Grillet, is full of the old, traditional categories which retard the development of a really accepting public--such notions as character, story, engagement, or the

didactic approach, form, and content (25-44). Thus not only the critics but the bulk of contemporary writers, too, are guilty of slowing the novel's progress, of resisting any innovation.

What is Robbe-Grillet's own critical stance? Coming out of the fifties, he expresses sentiments similar to those of Sartre, for he says "le monde n'est ni signifiant ni absurde. Il est, tout simplement" (8). Around us, "*les choses sont là*" (8). He goes on to discuss "la réalité brute" which, he says, the movies bring to us. The filmed narration of a scenario or a novel offers us the brute reality of images which, in the novel, are merely described -- and the filmed chair, the filmed house, of for example, Mme Vauquer in *Le père Goriot* is *overdetermined*. The film restores to the novel's description its essential reality. Robbe-Grillet says nothing about shifting perspectives in the movies or an unreliable camera--like an unreliable narrator, but we know he experimented himself with film as well as with fiction in *Last Year at Marienbad*. *Profondeur*--depth--is a myth of the Balzacian novel. Things in the early Realist novel have a hidden soul - "toute l'âme cachée des choses" (22)--which the novelist strives to reveal to us.

However in a future novel the art of the novelist will be to portray the world as it really is--without depth, without meaning. The adjective will content itself with "measuring, situating, limiting, defining" (Robbe-Grillet, 23); this will be the path of a new art of the novel. The novel must seek to desacralize, demystify, demythologize, dehumanize, and de-anthropomorphize. It is in search of itself (137).

It follows then that what Robbe-Grillet reproaches in Balzac is the attempt to sacralize, mystify, mythologize, humanize, and anthropomorphize. "The old myths of depth" are criticized by Robbe-Grillet in the nineteenth century novel, which Robbe-Grillet connects to a history and a society, and Balzac becomes the arch-adversary of the evolution of the novel, particularly the contemporary novel. But is Balzac as naive about reality as Robbe-Grillet seems to think he is? Does Robbe-Grillet credit Balzac with being conscious of creating "myths of depth", of "sacralizing" the referent, of "mythologizing" the society of his century?

Balzac, it seems to me, is very much aware of the contradictions and difficulties inherent in the project of creating the illusion that is the novel.

Lilian Furst has pointed out in "Rereading Realist Fiction" the assumptions of Balzac in the beginning of *Le père Goriot*, where Balzac claims that his writing is neither a fiction nor a novel, but that in it "All is true." *Le père Goriot*, thus, is to be read as a "transcription of real life" whose elements we will all read referentially, with an eye to learning what the omniscient narrator has himself understood about --among other things--the love of an old father for his daughters, the

ambitions of a nearly penniless law-student, the stinginess of the owner of a boarding house, and the unfeelingness of ungrateful daughters--not to mention the intrigues and love-affairs of the nineteenth century version of "le tout Paris" as well as la Pension Vauquer. Robbe-Grillet is correct here in saying that this narrator in Balzac can only be *Dieu*, given his omnipresence and omniscience.

However, throughout the narration of *Le père Goriot* there are examples of the author's intrusion upon the smooth relating of a story. As in *Eugénie Grandet*, where the reader is often brought back to herself by statements about "ces pensées qui naissent au coeur des jeunes filles quand un sentiment s'y loge pour la première fois" (V.III. 1059), we find in *Le père Goriot* the following: "Allons, se dit-il en lui-même, je suis sûr que je leur fais des phrases de coiffeur" (V.III. 112); "La maison Vauquer est une de ces monstruosité curieuses" (V.III. 59); "il allait donc voir pour la première fois les merveilles de cette élégance personnelle qui trahit l'âme et les moeurs d'une femme de distinction" (V. III. 104); "(le tailleur) se considéra comme un trait d'union entre le présent et l'avenir des jeunes gens" (V. III. 130); "Le bonhomme se prit donc pour son voisin d'une amitié qui alla croissant, et sans laquelle il eut été sans doute impossible de connaître le dénouement de cette histoire" (V. III. 162).

Perhaps these are not so much authorial intrusions as the techniques by which the illusion of a fictional world sustains itself, the "spectacular signs," as Barthes called them, by which the fiction is constituted and points to its own creation. In fact, in *S/Z* Barthes read Balzac with a very specific aim of uncovering the devices behind the illusion of reality. The artifice has to be maintained also by such--for Robbe-Grillet--hateful devices as the omniscient narrator, the contraction and expansion of time, the panoramic surveys of the eye as it takes in all the details of a boarding-house or the salon of an aristocrat, the entering into the mind of a character, the phrasing of a character's thoughts as he contemplates a deceived husband or a deceiving wife, and the insertion into the internal frame of reference of sufficient material from the external frame of reference--dates, political events and historical figures--that the reader loses his or her sense of disbelief. Balzac also encourages us to believe with him, as he writes in *Eugénie Grandet* that the clergy believe "tout plaisir semble ou un vol ou une faute" (V. III. 1061) or to agree with him that "Ici donc le passé d'Eugénie servira, pour les observateurs de la nature humaine, de garantie à la naïveté de son irréflexion et à la soudaineté des effusions de son âme. Plus sa vie avait été tranquille, plus vivement la pitié féminine, le plus ingénieux des sentiments, se déploya dans son âme" (V. III. 1102-1103). Balzac asks us to

generalize with him: "Tout pouvoir humain est un composé de patience et de temps" (V. III. 1104). He also frankly asks us to regard his fiction as a play: "Dans trois jours devait commencer une terrible action, une tragédie bourgeoise sans poison, ni poignard, ni sang répandu, mais relativement aux acteurs, plus cruelle que tous les drâmes accomplis dans l'illustre famille des Atrides" (V. III. 1148), and with this foreshadowing of the struggle between Eugénie, her mother, and her father, and the comparison with the plays of Aeschylus, he brings us to a literary-historical plane, and compares his own fiction to the works of the classical Greek age. But he precedes this attempt to place the "bourgeois tragedy" alongside the ancient aristocratic tragedy with this sentence: "Dans trois jours l'année 1819 finissait" (III. 1148), thus referring us to a recent historical moment (*Eugénie Grandet* appeared in 1833), and pointing to the external frame of reference.

The "spectacular signs by which the fiction points to itself as fiction" are also seen in Balzac's cynical comment on the death of old Grandet, when he writes, "dit-il en prouvant par cette dernière parole que le christianisme doit être la religion des avarés" (V. III, 1175). And Balzac finally feels compelled to comment on Eugénie's fate and to draw the moral lesson by remarking, on the last page of the novel, "Eugénie marche au ciel accompagnée d'un cortège de bienfaits. La grandeur de son âme amoidrit les petitesesses de son éducation et les coutûmes de sa vie première. Telle est l'histoire de cette femme . . ." (V. III. 1198). Thus Balzac brings us back into the external frame of reference with the present tense of the verbs.

Tzvetan Todorov writes in his introduction to *Littérature et réalité* that "en lisant les oeuvres réalistes, le lecteur doit avoir l'impression qu'il a affaire à un discours sans autre règle que celle de transcrire le réel, de nous mettre en contact immédiat avec le monde tel qu'il est" (7). That is approaching the matter from the reader's perspective--that we must somehow be persuaded that the real is being represented. Perhaps Balzac is not quite saying the same thing in his short commentary in *Le père Goriot*; after all, he writes "All is true." True, not real! In other words, *vraisemblable*.

Alain Robbe-Grillet approaches the "transcription of the real" from the writer's point of view. In a passage from *Pour un nouveau roman* (138-139), he says that he became aware of the referential fallacy or what he calls the *realist illusion* when, on a visit to the beach, he decided to observe things at the beach in order to, as he says, "catch things in life" and "refresh my memory." He soon discovered that the seagulls he watched at the beach had only a "confused relationship" with the birds he was trying to describe in *Le voyeur*, and that, what's more, he couldn't care less. "Les seules mouettes qui

m'importaient . . . étaient celles qui se trouvaient dans ma tête" (139). He goes on to say that the seagulls in his head came probably also from the external world, but that they had been transformed, becoming even more real, because they were now imaginary (139). And here is where Robbe-Grillet breaks with Balzac, but not, as he claims, with Flaubert. Robbe-Grillet writes: "Je ne transcris pas, je construis" (139). The work has come to be totally unrelated to the outside world and, he says, was always so. Only Balzac didn't realize it, according to Robbe-Grillet.

However, I have shown that first, Balzac does not claim to represent the real, but rather to write what is true of his age; secondly, that Balzac is far more aware of the creation of the illusion, of the fiction, than Robbe-Grillet gives him credit for being. Other examples too numerous to mention could be found in other parts of the *Comédie humaine*. Thus Balzac is not the naive realist that Robbe-Grillet seems to believe he is, nor is Robbe-Grillet himself more sophisticated by dint of his profession of awareness of the pathetic fallacy or the referential illusion, no matter what he says about seagulls in Brittany. For he still makes reference to brute reality and says that the novel of the future will have to be one in which the adjective is content "de mesurer, de situer, de limiter, de définir . . ." (23). In fact, Robbe-Grillet still believes that he will be pinning down reality, representing the real without the "old myths of depth" and without trying to assume the "hidden soul of things". It is no accident that one critic labeled all the Nouveaux Romanciers as "l'école du regard" and that others hostile to Robbe-Grillet and experimentation, found the novels, movies and *ciné-romans* of this novelist to be nothing more than sterile games which frustrated readers and led nowhere. Perhaps the most emblematic title of all his novels is *Dans le labyrinthe*, a title which was echoed in other writers' short stories and novels in that same decade.

What is certain is that Robbe-Grillet's narrators are not the kind who ask "Are you sitting comfortably?" before they begin. Narrative point-of-view shifts constantly and the object is taken up again and again in different perspectives, always remaining the object, and thus having no "hidden soul," but changed, layered, deformed, misplaced. In this "école du regard" the gaze itself takes on significance, and in another of the Nouveaux Romanciers, Nathalie Sarraute, the gaze even becomes sadistic. Another title of a Robbe-Grillet novel, *La jalousie*, plays upon our expectations of a psychological novel, or a domestic quarrel, by turning itself into a double-edged noun--referring also to the venetian blinds through which characters spy on each other without being seen, a theme which is echoed in the novel *Le voyeur*. Thus, Robbe-Grillet's titles - and adjectives, and objects - are always, despite

what he says in *Pour un nouveau roman*, slipping away from our grasp, receding into the depths, in every way eluding the measuring, calculating eye.

We return to what Robbe-Grillet said he wanted the New Novel to be understood as: I refer you to the list of statements he made in defense of his own novels. In this formulation of what the New Novel is and is not, he is above all responding to critics of experimentation in fiction and very likely to the stranglehold that critics before Roland Barthes' *Critique et vérité* had on the French reading public as well as in the university. Barthes' attitude in his polemic against Raymond Picard is shared by Robbe-Grillet. In fact, we can see Barthes and Robbe-Grillet as belonging to that generation of French intellectuals, writers and critics alike, who share the structuralist view of literature and particularly of realist fiction, as the view is described in Furst's article. Like Barthes, Robbe-Grillet rejects both the Marxist view of literature and Sartrean *engagement* or political commitment. Robbe-Grillet straddles the question of whether the word refers only to other words or whether it refers to things, acting as if he believed in the former for his fiction, but espousing the second view in his criticism.

However, Robbe-Grillet is solidly with the Structuralists in shifting "the focus of the discussion from the veracity of the representation to the nature of the verbal texture" (Furst, 19). Further, Robbe-Grillet sees the writer as an artist, not as a social historian, and literature as "something other than reality" (Furst, 20).

In the end, much separates Robbe-Grillet's famous fictional seagulls from Balzac's Pension Vauquer. I have tried here to delimit some of the differences.

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THE WRITING PROCESS AND THE LIMITS OF
IRONY IN CÉSAR VALLEJO'S
POEMAS HUMANOS: AN INTERPRETIVE READING
OF 'INTENSIDAD Y ALTURA'

Cheryll Saylor-Javaherian

César Vallejo's third major work, *Poemas humanos* (ca. 1931-37), is a collection of poems that embodies the existential contradictions of the human condition both from an individual and a collective viewpoint. The shaping principle in the portrayal of these contradictions is thematic and stylistic irony; however, no systematic studies of Vallejo's irony have yet been offered. The present investigation is an initial step toward filling in this lacuna.

Five types of traditional thematic irony characterize two-thirds of the texts of *Poemas humanos*: comic, satiric, paradoxical, tragic, and nihilistic. In a general way, all of these thematic types of irony corroborate Michael Riffaterre's definition of irony as "two simultaneous and contradictory meanings" (169). Nihilistic irony carries irony to its limits with regard to a play of contradiction between value and countervalue meanings because it always incorporates a denial of value. By "value meaning" is suggested a positive, ethical signification, one that is corrective of a countervalue meaning. In nihilistic irony, the speaker as ironist and/or as ironist and victim appears unable or unwilling to formulate a clear division between good and evil, as is the case with both tragic and satiric irony. Moreover, the victim of nihilistic irony demonstrates little of the struggle for meaning or for physical existence that characterizes tragic irony; or, at best, this victim ultimately views such struggle cynically. There may or may not be evidence of suffering on the part of the victim, but when suffering is present, it is also viewed with cynicism by the ironist as both lyric speaker and victim or by the ironist as implied author. The victim arouses little or no sympathy. This definition of nihilistic irony accommodates Vallejo's particular response to the vision of the absurd, for in the three texts of *Poemas humanos* which might be regarded as exemplifications of nihilistic irony, "Intensidad y altura," "La punta del hombre" and "Sombrero, abrigo, guantes," there is no conception of a Nietzschean revolt as a response to the proclamation that God is dead; rather, there is Schopenhaueristic pessimism or cynicism and resignation.

A reading of "Intensidad y altura" is offered in the present investigation. This text works toward poetic closure in an all-subsuming nihilistic irony by means of an interplay of contradiction which also includes both tragic and satiric irony. Together with

"Primavera tuberosa" and "Un hombre pasa con un pan al hombro," "Intensidad y altura" makes a statement about artistic production. These poems suggest diametrically opposite views of poesis: "Un hombre pasa con un pan al hombro" highlights the need for bolshevik art; "Primavera tuberosa" likewise suggests the speaker's switch from the ostentatious manner of art of his early poetic career to a style more coterminous with Marxist ideology. Neither of these texts suggests the denial of value regarding the creative process that is embodied in "Intensidad y altura." The contradictory views expressed in these three texts might seem to indicate a disunity in *Poemas humanos*, but the present investigation finds that these contradictions evince a rather faithful portrayal of existential tensions of which art itself becomes a rhetorical victim.¹ "Intensidad y altura" is a sonnet which explores the frustrated efforts of the lyric speaker to "create" a poem that might be, as the title suggests, both profound and majestic. The three interwoven ironic outlooks, their values and/or countervalues, and the element of sympathy evoked for the victim(s) may be schematized as follows:

Tragic Irony

Value: the speaker's struggle to create a profound and noble work of art--presumably a poem

Countervalue: the frustration of the speaker's attempt to create a noble work because of an invariably tautological subject matter and the imperfections of language as a means of expression

Victim: speaker (sympathetic portrayal)

Satiric Irony

Value: (1) the speaker's acquisition of humility and self-enlightenment regarding the implications of failure inherent in the creative venture
(2) disillusionment as to the value of excess emotion and the elevated position of the artist as creator that characterized the Romantic tradition

Countervalue: the Romantic tradition and its focus on exorbitant sentiment, hedonism, and the idea of the artist as a "small god"

Victims: speaker and the writing process (unsympathetic portrayal)

Nihilistic Irony

Value: implies an inclusion of those values at work in both the tragic and satiric outlooks

Countervalue: the speaker's view that the struggle to "create" by means of the writing process is futile and worthless--a mere reflection of human existence in its most basic function of reproducing itself

Victims: speaker, the writing process, life itself (unsympathetic portrayal)

From this, one may discern that the tragic- and satiric-ironic perspectives stand in opposition to each other in regard to value and countervalue and to the element of sympathy, a situation that, of course, heightens the ironic meanings at play within each perspective. This poem has received the attention of several critics, including Alberto Escobar, Jean Franco, Julio Ortega, and Michèle Bernu, whose views are outlined as follows: Escobar views the text as conveying a positive message regarding the artistic process; he believes the poem bears out the idea that "la poesía como expresión de la vida plena" is capable of the "profundidad y altura" suggested in the title, and he explains the tercets as a distancing maneuver on the part of the poet (speaker) that allows him to recuperate his vision through the cult of Romantic inspiration, thereby re-entering "la vertiente de la creación" (233-34). Franco describes the text as one in which "Vallejo's attempt to assert his individuality by writing ends with his incorporation into the species until he is no longer Vallejo but 'species-man,' swallowed up by an "engulfing chaos" (207). Ortega regards the poem as a "búsqueda de una revalorización de la materialidad del mundo, como eje de lo real," a search which ends in failure (302). Bernu, like Franco, sees abandonment of the creative task to the point of "silence" itself as the resolution for the problem of "les inconciliables" which language and creation represent (26-7).

The choice of the Petrarchan sonnet form underscores the theme of frustration involved in the creative process for the artist who must felicitously set thoughts, rhythm and rhyme into the sonnet's rigid mold. In each quatrain, the first two verses focus on the speaker's anguish over the writing process while the consecutive verses highlight the cause of this impotence:

Quiero escribir, pero me sale espuma,
 quiero decir muchísimo y me atollo;
 no hay cifra hablada que no sea suma,
 no hay pirámide escrita, sin cogollo. (vs. 1-4)

Vs. 1-2 focus on the conflict between the tragic- and satiric-ironic perspectives in the speaker's acknowledgement of a struggle and consequent defeat that also constitutes a self-diminution. The speaker wants to write, but all he acquires for his pains is "espuma" (triviality). In v. 2, "quiero decir muchísimo," in one sense, conveys the idea of wanting to say something "of great import," which, in the context of the poem as a totality, corroborates tragic-ironic value. However, it also suggests satiric-ironic countervalue in the sense of wanting to say "too much." The syndetic element and the punctuation of vs. 1-2 also add to the derogatory meaning of "decir muchísimo:" the comma after v. 1

gives the subsequent line the appearance of a run-on thought; the "y" and the semi-colon similarly support the idea of quantity and getting bogged down, respectively.

Vs. 3-4 attempt an explanation for the speaker's failed venture which again is antithetically suggestive of both tragic and satiric irony, although in this latter regard, the implicit criticism is other-directed at the writing process itself rather than toward the speaker. As local paradoxes, these verses are sharply differentiated from the readily understood verses that precede them; and the contrast they pose is heightened even more by their aphoristic form that thwarts an expectation of continued simplicity. V. 3 implies that to say even one word ("cifra hablada") is to say everything ("suma") and vice versa, hence the futility of "creation" by "saying" or "writing" anything.

Similar to v. 3, v. 4 suggests that the written work of art ("pirámide escrita") is an empty symbol of creation with no real centre, for the cabbage heart ("cogollo") is a seedless one. Adopted here is Franco's interpretation of "cogollo" as a negative term (204).

In a larger sense, which opens the text unto the nihilistic-ironic view, the "pirámide escrita," "sin cogollo" may be regarded as symbolie of a crypt for the sum of spoken and written expression as well as for the speaker's aspirations to demonstrate creative powers by means of such. The second quatrain as a variation-on-the-same-theme amplifies these ideas:

Quiero escribir, pero me siento puma;
 quiero laurearme, pero me encebollo.
 no hay toz hablada, que no llegue a bruma,
 no hay dios ni hijo de dios, sin desarrollo. (vs. 5-8)

The idea of tragic-ironic defeat again meets a counter from satiric-ironic self-depreciation, and once more both views take umbrage under the nihilistic-ironic idea that life itself as well as supra-human existence are victims of a force of repetition that renders all meanings axiologically relative. There is a rather calculated *légereté* in the self-depreciative satiric-ironic outlook here because of rhyme that seems farcical and because of the use of neologism. In this regard, one may note the speaker's selection of "me siento puma" as a parallelistic amplification of and rhyme for "me sale espuma" and the use of the neologistic "me encebollo" which combines the techniques of portmanteau expression and enallage (perhaps "encogerse" or "envolverse" + "cebolla") to suggest the antithesis of "wreathing oneself in laurels".² Vs. 7-8 represent variations-on-the-same-theme of vs. 3-4: "no hay toz hablada que no llegue a bruma" suggests that the "word" as a "spoken cough" disperses into the atmosphere and condenses into

"mist" (the insubstantial, collective nothingness). V. 8 repercussions to the idea of impotent creation suggested in v. 4; that is, "no hay dios ni hijo de dios, sin desarrollo" implies a degradation of the creative force traditionally represented by "Dios," for the human and the supra-human may be perceived here as being on equal footing, subject to the same redundant process in the act of "creation" ("desarrollo").³

As a summary look at the initial quatrains, it may be said that both in their tautological form and content, they ultimately serve the nihilistic-ironic idea that "quantity" rather than "quality" is all the would-be creators (either human or supra-human ones implied) may acquire for their struggles; in short, "creation" is tantamount to mere "repetition." In the closural tercets, the nihilistic-ironic outlook becomes even stronger, though the contradictory play between tragic- and satiric-ironic values continues:

Vámonos, pues, por eso, a comer yerba,
carne de llanto, fruta de gemido,
nuestra alma melancólica en conserva.

¡Vámonos! ¡Vámonos! Estoy herido;
vámonos a beber lo ya bebido,
vámonos cuervo, a fecundar tu cuerva. (vs. 9-14)

Here, the speaker urges his poetic self to flee with him; "por eso" as the motive for this flight reinforces the idea that creative efforts are but repetition; and he proposes an alternative: to feed upon the tragic substance of life (tears, lamentations, melancholy); this is the meaning one may derive from "comer yerba" and the concatenation of synonymy that follows which equates "grass" with "carne de llanto," "fruta de gemido," and "nuestra alma melancólica en conserva." In one sense, then, the idea of reflection on struggle, suffering, and defeat evoked by these imagistic structures, makes a bid for a sympathetic portrayal of the speaker as tragic-ironic victim. In another sense, however, the tragic-ironic perspective is victim of a satiric-ironic backlash directed toward two victims: in the one case, the consumption of grass may be linked to a curative punishment for the pride (similar to that of the biblical Nebuchadnezzar) manifest in the would-be creator's seeking of laurels.⁴ In the other instance of victimization, the "ingestion" of preserved melancholy evokes ridicule directed toward the cult of excess emotion and the divine powers of creativity bequeathed to the artist by Romanticism in the wake of the death of God.⁵

The tercets like the quatrains constitute an interplay between the tragic- and satiric-ironic perspectives that ultimately serve as a backdrop for the nihilistic-ironic renunciation of all values. In this

context, "comer yerba" and, by association, its retinue of synonyms, additionally connote the metaphor of chewing a cud, a meaning which corroborates the conception already suggested that repetition infiltrates everything.

The sense of urgency suggested in the exclamatory epizeuxis ("¡Vámonos! ¡Vámonos!", v. 12) and the reference to being wounded amplifies the antagonism between the tragic- and satiric-ironic views, going into overload, perhaps, in the satiric-ironic vein, for the speaker's ridicule of the Romantic tradition is heightened as the idea of melancholic wounding rides over into a connotation of lustful urgency that anticipates the final verse. The more intense play of contradiction in which the satiric-ironic view overrides the tragic one is the major factor here in delivering the primary thematic meaning of the poem unto the nihilistic-ironic view: satiric irony, like nihilistic irony, highlights a sense of defeat and a lack of sympathy for the victim, but the nihilistic-ironic view takes a giant step beyond and counters *all* value.

Vs. 13-14 highlight once again the idea that all creative effort amounts to repetition. "Vamos a beber lo ya bebido" comes across as another image of "comer yerba" in its sense of chewing the cud and of the "eifra" that is "suma" and vice versa. In the closural verse, the speaker gives himself over completely to the nihilistic renunciation of values in his highly sarcastic invitation to his poetic self to accompany him "crow-like" ("cuervo" is used here as an adverb) to "fecundate" his muse ("cuerva"). Cacophony contributes to an intensification of disharmony in the speaker's outlook. He suggests here an analogy between poiesis and human reproduction. The "cuervo," of the same ilk as Edgar Poe's notorious "nevermore" bird, bears a negative connotation, not only as another metaphor of creation signifying "repetition" but also as a metaphor suggestive of "death:" crows are scavengers that feed upon decay. To go about "crow-like" is perhaps the most obvious of images one might employ to convey the idea that all attempts to create are but scavengings upon the dead: on the physical level of existence, this refers to the idea that life feeds upon the organic matter of the living who have gone before; and on the mental level--which includes the poet's attempts to create--this suggests the idea of scavenging upon dead metaphors. The speaker's ultimate invitation to go beget another "cuervo," then, is a facetious acknowledgement that all creative attempts amount to but epitaphs on the creative process.⁶ In this stance, he generates no sympathy as victim. Even the title reflects this central idea in the text in antithetical ways: it may be regarded as an example of ironic omission, that is, the text contains no formula for "intensidad y altura," or, the title does indeed reflect the theme of the text, for "altura" and "intensidad" are,

in reality, redundant expressions of each other, signifying "excellence." In the final analysis, the text constitutes a cynical invitation on the part of the speaker to keep on playing a game that leads back over the same terrain.

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NOTES

¹ Vallejo conceded in a letter of 1926, to Pablo Abril, that "lo poético, a veces descorazona y mortifica más que la realidad circunstancial en que vivimos y comemos" (*Epistolario general* 106).

² Ortega views "enfolding oneself in onion leaves" as an honor: "el honor más prosaico para una poesía que se quiere más material" (303).

³ In v.8, Bernu perceives an implication of a contradiction between language and creation as irreconcilable opposites rather than a reflection of the principle of repetition (25).

⁴ The eating of grass and perhaps even the images of "meat" and "fruit" may have been inspired by the biblical story in the Book of Daniel of King Nebuchadnezzar's attempt to compete with God and his consequent transformation into a feathered creature forced to eat grass like an ox until he repented.

⁵ Escobar has suggested that the Romantic tradition is alluded to in these verses, though he perceives no satiric import in the evocation; rather, he claims that the poet (speaker) uses this tradition as a means of regaining lost access to "la vertiente de la creación" (203-204).

⁶ Though the crow is subject to antithetical meanings in traditional symbolism, Juan Cirlot offers an observation that serves, in part, the reading that has been offered in this study: he claims that the alchemists regarded the crow as a symbol of the *nigredo*, "the initial state which is both the inherent characteristic of prime matter and the condition produced by separating out the Elements (putrefactio)" (*A Dictionary of Symbols*, "crow").

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TONY CARTANO AND LANGUAGE AS A SHARED PROPERTY

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Tony Cartano has said that the major concerns in his novels are exile and identity.¹ This is clearly no exaggeration, for nearly all his fiction deals with characters who flee from some danger and go into exile. Under these circumstances, they feel that they have no control over their lives, and that their very identity is at risk. What is particularly interesting is that, when they attempt to create an identity, language has a privileged role in this enterprise. Cartano's works are an excellent example of Benveniste's contention that "la langue fournit l'instrument d'un discours où la personnalité du sujet se délivre et se crée, atteint l'autre et se fait reconnaître par lui" (78).

Debbie, the narrator of *Opera*, when she writes her husband's life, finds her own sense of identity being taken over by memories of him. She goes to see a psychiatrist, to whom she talks in an attempt to "s'incarner dans les mots" (123). Marco Polo in *Le singe hurleur* is a monkey who is captured by men and taught to speak. He assumes an almost human identity by entering the world of men and their language. In many other cases it is written language that is used by preference to create identity, for it seems to possess a permanence and stability beyond that of the spoken word. Thomas in *Le conquistador* is a priest in sixteenth-century Spain who is forced into exile when he leads a peasant revolt. When he is put in prison, he starts to write in order to affirm himself. The writer Zack, who is the main character in *Schmutz*, begins to write when he is imprisoned and apparently forgotten by the outside world. George Rust in *Opera* is a Frenchman who becomes a Soviet agent, then defects to the Americans. Unsure of who he really is, he writes about himself. His wife too turns to writing because: "Il s'agissait...de se construire, de s'établir, de trouver en elle-même la force de s'assumer" (*Opera* 169). In *Blackbird*, the character named Blackie is a psychiatric patient who writes an account of his life in which he claims to be a famous European novelist long believed dead. These are all examples of that "entreprise d'autodéfinition" that Cartano discerns in Saul Bellow's work ("Saul Bellow" 75), an undertaking that he also describes as "griffer du papier pour faire et se faire croire que l'on existe" (*Malcolm Lowry* 12).

In many of Cartano's works, the attempt to create a self in language is carried out in opposition to some person or group that would deny the identity of the speaking subject. This is most obvious in the case of Blackie, who affirms a certain identity when Clockwork the New York psychiatrist argues that his patient is not the famous writer he

claims to be but a criminal hiding from justice. George Rust writes his account of his life at the request of Aaron Zuckerman, a CIA agent. But it is also written in opposition to Aaron's view of him as a minor operative who can be manipulated at will. Thomas speaks out on behalf of the Spanish peasants because they have no voice to affirm their rights when oppressed by the rich. Joachim in *Le danseur mondain* reacts against the supporters of Franco, who deny the achievements of the Republicans, and who cast doubt on "la véracité des événements que l'on s'était évertué à créer soi-même" (23). The title of the second part of this novel conveys exactly what his enterprise is: "La reconquête de signes."

Some characters are forced into silence by their opponents. Thomas in *Le conquistador* has his right to preach withdrawn, while the Indians in the same novel are robbed of their language (and identity) when Spanish is imposed on them. But opposition to the speaking subject is often more subtle than this and takes advantage of the very nature of language. Words have a double nature, for they are shared by the speaking subject and by the listener. Both parties exist and evolve in the same language, and may interpret and recuperate that language for different purposes. For example, Michel in *Bocanegra* creates a newspaper that uses the language of satire against the establishment, but his words become an amusement for these people, who make him part of "le jeu des forces conservatrices" (512). Joachim, who is a professional dance instructor, uses the language of dance to affirm himself. But this language has become the domain of the rich who frequent the dance halls. "C'était l'adversaire qui avait le choix des armes," he says (*Le danseur mondain* 60). He slowly becomes part of his adversary's world, and he even falls in love with a woman from it. Sometimes the language of revolt itself is taken over by those against whom it is used and turned to their own purpose. Thomas is adopted for a time by the powerful whom he attacks. They treat him as an amusing entertainment and he becomes "absorbé par des forces dont il avait peut-être mésestimé la puissance" (*Le conquistador* 49). Manuel in *La sourde oreille* is a film maker whose works are also an attempt to advance the Revolution, but, when he joins a deputation to protest against government repression, he is treated by the President as an honoured guest. He is turned into "l'indispensable provocateur de service" (98). Even the avant-garde poetry of Arturo and his friends in *Le bel Arturo* is recuperated, labelled and made inoffensive. He is forced to admit: "Il n'aura fallu que quinze ans pour que les hors-la-loi . . . regagnent le statut de 'grands maîtres'" (203). Cartano discerns a similar process in such films as *Boys n'the Hood*, which make violence and protest acceptable entertainment. He writes: "Même la violence des gangs de jeunes noirs de South Central Los Angeles est récupérée

par le cinéma et l'étoile montante du rap" (*American Boulevard* 189).

Words of revolt may also be transformed and used against the speaking subject. Thomas's writings are seized by his gaolers and used as an accusation against him, and Aaron tries to turn George's confession into material that will serve the CIA. Sometimes the language of a whole people may be reinterpreted and used against it. This is the case of the Indians in *Le conquistador*, whose language, customs and religion are seen by the Spanish as barbarous. They are, in fact, projecting their own characteristics onto the Indians and then persuading the latter to accept this interpretation. As Thomas says: "Les sauvages n'ont jamais existé, création de l'esprit; les envahisseurs les ont fabriqués, à leur image" (136).

The speaking subject in these novels learns that, by using language, it puts itself in the power of others. Marco Polo, by learning the language of men, puts himself even more at their disposal. "Après," he says, "le récit serait piégé, plus moyen de sortir des lignes tracées par les hommes" (*Le singe hurleur* 48). Aaron is well aware of this property of language, and he encourages George to write his confessions in the hope that they will be a means to grasp and control a man who refuses to be a passive instrument. The double nature of language is seen particularly clearly in the use of names. An individual's name is obviously important for the creation of an identity. Marco Polo, for example, does not feel that he exists until he acquires a name, and George Rust assumes a new identity when given that name at the time of his defection. On the other hand, the old Jewish prisoner Noname, whom Zack meets in prison, is a nonentity in the eyes of the other prisoners largely because he has no surname. Michel Mateos in *Bocanegra* is unsure of his identity because he is unsure of his name. He tries to prove that his father was W. H. Raven, a famous writer who adopted a variety of pseudonyms. By doing this, Michel hopes to provide himself with a name and identity. Yet a name also belongs to others, who use it and discover through it something of the owner. Blackie, whose sense of identity is extremely fragile, refuses to give his real name in his manuscript. "Si je disais mon nom," he says, "je sais bien que cela fournirait à Clockwork et ses acolytes une raison de plus de me croire perdu" (*Blackbird* 12). The one who confers a name on the speaking subject has even more power, since he or she creates to some extent the individual named and assumes almost proprietary rights. George becomes Aaron's creature when the latter gives him a new name, and Marco Polo belongs forever to the man who named him.

In view of the dangers associated with having a name known by others, one can see why Raven in *Bocanegra* writes under a pseudonym and why George Rust changes his name when he escapes from one set

of masters. These characters wish to create a self, yet they fear that an openly affirmed identity will put them in the power of others. This ambiguous attitude explains why the question of identity papers often arises. Documents of this nature are immensely important because they confer an identity. Hence, Zack feels that he has finally become himself again when he leaves prison, abandons his prison number, and acquires a driving license with his name on it. Michel's search for written evidence of his father's name is also a search for himself. Yet these kinds of document put their bearer in the power of those who have access to them. Whoever finds Raven's birth certificate will hold the clue to his identity, and Clockwork travels to Paris and Vienna in search of written documentation that will enable him to find out who Blackie really is.²

Cartano's texts clearly show hyper-awareness of the fact that language is important in the creation of an identity, but also that its use by others may deny identity. Possible solutions to this problem are less evident, but they are put forward in certain texts. In *Le danseur mondain*, Joachim and Eva maintain for some time a sense of communion and mutual understanding, but, as their love for each other is put under stress by social conflict and the events of the Spanish Civil War, their affection falters and their language reverts to that of the mutually hostile social classes to which each belongs. Elvira is slowly reabsorbed by her own wealthy class, adopting its language, manners and political stance. The process is complete when she becomes the mistress of a fascist leader. Joachim sticks to his social class, its language and political loyalties, and fights for the Republicans. In *La purification*, Blanche and Benjamin also try to turn their love into perfect understanding. They shut themselves away in their apartment and concentrate on their love for each other. So close do they become, and so perfect a form of communion does their language become, that the text uses the same initial 'B' to refer to both of them. At this point, they become almost one person, and the reader frequently does not know to which individual the text refers. However, this blending of individuals in a common language is achieved at the cost of almost total isolation from the outside world. Only two people live this kind of communion, while the rest of society remains within the usual linguistic structure. As the outside world recedes from their consciousness, so do the demands of everyday cares, and the apartment is neglected to the point that it becomes filthy and rat-infested. Gradually, the love-making of the two characters becomes more violent. Cut off from the taboos and rules of society, and from the restrictive language that conveys these rules, their relationship degenerates until Benjamin finally kills Blanche in what appears to be his idea of the ultimate orgasm. When he begins to eat her corpse, he

is trying, on a derisory level, to achieve some form of union. But this union is based on the domination, killing and total absorption of another.

Le conquistador presents the most interesting and socially relevant depiction of language used as communion among equals. Thomas discovers a group of Indians who have created a society based on "l'harmonie du temps et de l'espace-individu et collectivité" (167). In this idyllic society, everybody seems to live in harmony, no single individual dominates, all the members respect one another, and decisions arise from the collective will. Naturally, their language conveys this equality and harmony. For example, the first person form of the verb is never used among them, as this would assert the importance of the speaking subject over others. Language is a common property, shared by all, like everything else in the group: "Les mots appartiennent à tous, réunis autour du centre de gravité du village" (169). Unfortunately, such a society is helpless when confronted by the cruel, conquering Spaniards, who impose their language, customs and religion. The Indians are resettled around a monastery and made to speak Spanish. They abandon their old language, for: "Dans le village indien autour du monastère, les langues s'étaient desséchées de faim, de soif, d'inanition, et la parole, signe de reconnaissance et de vie, avait préféré se détruire plutôt que de trahir ses lointaines origines" (126). Even the presence of Thomas among the Indians contributes to this process, for he begins to dominate the others, who then look on him as a leader. When he tries to possess exclusively one of their women, they finally rebel and kill him. They thus adopt the methods of his culture. One may see in the death of this group's traditional values the inevitable demise of a society and a language of equality when it comes in contact with one based on domination, recuperation and destruction.

It would seem that a language of equality and mutual respect is ultimately impossible. There is, however, a kind of partial success described in *Bocanegra*. In his search for the true identity of his father, Michel reads and studies his father's texts and listens to others who interpret his father's life and words. He himself is obliged to interpret what he reads and hears, but he does so with as much respect as possible for his father's words. His is a careful weighing of language that produces an interpretation that refuses, as far as possible, to deform or recuperate. Michel thus serves as a model for the intelligent and respectful reading of any text. The reader inevitably recuperates the writer's voice and reinterprets it, while the writer too "takes in" the reader, imposing his or her voice on the reader. This can be an openly conflictual process, as when Blackie tries to impose a text that conveys his interpretation of his life, while Clockwork attempts to set up a

totally different version. It can also be a one-sided process in which the writer's voice is subsumed and traduced. This happens when Debbie, in order to escape domination by George's voice, uses the fragments of his confession to produce her own text, in which her voice dominates. What Cartano proposes as a model of communication avoids these extremes and is based on careful writing and reading that takes account of both individuals in the process of communication.

There is a lesson here for the literary critic. Beside the example of "good" reading provided by Michel in *Bocanegra* is the one set by an academic called Lippman. This man builds his reputation and career on a specific interpretation of Raven's texts that leads him to claim that a man named Cartridge was the real author of them. He noticeably refuses to approach Raven's texts in the right co-operative spirit, ignores all evidence that contradicts his theories, and uses another's words to further his own ambition. Cartano, through Michel, seems to propose a more co-operative version of reading that posits the text as a meeting of minds in which the language of both parties is respected. Complete harmony of speaking subject and recipient is not possible, but the literary text is seen as affording the closest model. This is the message that the critic and the general reader might reasonably find in Cartano's texts without undue imposition of his or her own voice.

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NOTES

¹ In an interview with the author. See also Gilles Pudlowski, "Tony Cartano: 'Si j'étais Kafka,'" *Les nouvelles littéraires*, 24 avril 1980: 31. I would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for providing me with a grant that enabled me to carry out research on this topic, including the interview with Cartano.

² These concerns with names and identity papers probably reflect Cartano's own experience. When his father, who fought against Franco, was forced into exile in France, the gendarme who took down his name misspelled it. The misspelled form became his official name, and therefore his son's too. In a sense, then, Tony Cartano's name is not his "real" one, and he has had an identity imposed by others. This information was supplied by Cartano in the interview mentioned in note 1.

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MUJER Y PALABRA EN *EL JARAMA*: UNA NUEVA PERSPECTIVA DEL LENGUAJE EN LA NOVELA DE SANCHEZ FERLOSIO

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Se ha señalado en numerosas ocasiones la importancia de *El Jarama* desde el punto de vista lingüístico y la fidelidad con que recoge el habla de unos determinados grupos de la España de postguerra. Villanueva considera *El Jarama* como un verdadero tratado del coloquialismo lingüístico (115) y estudia los recursos léxicos y sintácticos que dan a la novela su carácter documental. Canellada, en "El habla en *El Jarama*," realiza un recorrido por los procedimientos morfológicos, sintácticos, léxicos, pragmáticos y fonéticos que contribuyen a la reproducción del habla popular en el texto. Buckley señala el realismo del lenguaje, pero subraya sobre todo su función como caracterizador de los personajes (50). Sobejano destaca asimismo la "fidelidad minuciosa" (315) del diálogo como una de las manifestaciones de la objetividad testimonial de *El Jarama*, aunque, para él es, al mismo tiempo, una forma más trascendente, poética: "Las trivialidades, los vacíos, las partes muertas de la charla (medias palabras, idiotismos, rípios, anacolutos, perogrulladas) adquieren grandeza por la intocada verdad humana de que informan" (316). También García-Viñó subraya el carácter poético de la lengua, situándolo por encima de sus rasgos coloquiales (110). Por el contrario, Domingo, aunque coincide con García-Viñó en calificar de poética la conversación entre Tito y Lucita (96), considera el diálogo en la novela como vulgar y anodino (95) y, a diferencia de la mayoría de los críticos, tampoco destaca la importancia del coloquialismo en ésta: "Y no es que el autor haya exagerado el prosaísmo del lenguaje, que nunca llega a distorsiones ni a excesivo popularismo, es que nada puede extraerse de donde no hay" (96). El estudio más completo de *El Jarama* desde un punto de vista lingüístico es el de Hernando Cuadrado, que realiza un detallado análisis de los elementos propios del lenguaje coloquial en la obra. Estos rasgos caracterizan el diálogo, que "llano hasta la saciedad, pretende ser una fiel reproducción de la lengua tal cual es" (16). Sin embargo, Hernando Cuadrado concluye que el diálogo supera el mero realismo objetivo, pues "es . . . más rico en matices que el que se oiría normalmente en circunstancias similares" (133).

Entre todas estas visiones críticas de la novela examinada desde un punto de vista lingüístico, se destaca la de Buckley, por ser él el único que se aproxima a su lenguaje como elemento que distingue a personajes masculinos y femeninos. Para él, Ferlosio enfrenta "por

medio de la palabra hablada, la mentalidad analítica y objetiva masculina y la sintética y subjetiva femenina" (67).

Es el propósito de este estudio--a partir de la aceptación de la "documentalidad" del diálogo de la novela y de su valor configurador de los caracteres--demostrar cómo *El Jarama* utiliza, en efecto, el lenguaje como elemento diferenciador entre los sexos. Sin embargo, frente a la visión esencialista de Buckley, se intentará mostrar que esta separación lingüística es de carácter social, para lo cual se emplearán como marco teórico los principios de Robin Lakoff en su estudio *Language and Woman's Place*. El análisis se dividirá en dos apartados: 1) el estudio del empleo del lenguaje por parte del hombre en relación con la mujer y 2) el de la caracterización de las voces femeninas.

1. Postula Lakoff que el uso colectivo del lenguaje es discriminatorio para con la mujer, a la que aborda como un ser inferior (8). Este hecho se refleja en *El Jarama* a través de distintas manifestaciones: si se examina cómo los hombres hablan de las mujeres y lo que tienen que decir de ellas, se observa que la mujer es considerada desde el punto de vista de su faceta biológico-sexual y que se generaliza sobre ella sin ningún apoyo científico.

Son múltiples los casos que permiten señalar la presencia del primero de estos aspectos discriminatorios. A continuación se seleccionan algunos ejemplos: "¿Estabas inspeccionando las chavalas?" (32); "pues si tanto te gustan en pintura, qué no será con las de carne y hueso . . ." (48); "si ustedes quieren tener consideraciones con las faldas . . ." (82).

Hablando de una de las jóvenes, Mariyayo, dice uno de los miembros de su pandilla: "Es una nueva adquisición" (205), como si se tratara de un objeto de su pertenencia. Fernando, que, significativamente, "la miraba el busto y las caderas," subraya esta aproximación replicando: "Sí, señor, y una buena adquisición, además" (205).

Esta concepción utilitaria y objetual de la mujer queda definitivamente señalada en una conversación en la venta de Mauricio, en la que el chófer elogia las delicias del matrimonio reduciéndolas a su carácter doméstico, al referirse a la gorra de Carmelo en los siguientes términos: "búsquese una buena mujer que se la cuide y le pase el cepillo por las noches" (270). En este enunciado, el adjetivo "buena," como adyacente de "mujer," presenta a todo individuo positivo de esta categoría identificado con "ama de casa." En su respuesta, Carmelo hace equivaler a esta última con su fisicidad, desprovista de cualquier atributo emocional o intelectual: "una hembra¹ no está de más en casa ninguna" (270).

De esta identificación a la generalización acientífica hay sólo un paso, como en la siguiente exclamación de Sebastián: "¡La insensatez

de las mujeres!" (176). Se llega a un punto en que la sola mención del sustantivo "mujer" en su forma plural se sobrecarga de significado y sitúa a todos los individuos del género femenino en un grupo aparte, con características diferenciadas, que para el individuo hombre no necesitan ser expresadas de manera explícita. Es éste el caso de la resignada réplica del Secretario al Juez, cuando al mostrar éste su preocupación expectante ante la próxima declaración de Paulina, aquél responde lacónicamente y "ladeando la cabeza" con un sintagma lleno de connotaciones negativas: "Las mujeres" (345).

El segundo nivel en que el lenguaje manifiesta un uso discriminatorio para con la mujer es el reflejado por la manera en que el hombre se dirige a sus interlocutoras. Para Sebas, Paulina es "paloma" (257), "golondrina" (16)... Los hombres se dirigen a las mujeres llamándolas "niñas," "chicas," "preciosas,"... Para Lakoff, son estos vocativos eufemismos que pretenden presentar una aproximación cariñosa, pero que connotan trivialidad, irresponsabilidad e inmadurez (25). Que los hombres que los pronuncian en *El Jarama* son conscientes del papel preponderante que les proporcionan queda claro por el hecho de que cuando los emplean en sus diálogos con otros hombres, su objetivo es la burla. Así sucede, por ejemplo, cuando Santos se dirige a Daniel con un "¡precioso, tú!" (95) para mofarse de él.

Por otra parte, el mandato es una forma común en la aproximación del hombre a la mujer. Santos controla los actos de Paulina y el momento en que han de realizarse, como en: "Ahora enjuagas esa falda y la pones al sol" (62). En ocasiones, el mandato se convierte en imposición o amenaza. Tito somete al silencio a Luci con el peso de la palabra: "¡Tú a callar!, ¡no te han pedido la opinión! He dicho guapa y se ha concluido" (180-1). Y Manolo, asumiendo el papel de un padre ante una niña contestona, corrige a Justina en los siguientes términos: "No me contestes así, ¿eh?" (184).

Para terminar con este primer apartado, cabe anticipar un punto que se estudiará más adelante en relación con el modo en que la mujer usa el lenguaje. Según Lakoff, existe lo que ella denomina "women's language" (8-19), que con sus códigos particulares diferencia la forma de expresión femenina de la masculina. En *El Jarama* esta diferenciación se utiliza como otro de los elementos de discriminación de la mujer a partir del lenguaje, por medio de la imitación de los enunciados típicamente "femeninos" por parte de los hombres. Así, Tito finge consolar a Luci, cuando en realidad lleva a cabo una burla que reproduce los códigos lingüísticos de ella: "Tito imitó la voz de niña que Lucita ponía: '--Son muy brutos, ¿verdad, cariño? ¿Los pego? Ahora mismo los pego . . . ¡Toma, toma! ¡Por malos!' . . ." (43).

2. Para Lakoff, el modo en que se enseña a hablar a la mujer es

una forma de discriminación lingüística. Adquiere la mujer dos códigos o "dialectos:" el neutro, que comparte con el hombre, y el "dialecto femenino"--al que ya se ha hecho referencia con anterioridad--, que la discrimina con respecto a éste (6-7).

De las varias mujeres que hablan en *El Jarama*, Lucita es el caso más extremo en la novela por lo que se refiere a pertenencia a uno de los dos dialectos. Es Lucita la representación más clara del llamado lenguaje "femenino." Una de las características más destacadas de éste, según Lakoff, es que "[it] is devised to prevent the expression of strong statements" (19). La acumulación de elementos de duda en este enunciado de Luci a Tito deja clara la falta de firmeza de su lenguaje: "No lo sé . . . a lo mejor te gustaba estar solo" (54). El adverbio de negación, la pausa representada por los puntos suspensivos, la locución dubitativa y el imperfecto con valor hipotético reflejan una falta total de confianza de Lucita en su "aserto."

El "dialecto femenino" se caracteriza también según Lakoff por su intento de evitar el compromiso y el conflicto (16-7). Lucita multiplica los recursos que puedan atenuar la molestia provocada por el favor que solicita cuando dice: "--¿Me untáis alguno una poquita de nivea? . . . ¿serías tú mismo tan amable, Tito?" (121-2). En la primera oración, el indefinido "alguno" evita que ningún interlocutor concreto deba darse por aludido y la combinación del diminutivo con el partitivo minimiza la dificultad del favor. La actitud interrogativa de la segunda, que de por sí deja la iniciativa sobre el enunciado en manos del receptor, aparece reforzada por un condicional de cortesía y el adverbio enfático "tan" en la aproximación al interlocutor.

Lucita se halla enmarcada en los límites del lenguaje "femenino," un código considerado inferior, pero no hace esfuerzo alguno por salir de él, aunque parezca consciente de sus constricciones. Así, es la propia Luci quien priva de valor a su palabra: "Oye, tú no harás caso a las cosas que digo, ¿verdad?" (227). Por otra parte, se juzga a sí misma, pero en la emisión de sus juicios, dado que su código carece de vigor y que ella no puede salir de él por sí misma, usa el registro masculino, "citando" el posible enunciado de un hombre: "Soy una fresca, ¿verdad Tito?, dirás que soy una fresca, a que sí" (230).

No todas las mujeres de *El Jarama* presentan una situación tan extrema como la de Luci, si bien todas ellas responden en mayor o menor grado a alguna de las características atribuidas por Lakoff al "dialecto femenino." Alicia, por ejemplo, manifiesta que tiene hambre, pero no propone comer de una forma directa, sino a través de un encadenamiento de introductores: "Creo que deberíamos de ir pensando en comer" (70). Sin embargo, reivindica ante Fernando su derecho a la palabra--"¿Por qué voy a callarme?" (75)--y rechaza el uso colectivo del lenguaje para con la mujer: "Y además, no me hablas tú

de esa manera" (75).

Justina, la hija del ventero, oscila también entre los dos mundos lingüísticos de la mujer. Acaba por abogar por los enunciados directos, al signar con la palabra, en lo que parece anticipar una ruptura definitiva, su decisión de no salir con su novio: "Creo que ya te lo he dicho" (185).

El caso que se ofrece como más rico es el de Mely. En principio, este personaje se presenta como la mujer de *El Jarama* más desvinculada del "dialecto femenino." Lo rechaza de manera implícita al censurar la forma subordinada en que Fernando se ha dirigido a los guardias que los detienen en su paseo y proponer una opción verbal alejada de la sumisión: "basta saber estar uno en su sitio, sin rebajarse ni poner . . . voz de almíbar" (155). De igual modo, cuando Zacarfas califica su tono de "repipi," "antipático" e "incordiante" (233), Mely vuelve a rechazar el "dialecto femenino," al reaccionar irónica pero firmemente: "¿Te crees que soy una radio, para poder yo ajustarme el tono de la voz al gusto del oyente?" (233).

Robin Lakoff señala que en muchas ocasiones la mujer es consciente del doble código que posee y utiliza una forma u otra también de manera consciente (6). Mely es diferente a las otras mujeres del texto en cuanto que "sabe" utilizar los dialectos de los que dispone. Este personaje reniega de su dialecto "no femenino" cuando se enfrenta a la incomprensión de su interlocutor masculino. Así lo hace cuando se siente atraída por Zacarfas: "y no me hagas hablar ya más que me encorajina armarme estos bollos cuando quiero explicar alguna cosa" (275). Sin embargo, todavía queda su rebeldía final. Lucita, la mujer más débil y, según ha quedado visto, la más sometida al "dialecto femenino," ha muerto. Mely está junto a su cadáver y los guardias quieren separarla de él. Ella no suplica, grita firmes imperativos: "¡Suélteme! ¡No me toque! ¡Déjeme quieta!" (313).²

En *El Jarama*, el lenguaje está asistiendo a un cambio incipiente y, por tanto, vacilante. No es un cambio compartido por todos los hablantes del texto. En la evolución de la relación mujer-palabra, los hombres permanecen al margen, enmarcados en un registro patriarcal que habla de la mujer y a la mujer como ser inferior. Algunas de las mujeres de la novela, especialmente Lucita, aceptan este registro y asumen como suyo un "dialecto" femenino, subordinado e inseguro. Justina y, sobre todo, Mely dan con dificultad sus primeros pasos en un nuevo terreno: el de la rebeldía verbal contra su registro sometido.

NOTAS

¹ Los énfasis de las citas son míos.

² Buckley califica estas expresiones de Mely de "apasionadas y humanas" y las enfrenta a las formas ritualísticas del "otro" idioma de la guardia civil" (67). Si bien los calificativos son apropiados para definir la reacción verbal de Mely, el empleo de esta cita por parte de Buckley como ejemplo de la oposición texto femenino subjetivo vs. texto masculino objetivo elimina el carácter de rebeldía lingüística que tiene el enunciado.

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LE JOURNAL DES DEUX ÉTENDARDS OU LES COULISSES DE LA CRÉATION

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Dans le roman de Gide *Les faux-monnayeurs*, Edouard, le double de l'auteur, quand on l'interroge sur le roman qu'il est censé être en train d'écrire, répond qu'il ne l'a pas commencé mais qu'il y travaille de la façon suivante:

... sur un carnet, je note au jour le jour l'état de ce roman dans mon esprit; oui, c'est une sorte de journal que je tiens, comme on ferait celui d'un enfant . . . C'est-à-dire qu'au lieu de me contenter de résoudre, à mesure qu'elle se propose, chaque difficulté . . . , chacune de ces difficultés, je l'expose, je l'étudie. Si vous voulez, ce carnet contient la critique continue de mon roman; ou mieux: du roman en général. Songez à l'intérêt qu'aurait pour nous un semblable carnet tenu par Dickens, ou Balzac; si nous avions le journal de *L'éducation sentimentale*, ou des *Frères Karamazov*! l'histoire de l'oeuvre, de sa gestation! Mais ce serait passionnant... plus intéressant que l'oeuvre elle-même . . . (1083)

Bien entendu, ce carnet existe pour *Les faux-monnayeurs*: intitulé *Le journal des "faux-monnayeurs"*, il est généralement considéré, à tort, comme le seul document de ce type, Gérard Genette, par exemple, l'appelant "[l]e seul 'journal de bord' entièrement et exclusivement consacré à la genèse d'une oeuvre" (362).

En effet, Lucien Rebatet a également tenu un journal de son roman *Les deux étendards*, un journal bien plus détaillé et bien plus complexe que celui de Gide. Il mentionne ce document, malheureusement inédit et intitulé *Etude sur la composition des "deux étendards"*, dans ses Mémoires, où il le décrit comme "plus de trois cents pages de notes sur les différentes phases de la rédaction des *Deux étendards*, qui représentent un travail concret sur la création littéraire auquel peu d'écrivains se sont livrés" (113).

Les deux étendards est considéré par certains critiques influents comme l'un des grands romans français contemporains. Ainsi, pour ne citer que deux exemples, Pierre de Boisdeffre le tient pour "un des grands romans de l'époque" (579) et George Steiner pour "one of the secret masterpieces of modern literature" (45). Pourtant, peu nombreux sont ceux ayant lu ou même connaissant ce livre qui est boycotté par l'intelligentsia française en raison des opinions politiques de son auteur et de ses activités pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale. Rebatet est

en effet l'auteur des *Décombres*, le best-seller de l'Occupation, où il dénonce violemment la plupart des institutions et des partis politiques français et où il prône une alliance avec l'Allemagne nazie. Il collabora également à *Je suis partout*, l'hebdomadaire fasciste, où il se distingua par la virulence de ses écrits antisémites. Après quelques mois passés à Sigmaringen avec la erème de la collaboration, il fut arrêté et condamné à mort en 1946. Il rédigea en fait une bonne partie des *Deux étendards* à la prison de Fresnes, les chaînes aux pieds et dans l'attente de son exécution, puis, après que sa peine fut commuée en travaux forcés à perpétuité, au bagne de Clairvaux. Le livre fut publié par Gallimard en 1952, peu avant la libération de son auteur qui mourut en 1972¹.

Les deux étendards ne traite pourtant pas de politique, mais d'amour, de religion et d'art. L'histoire, basée sur des faits réels, a pour protagonistes principaux trois jeunes gens: Michel, le double de l'auteur, qui, au début de l'histoire, rejette la foi et se consacre aux arts et aux femmes dans le Paris des années 1920; Régis, un ami d'enfance de Michel qui vit à Lyon où il étudie pour devenir Jésuite; et Anne-Marie, une lycéenne qui vit une extraordinaire aventure amoureuse, mais pure et mystique, avec Régis et qui entend également entrer dans les ordres. Ils ont reçu la révélation de cet amour après avoir passé une nuit ensemble au sommet d'une colline appelée Brouilly. Lorsque Michel fait la connaissance de la jeune fille, il tombe éperdument amoureux d'elle tout en sachant qu'elle appartient à Régis et à Dieu. Cependant, fasciné par Anne-Marie et sa relation mystique avec Régis et avide de les joindre sur leur plan divin, il essaie de retrouver la foi et va vivre à Lyon où sa pénible quête spirituelle et théologique est illuminée par ses rencontres et ses discussions religieuses et artistiques avec Régis et Anne-Marie. Mais bientôt les efforts de Michel sur la route de la foi sont entravés par sa raison, son cynisme et l'ambiguïté de son entreprise, motivée par son attirance pour la jeune fille. Puis le confesseur de Régis demande à celui-ci de renoncer à Anne-Marie, ce qui conduit finalement à la séparation des deux amants mystiques. Comme Michel demeure seul avec la lycéenne, il la débarrasse de sa religion mais est longtemps incapable de lui confesser son amour et passe des mois (et des centaines de pages) dans un état de terrible incertitude quant à ce qu'elle éprouve pour lui. Mais un jour, comme il la prépare à son baccalauréat, il trouve la force de lui avouer la vérité et réussit à la séduire. Ils s'enfuient même ensemble dans le sud de la France, en Italie et en Turquie. La famille d'Anne-Marie, craignant le déshonneur, exige qu'ils se marient mais la jeune fille refuse et rompt avec Michel: il apparaît que sa relation avec Régis et que ses anciennes aspirations religieuses l'ont perdue pour la vie.

Bien que le roman soit surtout célébré pour sa peinture de l'amour,

son traitement des grandes questions religieuses, ses commentaires artistiques, son étonnante reconstitution du Paris et de la province des années vingt, il mérite également d'être connu pour le journal de son écriture. L' *Etude sur la composition des "deux étendards"* est en effet un document tout à fait remarquable. Bien que, techniquement, elle n'ait pas été composée en même temps que *Les deux étendards*, elle est basée sur la multitude de notes que Rebatet a prises sur l'écriture de son roman entre 1943 et 1951 et peut certainement être considérée comme le journal de ce roman. C'est un compte rendu fidèle, chapitre par chapitre, des conditions dans lesquelles il a écrit son livre, de ses objectifs et de ses conceptions littéraires, de sa manière d'écrire, des difficultés pratiques et techniques qu'il a rencontrées, des moments d'extase et d'agonie qui ont accompagné son activité créatrice, et des rapports entre les faits et la fiction dans *Les deux étendards*.

Quoique l'*Etude* soit surtout passionnante pour les lumières qu'elle jette sur les mécanismes internes de la création littéraire, elle excite d'abord l'intérêt parce qu'elle traite également des circonstances extraordinaires de l'écriture du roman. Cependant, elle le fait incidemment et superficiellement. Rebatet, en effet, ne s'étend pas sur ces circonstances mais les mentionne seulement dans la mesure où elles affectent son activité d'écrivain. Par exemple, quand il discute son séjour à Sigmaringen, c'est surtout en rapport avec les problèmes pratiques qu'il y rencontre pour pouvoir continuer son livre: la perte de ses sources religieuses, la médiocre qualité du papier disponible et le manque d'encre, qui l'oblige à utiliser "des pastilles qui, fondues, donnent une eau bleuâtre" (78). De même, s'il mentionne Jeannot, son compagnon de cellule corse à Fresnes, c'est parce que sa présence a une incidence sur son roman: lorsqu'il décide que Michel doit avoir recours au vol pour pouvoir survivre, le gangster devient son conseiller technique et lui donne l'idée de l'épisode Mourreau, le riche ivrogne dont Michel vole le portefeuille. Rebatet décide même de faire de Jeannot un personnage de son roman sous le nom de Jojo le Corse, le noble gangster qui donne de l'argent à Michel pour lui permettre d'aller retrouver Anne-Marie en Suisse. Cependant, quand Rebatet lit fièrement les deux pages en question à son ami, il n'obtient pas la réaction attendue: Jeannot voulait un chapitre entier consacré à ses exploits.

Même les événements les plus dramatiques ne sont importants pour Rebatet que pour leur influence sur *Les deux étendards*. Ainsi, quand il est condamné à mort, il pense d'abord à son roman:

Je sais que je n'attendrai pas dans l'impavidité l'arrêt du sort. Je veux en finir du moins avec le souci de mon livre; et j'espère un peu dans le travail qui me reste à faire pour

retrouver mon équilibre moral.

Sur la planchette classique, je me mets à l'épilogue. Ma chaîne qui ferraille sur le plancher . . . est peu propice à mes allées et venues de fabricant vertical en phrases. Mais je ne suis plus astreint au couvre-feu, mon ampoule brûle toute la nuit, je peux veiller jusqu'à l'aube si j'en ai envie. . . . (290)

De la même manière, ironiquement le matin de Pâques 1947, alors qu'il se croit sur le point d'être guillotiné, il consacre ce qu'il pense être ses dernières heures à son roman, et plus spécifiquement à un passage contre la religion:

. . . je corrige méticuleusement un des discours de la mécréance, ajoutant encore quelques traits contre le catholicisme et son Christ, comme je l'ai déjà fait la veille. Je date ces corrections. Elles aussi porteront témoignage. Vers dix heures et demie, visite de mon avocat. Après quelques hésitations, il m'annonce que nous sommes grâciés tous les trois². (300)

De tels passages, cependant, sont exceptionnels car la majeure partie de *l'Etude* ignore les circonstances externes de la composition et s'occupe de son côté technique, traitant notamment des problèmes d'écriture, de structure et de style, ou encore des questions de logique interne, de cohérence et de vraisemblance. Par exemple, Rebattet explique pourquoi les événements de Brouilly sont racontés indirectement par Michel plutôt que directement par Régis:

Après les premières répliques entre Michel et Régis, répugnance immédiate à poursuivre ce dialogue avec toute la confiance de Régis. Sentiment que les mots du garçon: "J'aime une jeune fille et je suis aimé" puis "Ils s'enfoncèrent dans la nuit etc", forment une bonne fin de séquence. Le déroulement normal du récit veut dès lors que l'on ait cette confiance par la bouche de Michel, au cours d'un dialogue avec Guillaume. Ce découpage comportant un escamotage, est beaucoup plus distinctif que prémédité. Longtemps après coup, je vois que le procédé répond bien au dessin général du livre. Michel étant le seul personnage *réfléchissant* de l'histoire, il est naturel que l'on connaisse Brouilly à travers lui, selon lui, que ses réactions viennent au premier plan. (7-8)

Ailleurs, il affirme qu'il veut qu' Anne-Marie "se dessine surtout par les petites phrases qu'elle prononce, et qui montrent en particulier sa

connaissance précoce du coeur masculin", ajoutant qu' "il est bon . . . qu' Anne-Marie demeure d'abord imprécise pour le lecteur, comme elle l'est pour Michel, qu'elle ne se révèle que peu à peu" (25-6).

Rebatet discute également la myriade de problèmes, parfois très techniques, qui ralentissent sa progression. Il lui arrive par exemple de se demander si une conversation doit être présentée mot pour mot ou résumée au style indirect, ou encore de buter sur la bonne transition entre deux paragraphes ou deux chapitres:

Mon plaisir est d'ailleurs diminué par la difficulté que j'éprouve toujours à ouvrir un nouveau chapitre (comment faire le noeud, où reprendre le fil après la coupure; choisir le moment exact où le héros, que l'on vient de laisser seul, se retrouve avec un second personnage); les risques de gaucherie et de poncifs sont grands; je trime beaucoup plus sur certaines petites phrases jointives, qui passeront inaperçues, que sur maints passages essentiels . . . (20)

De même, il passe beaucoup de temps sur la première page de son roman, avant de décider d'éviter les "poncifs" et de choisir "l'extrême simplicité", c'est-à-dire de "débuter par la naissance de Michel" (118).

Avide de maintenir son histoire et son style à un niveau qui le satisfasse, Rebatet est en effet terrifié par les "poncifs", un terme qu'il utilise constamment. Cela explique par exemple qu'il ne montre pas Anne-Marie en train de se déshabiller quand elle est sur le point de perdre sa virginité avec Michel, "car le tableau a été fait mille fois". Il préfère montrer:

la suprême attente du bonheur, la face dans l'oreiller. Et sans le savoir, je me conforme ainsi à toute l'esthétique et toute la méthode de mon roman, dont l'âme de Michel est le centre. Encore un monologue, indirect, car la conscience de Michel est bien trop ardente et bouleversée pour que l' on puisse lui donner une forme. Les perceptions délicieuses--le bruit des pieds d' Anne-Marie--les détails matériels, les infimes soucis qui la traversent encore. L' indicatif pour dire qu'elle approche, qu'elle est là, qu'elle est sur le lit. (206)

Si la description subséquente des scènes d'amour entre Michel et Anne-Marie exalte et même excite Rebatet, les trois ou quatre cents pages précédant la confession de Michel le tourmentent au plus haut point car il craint que la monotonie ne s'installe quand son histoire semble au point mort. En d'autres occasions, il doit faire face au problème opposé: trop de matériel. Et la plupart du temps, il s'inquiète

à propos de répétitions, d'ellipses, de détails superflus ou gênants et s'interroge sur la crédibilité des actions ou attitudes de ses personnages. D'autres problèmes sont plus matériels: par exemple, il a de la peine à se rappeler la topographie de la ville de Lyon, la valeur de la monnaie des années 1920 ou encore la mode de l'époque, ce qui explique notamment que les vêtements d'Anne-Marie et des autres personnages féminins de l'histoire ne sont jamais décrits très précisément.

L'*Etude* révèle également la conclusion originale du roman, celle qui formait les trois cents dernières pages que Rebatet a choisi d'éliminer peu avant la publication. En effet, bien qu'ayant pris cette décision avant d'avoir rédigé l'*Etude*, il passe autant de temps sur cet épilogue que sur le reste du livre. La fin originale se déroule essentiellement à Paris où Michel retrouve Anne-Marie et est résumée ainsi:

... longue dépression de Michel, déchéance progressive d'Anne-Marie. Michel finira par se redresser, guéri enfin d'Anne-Marie par le spectacle même de cette Anne-Marie décadente. Anne-Marie, elle, ne se redressera pas, elle sera la victime du païen comme du chrétien. (268-69)

Cette conclusion, comme presque tout le roman, reflète l'histoire authentique, ce qui nous permet de dire un mot d'un des aspects les plus fascinants de l'*Etude*: la manière dont elle montre comment le romancier base son récit sur des événements réels, comment il les transpose pour les besoins de son art, ce qu'il utilise et ce qu'il écarte, et comment il transforme les trois protagonistes réels en Michel, Régis et Anne-Marie.

Ces quelques remarques ne donnent qu'un aperçu de la richesse de l'*Etude sur la composition des "deux étendards"*. Document véritablement exceptionnel, il reconstitue minutieusement chaque étape de la construction de l'édifice qui allait devenir *Les deux étendards* et fournit ainsi une rare occasion de pénétrer dans les coulisses de la création littéraire. La qualité du roman et les circonstances rocambolesques dans lesquelles il a été écrit ajoutent encore à son intérêt. Il reste à espérer qu'un éditeur courageux décidera un jour de le publier pour le bénéfice de tous les amateurs de littérature.

NOTES

¹ Pour une analyse plus détaillée du roman et de son histoire, voir notre article: "Anatomy of an Exclusion: *Les deux étendards* by Lucien Rebatet," *Symposium* 45, 1 (1991): 343-54.

² Rebatet avait été jugé et condamné à mort avec deux autres collaborateurs: Pierre-Antoine Cousteau et Claude Jeantet.

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VALORES PERSONALES Y LA CAZA NUPCIAL: DOS TEXTOS ILEGIBLES

Gustavo Verdesio

En este trabajo me limitaré a considerar las posibles razones de un fenómeno singular: la ilegibilidad de las estrategias discursivas en los dos últimos libros de Eduardo Espina. Antes de pasar a ello, revisaré las nociones de barroco y neobarroco, con las que la poesía de Espina ha sido relacionada.

Existe una tendencia a usar el término barroco para referirse a un estilo, a una especie de actualización de un modelo abstracto preexistente a la producción textual. En este sentido, la obra de Góngora sería, meramente, una actualización de lo barroco. Según Sandino Núñez, esta caracterización limita al barroco al papel de fenotipo, a una existencia entendida sólo como trabajo verbal: "menos que el lenguaje funcionando como una máquina, barroco es la exhibición misma, a través de un estilo y una estética de ese funcionamiento" ("Los cantos de caldo nor" 4). Severo Sarduy ya señalaba, en uno de los textos fundacionales de lo neobarroco, las diferencias entre la concepción de lo barroco como fenotipo y la que lo entiende como "esquema operatorio preciso," es decir, como máquina productiva (168). Desde esta perspectiva, el barroco aparece como un esquema o plan productivo, como una combinación de estrategias. Creo que es desde este punto de vista, y sólo desde él, que puede considerarse la obra más reciente de Espina como ejemplo de lo (neo)barroco.

En *Valores personales* se puede detectar la primera versión de la maquinaria que operará en *La caza nupcial*. Se trata de un libro que se concentra en los valores que han contribuido a crear el yo poético del texto. Allí comienza a verse esa "ruptura de la integridad del signo" de que habla Echavarrén (4), puesta al servicio, en esta ocasión, de una especie de homenaje a sí mismo. Por las páginas de *Valores personales* pasan, arrojando luz sobre el yo poético, las figuras de políticos y próceres uruguayos (Leandro Gómez) y extranjeros (Luther King), poetas (Góngora, Lautréamont), artistas plásticos (Magritte, de Chirico), personajes de la cultura popular (Superman, Sandokán), deportistas (Muhammed Ali), científicos (Darwin, Pavlov) y finalmente, alguna mujer amada, innombrable y postergada. La función de estas referencias, tanto cultas como populares (una distinción que a Espina no le preocupa mucho) es la de iluminar al lector sobre lo que el poeta llama sus "valores personales." Pero no sólo las citas explícitas son parte fundamental del texto, sino que también las presencias veladas juegan un papel importante en su construcción. Me refiero a lo que Sarduy ha llamado reminiscencias: "forma inmediata de incorporación

en que el texto extranjero se funde al primero, indistinguible, sin implantar sus marcas, su autoridad de cuerpo extraño en la superficie, pero constituyendo los estratos más profundos del texto receptor, tejiendo sus redes, modificando con sus texturas su geología" (177). Un ejemplo de este tipo de "presencia" en *Valores personales* es el rock and roll. Si bien no hay demasiada alusión a letras o a tonadas específicas a lo largo del libro, puede detectarse una presencia de la cultura rock en la respiración, en el ritmo de los poemas, como el propio Espina ha reconocido (Zapata, "Eduardo Espina" 122). Ciertos arcaísmos de lenguaje ("fermosa," etc.) operan, también, como reminiscencias de una época cultural (y poética) que ya no es, pero que sirve de referencia cultural al aludir a los maestros del Siglo de Oro, entre los cuales se encuentra, obviamente, Góngora.

Todas esas referencias, explícitas e implícitas, forman parte de un complejo continuum verbal que impresiona por su fuerza torrencial y su aparente caos. Estamos, según el propio poeta, ante una "reunión de íconos [sic] abandonados a la lógica del azar, heteróclito lenguaje, realidad, Heráclito otra vez" (*Valores personales*, 19). Claro que lo que une íconos y heteróclito lenguaje no es el azar, como pretende hacernos creer Espina. Parece más bien que uno de los nexos entre ellos es ese ritmo, esa respiración de que ha hablado Miguel Ángel Zapata ("Poesía hispanoamericana" 724-5) y, como veremos luego, una estrategia discursiva determinada.

En *Valores personales* vemos un lenguaje que intenta liberarse de ciertos condicionantes que aparecen como límites para el proyecto poético en que se embarca. Por ejemplo, si bien Espina intenta liberarse de la necesidad de tener que referirse a objetos que existen fuera de su discurso, por medio de perífrasis y de permutaciones de significantes (dos características de lo barroco, según Sarduy, 169-72), la propia estructura del poemario le impide sacudirse totalmente las cadenas de la referencialidad. La constante alusión a personajes famosos, conocidos por el lector, impregna a los textos de una intertextualidad fuertemente basada en la referencia. Difícil es escapar de ella cuando se está invocando a Marilyn Monroe o a Superman.

En *La caza nupcial*, en cambio, el texto está menos poblado de referencias directas a esos valores personales que eran omnipresentes en el libro anterior. Los nombres y apellidos se diluyen ahora en el torrente discursivo. La referencia, entendida como denotación (Russell 29-48), se hace cada vez más difícil de aprehender. Lo que hay es un mundo en el que abundan los fluidos (baste recordar el título de uno de los poemas: "Ay amor cuanto líquido me cuestas"), las heces (prolifera las palabras como "fiemo", "caca", etc.) y las descripciones veladas o directas del acto amoroso. Todo en el poemario apunta a Eros y, sin ambages, al sexo. Sin embargo, bajo la superficie erótica

se encuentra, quizá opacada, la principal preocupación del poeta: lo que él llama la trascendencia y que puede alcanzarse por el amor o las palabras. Sobre el primero, el poeta dice que "es la única imposibilidad necesaria" (93). La imposibilidad del amor y de su representación verbal hacen que el otro camino hacia la trascendencia sea el más frecuentemente transitado por Espina. Las palabras, quizá lo único que queda después del amor (*nomina nuda tenemus*, diría Eco), son una especie de escalera al cielo.

En este libro las palabras se suceden en una especie de torrente que arrastra al lector a golpes de metáforas y aliteraciones ("baba adamada de hada," "pijamas al pujar la pija", etc.), a tal punto que se llega a perder el hilo conceptual. De este modo, no será raro tener que volver al principio y tratar de rehacer el camino, hilvanando frase tras frase, tan sólo para encontrar, al final, que tal camino no existe, que lo que existe es otro tipo de ligazón. La sintaxis ya no es capaz de organizar el discurso "correctamente:" abundan las digresiones (generalmente precedidas de adverbios y expresiones tales como "a pesar," "donde," "cuando"), proliferan las cláusulas coordinadas o subordinadas y las perífrasis--que esconden, como ya anotara Sarduy, un significante que no osa mostrarse (170-2). A veces es la inexistencia de los signos de puntuación, sumada a la proliferación encadenada de frases en aposición, la que dificulta la lectura de los textos. En otros poemas, el lector debe recurrir a lo que los viejos profesores de latín llamaban la construcción directa. Es decir, deberá poner las palabras en su orden sintáctico "natural" a fin de poder sortear las dificultades de comprensión planteadas por la utilización sistemática del hipérbaton. Como ha señalado Eduardo Milán, en Espina la sintaxis no sigue los preceptos de la lógica (54). Muchas veces, las frases no culminan, no permiten que se les atribuya un sentido completo. A menudo nos encontramos con poemas que nos exponen a uno de los términos de una comparación ("así como"), pero que no concluyen el prometido símil. Un ejemplo de las expectativas creadas y al mismo tiempo frustradas por el poema, puede verse en "La bolsa de los boleros." (El subrayado es mío):

Tal cual la esplendidez de nadie entra por estos míos oídos,
bien que de aire en la ira pudiera ser esta mentira más por oír
de boca que rápida esconde sus engaños en un cofre con
monedas falsas que más lucen la desmesura de además dudar
del sino de estas cuatro paredes donde tanto te creo todo que
te creo a partir del pubis sin fin al débil dedo pulgar y de la
cabeza a todos los pics . . . (20)

El lector espera, razonablemente, que luego de la expresión inicial

"tal cual," la oración devenga símil. En el fragmento de poema transcrito, el segundo término de la comparación no aparece (así como tampoco en el resto del poema). Otras veces, la expectativa queda insatisfecha por el uso sorprendente de ciertas partes de la oración, como en el caso que veremos a continuación ("Lo que anuncia lo amoroso"), donde se da una aparición inusual de la conjunción disyuntiva "o" y de la conjunción copulativa "y:" "Puso la dentadura postiza/ en un búcaro de agua fría/ y la natación de una risa/ o pasaba nadando el deseo" (87).

La proliferación, la perífrasis, la aliteración y todos los recursos hasta aquí vistos son una especie de vegetación que se interpone entre el lector que espera un discurso racional y el texto que lo esconde. Si se ha dicho que Perlongher extrajo del domingo porteño una especie de trópico (Kamenszain 118), bien puede afirmarse que Espina transforma su mundo erótico y poético en una selva. Una selva entendida como metáfora de la proliferación discursiva: compuesta de palabras organizadas en interminables sucesiones de oraciones.

Como toda obra inspirada en la estética neobarroca, postula un mundo en el que las certezas son cada vez más difíciles de obtener. Después de la teoría de la relatividad y de la hipótesis del Big Bang, vivimos en un mundo amenazado de sedición, contradicciones y relatividad (Ulloa 98). Un universo en el que el centro ya no es el centro y en el que la gramática resulta incapaz de ordenar el lenguaje, produciéndose así esa fisura del sentido de que habla Echavarrén (5). Por ello no debe extrañar que las páginas de *La caza nupcial* sean el lugar de encuentro (no muy fortuito, a pesar de la admiración de Espina por Lautréamont) de distintos objetos, universos discursivos y registros de lengua. Una especie de romería donde se encuentran desde palabras poco frecuentes en el uso cotidiano ("ampo," "azumbre", "licopodios"), hasta vocablos rioplatenses coloquiales (e incluso vulgares, como "entube," "tripa"), pasando por la mitología griega (lamias, Ledas), la cultura popular (que incluye alusiones a películas que ya nadie recuerda, como *The King of Marvin Gardens*, de Bob Rafelson, citada por Espina por su título castellano, *Castillos de arena*) y otros registros dialectales pertenecientes a diversas regiones del mundo hispanohablante. De modo que a la estrategia gongorina (o casi, ya que Espina, a diferencia del cordobés, no crea neologismos de base latina o griega, sino que recupera palabras en desuso, arcaísmos) le suma la de apelar a los distintos tipos de habla hispana. Todos estos materiales se deslizan y se ordenan sin privilegios, sin orden jerárquico que los organice--como dice Kamenszain que ocurre con la(s) lengua(s) y registros discursivos en Perlongher (120). A tal punto que su propio registro, el rioplatense uruguayo, suena un poco exótico entre tanto sonido forastero; lo cual parece confirmar lo sugerido por Sandino

Núñez: en lo barroco la lengua materna aparece como rasgo de exotismo ("Hace algunos años" 5). Todas esas palabras y esos universos pueblan los versos de este texto, intentando tapar de signos la página en blanco. La mezcla de registros discursivos, de jergas, característica del neobarroco según Perlongher (Zapata, "Néstor Perlongher" 286) y Sarduy (175), es una de las herramientas principales a través de las que Espina intenta desarticlar la unidad de la sintaxis y el sentido racional.

Es aquí que me gustaría volver a la definición de barroco en tanto que máquina productora de discursos, y no como estilo literario identificable, como fenotipo. Pero antes quisiera enmarcar dicha definición en las coordenadas geográfico-culturales que contextualizan la producción poética de Espina: en un análisis de su obra no puede ignorarse su condición de uruguayo ni la cultura en que vivió el poeta la mayor parte de su vida. Una cultura de la que Espina es, le guste o no, un producto. La cultura del Uruguay no puede ser, por fuerza, similar a la de los países más poderosos económica y culturalmente. Los textos "originales" producidos allí son ya un collage de elementos y corrientes culturales que vienen de afuera (Núñez, "Hace algunos años" 4). Son discursos en los cuales la titularidad discursiva está "decolorada," como afirma Rubén Tani (1-25).¹

En este marco es que debe ubicarse la poesía de Espina. Es cierto que el *horror vacui* y un mundo descentrado han ayudado a desencadenar su vegetación lingüística. Pero ellos no bastan, en mi opinión, para causar esta reacción en cadena, esta especie de fisión poética. Hay algo más contra lo que Espina reacciona. Me refiero no sólo a la tradición poética en el Uruguay, sino a sus prácticas culturales en general y a una concepción racional de la vida. El exceso y la locura no son características predominantes en la cultura uruguayana—como el propio Espina se encarga de señalar (Zapata, "Eduardo Espina" 118).

Su discurso churrigueresco y emplumado es, como diría Sarduy, un ataque al logos, una impugnación (183). Pero no sólo al logos occidental, sino también (y especialmente) a su encarnación en la periferia montevideana. La exuberancia de su verba, sólo contenida a medias por la forma rectangular de la mayoría de los poemas de *La caza nupcial* (Zapata, "Poesía hispanoamericana" 725), es una intervención significativa en un universo discursivo determinado. Su estructura, que desdeña la lógica de la sintaxis, lo convierte, para el lector con ciertas expectativas, para el integrante de una comunidad interpretativa determinada (Fish 1-17), en un texto ilegible. El lector uruguayo, en tanto que integrante de una comunidad que tiende a interpretar los mensajes verbales de una forma determinada (siguiendo una cierta estrategia de decodificación), tiene dificultades para

comprender un texto articulado de una forma no prevista. Esta violación de los códigos de legibilidad afecta también a la crítica literaria institucional, que no tiene conciencia de que "una cultura imitativa, especular, es el terreno más apto para que crezca el barroco, el objeto cultural fronterizo, la pose bizarra, la imitación absurda, el deseo delirante de ser . . . institucionalmente otro" (Nuñez, "Hace algunos años" 50). Si entendemos el barroco como un amontonamiento, como algo que juega con la existencia de estrategias más o menos estables e institucionales de lectura, la clasificación de la obra de Espina no deja dudas: es barroca o neobarroca--o barrococó, según el propio autor (Zapata, "Eduardo Espina" 120). Tanto da. Lo que importa es concebir su poesía en tanto que intervención en el terreno de las prácticas de lectura, en el universo de lo que Tony Bennett llama las formaciones de lectura (7) (es decir, la historia y registro de la serie de lecturas de las que los textos son objeto en una comunidad o sociedad dadas). La vegetación discursiva transforma a este libro en una presencia diferente y desafiante en la cultura uruguaya. El sexo rampante, su amor de pez espada son, también, una desviación de las prácticas discursivas decoloradas uruguayas. Por ello, la ilegibilidad de los poemarios de Espina no puede explicarse solamente por la dificultad de las estructuras significativas que los informan. Para entender plenamente la falta de comunicación entre el poeta y la comunidad lectora a la que se dirige hay que tener en cuenta el tipo de relación que se da entre emisor y receptor: un emisor que no hace uso de las estrategias discursivas aceptadas en su comunidad interpretativa y un receptor que no está programado para decodificar determinado tipo de estructura significativa. En esta situación de enunciación, el autor, aceptando su propia decoloración y la marginalidad de su situación enunciativa, prosigue su búsqueda personal, a machetazo limpio, entre la maleza que él mismo ha creado.

De lo dicho no debe concluirse que la poesía de Espina es una poesía crítica (en el sentido de poesía con programa crítico explícito, analítico y con contrapropuesta). Es más bien un amontonamiento y una reacción. O una reacción en forma de amontonamiento. El objeto barroco, según Nuñez, no deconstruye ni denuncia críticamente, no nada contra la corriente de la mitología occidental: simplemente la exhibe, delatando de ese modo el sinsentido del original ("Hace algunos años" 4), señalando el carácter palimpséstico de la materia prima de que está construido su propio collage. Espina no es un crítico explícito del orden universal propuesto por la razón, es un crítico por agregación, por amontonamiento de los restos de esa cultura que se cree racional. Su subversión se funda en el énfasis y no en la crítica. La suya es, entonces, una intervención gestual, un desplante; una escritura del sinsentido de seguir, sin telos (Espina,

Valores personales 15), en medio de las prácticas de lectura racionales. Una maleza tropical que crece en medio del cemento rioplatense.

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NOTAS

¹ Su hipótesis de trabajo, que se funda en las ideas de Austin sobre la titularidad del discurso, es que en el mundo periférico la titularidad discursiva no depende de los elementos que Austin trata como si fueran universales, sino que requiere además un análisis que trascienda la mera interacción oral y que tenga en cuenta la situación geopolítica de enunciación en que se encuentra el hablante periférico. De modo que la titularidad de un hablante periférico no puede ser la misma que la de uno que emite su mensaje en los centros de poder.

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HENRI MICHAUX:
DIRE L'ESPACE DU DEDANS AVEC
LES MOTS DES AUTRES

Jean-Louis Morhange

I. AILLEURS

J'hésitais à rentrer chez mes parents. Quand il pleut, me disais-je, comment font-ils? Puis je me rappelai qu'il y avait un plafond dans ma chambre. (*Plume* 24; "Rentrer")

Ces deux très simples phrases contiennent en raccourci toute la singularité de l'oeuvre de Michaux. Il suffit de les lire pour se trouver transporté dans un monde d'une très profonde étrangeté: aucune des certitudes sur lesquelles repose notre vie quotidienne n'y est jamais acquise d'avance. Il n'est pas assuré que les chambres y aient un plafond, que les choses y aient une forme ou que les hommes y aient des doigts: "Doigts nombreux au point d'être dix et de cinq modèles différents" (*La nuit remue* 168; "Compagnons").

Certaines analyses récentes ont mis en valeur ce qui dans les textes de Michaux manifeste la modernité en littérature -- rupture avant-gardiste avec la tradition, revendication des pouvoirs de l'écriture ou entreprise de décentrement du sujet (voir par exemple les travaux de Laurie Edson). S'il est vrai que Michaux a été lié à certains moments de sa vie à des mouvements d'avant-garde (revue *Le disque vert*, groupe surréaliste), ses textes semblent pourtant traduire un projet profondément différent de celui du modernisme. En effet, le projet moderniste participe paradoxalement d'une forme d'intégration sociale, et ce dans la mesure même où il se veut une entreprise de subversion des normes de la représentation artistique et littéraire et des présupposés idéologiques sur lesquels repose l'ordre social: le geste même de la subversion présuppose une reconnaissance de l'existence et de l'importance de ce qu'il subvertit. Tout projet de remise en question d'un ordre existant avec ses conventions idéologiques ou esthétiques constitue, à un autre niveau que l'on pourrait appeler ontologique, la manifestation d'une solidarité plus fondamentale avec le monde, et en particulier avec *l'espace social dans lequel s'inscrit nécessairement toute expérience du monde extérieur*. Prétendre changer le monde par l'intermédiaire de textes ou d'images c'est affirmer avec la plus grande force possible d'une part que ce monde existe effectivement, d'autre part qu'il est possible d'agir sur lui par un acte créateur, autrement dit que la sphère publique n'est pas absolument irréductible à l'expérience intime et que l'art et la littérature sont en prise sur le monde extérieur.

Or à toutes ces affirmations les écrits de Michaux semblent obstinément refuser de souscrire. Le "monde du dehors", l'espace où se déroule l'expérience sociale, n'y est l'objet d'aucune solidarité mais plutôt d'une sorte de calme indifférence: le projet de Michaux tel qu'il se manifeste dans ses textes poétiques et s'énonce explicitement dans des textes plus théoriques, ne concerne pas le monde du dehors, qu'il s'agirait de transformer par l'action ou l'écriture, mais "L'espace du dedans" (titre donné par Michaux à une anthologie de son oeuvre), c'est-à-dire l'expérience d'être au monde dans tout ce qu'elle peut avoir d'intime, d'aberrant, de non représentable. Or cette expérience intime est ressentie par Michaux comme un donné brut qui préexisterait à toute expérience sociale, à toute culture, et que l'on ne pourrait recouvrer qu'à condition de rejeter de soi ce qui vient du dehors.

Je ne veux apprendre que de moi, même si les sentiers ne sont pas visibles, pas tracés, ou n'en finissent pas, ou s'arrêtent soudain. Je ne veux non plus rien "reproduire" de ce qui est déjà au monde. (*Emergences-résurgences* 18)

Ce programme rappelle celui de l'"Art brut" défendu par le peintre Jean Dubuffet et dont l'enjeu était la découverte dans les productions artistiques de malades mentaux d'une manifestation humaine supposée vierge de toute culture. Michaux, comme Dubuffet, semble croire à la possibilité d'accéder à une expérience primordiale antérieure à toute expérience de l'extériorité.

Or il est bien sûr facile aujourd'hui à la lumière des acquis des sciences sociales de rétorquer à Michaux et à Dubuffet que le dedans est inséparable du dehors, autrement dit qu'il n'existe pas d'expérience humaine qui ne participe d'une culture et d'une société, et que tout être humain est inséré depuis sa naissance dans un espace social dont il ne peut jamais sortir. Le projet de Michaux paraît donc théoriquement insoutenable et devrait en principe être voué à l'échec. Et pourtant, contre toute attente, il se trouve jusqu'à un certain point réalisé dans ses textes, ou plutôt dans ce que ses textes peuvent faire surgir en nous en traçant pour un instant la forme de quelque chose d'insaisissable et d'essentiel.

II. LE LANGAGE COMME OBSTACLE

Cependant, en tant qu'écrivain, Michaux se trouve immédiatement confronté dans la réalisation de ce projet à un obstacle apparemment insurmontable: celui de son matériau, le langage. En effet la langue est de toute évidence partie intégrante et même constitutive de la socialité et donc de l'expérience du dehors. Le lexique, la syntaxe, l'ensemble

des structures linguistiques sont le produit de l'usage dans l'interaction sociale et sont chargés d'une mémoire collective dont ils ne peuvent être séparés. Michaux éprouve de manière très aiguë cette contradiction entre son matériau et son projet. Elle lui paraît même parfois si insoluble qu'il en arrive à conclure que le langage est par nature inapte à explorer l'espace du dedans, et qu'il n'y a pas d'autre recours que de l'abandonner au profit d'autres moyens d'expression.

Immense préfabriqué qu'on se passe de génération en génération, la langue, pour condamner à suivre, à être fidèle, qui pousse à montrer un important standing. . . . Dans la peinture, le primitif, le primordial mieux se retrouve.

On passe par moins d'intermédiaires et qui ne sont pas vraiment intermédiaires, n'étant point partie d'un langage organisé, codifié, hiérarchisé. . . . Pas de langue vraiment pauvre. Avec l'écriture, c'est pire. Encombrée par l'abondance, le luxe, le nombre de flexions, de variations, de nuances, si on la fait "brute", si on la parle brute, c'est malgré elle. (*Emergences-résurgences* 18-19)

. . . l'image est un certain immédiat que le langage ne peut traduire que de très loin, et . . . elle a dans l'esprit une place vraiment à part, matière première pour la pensée. (80)

Eugène Nicole analyse ainsi le projet plastique de Michaux:

Négation, en somme, du langage dans une biffure généralisée, qui retourne aux jeux immémoriaux de l'existence, disparus, oubliés sous la pression totalisatrice, économique et directrice de l'écriture fonctionnelle, à base phonétique. . . . Les mots sont toujours "ceux des autres". (*Nicole* 38)

Comment explorer, comment exprimer l'expérience intime à travers les mots des autres? Comment parler la langue "malgré elle"? Est-il vraiment possible de démolir le "préfabriqué" de la langue pour en faire une matière brute qui se laisserait façonner au lieu d'imposer sa forme à l'informe du dedans? L'œuvre de Michaux oblige à se poser ces questions, et c'est déjà beaucoup. Mais elle s'efforce même de leur apporter des réponses. En voici quelques-unes:

III. L'INVENTION LEXICALE

Il l'emparouille et l'endosque contre terre;
 Il le rague et le roupète jusqu'à son drôle;
 Il le pratèle et le libucque et lui baruffe les ouillais;

(*Qui je fus* 74; "Le grand combat," repris dans *L'espace du dedans* 14)

L'une des caractéristiques les plus frappantes des textes de Michaux est la fréquence avec laquelle ils recourent à des mots inventés. C'est que, grâce à ces mots qui n'existent pas, le langage cesse au moins en partie de charrier sa charge culturelle et tend à passer à l'état d'une pâte sonore que l'écrivain pourrait travailler à sa guise comme le sculpteur travaille l'argile. Car le sculpteur jouit grâce au matériau qu'il emploie d'une liberté créatrice qui se refuse à l'écrivain: la forme qui va surgir entre ses mains n'est pas contenue à l'avance dans le bloc de terre ou de pierre qu'il travaille. L'écrivain, lui, n'a pas à sa disposition une matière brute. Les mots des langues dites naturelles qui constituent son matériau sont toujours des mots d'occasion, des mots empruntés à quelqu'un d'autre, qui viennent toujours déjà chargés d'une écrasante mémoire: celle des innombrables occurrences de leur emploi dans le discours (cf. Ricoeur 817). Forger des mots inédits à partir des lettres et des sons de la langue revient à tenter de se libérer de cette mémoire, dans l'espoir que le langage puisse devenir cette matière brute qui se laisserait modeler par l'écrivain.

IV. UNE SYNTAXE SAUVAGE

La syntaxe de Michaux peut être caractérisée par les termes *brute* et *sauvage*, dans plusieurs sens de ces mots. Il traite la langue avec une grande *sauvagerie*, martyrisant la syntaxe avec cette même allégresse que les protagonistes de nombre de ses textes mettent à *brutaliser* tout ce qui passe à leur portée: "Là, en trois secondes, ses forces, il n'en est plus question (*La nuit remue* 66; "L'éther"). Les phrases se déboitent, les syntagmes se désarticulent comme le corps des protagonistes et se trouvent catapultés les uns par-dessus les autres. Par cette violence syntaxique, Michaux semble chercher à retrouver ou à inventer une sorte d'*état sauvage* de la langue, une langue *brute* qui serait décapée de tout poli, de toute histoire et de toute culture. Ainsi la syntaxe de Michaux est impatiente, nerveuse, elliptique au point d'être souvent abrupte. Certaines de ses phrases semblent réduites à l'extrême, lacunaires même, comme s'il en était tombé des grappes de mots.

... au moment de franchir le seuil de ma chambre, elle n'était guère plus haute qu'une perdrix. Non, non, alors je n'y tiens pas. Une femme, bien! pas une perdrix. Elle savait bien pourquoi je l'avais appelée. Ce n'était pas pour ... enfin! (*La nuit remue* 10)

On pourrait parler d'une syntaxe du court-circuit: "C'est bon voir quelqu'un faire quelque chose" (*Fables des origines* 8; "Dieu, la Providence"). "... l'ascension-fourmi se poursuit avec une lenteur interminable" (*La nuit remue* 10; "La nuit remue," section 2). Les mots de liaison (prépositions, conjonctions) manquent souvent, comme s'ils avaient été extirpés des phrases avec une sorte de rage.

V. ORIGINES

Mais c'est parfois le contraire qui se passe. On trouve souvent au tout début des textes de Michaux un mot de liaison syntaxique ou logique qui ne lie à rien puisqu'il n'y a rien avant lui: "Non, il est sans exemple qu'éclairée par un grand feu de bois l'obscurité tarde à s'en aller" (*Plume* 29; "La nature, fidèle à l'homme". Souligné par moi, dans cette citation et les suivantes). "Et circulant dans mon corps maudit, j'arrivai dans une région où les parties de moi étaient fort rares et où pour vivre, il fallait être saint" (*La nuit remue* 136; "Saint"). "Il ne s'agit plus de faire le fier, à présent" (ibid. 59; "Emme et son parasite").

"... Là je vis aussi l'Auroch, la Parpue, la Darelette, l'Epigrue" ... (145; "Notes de zoologie"). Ou bien un démonstratif ou un pronom de la troisième personne dont l'antécédent ne se trouve nulle part: "Déjà dans l'escalier elle commença à n'être plus bien grande" (10; "La nuit remue", sec 3). "Ce n'est encore qu'un petit halo, personne ne le voit, mais lui, il sait que de là viendra l'incendie" ... (54; "Sous le phare obsédant de la peur").

Ces phrases qui surgissent de l'espace vierge de la page placent abruptement leur lecteur dans une situation souvent inouïe, et qui pourtant lui est présentée comme allant de soi puisqu'elle ne fait l'objet d'aucune explicitation. Certains textes commencent par des points de suspension, ou par des conjonctions de coordination, comme s'ils n'étaient que la partie émergée de messages dont le lecteur est censé avoir déjà lu le début. Or le référent de ces messages n'est pas le monde du dehors, mais un monde souvent absolument incompatible avec celui de l'expérience quotidienne, telle au moins qu'elle est socialement construite et constituée par le discours.

Michaux semble écrire comme s'il n'avait jamais rien lu, comme si rien n'avait jamais été écrit avant lui. En cela encore se manifeste son projet de repartir à zéro, d'accéder à une expérience primordiale, antérieure à toute culture, de recouvrir un monde où les choses et les mots n'auraient pas encore précipité, un monde antérieur à la solidification généralisée qui semble avoir rejeté au-dehors de soi les choses et les mots du monde réel pour en faire des objets durs, hostiles ou oppressifs.

Ce refus manifesté par les textes de Michaux de reconnaître l'existence même de toute expérience socialement constituée a pour pendant une fascination d'ordre cosmologique pour les commencements et les origines. L'un de ses premiers livres est un recueil de récits mythiques imaginaires intitulé *Fables des origines*. Comme les mots inventés, les créatures inventées prolifèrent dans ses textes, dont certains constituent de véritables manuels d'histoire naturelle ou d'anthropologie imaginaires: "Notes de zoologie" (*La nuit remue*, 145), "Notes de botanique", *Ailleurs* (157). Ecrire c'est accomplir le geste démiurgique de la création, c'est peut-être rivaliser avec Dieu en mettant au jour des mondes dont la force de présence puisse égaler celle du monde du dehors.

VI. UNE APPROCHE DE L'INDICIBLE

Mais la réponse la plus forte que propose Michaux aux questions qu'il se pose, c'est peut-être celle-ci:

Mais Toi, quand viendras-tu?
 Un jour, étendant Ta main
 sur le quartier où j'habite,
 au moment mûr où je désespère vraiment;
 dans une seconde de tonnerre,
 m'arrachant avec terreur et souveraineté
 de mon corps et du corps croûteux
 de mes pensées-images, ridicule univers;
 lâchant en moi ton épouvantable sonde,
 l'effroyable sonde de Ta présence,
 élevant en un instant sur ma diarrhée
 Ta droite et insurmontable cathédrale;
 me projetant non comme homme
 mais comme obus dans la voie verticale,
 TU VIENDRAS. (*Plume* 97; "Mais Toi, quand viendras-tu?")

Ce qui frappe avant tout dans ce poème, c'est qu'il se refuse à désigner ce dont il parle. C'est un texte en creux, au centre duquel se trouve une absence: le nom de son référent -- comme si l'écriture ne pouvait faire plus que manifester l'impossibilité de nommer. Quelle transcendance recouvre-t-elle donc, cette deuxième personne assez souveraine pour mériter une majuscule?

Toute transcendance telle qu'elle est éprouvée de l'intérieur est par principe indicible, qu'il s'agisse d'une expérience mystique ou de la mort du locuteur. L'instant de la mort est celui de la disparition de la conscience et du langage. On ne peut donc rien en dire. Les mots les

plus justes ne peuvent qu'indiquer la place de cette absence: comme on l'a vu, on ne peut employer un mot sans reprendre à son compte l'ensemble des représentations mentales associées à ce mot par l'usage. Les mots de la langue, placés comme des étiquettes sur les objets du monde, mettent à distance l'expérience brute en la filtrant à travers un ensemble de représentations déjà constituées. Ecrire le mot "mort" ou le mot "Dieu" reviendrait à faire appel à une expérience non pas intime, intérieure (le poème fait partie d'un recueil intitulé *Lointain intérieur*), mais publique, sociale, faisant l'objet d'un consensus préexistant. Ce serait accepter de ramener l'autre au même et l'inconnu au connu.

Si l'espace du dedans ne peut pas s'inscrire dans le moule de la culture et de la langue des autres, la meilleure approche est peut-être le silence qui demeure au coeur des textes, dont les mots ne sont là que pour indiquer la forme de l'indicible.

Recours aux drogues, voyages réels et imaginaires, création à partir de rien d'êtres et de mondes entiers, innovation lexicale et syntaxique, renoncement aux mots des autres menant jusqu'à l'abandon pur et simple du langage, telles sont les voies choisies par Michaux pour tenter de réaliser son étrange projet: se dépouiller de la culture et de la société des hommes comme s'il s'agissait d'un corps étranger, pour pouvoir vivre et dire dans sa vérité l'aventure d'être au monde (Bellour 11). On ne sait que penser de ce projet à la fois fascinant et absurde, sans doute condamné à l'échec, dont les traces multiples constituent pourtant quelques unes des oeuvres les plus fortes et les plus belles qu'il nous soit donné de lire.

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EL HUMOR EN LAS NOVELAS DE EDUARDO MENDOZA

Agnieszka Gutthy

En el uso constante del humor, casi olvidado por la novela testimonial de posguerra, consiste la gran novedad y originalidad de Eduardo Mendoza. Es un elemento que se encuentra a todos los niveles de sus textos: en el argumento, el narrador, el personaje y el lenguaje. La subversión de los géneros literarios, el humor negro, el distanciamiento y su poder desfamiliante, el manejo idóneo de la historia, el uso muy hábil del lenguaje son los elementos que contribuyen al efecto humorístico de sus obras.

La subversión de los géneros literarios es más evidente en dos de sus novelas: *El misterio de la cripta embrujada* (1979) y *El laberinto de las aceitunas* (1982). Mendoza se sirve aquí del modelo de la novela detectivesca: el protagonista-detective a través de la deducción y del razonamiento llega a resolver el caso. Sin embargo, desde las primeras páginas de ambas novelas se establece la distancia paródica entre el género policíaco y su realización por Mendoza. La expectativa del lector, que espera encontrar en la novela un protagonista de la talla de Sherlock Holmes, Maigret, Poirot, un cerebro potente, capaz de pensar lógicamente, de resolver cualquier misterio, choca con el personaje creado por Mendoza. Su 'detective' ni siquiera tiene nombre, es casi iltrado; narra, sin embargo, la historia apropiándose del lenguaje culto del Siglo de Oro. Es un pequeño criminal sacado de un manicomio, soplón de policía, "propenso a oler mal" (*El misterio* 8), que come bocadillos sacados de la basura, bebe Pepsi-Cola teniendo de vez en cuando "la prudencia de colocar los labios a ambos lados del borde del vaso y no los dos dentro del recipiente" (*El misterio* 16), y si logra controlar sus movimientos, es a costa de perder lo que se le está diciendo. Al otro lado están el elegante inspector Maigret--que saborea su Calvados ante todo--y el exquisito Sherlock Holmes, quien fuma tranquilamente su pipa a la vez que descifra un nuevo misterio. El gran pensamiento lógico, que ha asombrado al lector en la novela detectivesca clásica, es sustituido por las conclusiones, de vez en cuando equívocas, que el loco investigador saca de las cosas, ya desde el principio bien obvias para el lector.

Los acontecimientos, cada vez más absurdos, suceden rápidamente. El suspense, un recurso poderoso de la novela policíaca, que ha de aumentar la tensión dramática y el interés del lector, aquí aumenta la risa: este 'detective' detiene la acción investigadora para leerse una revista pornográfica o para comer una cruda bulifarra, cuando le apetece. Asimismo, el detective de Mendoza es un pícaro para quien satisfacer sus necesidades básicas es lo más importante. Los elementos

de la novela detectivesca quedan aquí subvertidos y puestos al revés; el caso resuelto no restaura ningún orden racional, todo lo contrario, cuestiona la cordura y la coherencia del mundo.

Si en *El misterio de la cripta embrujada* y en *El laberinto de las aceitunas*, Mendoza subvierte la convención literaria de la novela policíaca, en otra de sus obras, *La ciudad de los prodigios* (1986), juega con otra forma narrativa: con la crónica histórica. Coloca al narrador en la frontera entre la verdad histórica y la ficción, entre lo real y lo absurdo. El efecto que de ello se deriva es que el lector no sabe a veces a qué atenerse y empieza a creer en las mentiras del narrador y a dudar de la verdad histórica. El narrador cuenta la historia de Barcelona mezclando hechos reales con otros imaginarios y mágicos y, para colmo, apoya su veracidad con documentos y artículos de la prensa.

Del hecho real y creíble hace un acontecimiento insólito y disparatado. Cuenta, por ejemplo, la historia de dos delegados de la Junta del Patronato de la Exposición Universal en Barcelona, que van a Madrid al Ministerio de Fomento para obtener una subvención para la organización de la Exposición. Los delegados se llaman Guitarrí y Guitarró, llevan puestos vestidos y capas del siglo XV. La espera para ser recibidos por el ministro se prolonga tanto que los dos "a fuerza de convivir día y noche habían acabado por parecerse el uno al otro como dos gotas de agua y ambos al santo ermitaño del cuadro del taller de Zurbarán en cuya contemplación llevaban meses" (*La ciudad* 43).

La novela es un juego constante entre la ficción, la historia y la intrahistoria, la magia, el disparate y la realidad. El narrador se burla tanto de los personajes ficticios como históricos, de las instituciones españolas y barcelonesas; cuestiona la historicidad de los hechos históricos y la ficcionalidad de los ficticios. La distorsión de la realidad y el distanciamiento burlador es un recurso constante, que gracias a su poder desfamiliarizante permite al lector reírse de los problemas, palabras y acontecimientos que normalmente no parecen tan chistosos; verlos, quizás, por primera vez y encontrar una mayor objetividad en esa mirada fresca.

Si en *La ciudad de los prodigios* el autor crea el distanciamiento a través de salir y entrar constantemente en la esfera del realismo, en otras novelas obtiene el mismo efecto sirviéndose de la perspectiva limitada del narrador. De esta manera modifica la percepción habitual de la realidad llamando la atención del lector al artificio del texto y presentando la realidad desde una perspectiva nueva, desacostumbrada.

De esta técnica se sirve Mendoza al presentar el mundo ya a través de los ojos del loco narrador de *El misterio de la cripta embrujada* o de un extraterrestre en *Sin noticias de Gurb* (1991). Esta novela narra la historia de dos extraterrestres que llegan a nuestro planeta para

establecer el contacto con los habitantes de la Tierra. Escrita en forma de un cuaderno de bitácora, cuenta su llegada a Barcelona, la salida de uno de ellos llamado Gurb y la búsqueda de Gurb--que desaparece sin dejar huella alguna--por su compañero. Los dos extraterrestres viajan bajo forma acorpórea de inteligencia pura, y al salir de su nave tienen que adoptar la forma humana. Las constantes transformaciones del narrador constituyen una de las fuentes del humor en la novela. Antes de adoptar las diferentes apariencias, consulta cuidadosamente su Catálogo Astral, que ofrece toda la galería de seres humanos en los que él se puede transformar. Su catálogo no le informa, sin embargo, de que el concepto del tiempo es diferente en la Tierra, así como lo es el concepto de la muerte. Por ello, el narrador adopta indiscriminadamente formas que varían desde S.S. Pío XII a Gary Cooper. También se transforma en unos representantes de la cultura española: cuando se encuentra borracho en la cárcel, sale de allí gracias a adoptar la apariencia respetable de don José Ortega y Gasset.

Gurb abandona la nave transformado en una mujer joven, guapa y atractiva, en "el ser humano denominado Marta Sánchez" (*Sin noticias* 5), una prostituta, y disfrutando de su nueva condición se pierde en la ciudad sin dejar noticias. El otro, que narra la historia, sale en su búsqueda y aunque aparentemente le sobra inteligencia, no la tiene bastante como para adaptarse bien a la vida barcelonesa. Sin saberlo, subvierte las reglas que rigen esa sociedad. El lector obviamente las conoce, así que las peripecias le resultan muy graciosas.

A los ojos de un extraterrestre sorprenden cosas que son muy naturales y hasta obvias para un ser humano. Muy cómicas resultan ser las conclusiones que el narrador saca de sus observaciones de la gente en la calle: "No debo volar ni andar sobre la coronilla si no quiero ser tenido por excéntrico. Nota: mantener siempre en contacto con el suelo un pie--cualquiera de los dos sirve--o el órgano externo denominado culo" (9).

Por otra parte, una vez preparado el lector a que el narrador, siendo un ser extraterrestre, sea totalmente diferente del ser humano, tanto en su comportamiento y en su apariencia como en sus creencias y costumbres, encuentra en la novela una frase que el narrador apuntó en su cuaderno de bitácora: "12.00 La hora del ángelus. Me recojo unos instantes" (9); a las diez y media escribe: "me pongo el pijama, rezo mis oraciones y me acuesto" (21). En otro momento, confiesa que está leyendo una novela en entregas sobre las aventuras de Lolita Galaxia. El humor de tales fragmentos nace de la subversión de la regla que el lector acaba de formular sobre la naturaleza del habitante de otros planetas que aquí, contra la convicción común, se comporta según las normas del comportamiento humano.

Tampoco faltan en la novela ejemplos de humor negro. El

narrador, sin saber cómo moverse en la ciudad terrestre, se encuentra inmediatamente:

- 08.01 Arrollado por un Opel Corsa.
- 08.02 Arrollado por una furgoneta de reparto.
- 08.03 Arrollado por un taxi.
- 08.04 Recupero la cabeza y la lavo en una fuente pública situada a pocos metros del lugar de la colisión. Aprovecho la oportunidad para analizar la composición del agua de la zona: hidrógeno, oxígeno y caca. (8)

En estilo escueto, telegráfico, apunta en su cuaderno lo ocurrido. El protagonista es un ser analítico, registra con exactitud la rapidez con la cual suceden los accidentes y el número insólito de ellos. Ni siquiera el agua se salva de la burla: la caca resulta ser uno de sus ingredientes básicos.

En otro momento se le olvida respirar y los ojos le salen disparados de las órbitas, debe ir a recogerlos bajo las ruedas de los coches. En este incidente el lector fácilmente reconoce el humor de los "cartoons," en donde las figuras animadas sufren accidentes terribles y se reponen físicamente al instante, por arte de magia.

A todo eso hay que añadir un elemento humorístico más: a pesar de su extraño comportamiento y aspecto a veces horroroso, el narrador no parece llamar la atención de nadie entre la multitud de la calle; sólo una mujer reacciona a su apariencia bastante lastimosa ofreciéndole limosna, una moneda que él se come inmediatamente para no parecerle descortés: se redobra el humor por combinar en este acto la reacción "incorrecta" basada en la creencia de que debe ser la "correcta."

Otra manera de crear el humor (y se sirve de ésta Mendoza) es a través del lenguaje. Al comentar el idioma de los seres humanos, el narrador extraterrestre observa que éste "sin descodificar, es trabajoso y pueril. Para ellos, una oración elemental como ésta," y aquí siguen ocho líneas de símbolos, cifras y letras, "resulta ininteligible" (29). Afirma que nuestra "capacidad de expresión es limitadísima, salvo en el terreno de la blasfemia y la palabra soez" (29).

Mendoza juega también con el lenguaje en *El misterio de la cripta embrujada* y en *El laberinto de las aceitunas*. El narrador, siendo casi iletrado, se apropia de un lenguaje culto, clásico, cuidadosamente estilizado. Tiene aspiraciones literarias, escribe las memorias dirigiéndose directamente a su "amable lector," sirviéndose aquí de la convención inglesa del siglo XVII, y explicando su 'caso' como si fuese un pícaro verdadero. Al describir sus aventuras, se sirve de un lenguaje muy elaborado, usando muchas metáforas--por ejemplo,

medita sobre "el transcurso inexorable de los años, en cuyas fauces perece nuestra evasiva juventud" (*El misterio* 31)--y zeugmas--el coche-patrulla "entre bocinazos, sirenas y zarandeos, nos condujo en poco más de una hora al centro de la ciudad y, por ende, al final de este capítulo" (27). En su lenguaje abundan paradojas y antítesis, hecho extraño tratándose de un hombre marginado y, como él mismo afirma, "de instrucción y cultura deficientes" (15). Utiliza oximorones--por ejemplo, el doctor Sugrañes le da su "cordial ultimátum" (10); un fotógrafo muestra "insensibilidad de artista" (31)--, perífrasis humorísticas--"las dos caras de crisol" (94)--, desviaciones lingüísticas más extrañas aún--"la era prepostfranquista" (20)--e injertos del inglés--"variedad conocida del mal francés, french, bad" (42). Efecto cómico tiene también el hecho de mezclar en su elaborado discurso términos que no se suelen unir en el mismo contexto, como por ejemplo, "dramática tesitura" y "chirona" (76).

En todas las novelas de Mendoza el humor desempeña un papel muy importante. Le sirve tanto para aliviar la tetricidad del espacio urbano que describe, como para reírse de la historia y de la memoria colectiva, de la inferioridad y de la chapuza nacional. Patricia Hart nota a lo largo de su libro *The Spanish Sleuth* la presencia del tema de España como país de segunda categoría en las obras de Mendoza y también en toda la novela detectivesca española (20, 102, 207). La imagen de Barcelona que emerge de la ficción de Mendoza es la de una ciudad zarrapastrosa: los hoteles y las pensiones son sucios y asquerosos; las prostitutas están muy lejos de ser atractivas--basta recordar al pobre coco que es Cándida, que tiene "las carnes algo verdosas," "la frente convexa y abollada" y "el cuerpo trapezoidal, desmedido en relación con las patas, cortas y arqueadas, lo que le daba un cierto aire de enano crecido" (*El misterio* 30-1). Las instituciones educativas y los colegios parecen prisiones; las clases media y baja están empobrecidas, atontadas por la Iglesia, como el viejo jardinero del Colegio de San Gervasio, don Cagomelo Purga, para quien no "hay mejor credencial en este mundo ni en el otro" que la "acendrada devoción" (64). Solamente la aristocracia sigue siendo, como casi siempre, decadente. Todo eso crea una imagen desfavorable de Barcelona y por ende, de toda España.

El tema de la chapuza nacional es uno de los constituyentes del humor en Mendoza. Sin embargo, la imagen del país decadente y estancado no les ha divertido tanto a otros escritores españoles. Baste recordar la furia y el odio con que Juan Goytisolo exorciza en su novela *Reivindicación del conde don Julián* los odiados y paralizadores mitos de la sociedad española. Al igual que Goytisolo, Eduardo Mendoza sustituye la realidad histórica española por una versión inventiva, transgresiva y desmitificadora. Pero con una diferencia

radical: en las novelas de Mendoza falta la mirada ácida, sarcástica del reformador, y en su lugar encontramos el espíritu lúdico. Así deleita al lector, que puede reírse de temas que han dolido tanto a tantos escritores españoles.

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THE AUTHORITY OF THE ELEGIAC IN MACHADO DE ASSIS' *COUNSELOR AYRES' MEMORIAL*

Todd Garth

The notion that Machado de Assis' *Counselor Ayres' Memorial* (1908) has an elegiac aspect is hardly revolutionary, even setting aside the portraiture of his wife Carolina, acknowledged by the author himself (Caldwell 197). But Machado de Assis' last work, saturated with the presence of both the aged and the deceased, in fact inverts the discourse of mourning. *Counselor Ayres' Memorial* does mourn absence, but of the living rather than the dead. Similarly, the novel does express a sense of loss, but of a community rather than an individual hero. Above all, the *Memorial* mourns the imposition of individual will on a vulnerable and credulous Brazilian people. Conversely, the dead are invoked not as individuals lost to this world but as a dynamic collective presence, one which may even hold the key to the nation's well-being. Thus rather than call the novel elegiac, it is more accurate to take a cue from the title and term it memorialistic.¹

Without affirming that Machado de Assis purposely perverts an established tradition in Luso-Brazilian letters, one can find many examples in this novel of either parody or subversion of elegiac conventions.² In fact, much of what links *Counselor Ayres' Memorial*, in an ironic fashion, to the Western elegiac tradition is a tongue-in-cheek revisiting of the elegiac conflation of personal loss, deep mourning, and social disaster.

It is natural Machado de Assis should address this "memorialistic" discourse of mourning as pertinent to the question of authority. After all, the European elegiac tradition is, arguably, largely a discourse of individual legacy and inherited authority. But in contrast to such a tradition of individual authority, the *Memorial* presents a discourse of modern, peripheral, fragmented authority. Furthermore, Machado fears this discourse will perpetually be undercut by the Brazilian submission to the authority associated with European colonizers.³ And of course in this novel, that pernicious colonizing force is personified in the character of Tristão.

The idea that *Counselor Ayres' Memorial* concerns itself with the inheritance and exercise of authority in the newly-modern Brazilian state is amply supported by John Gledson, who maintains that as a tale of credulity and betrayal, the *Memorial* is a consummately political story, an allegory. But I disagree with Gledson's conclusion that this is Machado's most pessimistic work, casting doubt on the possibility of a modern Brazilian nation (Gledson, "Betrayal" 149). Machado is suggesting that the Brazilian nation is not viable according to the nineteenth-century standards of authority based on the exercise and

public endorsement of individual will. He hopes the community depicted by means of the vacuous (and aptly named) narrator Aires holds the alternative to the discourse he, as author, condemns.

Gledson argues, reasonably, that this community is neither impressive nor promising. Most of its number are, like Machado, aged, infirm and childless; the inherent tragedy of that condition is dwelt on. Even more disturbing is the alienation and isolation of these characters, despite their participation in an evidently lively and close-knit social community.

The Aguiars, for example, spend a great deal of time at home alone, despite their cheery gatherings, energetic work and overflowing affection for everyone. Their poignant portrait at the novel's close underlines their tragic isolation. The few parent-child relationships in the novel are no less bleak. At center is Fidélia, barely reconciled with her unyielding father upon his deathbed. Tristão's case is even worse, for his attachment to *both* sets of parents, natural and "counterfeit," is limited to enjoying the benefits of their affection.

Then there is Aires himself. Retired from lengthy service as a diplomat, Aires now finds himself more "at sea" than during all his travels. He alternates between confessed passion for the nubile Fidélia and an insistence that he feels only fatherly affection for her. His diplomatic demeanor means never pronouncing a disagreeable opinion. Most curious, Aires constantly vacillates between excruciating loneliness and boredom and an overwhelming desire to be left alone. Halfway into this diary, he laments, "I have a wife under the sod in Vienna, and none of my children ever left the cradle of nothingness. I am alone, completely alone" (111) [79].⁴ Yet six months earlier, he has declared, "I am going to stay at home four or five days . . . in order not to see or hear anyone . . ." (46-47) [38].

This vacillation even extends to his recording of past and present. He dismisses a cache of personal papers as better left unfound and he shreds letters (121, 72) [85, 54]; but he is driven to continue his memorial despite extreme doubts and discomforts, including failing eyesight. Underpinning this ambivalence in life and letters is Aires' overall sense of uselessness: his presence in Brazil seems to have no purpose. And it is significant, in this light, that his service to the nation was entirely *in absentia* and, in his own words, "decorative" (89) [65]. Aires, in effect, constitutes the perfect absent individual: of service when physically absent, engaged in self-suppression and, as he expresses it, living off of what he hears from others; frustrated and purposeless when physically present and immersed in an accounting of self. But the very frustration of this self-accountancy is crucial. Its ultimate effect of identifying Aires as an absent individual and as an indeterminate, decentered, fragmented and dependent self, is

inseparable from its effect of yielding such a rich portrait of this arguably senile community.

Returning to the novel's treatment of the dead and their presence among the living, it is noteworthy that often the homage to the dead by the living proves to be patently superficial, as Aires himself remarks. Aires repeatedly refers to the futility of such acts: ". . . The dead are well off lying where they fall . . ." (13) [16]. But as dismissive as he is of the rituals meant to keep the dead among us, Aires, with true Machadoian irony, reveals the inadequacy of his own summary of death in the peculiar case of Fernandes, the auctioneer.

During a fit of hermitude, trying to avoid contact even with his sister, Aires responds to Rita's query about the auctioneer by inventing what he believes to be a fiction: he pronounces Fernandes dead. He then scoffs at the very function of auctioneers and estates by grouching:

She must be joking. What do I know about auctioneers, or about auctions? When I die they can sell privately the little that I leave, at a discount or without one, and my skin along with the rest: it is not new, it is not handsome, it is not fine, but, still, it will be good for some drum or rude tambourine. There is no need for calling in an auctioneer. (47) [38]

It is not only remarkable, as Aires later concedes, that the auctioneer should indeed die just at the moment Aires announces his death to Rita. Equally striking is the abrupt setting into motion of events caused by Fernandes' actual death, completely negating Aires' purpose in making the premature announcement of his fictional death. Rita disrupts her brother's solitude and sets him to work tracking down effects--novels and paintings--consigned to the auctioneer. Their search is aided by the assiduous "escrituração" or "written account" kept by Fernandes (48) [39], who was both efficacious and honest in his office.

This passage is one of the few in which Machado de Assis suggests outright how the dead and the living serve each other as interdependent entities of a single community, and how their interdependence remains critical to the disposition of goods, especially the artifacts of culture (novels and paintings). More to the point, he indicates that the dead perform this service through their records: their personal "memorial" to the community they abandon.

This legacy is in sharp contrast to others in the novel. Most obvious is that of the Barão de Santa Pia, self-important to the point of freeing his slaves simply in order to maintain his individual will over his human property. Gledson clarifies the ultimate substance of this legacy: land exhausted, former slaves dispossessed, and the end of the Santa Pia family tree in Brazil (Gledson, "Betrayal" 123-4). More wry, but no less

pertinent, is the legacy of the only other "child" to receive the solicitude of the Aguiars: a dog, the selfless opposite to the egomaniacal Baron; this creature's legacy is by definition mute and fruitless.

These are the dead in *Counselor Ayres' Memorial* whose death, unlike that of the apparently so forgettable Fernandes, has no exit, no continuation, no legacy to bear fruit. They join those dead memorialized at the novel's beginning (Aires' wife, Rita's husband, Fidélia's husband), all nameless and childless, for whom the discourse of mourning adheres to the tradition of elegy: arguably European, bourgeois, self-affirming. It is a tradition of wreaths, mausoleums, obituaries and thirty-carriage funeral processions (in this even the humble Fernandes could not escape).

But this other discourse of mourning, of memorialism, exemplified by the *Memorial* itself, is reflected--refracted, rather--at many other moments. And like Machado's own writing, the medium of this discourse proves both dangerous and deceptive as well as helpful and enlightening. This medium is the very act of recording and chronicling.

Written chronicles--mainly in the form of letters--are crucial to the *Memorial*. Repeatedly, at essential moments, missives either intervene or fail to do so. The young Osório's failure to captivate Fidélia, for example, is owing, according to Aires, to Osório's faltering tongue and his neglecting to write to her prior to his abrupt departure from Rio (55-56) [44]. Conversely, the physical absence of beloved characters is often counteracted by their expressive letters. Such letters, especially when serving as chronicles or accounts, can render present absent or even deceased figures, as is the case of Fidélia's account to her godparents of her return to her family plantation:

(The letter) speaks at length of him (her father) and of the haunting memories she found there Among the phantoms of the past, the profile of her mother beside that of her father, and in the distance as well as close by, in the great rooms of the plantation house as in the depths of her heart--the profile of her husband, so firmly fixed that even I saw it and it seemed to me eternal. (67-8) [51]

Throughout the novel, similar evocations of "saudades," that quintessentially Brazilian sentiment (and a word that appears countless times), make present those who are physically absent.

This same medium is Tristão's great weapon, too. His letters keep him present for his duped and exploited godparents. His linguistic powers succeed with Fidélia where Osório's beseeching eyes fail. And ultimately, his words draw Aires himself, along with Campos and Aguiar (the diplomat, the judge and the banker, main representatives

of modern authority) into his web of deception. Having made the counselor also his confessor, Tristão then assigns to him and to Campos, in a letter, the job of revealing the truth; a job the diplomat attempts to perform by--what else?--inventing a story (194) [130].

Machado de Assis thus illustrates the double-edged power of the individual memorial. For Tristão, memorial, chronicle and letter are the means to posit himself as the individual heir to a legacy--material and familial (from the banker and landowner), civic (from the judge) and, crucially, cultural (from the "decorative" diplomat and, of course, author). For others in this novel, however--for Carmo, Aguiar and Fidélia--the written chronicle disperses this individual heir in favor of a fragmented one, in the interrelationships and interdependencies that constitute their community, and in the presence of the dead who enrich it. Writing takes its place alongside Dona Cesária's scintillating gossip as a powerful tool for the strengthening--indeed for the very elaboration--of a community of interdependent individuals.⁵

Aires himself, Machado's most brilliantly ironic creation, stands in between these two dynamics. His very vacuity enables readers to perceive the crisis depicted by *his* chronicle; his naive and ambivalent participation in both the discourses of individual and community legacy and authority emphasizes their mutual incompatibility and their potential for tragic conflict. Paradoxically, Aires' ambivalence also proves to be the primary foothold for Tristão's elegantly executed betrayal.

But more than a betrayal, as Gledson qualifies it, the *Memorial* is offered by Machado de Assis as a way out. If Aires' diary, as a memorial to his society, community and nation, serves to replace elegy as an instrument of legacy, cannot Machado's antiheroic masterwork serve as an example of how to counteract the consequences of traditional European discourses of mourning and inheritance? Machado de Assis urges his Brazilian readers to gain for their own community--so as to take possession of their communal legacy--the very weapon Tristão uses to appropriate that legacy for his individual self. It is a weapon they hold in their own hands.

NOTES

¹ A term novelist Helder Macedo also uses (201).

² These include the reference to writing an "Ecclesiastes, à la moderne:" "All is fleeting in this world" (87-8) [63]; the declaration that "(C)ustoms and institutions, like all else, pass away" (74) [55]; the ironic reference to the "vale of tears" that formed the melancholy verses of Aires the narrator as a youth (129) [90]; the play on the elegiac *ubi sunt* (77-8) [57].

³ Gledson and Schwartz note Machado's concern for the "gap between European and Brazilian historical experience" (Gledson *View* 101) and for Brazil's peripheral status before Europe.

⁴ Citations of the novel refer to Caldwell's translation. Page numbers in parenthesis refer to that volume, numbers in brackets to the corresponding passages in the original, *Memorial de Aires*.

⁵ Caldwell elucidates the importance of gossip to Machado (5-7).

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LE PASSÉ A-T-IL ENCORE DE L'AVENIR? LA GUERRE "MÉMOIRE VIVE" DANS LE ROMAN FRANÇAIS CONTEMPORAIN

Frédéric Pallez

De nos jours les conflits armés réapparaissent avec force dans le quotidien des émissions télévisées et des articles de journaux. La "machine de guerre"¹ refait surface dans l'actualité sous la forme de l'opération "Tempête du désert" et des conflits de l'ancienne Yougoslavie. Alors, un regain d'intérêt se lit dans le grand public quant à cette science un peu oubliée: la polémologie, c'est à dire l'étude des guerres.² Même si les sociétés occidentales ne se considèrent pas directement menacées par le retour des conflits, elles en retrouvent l'imaginaire avec sa longue sarabande de destructions à grande échelle, de tranchées, bunkers et autres formes de représentation des guerres modernes qui ressemblent tant à celles des guerres passées.

La "bellicisation" de l'espace médiatique, puis peu à peu de certaines formes artistiques et littéraires, est symptôme d'une réapparition de l'image de la guerre à travers des embrayeurs qui permettent ce retour. C'est alors qu'intervient la mémoire collective et son imaginaire. Il s'agit d'une représentation qui influence tous discours ayant un rapport avec l'événement et l'histoire. La mémoire collective n'est pas seulement un souvenir perpétré oralement par des générations de témoins de l'événement, elle prend aussi la forme d'objets qui permettent la réminiscence; des plus impressionnants: monuments aux morts, aux plus hétéroclites: cartes postales, images pieuses. La présence de la guerre, dans la société, est renouvelée par l'occurrence régulière d'un nouveau conflit qui vient réécrire et suppléer le précédent, tout en sauvegardant les clichés répétés d'un conflit à l'autre. La mémoire collective garde ainsi l'image de la guerre toujours vivante.

Dans la littérature française de ces dix dernières années, seuls quelques textes examinent le souvenir de la guerre disséminé dans la société et non le développement, sous la forme de fiction, du traumatisme de l'expérience de l'auteur. Les romans sur le souvenir collectif de la guerre décrivent un imaginaire qui laisse de côté le fait historique. Ces romans s'intéressent au monde des conflits armés perçu par l'ensemble de la société française et non pas seulement par ceux qui ont "fait" la guerre. La mémoire collective est présente dans ces textes car elle va à l'encontre de la représentation typique du roman de guerre qui est basée sur la présence d'un témoin qui conte l'événement passé.³

Le roman influencé par la mémoire collective aide à la création d'un imaginaire constitué de clichés connus de tous, comme c'est le cas dans

La guerre de Fortépaulle de Yves Lemoine (Editions Michel de Maule, 1987), *De purs désastres* par François Salvaing (Editions Balland, 1990), *L'acacia* de Claude Simon (Editions de minuit, 1990) et *Les champs d'honneur* par Jean Rouaud (Editions de minuit, 1990) Prix Goncourt 1991.

Le cadre historique dans *L'acacia* et *Les champs d'honneur* est sous-entendu. Le lecteur a souvent lu et relu les faits militaires décrits. Il connaît par avance les événements contés dans les récits. Ce sont des épisodes de la défaite de 1940 et des tranchées de la Grande guerre; des faits qu'il est possible de connaître d'une façon détaillée à cause de l'immense production de récits historiques écrits au sujet de cette période.

Mais à la différence des récits historiques, les événements guerriers sont sous-jacents dans ces deux romans. Décrire l'histoire n'est pas la raison d'être des deux livres. Le texte de Claude Simon *L'acacia* est divisé en douze chapitres, qui sont aussi douze dates, des années qui se répètent sans ordre chronologique. Il s'agit de moments importants de l'histoire: 1914 déclaration de la première guerre mondiale, 1940 invasion allemande de la Belgique et de la France, ou de périodes précises en référence à un épisode guerrier: un certain 17 mai, le 27 août, et d'autres années: 1880, 1910, 1919, 1982, moments d'avant et après les conflits, qui complètent l'image de la guerre. Dans *L'acacia*, la construction de la mémoire se fait suivant l'agencement des dates. La relation entre les différentes époques permet la confusion entre les conflits. Les chapitres, dans le texte de Claude Simon, créent un effet cyclique de réapparition de la guerre, ce qui est renforcé par l'éphéméride du 27 août 1914 et 1940. L'image de la guerre, à la fin du roman, n'est plus celle de différentes périodes historiques, mais une tissure d'époques qui se confondent et forment un tout. L'auteur entraîne ainsi son texte vers le fantastique où les différentes périodes se supplémentent pour former une image globale de la guerre.

Les champs d'honneur de Jean Rouaud décrit avec précision un passé idéalisé tel qu'il est vu par le jeune narrateur qui a dix ans dans les années cinquante. A cette époque, juste après la seconde guerre mondiale, le souvenir des conflits se doit d'être oublié par la société française. L'épisode réprouvé de la collaboration a entaché l'image de la victoire des alliés sur l'Allemagne nazie. Les règlements de compte qui ont suivi la libération restent encore dans la mémoire de tous. Alors ce ne sont plus seulement les souvenirs de la seconde guerre mondiale qui doivent être oubliés, mais les conflits armés en général (comme ce conflit colonial en Indochine où la France est engagée depuis déjà plusieurs années et que la société française, des années cinquante, tente de refouler).

Dans le milieu campagnard et familial, où se situe le roman, les

personnages: grand-pères, vieilles tantes, racontent leurs aventures. Ils omettent trop facilement les moments de la guerre afin de donner au narrateur/enfant une image idyllique du passé. Le village--lieu du roman--a été épargné par les conflits successifs. Les récits des personnages passent d'une période à une autre et laissent des trous béants dans la chronologie du village, ce qui commence à intriguer le narrateur.

La guerre est présente chez Jean Rouaud dans le titre et les trois dernières parties du roman alors que le narrateur commence à comprendre la signification de certains termes échappés par inadvertance du discours des anciens. Ce sont des noms de lieux, tels la Somme ou la Marne, qui pour l'enfant désignent de paisibles régions de France alors que pour ceux qui racontent les histoires, et dans l'imaginaire français, signifient la guerre. A ce moment les "Champs d'honneur" prennent forme dans l'esprit du narrateur. La guerre se précise comme étant celle de la mémoire collective française telle qu'elle est observée par un enfant.

Dans les deux autres romans étudiés, le conflit est issu d'un imaginaire sans rapport direct avec l'histoire car les guerres décrites n'existent pas comme événements réels. C'est le cas de *La guerre de Fortépaulle* par Yves Lemoine qui est supposée avoir lieu, lors d'un conflit Est-Ouest, sur un front d'Europe centrale. C'est aussi le cas du roman *De purs désastres*. François Salvaing décrit dans son texte un univers fantastique à mi-chemin entre les Croisades et la guerre du Golfe. Malgré l'absence de référent historique direct, les conflits sont reconnaissables dans ces deux romans. L'image de la guerre est celle retenue par la mémoire collective contemporaine.

La guerre de Fortépaulle ressemble à une transposition actuelle de la drôle de guerre de 1939. *De purs désastres* a lieu lors d'une guerre virtuelle dans un quelconque pays du Moyen-Orient, des Balkans ou d'ailleurs. Certains stéréotypes rappellent au lecteur ce qu'il connaît déjà des images du conflit libanais, ou de la guerre civile Yougoslave. A la manière dont la télévision et les journaux nous ont habitués, ces derniers temps, aux noms chargés d'affect de Sarajevo, Ryad, Vuklovar etc., François Salvaing habitue son lecteur à d'autres noms propres, mais cette fois imaginaires. L'auteur partage avec son lecteur le sous-entendu dans le nom d'un lieu. Les mots "difficiles à prononcer" se succèdent ensuite dans le roman. Ils mélangent les origines géographiques, brouillant les pistes d'une compréhension spatiale du texte: Berzerque, Oscoff, Acanthe dans la province d'Oust, Jacaranda, John's Town, Arpeut, Goix, Ixtli etc. Ce sont des villes citées par le narrateur sans référent, mais qui donnent l'illusion du connu. Salvaing joue avec la passion qui entoure ces noms propres, à la manière dont le fait la mémoire collective qui a su porter son attention sur quelques noms de

ville qui à eux-seuls résumant l'histoire contemporaine: Verdun, Dantzig, Stalingrad, Berlin, Saïgon, Beyrouth, Sarajevo . . .

Les images du souvenir de la guerre, dans les quatre romans: dates, noms de lieux, font office "d'effet de réel".⁴ L'imaginaire collectif, connu de tous, sert au lecteur à faire la liaison entre son monde à lui et celui fantastique ou historique sous-entendu par la fiction.

Les moyens mnémotechniques qui permettront au narrateur de se remémorer le passé sont aussi d'ordre matériel. L'objet permet la réminiscence, c'est à dire le retour intempestif à l'esprit d'un souvenir oublié comme le montre Yves Lemoine "Fortépaulle regarde le chauffeur fumer une 'bleue', nonchalamment appuyé sur l'aile avant du 'Berliet'"(39). Cette référence à l'armée française est connue de la plupart des lecteurs. Le paquet de cigarettes "Caporal", de couleur bleue, ainsi que les camions, de type Berliet, font partie des souvenirs, peut-être oubliés par les anciens militaires, mais qui reviennent vite à l'esprit: rouler dans un "Berliet" ou fumer une "bleue" sont des actions mille fois répétées par les soldats et il suffit de faire référence à l'objet dans sa plus grande simplicité, la marque du camion ou le sobriquet de la cigarette, pour que le souvenir fonctionne. L'image de l'armée dans le texte d'Yves Lemoine est d'autant plus puissante qu'elle contraste avec l'ambiance troisième guerre mondiale du roman. Yves Lemoine développe à l'extrême la dichotomie: armée obsolète et guerre du futur. Il crée ainsi un espace fantastique tout en étant inscrit dans le réel.

Dans le roman de Jean Rouaud, l'objet permet aussi la réapparition du souvenir et le retour de l'histoire. Parmi les reliques du passé, retrouvées par le narrateur, il y a des photographies et des images pieuses datant de la guerre. Sur ces images la Patrie et l'Eglise ne font qu'un face à l'ennemi, comme le voulait le discours de l'époque. Le narrateur retrouve aussi des images funèbres permettant de dater la mort au front d'un grand-parent. Les photographies montrent le chaos du champ de bataille. Les revues, brochures et images pieuses sont des représentations devenues typiques de la première guerre mondiale. Jean Rouaud parle de "monuments de tristesse" (121). On peut alors penser, par analogie, à un autre objet funèbre, sorte de gigantesque carte postale: le monument au mort.

Le monument et ossuaire de Douaumont est une architecture, qui montre une vision anachronique des événements qu'il représente. Après la première guerre mondiale, afin de commémorer la bataille de Verdun, un ossuaire fut construit sur les lieux du champ de bataille. Son architecture se veut volontairement maigre et austère. Ce qui attire la curiosité du visiteur est la ressemblance de l'édifice avec le seul bâtiment resté à peu près intact aux environs, et qui est maintenant recouvert par la végétation: le fort de Douaumont.

L'ossuaire "copiant" le fort, a l'apparence d'une gigantesque casemate au centre de laquelle se détache une tour de guet. Cet observatoire abritait autrefois, juste après la construction du bâtiment, un phare dont l'éclairage rendait l'ombre des milliers de croix, qui entourent le monument, comme distendue par cet oeil monstrueux. L'assimilation de l'horreur de la guerre de tranchées avec ce monument impressionnant, plus impressionnant que le véritable fort, avait pour fonction de représenter, aux yeux du monde, l'horreur de la bataille de Verdun⁵.

La carte postale et le monument au mort rappellent les effets dévastateurs des champs de bataille par la façon dont ces destructions ont été conservées sous la forme d'une image reconnue par la mémoire collective. Les deux représentations servent de métaphore du champ de bataille pour la société. Les "champs d'honneur" sont des lieux où la mémoire se souvient. Là où, comme pour les monuments aux morts *monere mentum*, l'objet doit être considéré suivant le sens littéral de la traduction: qui permet de se souvenir.

L'imaginaire collectif suscite la récapitulation minutieuse des événements. Mais cet imaginaire montre des absences, des "trous de mémoire" et des constructions erronées. Pour pallier à ces absences l'imaginaire crée des artifices de construction. Ce sont des anomalies dans la mise en scène de la guerre. Le travail de reformulation des événements porte à faux par rapport au récit historique. Il dévie de son but premier qui est de montrer la guerre, et s'attache à représenter une vision confuse, qui ne va pas à l'encontre de l'histoire proprement dite, mais qui est légèrement différente, comme perçue à travers plusieurs souvenirs de la guerre et non une seule mémoire. La création hybride, née de la mémoire collective, prend la forme d'un processus mnémotechnique particulier. Face à l'oubli, l'erreur et l'anaehronisme, la mémoire élabore une stratégie de réapparition du souvenir. L'oubli de la réalité vécue est remplacé par le fantastique. L'intéressant est alors le processus mnémotechnique décrit par l'auteur. La mémoire recrée au fur et à mesure ce qui est oublié.

Pour reprendre un terme d'informatique, la mémoire de la guerre, dans les quatre romans étudiés, serait une *mémoire vive*. C'est à dire un souvenir non seulement toujours "vivant" mais aussi créatif et en perpétuel renouvellement. Cette mémoire, comme celle d'un ordinateur, a l'avantage de pouvoir s'effacer après chaque utilisation. Instrument d'imagination, et non de lecture d'un souvenir déjà existant, la mémoire vive fonctionne grâce à un programme de construction interne de scénarios de la guerre; il s'agit d'une simulation au sens où l'entend le philosophe Jean Baudrillard⁶. L'idée de mémoire vive met en valeur l'acte de remémoration dans une autonomie par rapport au représenté qui alors n'est pas nécessaire (la guerre comme histoire).

Cette mémoire est amnésique bien qu'elle fonctionne grâce à n'importe quelle forme de stimulus, qu'il s'agisse d'un objet: une carte postale, ou d'un souvenir collectif (revenant à l'esprit à travers divers agencements de la représentation).

Au début de ce texte, il était question de l'actualité des guerres modernes et de leur "retour" dans l'imaginaire. La mémoire vive d'une représentation sans référent mnémonique, comme dans les quatre romans cités, implique une focalisation sur l'acte-même de représentation, et donc de présence de la guerre (sans présence de l'histoire de ces guerres). Il s'agit d'un passé illégitime car basé sur la mémoire collective. La réminiscence fait (arbitrairement?) surface dans l'actualité: La nouvelle Europe ressemble à celle d'avant 1914 et la guerre du Golfe rappelle de vieilles peurs comme celles du gaz de combat ou d'une possible guerre de tranchée. Le présent de la guerre est constitué de faits refoulés, tout ce qui était depuis longtemps oublié quant aux conflits; une vision des guerres de jadis dans leurs menaces déformées par les images passées, et dont la mémoire vive,--vierge d'une présence "trop" historique--permet le retour.

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NOTES

¹ Expression empruntée à Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari dans *Mille plateaux* (Paris: Minuit, 1980).

² La polémologie: l'étude critique de l'origine et des causes des guerres est un terme qui nous vient de Gaston Bouthoul fondateur de l'institut de polémologie. Voir le livre de Gaston Bouthoul.

³ Au sujet du rapport entre texte de fiction et récit autobiographique dans la représentation de la guerre, voir le chapitre IX "Persistence and Memory" de l'étude critique de Paul Fussler.

⁴ Roland Barthes utilise l'expression "d'effet de réel" pour qualifier l'apparition intempestive dans la narration de détails en apparence asignifiants: "...le baromètre de Flaubert, la petite porte de Michelet ne disent finalement rien d'autre que ceci: *nous sommes le réel*; c'est la catégorie du "réel" (et non ses contenus contingents) qui est alors signifiée; autrement dit, la carence même du signifié au profit du seul référent devient le signifiant même du réalisme: il se produit un *effet de réel*, fondement de ce vraisemblable inavoué qui forme l'esthétique de toutes les oeuvres courantes de la modernité". Roland Barthes *Le bruissement de la langue* (Paris: Seuil, 1984) 186-187.

⁵ Au sujet du rapport entre mémoire collective et architecture militaire, voir le livre de Paul Virilio.

⁶ "Dissimuler est feindre de ne pas avoir ce qu'on a. Simuler est feindre d'avoir ce qu'on n'a pas. L'un renvoie à une présence, l'autre à une absence. Mais la chose est plus compliquée, car simuler n'est pas feindre: "celui qui feint une maladie peut simplement se mettre au lit et faire croire qu'il est malade. Celui qui simule une maladie en détermine en soi quelques symptômes." (Littré) Donc, feindre, ou dissimuler, laissent intact le principe de réalité: la différence est toujours claire, elle n'est que masquée. Tandis que la simulation remet en cause la différence du "vrai" et du "faux", du "réel" et de l'"imaginaire". Le simulateur est-il malade ou non, puisqu'il produit de "vrais" symptômes?" Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacres et simulation* (Paris: Galilée, 1981) 12.

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INCISIVE INCISIONS: (RE)ARTICULATING THE DISCURSIVE BODY IN DIAMELA ELTIT'S *LUMPÉRICA*

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Throughout *Lumpérica*, Diamela Eltit's first novel,¹ a protagonist named L. Iluminada mutilates her body in a Santiago plaza, smashing her head, burning her hand, tearing off scabs and slicing open her skin. Eltit herself, while writing the novel, slashed and burned her own arms. In this essay I specifically focus on the interaction between Eltit's corporeal and narrative incisions. I relate *Lumpérica*'s hyper-fragmented composition to Eltit's own scarification, arguing that by "carving up" textual *bodies* Eltit articulates a critique of the (neo)fascist occupation of post-coup Chile.

Cutting the body, both in *Lumpérica* and in Eltit's real-life mutilation, can be read as an action of textual inscription. As Peter Brooks states in his analysis of the body in literature, marking or signing the body functions as a traditional topos that creates of the body a narrative subject:

The sign imprints the body, making it part of the signifying process. Signing or marking the body signifies its passage into writing, its becoming a literary body, ... the inscription of the sign depends on and produces a story (3).

Before interpreting the implications of the "story" that Eltit produces on her body, I will textually "dissect" several episodes of narrative mutilation from *Lumpérica*'s eighth chapter, the *Ensayo General*. Highlighting the correlation between Eltit's narrative and corporeal "cuttings," will reveal the way in which Eltit paradoxically inscribes a (de)constructive political critique through narrative effacement.

The *Ensayo General* begins with three one-line verses (E.G. 1, 2 and 3) each of which occupies an entire page. The first page is a quintessential example of *Lumpérica*'s multi-coded narrative:

Muge/r/apa y su mano se nutre final-mente el verde des-ata
y maya se erige y vac/a-nal su forma (152).

Chopping up words and phrases Eltit highlights the polyvalent multiplicity inherent to language. Multiple meanings resonate between privileged and hyphenated syllables. The phrase, like the novel, cannot be translated into a logical sentence. It projects, on the other hand, a wide spectrum of images that evoke the protagonist's body: L.

Iluminada (mujer rapada) alternately ties and unties ("des-ata") the lewd ("verde", bacanal ["vac/a-nal"]) narrative "forma," *Lumpérica*. She is a hybrid figure (woman/animal: "vac/a-nal su forma," "se nutre . . . el verde") who moans and mewes ("muge," "maya"), faints ("des-maya") and then erects herself ("se erige") feeling pleasure in unleashed ("des-ata" "a-nal") animalistic hedonism.

Although I am emphasizing the poetic projection of Eltit's prose, *Lumpérica's* fragmentation is charged with practical application. The hermeticism of *Lumpérica* allowed Eltit's experimental novel to escape government censorship--a point to which I will return later in this essay.

E.G.2 continues to compound a series of multiple images that foreground L. Iluminada's physical appearance and bodily transformations: "Anal'iza la trama=dura de la piel: la mano prende y la fobia es/garra" (153).

This page suggests the recurrent figure of L. Iluminada examining her weather-worn face in a mirror: "Se devuelve sobre su propio rostro" (9). In the plaza she traces the contours of her body, rehearsing the lines that she will literally carve as text in the coming pages: "Se toca la piel en el mismo momento en que se curva más aún sobre el pasto" (12-13). Her hand ("la mano prende"), superimposes images emanating from the verb *prender* meaning "to grasp," "adorn," and "catch fire." At the end of chapter 7 she grips the chalk with which she writes on the plaza floor: "Tiene tiza entre los dedos" (148). In chapter 1.4 she deliberately burns her hand in the fire: "Frente a la fogata acerca su mano, adelanta su mano sobre las llamas y la deja caer encima. . ." (35). Finally, towards the end of the novel, after cutting off her hair, L. Iluminada ornaments her body with a necklace: "Sacó un collar de pedrerías. Se lo puso alrededor del cuello" (207).

This conflation of images and ruptured narrative significantly increases the text's projection by implying a multiple series of simultaneous subjects. Whereas, "Anal'iza la trama=dura de la piel," infers L. Iluminada, the phrase also evokes *Lumpérica's* implied and historical authors. While L. Iluminada examines her image in a mirror, Diamela Eltit performs an analogous repetition. Writing her novel Eltit gazes at her narrative reflections--her implied author, diamela eltit (written in lower case), who in turn contemplates her protagonist, L. Iluminada. At the same time, Eltit turns her gaze outward to the "trama=dura" of contemporary Chile, analyzing the shredded fabric left behind after the coup. Finally, this Borgesian continuum of historical and implied authors and their protagonists reflects back to the reader who analyzes the fragmented narrative of *Lumpérica*.

E.G. 1, 2, and 3 distort, mutilate and mutate the image of L. Iluminada's body in the plaza.² The resulting textual ambiguity produces a (con)fusion of subjects--L. Iluminada, Diamela Eltit, Diamela Eltit and the reader--on parallel narrative planes. These passages of hyper-fragmented prose give way to an apparently linear section in which the narrative traces a series of epidermal incisions on the narrator's arms. A close reading of the epidermal slices, nevertheless, reveals not a "line" but a cycle of narrative mutilation.

The text defines the first cut in terms of a written sign which bisects her arm: "Es solamente marca, signo o escritura" (155). The next two slashes, one "más débil" (156) and the other "fallado" (157) acquire significance through comparison with the first. By introducing cuts that represent "errors" and changes of direction, the *Ensayo* replicates the stops and starts of *Lumpérica*.³

After the third "line," the *Ensayo* halts its forward momentum and begins instead to self-reflexively analyze the preceding "líneas." In other words the *Ensayo General* actually interrogates its own inscription: "¿Es realmente un corte? Sí porque rompe con una superficie dada. . . . Entonces ¿cuál es la frontera? ¿el corte mismo? No, es apenas la señal" (158).

The next page begins with a parenthesis, orthographically separating the series of lacerations. This new narrative *corte*, "(En relación al corte de la fotografía)" (159), amplifies the hermeneutic consequences. The text now examines the incisions depicted in a photograph of Eltit's arms (which precedes the *Ensayo General*).⁴ The *Ensayo* places the reader's eye on the same level as the knife. The text "será rota por el ojo que corta allí su mirada" (159).

In spite of the numerical sequence that apparently orders the incisions, the text inverts the chronology: "El tercer corte podría haber sido el primer corte que se hizo" (160). As the *Ensayo General* continues, the *cortes* themselves become repeatedly divided and interrupted. The fourth slice, itself "brevemente interrumpido por un fragmento de piel," branches into two hypotheses related to time and depth:

- a) La línea fue realizada en más de una etapa.
- b) La hoja que efectuó el corte se levantó levemente. (162)

Following this split, the narrator modifies the surface of her "text" by burning the skin: "La superficie . . . está modificada por una quemadura en la piel" (163). She continues to mark herself with layered mutilations until a final sixth incision disappears beneath her blistered skin: "La quemadura lo absorbe . . . la piel se ampolla oscureciendo la sexta línea" (166).

The *Ensayo General*, then, stages an episode of textualization through a complex process of corporeal and narrative mutilation. The text not only depicts the slashing of skin, but further fragments and then splits the narrative sequence with sections of metatextual analysis. Finally, on the last page of the "Ensayo General," the focus moves backwards to encompass the subject who poses in the plaza gripping the knife: "Los dedos de su mano derecha sostienen la pequeña y afilada hoja. Sin mirarse la acerca hasta su cuero" (167). Significantly, as she approaches the knife to her skin on the *last* page of the "Ensayo" (meaning "rehearsal," "test," and "essay") she has yet to inflict any incisions: "Se va a iniciar el Ensayo General" (167). Chronologically, then, by juxtaposing the last cut cyclically with the first, the *Ensayo* scripts a circular rehearsal of in-scription.⁵

Lumpérica, like the *Ensayo General*, is a non-linear series of *cortes* that perpetually revises itself while reconfiguring the image of L. Iluminada in the plaza. The last scene, which again portrays L. Iluminada sitting in the plaza, recalls the novel's opening. Written to be re-read, *Lumpérica* plausibly "begins" at the novel's end, chapter 10, when L. Iluminada cuts off her hair, and continues the following dusk (chapter 11) when she burns and cuts her skin.

Early in this essay I state that *Lumpérica* resists the repression of (neo)fascism, and yet the novel never directly mentions the Dictatorship. To comprehend the political and social implications of Eltit's work it is crucial to "read" the articulation of a scarified body as text. Nelly Richard sees Eltit's self-mutilation as a ritual that attempted to heal the open wound of the military coup: "Como si, al analogizarse las marcas del deterioro autoinflingido en el cuerpo del artista con las marcas de padecimiento inscritas en el cuerpo nacional, el dolor y su sujeto se colectivizaran en una misma cicatriz" (142). Eltit thus symbolically assumes the violence of the Chilean dictatorship by gashing and burning her body.

Of course the use of the body for signifying purposes by no means insures a counter-hegemonic text. As Brooks emphasizes, the body "can be made to bear messages of all kinds" (22). The Pinochet dictatorship, claiming to excise the malignant tumor of socialism from the Chilean national body, is a case in point. All too often the regime literally inscribed the flesh of the "enemy." Like the Harrow in Kafka's "Penal Colony," the military carved punishment directly into the bodies of those who dared to disagree. Maiming, disfiguring, dismembering and killing, the *régimen* transformed the bodies (or corpses) of their victims into message-bearing signs.

Eltit, in turn, assumes the task of rearticulating and deconstructing the nationalist discourse of (neo)fascism. Eltit marks and signs her body, writing a series of body/texts which refuse the "story" imposed by

the Dictatorship. She undercuts the discursive clarity of Socialist Realism by mutilating the linear concept and narrative uniformity of discursive order. Finally, the narrative mutilation that fragments *Lumpérica's* plot sufficiently obscured the political message of the novel to allow it to evade government censorship.

Obviously *Lumpérica* cannot be succinctly explained. Rather than a single meaning, a close reading produces a multiplicity of open images. Although my analysis stresses polyvalency, I am aware that I trace a continuous line through Eltit's intentionally cut-up narrative. Reading between the signs of Eltit's incisive incisions, however, reveals a double-edged critique that rearticulates, even as it mutilates, the very notion of a discursive body.

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NOTES

¹ To date Diamela Eltit has published five novels: *Lumpérica* (Santiago: Ornitorrinco, 1983), *Por la patria* (Santiago: Ornitorrinco 1986), *El cuarto mundo* (Santiago: Planeta, 1988), *Vaca sagrada* (Santiago: Planeta, 1991) and *Los vigilantes*, (Santiago: Ed. Suda americana Chilena, 1994). In addition she facilitated a "testimonial," *El padre mío* (Santiago: Francisco Zegers Editor, 1989), transcribing the words of a schizophrenic street person. Her other recent book, *El infarto del alma* (Santiago: Francisco Zegers Editor, 1994), juxtaposes Eltit's prose with Paz Errázuriz's photographs of indigent couples in a public mental hospital.

² E.G. 3 constitutes a similar narrative *montage* in which Eltit simultaneously stretches and fuses multiple images: "Muge/r'onda corporal Brahma su ma la mano que la denuncia & brama" (154). Here again the subject evokes a hybrid, woman/animal, who moans ("Muge . . . & brama") and wanders ("r'onda"). Her body, "corporal Brahma," connotes both an enlightened deity (Iluminada) and a breed of cattle. The language surrounding her hand, "su ma la mano," combines "su mano" from E.G. 1 (152) with "la mano" of E.G. 2 (153). Re-combining syllables one might read "suma la mano" or "su mala mano," or even, "ahma su mala mano."

³ The novel begins with L. Iluminada in the plaza, then describes the process of filming her, continues with an analysis of the script, shifts to an ambiguous interrogation, inserts a photograph of Eltit's scarified arms and then narrates this mutilation in the *Ensayo General*.

⁴ This photograph was included only in the first (Ornitorrinco)

edition. For discussions of the photograph as a nexus linking the novel with its biographical context see Ortega. See also María Inés Lagos's article.

⁵ *Lumpérica's* cyclical non-linearity corresponds to what Roland Barthes calls a *texte scriptible*: "Il n'a pas de commencement; il est réversible; on y accède par plusieurs entrées dont aucune ne peut être à coup sûr déclarée principale" (12).

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L'ENFANCE CHEZ ANNIE ERNAUX (Des *Armoires vides* au *Journal du dehors*)

Claire-Lise Tondeur

Annie Ernaux considère que l'écrivain a des "comptes à rendre" à son public, aussi veut elle témoigner dans son oeuvre de l'aliénation que représente pour elle sa situation sociale avec son appartenance au départ à une classe dominée. "Pour moi écrire est profondément lié à ma situation sociale en tant qu'individu."¹ Dans ses romans on découvre un sentiment aigu d'altérité que l'auteur articule sur un plan social et non sexuel. La marginalité culturelle, économique et sociale de ses parents ouvriers, devenus petits commerçants, est vécue comme une différence infériorisante à laquelle elle ne parvient pas vraiment à échapper, malgré sa propre ascension sociale et son appartenance actuelle à l'intelligentsia.

Par un mélange de nostalgie mais aussi de répulsion, l'enfance de l'écrivain hante tous ses livres, depuis son premier, *Les armoires vides* (1974), roman autobiographique de la déchirure sociale au sein de la famille, jusqu'à son dernier texte, *Journal du dehors* (1993), reflet des nouvelles villes satellites. L'enfance prolétaire sous-tend toute l'oeuvre, c'est le point de référence qui structure la *Weltanschauung* d'Ernaux. Pour les narratrices qui ont entre quinze ans et la cinquantaine, l'enfance est la grille par laquelle elles vont déchiffrer le monde, c'est ce qui influence leur perception de la réalité, consciemment ou non.

On trouve un portrait des parents et de l'enfance dans les trois premiers romans d'Annie Ernaux mais le point de vue change. Dans *La femme gelée*, ce n'est plus l'adolescente déboussolée de *Ce qu'ils disent ou rien*, ni l'étudiante angoissée des *Armoires vides* qui parle de sa famille, mais une adulte, mûrie et lucide. La narratrice ayant mis sa propre vie en perspective porte un jugement moins hargneux sur ses parents. Ce n'est pas encore la réconciliation mais elle voit certains aspects positifs, elle est par exemple fière de son père. Depuis sa petite enfance, "ce papa bobo," ce "papa enfant" (*Femme gelée* 128) ne lui a laissé que des images de douceur et de sollicitude. Face au modèle idéal du père bourgeois tel que l'incarne parfaitement le beau-père, "si bien, si forte personnalité, autorité naturelle," (*Femme gelée* 128), l'attitude de la jeune femme envers son père se modifie, devient ambivalente. Ce n'est plus la révolte et le rejet des deux premiers romans, mais un mélange de honte et d'attendrissement comme lors de la scène du repas de mariage (*Femme gelée* 128). Au lieu de la critique acerbe et incessante de ses parents, sa prose devient lyrique. Elle ne renie plus son père et accepte finalement d'être sa fille (*Femme gelée* 19).

Comme pendant au portrait du père il y a celui de la mère avec le même point de vue changeant. On passe du rejet violent de l'adolescente de quinze ans, de la révolte de l'étudiante de vingt ans, à une nouvelle attitude, celle de l'adulte de trente ans, mariée et mère elle-même, qui cherche pour la première fois à comprendre sa propre mère. Les deux premiers tiers de *La femme gelée* reprennent les thèmes et motifs des *Armoires vides* ou de *Ce qu'ils disent ou rien*: c'est-à-dire les origines prolétaires, la routine bruyante de l'épicerie-buvette d'un quartier populaire, la réussite scolaire encouragée par les parents, par la mère surtout, l'arrachement progressif à la famille qui mène à un sentiment d'éloignement affectif et culturel, la révélation des différences sociales grâce à l'école qui donne accès à la culture. Si le sujet n'a pas changé entre 1977 et 1981, le ton par contre n'est plus le même comme on s'en rend compte lorsqu'on compare le portrait de la mère dans une scène identique dans les deux romans. Dans *Ce qu'ils disent ou rien*, la narratrice commente:

Penser que je l'ai adorée, une gosse qui était moi, quelle chose incompréhensible. Sa voix, les jours de gueuleton, je m'endormais contre sa poitrine, j'entendais les mots se former, ça grondait, comme si j'étais née de cette voix. (*Ce qu'ils...* 66)

Dans *La femme gelée*:

Oedipe, je m'en tape. Je l'adorais aussi, elle. Elle, cette voix profonde que j'écoutais naître dans sa gorge, les soirs de fête, quand je m'endormais sur ses genoux. (*Femme gelée* 19)

La scène est la même mais le point de vue a complètement changé. Cette mère bruyante, dont la voix gronde et qui fait des gueuletons, la fille refuse de comprendre comment elle a pu l'aimer. Elle a honte d'elle. Quand elle pense que plus jeune elle adorait sa mère, qu'elle aimait s'endormir contre sa poitrine, cela lui semble parfaitement incompréhensible. Quatre ans plus tard, dans son troisième roman, l'image de la mère est devenue moins populaire. Celle-ci ne fait plus de gueuletons mais participe à des soirées de fête. Sa voix n'est plus bruyante mais profonde. On a passé d'une critique à un compliment. L'enfant ne dort plus contre la poitrine de la mère mais sur ses genoux. Toute vulgarité a disparu du portrait maternel, ce qui domine, c'est l'adoration qu'elle professe pour sa mère. Ce portrait enthousiaste et admiratif de la mère anticipe sur celui que le lecteur découvrira dans *Une femme*.

Dans *Les armoires vides* l'auteur s'intéresse à la problématique de la lutte des classes dans le cadre de la famille. Un des thèmes

principaux de ce roman est l'abîme qui sépare la narratrice Denise Lesur, qui est maintenant étudiante, de ses parents qui appartiennent à un milieu ouvrier. Entre la fille qui est devenue une intellectuelle et la mère qui a été ouvrière d'usine avant de tenir une petite épicerie-buvette de quartier, la communication est devenue impossible. L'enfance de Denise avait pourtant été insouciante et heureuse entre une mère ardente et un père affectueux, qui avaient fait de grands sacrifices pour l'envoyer dans une école tenue par des religieuses. Si l'enfant avait accepté avec bonheur le monde parental, l'adolescente par contre, se révolte et fait siens les jugements que son nouveau milieu social porte sur celui de ses parents. Elle se met à les mépriser, les trouve "mimables" mais elle souffre car ils l'adorent et elle a honte de son attitude. La narratrice estime avoir "tous les péchés, tous les vices" car "personne ne pense mal de son père ou de sa mère. Il n'y a que moi" (*Armoires* 99).

La déchirure sociale se transforme en incompatibilité culturelle. Les parents sont vus comme des gens qui sont toujours à "basouiller devant les types importants" (*Armoires* 97) alors que "les personnes bien ont une voiture, des porte-documents, un imper, les mains propres. Ils ont la parole facile, n'importe où, n'importe comment." Ils ont "continuellement la réplique" (*Armoires* 96). "N'avoir rien à dire" (*Armoires* 114), est le sort de sa classe, à laquelle elle va chercher à échapper par la voie de l'écriture. Posséder à fond le maniement de la langue est donc une échappatoire mais cette maîtrise renforce aussi l'aliénation, car en adoptant la langue d'une autre classe, elle se coupe de ses racines. Elle est consciente que "même si [elle] voulai[t], [elle] ne pourrai[t] plus parler comme eux, c'est trop tard" (*Armoires* 181). Le parcours sociolinguistique est irréversible. Elle le ressent comme une libération mais il lui arrive parfois de regretter le monde dont elle est issue. Le père, plus attaché que sa femme, à leur milieu, déplore "l'ascension" sociale de leur fille et commente qu'"on aurait été davantage heureux si elle n'avait pas continué ses études" (*Armoires* 181)!

Cette nouvelle incompatibilité culturelle se manifeste avant tout à travers une différence langagière. Leurs langues respectives ne leur permettent plus de communiquer. La langue des parents est jugée erronée. "La faute, c'est leur langage à eux" (*Armoires* 115) alors que la langue de l'école, reflet de la langue de la culture, n'est pas simplement normative mais aussi idéale. La langue d'origine doit être évacuée en faveur de la langue de la classe dominante. Il s'agit du phénomène culturel dont parle Marina Yaguello dans son "essai d'approche sociolinguistique de la condition féminine", *Les mots et les femmes*, avec "domination d'une langue et hiérarchisation sociale fondée sur la maîtrise de la langue dominante" (41).

L'expérience de la déchirure sociale, qu' Annie Ernaux nomme "exil intérieur", est fondamentale pour saisir son oeuvre. C'est le moteur de son écriture, car il s'agit d'échapper à l'exil en devenant le scripteur du parcours social, c'est aussi la source qui irrigue toute son oeuvre ancrée dans l'autobiographie. Annie Ernaux revient dans presque tous ses romans à son enfance, à la relation avec ses parents. Cela devient un thème obsessionnel qui la poursuit même lorsqu'elle semble renoncer à la veine autobiographique comme c'est le cas dans son dernier texte, *Journal du dehors*.

Ce journal composé entre 1985 et 1992, l'auteur a voulu en faire "un anti-journal intime" (*Entretien*) en tentant de restituer des scènes entrevues, des graffiti ou des slogans lus en passant, des bribes de conversation entendues dans les transports publics. Partant d'un matériau hétéroclite le plus proche possible du réel elle veut faire naître un imaginaire enraciné dans le quotidien. "Aucune description, aucun récit non plus. Juste des instants, des rencontres. De l'ethnotexte" (*Journal* 65). Parmi la foule de banlieue, en mouvement constant, qui emprunte le R.E.R. ou déambule dans les grandes surfaces, ceux qui intéressent Annie Ernaux sont les individus qui lui rappellent son enfance prolétaire. Les gens qui contreviennent aux règles de la bienséance, qui ne respectent pas les usages d'une certaine courtoisie deviennent les personnages principaux. Voilà pourquoi les enfants prennent une grande place, soit qu'ils ne sachent pas éviter de heurter les clients dans les supermarchés (*Journal* 14) ou qu'ils accaparent toute l'attention du compartiment de train en parlant de plus en plus fort (*Journal* 15). Se donner en spectacle aux copassagers est un manque de tact que la narratrice relève à plusieurs reprises, et c'est avant tout le fait des diades mère/fille qui "se sentent autorisées à faire partager leurs réflexions à tous les voyageurs" car elles sont "désireuses d'offrir le spectacle d'une intimité et d'un rapport mère-fille qu'elles estiment enviable" (*Journal* 49). La narratrice, reflet fidèle de l'auteur, est obsédée par le souvenir de son enfance avec sa cohorte de marginaux et d'exclus qui la hantent et fragilisent sa propre réussite sociale.

Alors qu'enfant Annie Ernaux se sentait emprisonnée dans un monde figé où elle ne pouvait jamais échapper à personne, dans les transports en commun, au contraire, la narratrice ne croise que des individus qui passent sans qu'elle puisse les revoir. Par contre elle entend des phrases qui lui rappellent verbatim les sentences de sa mère (*Journal* 87-8) et elle retrouve les gestes maternels chez de nombreuses femmes (*Journal* 106). Son enfance se réincarne journalièrement parmi les usagers des transports publics. A l'instar de ses voisins qui l'épiaient enfant, les banlieusards l'emprisonnent momentanément mais sans en être conscients puisque ces "individus anonymes . . . ne

soupçonnent pas qu'ils détiennent une part de mon histoire. [...] C'est donc au dehors, dans les passagers du métro ou du R.E.R., les gens qui empruntent l'escalator des Galeries Lafayette et d'Auchan, qu'est déposée mon existence passée" (*Journal* 107). Pour cette quinquagénaire, utilisant des lignes du R.E.R. inexistantes il y a 35 ans, comme les grandes surfaces, autre lieu privilégié de ce journal, c'est son enfance qu'elle affronte. *Journal du dehors* qui à l'origine se voulait un essai sur les villes nouvelles, devient par ses personnages un reflet des quartiers populaires de l'enfance d'Annie Ernaux.

L'enfance joue un rôle central dans *La place* (1984), qui est un témoignage sur la vie de son père qu'elle s'accuse d'avoir renié socialement et linguistiquement. Sentant que par son propre métier de professeur et son mariage bourgeois, elle semble avoir désavoué ses parents, son père surtout, garçon de ferme, ouvrier d'usine puis épicier-cabaretier dans une petite ville de Normandie, elle cherche à le faire revivre ainsi que le monde qui l'entourait parce qu'ils "méritai[en]t de venir à l'écriture" (*Conférence*). Elle le fait en se fondant sur des faits, des photos, des souvenirs de scènes précises et de phrases souvent entendues. Ce roman, qui devait être "le grand livre de la réconciliation"² avec son enfance, est aussi le récit d'une éducation où la narratrice est déchirée entre son milieu familial étroit, suffocant et l'aspiration à la connaissance qui est ressentie comme une promesse de liberté. Au fur et à mesure qu'elle "s'élève", elle s'éloigne de l'épicerie-buvette paternelle et prend son milieu social en horreur. En changeant de classe sociale, elle change inévitablement de vision du monde. Le père qu'elle adorait, enfant, lui est devenu étranger. Ils n'ont plus ni langue, ni intérêts communs. Symboliquement, celui-ci meurt au moment où sa fille accède au professorat et elle se reproche de l'avoir "trahi".

Pour Annie Ernaux, le processus d'identification à la mère que les psychologues féministes considèrent comme indispensable dans l'élaboration de l'identité féminine, focalise son malaise existentiel. La déchirure sociale qui la hante est amplifiée par le portrait d'elle-même que lui renvoie la relation avec sa mère. Le livre *Une femme* (1988) est plus particulièrement axé sur ce processus d'identification à la mère puisqu'il s'agit d'un ouvrage, ni "biographie, ni roman" (*Une femme* 106) qui est consacré à sa mère et par conséquent à la relation, souvent conflictuelle, entre mère et fille. Donner indirectement la parole à cette classe sociale dont elle est issue et qui n'a jamais eu voix au chapitre est une tâche qui lui tient à coeur. "Il fallait que ma mère, née dans un milieu dominé, dont elle a voulu sortir, devienne histoire, pour que je me sente moins seule et factice dans le monde dominant des mots et des idées où, selon son désir, je suis passée" (*Une femme* 106). Dans *l'écriture-femme*, Béatrice Didier insiste sur le fait que les romancières

ont toutes tendance à privilégier dans leur texte cette relation mère-fille. Mais chez Annie Ernaux, cette relation filiale ramène inéluctablement au thème central de la déchirure de classe au sein de la famille. Cette mère qui considérait parfois sa fille comme une "ennemie de classe" (*Une femme* 65), était aussi de son côté, prenant toujours le parti du corps enseignant, poussant sa fille à faire des études pour qu'elle puisse échapper à son milieu, "désirant s'élever" par sa fille, vivant, dans une certaine mesure, à travers elle. La narratrice se fait archiviste de la mémoire de la mère, de sa langue et de son "savoir-faire", mettant au jour les coutumes, les goûts, le vocabulaire, les valeurs du milieu maternel, tel "l'orgueil de leur force de travail" (*Une femme* 32), tout un héritage culturel des dominés chez qui la religion par exemple est vécue comme une culture à leur mesure, la seule à laquelle ils aient accès, et qui leur donne une dignité que leur refuse la société.

L'auteur doit aussi à sa mère cette langue première qui a fructifié sa langue d'adoption, lui permettant de porter témoignage sur son enfance, cet aimant plus fort que tout (*Entretien*) qu'elle retrouve toujours sur son chemin. Mais le dou maternel foudamental, c'est l'écriture. Cette femme qui disait: "si j'avais su j'aurais aimé écrire un roman" (*Entretien*), avait une grande admiration pour les livres qu'elle a inculquée à sa fille. La mère considérait qu'être écrivain était la profession la plus prestigieuse possible. Le projet maternel qui a pesé sur Annie comportait aussi un vecteur littéraire. En devenant écrivain, elle a exaucé le voeu maternel.

Après avoir exploré dans six ouvrages le processus identitaire qu'elle a suivi, l'auteur, dans *Journal du dehors*, semble trouver un élément nouveau. Elle qui avait cherché à comprendre son enfance, son ascension sociale liée à l'exil intérieur, qui avait examiné en détail les relations avec son père, celles avec sa mère, son rôle d'épouse et de mère, ses liaisons charnelles, découvre finalement les autres. "Quand on assume pleinement sa vie, on peut voir les autres, sinon on est enfoncé dans son narcissisme" (*Interview*). La surprise vient du fait qu'autrui, c'est encore son enfance prolétaire. Ceux qui appartiennent à d'autres classes sociales sont marginalisés, tel le directeur de la galerie de peinture (*Journal* 21-2) ou cette intellectuelle à la voix "péremptoire" dont se moque la narratrice (*Journal* 52). L'auteur dit se sentir beaucoup plus proche des marginaux, des exclus et des prolétaires que des intellectuels et des bourgeois bien que ce soit à ces deux milieux qu'elle appartient elle-même aujourd'hui. Elle est convaincue que "tout est social" (*Interview*), ce qui lui permet d'évacuer,

ou en tout cas d'ignorer ce qui n'a pas trait à sa classe d'origine et c'est ainsi que l'enfance chez Annie Ernaux triomphe, c'est la source de tout et l'explication universelle.

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¹ Pour ces remarques, je me base sur une communication présentée par Annie Ernaux le 17 mai 1990 lors du *Tenth Cincinnati Conference on Romance Languages and Literatures (Conference)*.

² Interview avec Annie Ernaux, juin 1993 (*Interview*).

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THE DECONSTRUCTION OF THE "SOLDADERA" IN LAURA ESQUIVEL'S *COMO AGUA PARA CHOCOLATE*

Patricia Hart

The lively, lovable character of Gertrudis in Laura Esquivel's novel, *Como agua para chocolate*, is a fascinating deconstruction of a popular figure of varying forms rooted in Mexican history and folklore, the *soldadera*. "*Soldadera*" is the name given to the warrior women who were often drawn into the fray of the Mexican revolution following their men, caring for them, cooking for them, carrying their ammunition, reloading their weapons, sometimes fighting alongside them, and in a few cases even becoming officers and leaders in their own rights. But it is not so much these genuine historical *soldaderas* with whom Esquivel plays in her novel, but rather, with the *soldaderas'* iconic representation in popular culture. According to María Herrera-Sobek, in her fascinating study, *The Mexican Corrido: A Feminist Analysis*:

The most spectacular form of female participation in the Revolution was in actual armed conflict. Movies, pulp literature . . . comic books . . . dance . . . paintings . . . novel . . . short story, photography . . . and of course the *corrido* have all immortalized the *soldadera*. (91)

Through the pervasiveness of the Mexican folk ballad, or *corrido*, myths about *soldaderas* reached every corner of Mexico, and then films, very often based on *corridos*,¹ solidified these myths for the masses. Because *Como agua para chocolate* is a novel conceived so near the film genre, and because Esquivel herself wrote the script for the screen adaptation, it seems particularly appropriate to concentrate on film here, and look at several previous screen representations of the *soldadera* in Mexican cinema in order to contrast them with Esquivel's truly revolutionary² depiction of Gertrudis.³

According to George Hadley-García, the *soldadera* appeared in silent Hollywood films even while the Revolution was in progress! He reports:

One of the better Revolution pictures was *The Mexican Joan of Arc* (1911), initially about a father and son arrested as *insurrectos* and executed by a corrupt judge. The grieving widow-mother then transforms into the title heroine, and

leads her followers into the rebel movement and executes the colonel of the federal troops in her region. (41)

But the classic *soldadera* films were, of course, made in Mexico, the best-known after a lapse of time that allowed for a crystallization of the stereotypes. Probably no version of the *soldadera* contrasts more starkly with Esquivel's Gertrudis than that of Silvia Pinal in *La soldadera*, 1966, directed by José Bolaños. In it, Silvia Pinal plays Lázara, a humble woman swept into the whirlwind of the revolution when her new bridegroom is drafted into the army, and she is allowed to follow along, cooking for him. Early on he is killed in battle, and she is forced to become the lover of a coarse revolutionary general (played by Narciso Busquets). In a scene where she is grinding corn with other camp followers, the women discuss their role in the revolution. "La guerra no se hizo para las mujeres," laments one. "Ay no," another answers, "pero tenemos que seguir a nuestros hombres en campaña pa' luego saber si están vivos o muertos." That woman goes on to explain that her husband has brought her along saying, "¿Quién me hará las tortillas a mí si no es mi mujer?" Quickly the model is established in the film of woman as silent sufferer, preserver of hearth and home, and maternal, not bellicose model. Lázara's main obsession as she moves from one tragic scene of battle to another, is to have a house of her own. At one moment, she asks her general if he can "liberate" a small house for her, if the revolution is successful. He assures her simply, "para eso peleamos." However, Lázara's dreams are never fulfilled, and the closest she comes to realizing them is arranging her few miserable possessions in a boxcar that is later abruptly taken away to transport horses, so that first her home is trampled, and then it physically vanishes before her eyes as the train pulls away.⁴ During the course of the revolution, Lázara gives birth to a baby girl by the general, and in one scene dripping with pathos, gives the baby a bullet from her ammo belt to suck on in place of a pacifier. The emphasis throughout the film is on Lázara's abnegation, her lack of self-determination as her harsh destiny is inflicted upon her, and her overwhelming nesting instinct. But it should not be assumed that such a depiction is the stereotype of the *soldadera* in film, for in fact, although humble sufferers abound, there is also another quite different icon to be considered, one that is nowhere better illustrated than in the filmic work of María Félix.

No one played the *soldadera* oftener or with grander, kitschier verve than María Félix. *La Doña* dressed up in ammo belts for half a dozen films on the revolution, including *La escondida*,⁵ *Café Colón*,⁶ *La cucaracha*,⁷ *La bandida*,⁸ *La Valentina*,⁹ and *La generala*.¹⁰ But none is quite as interesting for comparison as the 1960 film she made under

the direction of Miguel Zacarías, *Juana Gallo*.

In *Juana Gallo*, María Félix¹¹ plays a hardworking peasant girl on the verge of marriage, Angela Ramos, who is left orphaned and "widowed" when her father and fiancé are both shot the same day by cruel *huertistas*, and so she throws herself into battle in order to avenge their deaths. Angela changes her name to Juana Gallo--Juana, in honor of Joan of Arc, and Gallo, because she is fierce as a banty rooster. Like Lázara in *La soldadera*, Juana is drawn into the fray because of her men, but the similarity ends there. The first time we see Juana she is resolutely plowing a field behind a team of oxen, and when she becomes *Generala* Juana Gallo, there is no one braver or tougher than she. However, the film insists on setting this up as an anti-natural situation, a tragic or even esperpentic deformation of "natural" womanhood that the humble Lázara would seem to have embodied. Unlike Lázara, Juana Gallo does not accept any unwanted advances from fellow soldiers. However, when she falls in love with a handsome subordinate (played by Jorge Mistral), the romance falters when she uses her power to keep him from being sent on a suicide mission. He responds furiously to her that the day she joined the revolution, "Angela Ramos . . . se convirtió en Juana Gallo y dejó de ser mujer." Throughout the film, both the visual aspects and the soundtrack combine to emphasize a judgment that by fighting bravely Juana Gallo is losing her "womanhood." In one scene, opposing armies sing a *corrido* to Juana insisting, "No tienes términos medios/ eres buena o eres mala./ Lo mismo das un beso/ que una puñalada." A moment later, Juana's enemies insist that she is an ugly witch, and that she is capable of escaping danger on a broomstick. In another scene, Juana takes "femininity" lessons from a French dancehall girl played by Christiane Martel, but can't stand up in ultra high heels that Martel jokingly refers to as "tacones de esguince," so at last accessorizes her gorgeous dress with army boots. Eventually, it is Martel's character who consoles Juana's beloved Captain, after he has renounced Juana for her lack of womanhood, in disobeying an order he gave her. "Te ordeno," he says when he tells her not to get him out of the suicide mission. Since Juana outranks him in the army, this makes clear the film's position that a man always outranks a woman in love. In the end, the Captain's honor is saved when he dies bravely on the battlefield, and Juana is left bereft, and according to the film, deformed by her war experiences.¹²

Of all the filmic representations of the *soldadera*, perhaps these two extremes best show the dichotomy generally present in popular depictions of the revolutionary woman. Either she is shown as a passive victim, like Lázara, who therefore has the audience's sympathy, or as a sort of monstrous deformation, like Juana, who chooses an

active role, but at the price of her "womanhood." The *corridos* on which many of the *soldadera* films were based also tend to hyperbolic dichotomies. Herrera-Sobek points out that the warrior woman of the revolution is even associated with the devil in certain ballads like "La chamuscada." She asserts:

[R]epresentations of the *soldadera* in the Mexican *corrido* evolved from historical figure to romanticized love object to mythic archetype. A patriarchal perspective dominates all three representations of the fighting woman, and generally obfuscates the Mexicana's true role in armed conflicts. (115)

In the light of these widely popular stereotypes, it is now fascinating to study Esquivel's Gertrudis.

Gertrudis is neither doormat nor deformation, neither a helpless victim nor a cruel tyrant. Let us look at the way she functions. Some reviewers have already criticized Esquivel's sexual politics, finding her characters (especially Tita), too submissive, but Gertrudis's transformation of warrior woman stereotypes belies these easy judgments.

There is nothing servile in the way that Gertrudis is drawn into the revolution. Like her filmic predecessors, Gertrudis's first contact with the revolution involves a man, a revolutionary captain named Juan Alejándrez, but she goes with him not as cook or appendage, but rather because of a passion provoked in part by a magic recipe of Tita's that involved *codornices*, rose petals and her own blood. This passion is represented literally in the novel when Gertrudis's sexual heat causes her shower stall to spontaneously combust, and Juan, drawn by her aroma of rose petals, carries her off naked on his horse, where, according to the text, "el movimiento del caballo se confundía con el de sus cuerpos mientras realizaban su primera copulación a todo galope, y con alto grado de dificultad" (60). However, it is significant that Gertrudis does not stay with Juan at this point. Instead, her insatiable passion causes her to end up in a bordertown brothel, from whence she reports cheerfully in a letter to Tita, "Por fin ahora, después de que infinidad de hombres han pasado por mí, siento un gran alivio" (133). By her own force of will, and without making any special fuss about it, Gertrudis leaves the brothel saying, "voy a dejar este lugar, pues no es el que me pertenece" (133). She joins the revolutionary army, and soon rises in rank, not through desires for revenge or through attachment to a man, but by sheer merit:

Era generala de ejército revolucionario. Este nombramiento se lo había ganado a pulso, luchando como nadie en el campo

de batalla. En la sangre trafa el don de mando, así que en cuanto ingresó al ejército, rápidamente empezó a escalar puestos en el poder hasta alcanzar el mejor puesto . . . (182)

It is only after becoming a *generala* that Gertrudis re-encounters Juan Alejándrez. He is a general himself, so the relationship between them is not one of servility (as was the case with Lázara and her General) nor one where the lovers compete to outrank each other (as in Juana Gallo). Rather, the lovers join in a relationship of equality, marry, and despite problems, they live, "para siempre juntos y pasando más tiempo felices que enojados" (183).

The behavior of Gertrudis as *generala* in the novel deliberately contrasts with Juana Gallo's domineering behavior. In *Juana Gallo*, there is a scene where Juana orders a soldier who has stolen corn from the starving populace flogged with a sabre. Midway through, the soldier carrying out the beating stops, and points out that the victim has died. Juana insists that he give the full count of blows ordered, to make her point. This cruel tyranny contrasts with Gertrudis ordering sergeant Treviño to make the syrup for her beloved *torrejas*. In this comical takeoff, Treviño accomplishes the nearly impossible of reading and following a recipe (since he is practically illiterate), but not so much through fear of Gertrudis, but through devotion, respect, and love. The scene also emphasizes Gertrudis's total lack of connection to the pathetic *soldaderas* like Lázara who were expected because of their gender to be cooks, as Gertrudis obviously has no ability whatsoever in that area.

The character in the novel who does echo Juana Gallo's filmic "deformations" is not Gertrudis, in fact, but rather Mamá Elena herself, whom Audry García has characterized as "una Bernarda Alba mexicana."¹³ The contrast between old and new versions of the *generala* is made clear when Juan, while still a captain and separated from Gertrudis, comes to the ranch in order to requisition food. It is Mamá Elena who greets the soldiers with a shotgun and tells them to take what food they like from outside, but not to set foot in her house. The captain responds, jokingly, "Entendido, mi general" (94). But he soon quits joking when she points the shotgun at him and threatens to shoot if her orders are not obeyed. "Tengo muy buen tino y muy mal carácter, capitán," she informs him (95). Juan, then, falls "preso de un miedo pueril a la autoridad materna" (95). By combining the epithets of "general" and "materna," Esquivel deftly deconstructs our previous image of the women of the revolution dichotomized as humble Lázaras or overbearing Juana Gallos. By contrasting Gertrudis and Mamá Elena, Esquivel gently shows Mexican women fully within their culture

and historical moment who nevertheless have other options than servility or deformed power. Gertrudis enjoys a passionate and happy marriage, crowned by maternity, and suffers no visible ill effects from either of her previous occupations--prostitute or *generala*. It is Mamá Elena's brand of dictatorship that must be exorcised, and with the banishing of her spirit, goes a diminution of harsh tradition of oppression of women, often passed on and enforced by women themselves.

Readers who criticize *Como agua para chocolate* because Tita, a woman living in the early twentieth century in Mexico, does not behave like a North American feminist of the 1990s, might well remember that at a number of key moments in the book, events occur that within the conventions of Mexican melodrama should normally lead to disaster for the female characters, but actually do not. Instead, at key points, Esquivel offers paradigms for more sensible and liberated behavior on the part of her male characters. Three key examples are the sympathy that Chenchá's old boyfriend shows after she is raped, John Brown's understanding when Tita tells him she has slept with Pedro, and Juan's devotion to Gertrudis that overcomes both the fact of her previous prostitution and later temporary doubts as to the paternity of their son.

The most important of these, in my opinion, is the latter as it represents the synthesis of the *soldadera* from other art forms, and transforms the figure into something new and truly revolutionary. Herrera-Sobek points out that some have viewed "the era of the Revolution as an important period in which Mexican women achieved maximum integration into the affairs of the nation" (115). Her ironic follow-up to this is to note:

In retrospect, we see that an *acercamiento* of equals failed to materialize after the Revolution. The *soldadera* was forced to fade into the woodwork by male leaders who, taking complete control, encouraged women to return home and become, once again, mothers and daughters. It was easier to glorify the *soldadera* and mythify her than to grant her the vote. (116)

In *Como agua para chocolate*, by taking apart and then reassembling familiar popular figures like the warrior woman in the manner that has been briefly demonstrated in this paper, Laura Esquivel marries a love of México's history and tradition with a clear vision of limitless possibilities for her countrywomen in the present. And by refusing to allow the figure to remain as a stagnant, iconic figure in the past, Esquivel provides hope for the future.

NOTES

¹ A few examples of *corridos* that inspired later films: "Juana Gallo," "La Chamuscada," and "La Valentina"--which was actually composed in 1909, and according to Herrera-Sobek achieved popularity when applied to Valentina Gatica, a soldadera with the Obregón forces (109).

² y nunca mejor dicho

³ Because of their popular treatment of the subject, these filmic comparisons also seem more apt than realistic renditions like Elena Poniatowska's *Hasta no verte, Jesús mío*, for example.

⁴ In a pathetic prefiguration of ET, Pinal speaks one of her few lines in the entire movie, "¡Mi casa! ¡mi casa!"

⁵ 1955, directed by Roberto Galvaldón.

⁶ 1958, directed by Benito Alazraki.

⁷ 1958, directed by Ismael Rodríguez.

⁸ 1962, directed by Roberto Rodríguez.

⁹ 1965, directed by Rogelio A. González.

¹⁰ 1970, directed by Juan Ibáñez.

¹¹ who is already a bit long in the tooth for such a role...

¹² It is interesting to note that this film is based on a *comido* written about a real woman, according to Paco Ignacio Taibo I in his biography of Félix, *La Doña*. According to him, the real Juana Gallo was a woman named María Soledad Ruiz Pérez, who confronted María Félix after a premiere to tell her, "La película que usted hizo fue una cosa muy sucia. Yo no tomaba ni una gota de licor y no bailaba con los soldados. Yo era una generala, señora. Además, yo no chupaba puros. Ahora la gente ya no me tiene estima por causa de esa película tan llena de mentiras" (315).

According to Taibo, both he and fellow critic José de la Colina gave poor reviews to the film, so even on its release, it hardly satisfied everyone with its Manichaean representation of war and sexual politics.

¹³ In personal conversation.

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LOOK WHO'S TALKING: A STUDY OF NARRATIVE VOICE IN MARGUERITE DURAS' *L'AMANT*

Eileen M. Angelini

In 1984, *L'amant* won the Prix Goncourt and became an international best-seller.¹ This autobiographical work tells of Marguerite Duras' childhood in colonial French Indochina - a theme which has appeared and reappeared in many of her "autofictional narratives," most notably in *Un barrage contre le pacifique* (1950), *Des journées entières dans les arbres* (1954), *L'Eden cinéma* (1988), and most recently in *L'amant de la Chine du nord* (1991). Yet unlike these narratives, where a female character is the subject of third-person narration, in *L'amant* we can distinguish alternating narrative voices. Among them are the first-person authorial voice of Duras remembering her adolescence and two seemingly distinct omniscient third-person narrators, one offering a second perspective on Duras' adolescence and the other confined to telling about the older Duras. The use of the first-person narration by the author-identified narrator remembering her adolescence enables Duras to present an omniscient narrator who, with great flexibility, is capable of shifting from one period to another, from one place to another. In addition, the differences between the first- and third-person narrative voices enhances the contrast between internal and external focus. Internal focus permits the unveiling of a character's thoughts and feelings whereas external focus limits the reader to an exterior view of a character or scene. Thus, a narration with an internal focus gives the reader the impression of being more intimately involved with the text. Indeed, the alternation between the first- and third-person narrations in one text is a key writing strategy employed by Duras in composing the history of her personality. This strategy is of primary importance to my study of the works of Duras since it helps to resolve part of the difficulty of categorizing *L'amant*, especially in relation to her other "autofictional narratives."² It was not until the publication of *L'amant* that the autobiographical aspects of her previous works became truly evident; and in using the first-person narration to relate her adolescence, Duras finally introduces an identity among the author, the narrator, and the protagonist or main character.

The dominant form of narration of the three types is that of the first-person narration by Duras, the author-identified narrator remembering her adolescence. For example, at the very beginning of *L'amant*, Duras writes:

Un jour, j'étais âgée déjà, dans le hall d'un lieu public, un homme est venu vers moi. Il s'est fait connaître et il m'a dit: 'Je vous connais depuis toujours. Tout le monde dit que vous étiez belle lorsque vous étiez jeune, je suis venu pour vous dire que pour moi je vous trouve plus belle maintenant que lorsque vous étiez jeune, j'aimais moins votre visage de jeune femme que celui que vous avez maintenant, dévasté.'³

Starting at an undetermined time in her recent past⁴ where she contemplates her now ravaged looks, Duras sets the stage for her first-person account of her adolescence as she draws a parallel to the sooner than expected ageing of her younger self:

Très vite dans ma vie il a été trop tard. À dix-huit ans il était déjà trop tard. Entre dix-huit ans et vingt-cinq ans mon visage est parti dans une direction imprévue. À dix-huit ans j'ai vieilli. (9-10)

Here, Duras begins the gradual process of recovering her past. She does not begin the narrative of her adolescence at the point at which she met her Northern Chinese lover⁵, but at a point where she has aged, presumably shortly after her affair with him. This technique has the effect of slowly leading the reader back into Duras' past and shows the multiplicity of time levels in the narration. It is not until one page later when Duras writes the following that she begins the narration of her youth:

J'ai quinze ans et demi, il n'y a pas de saisons dans ce pays-là, nous sommes dans une saison unique, chaude, monotone, nous sommes dans la longue zone chaude de la terre, pas de printemps, pas de renouveau. Je suis dans une pension d'Etat à Saïgon. Je dors et je mange là, dans cette pension, mais je vais en classe au-dehors, au lycée français. Ma mère, institutrice, veut le secondaire pour sa petite fille. (11)

In this example, Duras starts the narration of her youth in the present tense and thus sets the stage for the narration's development as she will switch back and forth between verb tenses and time periods, and between first- and third-person narrative voices. In close proximity to this first-person narration is the first-person commentary on the feasibility of writing her life story:

"L'histoire de ma vie n'existe pas. Ça n'existe pas. Il n'y a jamais de centre. Pas de chemin, pas de ligne. Il y a de vastes endroits où

l'on fait croire qu'il y avait quelqu'un, ce n'est pas vrai il n'y avait personne". (14)

In this metacommentary, Duras, commenting on her autobiographical project, exploits the possibilities of first-person narrative, and focusing on the narrator and the situation of narration, remarks on the kinds of narrations she has produced. She continues by differentiating between what she has already written about her youth and the project which she is now undertaking:

L'histoire d'une toute petite partie de ma jeunesse je l'ai plus ou moins écrite déjà, enfin je veux dire, de quoi l'apercevoir, je parle de celle-ci justement, de celle de la traversée du fleuve. Ce que je fais ici est différent, et pareil. Avant, j'ai parlé des périodes claires, de celles qui étaient éclairées. Ici je parle des périodes cachées de cette même jeunesse, de certains enfouissements que j'aurais opérés sur certains faits, sur certains sentiments, sur certains événements. (14)

Duras thus discriminates here between the clear periods of her youth, which she has already written about in her "autofictional narratives," and the buried facts, feelings, and events which she will now try to reveal in *L'amant*. Therefore, in making this comment with an internal perspective, Duras alludes directly to the autobiographical aspects of her previous writings.

In contrast to the author-identified narrator remembering her adolescence, the two types of third-person narration are significant in *L'amant* as they provide Duras with the means of designating her alter ego by the indefinite "she." This technique also allows her to distance herself from her text without, on the other hand, letting fiction go free. She is able to examine herself from an external perspective, since she looks at herself as if she were another. An example of the omniscient third-person narration of Duras' adolescence can be found in the scene in which the narrator describes the image of the young girl on the ferry-boat:

Quinze ans et demi. Le corps est mince, presque chétif, des seins d'enfant encore, fardée en rose pâle et en rouge. Et puis cette tenue qui pourrait faire qu'on en rie et dont personne ne rit. (29)

This scene stands in contrast to a prior account rendered in the first-person:

*Que je vous dise encore, j'ai quinze ans et demi.
C'est le passage d'un bac sur le Mékong.
L'image dure pendant toute la traversée du fleuve.*
(11, my italics)

Typically, this example of first-person narration begins with a brief metacommentary, a brief dialogue with the narratee-reader ("vous")⁶, referring to the already told, the fact that she was fifteen and a half when she first encountered the Northern Chinese lover on the ferry-boat. In effect, in this metacommentary, she is calling attention to her narrating process as she reaffirms details from her past. Contrasting these first- and third-person narrative accounts of the same scene allows Duras not only to distance herself from her text but also to show that the nature of memory itself is under interrogation. To further confirm this view, one needs only to continue reading the first of the two above-mentioned scenes:

Je vois bien que tout est là. Tout est là et rien n'est encore joué, je la vois dans les yeux, tout est déjà dans les yeux. Je veux écrire. Déjà je l'ai dit à ma mère: ce que je veux c'est ça, écrire. (29)

Duras switches from the third-person narration back to the first-person narration in order to justify her memory process, since the first-person narration takes an adamantly defensive position about what it remembers. A variant of how Duras combines first-person narration and third-person narration to tell the young girl's story is the following:

Je regardais ce qu'il faisait de moi, comme il se servait de moi et je n'avais jamais pensé qu'on pouvait le faire de la sorte, il allait au-delà de mon espérance et conformément à la destinée de mon corps. Ainsi j'étais devenue son enfant. Il était devenu autre chose aussi pour moi. Je commençais à reconnaître la douceur inexprimable de sa peau, de son sexe, au-delà de lui-même. . . . J'étais devenue son enfant. C'était avec son enfant qu'il faisait l'amour chaque soir. Et parfois il prend peur, tout à coup il s'inquiète de sa santé comme s'il découvrait qu'elle était mortelle et que l'idée le traversait qu'il pouvait la perdre.
(122)

Here the reason for the switch from first-person narration to third-person narration is almost certainly to create a shift in focus from internal to external in order to place more emphasis on the Northern Chinese lover and his feelings of fear about losing "his child"--

whether it be through her death or through her return to France. In this manner, eclipsing the first-person view allows for the needs of others to manifest themselves so as to render a more extensive portrayal of the child protagonist. This is not the only time when Duras combines external third-person points of view with her personal voice. The scene where, as a child, she is physically beaten by her mother allows us to further analyze this technique of switching back and forth between the first- and third-person narrations in order to place the emphasis on someone else:

Derrière les murs de la chambre fermée, le frère. Le frère répond à la mère, il lui dit qu'elle a raison de battre l'enfant, sa voix est feutrée, intime, caressante, il lui dit qu'il leur faut savoir la vérité, à n'importe quel prix, il leur faut la savoir pour empêcher que la mère en soit désespérée. La mère frappe de toutes ses forces. Le petit frère crie à la mère de la laisser tranquille. Il va dans le jardin, il se cache, il a peur que je sois tuée, il a peur, il a toujours peur de cet inconnu, notre frère aîné. La peur du petit frère calme ma mère. Elle pleure sur le désastre de sa vie, de son enfant déshonorée. Je pleure avec elle. (73-74)

In this example, Duras is able to emphasize not only her own shame but the older brother's maliciousness, the mother's anger, and the fear of the older brother that she and her younger brother shared because of her manipulation of narrative voices.

With this manipulation, Duras also achieves both an internal and external reexamination of her past self so that she not only actively reexamines her past self but conceptualizes as well how she was seen by others, as she becomes the object of their gaze. For example, again in the passage where Duras, principally from the external perspective of third-person narration, gives a physical description of the fifteen and a half year old adolescent as she was first seen on the ferry-boat, we see:

Quinze ans et demi. Le corps est mince, presque chétif, des seins d'enfant encore, fardée en rose pâle et en rouge. Et puis cette tenue qui pourrait faire qu'on en rie et dont personne ne rit. Je vois bien que tout est là . . .
La petite au chapeau de feutre est dans la lumière limoneuse du fleuve, seule sur le pont du bac, accoudée au bastingage. Le chapeau d'homme colore de rose toute la scène. (29-30, my italics)

This scene is important to the unfolding of the narration for, in presenting a physical description of the young Duras from the external perspective of a third-person narrator, it gives the reader the impression of looking through Duras' eyes as she contemplates the imaginary photograph of herself. It is, in effect, Duras' narcissistic gaze at herself. As readers, we thus have the feeling of observing Duras' past from an objective point of view that is external to Duras herself. Or in reading this scene, we as readers may have the impression of looking through the eyes of the Northern Chinese lover as he scrutinizes the girl. This impression also gives the reader the feeling of observing Duras' past from a point of view that is external to herself.

Another aspect of the ability to switch back and forth between the first- and third-person narrations is the use of direct discourse, the type of discourse which renders verbatim what a character says. The use of direct discourse heightens mimetic illusion as the reader no longer feels that the omniscient narrator is acting as an editor who reworks a character's speech or thoughts. On the contrary, the reader feels closer to the text as there is less distance between her/himself and the characters since the narrator is acting as a reporter who gives verbatim accounts of the characters' speech and thoughts. For example, when presenting her mother's conversation with the head of her boarding house, Duras uses direct discourse:

Ma mère a dit à la directrice de la pension: ça ne fait rien, tout ça c'est sans importance, vous avez vu? ces petites robes usées, ce chapeau rose et ces souliers en or, comme cela lui va bien? (112)

It is possible that the reader would find it bothersome that Duras uses direct discourse in an autobiography when it is not clear as to whether or not she was a witness to the conversation. How is Duras able to report the exact words of her mother if she was not a witness? Did her mother or the head of her boarding house tell her what had been said during the conversation, thereby setting up a communication network? However, the reader's uneasiness is somewhat alleviated when Duras switches from the first- to third-person narration as she completes the description of the scene⁷:

La mère est ivre de joie quand elle parle de ses enfants et alors son charme est encore plus grand. Les jeunes surveillantes de la pension écoutent la mère passionnément. Tous, dit la mère, ils tournent autour de ça, ils veulent de cette petite, de cette chose-là, pas tellement définie encore, regardez, encore une enfant. Déshonorée disent les gens? et moi je dis: comment

enfant. Déshonorée disent les gens? et moi je dis: comment ferait l'innocence pour se déshonorer? (112-113)

Since the reader assumes that the narrator is omniscient, the question of whether or not Duras was present at the time of this conversation is less problematic. In this way, Duras, by employing both the first- and third-person narrations, gives the impression of being able to overcome one of the difficulties of autobiographers -- that of the credibility of directly quoted dialogue. Moreover, Duras is able to present the mother's point of view and, indeed, actual words are given to amplify the description of the adolescent. Nonetheless, the reader will continue to question the validity of this description as s/he wonders if this is a true description given by the mother or the head of the boarding house and remembered by the daughter or an imaginary construction of the self.

The omniscient third-person narration of the older Duras, although less prominent than the two other types of narration, is equally important to Duras' autobiographical writing process as it extends her interweaving of verb tenses and different time periods. An example of this second type of third-person narration, is found near the end of *L'amant*:

Elle ne sait pas combien de temps après ce départ de la jeune fille blanche il a exécuté l'ordre du père, quand il a fait ce mariage qu'il lui ordonnait de faire avec la jeune fille désignée par les familles depuis dix ans, couverte d'or, elle aussi, des diamants, du jade. Une Chinoise elle aussi originaire du nord, de la ville de Fou-Chouen, venue accompagnée de famille.
(140)

In this case, the first "elle" is the older Duras as seen by the omniscient narrator who, as author, fails to recall how long it was after the departure of the "jeune fille blanche" (subject of the other type of third-person narration) that the lover married the Chinese girl. Duras demands here an active participation on the part of the reader as the reader is forced to distinguish between the "elle" of the older Duras and the "jeune fille blanche" of her younger self. The reader must also distinguish between the "elle" of the older Duras, the "elle" of her younger self, and the "elle" of the young wife of the Northern Chinese lover. A little further on, the narrator comments:

Peut-être connaissait-elle l'existence de la jeune fille blanche. Elle avait des servantes natives de Sadec qui connaissaient l'histoire et qui avaient dû parler. Elle ne devait pas ignorer sa

peine. Elles auraient dû être du même âge toutes les deux, seize ans. Cette nuit-là avait-elle vu pleurer son époux? Et, ce voyant, l'avait-elle consolé? . . . Qui sait? Peut-être qu'elle se trompait, peut-être avait-elle pleuré avec lui, sans un mot, le reste de la nuit. Et puis qu'ensuite serait venu l'amour, après les pleurs. Elle, la jeune fille blanche, elle n'avait jamais rien su de ces événements-là. (141)

This paragraph must be carefully read as the interplay among the three "elles" is complex, often nebulous. The "elle" of "Peut-être qu'elle se trompait" is the older Duras as the omniscient narrator hypothesizes about Duras' remembering process since Duras herself would be incapable of knowing what occurred between the lover and his young wife ("avait-elle pleuré avec lui?"). This hypothesizing about the memory process, via an improbable juxtaposition of different points of view, by the omniscient narrator is reinforced by the final comment that the omniscient narrator makes about the "elle" as the young Duras: "Elle, la jeune fille blanche, elle n'avait jamais rien su de ces événements-là." Thus Marguerite Duras as simultaneous author and autobiographer calls our attention to what an autobiographer is truly capable of remembering and explains why an autobiographer can only provide possible hypotheses concerning events to which she was not a witness. Duras has resolved this problem of hypothesizing by an autobiographer by bringing in the omniscient narrator to comment on the young Duras and the older Duras and then by using this technique to introduce other points of view. Although it seems that Duras is fictionalizing her autobiography, to borrow Carol Murphy's terminology⁸, she is exploring, within an "autobiographical space," the different possible points of view that come into being as one reexamines one's life.

Through the use of three types of narration in *L'amant*, including the first time use of first-person narration by Duras, the author-identified narrator, we have seen her efforts to produce a more revealing autobiography. The specific results achieved from switching back and forth between first- and third-person narration in *L'amant* are: 1) Duras' ability to distance herself from her text as she designates her alter ego by the indefinite "she"; 2) the possibility of questioning the nature of memory itself through the point of view of first-person narration, which adamantly justifies the memory process; 3) the capacity to transfer the dramatic emphasis to others who were a part of her adolescence so as to give a more ample self-portrayal by showing how she affected those surrounding her; 4) the skill to focus on how she saw herself as well as how she imagines she was seen by others as she becomes the object of others' gazes or of points of view

external to hers; and 5) the freedom to employ direct discourse. Indeed, Duras' *L'amant* is a text that demands an active participation on the part of the reader in order to follow and interpret her writing strategies. Just as she is both participant and narrator, her text insists that we participate in the double role of co-author and reader.

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NOTES

¹ *L'amant* has been translated into forty-three languages. Carlin Romano, of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, reports that in France alone, *L'amant* sold nearly 800,000 copies and led the French best-seller list for six months. He also gives an account of its publication in the United States: "Published here this summer, it has taken off in a similar way [as it did in France] going onto national best-seller lists and attracting enough interest in paperback rights to require an auction (Harper & Row won the bidding this week with an offer of \$155,000)." [Carlin Romano, "Why does everyone seem to love 'The Lover'?", *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 April 1989, Book Section.]

² Of particular interest in *L'amant*, are the transgressions of the kind of retrospective, chronologically oriented narrative as given in Philippe Lejeune's original definition of autobiography (Philippe Lejeune, *L'autobiographie en France* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1971), p. 14). It is these strategies that constitute what I define as "writing the self"--writing that includes straightforward as well as fictional accounts--since Lejeune's concept of *espace autobiographique* or "autobiographical space" (Philippe Lejeune, *Le pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Editions du seuil, 1975), pp. 165-168.) encompasses the image of the self across many genres or across all the works of an author.

³ Marguerite Duras, *L'amant* (Paris: Editions de minuit, 1984), p. 9. All future references to *L'amant* will be made to this same edition.

⁴ Even though my study does focus primarily on the juxtaposition of the first and third person narrations, one should note the interweaving of verb tenses and different time periods that are incorporated in the narration of *L'amant*. This interweaving of verb tenses and different time periods is important since *L'amant* does not follow a specific chronological order as would a traditional autobiography.

⁵ In *L'amant*, Duras claims she was fifteen and a half when she met her lover; but she contradicts this in *L'amant de la Chine du nord*, where she states she was only fourteen - see p. 11 of *L'amant* and p. 192 of *L'amant de la Chine du nord*.

⁶ It is to the narratee that the narrator speaks directly and through whom the narrator demonstrates his or her communicative function. It is important not to confuse the narratee with the real reader, the potential or virtual reader, or the ideal reader. The functions of the narratee are to serve as a relay between the narrator and the reader (a function of mediation); and to be a part of the narrative discourse: the relationship between the narrator and the narratee can emphasize a theme, advance the story, and reveal the fundamental ideas or attitudes expressed in the work.

⁷ One should note that the first-person account begins the narration in the past tense and that the third-person narration switches tenses to use the present tense.

⁸ Carol J. Murphy, "Duras' *L'Amant*: Memories from an Absent Photo," in *Remains to be Seen: Essays on Marguerite Duras*, Sanford Scribner Ames, ed. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1988) 173.

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