

CINCINNATI

ROMANCE

REVIEW

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PREFACE

The Cincinnati Romance Review is a logical outgrowth of the first Cincinnati Conference on Romance Literatures held May 1981 under the sponsorship of the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures and the Graduate Student Association of the University of Cincinnati.

Our special thanks to Heather Arden, James Hamilton, Kornal Huvos, John Wilhite and Frank Triplett for their time in evaluating and selecting the papers included in this inaugural volume; Patricia Clark for the cover design; Llevella Frank and Debbie Sicking for the typing of manuscripts.

Finally, we wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Graduate Student Association of the University of Cincinnati and the University Budget Board for their financial support, without which neither the Conference nor this journal would have been possible

Donald W. Bleznick

We desire to communicate our heartfelt appreciation to Dr. John F. Wilhite for his encouragement in realizing the Cincinnati Conference on Romance Literatures and the Cincinnati Romance Review. His time, assistance and example have been primary motivating forces in spawning the professional activities of graduate students in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures. As Faculty Advisor he dared to suggest that we should read papers at conferences and submit essays for publication. He mentioned that we could hold our own conference and even publish a journal. What was a challenge is now reality, and what was doubted is now lauded.

Many thanks, John, and may God bless.

Felix Menchacatorre

Eric Pennington

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
GLASS LIGHT AND WATER: THE AQUARIUM EFFECT IN A <u>LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU</u> Anita Henry.....	1
JULES ROMAINS' <u>LES COPAINS</u> : MUSKETEERS OF LAUGHTER Pierre L. Horn.....	11
GENERATIVE REPRESENTATIONS IN THE POST-MODERN FICTION OF CLAUDE SIMON S. Jiménez Fajardo.....	19
THORNS AMONG ROSES: REPRESENTATION AND NARRATION IN PROUST'S "LA MELANCOLIQUE VILLEGIATURE DE MME BREYVES" Renée A. Kingcaid.....	29
STENDHAL'S EARLY WORKS CRITICIZED IN THE <u>ANTOLOGIA</u> FROM 1823 TO 1830 Carolina Donadio Lawson.....	43
A PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST: MAUPASSANT'S OLIVIER BERTIN Anna Limoges Miller.....	57
IMAGES OF RETREAT: GEOGRAPHY IN THE PASTORAL NOVEL Carol Deering Paul.....	65
HISTORICAL FANTASY: MUSIC AND MUSICIANS IN CARPENTIER'S <u>CONCIERTO BARROCO</u> David Herbert Bost.....	73
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BALLAD "LA CONSTANCIA" IN <u>DON QUIJOTE</u> David L. Garrison.....	83
SEVERAL OBSERVATIONS ON RELIGION AND ROMANTICISM AND THEIR APPLICATION TO LARRA'S <u>MACIAS</u> David Goldin.....	91
LA CUENTISTICA FANTASTICA DE FELISBERTO HERNANDEZ Nancy M. Kason.....	101
WOMEN IN LORCA'S THEATER: TWO PERSPECTIVES James E. Larkins.....	113

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONT'D)

Page

THE DYNAMICS OF POETIC PROCESS IN
JOSE DE JESUS SAMPEDOR'S UN (EJEMPLO) DE
GATO PINTO

Frederic W. Murray.....123

BORGES Y EL CRIOLLISMO

Abdón Sánchez.....133

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When we encounter light and glass imagery in Proust's novel, and this is frequent, we can often note an associated water presence. The Narrator's room at Balbec is a good example of this combining. The view from the window is a seascape; it is often in fact presented as a painting framed by the window casing. Inside the room, the light passing through this blue-filled window separates into a prism effect; it is broken into its composite parts by the glass pane:

. . . cette chambre, que je traversais un moment avant de m'habiller pour la promenade, avait l'air d'un prisme où se décomposait les couleurs de la lumière de dehors¹

"La lumière de dehors" is the light of the sea, or more accurately, the light reflected off the water. Another description of the Balbec bedroom even more clearly enunciates the association of water with glass and light. The beginning of the Nom de Pays section describes the room as a pool with polished sides like the glass of an aquarium, ". . . les murs passés au ripolin contenaient, comme les parois polies d'une piscine où l'eau bleuit, un air pur, azuré et salin" (I, p. 383). The suggestion of "parois polies" will be fully developed in the transformation of the Balbec dining room into an aquarium.

A different example of light and water association occurs in the description of the fiery glance of the Duchesse de Guermantes on the evening of the opera gala in Paris. The look the duchess showers upon the Narrator on this occasion is described as an "averse étincelante," a sparkling downpour (II, p. 58). This scene is part of one of the major aquarium developments in the novel to which we shall return. It is also one of Proust's carefully constructed parallel scenes, for it repeats the flashing blue glance the duchess gave the Narrator during his childhood in the Combray church (I, p. 175).

Near the close of Sodome et Gomorrhe, light and water association turns the steeples of Saint-Mars le Vêtu into radiant fish:

. . . par ce temps où on ne pensait qu'au bain, les deux antiques clochers d'un rose saumon, aux tuiles en losange, légèrement infléchies et comme palpitants, avaient l'air de vieux poissons aigus, imbriqués d'écaillés, moussus et roux, qui, sans avoir l'air de bouger s'élevaient dans une eau transparente et bleue. (II, pp. 1014-1015)

Here as at Balbec it is the proximity of the sea that provides the idea of water, gently reinforced by "ce temps où on ne pensait qu'au bain." The color and the shape of the tiles begin the metamorphosis of the steeples into fish, while the illusion of movement ("comme palpitants") suggests the movement of sunlight on water. The image is completed by the impressionistic transformation of sky into water as the fish/steeples rise "dans une eau transparente et bleue."

Finally,, the three elements of glass, water, and light are tightly associated in the synesthetic "noms de lieux" phenomenon based on the cacophonous name of the Prince de Faffenheim-Munsterburg-Weinigen:

Le nom du prince gardait, dans la franchise avec laquelle ses premières syllabes étaient—comme on dit en musique—attaquées, et dans la bégayante répétition qui les scandait, l'élan, la naïveté maniérée, les lourdes "délicatesses" germaniques projetées comme des branchages verdâtres sur le "Heim" d'émail bleu sombre qui déployait la mysticité d'un vitrail rhénan derrière les dorures pâles et finement ciselées du XVIIIe siècle allemand. Ce nom contenait parmi les noms divers dont il était formé, celui d'une petite ville d'eaux allemande où tout enfant j'avais été avec ma grand'mère, au pied d'une montagne honorée par les promenades de Goethe (II, p. 256)

In this manifestation light is projected as though through a stained-glass window, with "émail bleu sombre" and "dorures pâles" resulting in "branchages verdâtres." The color of water is suggested by "verdâtre," and water is specifically joined to the image with the evocation of the Rhine in "vitrail rhénan" and of the German spa in question, the "petite ville d'eaux allemande." We shall note that this effect of water caused by stained glass is a second parallel to the appearance of the Duchesse de Guermantes at the wedding of Dr. Precepiéd's niece.

In his essay "Métonymie chez Proust," Gérard Genette suggests a neat formula for the association of water and glass, "Verre // eau durcie, eau // cristal liquide et courant."² Glass is hardened water; water is liquid, flowing crystal. With this indication that the one substance visually suggests

the other, we must also note that in Proustian imagery as in physics both glass and water act as refractors of light (sunlight glistens on the surface of the sea and is broken into its component parts by the bedroom window glazing). When the two substances are combined, the bending of light is intensified and there results a heightening of illusion. One of the early articles on the Recherche refers to this peculiar visual effect. Jean Dalligny, in his article "L'Oeuvre de Marcel Proust" described a fluid, blurred effect, "the Narrator seems to be looking through glass at a mist-enveloped world."³ The Narrator does indeed spend a remarkable amount of time looking out of or into windows. The combined effect of liquid and glass creates the illusion of an aquarium, an effect developed at some length in two places in the novel and alluded to several times more.

The first development of the aquarium image is the transformation of the dining room of the hotel at Balbec into an exotic container for fish and shellfish. The image is first suggested by the green light that filters into the room from the windows facing the sea:

. . . cette saie à manger de Balbec, nue, emplie de soleil vert comme l'eau d'une piscine, et à quelques mètres de laquelle la marée pleine et le grand jour élevaient . . . un rempart indestructible et mobile d'émeraude et d'or. (I, p. 674)

The greenish color is caused by sunlight and real water here, the colors of "émeraude" and "or," The suggestion that the room itself is a "piscine" is already present, as is the idea of a glass wall ("un rempart"). We have already seen that the Balbec bedroom is also capable of becoming a "chambre/piscine," as Genette puts it.⁴ The image is fully developed in the next description of the dining room:

. . . les sources électriques faisant sourdre à flots la lumière dans la grande salle à manger, celle ci devenait comme un immense et merveilleux aquarium devant la paroi de verre duquel la population ouvrière de Balbec, les pêcheurs et aussi les familles de petits bourgeois, invisibles dans l'ombre, s'écrasaient au vitrage pour apercevoir, lentement balancée dans remous d'or, la vie luxueuse de ces gens, aussi extraordinaire pour les pauvres que celle de poissons et de mollusques étranges (une grande question sociale, de savoir si la paroi de verre protégera toujours le festin des bêtes merveilleuses et si les gens obscurs qui regardent avidement dans la nuit ne

et si les gens obscurs qui regardent évidemment dans la nuit ne viendront pas les cueillir dans leur aquarium et les manger). En attendant, peut-être parmi la foule arrêtée et confondue dans la nuit y avait-il quelque écrivain, quelque amateur d'ichtyologie humaine, qui, regardant les mâchoires de vieux monstres féminins se refermer sur un morceau de nourriture engloutie, se complaisait à classer ceux-ci par race, par caractères innés et aussi par ces caractères acquis qui font qu'une vieille dame serbe dont l'appendice buccal est d'un grand poisson de mer, parce que depuis son enfance elle vit dans les eaux douces du faubourg Saint-Germain, mange la salade comme une La Rochefoucauld. (I, p. 681)

Here the source of light is interior, electric rather than solar, and the glass side has become more evident and more important. The rather bitter social commentary muses on the question of how long the glass side can protect the wealthy from the hungry poor. The glass serves another function common to both the lighted window and the aquarium side; the observers can see in, but the "fish" cannot see out. The image is recalled when the Narrator sees a soldier outside of a lighted restaurant window in Paris during the war:

A l'heure du dîner les restaurants étaient pleins; et si, passant dans la rue, je voyais un pauvre permissionnaire . . . arrêter un instant ses yeux devant les vitres illuminées, je souffrais comme à l'hôtel de Balbec quand les pêcheurs nous regardaient dîner . . . (III, p. 735)

We note in both of these scenes that the vertical glass, the "aquarium side," is a symbol of absolute social separation, a fact that will also be true in the second major aquarium development. Before proceeding to that scene, let us consider briefly two further examples of the cruelty inherent in the aquarium situation.

The illusion of the fish who cannot see the cruel predator lurking beyond its aquarium wall also occurs with Odette and with the Baron de Charlus. On the night when Swann returns to the rue La Pérouse after midnight to be certain that Odette is alone, something quite sinister develops in his mood; it is in fact the introduction of the prisoner theme:

Il la tenait là, éclairée en plein par la lampe, prisonnière sans le savoir dans cette chambre où, quand il le voudrait, il entrerait la surprendre et la capturer (I, p. 273)

It is again a lighted window that forms the side of Odette's "aquarium." This

scene, after the suggestion of cruelty caused by what is actually Swann's illusion, ends in a burst of ironic humor. Swann discovers that the silhouettes he had assumed to be Odette and her lover are in fact two startled old gentlemen--he had the wrong window, the wrong house.

The situation of the Baron de Charlus is unrelieved by even a touch of laughter; he is the fish at the mercy of the observer:

M. de Charlus . . . vivait dupé comme le poisson qui croit que l'eau où il nage s'étend au-delà du verre de son aquarium qui lui en présente le reflet, tandis qu'il ne voit pas à côté de lui, dans l'ombre le promeneur amusé par ses ébats ou le pisciculteur tout-puissant qui, au moment imprévu et fatal . . . le tirera sans pitié du milieu où il aimait vivre pour le rejeter dans un autre. (II, 1049)

This scene occurs at the Verdurins' on the evening the "Patronne" has chosen to separate Charlus from his beloved "Charlie." The image shares with the dining room at Balbec the glass, the illusion, the "pêcheur" who is in the darkness beyond the bright reflecting wall and who cannot be seen. The sinister intent of the observer is fully developed.

The second major aquarium development occurs during the evening of the opera gala:

. . . dans les autres baignoires, presque partout, les blanches déités qui habitaient ces sombres séjours s'étaient réfugiées contre les parois obscures et restaient invisibles. Cependant, au fur et à mesure que le spectacle s'avavançait, leurs formes vaguement humaines se détachaient mollement l'une après l'autre des profondeurs de la nuit qu'elles tapissaient et, s'élevant vers le jour, laissaient émerger leurs corps demi-nus et venaient s'arrêter à la limite verticale et à la surface clair-obscur . . . après commençaient les fauteuils d'orchestre, le séjour des mortels à jamais séparés du sombre et transparent royaume auquel ça et là servaient de frontière, dans leur surface liquide et plane, les yeux limpides et réfléchissants des déesses des eaux. (II, p. 40)

The glass wall is as rigidly in place here as at Balbec, represented in the "paroi" and the "limite verticale;" here even more than at Balbec, it seems to offer an absolute separation between the magnificent sea creatures and the observers. Fish imagery returns with the appearance of the Marquis de Palancy:

Le marquis de Palancy . . . se déplaçait dans l'ombre transparente et

paraissait ne pas plus voir le public de l'orchestre qu'un poisson qui passe, ignorant de la foule des visiteurs curieux, derrière la cloison vitrée d'un aquarium. (II, p. 43)

This reminds us that we have seen a fish-like Marquis de Palancy before, long ago at the matinée of Mme de Saint-Euvert:

M. de Palancy . . . avec sa grosse tête de carpe aux yeux ronds . . . avait l'air de transporter avec lui un fragment accidentel, et peut-être purement symbolique, du vitrage de son aquarium, partie destinée à figurer le tout. (I, p. 327)

Even the unlikely locale of Doncières can undergo a brief transformation into an aquarium, as the Narrator peers into lighted apartment windows:

. . . des hommes et des femmes amphibies, se réadaptant chaque soir à vivre dans un autre élément que le jour, nageaient lentement dans la grasse liqueur qui, à la tombée de la nuit, sourd incessamment du réservoir des lampes pour remplir les chambres jusqu'au bord de leurs parois de pierre et de verre (II, p. 97)

Here light becomes water as in the other examples of this phenomenon, and the vertical "paroi" is also an element of both the Balbec and the Paris aquaria.

There is one more scene that fits with these clearly drawn examples of aquarium imagery, because of an association of glass and separation and because of a similar color treatment. A number of commentators have noticed the parallel between the magic lantern scene of Geneviève de Brabant and the appearance of the Duchesse de Guermantes at the wedding of Dr. Percepied's niece:

. . . la chapelle où elle suivit la messe était celle de Gilbert le Mauvais, sous les plates tombes de laquelle, dorées et distendues comme des alvéoles de miel, reposait les anciens comtes de Brabant (I, p. 174)

. . . pendant que Mme de Guermantes était assise dans la chapelle au-dessus des tombes de ses morts, ses regards flânaient ça et là . . . s'arrêtaient même sur moi comme un rayon de soleil errant dans la nef (I, p. 176)

Ce sourire tomba sur moi qui ne la quittais pas des yeux. Alors me rappelant ce regard qu'elle avait laissé s'arrêter sur moi, pendant la messe, bleu comme un rayon de soleil qui aurait traversé le vitrail de Gilbert le Mauvais, je me dis: "Mais sans doute elle fait attention à moi." (I, p. 177)

Proust suggests the image of the magic lantern when he has the Narrator describe

his difficulty, "j'essayais d'appliquer l'idée: 'C'est Mme de Guermantes,' sans parvenir qu'à la faire manoeuvrer en face de l'image, comme deux disques séparés par un intervalle," (I, p. 175). We are also reminded throughout this long passage that Mme de Guermantes is the descendant of Geneviève de Brabant, the subject of the magic lantern slides. Howard Moss has noted that the same colors are present in the magic lantern slide and in the church.⁵ The primary colors are in fact the same as in the parallel scene concerning that other German noble, the Prince de Faffenheim-Munsterburg-Weinigen, for here we have the blue and the gold, though without specific mention of the resulting "verdâtre." The blue light in the church has two sources, Mme de Guermantes' eyes and the sun shining through the stained glass portrait of Gilbert le Mauvais. The glance of the duchess is actually compared to the sun, and this fiery glance prefigures that of the opera gala. The sun image and the actual sunlight are both instances of yellow light filtered through blue. When one adds the golden honey color of the Brabant tombs and the "orange sound" of the syllable ant common to both "guermantes" and "brabant," there is more yellow to mix with the blue light. And though green is never mentioned in the passage, one recalls that, just as the name of the German prince suggests a Rhine chapel and a "ville d'eaux," so the Guermantes Way lies along the Vivonne and has the water garden of the two "ways." The absolute social separation is as strong in the Combray church as in either of the two major aquarium scenes; it is an image of the same type.

It remains to consider the sources of Proust's fascination with glass, light, and water, and his combination of these elements into the aquarium image. Proust's use of light and water imagery is very similar to that of Goethe, whom he admired and mentioned from time to time in the novel, as in the Faffenheim-Munsterburg-Weinigen passage.⁶ The image of the waterfall in Faust will serve as one example of Goethe's use of light and water:

Let us turn our backs upon the sun, upon infinite force and infinite existence. Fritter for our eyes the waterfall over against it, the torrent of human affairs, broken into a myriad rills. Upon the mists that rise from it, the sunlight paints a rainbow, always vanishing, always restored.¹

The prismatic refraction here, the action of water upon light, reminds one of

the prism image in the Balbec bedroom.

Proust's fascination with the aquarium goes beyond Goethe's use of water and light, however; as David Mendelson documents it, the aquarium was used extensively as an instrument of scientific observation in the second half of the nineteenth century. Mendelson points out that the aquarium enjoyed a great vogue in Paris in the decades just preceding the creation of Proust's novel.⁸ Proust doubtless found the optical illusion of the aquarium interesting, and as with so many other things that appealed to the curiosity of his encyclopedic mind, the aquarium provided a recurring theme for A la recherche du temps perdu.

NOTES

¹ Marcel Proust, A la recherche du temps perdu, ed. Pierre Clarac and André Ferré (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard, 1954). I, 705. (Hereafter referred to in the text by volume and page number.)

² Gérard Genette, Figures III (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1972), p. 54.

³ Quoted by Douglas Alden, Marcel Proust and His French Critics (Los Angeles: Lymanhouse, 1940), p. 78.

⁴ Genette, p. 51.

⁵ Howard Moss, The Magic Lantern of Marcel Proust (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), p. 44.

⁶ For a discussion of Goethe's influence on Proust, see Annie Barnes' "Proust et Goethe," Oxford German Studies, 8 (1973), pp. 128-48.

⁷ Translated and quoted by George Santayana, Three Philosophical Poets: Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1910), p. 182.

⁸ David Mendelson, Le Verre et les objets de verre dans l'univers imaginaire de Marcel Proust (Paris: José Corti, 1968), p. 38.

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Calling his 1913 novel entitled Les Copains a "Conseiller de la Joie et Bréviaire de la Sagesse Facétieuse,"¹ Jules Romains presents not only a highly entertaining work in the tradition of the fabliau and of Rabelais, but he also looks in a humorous manner at his own precepts of unanimité. It is, after all, through the characters' canulars on the inhabitants of two sleepy villages of the Auvergne region that this awesome oneness of soul evolves. And that his protagonists practice the same type of preposterous mystification invented at the Ecole Normale Supérieure is quite understandable when we recall that Romains was himself an illustrious alumnus of that institution.

When the seven musketeers agree that "effectivement Issoire et Ambert avaient un drôle d'air" on the map of France (p. 26) and that something ought to be done to straighten things out, they first decide to write libelous poems where Issoire rhymes with... "passoire" and Ambert with... "camambert." This intellectual exercise, however, is obviously not sufficient punishment for these two chefs-lieux d'arrondissement, and the heroes decide to teach them a real lesson. Not having a Petit Larousse readily available, they extrapolate oracular pronouncements from the Bottin in which the gods, as is their wont, "s'exprimaient en termes bien voilés": "Riboulté, Joseph. Uniformes militaires. Vêtements ecclésiastiques. Accessoires pour cérémonie" (p. 44). Since Bottinmancy reveals no easily understandable messages, they must of course consult an extra-lucid somnambulist who, after coming down from his rooftop, speaks with a couple of night spirits who dictate the following sibylline verse:

Si la baguette du tambour
Tourmente le sommeil du sourd,
Si l'amour dans toute sa gloire
Clôt la messe avant l'offertoire,
Si le simulacre éloquent
Ferme la bouche au trafiquant,
Issoire, Ambert auront beau faire,
Ils tomberont sur leur derrière (p. 62).

After a test run in Nevers in which a copain has organized a welcoming committee complete with Marseillaise and local notables—all this for Bénin whom Broudier introduced as a councillor to the Czar: "Etenim isti persuasun habent te apud Scytharum regem, quem Tsarem vocant, praestantissimo officio praefectum esse" (pp. 93-94)—the hoaxers, disguised as a minister "barbu comme Charlemagne," a director general, a military attaché, and a private secretary, move on to Ambert where they tour the army barracks, especially the toilets and the infirmary, thereby fulfilling the first Bottinical and somnambulistic presage ("uniformes militaires" and "baguette de tambour"). The actual prank consists in having parts of the garrison troops act in an anarchist insurrection directed against "la sous-préfecture... l'hôtel de ville... et la personne du maire, arrêté à son domicile" (p. 176) and crushed by the army "avec vigueur et rapidité" (p. 177). The result is complete pandemonium; yet it allows the early-rising citizens of Ambert to become a unanimous group:

Une masse s'ébranle... La foule de deux rues est aspirée avec un sifflement. Mais les deux rues à leur tour aspirent le reste de la ville. La multitude se ramasse, se canalise, afflue, conflue. Ambert existe, d'un jet (p. 191).

The next oracle, it will be remembered, was "vêtements ecclésiastiques" and "l'amour... clôt la messe." It is therefore in the guise of Father Lathuille, "l'orateur éminent et le docte théologien" (p. 193), that Bénin preaches the sermon that is at once verbose, learned and obtuse and whose subject is a very literal exegesis of Christ's admonitions: "Love one another!" and "Grow and multiply!" This is why at the end of the service the entire congregation is in the throes of Eros:

Un vieux mâle enjambe la clôture du banc d'oeuvre, et la première des vierges mûres qui lui tombe sous la main, il l'empoigne. Un adolescent colle ses lèvres sur la nuque d'une jeune fille. Un commandant en retraite, sur une croupe, abat ses mains noueuses. Des femmes s'inclinent vers leurs maris, qui leur encerclent la taille et leur palpent la poitrine... Vingt adolescents assaillent les demoiselles accompagnées. Les commandants pétrissent des hanches. L'auditoire se crispe en groupes convulsifs (p. 216).

The final canular takes place at Issoire, where the local authorities and the Chamber of Commerce want to dedicate an equestrian status of Vercingétorix:

Vercingétorix avait une pose simple, mais belle: la main gauche sur la cuisse, la main droite tenant les rênes de son cheval. Vercingétorix était nu... Son sexe, bien étalé sur l'échine du cheval, frappait à la fois par sa grosseur et par son naturel. Les dames, et plus d'une jeune fille, n'en finissaient pas de l'admirer (pp. 226-27).

When the deputy gives his speech, however, the statue comes to life and starts to insult him: "Vieille lope! Tête de chou! Fatigué! Tu vas me faire rendre ma nourriture! Fous le camp!" (pp. 228-29), as well as to throw cooked apples at the assembled dignitaries. These acts had naturally been predicted by the sentences, "accessoires pour cérémonies" and "le simulacre éloquent ferme la bouche au trafiquant."

At the same time that these two burgs are brought to life, or at least "régénérés" by the mischievous tricks of this jolly band, the pals too acquire their own collective cohesiveness and identity in exchange for "la diversité des destinées individuelles."² Whereas at the beginning of their joyous adventures "chacun avait l'impression d'être seul dans une région pleine d'un brouillard lumineux... et sentait monter du fond de lui-même comme une clameur vaste et creuse" (p. 66), at the end of the novel "les copains étaient envahis par un sentiment singulier, qui n'avait pas de nom, mais qui leur donnait des ordres, qui exigeait une satisfaction soudaine; on ne sait quoi qui ressemblait à un besoin d'unité absolue et de conscience absolue" (pp. 257-48). Once they have discovered this "besoin vital," they partake of the grand comedic feast and thus rejoin the long tradition of fun and carnival, along with pointing out that life itself is but a gigantic prank and ought not be taken seriously: "Ce que les hommes ont de sérieux et de sacré, vous en avez fait des objets de plaisir, vous y avez taillé les pièces d'un jeu" (p. 253).

While I do not wish to incur the ironic disapproval which L. D. Knights reserves for mere cataloguers of jokes,³ it is important to see and understand what makes Jules Romains' novel so funny. In addition to the canulars we have just looked at, there is his verbal humor, an uncanny virtuosity at handling language and words which announces writers like Boris Vian and especially Eugène Ionesco, as in this syllogism worthy of the Logician: "Je ne te dirai plus rien. Tu me fais suer avec tes questions. Et tu sais que la sueur matinale est mauvaise" (p. 115).

- Enjel! Enjel!

On entendit un petit grésillement.

- Vous écoutez? Enjel!... Accordez-moi la communication avec Pijl... vous savez...

Pijl et fils...

Enjel... est un génie féminin, chargé de mettre les voyants en rapport avec les puissances supérieures...

On entendit un nouveau grésillement.

- Pijl?... Tu dis? Je n'entends pas.

Enjel! Enjel!... Ne rompez pas, gracieux esprit, la communication (pp. 59-60).

Because the copains are the products of an excellent classical education, it is easy to understand that heavy, learned expressions are part of their everyday language, along with slang and vulgarities, and that zeugmas and syllepses are common rhetorical figures of speech for them. This is not to say that they are pedants in the précieuses ridicules fashion, but rather that they take pleasure in the beauty, richness and elasticity of language, what Jankélévitch calls "le pouvoir de jouer, de voler dans les airs, de jongler avec les contenus soit pour les nier, soit pour les recréer."⁵ Here, taken at random, are a few examples of their erudite speech: bigophone, épizootie, nouménale, brahmanes monorchites, foi punique, concussionnaire, arverne, vaticination, édicules, borborygmes. Of zeugmas and syllepses there is this sample representation: "Mon chapeau, mon mouchoir et mon âme brandis," "vous sapiez les fondements de la morale, de la société et du Puy-de-Dôme," "ce fut une file indienne et aveugle," "il semblait ému et corpulent," "il fit une pause; les copains un bon sourire."

Then there are the verbal accumulations, such as "une luxueuse galerie de miction, un vaste Pissing Room, un Urination-Palace" (p. 72), "je l'assimile à un vidangeur, à un adjudant corse, au maestro Puccini" (p. 78), "la multitude se ramasse, se canalise, afflue, conflue" (p. 191), or this list of finas herbes reminiscent of culinary manuals: "Un soupçon de thym, une branchette de serpolet, une feuille de menthe, et un rien de fenouil" (pp. 241-42). There is even a series of words starting with a normal substantive and proceeding to imaginary formations: "Quadragénaires, quinquagénaires et sexagénaires, cossus, pansus et cuissus" (p. 202).

Historically, caricature belongs to the fine arts, but this shorthand exaggeration also found its way into literature since it allows comic writers to both reduce and magnify their personages by focusing on one or two outstanding features. And Jules Romains is no exception: Omer is personified by his red nose; Lesueur by the abundant facial hair that gives him the look of a French poodle; Huchon has protuberant Barney-Google eyes; Lamendin's head is shaped like an apple with a knife (that is, his nose) stuck in the middle; Broudier sports a ferocious Gaulois moustache; Martin is so average ("un monsieur de vingt cinq à trente ans, taille moyenne, bouche moyenne, nez moyen, front moyen, pas de signe particulier" pp. 155-56) that this very nondescriptness becomes his salient characteristic. Bénin's physiological needs are overpowering enough that, like Vladimir of Godot fame, he is remembered either for his stercorous concerns and jokes or more likely for his total, complete dedication to the "modeste fonction organique":

Sa vessie devenait pesante et douloureuse.
Toute son âme descendait dans sa vessie.
Bénin aurait donné ses droits politiques
pour la joie d'uriner à son aise une minute;
pas même: vingt secondes. Mais uriner avec
force, éruptivement, comme un geyser (p. 72).

Even minor figures are endowed with caricatural traits, from the somnabulist with the "barbiche de chèvre" to the calculating proprietress of the inn outside Nevers:

Une femme obèse parut. Son abdomen la précédait d'un bon pas. Sa poitrine venait ensuite, comparable à deux sacs de farine battant la croupe d'un cheval; puis sa tête, renversée, bourrée d'une graisse blanche; et, sur sa tête, deux yeux ronds et saillants que la marche ballottait du même mouvement que la poitrine (pp. 107-08).

Authorial interventions are another comic device frequently used in the work. Romains is not afraid to comment on the physique, personality and actions of his characters or to proffer elaborate explanations, whether needed or not:

Derrière Lesueur, Martin gravissait l'escalier marche par marche. Il n'y a rien à dire sur son compte (p. 24);

Il ôta ses lunettes. On eut l'impression pénible que ses yeux allaient tomber sur la table avec un bruit de cailloux. Il ne se produisit rien de pareil (p. 28);

Ce spectacle réconfortait, à une époque où tout n'est que falsification, contrefaçon et malfaçon (p. 53);

La fanfare attaqua l'Hymne Russe qui se défendit bien (p. 98);

Le nez d'Omer exigeait un pagne, ou à tout le moins une feuille de vigne (p. 206).

Today laughter is tinged with despair, and humor has become serious and savage; the world is completely devoid of rational order as it stands on the brink of atomic destruction. Unlike writers like Beckett, Heller, Arrabal, for whom the grotesque, according to Dürrenmatt, is "only a way of expressing in a tangible manner, of making us perceive physically the paradoxical, the form of the unformed, the face of a world without face,"⁶ comic novelists of the 1900s and 1910s (for instance, Anatole France, André Gide, Valery Larbaud, Jules Romains, of course) satirized human foibles, undermined social and political restraints, overthrew moral conventions, presented new philosophical possibilities—using techniques and styles that were appropriate to the subjects discussed. The comic, with its origins in the celebration of life, mind and body, and laughter, which Rabelais defines as "le propre de l'homme," are essential elements of Les Copains since humor, this integral part of Bergson's élan vital, is a powerful means for uniting people, for creating "cette magie du pluriel qui transcende la plupart de nos actes."⁷ It is no wonder, then, that both groups—the villagers and the young companions—have so merged into an ethos based on the release from inhibition, on fun, merriment and the euphoria of liberating laughter. And "le rire n'est-il pas la conscience joyeuse de notre finitude"?⁸

NOTES

¹Jules Romains, "Dédicace" of Les Copains (Paris: Gallimard, 1922), p. 7. Hereafter, all quotations are to this edition and are given in parentheses within the text.

²Jules Romains, Les Hommes de bonne volonté (Paris: Flammarion, 1932-1936), II, 137.

³L. C. Knights, "Notes on Comedy," in Comedy: Meaning and Form, ed. Robert W. Corrigan (San Francisco: Chandler, 1965), p. 191.

⁴Maurice Charney, Comedy High and Low: An Introduction to the Experience of Comedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

⁵Vladimir Jankélévitch, L'Ironie (Paris: Flammarion, 1964), p. 17.

⁶Friedrich Dürrenmatt, "Problems of the Theatre," in Four Plays, trans. Gerhardt Nellhaus (New York: Grove Press, 1965), p. 31.

⁷André Figueras, Jules Romains (Paris: Seghers, 1952), p. 24.

⁸Marcel Gutwirth, "Réflexions sur le comique," Revue d'esthétique, 17 (1964), 27.

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My remarks will deal specifically with the role of described pictorial representations in Triptyque (1972), and Leçon de choses (1975), two recent novels by Claude Simon.

Simon's pervasive interest in the language or representations, in pictures of all sorts, postcards, stamps, oil paintings, etchings, photographs, even film, may stem from his early interest in painting—he was a student of André L'Hôte—but more likely, it reflects the central importance of description in his fiction. The initial fixity of figures and designs, their secrets half revealed, beckon the investigation of language. Also a picture offers a ready made selection of a portion of reality, photographed or painted, which may be used as a basis for the examination of such artistic concerns as framing and arranging, focusing, and naturally, the selective process itself. Simon, in one of his few theoretical statements has himself suggested a functional analogy between language and painting; he says of his own fiction "...certaines qualités communes regroupent ou si l'on préfère cristallisent dans un ensemble des éléments apparemment disparates...exactement comme certaines qualités communes (harmoniques ou complémentaires, rythme, arabesque) rassemblent dans un tableau, permettent d'y cohabiter en constituant un ensemble pictural cohérent, les objets ou les personnages qui y sont représentés..."¹

Together with the growing importance of static representations, Simon's recent novels manifest as their central concern the movement of writing toward form. That is to say, they are highly self-conscious works, in which plot is the very elaboration of a structure of language.² Descriptions, those of representations in particular, are at the very heart of invention and no longer the mere support, redundant anticipation or echo of the action. Starting with the premise that all representations are metaphors, and that the relationships between various ways of representing are as important as their objects, Simon proposes fictions in which language penetrates and transforms

all other modes of picturing. While representations generate the fictional text, the text itself becomes an overarching metaphor for all its enclosed representations.

The confrontations of language with fragmentation, be it that of the materials selected for its engagement, or its own tendency to digression, underpin the form of these narratives. The text's integrative efforts are also constantly threatened by two fundamental human experiences, apparently antagonistic and yet inseparable, love and death. For eros, as well as death, can be the origin of disjunction. In these conditions, none of the representations available to the fiction long remains neutral. The pressures of the context modulate them, they are reformed by a language suffused with love or death-related connotations. In this sense, representations—which offer the text points of departure or objects of study, enigmas to solve—though they may refuse to divulge the mystery stubbornly sought within them by language, ultimately become elements in the resolution, as do any other portions of the fiction since the text generates its own significance through its very search.

In the novel preceding Triptyque, Les Corps conducteurs (1971), Simon investigated the assimilative capacity of a text—as if the novel were an organism capable to make use of and transform into its own tissue the most disparate elements. He concentrated on the inner resources of language to create a nexus of relationships that brought together the various anecdotal sequences and fused them into an indivisible whole.

In Triptyque he examines particular aspects of picturing per se. There is now an emphasis on problems of perspective, on the visualization of a scene before it is represented, or its triangulation, on framing, or the selection of material. Again, as always, love or death are the inescapable centers of convergence of all human activity in the fiction, its cause or its origin—for Simon's novels are not solipsistic experiments in form, but meditations on our most essential concerns.

There are in Triptyque three fictional sequences taking place in three different localities: 1) in a village a woman entrusts her little girl to two older girls in order to meet with a lover; 2) in an industrial city a young couple gets married; the groom celebrates with friends before going to

his bride's bed; 3) in a resort city by the sea, a woman seeks the help of influential male friends; her son has been arrested on a drug traffic charge. Each sequence centers on an erotic encounter which is either followed by or is the consequence of a disastrous event: the little girl drowns; the groom, drunk, is attacked and beaten in the night after making love with a barmaid; the woman in the resort city must grant her favors to help her son. In the first and second series the lovemaking is detailed but not the drowning nor the violence; in the third are described the transactions and bribery necessary to save the young man, but not the lovemaking.

Three means of representation are considered in the novel: fixed images (posters, postcards), film and written fiction (a detective novel). Their subject may be any one of three sequences of incident, which, in their turn, may contain scenes from the other two in any of the three modes of representation. For instance, the novel opens in the village with the description of a postcard showing a view of the resort city; later, the wedding sequence and the "mother and son mystery story" appear as films, fiction or posters. Near the end of Triptyque a man from the "mystery story" completes a jigsaw puzzle showing in a picture of the village and its environs, but he suddenly brushes it aside in apparent disgust. As the puzzle falls apart, the movie that contained this scene ends. The spectators walk out into the night of the industrial city.

To some extent, the novel Triptyque follows the gradual elaboration of a puzzle, but one which would offer no completed image as a guide. As in this sort of assemblage, each element in the fiction generates new possibilities of linkage, relating to its shape or its principal colors or its portion of design. Furthermore, to pursue the analogy with a puzzle, or a mosaic, the components consist as much of individual segments of action as they do of varieties of representational modes—images, straight narrative, film. In other words, the components of the stories may be contiguous to one another as much in terms of what they show, as in terms of how they show. The transitions or links between each segment of the fiction result from several types of compositional analogy: similarities of words, comparable shapes, parallel movements, inclusion in the same perceptual field.

The first problems that the text seeks to solve are framing and

triangulation or the selection of a visual compass. From a postcard image, the description recedes—backward zoom—situates the card on a kitchen table, then backs out of the room to give a panoramic view of the countryside: "De la grange on peut voir le clocher. Du pied de la cascade on peut aussi voir le clocher mais pas la grange. Du haut de la cascade on peut voir à la fois le clocher et le toit de la grange."³ Thus, having moved from too narrow a focusing to a broader one, new problems of perspective arise. The "moving camera," though it expands the angle of vision, does not solve the problem of selection: something must always be left out.

Concurrent with such broad sweeps of perspective, the detailed development of the prose pursues its linkages of different portions of fiction, gradually forming a compact whole within each sequence and between them. Thus, it is not sufficient to situate various distant parts of a picture within a frame, they must also be linked by the description at their most basic, compositional level. As the description progresses, its main problem is to join the waterfall to the barn and the steeple. The elements used in the linkage are verticality and depth of field: "Construite sur le pré en pente, la grange aux murs faits de planches verticales, plus ou moins disjointes, s'élève sur un soubassement de terre. En amont le soubassement affleure tout juste le sol. ... Si l'on fixe le clocher, les tiges et les fleurs des ombelles se muent à leur tour en formes floues oscillant doucement, dessinant des triangles aigus dont les côtés imprécis se croisent et se disjoignent tour à tour." (pp. 9-10) As we read on, this imagery of verticality and triangulation acquires sexual overtones (phallus - vulva) when it serves as a means of access to the inner darkness of the barn where lovemaking is taking place. Three separate activities are in progress: 1) the creation of linkages between the three principal elements of the landscape; 2) the self-reinforcing multiplication of images of verticality (phallic) and congress (triangle - vulva); 3) a pulsation, or the back and forth movement of the "eye," inward closeups and backwards to panoramic views.

The waterfall will join the other two elements of the description by means of analogies involving the language itself and the concept of verticality. "...les planches qui constituent la paroi de la grange ont joué,

gonflant ou se contractant, de sorte que quelques déchirures s'ouvrent dans la couche des affiches superposées. L'une d'elles toutefois, plus importante, semble avoir été agrandie à dessein. Au pied de la cascade s'est creusé un bassin dont on ne voit pas le fond, en forme de cuvette, à peu près circulaire ... A mesure que la profondeur augmente l'eau verdi d'abord, puis devient d'un bleu de lessive qui s'épaissit par degrés, presque noir au centre du bassin. Il faut un moment pour que l'oeil colle à la fente que l'on a agrandie se fasse à la demi obscurité..." (pp. 10-11)⁴

The barn and the waterfall are now joined through homologous language (dessein, bassin, lessive), homologous actions (widening a gap or a trough) and the idea of darkness (darkening of water, darkness inside the barn). Water is a more propitious element for the introduction of sexual imagery. In any case, the gaze is already penetrating inside the barn. Soon movement, water and shape will join to create an unavoidable transition to the coitus: "... la truite file sur la droite d'un rapide coup de queue et se glisse dans l'ouverture du broc couché sur le flanc. Avant qu'elle disparaisse les garçons ont pu voir vriller-son ventre clair. Lorsque le bassin de l'homme recule on entrevoit pendant une fraction de seconde son membre luisant et cylindrique sortant à demi de l'épaisse toison noire entre les cuisses repliées, presque bleues..." (p. 15) Once this quick image of the coitus appears, all previous images suddenly acquire, in retrospect, a specifically erotic content. The very movement of the description, the framing and triangulation, are the pulsations of lovemaking.

Thus the prose gradually evolves into a determinate design wherein all components, though superficially distinct, are metaphorically equivalent. Shifts from one sequence to the other, from one locale to another, from one mode of representation to another, minimize the importance of the incident and draw the reader's attention to the self-referentiality of the writing.

It is again this representational emphasis that we want to illustrate in Leçon de choses, our second examined work. The inner articulations of description, the linkages between diverse series of incidental matter, function in the same manner here as they did before. Transfers are effected by means of

homologous elements (sound, shape, gesture) and also include other types of representation assimilated by the text. Again, the two central themes in the narration are the dyad of death and eroticism (destruction/construction) and the concept of composition itself, integrated as before as an actively sought source of material. Among the inner articulations of the prose, I shall examine briefly the function of framing and its specific generative properties.

The consequences of framing are considered immediately in the opening section of the novel entitled "Générique." This is the formative kernel of the novel, whose various elements are subsequently developed in the central five parts and whose content is duplicated with slight amplifications in the last, seventh part, "Courts Circuits" ("Short Circuits"). "Générique" consists of the description of a room in a tumbledown house. It is developed in three parts of which the third is, though only for our purposes, the most significant. Here, the desire for total inclusion--an aspect of description's tendency to proliferation--transforms the origin and form of the description into the matter described: "La description (la composition) peut se continuer (ou être complétée) à peu près indéfiniment selon la minutie apportée à son exécution, l'entraînement des métaphores proposées, l'addition d'autres objets..."⁵ The emphasis on organizing principles is also based on the contrast between completion (or containment) and dispersion. The "frame" is defined both in terms of what it holds and of what it excludes. All the parentheses here--and in the rest of the paragraph--involve matters of artistic choice, composition and containment. In fact, the description is referred to as "tableau" and manifestly seeing becomes the equivalent of ordering, assigning compositional values to the material, so that description is, actually, invention. The desire for specificity leads to the fabulating activity itself and its origin. The containing power of the frame is used in its excluding capacity, as its contents are presented together with the selective decision that gave them body, by mentioning what has not been chosen.

The novel's second segment "Expansion" begins with the depiction of a fixed image, and Impressionist seascape, later identified as Monet's "effet du soir." In this representation to the second degree (a description of a picture of a scene) immediately and inseparably stressed are both the manner and the

object of the painting: "Les flots verdâtres, les rochers violets, l'écume, le ciel bas, sont figurés indifféremment au moyen de petits coups de pinceau en forme de virgules ou de minuscules croissants." (p. 15) From this quick initial sketch the description proceeds to its second form, a standing back (it begins with "De loin..."). After these two "vues d'ensemble," the third descriptive movement, in its effort toward exhaustive detail focuses so closely on the style of individual strokes as to isolate them from their context: "De tout près on peut distinguer la matière de chacune des touches dirigées de droite à gauche, d'abord empatée, puis s'élargissant, dérapant en même temps qu'elle se relève comme une queue." (p. 15) The notation no longer mentions color and is limited to the shape of the strokes. Such attention bypasses all representational significance in the picture and the text (the description) must retreat once more: "L'image de l'immobile tempête est collée sur un papier pelucheux qui l'entoure d'une marge gris-vert." (p. 15) From this distance the wall itself (subject of "Générique") appears, and a "generative" transition may be achieved to the next "picture," a window: "Ille est punaisée à côté de la fenêtre dont l'embrasure encadre un paysage champêtre..." (p. 15) Since the main concern has been for the text to find a proper "frame" or focus, aspects of this concern will create the hinge between the frames:

image _____ paysage

l'entoure d'une marge _____ l'embrasure encadre

Focusing, or framing, will remain one of the principal means of transfer between scenes in Leçon de choses and is to this novel what triangulation or point of view was to Triptyque. As in the latter and Les Corps conducteurs, phonetic and referential analogies of all sorts enter into play; a vocabulary of design, gesture, connotation is being created at the same time as a proper distance of description and a proper frame of organization for the entire narrative are sought. While the text gains momentum these words, gestures, frames elicit segments of each anecdotal sequence that are echoes of one another so that the entire fiction is soon suffused both with eroticism and death, as ironic self-reflection encloses the whole in a web of artifice, otherwise called art.

Here again, having situated the concept of invention at the source of his

fiction, Simon erects the spiraling structure of a self-elaborating text. In it, representations play an essential role as sources and generators of material and of structure. Thus, it is the very possibility of constructing fictional texts that these novels consider, fictional texts whose encompassing thrust seeks to contain our most tenacious obsessions. For Simon's novels are not abstract experiments in form, but meditations on the perennial antagonists, love and death.

NOTES

¹Claude Simon, "La Fiction mot à mot," in Nouveau Roman: hier, aujourd'hui
2. Pratiques (Paris, 10/18, 1972). p. 81.

²The title of the talk "La Fiction mot à mot," itself announces this task.

³Claude Simon, Triptyque (Paris, Ed. de Minuit, 1973), p. 9. All subsequent references are to this edition.

⁴Italics mine.

⁵Claude Simon, Leçon de choses (Paris, Ed. de Minuit, 1975), p. 10. All subsequent references are to this edition.

"LA MÉLANCOLIQUE VILLÉGIATURE DE MME DE BREYVES"

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Proust dedicated his first collection of short stories and poetry, Les Plaisirs et les jours,¹ to his young English friend Willie Heath, who had died of typhus three years earlier in Paris. At the beginning of his lengthy dedication, Proust suggests that what he is offering his absent friend is above all a picture-book: "Si je vous donne ce livre-ci, c'est d'abord parce que c'est un livre d'images."² He immediately explains that the "images" to which he refers are the illustrations done for the volume by the fashionable salon hostess and amateur painter Madeleine Lemaire, about whom Proust repeats the compliment of Dumas fils, "'que c'est elle qui a créé le plus de roses après Dieu'" (p. 5).

However, "un livre d'images" describes Les Plaisirs et les jours in a much less literal sense than the one to which Proust so coyly limited himself, for the collection presents the reader with a succession of striking images conjured up, not by the illustrator's brush, but by the author's pen. Willie Heath is remembered as he used to wait for Proust in the Bois de Boulogne, leaning pensively against a tree and resembling for all the world a young nobleman from a Van Dyck painting, or a John the Baptist by da Vinci. The hero of the first story, Baldassare Silvande, reconciles himself to the approach of death by imagining in detail its sweet and melancholy serenity. The verse sections of the collection are grouped under the heading "Portraits de peintres et de musiciens," and in what is perhaps the best known short story from the work, "La Confession d'une jeune fille," it is a series of facial images—her own and her lover's in the mirror; her mother's, horrified, as she gazes upon the lovers through a window—that precipitates the heroine into disaster. Imagination is thus one of the principal themes of Les Plaisirs et les jours;³ more than just a picture-book, the work is in large part an investigation of the very process of representation, as it functions to create mental images as well as (literary) works of art. Nowhere in the

collection does this double inquiry into representation become so much the "stuff" of fiction than in the nouvelle "La Mélancolique villégiature de Mme de Breyves," which Maurice Bardèche has described as "un conte qui a pour sujet l'insidieux travail de l'imagination,"⁴ and which offers a fascinating investigation of the manner in which representation distances itself from reality and of the means by which literary art might restore their resemblance.

The plot of the story is a simple one: Françoise de Breyves, a young and attractive widow much sought after by society, refuses to allow an unattractive and reputedly unintelligent young nobleman to be presented to her during one of the final soirées of the Paris season. While she is mildly flattered by his attention, she is shocked by the straightforward invitation he extends to her at the end of the evening to visit him at his home. Her indifference becomes a sudden desperate passion, however, as the end of the season and M. de Laléande's departure for Biarritz frustrate her ingenious attempts to see him again. Recognizing that she has fallen hopelessly in love with a man she does not even know, Françoise retires to her country estate and thence to Trouville, to nourish her melancholy and groundless love on music and a photograph of Biarritz, in the end refusing to allow the concerned narrator to fetch Laléande from Biarritz and thus prevent her from pining endlessly away. One is left to conclude that Mme de Breyves would just as soon pine away, for the nouvelle ends on the précieuse note of melancholy promised by the title and summed up in a memory of opportunity lost:

Si, se promenant sur la plage ou dans les bois elle laisse un plaisir de contemplation ou de rêverie, moins que cela une bonne odeur, un chant que la brise apporte et voile, doucement la gagner, lui faire pendant un instant oublier son mal, elle sent subitement dans un grand coup au cœur une blessure douloureuse et, plus haut que les vagues ou que les feuilles, dans l'incertitude de l'horizon sylvestre ou marin, elle aperçoit l'indécise image de son invisible et présent vainqueur qui, les yeux brillant à travers les nanges comme le jour où il s'offrit à elle, s'enfuit avec le carquois dont il vient encore de lui décocher une flèche. (p. 79)

The poignant lesson of Mme de Breyves' experience is that representation and reality need have very little to do with each other. In "Réflexions métaphysiques sur le concept de la représentation,"⁵ Pierre Trotignan defines representation as the activity that unites entity A to "some other reality X," stressing that A and X need entertain no resemblance between each other for X to become the substitute for (représentant de) A. He goes on to establish the difference between this process of representation and that of signification: the latter process, which assigns to X the meaning "a," is not implied in, is indeed secondary to, the primary mental operation of substitution that defines representation, the ability to "faire des idées."

Similarly, in Michel Foucault's Les mots et les choses, we read that resemblance was an essential feature of Renaissance epistemology, its recognition being what permitted the world to be read as a language waiting only to be deciphered. But from the seventeenth century on, resemblance as a basis of knowledge is replaced by the recognition of difference: "L'activité de l'esprit. . . ne consistera donc plus à rapprocher les choses entre elles, . . . mais au contraire à discerner..."⁶ and language, now conceived of as only one of many possible forms of representation, loses the privileged position it had formerly enjoyed as representation of truth. Finally, Lévi-Strauss' studies of totemic representation lead him to redefine resemblance itself only in terms of difference—"la ressemblance n'existe pas en soi: elle n'est qu'un cas particulier de la différence, celui où la différence tend vers zéro"⁷—with signification again shown to be a mental process secondary to that of representation, or the perception of difference.⁸

Proust goes to great lengths in "La Mélancolique villégiature" to demonstrate just how little Mme de Breyves' representations of M. de Laléande (X) resemble him ("some other reality A"). According to the text, she has seen him "seulement deux ou trois fois et pendant quelques instants" (p. 77); from time to time she forgets what he looks like and has in fact completely forgotten that her first impression of him was largely unfavorable. Her subjective representations have all the more room to grow in that it is nearly impossible to determine in the nouvelle exactly what reality Françoise's representations do or do not resemble: Jacques de Laléande's characterization

is a masterpiece of indirect presentation. Françoise's friend Geneviève declares him to be "insignifiant et ennuyeux" (p. 67); Françoise agrees that he is "un peu laid du reste et vulgaire, malgré d'assez beaux yeux" (p. 67). The narrator allows Jacques himself to state his address as 5 rue Royale, but restricts himself to merely surmising that Jacques "devait en effet la trouver Françoise bien jolie" (p. 67). It is Geneviève who supplies the information that Laléande is a 'cellist, although a rather poor one, and M. de Grumello, a mutual friend, informs the ladies of the quarry's extended stay in Biarritz. Thus, there is a hole in the love story where Jacques de Laléande should be; the essential question "who is he?" which should have constituted him as a "reality" in the text, goes begging: "Lui, savait-elle ce que c'était? sinon qu'il en émanait pour elle de tels frissons de désolation ou de béatitude que tout le reste de sa vie et des choses ne comptait plus" (p. 76).

In the second place, the only moment of direct contact between Françoise and Jacques is shrouded in ambiguity.⁹ The boldness of his invitation—"Il passa près d'elle, remua légèrement le coude de Françoise avec le sien, et, les yeux brillants, dit, au moment où il était contre elle, ayant toujours l'air de chercher sa canne: 'Venez chez moi, 5, rue Royale'"—so shocks Françoise that, the narrator adds, "elle ne sut jamais très exactement dans la suite si ce n'avait pas été une hallucination" (p. 68). As Françoise thus questions the reality of Jacques' initiative, her story begins to partake of the fantastic as Todorov described it, an indistinguishable mixture of the real and the imagined, dependent for its sustenance upon the persistence of ambiguity.¹⁰ Although the moment of contact seems "real" enough in the story—it forms part of the plot, a link in the chain of its successive events—Françoise's doubts serve to induce her into the compensatory world of fantasy.

It is fantasy, a fictional "as if" believed in uncritically, that governs the course of Françoise's love affair. Scheming with Geneviève to arrange a private concert of 'cello music, she behaves as if the affair as she imagines it will evolve were already a given in reality:

C'est que je te dirai, j'ai un petit intérêt, même assez grand, pour des choses que ni me concernent pas et qu'on

ne me permettra sans doute pas de te dire avant un mois (d'ici là elle aurait convenu avec lui Jacques d'un mensonge pour n'être pas découverte, et cette pensée d'un secret où seuls ils seraient tous les deux lui était douce), à faire sa connaissance et à me trouver avec lui. (pp. 69-70)

As Françoise advances farther into fantasy, part of her retains a sufficient hold on reality to allow her to realize how much of her love and misery she has herself invented—"elle maudissait son imagination aussi; elle avait si tendrement nourri son amour que Françoise se demandait parfois si seule aussi son imagination ne l'avait pas enfanté" (p. 74) —but she has completely lost her grasp by the final chapter:

Souvent elle imagine qu'il va venir à Trouville, s'approcher d'elle, lui dire qu'il l'aime. Elle le voit, ses yeux brillent. Il lui parle avec cette voix blanche du rêve qui nous défend de croire tout en même temps qu'il nous force à écouter. C'est lui. Il lui dit ces paroles qui nous font délirer, malgré que nous ne les entendions jamais qu'en songe, quand nous y voyons briller, si attendrissant, le divin sourire confiant des destinées qui s'unissent. (p. 78)

Her refusal to allow the narrator to bring Laléande to her at Trouville certifies Françoise, finally, as a victim of her own representations. In Freudian terms, one might say that her pleasure principle has triumphed over her reality principle, for the former, Freud says, resorts to fantasy to satisfy its repressed erotic longings, while the latter seeks accommodation with reality.¹¹ Françoise's new reality is the fantasy world of the neurotic, as Freud defines neurosis in terms of disorder in the representative function creating a "neurotic standard of currency" based on purely affective perceptions more often than not in conflict with reality.¹² In "La Mélancolique villégiature de Mme de Breyves," the "neurotic standard of currency"—the highly affective process of signification that dovetails François's equally affective process of representation—is easily identifiable and distinctly

Proustian. The silence of Françoise's devoted servants, chagrined and respectful of her sorrow, speaks to her of M. de Laléande. An invention worthy of Swann is her appropriation of a line from the Maître chanteurs de Nurembourg, heard at the very soirée where she first saw Jacques, as "le véritable leitmotif de M. de Laléande," (p. 74), a sign of him in his absence. She would in fact, the narrator assures us, carry this particular bit of currency even further: "Si elle savait la mauvaise musique qu'il aime et qu'il joue, les romances méprisées prendraient sans doute sur son piano et bientôt dans son coeur la place des symphonies de Beethoven et des drames de Wagner" (p. 74). To an unidentified and barely distinguishable figure in a photograph of Biarritz, she attributes the features of M. de Laléande; her previous loathing of Biarritz itself is transformed into an avidity to hear or talk about the town. Significance thus installs itself in what was once the merely contingent, and metonymy (which Gérard Genette has demonstrated to be an essential element of representation by metaphor in the Recherche du temps perdu¹³), forms the common denominator of Mme de Breyves' neurotic currency. In fact, the device of metonymy feeds and sustains her neurosis in such a way as to make possible the ultimate reevaluation of standard into neurotic currency and guarantee the persistence of her fantasies in an unrelieved alternation of pleasure and pain. As the final sentence of the nouvelle makes clear, Françoise accomplishes the supreme feat of representation and turns absence into presence—"dans l'incertitude de l'horizon sylvestre ou marin, elle aperçoit l'indécise image de son invisible et présent vainqueur" (p. 79)—thus eliminating any need for the narrator to act as pander, and precluding a definitive eruption of reality into her imagined world. In other words, Mme de Breyves' fantastic representations remain sufficiently incomplete to continuously fuel the desire that sets the fantasy in motion,¹⁴ while they offer at the same time an affective completeness sufficiently pleasurable to make them preferable to the reality for which they substitute.

In "Creative Writers and Day Dreaming," Freud suggests that creative fictions are essentially aesthetic transpositions of their authors' day-dreams, or fantasies.¹⁵ In "La Mélancolique villégiature," there is room to

reverse the equation and read Mme de Breyves' fantasies as fictions, for her representations of her love affairs are not created spontaneously so much as they are derived from an established model of literary fiction, the romantic novel. When her plans to meet Jacques by organizing an evening of 'cello music fail, Françoise recognizes her elaborate eat-and-mouse plot for that of a novel: "Jusque-là tout occupée à imaginer des romans pour le voir et le connaître, certaine de les réaliser dès qu'elle le voudrait, elle avait vécu ce désir et de cet espoir sans peut-être s'en rendre bien compte" (p. 71). Novels appear again several pages later, this time to provide a structural description of her fantasy: "Elle maudissait sa finesse aussi, qui avait si habilement, si bien et si mal arrangé tant de romans pour le revoir que leur décevante impossibilité l'avait peut-être attachée davantage encore à leur héros" (pp. 74-75). Finally, her recurrent fantasy of Laléande's arrival in Trouville and his declaration of love may well be couched by the narrator in terms of the dream—"Il lui parle avec cette voix blanche du rêvé..."; "il lui dit ces paroles qui nous font délirer, malgré que nous ne les entendions jamais qu'en songe" (p. 78)—but this fantasy is nothing less than the standard happy ending of the stereotypic romantic novel, ending as it does with the obligatory catch-phrase celebrating "des destinées qui s'unissent" (p. 78). The word bovarysme springs to mind as a description of Mme de Breyves' neurosis, since both women, Françoise and Emma, depend upon literary representations to give shape to their fantasies of impossible love.

Yet Françoise's bovarysme is immediately countered in the nouvelle by an explicit negative valorization given to her literary models. The romantic novels which encourage Françoise to envision a happy issue to her love are actually misrepresentations of her reality; they are lies: "Elle se sentit déchirée, dans une horrible souffrance de tout cet elle-même déraciné tout d'un coup, et à travers les mensonges subitement éclaircis de son espoir, dans la profondeur de son chagrin, elle vit la réalité de son amour" (p. 71). Thus, the levels of representation that constitute the nouvelle—Françoise's neurotic representations and the nouvelle as literary representation of her experience—begin to pull against each other. Françoise's fantasies of boy-meets-girl and life happy ever after, based on the model of reality provided

by romantic novels, are given the lie by the text in which Françoise appears as a character, for that text, the nouvelle, represents as "real" the exact opposite of the romantic novels and of Françoise's imaginings: no boy-meets-girl, no love affair, no happy ending, nothing, in short, but fantasy. While "reality" for Françoise is synonymous with her fantasies, the falseness of these fantasies makes up the "truth" of the nouvelle; the literary models that give her fantasies their coherence are discredited.

But how can the nouvelle, itself a literary representation, castigate novels as lies without leaving open to suspicion its own claim to truth? Why, in other words, should the nouvelle be considered a more reliable representation of reality than Françoise's romantic novels? A tentative answer to this problem of narrative authority might have been the purpose of the shift in narrative point of view that occurs in the final chapter. Having adopted for the first four chapters the pose of omniscient narrator, at the beginning of the fifth and last chapter, the narrator suddenly introduces himself into the story: "C'est à Trouville que je viens de retrouver Mme de Breyves, que j'avais connue plus heureuse" (p. 76). This shift from omniscient to first person narration might be read as an attempt to guarantee the "reality" of the nouvelle by establishing the narrator as an authority on Mme de Breyves and eyewitness to her predicament. Not only has he known her before her crisis ("que j'avais connue plus heureuse"), so that he is presumably in an excellent position to judge the extent of her deterioration, but the information that forms the content of his story is also fresh ("je viens de retrouver Mme de Breyves") and therefore, one supposes, more accurate than older information that would have had to be reconstructed from memory.

But I am not sure that such a device—if it was so intended—succeeds in establishing the narrator as trustworthy. The original omniscient point of view and the more limited narration in the first person that succeeds it are mutually contradictory, since the restricted sphere of knowledge reasonably accessible to the je discredits the wider range of knowledge that that same, unidentified je supposedly controlled in the bulk of the narrative. Further, recalling Freud's identification of fiction with authorial fantasy, we suspect that if the narrator presumes to understand Mme de Breyves well enough

to exceed the limits of his certain knowledge in describing her inner thoughts and emotions, he does so because he is himself subject to the same neurosis as she. He is given to the same insidious play of the imagination, or at least he has read the same novels, for his empathetic use of the first person plural reveals his familiarity with the experience of fantasy and romantic jargon:

Il lui parle avec cette voix blanche du rêve qui nous défend de croire tout en même temps qu'il nous force à écouter. . . . Il lui dit ces paroles qui nous font délirer, malgré que nous ne les entendions jamais qu'en songe, quand nous y voyons briller, si attendrissant, le divin sourire confiant des destinées qui s'unissent.

(p. 78) [Emphasis mine]

Thus the narrator alone cannot establish the "truth" of his nouvelle; his word is not sufficient to guarantee his literary representation as real. Perhaps his offer in the story to bring Laléande to Trouville should be read as a compensatory attempt to bring together representation and reality, for an encounter with Jacques could either reconcile Françoise's representations with reality by convincing her of Jacques' mediocrity and ending her passion, or the happy ending of "des destinées qui s'unissent" could reconcile her story with the romantic fictions that have given rise to her representations, thus eliminating the conflict between them and the nouvelle. But both of these possibilities are blocked by Françoise's rejection of the narrator's offer, and we are again confronted with the nouvelle's unsubstantiated claim to represent the truth.

I would suggest that the nouvelle validates its claim by the particularities of its own structure as representation. What the nouvelle claims to be real is "l'insidieux travail de l'imagination," the possibility of psychic degeneration through the work of the imagination such as occurs in the experience of Françoise de Breyves. It demonstrates this truth through a process of mimetic representation, more common to poetry than to prose narrative, that seeks to minimize the distance between the experience of Françoise and the

literary form that expresses it. The mirror effect is a double one, for the image of the nouvelle is imbedded in the text. In her sorrow, Françoise "aurait voulu avoir à soi des bêtes énergiques qui auraient languie de son mal" (p. 73). Through mimetic representation, the nouvelle is in fact just such a beast. It passes from energy to languor and in the process stands on their heads the techniques of the novels that have misled Françoise: denying to the heroine the joy of successful intrigue and the satisfaction of a happy ending (or even the rueful wisdom she might have gained from a sad ending), the nouvelle refuses suspenseful build-up of the action, an explosive climax, and even a conclusive ending, to offer instead passage from feverish activity to unrelieved suspension in time, as even a cursory examination of its verb tenses should make clear.

The rapid pace of the aorist ticks off in the first half of the story a series of actions undertaken and accomplished: "Françoise de Breyves hésita longtemps, ce soir-là" (p. 66); "elle ne résista pas plus longtemps à sa prière" (p. 66); "la soirée de la princesse fut très ennuyeuse" (p. 67); "il ne revint pas" (p. 67); "Il faut nous en aller, dit bientôt Geneviève" (p. 67); "elles se levèrent" (p. 68); "elle le revit à la dernière soirée qui fut donnée cette année-là" (p. 68); "Françoise ne manqua plus une fois l'Opéra" (p. 69); "Françoise se précipita toute blanche vers sa porte pour la fermer à clef" (p. 71); "Françoise se retira davantage chaque jour de toutes les joies" (p. 71).¹⁶ Additionally, there is in these pages a concerted effort by the narrator to make of time what Frank Kermode has called kairos, significant time, time to which meaning has been attributed, in short, the time of the novel.¹⁷ The time of the nouvelle begins with "ce soir-là" and continues to be significant through the last social gatherings of "cette année-là." There is a sort of destiny at work, for the alternatives to Françoise's going to the princesse's soirée are carefully spelled out before she is prevailed upon by Geneviève to attend. Instances of dramatic irony further designate that particular evening and that particular decision as momentous. Trying to persuade Françoise in favor of the soirée, Geneviève suggests innocently, "On dirait que cela peut avoir de graves conséquences pour toi d'aller chez Elisabeth" (p. 66). Later, at the soirée, the two discuss Laléande in terms

that will also prove laden with prophetic irony:

"Tu as raison," dit Geneviève. "Et puis tu le rencontreras souvent, cela pourrait te gêner si tu le connaissais."

Elle ajouta en plaisantant:

"Maintenant si tu désires être intime avec lui, tu perds une bien belle occasion."

"Oui, une bien belle occasion," dit Françoise—et elle pensait déjà à autre chose." (p. 67)

After this significant decision, then, on this significant evening, after these portentous conversations, the climax of the nouvelle occurs at its exact midpoint (in the Pléiade edition, at the bottom of page seven out of fourteen), and postulates, not the convergence and resolution of the events that have led up to it, but rather, the impossibility of further action. The onset of the climax is marked by the verb tense that Genette has identified as Proust's "false reiterative," that is, an imperfect used as an aorist, that blurs the distinction between single and repeated past action;¹⁸ here, the false reiterative signals the passage from kairos to the neurotic time of endless repetition. Françoise has just forwarded to M. de Grumello a discrete inquiry about Laléande; "une heure après, un domestique lui portait cette lettre" (p. 72). The statement of climax that follows the letter's news—Laléande plans to stay in Biarritz until January—is a statement of paralysis: "il n'y avait plus rien à faire" (p. 72). The verbs in the rest of the chapter are chiefly in the imperfect, the true imperfect this time of repeated past action that tolls Françoise de Breyves' degeneration into obsession: "elle l'écoutait," "elle voulait garder," "il lui valait mieux," "elle se disait," (p. 73); "elle le revoyait," "elle éprouvait," "elle se maudissait," "elle maudissait," "elle maudissait," "elle maudissait" (p. 74). Finally, in the fifth chapter, the tense shifts to the present, an eternal present of anguish and fantasy that conceives of the future only as a question: "Comment Mme de Breyves supportera-t-elle ce retour à Paris où lui ne reviendra qu'en janvier? Que fera-t-elle d'ici là? Que fera-t-elle, que fera-t-il après?" (p. 78). The nouvelle ends but does not resolve itself; for Françoise de Breyves, villégiature means, more than a summer sojourn away from the capital, an

indefinite stay in neurosis, in fantasy, in the pleasure-pain world of her representations.

The epigraph to "La Mélancolique villégiature de Mme de Breyves" is Phédre's lament on the nature of love: "Ariane, ma soeur, de quel amour blessée, / Vous mourûtes aux bords où vous fûtes laissée!" (p. 66). By suggesting that the nature of love is in fact imaginary, the nouvelle presents itself as an early rehearsal for the love stories of Swann and Odette, Marcel and Albertine, based as they are also on the "insidieux travail" of the lovers' imaginations. By calling into question the validity of literary representations and by straining against the limits of prose fiction, the nouvelle is likewise a preparation for the monumental experiment in narrative that is the Recherche du temps perdu. In the masterwork, the distance between representation and reality will come to define the torment and the hopelessness of love; a recurrent mistrust of literary fictions themselves will very nearly prevent the narrator-hero from composing his novel at all. The presence of such philosophical and artistic concerns in Les Plaisirs et les jours further belies Proust's claim to have produced a mere picture-book; as we have seen, he has strewn some very thorny problems in among Mme Lemaire's roses.

NOTES

¹Published by Calmann-Lévy in 1896.

²Marcel Proust, Jean Santeuil précédé par Les Plaisirs et les jours, eds. P. Clarac and Y. Sandre (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1971), p. 5. All subsequent references to Les Plaisirs et les jours will be to this edition of the work.

³In "La Composition des Plaisirs et les jours," Bernard Gicquel lists the work's major themes as "vanité mondaine, sensualité, imagination, volonté, mort." Bulletin de la société des amis de Marcel Proust et de Combray 10 (1960), p. 253.

⁴Maurice Bardèche, Marcel Proust Romancier (Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1971), vol. 1, p. 54.

⁵Revue des sciences humaines 154 (1974), 195-201.

⁶Michel Foucault, Les Mots et les choses (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), p. 69.

⁷Claude Lévi-Strauss, Mythologiques et l'Homme nu (Paris: Plon, 1971), p. 32.

⁸Claude Lévi-Strauss, Le Totémisme aujourd'hui (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1962), p. 112.

⁹In her article, "Intertextuality and the Structure of Desire: Proust's 'Mélancolique villégiature de Mme de Breyves'" (Yale French Studies 57 1979, 136-63), Maria Paganini notes the special importance in Proust of the vestibule, where this encounter between Françoise and Laléande takes place. The vestibule, she says, "is the place where sexuality is on display, whether due to the use of a less refined language of gesture, or to equivocal actions. (here one dons or removes galoshes, overclothes), or to the formulation of compromising propositions" (p. 47).

¹⁰Tzvetan Todorov, The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre, trans. R. Howard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), pp. 24-40.

¹¹Freud, "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, trans. J. Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958), pp. 218-26.

¹²Freud, Totem and Taboo, trans. A.-A. Brill (New York: Vintage, 1946), p. 113.

¹³Gérard Genette, Figures III (Paris: Seuil, 1972), pp. 41-63.

¹⁴For a discussion of fantasy as wish-fulfillment, see Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams (New York: Avon Books, 1965), as well as his essay, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" in the Standard Edition, vol. 9, pp. 143-63.

¹⁵Freud, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," p. 144.

¹⁶Emphasis in this and subsequent passages on verb tenses is mine.

¹⁷Frank Kermode, The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 35-64.

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Because this paper I am going to read to you is the condensation of a part of another project in progress, I like first to explain the word Romantic as it was understood in Italy in the early nineteenth century, since Stendhal's literary credo was inspired and codified in his contact with Italian Romantics.

FOREWORD

In Milan, in 1816, Gian Domenico Romagnosi, one of the Italian writers of the Romantic manifestoes, which were being published in the footsteps of Mme. de Staël's campaign in favor of the Romantici and against the classici, gave a definition of Romanticism which is best suited to describe what Stendhal believed.

Romagnosi began his manifesto with pertinent questions and answers.

Question: Sei tu romantico?

Answer: Signor no.

Question: Sei tu classico?

Answer: Signor no.

Question: Che cosa dunque sei?

Answer: Sono illichiasmico, se vuoi che te lo dica in greco, cioè adattato alle età.

In choosing the word "illichiasmico," Romagnosi explained, he wanted not only to recognize literature according to the cultural ages of mankind, but also and above all, to profess principles free from artificial institutions, respecting only laws of good taste, reason, and morality.* Another important factor to bear in mind is that Romantics wanted to free Italian letters and their country from tyranny, they wanted to create a new order without forgetting their traditions. Cosmopolitanism in itself was no longer the eighteenth century type when man had no country, but a spiritual reunion with all the European nations, holding onto one's roots.

*See Domenico Romagnosi, Della poesia considerata rispetto alle diverse età delle nazioni in I manifesti romantici. Ed. Carlo Calcaterra. Turin: Unione Tipografica, 1951.

After the fall of Napoleon in 1814, Stendhal established a permanent residence in Milan, the city he loved best and from which he was to adopt an everlasting alter ego for himself—that of Milanese, no less. While in Milan for seven consecutive years, he made his apprenticeship as a man of letters to a great extent through his association with the intellectual "erocchio" headed by Ludovico Di Breme at La Scala Theatre famous loggia. It was in Milan that he became "un Romantique furieux," as he described himself, and that he began to write. But it would be in Florence, a city which had yet to capture his heart, that he was recognized as a pioneer of Romanticism and that his early works were criticized from 1823 to 1830 by the tenets of the Italian Romantic movement.

The group in Florence with which Stendhal became associated was led by Gian Pietro Vieusseux, an enlightened Genevan of Swiss Italian heritage, whose love for Italy made him wish for a united country and for the education of the Italian people. At the age of forty, Vieusseux settled in the city of Dante to spread the ideals of freedom and culture he had cultivated as a merchant in his extensive travels through Europe, and he founded in 1820 the Gabinetto scientifico e letterario,¹ a cultural center which has never ceased to be fully active to the present time. From that establishment he continued the work pursued in Milan by the Di Breme group until its members were dispersed by the Austrian police through persecutions and imprisonment. (Stendhal was among those ousted from Lombardy in 1821).

The members of the Vieusseux Gabinetto, like those in the Milanese circle before them, were extraordinary men, some very young, who conspired and battled for the intellectual and political rebirth of the country—the Risorgimento—that is the resurrection of Italy from the servitude of foreign rule to the dignity of a sovereign nation. In Florence they pursued this noble goal much in the same way as the Italian Romantics had done in Milan: by combating campanilismo, that is provincialism, by endeavoring to free Italian letters and journalism from outside oppression and domestic outmoded traditions, and by advocating the progress of Italian institutions through much needed change.

Viesseux' group was cosmopolitan, as had been Di Breme's, since personalities from all over the European continent, from the British Isles, from Russia, and even from America were welcomed at one time or another.² In the comfortable rooms of Palazzo Buondelmonti, these brilliant young Italians and illustrious foreign visitors engaged in animated conversations of encyclopedic scope, reading Dante, debating liberal trends in European literature and politics. Their gatherings profoundly contrasted with the lethargy and oppression in which not only the Grandduchy of Tuscany but all Italian states were held by the various Austrian Restoration regimes.³ The excitement that the cosmopolitan visitors brought to the slumbering city of Florence led the spies--i birri--to keep a close watch on all those who visited the Gabinetto. (Stendhal included, of course).⁴

The Antologia began to be published under Viesseux' editorship in 1821, and in spite of the climate of ferment and intrigue surrounding the Gabinetto, it managed to survive for twelve years. Contributors from Italy and abroad were invited; translations were included from such outstanding publications as the Edinburgh Review and the Revue encyclopédique.⁵ The journal's aspirations closely resembled those of Italian Romanticism, which in Milan had been crystallized by Mme de Stael's campaign for the popularization of literature and the unity of the Italians. Although the word "Romantic" was banned from the Antologia's prospectus, this liberal publication was obviously Romanticism in action. Not only did it become the most influential Italian journal in Restoration Europe, as Stendhal himself often reiterated, comparing it to the Edinburgh Review, but it was and remains a shiny landmark of the history of the Italian Risorgimento. It was in this atmosphere of ferment, liberalism, and intrigue that Stendhal's early works were first reviewed favorably in Italy.

The first article in which the readers of the Antologia were introduced to Stendhal appeared in the May issue of 1823 and was written by Giuseppe Montani, who later was to review Armance and Promenades dans Rome. Devoted to reviewing Camillo Ugoni's work on Italian literature in the second half of the eighteenth century, the article contains, in the section dealing with the arts, a lengthy reference to Stendhal's Histoire de la peinture en Italie.

Since Stendhal had based his work on Lanzi's Storia pittorica, he is seen

as an innovator in his approach to art history. While Lanzi had stated facts, Stendhal had improved upon his predecessor by giving a "modern" interpretation of art, because he had used his sentiments to guide him. Rather than condemning Stendhal's plagiarism, both Ugoni and Montani in his wake, were quite fascinated and amused by his research method, and spoke highly of a foreigner who could write about Italian art better than Italians who had dealt with the same topic before him. Ugoni and Montani were modernisti; they espoused literary works with a Romantic imprint, sustaining that modern criticism in the arts could be more effective if approached with passion and feelings. Besides, they were dedicated to the updating of Italian institutions and mores. A writer should be natural, they thought; he should spontaneously feel a need for change and improvement of the literary production of previous generations. All of which was exactly Stendhal's point of view.⁶

In the July 1823 issue appeared the first full length article on Stendhal, dealing again with the Histoire de la peinture en Italie. It was written by an anonymous reviewer, "D," and it is an adapted translation of an article previously published in the Edinburgh Review. The highlight of the piece is its focus on Chapter X, Book I of the work, dealing with the Romantic theory of perfectibility ushered in by Mme de Staël. In the interest of progress every generation must rely upon the works of preceding ones and improve upon them.

Considering the date, and the fact that up to then Stendhal had enjoyed little or no publicity, this is a remarkable critical essay from which well informed readers could recognize an interpreter of Romanticism in Stendhal. The Introduction to the Histoire, they learned, showed Italian painters as Romantics before Romanticism. Cimabue and Giotto greatly relied upon Byzantine forms, but improved upon them and kept pace with their times by taking inspiration from religious subjects, thus beginning an Italian tradition in painting. Masaccio personified excellence in transition. The first one to use the chiaroscuro, which was an adaptation of light and shade he had learned from Ghiberti, Donatello, and Brunelleschi, he was quite unique, a man of feelings, exemplified in his innovative technique and applied to his painted subjects. The most prominent painters of the high Renaissance period,

relying on their predecessors, embodied the grandeur of their times both as human beings and as artists. Leonardo exemplified the best in Italian temperament in his universal genius, Michelangelo in his energy, and titanic strength.

Stendhal was finally found to be an original author, a Frenchman altogether fascinating because of his experiences in love and war, who had an unusual flair for Italian art. Besides, here was a new French writer who was beginning to solve an old quarrel as he spoke about the ancients and the moderns in terms of equality, by pointing out that they were all Romantics in their own time.⁷

The next article was written by Antonio Benci on the Vie de Rossini and it appeared in the Antologia issue of July 1824. Traveling extensively in Europe at this time, and because he had been banned from Lombardy, Stendhal directed his steps towards Florence. It appears that now his reputation in the Vieusseux circle was growing and, having been cordially welcomed, he met some of the prominent members and apparently he himself asked Benci to review his new work.

Benci's critique encompasses many of the principal areas covered in Stendhal's text. The critic likes to underscore the author's comparisons between Italian and German music: the latter owes its distinction to the beauty and majesty of the orchestra sounds, whereas in Italy musical excellence is exemplified by the singers' passion. Surveying the author's pronouncements about the music of Cimarosa, Paisiello, Mayer and Paer in order to lead up to Rossini's music, Benci emphasizes many facts of the Maestro's life, on staging and on conflict of melody and harmony, and on Rossini's changes in their use through his career. The critic finds the Maestro's music delightful and pleasing, but seldom sublime. It is a popular music, destined to please the masses.

Because Benci was not a Romantic, rather adhering to the classical school of thought he failed to understand Stendhal's approach to Rossini's music in the light of the Romantic issue of modernity. Nor did the critic focus upon race, milieu, and the evolution of art according to time, as the author intended. Whatever its shortcomings, however, Benci's first article is a fine

laudatory tribute to Stendhal and the critic recognizes the Vie de Rossini as a Stendhalian work, full of digressions and anecdotes, not merely a biography of a living composer, but also a survey of the history of the theatre. Taking off from Stendhal's intimations, Benci also manages surreptitious remarks concerning Italy's oppressors, thus exemplifying the very liberal tone of the Antologia.⁸

In the same July 1824 issue, Benci wrote a second article, which was meant to be an exhaustive explanation on Stendhal's views on patriotisme d'antichambre or parochialism, but taking the lead from Racine et Shakespeare, the critic instead gets carried away and writes a long essay on Romanticism as he understands it. Evaluating such Romantic issues as the unities in the theatre, translations, Italian literature, language, and classical versification, the critic argues in favor of classicism by sustaining the validity of classical rules. Although he is never venomous in his stand, trying to see the other side of the argument, he fails to understand that for Stendhal literature is the expression of the times in which an author lives. Shakespeare and Dante had been Romantics in their days, because their works had embodied and represented the times in which they lived.⁹ Here is how Stendhal defines Romanticism:

Le Romanticisme est l'art de présenter aux peuples les œuvres littéraires qui, dans l'état actuel de leurs habitudes et de leurs croyances, sont susceptibles de leur donner le plus de plaisir possible.

Le classicisme, au contraire, leur présente la littérature qui donnait le plus grand plaisir possible à leurs arrière-grands-pères.

Sophocle et Euripide furent éminemment romantiques; ils donnèrent aux Grecs rassemblés au théâtre d'Athènes les tragédies qui, d'après les habitudes morales de ce peuple, sa religion, ses préjugés sur ce qui fait la dignité de l'homme, devaient lui procurer le plus de plaisir possible.

Contemporary imitation of these celebrated tragedians would bore today's Frenchmen, added Stendhal. That is what classicism is. And that is what Benci did not understand.¹⁰

In the November 1824 issue Benci published another lengthy article on Stendhal's De l'amour this time, requested by the author with a letter written in Italian. Since De l'amour is not only a book on love, but also an historical and sociological survey of Italian mores and culture, Benci takes up again one of the most persistent topics in Stendhal's discussion; patriotisme d'antichambre, that Caliban, that monster afflicting Italy and elaborates upon its destructive impact. But in the footsteps of Stendhal, the critic takes pleasure in evaluating in detail outstanding Italian virtues, among them the capacity for love, l'amour-passion—passionate love—found particularly among women, who unlike their French sisters lack vanity. Benci also examines at great length the author's essay on the education of women, but here again he fails to explain to his readers De l'amour's central point of view, which Stendhal defined as "crystallization."¹¹

"Ce que j'appelle cristallisation," he wrote, "c'est l'opération de l'esprit, qui tire de tout ce qui se présente la découverte que l'objet aimé a de nouvelles perfections."¹² For Stendhal crystallization is the manner in which the imagination works on reality: it is the operation of the subjective on the objective world. It is a relative vision, a very Romantic approach to life and to art. It is individual, ever changing, ever adapting to the present, as man is able to interpret it within the limits of time and space allowed to him. Crystallization does not simply apply to love, it relates to all human activities. In another definition it has been called realismo romantico—Romantic realism¹³—because it pertains to realism but cannot ignore the subjective, or Romantic interpretation of it.

Benci fails to mention the personal tone of this all important of Stendhal's works. Out of ignorance, or perhaps out of courtesy, he never mentions the author's great passion for Metilde Viscontini, nor does he allude to her important role as a giardiniera in the Carbonari's secret sect to liberate Italy. But the critic is full of praise for Stendhal, favoring especially his love and admiration for Italy, a detail which he finds particularly flattering at a time when the country had mostly detractors. Animated by a

sincere concern for the destinies of his country, the critic compares her present political shortcomings and afflictions to her virtues and glory in former eras, getting away with considerable criticism of present-day regimes, as he can pass the censor, unsuspecting that a book on love could be politically harmful to the Austrians.

Most importantly, like the critic, Italian readers could take Stendhal's psychological study of Italian mores as an impressive document through which Italy could be studied with the eyes of an enlightened foreigner.¹⁴

In a piece which appeared in the Antologia in August 1825 dedicated to a new edition of Alessandro Manzoni's theatre and other works, Giuseppe Montani again referred to Stendhal. Centering his discussion mostly on the dramatic unities, the critic finds that new literary trends lend perfection to the characters because they are closer to reality. Linking Stendhal's name with those of Mme de Staël, Alessandro Manzoni, and Hermes Visconti, Montani hails all of them as pioneers of Romanticism. Stendhal is so considered because of his Racine et Shakespeare.¹⁵

When Stendhal's first novel, Armance, was published in 1827, the author had been traveling in Italy and had stopped for sixty-eight days in Florence, spending much of his time in the Vieusseux Gabinetto, reading and conversing, and also meeting many other members and visitors. Among them were Lamartine, Leopardi, Gino Capponi, Vincenzo Salvagnoli, a young Florentine lawyer and poet who was to remain his dear friend for the rest of his life, and last but not least, Giuseppe Montani. Thereafter the critic reviewed Armance in the Antologia issues of January and February 1828 in two detailed and eulogistic installments.

Since the title of the novel is Armance ou quelques scènes d'un salon de Paris en 1827, Montani takes the lead and points out that, as lithography answers modern needs, so a literature that might be called lithographic is in order for modern times. Hence the critic concentrates on the scènes which have the distinction of sketching events as they are happening in France. Armance, he writes, is a novel of manners and as such it gives a prominent place to ladies and gentlemen of rank. Octave, the protagonist, is an incongruous character as a twenty-year-old misanthropist, an anachronism, a sort of anti-hero, as later critics designated some of Stendhal's characters. In the

review, as in the novel, the nature of Octave's affliction is never revealed, it remains "un segreto," no doubt to entice the readers' curiosity with an intrigue, or perhaps to spare the ladies among them from being offended.

The most interesting part of this review consists of the critic's explanation of the author's tenets on the novel as a genre. It should be like a mirror, realistic that is, but it should be Romantic as well, and therefore interpret the times in which it is written. A transplanted Romantic from Lombardy, Montani fully agrees with the point of view that literature is produced for and about a given generation. He finds Stendhal's form pleasing if bizarre, but his style contemporary and full of witticism. Finally, exhorting his readers to draw their own conclusions, the critic suggests that Armance is psychological, as well as being a realistic and Romantic novel.¹⁶

The last article on Stendhal in the Antologia appeared in the September 1830 issue. Stendhal himself wrote to Vieusseux asking that Montani write a review of Promenades dans Rome, which had been published in 1829. This article is the most complimentary and charming tribute paid to the author in Italy while he was still living. Taking a walk through Rome with Stendhal, Montani surveys the author's pronouncement on Roman art and nature. With Stendhal he goes back through historical eras to see architecture in Rome as the expression of the times in which it was produced. Finding the work a sure guide, and the best to date, for visitors from abroad to acquire a feeling of beauty, the critic also remarks that it is so well done, that it can teach the uninitiated onlooker to become aware of the grandeur of Rome through landmarks of Roman architecture. Echoing the author's statement, he points out that the Colosseum and the Pantheon are symbols of ancient ideal beauty. Montani looks for other Romantic elements he appreciates in the work reviewed. He underscores Stendhal's remarks on melancholy, a feeling that a visit through the Eternal City arouses in the sensitive visitor. Other reactions of the author are reported such as the quintessence of true beauty in the breathtaking sculpture of the angels in the Stuarts' tomb and to the art of Raphael and Correggio as artists representing expression. Since Stendhal had stated that intellect and feelings cannot coexist in the same person, Montani repeatedly points out that the author defies that rule by his own personality and work.

Montani elaborates upon Stendhal's customary comparison between ancient and modern art, leading to the author's views on ideal beauty, not as a mere imitation of nature, but rather as the Romantic interpretation of expression and feelings. By examples the critic shows that for Stendhal ideal beauty is in the artist's feelings expressed in the chiaroscuro. Stendhal's Romantic principles, he notes, can be illustrated through the interrelation of the arts and literature.

Flattered by Stendhal's predilection for Italians and by his comparison in favor of Italy with other countries, the critic stresses the point that for this author there is a great distinction between the man of the North and the man of the South. His anecdotes, writes Montani, are introduced to illustrate this difficult difference, not as a digression.

In Promenades, in sum, Stendhal is found to be a student of the visual arts, music, the theatre, and other institutions, in relation to time, race, and climate. The critic's candor and simple, conversational style as a journalist eminently qualified him to realize that this complex author was a foreigner who loved Italy and honestly studied every means to understand her, so that he could write about her truthfully.¹⁷

By the articles just surveyed, it appears that at the time they were written, if one wanted to be Romantic and modern, one should be well informed about what was happening in the present, as well as writing about it truthfully. Nevertheless, to speak and write about the truth was becoming more and more dangerous in Italy. As many of the Antologia articles were more daring and openly hostile to the Austrians, censorship became increasingly harsher, until on March 26, 1833, the journal was suppressed.

Stendhal was among the many losers of this sad event, the repercussion of which was deeply regretted all over Europe. Criticism on Stendhal came to a halt in Italy, at the very time when he was beginning to get recognized because of the publicity these reviews had afforded him. Although six full length articles and two important references were dedicated to him in the Antologia, the readers had failed to be introduced to the Vies de Haydn, Mozart et Métafaste, or to Rome, Naples et Florence. Besides, another important article had already been in the making for a review of Le Rouge et le noir, as it is

evident from many collected notes and letters and other fragments in French and Italian, written partly by Stendhal himself, and partly by his friend Count Vincenzo Salvagnoli. The two were to collaborate in this article manqué by basing it on the psychological study of vanity and on the somberness of modern-day France as a consequence of the suppression of freedom by the Congregation.¹⁸

Although Vieusseux struggled constantly to resume the publication of his beloved journal, or to replace it with a similar one, it was only three years after his death, and five years after the unification of Italy that Francesco Protonotari succeeded in beginning the publication of the Nuova Antologia in 1866.

However, the articles on Stendhal which appeared in the Antologia in the course of seven years are quite unique, as they first show the source of his originality. His critics in Florence emphasized the Romantic qualities of his artistic creation. They saw him as an innovator, an author who believed in progress brought about by relying and improving upon past endeavors. As a "modern" author following in the wake of Montesquieu and of Mme de Staël, Stendhal approached art, music, literature and all other institutions of a country in relation to time, milieu and climate.

Because of their deep involvement in the destinies of their country, these critics fully understood and were sincerely flattered by Stendhal's frequent comparisons of Italy in her past glory and her present subservience and aspiration to recapture that glory. By documented evidence it appears that those critics were at times coached by the author himself because he always asked for "toute la vérité," or "la vérité toute nue," wishing that the message he had for humanity be delivered as he intended.

His message had been crystallized to a large extent in Romantic Italy. Rejecting the old for the contemporary in his early cultural works, Stendhal became a pioneer of Romanticism in his country with the theories he exposed in Racine et Shakspeare. In it he advocated clearing out of the way old-fashioned, rule-ridden stereotypes of literary classicism and the modernization of the theatre. He then opted for fantasy to replace classical rules.

During his lifetime Stendhal remained obscure and nearly unrecognized by

the general public and by most experts in literature. The editions of his works were usually limited and very few copies of them sold. He gathered few crumbs of that glory he so coveted, because even when the critics noticed him, it was to expose his plagiarism or his seemingly unorthodox method of composition. These critical essays in the Florentine journal remain among the slender rewards he could count as a man of letters.

These reviews are important also because they laid a solid foundation for future Stendhal criticism, expressing and interpreting the spirit of the times in which he lived and the aesthetics he had formed in the country he so loved. Historical vicissitudes kept them hidden in the dusty pages of the suppressed Risorgimento journal, thus causing a long delay in the understanding of the man and his literary production—just as he had always predicted. Yet among his Italian critics and those other elite intellectuals in Milan and Florence, Stendhal found the happy few, he met with his kindred spirits. He would not have asked for a much greater reward.

NOTES

- ¹A. Frènes, "Jean-Pierre Vieusseux d'après la correspondance avec J.C.L. de Sismondi" in Rev. internationale (1888), 415.
- ²Paolo Prunas, L'Antologia de Gian Pietro Vieusseux: storia di una rivista italiana (Rome, Milan, 1906), p. 166ff.
- ³Adolfo Amodéo, L'Età del Risorgimento italiano (Naples, 1946), p. 256. See also Cesare Cantu, Il Conciliatore e i Carbonari (Milan, 187), pp. 196-201.
- ⁴Antonio Baldini, Il Sor Pietro, Cosimo, Cosimo Papareschi e Tuttaditutti (Florence, 1941), p. 6.
- ⁵Raffaele Ciampini, Gian Pietro Vieusseux. I suoi viaggi, i suoi giornali, i suoi amici (Rome, 1953), pp. 117-18. See also Prunas, op. cit., p. 51ff.
- ⁶Giuseppi Montani, "Della letteratura italiana nella seconda metà del secolo XVIII, opera di Camillo Ugoni" in Antologia, X (1823), 1-50.
- ⁷"D," "Storia della pittura in Italia del Sig. B.A.A." in Antologia, X (1823), 99-123.
- ⁸Antonio Benci, "Vie de Rossini par M. de Stendhal" in Antologia, XV (1824), 11-120.
- ⁹_____, "Intorno al patriottismo d'anticamera ed al romanticismo" in Antologia, XV (1824), 120-34. The phrase patriotisme d'antichambre was coined by Turgot in 1763. In that year Du Belloy's tragedy, Le Siège de Calais, enjoyed an immense success because the author had greatly flattered his fellow-citizens for lucrative purposes. The people having become dupes of Du Belloy's gross compliments, Turgot used the expression to describe their infatuation. See Stendhal, Rome, Naples et Florence. (Paris, 1927), Vol. I, pp. 229-30.
- ¹⁰Stendhal, Racine et Shakspeare (Paris, 1928), p. 43.

¹¹Antonio Benci, "De l'amour, par M. De Bayle sic . Del patriottismo d'anticamera in Italia. Dictionnaire des anonymes et pseudonymes, par M. Barbier. De l'education par Madame Campan" in Antologia, XVI (1824), 81-99.

¹²Stendhal, De l'amour (Paris, 1959), p. 113.

¹³Umberto Bosco, Realismo romantico (Palermo, 1959), 302 pages.

¹⁴Benci, loc. cit.

¹⁵Giuseppe Montani, "Tragedie e altre opere d'Alessandro Manzoni" in Antologia, XIX (1825), 67-91.

¹⁶_____, "Armance, ou quelques scènes d'un salon de Paris en 1827" in Antologia, XXIX (1828), 69-89, 96-127.

¹⁷_____, "Promenades dans Rome par M. de Stendhal sic in Antologia, XXXIX (1830), 86-104.

¹⁸Luigi Foscolo Benedetto, "Storia di un'autocritica stendhaliana" in Leonardo, IV (1933), 4-12.

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Maupassant notes in a passage from La Vie Errante that for a novelist vision is the most important sense, for "il devient facile de reconnaître, à la lecture de toute oeuvre travaillée et sincère, les qualités et les propriétés physiques du regard de l'auteur."¹ In the same section of La Vie Errante, Maupassant develops his idea of this link between the artwork and its creator:

L'Intelligence, aveugle et laborieuse Inconnue, ne peut rien savoir, rien comprendre, rien découvrir que par les sens. Ils sont ses uniques pourvoyeurs, les seuls intermédiaires entre l'universelle Nature et Elle. Elle ne travaille que sur les renseignements fournis par eux, et ils ne peuvent eux-mêmes les recueillir que suivant leurs qualités, leur sensibilité, leur force et leur finesse.

La valeur de la pensée dépend donc évidemment d'une façon directe de la valeur des organes, et son étendue est limitée par leur nombre.
(p. 23)

Since the human intelligence can gather information only through the senses, which vary from person to person, any work of the human mind will betray characteristics of the person who produced it. Because physical factors affect an artwork to such an extent, it becomes worthwhile to study the artist himself. Maupassant in fact wrote a study of both Flaubert and Zola, and in "La Vie d'un Paysagiste" illustrated this connection between an artist's temperament and his perception of nature. Maupassant devotes the first half of the article to the importance of careful observation, then he concludes with descriptions of Monte, Corot, and Courbet, three famous artists he has seen painting near Etretat, his home in Normandy.

Maupassant's most detailed characterization of an artist, however, is Olivier Bertin in Fort Comme La Mort, a novel about an aging artist and his mistress of many years, Any de Guilroy. By examining Bertin's strengths and weaknesses, it is possible to determine what qualities Maupassant finds essential in an artist. When the reader has met Bertin, an established, wealthy painter, Maupassant fills us in on the development of his career.

After completing his training, Bertin had gone unnoticed, but after winning critical acclaim for two paintings and a first prize for another, he grew rapidly in the public's esteem.

Maupassant comments on one of the paintings that helped to make Bertin's reputation: "une Jocaste, sujet hardi, classa Bertin parmi les audacieux, bien que son exécution sagement originale le fit goûter quand même par les académiques."² The important phrase here is "exécution originale." On one of the rare occasions when Maupassant discussed principles of art, he wrote, "Voir: tout est là, et voir juste. ... L'originalité d'un artiste s'indique d'abord dans les petites choses et non dans les grandes. ... Il faut trouver aux choses une signification qui n'a pas été découverte et tâcher de l'exprimer d'une façon personnelle."³ Maupassant's words to the aspiring poet who had sought his advice indicate the emphasis he places on observation. Careful observation leads to originality, or the ability to express something "à une façon personnelle," because it enables the artist to find something unique, the "signification qui n'a pas encore été découverte," in his subject. In Fort Comme La Mort, Maupassant does not just state that Bertin is original, but shows the painter observing his model with the care Maupassant recommends:

Tantôt il s'éloignait d'elle, fermait un oeil, se penchait pour bien découvrir tout l'ensemble de son modèle, tantôt il s'approchait tout près pour noter les moindres nuances de son visage, les plus fuyantes expressions, et saisir et rendre ce qu'il y a dans une figure de femme de plus que l'apparence visible, cette émanation d'idéale beauté, ce reflet de quelque chose qu'on ne sait pas, l'intime et redoutable grâce propre à chacune, qui fait que celle-là sera aimée éperdument par l'un et non par l'autre. (pp. 997-98)

Besides observing what he is going to interpret, an artist must have the perception, or sensitivity, to detect the uniqueness of the object. This perception is what enables Bertin to capture "ce qu'il y a dans une figure de femme de plus que l'apparence visible, cette émanation d'idéale beauté;" observation alone would have given him only the "apparence visible." A phrase in this description of Olivier at work which indicates the refinement of Olivier's powers of observation is "noter les moindres nuances." One day his mistress Any wears a new dress which he admires, and he comments, "Ah! on peut dire qu'aujourd'hui on a le sentiment des nuances." (p. 986) The ability to

detect nuances is one that Maupassant prizes, for he writes of the Venetian painter Tiepolo, "Personne comme lui n'a su répandre sur un mur la grâce des lignes humaines, la séduction des nuances qui grisent sensuellement le regard, et le charme des choses rêvées dans cette sorte d'ivresse étrange que l'art communique à l'esprit."⁴

Maupassant touches on Bertin's artistic sensitivity in his description of the way the painter approaches a model, but he shows it more fully when Bertin is listening to a musical performance at his club: "Il se sentait emporté dans une sorte d'ivresse nerveuse qui rendait son corps et son intelligence incroyablement vibrants. ... Les yeux fermés, les jambes croisées, les bras mouss, il écoutait les sons et voyait des choses que passaient devant ses yeux et dans son esprit." (p. 1048) An image which occurs later in this passage as well as in the passage on Tiepolo is that of "griserie," or intoxication. Maupassant speaks of Bertin's imagination "grisée par les mélodies," (p. 1048) and uses the image to describe one of his own experiences, too, in La Vie Errante. His boat is anchored offshore from San Remo, and the evening breeze coming from land brings with it the perfume of aromatic plants as well as the sound of the San Remo orchestra's concert in the public square. The effect is unearthly: "Je demeurais haletant, si grisé de sensations, que le trouble de cette ivresse fit délirer mes sens. Je ne savais plus vraiment si je respirais de la musique, ou si j'entendais des parfums, ou si je dormais dans les étoiles." (p. 18)⁵

This intoxication of the senses which Maupassant shares with his character often leads to an artist's seeing a new, more original manner of expressing life if he is able to analyze and express what he has felt. Maupassant records this phenomenon in Bertin:

Il était dans une de ces heures où l'esprit excité comprend tout avec plus de plaisir, où l'oeil voit mieux, semble plus impressionnable et plus clair, où l'on goûte une joie plus vive à regarder et à sentir, comme si une main toute-puissante venait de rafraîchir toutes les couleurs de la terre, de ranimer tous les mouvements des êtres, et de remonter en nous, ainsi qu'une montre qui s'arrête, l'activité des sensations. (pp. 1055-56)

When Bertin is in this state of heightened sensitivity, artistic creation is easy for him:

... le lendemain, après une nuit de nerfs, une de ces nuits qui mettent les artistes dans cet état d'activité cérébrale baptisée inspiration, il se décida à ... travailler jusqu'au soir.

Ce fut une journée excellente, une de ces journées de production facile, où l'idée semble descendre dans les mains et se fixer d'elle-même sur la toile.

... il goûta ce bonheur donné aux seuls artistes d'enfanter leur oeuvre dans l'allégresse. Rien n'existait plus pour lui, pendant ces heures de travail, que le morceau de toile où naissait une image sous la caresse de ses pinceaux, et il éprouvait, en ses crises de fécondité, une sensation étrange et bonne de vie abondante qui se grise et se répand. (p. 1059)

All images in the last paragraph of this description of Bertin at work are ones of creation. Images like "enfanter leur oeuvre," "toile où naissait une image," and "vie abondante qui ... se répand" all suggest the creation of a living being. This implies that for Maupassant, art is not divorced from sexuality. The phrase "la caresse de ses pinceaux" indicates the artist's love for his creation. This feeling that Bertin has in his "crises de fécondité" is the same one that so excites Claude Lantier, Zola's artist in L'Oeuvre, when he declares, "Ah! la vie, la vie.' la sentir et la rendre dans sa réalité, ... et faire vivre, et faire des hommes, la seule façon d'être Dieu!"⁶

Maupassant wrote after visiting some of the Renaissance masterpieces in Italy, "on se demande avec stupeur ce que fut l'âme exaltée et féconde, ivre de beauté, follement créatrice, de ces générations secouées par un délire artiste. ... Le même reflet d'impérissable beauté, apparu sous le pinceau des peintres, sous le ciseau des sculpteurs, s'agrandit en lignes de pierre sur la façade des monuments."⁷ This exalted creative state is not typical, however, of Bertin and other artists of his time. Maupassant comments in Notre Coeur on the composer Massival, "il avait subi cette espèce d'arrêt que semble frapper la plupart des artistes contemporains comme une paralysie précoce. Ils ... paraissent menacés d'impuissance à la fleur de l'âge." (p. 1217) The sexual images above which are repeated in the passage on Renaissance artists with "âme . . . féconde, ... créatrice" contrast sharply with the image here of artists "menacés d'impuissance" and suggests that many artists of Maupassant's time were too far removed from nature. Even in Italy, where Maupassant so admired the works of its Renaissance artists, he is aware of a decline in

artistic sensitivity:

Mais plus on est grisé, ... plus on se sent aussi envahi par un bizarre sentiment de malaise ... Il provient de l'étonnant contraste de la foule moderne si banale, si ignorante de ce qu'elle regarde ... On sent que l'âme délicate, hautaine et raffinée du vieux peuple disparu qui couvrit ce sol de chefs-d'oeuvre, n'agite plus les têtes à chapeaux ronds couleur chocolat, n'anime point les yeux indifférents, n'exalte plus les désirs vulgaires de cette population sans rêves.

Bertin, too, notices the superficiality of the "gens du monde" around him, and he denounces them: "Ils vivent, disait-il, à côté de tout, sans rien voir et rien pénétrer; à côté de la science qu'ils ignorent; à côté de la nature qu'ils ne savent pas regarder; ... à côté de la beauté du monde ou de la beauté de l'art, dont ils parlent sans l'avoir découverte," (p. 1027) Although Olivier Bertin is aware of the shallowness of his society, and although he has the sensitivity and skill to be a great artist, he compromises his art to please "le monde." How does this happen? Maupassant tells us when we meet Bertin:

Intelligent, enthousiaste, travailleur tenace au rêve changeant, épris de son art qu'il connaissait à merveille, il avait acquis, grâce à la finesse de son esprit, des qualités d'exécution remarquables et une grande souplesse de talent née en partie de ses hésitations et de ses tentatives dans tous les genres. Peut-être aussi l'engouement brusque du monde pour ses oeuvres élégantes, distinguées et correctes, avait-il influencé sa nature en l'empêchant d'être ce qu'il serait normalement devenu. Depuis le triomphe du début, le désir de plaire toujours le troublait sans qu'il s'en rendit compte, modifiait secrètement sa voie, atténuait ses convictions. (p. 984)

In spite of his considerable talent, then, Bertin has gone astray by abandoning his search for originality. When his "oeuvres élégantes, distinguées et correctes" become popular, he stops looking for what is unique in his subjects, and instead copies himself. Indeed, when the reader meets Bertin, he has spent the afternoon searching futilely for a subject, for "toutes les figures entrevues ressemblaient à quelque chose qu'il avait fait déjà, toutes les femmes apparues étaient les filles ou les soeurs de celles qu'avait enfantées son caprice d'artiste." (p. 985) When Any became his mistress twelve years before, she established herself as his advisor and

source of inspiration. It is she who directs him towards "l'art distingué;" "Depuis douze ans elle accentuait son penchant vers l'art distingué, combattait ses retours vers la simple réalité, et par des considérations d'élégance mondaine, elle le poussait tendrement vers un idéal de grâce un peu maniéré et factice." (p. 988) The result is that Bertin's admirers call him a "Watteau réaliste" and his detractors refer to him as a "photographe de robes et manteaux." (p. 1043)

Maupassant is, in fact, an admirer of Watteau. In a discussion of Tiepolo, whom he admires, he writes of him "élégant et coquet comme Watteau."⁹ However, in his writings he stresses the need for originality, as in this excerpt from "La Vie d'un Paysagiste": "Il faut ouvrir les yeux sur tous ceux qui tentent du nouveau, sur tous ceux qui cherchent à découvrir l'Inaperçu de la Nature, sur tous ceux qui travaillent sincèrement, en dehors des vieilles routines."¹⁰ In his desire to please his public, Bertin has gradually abandoned the "exécution originale" (p. 993) which Maupassant noted in his early painting "Jocaste." By allowing others to choose his direction in art, he becomes unable to follow up the new direction he imagines one day:

Et il se sentait l'intelligence si libre et si clairvoyante que toute non oeuvre d'artiste lui parut banale, et qu'il concevait une nouvelle manière d'exprimer la vie, plus vraie et plus originale. ...

Mais dès qu'il fut seul en face de la toile commencée, cette ardeur qui lui brûlait le sang tout à l'heure s'apaisa tout à coup. Il se sentit las, s'assit sur son divan et se mit à rêvasser. (p. 1056)

When he finally chooses a subject for a new painting entitled "Rêverie," his desire to please wins out over his artistic convictions:

Il voulait reproduire exactement ce qu'il avait vu au parc Monceau, ... une fille pauvre, rêvant, un livre ouvert sur les genoux. Il avait beaucoup hésité s'il la ferait laide ou jolie? Laide, elle aurait plus de caractère, plus de philosophie. Jolie, elle séduirait davantage, répandrait plus de charme, plairait mieux.

Le désir de faire une étude d'après sa petite amie le décida. La Rêveuse serait jolie. (p. 1123)

By compromising his art to please those "gens du monde" whose judgment he deploras, Bertin merits the opinion of the Figaro which offends him so, "l'Art démodé d'Olivier Bertin." (p. 1180)

Nonetheless, Bertin has produced one chef-d'oeuvre, his portrait of Any. Maupassant says that it was "le meilleur, certes, qu'il eût peint, car il avait su voir et fixer ce je ne sais quoi d'inexprimable que presque jamais un peintre ne dévoile, ce reflet, ce mystère, cette physionomie de l'âme qui passe, insaisissable, sur les visages." (p. 1014) In Any Olivier Bertin has found a subject which would indeed absorb his abilities, his worth, his artistic powers: "Le portrait avançait et s'annonçait fort bien, le peintre étant arrivé à l'état d'émotion nécessaire pour découvrir toutes les qualités de son modèle, et les exprimer avec l'ardeur convaincue qui est l'inspiration des vrais artistes." (p. 1000) With this portrait Olivier has fulfilled Maupassant's three requirements for a chef-d'oeuvre, as he states them in "Le Roman": "le travail continuel et la connaissance profonde du métier peuvent, un jour de lucidité, de puissance et d'entraînement, par la rencontre heureuse d'un sujet concordant bien avec toutes les tendances de notre esprit, amener cette éclosion de l'oeuvre courte, unique et aussi parfaite que nous la pouvons produire." (pp. 839-40)

NOTES

¹ Guy de Maupassant, La Vie Errante, Oeuvres (Paris: Editions Louis Conard, 1909-1939), vol. 28, p. 25.

² Maupassant, Romans, édition critique éditée par Albert-Marie Schmidt (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1949), p. 993. All further quotations from Maupassant's novels will be from this edition and will be indicated by the page number in parentheses at the end of the citation.

³ Maupassant, Letter to M. Maurice Vaucaire, Oeuvres, Vol. 3, pp. cliv-clv.

⁴ Maupassant, La Vie Errante, p. 251.

⁵ The synesthesia Maupassant experiences recalls Baudelaire's writings, especially his essay on Wagner. Anna Balakian, in The Symbolist Movement (New York: Random House, 1967) observes that in this essay Baudelaire "tackles the notion of the integration of the art forms and thereby the possibility of a broader synesthetic mingling of sense stimuli; he also meditates on the power of music to provoke, through the stimulation of a single sense, a multi-sensory plane of imagery." (p. 50)

⁶ Emile Zola, L'Oeuvre, Les Rougon-Macquart (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1966), Vol. IV, p. 83.

⁷ La Vie Errante, p. 49.

⁸ Ibid., p. 50.

⁹ Ibid., p. 251.

¹⁰ Maupas

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From Ariosto and Sannazarro to Rousseau and Mallarmé, the bucolic tradition has formed an important part of our literary heritage. In his fine study of the pastoral, "The Oaten Flute,"¹ Renato Poggioli contends that the uniqueness of pastoral literature is to be found in a longing for innocence and happiness that is recoverable through retreat. France's most notable contribution to pastoral romance, Honoré d'Urfé's *L'Astrée*, is no exception to this rule. D'Urfé follows many of the conventions common to the pastoral code. The originality of *L'Astrée* lies in the presentation of the theme of retreat itself and in the recurrence of a structural figure that controls and modifies its presentation. This figure is that of the circle. It occurs in the initial description of the pastoral site, Forez; it is the underlying pattern of its architecture; and it reappears in the many natural structures that dot the landscape, especially in the cavern where the hero, Céladon, seeks refuge after his banishment by the heroine, Astrée.

The opening paragraph of the novel describes the pastoral scene:

Après de l'ancienne ville de Lyon, du côté du soleil couchant, il y a un pays nommé Forez, qui en sa petitesse contient ce qui est de plus rare au reste des Gaules. . . . Au coeur du pays est le plus beau de la plaine, ceinte, comme d'une forte muraille, des monts assez voisins et arrosée du fleuve de Loire, qui prenant sa source assez près de là, passe presque par le milieu, non point encore trop enflé ni orgueilleux, mais doux et paisible.²

The scene of the novel is thus a circular area cut in two by the river Loire. The mountains form a strong wall, "une forte muraille," protecting it from the intrusions of a less perfect world and provide the shepherds and shepherdesses with a tranquil space in which to pursue their Neoplatonic love quest.

By a convention common to the pastoral, the retreat into nature is in fact an affirmation of culture. While Gaul is torn by wars waged by the Romans and countless barbaric tribes, the founders of the pastoral colony assemble around Mont-verdun and vow to renounce ambition and to live a life that is "douce et accompagnée de moins d'inquiétudes" (p. 156). The men and women come with the desire to seek an alternative to a state of war in the

calm of the rustic life. They create an area of civilization, peace, and harmony in the midst of disorder. They see Forez as a simple solution, a retreat from heroic life. At the same time, its founders are members of an ancient nobility; this pastoral society, while it rejects the imperative of action preserves an aristocratic and courtly ethos. It replaces a chivalric ideal with a Neoplatonic Love dream set within a courtly society. The society of Forez in its retreat to the static world of the pastoral rests on an affirmation of the civilized existence preserved from the destruction surrounding it and upholding the high values of an aristocratic, Neoplatonic culture. The circle enclosing the pastoral scene is one that excludes disorder and makes the worldly and the social possible.

While retreat into Forez is an entry into a tranquil space, it is at the same time an entry into a rigidly hierarchical society. Amasis is the female ruler, Adamas her high priest and counselor, the various druids are next, followed by numerous shepherds and shepherdesses. Everyone has a fixed place in the social order. Forez society gravitates to its center, Mont-verdun, a mountain that hides a circular structure. "Tout ce rocher, qui pour sa grandeur se peut nommer une montagne, est de nature tellement creux, qu'il semble quand on est dedans, que ce ne soit qu'une voûte" (p. 157). At Mont-verdun and the nearby palace of Marcilly with its cultural treasures and its immense vaulted salons, the shepherds and shepherdesses gather to tell stories of numerous "bons amants" and to pass judgment on those who have transgressed their strict codes of behavior. As C. S. Lewis writes: "Like courtesy, pastoral is a poetry of conduct."³ D'Urfé's shepherds represent the apex of social man. He "represents man neither as 'homo sapiens' nor as 'homo fabor,' but only as 'homo artifex.'"⁴ The circles of Mont-verdun and Marcilly indicate a passage into social conventions, social postures, and play acting. As Jacques Ehrmann has noted in his study of the language of *L'Astrée*, Forez is the domain of "la parole publique"⁵ and the social mask. The artifice of the primitive habit is however, readily discerned by those worldly aristocrats able to appreciate the subtleties of art and the realities of nature. In their awareness of social man, d'Urfé's shepherds and shepherdesses preface the garden parties of a later time when costumed aristocrats looked for pastoral places in the Versailles gardens and in the arbors of the nearby Petit Trianon.

The palace of Marcilly recalls the courtly society of the Italian Renaissance, as well as the atmosphere of the Court of Navarre, to the extent that it blends a Neoplatonic quest with a courtly hierarchy and order. Gustave Reynier has pointed out the presence of gatherings held by noble ladies in which matters concerning the refinement of sentiments were discussed. The Duchess of Retz, the Duchess of Rohan, the Princess of Léon, Mme. de Villeroy and Mme. de Cimiez, Mme. de Guise, the Duchess of Nevers, and Mlle. de Longueville, were only a few of the ladies whose salons offered the pleasures of "bonne compagnie."⁶ The quest for certainty and order after the wars of religion that marks much of the literary production of the seventeenth century and that was to find its expression in the codes of the Classicists is suggested in part by the courtly standards of Marcilly and Mont-Verdun. It is this need for an ordering of the passions as well as of the intellect that is seen as the purpose of the pastoral. The circular spaces of Mont-Verdun and Marcilly, temple and palace, are communal spots at the center of Forez and are emblems of social integration and harmony.

Gérard Genette has observed that the general plan of Forez is based on concentric circles.⁷ In this the geography of L'Astrée recalls Tommaso Campanella's city in La Città del Sole (1602). Campanella's utopia has a great dome at its center; the dome is encircled by seven circular divisions. D'Urfé's Forez and Campanella's city recall the popular baroque structure of "mise en abîme." The concentric circles reflect as well the order of the Ptolemaic system with the earth at the center surrounded by the heavenly bodies. This circular image of scientific and cosmological harmony complements the spaces of temple and palace.

However, there are also other circular structures in L'Astrée that suggest not the wholeness of the pastoral community but rather the void at the circle's center. Passage from the social sphere to the social void is made by way of the garden. Geography in L'Astrée flutters between nature as culture and a more ambiguous nature escaping domesticity. Around the palace of Isoure, for example, one finds gardens that are perfectly domesticated. Their "natural" appearance is the product of cultivated artifice. The garden around Isoure is "...agencé de toutes les raretés que le lieu pouvait permettre, fût

en fontaines et en parterres, fût en allées et en ombrages,... rien été oublié de tout ce que l'artifice y pouvait ajouter" (p. 47). The grottos around Isoure also attest to the art of taming nature without appearing to do so: "Il y avait plusieurs autres diverses grottes, si bien contrefaites au naturel, que l'oeil trompait bien souvent le jugement" (p. 48). As soon as the shepherds and shepherdesses leave the palaces with their domesticated gardens, they risk getting lost in a labyrinthine forest. Silvandre, one of the "fidèles amants," loses his way and leads his friends into the forest.

Ils entrèrent dans le bois, et ne se donnèrent garde que la nuit peu à peu leur ôta de sorte la clarté, qu'ils ne se voyaient plus et ne se suivaient qu'à la parole. Et lors s'enfonçant davantage dans le bois, il [Silvandre] perdit tellement toute connaissance du chemin, qu'il fut contraint d'avouer qu'il ne savait où il était.... Tant y a que Silvandre, suivi de cette honnête troupe, ne put de toute la nuit retrouver le chemin, quoiqu'avec mille tours et détours, il allait presque par tout le bois. Et enfin il s'enfonça tellement, que pour se suivre ils étaient contraints de se tenir par les habillements, la nuit étant si obscure qu'elle semblait expressément être telle pour empêcher qu'ils ne sortissent de ce bois. (pp. 133-134)

The protective circle of the communal palace becomes transformed into a sinuous line, a type of maze. The garden leads to a forest with no clear exits. It is within that forest that the image of the circle becomes reversed; palace and temple are now replaced by the cavern. There are many examples of this reversal of imagery. I will concentrate on the most well-known, the cavern of Céladon.

In the first book of L'Astrée, Céladon is banished by Astrée and spends some time at Isoure. When he leaves the palace, he almost gets lost in the forest. "Il s'enfonça dans un bois si épais et marécageux en quelques endroits, qu'à peine en put-il sortir" (pp. 90-91). He decides to follow a river and eventually comes across a cavern in which he takes refuge. It is a circular structure that has been hollowed by the movement of a nearby river:

Aussi n'était-ce autre chose qu'un rocher que l'eau étant grosse avait cavé peu à peu et assez facilement que l'ayant au commencement trouvé graveleux et tendre, il fut aisément miné, en sorte que les divers tours que l'onde contrainte avait faits, l'avaient arrondi comme s'il eût été fait exprès... Le lieu pouvait avoir six ou sept pas de longueur, et parce qu'elle était rondé, elle en avait autant de largeur. (p. 91)

Céladon rigorously avoids social contact and he leaves his refuge only to wander alone through the forest. During the lengthy sojourn in the cavern, he lives off roots and vegetation. The result of this regimen is to make him not only weak, but physically unrecognizable. "Son visage se changea de sorte qu'il n'était pas connaissable" (p. 137). When he sees his reflection in the water, he is amazed at his appearance. "Et lui-même quelquefois allant boire à la proche fontaine, s'étonnait quand il voyait sa figure dans l'eau" (p. 95). The changes he undergoes while in the cavern transform his features in such a way that he experiences himself as "... tout autre qu'il ne souloit être" (p. 95). The retreat to the void of the cavern in which the self becomes lost or changed is complemented by the presence of a river surrounding the cavern. The water imagery suggests dissolution, a return to a pre-social state. Céladon is described as being "défait" (p. 95), undone; it is as though he dissolves in the cavern in which he disappears.

The isolation Céladon experiences from the social group and from his own being is underscored by a veiled criticism of Neoplatonic love, the cornerstone of the pastoral community. In a lengthy exchange, Léonide accuses him of ceasing to be himself, "... vous cessez d'être vous-même" (p. 148). Céladon responds by pointing out that the lover not only has no will since he follows his lady's wishes in all things, but that he is not even a man; "Je nie que l'amant soit homme, puisque dès l'heure qu'il commence de devenir tel, il se dépouille tellement de toute volonté et de tout jugement, qu'il ne veut ni ne juge plus que comme veut et juge celle à qui son affection l'a donné" (pp. 148-149).

This sense of nonbeing is accompanied by a sense of nonidentity. It permits Céladon to take the last step in his progressive withdrawal from his own personality. The cavern episode ends with Céladon becoming totally "autre" and assuming the disguise of Alexis, daughter of Adamas. The retreat from his own being is so complete that it involves the loss of the primary sign of identity, the proper name. The sojourn in the cavern appears to be a reduction to the absurd of the theme of retreat itself.

Céladon's comments on the position of the lover in Neoplatonic thought reverberate throughout the text. His position is emblematic of many of the other characters in the novel. Almost all the other "parfaits amants"—Silvandre and Diane, Lycidas and Phillis, Galathée and Lindamor, Léonide and Ergaste—are isolated from each other even in the midst of the social group. This is a disturbing phenomenon in a novel whose purpose is to show a harmonious community based on Neoplatonic love. Céladon's experience intimates that the love quest involves not only isolation but a radical alteration of the self that verges on total alienation from one's own being.

From a thematic point of view, Céladon's cavern is the very antithesis of Marcilly and Mont-verdun. One is the space of isolation, the other the space of the social. In one the desire for formlessness replaces the formal social structures with their codified rules of behavior. The cavern in which Céladon loses his name is doubled by the image of social integration and unity of being of the circle around Forez and the vaulted rooms of its communal structures.

Temple, palace, and cavern are complementary images but they are also profoundly contradictory. The presence in L'Astrée of the cavern seems to belie the utopian thrust of the pastoral retreat and suggests that all is not as it seems. The spaces have the effect of cancelling each other out. The play between images of retreat and integration and retreat and dissolution point to the impossibility of the pastoral Eden. The cavern signals the presence of a fissure in the social fabric. It is a detour, a space for the expression of feelings unacceptable to the pastoral society. It is a place of exile for failed social relationships.

Tony Tanner, in an interesting study of the nineteenth century novel, perceptively notes that in La Nouvelle Héloïse, Julie's dream is one of keeping everyone together—a dream of total harmony and complete incorporation.⁸ D'Urfé's pastoral circle wants to do the same thing; it seeks to create a homogeneous space of harmony, calm, and integration. But the pastoral dream of L'Astrée, like Julie's dream, is a failed dream. Its shepherds are always in danger of being swallowed up by those obscure caverns that are concealed in its landscape.

NOTES

¹Renato Poggioli, "The Oaten Flute," Harvard Library Bulletin, (1957).

²References to the text of *L'Astrée* are taken from the 10/18 edition, ed. Gérard Genette (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1964), p. 25. Hereafter citations will be given parenthetically within the text.

³C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 351.

⁴Harold E. Toliver, Pastoral Forms and Attitudes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 12.

⁵Jacques Ehrmann, Un Paradis désespéré: L'Amour et l'illusion dans L'Astrée (New Haven: Yale, 1963), p. 104.

⁶Gustave Reynier, Le Roman sentimental en France avant "L'Astrée" (Paris: A. Colin, 1908), pp. 170-71.

⁷Gérard Genette, "Le Serpent dans la bergerie" in L'Astrée ed. Gérard Genette (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1964), pp. 11-12.

⁸Tony Tanner, Adultery in the Novel (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 114.

HISTORICAL FANTASY: MUSIC AND MUSICIANS
IN CARPENTIER'S CONCIERTO BARROCO

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In a recent interview at Vanderbilt University, Professor Roberto González Echevarría of Yale, one of the foremost authorities on contemporary Spanish American prose narrative, asserted that Alejo Carpentier's historical vision was essentially problematic.¹ His novelized perception of the past not only affirms a constant persistence of myths, legends, archetypes, and other manifestations of an atemporal, cyclical interpretation of events; there is also, nevertheless, a movement forward: a recognition and distinction of a past, present, and future. Accordingly, circular time coexists with sequential time, synchrony with chronology. These two seemingly contrasting postures create an internal dialectic, a tension that is never truly resolved. As one of the main topics of Carpentier's fiction, the dynamics of the historical process are integral to his novelistic expression throughout his career.² Los pasos perdidos, probably his best known and most widely read novel, describes a passage from a world obsessed with linear movement of time to a land where time is of little importance. In fact, the creative tension of Los pasos Perdidos seems to exist, in part, in the narrator's inability to adjust to the rhythm of modern society; instead, he searches for and attempts a return to a past characterized by more primitive challenges to his daily existence. His sensibilities numbed by 20th century fragmentation and alienation, he dreams of man's long past primordial nature, of a time truly before time. In El reino de este mundo, Carpentier once again juxtaposes one vision of the past against another. Haiti's historical and political evolution flows simultaneously with the folklore, customs, and traditions of its African heritage. And in Concierto barroco, one of Carpentier's later novels, history once again reveals its multifaceted nature. Though strict chronology within the novel is almost totally disregarded, Carpentier pays close attention to certain historical events.

Generally speaking, Concierto barroco portrays an elaborately artistic fictionalization of 17th century Baroque music and composers. The historical

background regards many of the acclaimed masters of Baroque musical culture: Domenico Scarlatti, Antonio Vivaldi, and George Frederic Handel. Within this given historical framework, numerous references to 17th century composers implicitly create a figurative dimension that parallels the novel's overall thematic structure. The many musical allusions, for example, bring to light certain popular legends and beliefs surrounding the composers of this epoch. As a result, a clear relationship exists between historical fact and novelistic fiction. Yet Carpentier's legendary knowledge of music and history is not mere pedantry, for these historical characters function in perfect harmony within the novel's structural unity.

It is this clearly discernible historical backdrop that is of primary interest to me today, for at the heart of Concierto barroco is its vision of the past. With a degree of poetic license, Carpentier has based numerous episodes and characters on verifiable historical facts. This imaginative, inter-textual dialogue between a contemporary Spanish American novel and certain historical documents of the 18th century leads to what González Echevarrá has identified as a characteristic feature of Carpentier's last novelistic stage: "... parody and humor rule... in Carpentier's last artistic phase."³

As a measure of this parody, historical and fictional characters exist on the same narrative level. Carpentier uses both historical figures as well as stereotypes. Vivaldi, Scarlatti, and Handel interact with a character known as the Amo, an 18th century indiano who has come back to Europe with his black servant from Cuba, Filomeno. Having become bored with Madrid, the Amo and Filomeno arrive in Venice, the music capital of the Italian Baroque. Venice is in the midst of its annual Carnival, and its inhabitants have masked and disguised themselves in a primeval release of human passions and inhibitions. They enter the Botteghe di Caffè of Victoria Arduino when they meet the three composers. The narrative makes specific references regarding each composer that add parodic dimensions to their characterization. Vivaldi's initial description highlights his flaming red hair, his prominent nose, and his elegant coiffure:

Allí estaba sentado ya, en una mesa del fondo, el Fraile Pelirrojo, de hábito cortado en la mejor tela, adelantando su larga nariz corva entre los rizos de un peinado natural que tenía, sin embargo, como un aire de peluca llovida.⁴

In his lucid study on Vivaldi's work and life, historian Marc Pincherle discusses five portraits of the composer, two of which were done during his lifetime. Pincherle's observations parallel Carpentier's fictional creation:

There is the very lively sketch made by P. L. Ghezzi in 1723... The Prete Rosso appears in profile, half-length. He is portrayed as having long and curly hair, a somewhat receding forehead, a prominent, arched nose,...⁵ His glance is lively, his expression interested and willful.

In the portrait by François Morellon de la Cave, Pincherle notes that "the hair (is) so well groomed that it may be taken for a wig."⁶

The historicity of Carpentier's Vivaldi goes well beyond his appearance. That Vivaldi never gave mass is a well-known fact, though the reasons for his priestly neglect are somewhat vague. According to one legend, Vivaldi left the altar during mass in order to write out the theme to a fugue, an act that had him promptly reported to the Inquisition.⁷ More recent evidence, however, refutes this story. In a letter to one of his patrons, Vivaldi reveals that a physical restriction prevented him from saying mass:

I can no longer walk on account of this chest ailment, or rather, this tightness in the chest (strettezza di petto, commonly believed to refer to a kind of asthma). No nobleman invites me to his house, not even our prince, because all are informed of my ailment... Such is the reason I never say mass.

Carpentier apparently opts for the latter of the two explanations. The narrator offers the following insight: "-aunque nunca hubiese dicho una misa pues estaba demostrado que los humos del incienso le daban ahogos y pruritos." (p. 53) Ironically, Carpentier's fictional version dispenses with the more entertaining of the two accounts.

Vivaldi's relatively unknown status until the 20th century is also alluded to in the text. When he, Scarlatti, and Handel join forces to perform a concerto grosso, the narrator makes reference to his past obscurity: "...desencadenó el más tremendo concerto grosso que pudieron haber escuchado los siglos—aunque los siglos no recordaron nada..."

(p. 41) Despite immense popularity and fame during his lifetime, Vivaldi was quickly forgotten after his death.⁹ His works lay either dormant or disregarded for almost two centuries. In 1926, Dr. Alberto Gentili, a professor of music history at the University of Turin, discovered several old volumes of music dating from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. One discovery led to another, and Dr. Gentili finally uncovered more than 300 works by Vivaldi. The Turin collections sparked an unexpected, though spectacular, renaissance of Vivaldi's music, eventually leading to the creation of the Istituto Italiano Antonio Vivaldi by the Venetian Antonio Fanna.

The three composers have come to Vivaldi's Ospedale to practice their works. The Ospedale, or Seminario Musicale dell' Ospedale della Pietà, was one of four institutions in Venice established as charitable orphanages and asylums that later developed into music schools.¹⁰ Vivaldi's Pietà was known throughout the city for its disciplined all-girl orchestra; accordingly, the Pietà became an ideal place for Vivaldi's instrumental experiments and musical novelties. The girls of the Pietà were often referred to by their musical instruments. In fact, Carpentier's "Cattarina del Cornetto," who gives Filomeno his trumpet, seems to actually have existed.

Once in the Ospedale, Vivaldi and his cohorts unchain their concerto grosso, a suitable format for their virtuosity. As an art form, the concerto grosso flourished between the years 1670 and 1750. Highly representative of Baroque musical form, the concerto grosso utilized small groups of soloists that were pitted against the full orchestra.¹² Each one of Carpentier's musicians performs with the instrument to which he is historically linked: Vivaldi plays violin, Scarlatti plays clavichord, and Handel, the organ. Their performances curiously echoes a similar event in Rome in the year 1708. John Mainwaring, Handel's 18th century biographer, describes this competition in considerable detail:

When he came first into Italy, the masters in greatest esteem were Alessandro Scarlatti, Gasparini, and Lotti. The first of these he became acquainted with at Cardinal Ottoboni's. Here also he became known to Domenico Scarlatti, now living in Spain, and author of the celebrated lessons. As he was an exquisite player on the harpsichord, the Cardinal resolved to bring him and Handel together for a

trial of skill. The issue of the trial on the harpsichord hath been differently reported. It has been said that some gave the preference to Scarlatti. However, when they came to the Organ there was not the least pretense for doubting to which of them it belonged. Scarlatti himself declared the superiority of his antagonist, and owned ingenuously, that till he had heard him upon this instrument, he had no conception of its powers. So greatly was he struck with his peculiar method of playing, that he followed him all over Italy, and was never so happy as when he was with him...it was mentioned...that Scarlatti, as oft as he was admired for his great execution, would mention Handel, and cross himself in token of veneration.¹³

Handel's historical victory is transformed into dramatic fictional expression in Carpentier's novel. The performance produces an ascending degree of tension that reaches a climax when Vivaldi and Scarlatti yield to the Saxon's dazzling skill:

Y parecía que el movimiento hubiese llegado a su colmo, cuando Jorge Federico, saltando de pronto los juegos de fondo, las mutaciones, el plenum, con tal acometida en los tubos de clarines, trompetas y bombardas, que allí empezaron a sonar las llamadas del Juicio Final. —"El Sajón nos está jodiendo a todos!"—gritó Antonio, exasperando el fortissimo. —"A mi ni se me oye—" gritó Domenico, arreciendo en acordes. (p. 41)

Other stories exist that attest to Handel's musical prowess. Scarlatti's first meeting with Handel is said to have taken place in Venice during its Carnival. As in Concierto barroco, all the Venetians were masquerading during the celebration. The masked Handel was playing the harpsichord, when Scarlatti rushed up and reportedly cried: "This is either the marvelous Saxon or the devil!"¹⁴ Though neither Handel nor Domenico Scarlatti had met at the time, it is quite probable that Alessandro Scarlatti had informed his son of Handel's famed virtuosity.¹⁵

Carpentier further explores the historical dimensions of Handel's fictional characterization. When Handel first appears in the novel, his colleagues assure him of his opera's success:

—"Célmate"—"dijo el Fraile Pelirrojo—: Ya sé que la Agripina tuvo, esta noche, más éxito que nunca." —"Un triunfo!"—dijo el napolitano, vaciando una copa de aguardiente dentro de su café—"El Teatro Grimani estaba lleno." (p. 35)

On December 26, 1709, the first day of the Venetian Carnival, Handel's Agrippina was performed at the Teatro de San Giovanni Crisostomo, one of the three theaters owned by the Grimani family.¹⁶ The opera was an immediate success. Mainwaring writes:

The audience was so enchanted with this performance, that a stranger that should have seen the manner in which they were affected, would have imagined they had all been distracted.

The theater, at almost every pause, resounded with shouts and acclamations of viva il caro Sassone! and other expressions of approbation too extravagant to be mentioned. They were thunderstruck with the grandeur and sublimity of his style; for never had they known until then all the powers of harmony and modulation so closely arrayed, and so forcibly combined.¹⁷

Agrippina ran for twenty-seven nights to capacity crowds, a surprising phenomenon for the epoch. Cardinal Vincenzo Grimani, Agrippina's librettist, and part owner of the theater, was jubilant upon the opera's success.¹⁸

Filomeno's contribution to the musical spree adds a further dimension to the fictional elaboration. Undaunted by the expertise of his Baroque colleagues, Filomeno rushes into the kitchen and brings back a variety of copper kettles that he uses to add a unique, rhythmic quality to the impromptu concerto. His African heritage imbues new life into the European artform. Filomeno's presence symbolizes the historical and cultural heritage of his native America. America's historical process has synthesized several disparate cultural realities: the European, the African, and the indigenous. Ironically, Carpentier's metaphorical concerto has reversed the cultural transmutation. Europe, not America, has been chosen as the place for their hybrid experimentation.

An interesting precedent exists for Filomeno's actions. In 1861, an American composer from Louisiana, Louis Moreau Gottschalk, organized a music festival to be held in Havana's Teatro Chacón. As Carpentier observes in his scholarly La música en Cuba, Gottschalk's orchestra consisted of forty pianos, one of which was played by Cuban Nicolás Ruiz Espadero, Cuba's most famous composer during this epoch.¹⁹ Gottschalk's creativity led him to bring from Santiago de Cuba a group of Afro-French drummers for the percussion section, paralleling Filomeno's rhythmic tribute. Thus, Carpentier has used his own

historical investigations for later fictional purposes. La música en Cuba offers other intertextual similarities. Espadero, for example, was known by the title Monsieur Espadero, de la Havane, a French affectation for which Filomeno yearns: "En París me llamarán Monsieur Philomène, así, con P.H. y un hermoso acento grave en la 'e'." (p. 75)

The historical veracity of certain segments in Concierto barroco has obvious links outside the text. Within the work itself, however, the constantly repeated historical signals function to create a unity within the discursive dimension of the novel. The importance of Venice in the music world, for example, exists both within the novel and outside. The carnival atmosphere serves as a tonal determiner throughout history and fiction, consistently providing an atmosphere of spontaneity and release. The Baroque esthetic is, perhaps, the most pervasive of the historical symbols, functioning as an overall unifier for the characters. The Baroque supplies a common bond for both Vivaldi and Filomeno, otherwise vastly separated by their respective cultural experiences.

Concierto barroco's unique vision of history provides a strong thematic undercurrent that is complemented by allusions to specific works and composers that share a similar vision. The destruction of traditional chronology is fundamental to the novel, as seen by characters who exist in impossible simultaneity with one another. Vivaldi, who died in 1743, stumbles across Igor Stravinsky's grave, who died in 1971. It is ironic that Vivaldi praise Stravinsky's work, for the Russian composer occasionally ridiculed the Venetian's music. Nevertheless, Vivaldi keenly analyzes Stravinsky's music when he comments: "Buen músico..., pero muy anticuado, a veces, en sus propósitos. Se inspiraba en los temas de siempre: Apolo, Orfeo, Perséfone--hasta cuándo?" (p. 51) Though Vivaldi never mentions it, he strongly implies one of Stravinsky's symphonies that best exemplifies a work "anticuado en sus propósitos": The Rite of Spring. This symphony is based on ancient veneration of Spring in pagan Russia. Its programmatic structure evokes archetypal images of man, creating a vision of a world that resists interpretation based on lineal chronology. Filomeno appears to have taken a similar stance:

Y parecíale a Filomeno que, al fin y al cabo, lo único vivo, actual, proyectado, asaetado hacia el futuro, que para él quedaba en esta ciudad lacustre, era el ritmo, los ritmos, a la vez elementales y pitagóricos, presentes acá abajo, inexistentes en otros lugares... (p. 77)

Filomeno's rhythms have possible corollaries in The Rite of Spring. After the melodious introduction, the listener is startled by a series of rhythmic pulsations that both frighten and excite. Comments by music critics concerning Stravinsky's symphony parallel Carpentier's artistic fictional vision of history. Louis Biancolli observes: "Stravinsky perceived things and presented them musically in terms of noises immanent to those things, eternally present in them."²⁰ Carpentier later writes a novel concerned more directly with this symphony. In Consagración de la primavera, Vera, a Russian dancer, dreams of performing Stravinsky's work, a hope that is ultimately realized at the end of the novel.

Another composer alluded to in the novel whose musical theories are woven into the thematic fabric of the work is Richard Wagner. Filomeno and Montezuma observe his funeral procession and are told by the boatman of his strange musical imagination and creations:

Es de un músico alemán que murió ayer de apoplejía—dijo el Barquero, pasando los remos—: Ahora se llevan los restos a su patria. Parece que escribió óperas extrañas, enormes, donde salían dragones, caballos volantes, gnomos y titanes, y hasta sirenas puestas a cantar en el fondo de un río. (p. 54)

Indeed, Wagner died in Venice, having made the trip to Italy hoping to regain his health. As Carpentier's novel suggests, he was carried back to his famous opera house, the Festpielhaus, a building specifically designed for staging his sumptuous operas. Wagner's operatic theory revolutionized the European music stage of the 19th century. As one of the first composers to create an organic unity among all of opera's parts—music, drama, and poetry—his operas are based on mythological or legendary figures in German folklore. Wagnerian opera began to be seen as an expression of artistic totality, and his historical vision shares some similarities with contemporary Spanish American novelists. Like Carpentier, Wagner searches in both history and myth for artistic inspiration.

Although certain works in the novel function to identify characters (Montezuma and Vivaldi, for example), other compositions mentioned create a comic ambivalence. When challenged by the Amo to put music to Orlando Furioso, Vivaldi replies that he has already done so. Orlando Furioso, however, cannot function metonymically for Vivaldi's works. Ironically, both Handel and Scarlattì composed operas based on Ariosto's legendary hero: Orlando and L'Orlando, respectively.

The presence of history in Concierto barroco is dominant throughout the text. Carpentier begins with a considerable number of true events, easily proved and verified, yet transcends their temporal limitations. Man's artistic creations provide ready access to a past filled with music, dance, literature and art. Created in a world totally possessed by a lineal progression of time, Concierto barroco counterpoints, nevertheless, by making history a purely artistic elaboration. As both historian and poet, Carpentier successfully reveals the essentially creative nature of historical discourse.

NOTES

- ¹Roberto González Echevarría, Vanderbilt University, March 17, 1981.
- ²Roberto González Echevarría, The Pilgrim at Home (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 25
- ³González Echevarría, p. 258.
- ⁴Alejo Carpentier, Concierto barroco (Buenos Aires: Editorial Calicanto, 1977), p. 34. All further references to this work will be cited in the text.
- ⁵Marc Pincherle, Vivaldi, Genius of the Baroque, trans. Christopher Hatch (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1962), p. 57
- ⁶Pincherle, p. 57
- ⁷Pincherle, p. 17.
- ⁸Pincherle, p. 17.
- ⁹Pincherle, p. 258.
- ¹⁰Pincherle, p. 18
- ¹¹Pincherle, p. 18.
- ¹²Willi Apel and Ralph T. Daniel, The Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music (New York: Washington Square Press, 1960), p. 66.
- ¹³John Mainwaring, Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1760), pp. 59-61.
- ¹⁴Herbert Weinstock, Handel (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p. 32.
- ¹⁵Weinstock, p. 32.
- ¹⁶Weinstock, p. 42
- ¹⁷Mainwaring, pp. 52-53.
- ¹⁸Weinstock, p. 43
- ¹⁹Alejo Carpentier, La música en Cuba (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1972), p. 196.
- ²⁰Robert Bagar and Louis Biancolli, The Concert Companion (New York: McGraw Hill, 1947), p. 719.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BALLAD
"LA CONSTANCIA" IN DON QUIJOTE

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"Mis arreos son las armas,
mi descanso el pelear..."

Scholars have suggested that Cervantes derived the inspiration for Don Quijote from Orlando's madness and various anecdotes about people who were strangely affected by romances of chivalry,¹ from the anonymous, satirical "Entremés famoso de los romances,"² or from the mildly burlesque "Romance de Lanzarote y el Orgullosa."³ Two of these three main hypotheses have to do with the ballad tradition, and for good reason: in the opening scenes the author often employs romances viejos as the background against which he projects his comic hero.⁴ Indeed one of the first literary quotations in the novel is the ballad, "La constancia," which he cites in the second chapter of Part I. It seems to me that, in the search through the early chapters for clues to the seminal idea of the story, important related questions have not been adequately stressed, namely, "What is the function of this ballad within Chapter 2 and, in a general sense, within the context of the novel?" I will examine these issues and focus on the special resonance the ballad had in Cervantes' day, for there are indications that "La constancia" plays a far more vital role than is at first apparent.

Don Quijote mentions the ballad upon arriving at the first inn, which he of course envisions as a castle. The innkeeper, seeing Don Quijote's outlandish knightly get-up, says to him:

—Si vuestra merced, señor caballero, busca posada, amén de lecho (porque en esta venta no hay ninguno), todo lo demás se hallará en mucha abundancia.

Viendo don Quijote la humildad del alcaide de la fortaleza, que tal le pareció a él el ventero y la venta, respondió:

—Para mí señor castellano, cualquiera cosa basta, porque
mis arreos son las armas,
mi descanso el pelear, etc.

Pensó el huésped que el haberle llamado castellano había sido por haberle parecido de los sanos de Castilla, aunque él era andaluz, y de los de la playa de Sanlúcar, no menos ladrón que Caco, ni menos maleante que estudiantado paje, y así le respondió:

—Según eso, las camas de vuestra merced serán duras peñas, y su dormir, siempre velar; y siendo así, bien se puede apear, con seguridad de hallar en esta choza ocasión y ocasiones para no dormir en todo un año, cuanto más en una noche.

That Don Quijote should refer to a ballad in his dialogue with the innkeeper is not in itself unusual in a seventeenth-century setting. As Menéndez Pidal notes, "las alusiones a los romances . . . andaban entonces de moda en la conversación ordinaria."⁶ The ballads could be used much like proverbs in conversation because people knew them so well. Since Cervantes' readers had probably heard "La constancia" sung or recited many times; they would have known several lines and had a general idea of the poem if they did not know it by heart. Proof of this is provided within the novel itself, for the innkeeper's response to Don Quijote's quotation is in part an allusion to the next two verses of the poem, as we see from the complete text:

"La constancia"

Mis arreos son las armas,
 mi descanso es pelear,
 mi cama las duras peñas,
 mi dormir siempre velar.
 Las manidas son oscuras,
 los caminos por usar,
 el cielo con sus mudanzas
 ha por bien de me dañar
 andando de sierra en sierra
 por orillas de la mar,
 por probar si mi ventura
 hay lugar donde avadar.
 Pero por vos, mi señora,
 todo se ha de comportar.⁷

Thus it was much more than the two lines cited by the hero which at this point became part of the novel in the minds of Cervantes' contemporaries. By reminding them of the ballad, the author effectively incorporated it, or as much as each reader remembered, into the new written context. Within that context the ballad is even well-known to the innkeeper, a low-life character described as "no menos ladrón que Caco, ni menos maleante que estudiantado paje." Whereas in other parts of the novel characters have no idea what Don Quijote is saying when he addresses them in the archaic language of the romances of chivalry, he quickly makes himself understood here through the ballad. It serves him as a kind of oral literary code which contemporary Spaniards—readers as well as characters—understood, a brief allusion which reveals much about his lifestyle, his ideals, and, indirectly, the nature of his locura.⁸

The poem not only identifies Don Quijote to others, but also serves as a moral guide for the hero himself, a personal credo which motivates him and gives meaning to his life. He sees it as a precedent and justification for his career as a knight-errant; he envisions himself within the chivalric tradition described by the poem; "La constancia" is one of his sacred texts, so to speak. If we keep this sacred text in mind as we read the novel, we find that the mad Don Quijote never abandons the way of life it represents. Though frustrated and confined by the limitations of his humanity, he never forgets those ideals of the wandering life, the suffering and service for his lady. Nor does he ever commit a meaningless act or justify a deed by saying: "lo hice porque me dio la gana." He justifies his actions and attaches meaning to his adventures primarily through reference to literary texts such as "La constancia." This is what Cervantes shows us directly for the first time in Chapter 2.

By suggesting Don Quijote's ideals the poem establishes an irony which will reverberate throughout the novel, for to compare Don Quijote's life with the life described in "La constancia" is to see the differences between his aspirations and his reality. When Don Quijote says, "mis arreos son las armas," we are reminded of his ridiculous weapons and armor. "Mi descanso es pelear" ironically foreshadows the coming battles with windmills and people,

"mi cama las duras peñas" the times Don Quijote and Sancho will in fact be forced to sleep outside, "mi dormir siempre velar" the vigil Don Quijote will keep during his night at this first inn. The next eight lines are an accurate if general description of the wandering life of Don Quijote and the cruel blows fate has in store for him; indeed, the verses "el cielo con sus mudanzas / ha por bien de me dañar" would sound entirely appropriate if spoken by him. They would have a much less metaphorical, much more literal meaning with respect to Don Quijote than they seem to in the poem, however, for we know how often he is going to be physically harmed, brutally dañado by other characters in the novel. Finally, our hero suffers all for Dulcinea, a humble village woman he doesn't really know: "Pero por vos, mi señora, / todo se ha de comportar." As we can see, every line of the ballad has ironic application to the life of Don Quijote. In a general way it foreshadows the entire action of the novel.

Another level of irony stems from the comic overstatement already inherent in the ballad: even in Cervantes' time the melodramatic exaggeration of verses such as "Mis arreos son las armas, / mi descanso es pelear," must have seemed humorous to many people. Certainly the playful, jesting manner in which the innkeeper responds to Don Quijote's quotation indicates that he considers the poem quite in keeping with the comedy of the mad knight's appearance and speech. Cervantes incorporates it into Chapter 2 partly in order to play upon its comic overtones. He further develops its irony by having his hero make statements in later contexts which recall the poem. In fact at various times throughout the novel Don Quijote's words will echo the sentiments, if not the very words of "La constancia." For example, when asked to explain his profession on the way to Grisóstomo's funeral, he mentions the exemplary stories of Lanzarote and other famous knights, concluding with a description of his own life that is reminiscent of the life described in the ballad: "Y así, me voy por estas soledades y despoblados buscando las aventuras, con ánimo deliberado de ofrecer mi brazo a la más peligrosa que la suerte me deparare" (p. 126). After being severely dañado in his battle with the Galicians, Don Quijote reflects to Sancho that such hardships are part of the life of a knight-errant: "Y si no fuese porque imagino . . . ¿qué digo imagino?, sé muy cierto, que todas estas incomodidades son muy anejas al ejercicio de las armas, aquí me dejaría morir

de puro enojo" (p. 151). Further on in the same discussion, he tells Sancho that "la vida de los caballeros andantes está sujeta a mil peligros y desventuras" (p. 151) and that "las heridas que se reciben en las batallas, antes dan honra que la quitan" (p. 153). In spite of all misfortunes, however, he remains faithful to Dulcinea, as is evident in his speech to Maritornes. Believing this grotesque, pitiful creature to be a lovely princess who has fallen in love with him, he declines to make love to her when she atumbles into his bed by mistake, explaining that "he querido la fortuna, que no se cansa de perseguir a los buenos, ponerme en este lecho, donde yago tan molido y quebrantado, que, aunque de mi voluntad quisiera satisfacer a la vuestra, fuera imposible. Y más, que se añada a esta imposibilidad otra mayor, que es la prometida fe que tengo dada a la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso, única señora de mis más escondidos pensamientos" (p. 160). These are but a few examples of the many occasions when the hard wandering life and the steadfast loyalty of courtly love which are expressed in the ballad are reexpressed by Don Quijote.

"La constancia" is a prime example of chivalric literature cited directly by the hero and later reflected in his works and deeds. It is Don Quijote's statement to the world that he is, or at least aspires to be, a caballero andante: this is his manifesto. As such it contributes greatly to our initial understanding of his character and to our perception of the complex ironic texture of the novel. Unless we know the whole poem, rather than just the lines included in the text, we do not grasp its full meaning within the context of the Quijote nor feel the force of its irony as did Cervantes' contemporaries, who knew the oral tradition pervading the novel.⁹ It is clear that Cervantes chooses this particular ballad because it is a succinct, widely-known expression of the ideals of knight-errantry which obsess his hero, because it helps to establish the fundamental ironic tension between Don Quijote as he is and as he desires to be, because it foreshadows the action of the novel, and because its overstated, melodramatic tone already borders on the burlesque. Indeed, although the quest to determine "las chispas que encendieron la inmortal hoguera del Quijote"¹⁰ is highly problematic and by its nature somewhat speculative, it would seem possible and plausible, for all the reasons I have mentioned, that "La constancia" was one of the chispas, one of the sources which led to the genesis of the novel.

¹Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, "Cultura literaria de Miguel de Cervantes y elaboración del Quijote," Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos, 12 (1905), 333-34. He cites documented cases from the era of Cervantes about a man who returned home one day to find his entire family weeping uncontrollably over the death of Amadís, another man who memorized Palmerín de Oliva, and another who imitated the madness of Orlando; about a priest who believed that the stories of Amadís and Don Clarián were true; and about a Salamancan student who was reading a romance of chivalry and suddenly, in a moment of hallucination, took up a broadsword and rushed to the defense of one of the characters in it, shouting epithets and fencing against his imaginary foes. "Todos estos hechos, o algunos de ellos, combinados con el recuerdo de Orlando, que D. Quijote se propuso imitar juntamente con la penitencia de Amadís en Sierra Morena, pudieron ser la chispa que encendió esta inmortal hoguera" (p. 334).

²Ramón Menéndez Pidal argued that Cervantes steered away from ballads to parody romances of chivalry only after freeing himself from the influence of the "Entremés famoso de los romances." (He made the original statement of this idea in a speech to the Madrid Ateneo in 1920 entitled, "Un aspecto en la elaboración del Quijote," which was published by the Ateneo in the same year. A lengthier second edition came out four years later: Madrid: Cuadernos Literarios, 1924. This edition was later reprinted, along with a summary of the debate the essay engendered, in Menéndez Pidal's De Cervantes y Lope de Vega, Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1940.) His argument is based primarily on several parallels between the "Entremés" and the episode of the "mercaderes toledanos" (Chapter 5, Part I). Don Quijote, like Bartolo (the hero of the "Entremés") tries to be a knight and, like Bartolo, is beaten with his own lance and blames the disaster on his mount. Both heroes allude to the ballad of the Marqués de Mantua and believe themselves to be Valdovinos, a character in that ballad. Then both return home, go to sleep and awaken again with more delusions. Besides these similarities, the parodic technique Cervantes uses in this episode is similar to that of the "Entremés" but unlike that of any other part of the novel. In Chapters 5 and 7 Don Quijote imagines himself to be someone else,

as Bartolo does throughout the "Entremés," but in the rest of the novel Don Quijote's personality "queda . . . firme y erguida frente a la de los héroes que le enloquecen" (p. 23).

The "Entremés famoso de los romances" can be found in Emilio Cotarelo, ed., Colección de entremeses, in the NRAE, tomo I, volumen I, número 17, pp. 157-61.

For an excellent resume of pre-1968 scholarship on the origin of the Quijote, see Carlos Varo, Génesis y evolución del "Quijote" (Madrid: Ediciones Alcañá, 1968), pp. 127-43.

³Louis A. Murillo, "'Lanzarote' and Don Quijote," in Michael J. Ruggiero, ed., Studies in the Literature of Spain: Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Brockport, N.Y.: Department of Foreign Languages, State University of New York, 1977), pp. 55-68. Murillo argues that if the "Entremés" had any influence at all it was indirect and minor, for there is a crucial difference between the two works: the "Entremés" parodies new, written ballads (except for the "Romance del Marqués de Mantua"), while the Quijote alludes in the opening chapters only to the romances viejos of the oral tradition. Moreover, while Menéndez Pidal argued that Cervantes chose not to parody the old ballads out of reverence for them, Murillo shows that the Lanzarote ballad has many burlesque elements and a humorous tone which Cervantes wished to bring into his own work. A further link between the ballad and the novel lies in the phonetic similarity between the names of the two heroes: Murillo argues that Don Quijote named himself in imitation of "Lanzarote" and that Cervantes' readers of 1605 would have readily detected "in 'Quijote' the resonance of the popularizing, satirical manner already implicit in the old ballad" (p. 60). He concludes that it was the Lanzarote ballad which suggested to Cervantes "a popularized and implicitly comical treatment of a chivalric story on which to base his own" (p. 60).

⁴All the ballads which appear in Chapters 1-7 can be found, indexed according to first verses, in Antonio Rodríguez-Moñino, ed., Cancionero de romances: Anvers, 1550 (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1967). "La constancia" ("Mis arreos son las armas," p. 301) and the "Romance de Lanzarote y el Orguloso" ("Nunca fuera caballero," pp. 283, 284) appear in Chapter 2 of the Quijote. In Chapter 5 Don Quijote imagines himself to be Valdovinos and

alludes to the "Romance del Marqués de Mantua" ("De Mantua salió el marqués," pp. 130-40. In Chapter 7 he imagines himself to be another ballad hero, Reynaldos de Montalbán, but does not quote any specific ballad. A famous one about this hero, "Romance de Don Reynaldos de Montaluan" ("Estauase don Reynaldos") can also be found in Rodríguez-Moñino, pp. 160-64.

⁵Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra, Don Quijote de la Mancha, ed. Martín de Riquer (Madrid: Cupsa Editorial, 1977), p. 44. All quotations of the Quijote are from this edition and are hereafter cited parenthetically.

⁶Ramón Menéndez Pidal, De Cervantes y Lope de Vega, p. 31.

⁷The text I cite is from Manuel Alvar, ed., El romancero viejo y tradicional (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1971), p. 137. It is the same as the original version (Rodríguez-Moñino, p. 301) except that it has modern spelling and punctuation. Notice that Cervantes' text reads "el" in verse 2, where the original reads "es." This slight variant suggests one or both of these possibilities: a) the author knew the poem from oral tradition, where the variant was already in existence, or b) he inadvertently created the variant by a slip of memory as he recalled the ballad. "Both ideas tend to corroborate my point that the ballad was commonly known by memory via the oral tradition.

⁸I have already touched upon this idea in my article, "Ballad as Code in Don Quijote," Neophilologus, 64 (1980), 384-89, where I apply Roland Barthes' theory of codes to study the "Romance de Lanzarote y el Orgullosa" and a comic transformation of it in Chapter 16, Part I. I would argue that the Lanzarote ballad functions in much the same way as "La constancia," particularly in that it demonstrates the same chivalric value system. It tells how the noble Lancelot serves a lady by faithfully defending her honor and uses his strength and skill at arms to castigate an arrogant foe--precisely the things Don Quijote tries to do in many of his adventures.

⁹For an excellent discussion of the interplay between oral and written elements in the novel, see Elias L. Rivers, "Talking and Writing in Don Quijote," Thought, 51 (1976), 296-305.

¹⁰I take the liberty of rephrasing Menéndez y Pelayo's statement (Note 1) to clarify my own argument; I don't believe I am violating the meaning he intended.

SEVERAL OBSERVATIONS ON RELIGION AND ROMANTICISM
AND THEIR APPLICATION TO LARRA'S MACÍAS

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Critics such as Paul van Tieghen have defined Romanticism, in part, as a return to the exalted religious devotion of the Middle Ages.¹ Russell Sebold represents an opposing view, maintaining that "el romanticismo es esencialmente anticristiano, no obstante los adornos cristianos que los románticos usan para lograr ciertos efectos ambientales."² Thus, the religious tone and trappings that sometimes appear in Romantic literature are more often related to a nostalgic recreation of an idealized medieval history rather than an authentic representation of faith on the part of the writer. The emotionally charged skepticism of the Romantics implicitly led to a new metaphysics rejecting the traditional religious faith of Western Europe. Without deciding which was the cause and which the effect, we must recognize that the Romantic perception of a blank and uncomprehending universe is inextricably linked with a loss of faith in a personal yet transcendent God, as is exemplified in Christian theology.³ There is a link between the nineteenth-century Romantic and the medieval Christian in that both reject the world; each views temporal life as a vale of tears. But whereas the medieval Christian oriented himself towards transcendental ideals, which remained separated from and untarnished by the world, the irreligious Romantic was doomed to continual disillusionment because of his non-spiritual, temporal orientation.

Each viewed death as a resolution to the unsatisfactory nature of life. The Christian awaited it with an accepting resignation, confident that it marked only the passage to a purer form of being and not the end of existence. Lacking either the religious consolation or the moral strictures against suicide that guided the believer, the Romantic was open to the temptation of self-destruction as a solution to his despair. There is no transcendence, however, in death for the Romantic; it is rather a continuation of life, which he experiences through anticipation. In his book The Savage God, A. Alvarez emphasizes the refusal of Romantic suicides to accept death as an annihilation of the self. "But they conceived of death and suicide childishly: not as an end of everything, but as the supreme dramatic gesture of contempt toward a dull bourgeois world These epidemics of suicide à la mode had one element in common: the belief that the suicide itself would be present to

witness the drama created by his own death. Thus suicide as a gesture enhances a personality which magically survives."⁴

Suicide is often used as a weapon by its victim; homicidal aggression towards an oppressor is turned inwards against the self. The Dutch psychiatrist Joost Meerloo has written on the double-edged, hostile motivation underlying self-destruction. "Many a victim lives before the act in a revengeful anticipated future. He imagines his triumph after death, when others will feel doomed by guilt and remorse."⁵ Particularly in a Catholic country such as Spain, suicide represents an attitude of defiance and rebellion.⁶ If society treats the Romantic as an outcast, he can assert himself by embracing his fate, spitefully flaunting his death as an accusation for the wrongs done to him. Self-destruction is the ultimate sin for him to commit and to blame on society, since in a Catholic country suicide is more heinous a crime than even murder, there being no possibility of repentance and salvation.

Similarly, as the Romantic is alienated from any concept of the Divine and from the world itself, he is also separated from human society. He chooses to see himself as set apart from his fellow man, by turns withdrawing out of personal choice or being misunderstood and spurned by the callous hostility of others. Society mirrors the Romantic's inflexibility while it defies and contrasts with his emotionalism by its insensitivity.⁷ Essentially antisocial, the Romantic generally preferred to portray his heroes as victims of an authoritarian oppressor. The protagonist only "wins" by losing; he arouses the audience's sympathy by his death, either executed by a tyrant or by his own hand. It is noteworthy that the Romantic protagonist is almost invariably young, while his powerful oppressor is typically an older figure. Particularly in the many works where the drama arises out of a competition for a woman's love, the Romantic paradigm of a youth martyred by an older and more powerful authority must inevitably suggest the ritualization of psychological conflict.

Romantic dogma exalts love as life's supreme value.⁸ Although erotic love is frequently exalted in religious terms by Romantic writers, it is no more religious than the poetry of Santa Teresa or San Juan de la Cruz is erotic for the sexual imagery that they use. Writing about Romantic dramas, Donald Shaw comments upon their invariable linking of love with conflict and death and of

the supremacy of temporal, sexual love over any religious values: ". . . la frustración del amor va inevitablemente seguida de la muerte de los amantes, . . . en todo caso la única salida es la muerte. La pérdida del amor no permite otra solución, pues concebir cualquier otra significaría aceptar una ley superior a la del amor humano. Hemos visto que, incluso cuando la alternativa es el amor divino, es inaceptable."⁹ The theme of human love is often linked to that of political oppression, since it is not uncommon that an older tyrant is also the one responsible for frustrating the relationship between the lovers.

The dramatic tension in Larra's drama Macías springs from the common Romantic dilemma of a pair of star-crossed lovers frustrated by external forces. The play begins with the anticipation of the lovers' estrangement from society, that of Spain in 1406, when it was still an essentially feudal country. Accordingly, titles and blood are the principal means of establishing one's position in the hierarchical society. Fernán Pérez, who disputes the protagonist, Macías, for the hand of Elvira, openly boasts to her father, Nuño Hernández, of his high rank as privado to don Enrique de Villena, the Maestre de Calatrava, and his noble station in comparison with the Hernández family:

Yo, además soy caballero,
hidalgo de alta nobleza,
y acostamiento Su Alteza
me da por ser su escudero.
Vos y vuestra gente toda
villano sois, con lo que algo
se os ha de pegar de hidalgo
y de noble en esta boda.¹⁰

Nuño in turn casts aspersions upon the nobility of Macías: "Mas ¿qué bienes / son los suyos, Elvira? ¿Caballero / y no más? ¿Nombre de armas, o soldado? / ¿Mal trovador, o simple aventurero?" (Macías, 264).

According to formula, Elvira and Macías are deeply in love with each other, but their love is frustrated by outside forces. Fernán Pérez conspires to have don Enrique send Macías away on a lengthy mission in which he will either die or be separated from Elvira beyond the full year that she has agreed to wait before marrying anyone else. It is Pérez's position as privado that allows him to manipulate the destiny of the two lovers. He first effects Macías' absence and then alternately threatens and cajoles Nuño to give him his daughter in marriage. If Nuño agrees, there is the promise of wealth and prestige; if he

refuses, he is sure to suffer the wrath of the authorities. Thus, from the very beginning, an opposition is established between the Romantic ideals of Macías and Elvira and the unjust authority of society.

Larra establishes Elvira's character at the beginning of the drama as that of an obedient and religious young girl. At the beginning of the first scene, we learn from Nuño that Elvira faithfully attends Mass every day. When initially confronted with her promise to marry after a year's time, she chooses to honor her vow and not to risk breaking with her father, and thereby to renounce her love for Macías. Elvira, as she is presented in the first act, is still far removed from the Romantic protagonist who chooses death as the only solution to an impossible love.

Her dutiful character is contrasted with Macías' impulsiveness. He has returned to Andújar both without the permission of his lord and under orders to perform a mission elsewhere. He exhibits a keen awareness of time and its relation to both his love for Elvira and death: "Recuerda que hoy es el día / que el plazo expiró; y que vine / sabe, en fin, a ser de Elvira / o a morir" (Macías, 275). A typical Romantic protagonist, Macías places his love for Elvira above all else, and in his impatience will brook no delay for any other cause than the fulfillment of his love: "Ni me mandes que la deje, / ni que me parta a la guerra, / ni que piense ni imagine, / sino el cómo ha de ser mía" (Macías, 275). Larra explicitly defines his protagonist's complete identification with romantic passion in the paragraph that prefaces the drama. "Macías," he writes, "es un hombre que ama y nada más" (Macías, 257). From his introduction in the play, then, Macías is portrayed as a character who has accorded to love the feeling otherwise reserved for God, as he makes evident when he describes Elvira as "mi vida, mi bien, mi cielo" (Macías, 273). This Romantic transvaluation of the divine into human love brings him into conflict with Elvira when he attempts to convince her to break her marriage vows and flee with him. He holds love to be sacred and the supreme arbiter of moral values: "Los amantes son solos los esposos. / Su lazo es el amor: ¿cuál hay más santo? / Su templo es el universo: dondequiera / el Dios lo oye que los ha juntado" (Macías, 281). Elvira, however, feels constrained by her marriage vows, which invoke the name of God: "Juré ser de otro dueño, y al recato, / y a mi nombre

también y a Dios le debo / sufrir mi suerte con valor" (Macías p. 281). Later, having fulfilled her promise to marry him, she seeks to escape her marriage to Pérez by the sanctioned means of entering a convent.

During the course of the play, however, her attitude toward traditional religious and moral values changes. At the beginning of the play and while still devoutly orthodox, she anticipates and foresees an early death brought on by her frustrated love and her forced marriage to Pérez. Deceived into thinking that Macías has married someone else, she welcomes the match as a form of revenge that will bring about her own death: "¡Véame también casada, / y venga después la muerte!" (Macías, 266). When she first begins to contemplate death, her attitude is one of passive and resigned acceptance. There is as yet no cause for suspecting that she would consider the mortal sin of suicide.

Her values begin to change as she becomes acquainted with the character of the man whom she has married and learns that the rumors of Macías' marriage were false. At this point she begins to actively desire and to court death: "¡Oh, si el dolor me acabara! / Beatriz, ¡cuán dichosa fuera!" (Macías, 278). When she reveals her enduring love for Macías to her enraged husband, she openly encouragee him to draw his sword and kill her: "Sacad, Fernán, el acero; / herid; no temo la muerte" (Macías, 287). Elvira now begins to court suicide in an indirect fashion. Love is becoming the highest value in her life, as she indicates in her affirmative answer to Pérez's question: "¿le ama, oh cielos, de tal modo / que ya prefiera a su olvido / la muerte?" (Macías, 287). When her husband refuses to kill her, she must anticipate determining her own fate: ". . . que la desesperación / sabrá prestarme una daga!" (Macías, 288). By the end of the drama, Elvira despairs of life. She forces Macías to swear an oath that if they are discovered in their escape from the city by her husband, he will kill her. The oath is actually an act of blasphemy since Macías is swearing on a cross in God's name to perform a mortal sin.

At the very beginning of the drama, he had insisted on his preference for death rather than even entertaining the idea that Elvira might be fickle in her love: "Clávame antes en el pecho / un puñal que eso me digas" (Macías, 273). By the play's ending, Macías rushes toward his death in a kind of joyous

anticipation. Throughout the drama, he has indicated the low value that he places on life, and his eager acceptance of death may now be judged an indirect form of suicide: "¡Morir no ha una hora / desdeñado anhelaba, y tiemblo amado! / Deja; corro a su encuentro; más gloriosa / sea mi muerte" (Macías, 295). Elvira is faced with the decision to take her life by her own hand, since the mortally wounded Macías is incapable of stabbing her. Her transvaluation of her previous religious beliefs is made manifest by her words as she stabs herself: "la tumba será el ara donde pronta / la muerte nos despose" (Macías, 296). Words such as "ara" give love and death obviously divine connotations. Elvira has evolved through the course of the drama from a devout Catholic to an exalted Romantic, who chooses self-destruction as a solution to the dilemma of frustrated love.

The Romantic themes that we mentioned earlier—the transvaluation of religion to the supremacy of erotic love, the inevitable failure of this love at the hands of a powerful authority figure, with death as the only escape and suicide as revenge—are all clearly present in Macías. It is plausible to conjecture that the drama's treatment of these themes goes beyond a simple following of convention. There is no reason for conjecture about suicidal impulses in Larra. He treats the subject openly in pieces such as "La nochebuena de 1836" and, in fact, killed himself at the age of twenty-seven. The facts concerning Larra's maladjustment to society and the unhappiness that he felt throughout his life are well known. He grew up during his father's exile in France and spent the brief period of his adult years in Spain. Although his writings show a deeply felt patriotism, their acerbic criticism suggest that he was never entirely at home in Madrid society. Even though he was an only child, Larra evidently received little affection from his mother. He married young and was soon estranged from his wife. It is difficult to calculate the pain inflicted upon him by the discovery that his father had slept with an earlier love.¹¹ Although the immediate cause of his suicide was the rejection from a married lover, it is clear that Larra's entire life was marred by alienation and unhappiness.

It is possible to consider Macías as Larra's projection of painful incidents and people from his life. Macías' rival for Elvira, Fernán Pérez, is linked with the hero's feudal superior and ultimately with Elvira's father.

By their age and status in society, they all combine to suggest power and high rank. It would be plausible to see in them a projection of an authoritarian father figure, who oppresses and thwarts the protagonist, with whom the author and the audience are clearly intended to identify. Macías' destruction in the drama can be considered as a partially conscious act of defiance by the author against the forces in his life and in society that he perceived as set against him. The protagonist's death at the hands of his enemies serves as a reproach to their injustice. The doubts and waverings of Elvira with regard to her course of action may reflect Larra's anxieties about the constancy of women's affections; and her decision to follow Macías into death by committing suicide might be a fantasy expressing his desire for an unqualified commitment. In the light of what is commonly known about the circumstances of Larra's life, it does not seem unreasonable to conclude that his literary treatment of suicide is a projection of the emotions and perceptions that would lead him to take his own life within a few years.

NOTES

¹According to Van Tieghen, "pour la première fois depuis la Renaissance la religion Chrétienne se voit rouvrir la domaine de la littérature proprement dite, d'ou elle avait été expulsée au profit de la mythologie païenne ou d'une plus ou moins déiste." Paul Van Tieghen, Le Romantisme dans la littérature européenne (Paris: Editions Albin Michel), p. 260.

²Russell P. Sebold, "El incesto, el suicidio y el primer romanticismo español," Hispanic Review 41 (1973), 689.

³Edmund King believes that Romanticism is essentially nihilistic. "The conception of life behind Romantic attitudes is, of course, a negative one, that is that there is no rationally demonstrable, transcendental authority by which life is governed and through which it is made meaningful." Edmund L. King, "What is Spanish Romanticism," Studies in Romanticism 2, no. 1 (1962), 8. Morse Peckham has written about the psychological consequences stemming from the Romantic conception of a meaningless universe. "This perception was like a new Fall of Man. The world suddenly lost its value; life lost its meaning; the individual no longer had a source for his sense of identity and a ground for his desire for order and structure. . . . At a stroke, mind was sundered from nature, subject from object. . . . The Romantic experienced a sense of profound isolation within the world." Morse Peckham, The Triumph of Romanticism (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), p. 40.

⁴A. Alvarez, The Savage God (New York: Bantam Books, 1976), pp. 202-03.

⁵Joost A. M. Meerloo, Suicide and Mass Suicide (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1968), p. 26.

⁶It is interesting to note that according to Antonio Montoro: ". . . el Werther goethiano sufrió las iras y denuestos de algunas congregaciones católicas." Antonio Montoro, El romanticismo literario europeo (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva), p. 30.

⁷Because of the inflexibility of both sides, there is no chance of reconciliation. The Romantic ideals of freedom and perfection are always shattered by their contact with a stultifying, monolithic society, frustrating the individual and his aspirations. Frederick Hoffman writes that "the hero is conscious of a diminished prestige; he sees that human force and energy are being used to strengthen social structures that move toward an abstract, a rigid, an impersonal condition, a stasis; he finds that the metaphors of both religion and society (often they are the same metaphors) do not alleviate his concern." Frederick J. Hoffman, The Mortal No: Death and the Modern Imagination (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 24-25. The Romantic is inevitably doomed to disenchantment with his initial dreams and is unable to reconcile

himself with the world. Accordingly, Guillermo Díaz-Plaja sees the protagonist as being forced to make a difficult choice: "y la solución sólo puede producirse por una evasión radical hacia la soledad o por un choque dramático con la vida que conduce a la desesperación y—tópico romántico—al suicidio. . . ." Guillermo Díaz-Plaja, Introducción al estudio del romanticismo español (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1936), p. 73.

⁸This love typically turns out to be impossible and ends in conflict and death. Van Tieghem, though insisting on the religious nature of Romanticism, recognizes the unchallenged importance that it grants to human love: "Encore plus que le sentiment de la nature et l'aspiration religieuse, l'amour est un élément dominant du romantisme intérieur." Van Tieghem, p. 265.

⁹Donald L. Shaw, Historia de la literatura española: el siglo XIX (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1973), pp. 55-56.

¹⁰Mariano José de Larra, Macías in Obras completas, Vol. 3 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, BAE, 1960), p. 258. All subsequent references from this work are cited in parenthetical form in the text.

¹¹Pierre Ullman writes of the incident that "for the first time in his life Mariano was seen weeping profusely." Pierre L. Ullman, Mariano José de Larra and Spanish Political Rhetoric (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1971), p. 8.

LA CUENTISTICA FANTASTICA DE FELISBERTO HERNANDEZ

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El uruguayo Felisberto Hernández (1902-1964) es uno de los autores latino-americanos cuya obra literaria ha experimentado una revaloración durante los últimos años. Entre los escritores y críticos que han despertado nuevo interés en la obra del uruguayo figuran Julio Cortázar, Alberto Zum Felde y John Englekirk.¹ Estos han destacado la cuentística fantástica de Hernández por su mezcla genial de elementos de la realidad cotidiana con lo irreal.

El propósito de este trabajo es estudiar los elementos fantásticos en la obra de Hernández mediante un análisis de tres de sus cuentos. Para lograr esto, se ha dividido este estudio en tres partes. La primera parte tiene tres objetivos: establecer una definición general de "lo fantástico" basada en Todorov, Vax y Belevan, introducir el grupo de cuentos estudiados y servir de puente entre la teoría y su aplicación en los cuentos escogidos. La segunda parte comprende un análisis de tres relatos fantásticos del autor uruguayo. La tercera y la última parte resume los elementos fantásticos vistos en los cuentos analizados, destacando dos aspectos particulares de lo fantástico en la obra de Felisberto Hernández: la temática fantástica y las técnicas usadas en la expresión de lo fantástico. Se prueba aquí, concordando con la opinión de Cortázar, Zum Felde y Englekirk, que la cuentística de Felisberto Hernández contiene varios relatos fantásticos de mérito.

Conviene ahora establecer una definición general de lo que se clasifica como "lo fantástico" en la literatura mediante una enumeración de sus características más sobresalientes.² Para que se produzca lo fantástico, el autor debe crear un mundo real donde establece ciertas normas de realidad lógica como el tiempo, el espacio, la materia y la consciencia humana. Habiendo establecido este mundo lógico el autor reorganiza estos elementos, transformándolos hasta que se vuelvan no verificables. Con esta ruptura de las reglas de la naturaleza lógica, amenaza el autor las normas de la razón y apunta hacia una tercera realidad. La invasión de algo insólito en este mundo real puede producir miedo o terror en el lector y provocar un sentimiento

de inquietante extrañeza. El lector se queda en un estado de vacilación, duda y ambigüedad producido por una oscilación de lo conocido a lo desconocido. Lo fantástico está basado en el mundo humano pero el personaje fantástico se aleja un poco de ello.

Se puede ver la aplicación de estas teorías en los tres cuentos analizados en este estudio. "El acomodador" empieza con la descripción de un mundo lógico y racional de la vida de un acomodador en un cine. Luego se rompen las leyes establecidas cuando se introduce el elemento fantástico, el hecho de que los ojos del acomodador arrojan luz en la oscuridad. Lo mismo pasa con "Muebles 'El Canario'" donde mediante inyecciones, los cuerpos de la gente funcionan como radios emitiendo la programación de una emisora particular. En "La mujer parecida a mí", Hernández empieza sugiriendo la idea de un sueño, pero poco a poco mediante la manipulación cuidadosa de los detalles textuales, cambia la realidad a un mundo patas para arriba.

Resumiendo los comentarios anteriores, se puede ver que en estos cuentos de Felisberto Hernández se reorganizan los elementos de mundo real, transformándolos de tal manera que crea otra "realidad" muy diferente pero al mismo tiempo manteniendo los vínculos con la previamente establecida. Las ocurrencias insólitas no explicadas dejan al lector en un estado de vacilación que nunca se resuelve.

El primer cuento que se discutirá es "El acomodador" de la colección Nadie encendía las lámparas.³ Es la historia de un joven que va a una ciudad grande donde consigue trabajo de acomodador en un teatro. Tiene un amigo que va a cenar dos veces por semana a la casa de un señor. Este organiza cenas grandes en gratitud por la salvación de su hija, quien casi se había ahogado en un río. El protagonista empieza a acompañar al amigo a estas cenas, y desde entonces experimenta cambios difíciles. Se vuelve torpe en el trabajo de acomodador y lo pierde, pero el amigo le consigue otro trabajo en un teatro inferior. Una noche se despierta y ve una luz en la pared que sigue los movimientos de sus ojos. El se da cuenta de que tiene la facultad de emitir luz de sus ojos pero no se asusta. Al volver a la casa del "comedor gratuito", le pide al mayordomo que le abra la puerta durante la noche para que pueda ver

las vitrinas de una habitación contigua al comedor. Después de observar el mayordomo la facultad extraña de este señor, por temor, dice que lo hará. Durante la segunda visita nocturna del protagonista a la casa, entra en la sala una mujer sonámbula que aparentemente no lo nota. Ella, en el mismo estado onírico, vuelve durante la tercera visita pero esta vez ella camina sobre él. Una noche, al salir del teatro el protagonista, él la ve caminando en la calle acompañada por un hombre. El acomodador la sigue pero no la alcanza. Vuelve el protagonista a la sala otra noche y decide tratar de atraer la atención de esta mujer, pero al hacerlo ella se cae al suelo. El dueño entra, y al ver a su hija en el suelo, le pide que nunca vuelva a su casa. El protagonista pierde su trabajo y va perdiendo la facultad de emitir luz de sus ojos.

Hay varios elementos fantásticos que aparecen en esta obra. Primero, Hernández establece una realidad mundana con la mención de datos sobre el protagonista. Desde el principio se introduce la importancia de la vista. El ambiente del teatro es apropiado porque no sólo es el lugar donde trabaja el acomodador sino también es un sitio de juego entre luz y oscuridad. El hecho de que los acomodadores suelen llevar una lámpara eléctrica de bolsillo como parte normal, lógica de su trabajo prepara al lector para la extensión de esta idea a un mundo más allá de lo conocido--la luz emitida por los ojos. También el teatro es el lugar donde se presenta una representación ficticia del mundo real en las obras de arte. Hernández introduce tres comparaciones al principio que sirven de puente entre las dos realidades: "parecía un ratón debajo de muebles viejos" (p. 41), "Iba a mis lugares preferidos como si entrara en agujeros próximos y encontrara conexiones inesperadas" (p. 41) y "Ahora yo me sentía como un solterón de flor en el ojal que estuviera de vuelta de muchas cosas" (p. 42). Refuerza esta transición al mundo fantástico mediante el uso del subjuntivo en las oraciones. También en esta primera sección del cuento se contrasta la luz con la oscuridad. Emplea de manera interesante la palabra "apagar": "...según mis pasos cuando yo los apagaba en la alfombra roja" (p. 41), "...podía leer disminuyendo la luz y apagando un poco las flores" (p. 42) y "Después apagaba la luz y seguía despierto" (p. 42).

Luego Hernández introduce el episodio del comedor gratuito que provoca un cambio introspectivo en la personalidad del protagonista: "Me hundía en mí mismo como en un pantano" (p. 45). Por ser un cuento narrado en primera persona, Hernández invita al lector a acompañar al protagonista en sus experiencias. Al descubrir inesperadamente su extraña facultad de emitir luz por los ojos, el protagonista no se asusta sino que lo acepta felizmente. Después de perder su trabajo opina que esta nueva facultad le compensó de sus malas experiencias. Es aquí donde Hernández incluye la idea de la multiplicación del personaje. El protagonista se mira en un espejo, que refleja una realidad distorsionada, y se describe así: "Me juré no mirar nunca más aquella cara mía y aquellos ojos de otro mundo. Eran de un color amarillo verdoso que brillaba como el triunfo de una enfermedad desconocida; los ojos eran grandes redondeles, y la cara estaba dividida en pedazos que nadie podría juntar ni comprender", (p. 47). El cambio es casi una metamorfosis porque hay varias referencias bestiales al acomodador: "ratón" (p. 41), "hipopótamo", (p. 45) y "yo era un perro lanudo", (p. 57). Desde ese momento, se pasa a un mundo donde las leyes de lo real están transformadas. Hernández mantiene los vínculos con el mundo lógico en la escena del teatro cuando el protagonista ve a la mujer en la calle y la sigue. Pero más tarde, después del alivio del ambiente de misterio, se vuelve al ámbito cerrado de los encuentros en la sala. Se desarrolla el ambiente onírico cuando el protagonista describe su facultad durante la noche después de despertarse y luego, mediante el personaje de la mujer sonámbula. Al final del cuento, el protagonista va perdiendo su facultad extraña, pero nunca se explica cómo obtuvo ese poder. Esto, siguiendo las características de lo fantástico, deja al lector en un estado de vacilación y duda que nunca se resuelve.

El segundo cuento, "Muebles 'El Canario'", es la historia de un hombre harto de la propaganda que lo bombardeaba en la ciudad.⁴ Después de un mes de vacaciones, al volver a la ciudad, decide pasar un día en la playa. Para volver a su casa, toma un tranvía. Hace mucho calor y por eso lleva una camisa de manga corta. De repente un señor se acerca y le da un pinchazo con una jeringa llevando el nombre "Muebles 'El Canario'". El protagonista no

sabe qué reacción podría causarle pero decide que probablemente se enterará a la mañana siguiente en el periódico. Al acostarse se oye dentro de su propio cuerpo el canto de un pájaro y una voz diciendo "Hola, hola, transmite difusora "El Canario"...hola, hola, audición especial. Las personas sensibilizadas para estas transmisiones...etc., etc.", (p. 161). Luego escucha las indicaciones sobre los pagos en cuotas de los muebles y un tango. No puede tolerarlo y sale a la calle buscando ruidos fuertes para esconder los de su cabeza. Piensa ir a la emisora para averiguar cómo anular el efecto de la inyección y por eso toma otra tranvía. Allí encuentra a otro hombre dando inyecciones y el protagonista le pregunta cómo anular los efectos. El hombre contesta que debe comprar las tabletas "El Canario" en una farmacia pero el protagonista le dice que esto es imposible porque todas las farmacias están cerradas y no puede tolerar los ruidos. Después de pedir una propina el hombre le ofrece un remedio secreto al protagonista - debe bañarse los pies con agua bien caliente.

Habiendo resumido la trama de "Muebles 'El Canario'", es apropiado ahora discutir sus elementos fantásticos. El cuento empieza en un mundo lógico que muchos lectores habrán experimentado - el ruido y la rutina de la ciudad. Se narra en primera persona permitiendo la introspección subjetiva. En un tranvía de vuelta de la playa algo extraño le sucede al protagonista. Un hombre se acerca y parece que quiere sentarse pero en vez de esto, le pone una inyección al hombre sentado. Este encuentro es el paso del mundo lógico al mundo fantástico. Es interesante notar la descripción según el narrador, "él ya me frotaba el brazo desnudo con algo frío que no sé por qué creí que fuera saliva", (p. 159). La metáfora saliva es rara porque primero, en general, no es fría sino caliente y segundo, introduce un aspecto grotesco al proceso. También, es una jeringa grande que dice "Muebles 'El Canario'" a lo largo del tubo pero echa sólo un pequeño chorro de líquido. Lo raro es que después de la inyección, en vez de protestar inmediatamente, el protagonista lo acepta pensando "Después me dio vergüenza preguntar de qué se trataba y decidí enterarme al otro día por los diarios", (p. 160). Es también irónico que después diga "Tendrá que ser algo que deje consecuencias visibles si realmente trata de una

propaganda", (p. 160). Nótese la palabra "visible" - lo opuesto de lo que le pasa. Luego se penetra de verdad en el mundo fantástico cuando el hombre está por dormirse y oye el canto de un pajarito. Este canto es "anormal como una enfermedad nueva; pero también había un matiz irónico; como si la enfermedad se sintiera contenta y se hubiera puesto a cantar", (p. 161). Es aquí donde empieza el protagonista a oír la voz de un locutor anunciando los muebles "El Canario". Lo fantástico queda en la reacción de este personaje. Se enoja porque no quiere escuchar estos anuncios, pero no le sorprende el hecho de que provienen de su propio cuerpo. Esta actitud de aceptación es muy parecida a la de los hermanos en "Casa tomada" de Julio Cortázar. Al salir a la calle para buscar alivio en los ruidos cotidianos, decide tomar otro tranvía y allí encuentra a otro hombre dando inyecciones. El tranvía es importante porque sirve de puente a la otra realidad más allá. El protagonista llevaba una vida bastante rutinaria antes de su primer encuentro en el tranvía. Las experiencias de este encuentro modifican las leyes establecidas de la vida del hombre. Luego, el segundo encuentro le proporciona el medio de volver a lo normal pero no resuelve el problema. Al final se descubre que puede tomar las tabletas "El Canario" si no le gusta la transmisión o puede bañarse los pies en agua caliente. Hay que notar que ambos remedios sugeridos ganan dinero o para la compañía mediante la compra de las tabletas o directamente para el hombre mediante la propina que recibe del protagonista. Esto alude a la posibilidad que los remedios no sean válidos. No se resuelve el problema al final porque el autor termina el cuento dejando al protagonista en el tranvía sin probar los remedios sugeridos. Estos en sí son contradictorios, uno artificial y el otro natural, así se producen más confusión y ambigüedad. El protagonista y el lector se quedan en este mundo ilógico y transformado sin salida aparente.

El tercer cuento, "La mujer parecida a mí", empieza sugiriendo un mundo onírico que cabe dentro de lo aceptable en la realidad lógica, "Apenas yo acostaba mi cuerpo de hombre, ya empezaba a andar mi recuerdo de caballo", (p. 91).⁵ Luego, el narrador relata sus experiencias cuando era caballo con dueños diferentes. El primer dueño es un panadero y el caballo

camina en un círculo dándole vueltas al molino. Esto le presenta al lector una imagen fácilmente reconocible. Entonces el narrador habla sobre un peón, que le cuidaba durante su adolescencia, a quien mata por haberle maltratado. El próximo dueño que describe es un hombre muy cruel de quien se escapa huyéndose hacia un pueblo cercano. Allí en el pueblo, entra al escenario de un teatro público durante una función de niños y la maestra lo lleva a casa donde pasa una temporada agradable. Una noche ella lo esconde en su dormitorio porque su cruel viejo dueño viene a la casa a buscarlo. De vuelta a la casa de ese dueño cruel, éste le da golpes al caballo, lo que causa que el caballo se muera. El caballo vuelve silenciosamente a la casa de la maestra donde escucha una conversación entre ella y su novio. Al descubrir que su presencia causaría problemas entre los novios, el caballo se va de la casa guardando sus recuerdos de ella.

En este cuento Hernández manipula cuidadosamente los deslices textuales para efectuar una transición sutil de un mundo aparentemente onírico a un mundo fantástico. La primera oración establece tres elementos claves: 1) la identidad del narrador como hombre, 2) el ambiente onírico y 3) la perspectiva temporal. "Hace algunos veranos empecé a tener la idea de que yo había sido caballo", (p. 91). Es importante notar el uso del pluscuamperfecto "había sido" porque esto le indica al lector que el narrador habla desde el punto de vista de un hombre que ha tenido esta experiencia en el pasado. Luego, las descripciones vívidas de los dolores que sufría como "las articulaciones próximas a los cascos", (p. 91), claramente enfocan la presencia equina. La manipulación de los sustantivos cuando dice "...olvidaba la combinación de mis manos con mis patas traseras..." (p. 91), alude a la idea de la metamorfosis. El uso de otros términos como "belfos" y "hocico" refuerzan esta idea. También se introduce la idea de la percepción visual distorsionada cuando observa el narrador que "Mis ojos eran también como lagunas y en sus superficies lacrimosas e inclinadas se reflejaban simultáneamente cosas grandes y chicas, próximas y lejanas", (p. 91). Describe su vida con el panadero y termina enfocando en el sonido que hacía el maíz al comerlo. Aquí, en una expresión parentética, Hernández reorganiza el aspecto temporal de un mundo

racional. "(En este instante, siendo caballo, pienso en lo que me pasó hace poco tiempo, cuando todavía era hombre. Una noche que no podía dormir porque sentía hambre, recordé que en el ropero tenía un paquete de pastillas de menta. Me las comí; pero al masticarlas hacían un ruido parecido al maíz.)" (pp. 92-93). Al principio el narrador es un hombre recordando sus experiencias soñadas de cuando era caballo. Ahora es un caballo recordando sus experiencias de cuando era hombre. Uno de los temas fantásticos mencionados por Louis Vax es las partes separadas del cuerpo.⁶ Hernández incluye una variación de este tema a través de todo el cuento. "Mi cuerpo no sólo se había vuelto pesado sino que todas sus partes querían vivir una vida independiente", (p. 94). Luego pasa al salón público donde encuentra a la maestra. Durante una discusión entre ella y una de sus amigas, la maestra menciona que esta amiga siempre le decía que tenía una cara de caballo cuando era niña. El narrador, al oír esto, está de acuerdo y empieza a "enamorarse" de ella. Cuando la maestra lo lleva a su dormitorio para esconderlo de su viejo dueño, Hernández reintroduce la idea de la percepción visual mediante el uso de un espejo. Al mirarse, el narrador comenta, "El espejo también mostraba partes de mi cuerpo; mis manchas blancas y negras parecían también ropas revueltas. Pero lo que más me llamaba la atención era mi propia cabeza; cada vez yo la levantaba más. Estaba tan deslumbrado que tuve que bajar los párpados y buscarme por un instante a mí mismo, a mi propia idea de caballo cuando yo era ignorado por mis ojos", (p. 105). El cuento termina con el narrador diciendo, después de matar a su viejo dueño y descubrir que no debe quedarse, que lo único que lamenta es no ser hombre porque le habría gustado llevar consigo una foto de la maestra a su lado. Así Hernández empieza el cuento con un estado aparentemente onírico que todos pueden comprender pero luego transforma este estado a un mundo fantástico mediante la idea de la metamorfosis, la reorganización del tiempo, la distorsión de la percepción visual y la insistencia en las partes del cuerpo. Al final, no vuelve a mencionar los sueños y tampoco se resuelve la ambigüedad de la identidad del narrador. El cuento termina siendo el narrador un caballo.

Habiendo analizado unos ejemplos de la cuentística fantástica de Felisberto Hernández, conviene resumir algunos de los rasgos sobresalientes encontrados en ella. Primero, Hernández crea sus cuentos alrededor de una temática fantástica. Sus temas predilectos son: la metamorfosis, el doble y las partes separadas del cuerpo vistos en "La mujer parecida a mí" y lo sobrenatural e inexplicable vistos en "El acomodador" y "Muebles 'El Canario'". Casi siempre empieza sus cuentos con un mundo lógico, con normas establecidas de tiempo, espacio, materia y la conciencia. Luego reorganiza estos elementos, transformándolos para crear el mundo fantástico. El lector se queda en un estado ambiguo por la falta de explicaciones lógicas a los sucesos extraños. Una de las formas en que Hernández logra crear sus mundos fantásticos es mediante el uso del subjuntivo. Este modo verbal hace hincapié en la actitud dudosa expresada por el narrador, luego adoptada por el lector. También incluye Hernández muchos juegos de luz y sombra, distorsionando la realidad de lo que se percibe visualmente. Algunos de los motivos predilectos encontrados en sus cuentos son el espejo, el ojo y el vidrio - cosas que alteran la percepción del mundo real. De este estudio se puede concluir que algunos de los relatos de Felisberto Hernández sí caben dentro del mundo de lo fantástico y demuestran una creación innovadora. Según Zum Felde, "Felisberto Hernández comparte actualmente con J.L. Borges la primacía del cuento fantástico en el Plata".⁷

NOTAS

¹Julio Cortázar, "The Present State of Fiction in Latin America," Trans. by Margery A. Safir, Books Abroad, Vol. 50, No. 3(Summer, 1976), 522-23; Alberto Zum Felde, Índice crítico de la literatura hispanoamericana (Mexico City: Editorial Guaranía, 1959), pp. 456-463; John Englekirk and M. Ramos, "La narrativa uruguaya," University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 80(1967), pp. 92-93.

²Para esta sección se han usado las obras siguientes: Harry Belevan, Teoría de lo fantástico (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1976); Wiltold Ostrowski, "The Fantastic and Realistic in Literature," Zagadnienia Rodzajow Literackich, Vol. 9, No. 1(1966), pp. 54-71; Tzvetan Todorov, The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre, Trad. Richard Howard (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975); y Louis Vax, Arte y literatura fantásticas (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires, 1965).

³Felisberto Hernández, "El acomodador," en Nadie encendía las lámparas (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1947). pp. 41-64.

⁴_____, "Muebles 'El Canario'," en Nadie encendía las lámparas, pp. 159-163.

⁵_____, "La mujer parecida a mí," en Nadie encendía las lámparas, pp. 91-110.

⁶Vax, pp. 26-28.

⁷Alberto Zum Felde, p. 456.

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WOMEN IN FORCA'S THEATRE:

TWO PERSPECTIVES

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Those who are familiar with Garcia Lorca's major plays know that considered as a whole, they constitute what may be called "a woman's theatre." This designation is especially true of the trilogy of so-called rural tragedies written in the last years of his life: Bodas de sangre (1933), Yerma (1934), and La casa de Bernarda Alba (1936), together with a coetaneous production, Dona Rosita la soltera (1935). Not only is the protagonist of each play a woman, but other female characters abound. The extreme example in this respect is La casa de Bernarda Alba, in which not one man appears on stage.

This paper analyzes the role of women within Lorca's theatre from two perspectives based on a study of the above four works. First, the plays may be seen as an indictment of Spanish society, which unjustly expects the female to be inferior to the male. Second, a more universal and symbolic interpretation is possible, that of woman's important part within nature and the cosmos. The purpose here is to show that both interpretations are valid; if one searches for messages or meanings in an individual work, one may find them on both levels. Thus, as with most of Lorca's art, it is not a question of "either/or" but of "both/and." To conform to the limitation of time, discussion will be concentrated on three plays within each category, with emphasis on La casa de Bernarda Alba as a social document and Bodas de sangre as a symbolic work.

Lorca's strongest attack against Spanish society is in La casa de Bernarda Alba, the "drama de mujeres en los pueblos de España" that became the first of his plays to be seen in Franco Spain, in 1950. The cast of characters page anticipates Lorca's intent and the substandard conditions of the household. Bernarda is more common as a masculine name in Spain, Bernardo. The daughters are Angustias, "anguished;" Magdalena, "weeping;" Amelia, "honeyed;" Martirio, "martyred;" and Adela, "striving." And the servant is La Poncia, "embittered." Also, the statement hat "el poeta advierte que estos tres

actos tienen la intención de un documental fotográfico" indicates Lorca's desire to portray reality as he saw it in his country. Indeed, the models were neighbors of the poet living near Valderrubio, especially the Francisca Alba family, whom he carefully observed from a hiding place near his well. And critics today consider the play a microcosm of Spanish society because of its depiction of the role that women must play in twentieth century Spain.¹

La casa de Bernarda Alba attacks the traditional Spanish honor code best known through its treatment by Golden Age dramatists, in particular Calderón. Briefly stated, the code demands strict adherence to a standard of conduct accepted by society. Public opinion determines guilt or innocence; and if a woman's real or alleged misconduct sullies her husband's honor, he must avenge himself by punishing the guilty parties, specifically his wife, and her lover if the circumstances warrant. In La casa de Bernarda Alba Lorca shows the effect of that repressive code upon modern society, and by extension, the negative effect of tradition upon contemporary Spanish life. Bernarda represents the exaggerated self-righteousness that the forced system of conduct can produce in one whose life is dominated by appearances, upon which her family's moral worth depends. Her role as a tyrant becomes even more ludicrous when one searches in vain for a more immediate, rational cause of her actions and beliefs. Although Lorca concentrates the nefarious effect of the code upon the five daughters, his wish to present the entire female population of the village on stage suggests that his point was, and still is, that all Spanish women must thereby suffer.²

Bernarda asserts her authority with her first utterance, "Silencio." Throughout the play she expresses her absurd concept of morality, which is nothing more than complete obedience to the code, without benefit of thought. Examples include her unwillingness to believe that Agustia's fiancé has been seeing Adela, her contention that she cannot find men suitable to marry the other daughters, her urging that an unmarried mother be killed without a trial, the house arrest of her own mother, and her constant scolding of the daughters and servants. The caricature reaches its zenith of hypocrisy in the last scene when Adela, thinking that Pepe is dead, hangs herself. Bernarda

insists that the rebellious daughter has died a virgin, allowing her to be buried with the traditional white shroud. She then screams, "Silencio," ending the play with the first word she spoke. Thus, not only are the beginning and the end joined verbally, but there is no rebuttal to Bernarda's arguments and consequently, no escape from the honor code.

In a conversation with Bernarda's daughters, La Poncia warns all nubile Spanish women of the eventual misery they may find in marriage: "A vosotras que sois solteras os conviene saber de todos modos que el hombre a los quince días de boda deja la cama por la mesa y luego por la tabernilla y la que no se conforme se pudre llorando en un rincón" (Acto II). Doña Rosita la soltera, the last of his plays that Lorca saw performed in Spain (Barcelona, 1935), treats the plight of the spinster from a different point of view. Like many young Spanish ladies, Rosita has been conditioned to see fiancés as modern day knights in shining armor, protectors of frail females, idealized personages propagated by the tradition of honor and faith. Consequently, she naively believes her cousin's promise to marry her, even after he has taken a wife in Argentina. As time passes from 1885 to 1901 and finally to 1911, Rosita realizes too late that she is a victim of time, which hovers about her throughout the play. Like Madame Ranevsky in Chekhov's Cherry Orchard, to which Lorca's play bears a strong resemblance, she must finally abandon the home. She is now forty-six years old and motherless in a provincial atmosphere that worships procreation. A perfect Spanish woman according to the accepted standard of her time and place, Rosita has obeyed society's laws, only to be cast aside by the society to whose rules she has remained faithful. To accept her role in life dutifully, to be properly feminine, and to live honorably have brought Rosita only hopelessness and despair.

Whereas many Spaniards consider this play an unnecessarily strong attack against the middle class, Lorca obviously intended it to be a realistic portrayal of an unfortunate segment of his country's population. Or to paraphrase a line from a well known stage play, "God help us; we're both from

Granada." Like Rosita as she prepares to leave the house for the final time, he undoubtedly could say from personal observation and with conviction, ". . . comprendo muy bien a esas viejecillas borrachas que van por las calles queriendo borrar el mundo, y se sientan a cantar en los bancos del paseo."

Yerma deals also with the problems of a childless woman, and the honor code ridiculed in La casa de Bernarda Alba figures prominently in the play. Here, the concept of maternity is carried to its extreme, as Yerma is so obsessed by motherhood that it becomes her sole purpose in life. Although it is never stated or proven that she or Juan is sterile, she reasons that her husband cannot provide children while everyone and everything about her is fertile, as the populace expects them to be: the fields, including Juan's; other women, one of whom has had fourteen children; and especially her closest friend María, who bears her first child during the play.

As both Yerma's obsession and her frustration grow, the honor code stands as a obstacle to personal satisfaction and fulfillment. Conception is possible through Yerma and Juan's friend, Victor, or a young man, whose mother offers him to Yerma. But honor will not permit her to bear children outside the accepted norms of hold wedlock. Yerma asks the Vieja, "¿Te figuras que puedo conocer otro hombre? ¿Dónde pones mi honra?" (Acto III, Cuadro II). And her desire for natural birth rejects Juan's suggestion of adoption, since, "No quiero cuidar hijos de otros. Me figuro que se van a helar los brazos de tenerlos." (Acto II, Cuadro II). Like a stereotyped husband from a seventeenth century honor play, Juan brings his two sisters to the home to discourage his wife from acting scandalously. Following this blatant intrusion upon her privacy, Yerma's frustration steadily increases until she chokes Juan to death in a fit of rage. In the end, her strong desire to beget life can give only death.

The common feature of these plays is the contemporary Spanish woman's needless suffering in and because of a society that deviates from a rational pattern of social relationship. Lorca's works show that the principal cause of this situation has been the acceptance of the honor code, which relegates women to a servile, degrading position whether in the villages, as in the

trilogy, or in the cities, as in Rosita's case. The insanity is both deeply rooted and complete in its extensiveness, and the ironies are as cruel as they are obvious. Women who must base their worth on producing children often live in fear of extinction. Social convention not only stifles productiveness but prohibits true and sincere family relationships, when the code's raison d'être is to protect that basic unit. Women are expected to limit their activities and opinions; and frustration, especially sexual, is rampant in a country proud of its individualism. In the final analysis, all hope of true human dignity is irrevocably lost in a nation that expects automatic subservience of half its population because of the continued existence of an archaic system of morality.

The second role of women in Lorca's plays is one within nature in the widest sense of the word. In this respect, the best point of departure is that expressed by C. Michael Wells in his discussion of "The Natural Norm in the Plays of Federico García Lorca:" "(The touchstone of his plays is) natural existence--life that gives full expression to primal, instinctual vitality (and) which opposes . . . unnatural behavior."³ Nature, which is supreme, demands a certain rhythm and conduct of life on the part of the human being. Any deviation from the norm contradicts nature's laws and, consequently, leads to personal tragedy. Again, the distaff side of the human family best exemplifies this fundamental fact of life in Lorca's plays; and the woman must therefore bear the full impact of the resultant tragedy.

Doña Rosita la soltera treats one of the favorite themes of the Generation of '98, time. Rosita's crime against nature is her failure to follow the dictates of time, one aspect of the natural norm that Wells analyzes. By artificially suspending time, she violates nature's dictum that one dares not postpone indefinitely what must fructify naturally at any particular moment. The result is that her natural sexual life is smothered; and she, like the mutable rose, faces a type of premature death. One understands the housekeeper's protest against the suggested proxy marriage between the Sobrino and Rosita. To remain within the horticultural

vocabulary suggested by the subtitle, "el lenguaje de las flores," such a union is grafting, an unnatural act. At the end of the play, when she faces reality squarely, Rosita is not just another spinster scorned by a devious fiancé and a ridiculous Granadine society, but also a mythical figure:

"Rosita is not just every woman. She is Everyman, caught in an existential struggle to create a meaningful life against the limitations of time".⁴ Upon abandoning the house, the pathetic heroine perhaps realizes this as she reflects upon the only gift, and that a cruel one, that time has given her: "Como que no hay cosa más viva que un recuerdo. Llegan a hacernos la vida imposible."

Yerma deals with the lex maxima of nature, fruitfulness, and the protagonist illustrates the punishment that one must suffer for failing to fulfill that dictum. God's command to all living things on Earth in Genesis I, 22-24 is "Be fruitful and multiply . . . Let the Earth bring forth the living creature after his kind." Within the grand scheme, the human being's greatest obligation is to perpetuate life through the act of reproduction. Yerma's tragedy results from her inability to perform the fundamental mission that nature has assigned her, to bear children, when in her mind even stones procreate: "A fuerza de caer la lluvia sobre las piedras éstas se ablandan y hacer crecer jaramangos" (Acto I, Cuadro I). Furthermore, Yerma sees human impregnation as a divine event. Her dream, in which a shepherd leads a child by the hand, may be interpreted as a type of Annunciation, which is also suggested when María (the name is important) refers to her child as "un palomo de lumbre" (Acto I, Cuadro I).

But the divine does not favor Yerma, her allusion to the possibility of parthenogenesis merely evades the reality of human reproduction, and she remains barren in an environment that abhors barrenness. The punishment for her sin is manifest in the strangulation of Juan, thereby ending any hope of ever bearing children. Her last words are, "Voy a descansar sin despertarme sobresaltada, para ver si la sangre me anuncia otra sangre nueva. Con el cuerop seco para siempre . . . He matado a mi hijo, yo misma he matado a mi hijo!" As a corollary, Juan must die since by his actions

and thoughts, seemingly motivated by greed, he has denied life, a capital sin within the natural world. But the tragedy lies most upon Yerma, the female who was unable to perform fully her role within nature, a crime that in Lorca's primitive world allows no mercy and no appeal.

The fundamental struggle in nature that Lorca portrays in Bodas de sangre is that of the preservation of the species within evolution vis-a-vis the threat to its continuous existence on the part of an individual, or individuals.⁵ The former aspect is represented by the Madre, the Novio, the Padre, and the villagers who attend the wedding and the wedding feast. The mother is especially important in this respect. Haunted by the fear of extinction, she is ". . . símbolo continuo de la tierra: fecunda en su don de amor; inagotable en su absorción de dolor; eterna en su función creadora. . ."6 The Novia and Leonardo, on the other hand, symbolize individuation, which insures endless death.

Considered in its mythical aspect, the play carefully proceeds from the presentation of the theme, expressed by the mother's desire to perpetuate her seed, to the wedding, the promise of rebirth within the communion of nature, to the reception-feast, with its act of individuation (the escape of the Novia and Leonardo), and finally to the ritual sacrifice, in which the two men are killed. Through the species, nature can guarantee continued life, in this play in the person of the Novio, the Summer King, guarantor of warmth and reproduction. Leonardo is the Winter King, he of the frozen hoofs of the horse mentioned in the lullaby of Act I, the one who can lead only to death. As the title suggests, there is a war within the blood as to which road to select. Overcome by a passion they do not entirely comprehend, Leonardo and the Novia choose individuation. When the villagers join in the dance at the wedding feast, the dance of life on the universal plane, she cannot do so, because "estos pasos son pasos que cuestan mucho" (Acto II, Cuadro II). She cannot join the race, the community, the tribe, the species. Her subsequent escape with Leonardo is a visible threat to the species, and punishable by death for its welfare. Knowing that both Leonardo and her husband are dead, the Novia understands that her tragic choice has led her to ruin:

"Yo era una mujer quemada, llena de llagas por dentro y por fuera, y tu hijo era un poquito de agua de la que esperaba tierra, salud; pero el otro era un río oscuro, lleno de ramas que acercaba a mí el rumor de sus juncos y su cantar entre dientes . . . Yo no quería, ¡býele bien! Yo no quería."

One may speculate ad infinitum about Lorca's choice to create so many female protagonists. Some suggestions have been his devotion to his mother and sister, his debt to talented actresses such as María Guerrero and Marta Xirgu, his observation of the relative independence of American women during his residence in New York City, his homosexuality, and the Spaniards' strong attachment to the cult of the Virgin Mary. All are probably valid to a point. But on the basis of the two perspectives presented in this paper, it is first of all obvious that Lorca felt strongly the injustices of a system that stifled and humiliated women in Spain, as summarized earlier. He saw the need to incorporate that unsatisfactory status quo into his dramas in the tradition of availing oneself of national material in one's literary works. Whether the renewed interest in Lorca's works will help correct disparities during the post-Franco wave of liberalism remains to be seen. One must consider as powerful deterrents the strength of tradition and the conservative attitude (or should we say, lamentation?) that to allow women to vote under democracy is to encourage them to ask for even more liberties.

Secondly, in the primitive, mythical world presented in his plays and poetry, the poet-dramatist reasoned that the female especially represents the tragic side of life in its fullest form. Thus, issues such as the preservation of the species v. individuation, reproduction v. barrenness, and natural fruition v. artificial suspension of time are best presented dramatically by permitting the female to bear the major portion of the tragedy. It is hoped that this study has shown that both roles--women in society and women in the cosmos--were grist for Lorca's dramas and could be combined therein. Thus, not only are both aspects important in his plays, but both interpretations are logical in any given work. As Lorca saw the world, in the nation or in nature, "Woman, thy name is tragedy," whether the last word is defined in its literary sense or used as a synonym for ill fate in the greater drama of life.

NOTES

¹Raymond A. Young, "García Lorca's La casa de Bernarda Alba: A Microcosm of Spanish Culture," Modern Languages, 50, 2(June 1969), 66-72.

²The appearance of 200 mourners is analyzed by Sumner M. Greenfield in "Poetry and Stagecraft in La casa de Bernarda Alba," Hispania, 38, 4(December 1955), 459-460.

³Hispanic Review, 38, 3(July 1970), 299.

⁴Arthur Holmberg, "Five Years After Franco, Lorca is Alive Again in Spain," The New York Times, Theatre, October 19, 1980, 3.

⁵Many of these ideas are included in R.A. Zimbardo's penetrating study, "The Mythical Pattern in Lorca's Blood Wedding," Modern Drama, 10, 4(February 1968), 364-371. The article analyzes the play's structure as an archetypal pattern of tragedy.

⁶Betty Rita Gómez Lance, "Muerte y vida en el drama de Federico García Lorca," Hispania, 43, 3(September 1960), 377.

THE DYNAMICS OF POETIC PROCESS IN

JOSE DE JESUS SAMPEDRO'S UN (EJEMPLO) SALTO DE GATO PINTO

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Of the various tendencies along which contemporary Mexican poetry is developing, one of the more notable is that which is engaged in an exploration of the limits of poetic language structure. A cursory first reading of Sampedro's poetry would lead the reader to wonder whether the limit has somehow been exceeded. Although the editorial introduction to the work states that the reader can discover with relative ease the sources of Sampedro's poetry (suggested as being culture), the casual reader may experience anything but ease upon being suddenly immersed into a swirling maelstrom of apparently jumbled words, disconnected images, frustrated metaphors, and symbols that never seem to reach the stage of realization. The present work is replete with several forms of semantic distortion and is marked by a complete abandonment of sequential grammar as well as by an apparent disavowal of words as interrelated communication symbols. The poetry does not achieve a modicum of clarity until the reader realizes that the poet is engaged in an exploration of the process of poetization of imagery as it flows from the subconscious into the conscious mind, there to become mixed with the influx of sensory data from exterior reality.

Sampedro, a young poet from Zacatecas, has published one previous work, Andar en la palabra, in a collective work entitled Crónicas de viaje, which appeared in 1975 in the journal Punto de Partida. As such, the present volume, Un (ejemplo) salto de gato pinto, represents the poet's first major work and is one for which he won the Premio Nacional de Poesía in 1975.¹ The volume is composed of fifty five poems of diverse length, preceded by a poetic prose selection entitled "ragtime" which in its own right is preceded by a poem of Guillaume Apollinaire translated into Spanish as "Los cólquicos." Appropriately it is Apollinaire who, as Fernández Moreno stated, "pregonó textualmente la destrucción de la sintaxis."² The body of poetry is divided into five major sections, with one poem, "después de todo," set apart as an

epilogistic statement. The title of the work springs from the poem, "solitude (muy adentro)":

.....

la conciencia encuentra su adversario: yo espejismo
 giramos hélice membrillo rajadura acuosa (día)
 un ejemplo salto de gato pinto
 la muerte dentadura de diamante
 la nube su liebre de designio su otro precipicio

.....

As a point of departure the poet proposes two central images that serve as statements concerning the poetic process. The first, taken from Apollinaire, is that of a cow grazing in a peaceful autumn meadow: a patently static scene with the images organized into an integrated unit. It is autumn however, and the meadow is poisoned by saffron flowers that lead to the destruction of the peaceful (and soulful) cow. Thus the poem, "Contribución a la perplejidad manifiesta de la última vaca que abandona para siempre este prado florido de otoño," is an accurate depiction of the image structure of the poems in the present volume:

un oboe cuenta su prelude de ozono
 rebota una cáscara violeta sin remedio
 amanece flor después en tu corpiño tenue
 combinación de grillo y mataperro basta
 la vaca paciende se derrumba intocada
 su rabo madura dulce o fatídico de música
 el firmamento ha metido su armónica filosa
 nuestro prado florece en esta ruina
 y es como si yo también lo abandonara

The traditional poetic meadow (poetic scene, poetic sentiment) is laid waste, this however does not signal the death of the poetic process. As the poet makes clear in the last two lines of verse, any implied abandonment of the poetic enterprise is only apparent as is made clear by the contrary to fact clause. Furthermore, the unexpectedly lucid syntactic structure of these last two lines underscore the poet's affirmation.

The poet then contrasts this wasteland scene with his second major imagistic statement: that of the curious cat meandering about sniffing here and there. The scene has acquired a dynamic quality and is populated

by a variety of diverse images. What the cat turns up is a diverse conglomerate of things in which the only connecting and common element is the cat itself. As to the meaning of the image of the cat, a possible suggestion is found in the poem "Ópera":

saliendo del metro rilke te encuentra
 en ragnon un muerto lo ha leído tiene un gato
 (garabato)
 atado a un cordel

The cat is assigned the meaning of "garabato" through an alliterative metonymic twist and is then set into a structure that is suggestive of a stream of images "un cordel" upwelling from the subconscious "el metro." Stated in concrete terms, the poet thus views his sphere of action, not as a peaceful meadow, but rather as the dynamic outflow of impressionistic and surrealist images from the subconscious mind. Sampedro in "ragtime" had already stated that "el inconsciente aparece como categoría poética" (p. 15).

At this juncture one is reminded of Gabriel Zaid's acerbic statement, to wit, that "un poema es otra cosa que un garabato subjetivo."³ Zaid bases his observation on the demands placed upon a poet by his readers; that is, when a poet programs (to use Zaid's terminology) a poem that springs from a purely subjective experience and given the author-reader relationship, the poetic statement has to be valid from the standpoint of the reader. If this demand for validity of poetic statement is not met the result is extremely hermetic poetry. The content of one mind, revealed directly to another without the intermediary rationalization provided by syntactical structure, lacks the points of reference obvious to the originator of the attempted communication. The poetic theme is then lost in a welter of caotic images that communicate nothing more than an amorphous psychic event of unknown significance. And as Fernández Moreno has pointed out, "el surrealismo tiende a ser poesía sin tema, o, mejor dicho, poesía con un solo tema masivo, global, confuso, incesante: el acaecer psíquico" (p. 129). With this in mind it becomes clear that no specific theme can be isolated and shown to develop through Sampedro's work; rather, the reader is purposely subjected to a

continual stream of disconnected images that never reach the level of metaphor. The poet does speak of the necessity for the "liquidación de la metáfora" (p. 17) after which nothing is to remain, except of course that which has been salvaged from the ruin of traditional poetics (by the curious cat) and in which each image is its own isolated theme.

By his statement that images upwelling from the subconscious form a poetic category Sampedro raises a provocative question; that being, in just what manner is the outflow of the subconscious mind poetic? In narrative fiction the utilization of the Freudian unconscious serves a clear purpose: the construction and elaboration of character as well as an explanation of patterns of behavior, but in poetry one is left with amorphous psychic events expressed by means of surrealist images of unknown significance. A detailed search for an adequate answer may tend to lead one down any one of several labyrinthine blind alleys and to proclaim in despair that poetry is what poets do and leave it at that. However one possible major response is to appeal to that much quoted and often abused final line found in Archibald MacLeish's "ars poetica," that "a poem should not mean / But be." With this statement the discourse concerning poetic enunciation is elevated from one category (poetry as meaning) to another (poetry as being). The "becoming," the poetic process itself, then assumes primacy. Once the art process itself is concentrated upon, Sampedro's poetry falls into a clearer pattern than is immediately evident when trying to divine the "meaning" of any given poem. The poet does stress process when he states that "la revelación del inconsciente freudiano se llama también poema. Su estructura depende de lo casual: de lo necesario" (p. 16). That is, stress is placed upon process and structure rather than upon any given static theme as being the goal or "raison d'être" of the artistic statement. In the end, it is art speaking to and about itself.

To speak of process and structure in verbal art is to emphasize relationships that appear principally in the form of syntax. But syntax is an exterior pattern placed upon thought as it is formulated in enunciated form. The mind however does not necessarily function along a lineal, syntactical

and structured pattern-like manner: were that so, we would all be master novelists and the concept of the struggle toward expression would have no meaning. On the contrary, the mind generates thought holistically. The poet views his enterprise as an attempt to capture and exteriorize this pristine holistic quality of thought and imagery as it is first formed at the conscious level and before the attempt is made to exteriorize it in a rational manner by means of syntactical lineality. In the poem "quirófano" Sampedro states:

en el fondo de ti la muerte no tiene sitio
 por eso niego la sintaxis absoluta donde la palabra
 es cúmulo
 del signo:

That is, syntax signals the death of poetic perception, the solidification of fleeting thought or image into a fixed and ultimately fossilized form: words as fossils of thought. The sudden appearance of a syntactically constructed statement within the body of the poem serves as a major poetic statement of purpose. The poet explicitly states that he seeks the elimination of syntax in order to divine the poetic content hidden therein. Furthermore, a quirófano is a surgical operating room with a surrounding spectator gallery, so that what is being operated upon and being broken down into its constituent parts is language itself and particularly poetic language. Once this is done what is left is a conglomerate of images not yet formed into a metaphorical construct. The poet, once he performs his "quirófanic" operation upon language structure is left with what at first glance appears to be an amorphous jumble of isolated words and images. But not really, for the finished poem represents one frame of time--one moment frozen--of the dynamic influx of data from all sensory input channels, from the subconscious as well as from exterior reality, before the mind or the neocortex has the opportunity to categorize the flood of data and assign each item a ranking of importance or value within a syntactical structure. The reader is faced with what could be called verbal cubism; that is, Sampedro presents all at once all facets of a given moment of thought without the mediating process of the neocortex, or of the superego, if you will.

Of course Sampedro's poems are not merely the poet's annotation of

images and symbols as they flow out of the unconscious on the one hand and into the sensory channels, there to mix with images inflowing from exterior reality on the other. The result of such a purely unmediated process would not necessarily be artistic and would be akin to putting down on paper the product of a state of dream-like reverie. Rather, as Albert Rothenberg has stated in his study of the creative process, "the creator consciously uses the mechanisms and processes characteristic of dream thought and dreaming for the purpose of abstracting, conceptualizing, and concretizing as well as reversing the effects of unconscious censorship."⁴ The problem of how to circumvent the censoring mechanism of the rational mind, of the neocortex or the superego is a serious one to which Sampedro has devoted serious discussion in "ragtime" as well as illustrated in several poems. In "aprehensión" this problem is clearly drawn:

represivo caimán
 irse de ti muy temprano o
 meterse dentro de un azogue duro irte de mí
 puedes oírme
 afuera un ritmo de botas de soldado
 una bayoneta se clava
 en la puerta y cede
 entran a nuestra casa te despiertas

rompen tu sueño desbaratan el poema

A repressed, threatening image, the "represivo caimán" from the R-complex of the brain, the site of non-rational, instinctive behavior, addresses the conscious mind "puedes oírme." The problem immediately faced by the poet is that of how to handle the image: to reject it out of hand "irse de ti muy temprano" or to attempt to subject and control the image by moulding it into a traditional poetic form "dentro de un azogue duro." But before the poet can act, the apprehension caused by the forbidden image provokes the censoring mechanism to act manifesting itself in the form of soldiers with fixed bayonets who invade the poetic process "nuestra casa" in search of what is prohibited and in the process ruin the nascent poem.

The process of censorship can be seen equally well in the poem "José revueltas: apando" in which an entire series of images of pure

ánfora de niebla bufido
 ideamos un puente cruza aguafuerte
 permanente melancolía orangután inútil tinaja
 de astros
 donde respira un pájaro tonto
 contraabajo rinde cercado en 0 dispositivo crítico
 de zona
 desesperanza resguarda
 excelente maniobra digo mientras beatles
 un durazno sogá de cargador entiende

The poem begins with the sudden appearance of a classic image of perfect form that just as quickly evaporates, calling forth a physical reaction of disgust on the part of the poet. Immediately the poet deliberately proposes the image of a bridge over water to lead into the world of artistic form symbolized by the image a painting or etching: "ideamos un puente cruza aguafuerte." Again the poet experiences failure in his attempt to weld into an aesthetic unit the two disparate zones or categories: human nature--the earthiness of the "tinaja" and the spiritual or ethereal qualities of the "astros." While the earthiness knows itself, is self-aware "permanente melancolía orangután" the ethereal is oblivious to selfhood "donde respira un pájaro tonto." From the artistic world of sculpture and of painting, both of which partake of earthy materials and so fail, the author goes into and experiences the artistic world of pure sound, seeing this as a last ditch attempt at rescuing the aesthetic category. But while the artist is congratulating himself for his success, the pure round sound of the counterbass degenerates into the image of an earthy element "un durazno" under the pressure of the image of the music of the beatles. Again art is tied to the corruptibility of the human condition "soga de cargador," and with this the poet reaches a stage of understanding of the art process. With this understanding the battle lines are drawn more clearly, and the poem struggles through some 45 more lines of point and counterpoint.

Of course what is important in the poem is the process of development. By his elimination of syntactical structure, of commas, capitalization, of grammatical sequentiality the poet is attempting to communicate the holistic, global quality of the images as they appear of a once on the

surface of perception.

Naturally there is a name for this process of creative thought. The resultant images in Sampedro's poetry illustrate what Albert Rothenberg has characterized as the prime ingredients of the creative process. The first is what Rothenberg has called Janusian thinking; that is, "actively conceiving of two or more opposite or antithetical ideas, images, or concepts simultaneously" in an attempt to transcend sequentiality.⁵ The second major category is homospatial thinking; that is, the "conceiving of two or more discrete entities occupying the same space" in an attempt to transcend differentiation.⁶

In summation, Sampedro in his poetry is dealing with the rupture of syntax and metaphor, with an attempt to capture the flow, or better yet, the simultaneity of imagery as it wells up from the subconscious mind and before the thinking and reasoning mind, the neo-cortex, warps it into the regimented and lineal form of enunciated expression. The non-lineality of Sampedro's work represents an attempt to break the lineality of thought as exposed in written form. But the stream-of-consciousness technique and the strictures imposed by the written presentation of thought processes nevertheless situate the images that flow from the subconscious into a lineal form. The problem then, is how to capture the non-lineal aspect of the presentation of images as they spring forth, for they do not flow one after the other so much as appear on the surface of the conscious mind all of a once. The poet, in an attempt to capture this experience, breaks the syntactical patterns, eliminates signs of punctuation, liquidates the tendency toward metaphorization, and intersperses one disconnected image within another when the tendency toward metaphorization shows signs of attempting to develop. The technique used by the poet to accomplish this illustrates Janusian and homospatial thinking at its most pure.

We are faced with nothing less than the artists continual struggle with form, and it seems that the contemporary poet has concluded that once the poetic imagery is fixed into form it loses a greater part of that quality that makes it poetry--that which is ineffable slips through the net of form, of syntax and sequentiality of thought.

NOTES

¹José Jesús Sampedro. Un (ejemplo) salto de gato pinto (México: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, S.A., 1976).

²César Fernández Moreno. Introducción a la poesía (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1962). p. 74.

³Gabriel Zaid. La máquina de cantar (México: Siglo XXI Editores, 1970). p. 29

⁴Albert Rothenberg. The Emerging Goddess: The Creative Process in Art, Science and Other Fields (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979). p. 41.

⁵Rothenberg, p. 55.

⁶Rothenberg, p. 69.

BORGES Y EL CRIOLLISMO

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El presente tema ha sido objeto de discusión y sigue siéndolo por parte de los críticos. Los que lo atacan se basan en que Borges hace una literatura de escape, irreal, y en que sus relatos son deshumanizados, para una élite intelectual. Por otra parte, otros lo defienden por ser un escritor que traseiende lo particular al usar temas de talla universal, válidos para todo ser humano en cualquier tiempo y espacio. Dado su enorme cultura y su interés por la filosofía, la teología, las lenguas, la historia, la literatura, le consideran uno de los más grandes genios de la literatura escrita en español. Borges ha ejercido enorme influencia en los autores de la "nueva narrativa hispanoamericana".

Es mi propósito en la presente conferencia exponer ese mundo argentino que aparece en la obra literaria de Borges, a través de su poesía, sus ensayos, sus cuentos y a través de su vida.

Borges nace en Buenos Aires, el 24 de agosto de 1899, de familia de clase alta, de descendencia portuguesa, española e inglesa. Sus dos abuelos fueron militares que lucharon en Junín por la independencia de Argentina; su abuela era inglesa y la madrastra educaba al niño Borges in inglés hasta los nueve años de edad, cuando comenzó a ir al colegio. El padre era abogado y escritor también y tenía una gran biblioteca donde Borges, de salud delicada, prefirió pasarse el tiempo leyendo.

Ya desde joven, la cultura anglosajona le llama la atención, mientras que lo argentino le recuerda el valor y el coraje de sus antepasados o el lado más primitivo de la vida. Estos serán los dos grandes temas de todas sus obras. Así en el Hacedor nos dice: "Pasé de las mitologías del arrebato, a los juegos con el tiempo y con el infinito."¹ Estos son sus dos grandes temas que se mezclan de una manera u otra en toda su obra.

En 1914 está de vacaciones con su familia en Génova y estalla la Primera Guerra Mundial y se ven obligados a permanecer allí, donde terminará su

bachillerato, lee a Kipling, Dickens, Wilde, Poe, James, y Twain. También lee Facundo de Domingo Faustino Sarmiento y las novelas del escritor popular argentino sobre el gaucho Eduardo Gutiérrez. También lee a los franceses Victor Hugo, Flaubert, Daudet, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, y a los ingleses Thomas Carlyle, Thomas de Quincey, G.K. Chesterton y a los alemanes, Shopenhauer, Nietzsche, Heine y a los poetas expresionistas. Finalmente, va a España y se pone en contacto con el movimiento ultraísta, movimiento que reacciona contra la belleza y la conciencia artística modernista, apoyándose en la palabra o mejor en la metáfora, usando versos libres, y temas contemporáneos, no conectan las frases; la metáfora por la metáfora les lleva a veces a la incoherencia.

Después de siete años vuelve a Buenos Aires en 1921, y casi no conoce su ciudad por los cambios sufridos. Se convierte en el líder ultraísta, pero se diferencia de sus colegas en que no abusa de la metáfora, y en que le atrae el pasado de Argentina, siente nostalgia por el pasado y a su vez le preocupan los problemas metafísicos.

Durante 1921 hasta 1933, Borges escribe en periódicos, publica tres colecciones de poesías y ensayos, ayuda a fundar revistas y participa en otras como Prisma, Martín Fierro y Sur. Sobre Buenos Aires dirá: "Calle grande y sufrida, sos el único verso de que sabe mi vida."² Esta poesía de los años veinte se centra en las gentes, las calles y lugares de Argentina. Así en Evaristo Carriego (1930), poeta menor argentino, Borges queda fascinado por la vieja ciudad y sus habitantes, especialmente el "compadrito" que toca la guitarra y canta versos imprevistos y se mezcla fácilmente en la pelea a cuchillo. Al mismo tiempo, se preocupa por el idealismo filosófico, por la filosofía griega y por sus ideas literarias para escribir, ve la posibilidad de lo mágico como ingrediente de sus escritos.

Martín Fierro es la revista en la que Borges participa activamente, en torno a ese ideal y prototipo del argentino. En el ensayo Discusión (1932), Borges habla de los orígenes de la poesía gauchesca, pero Borges distingue claramente entre la realidad histórica del gaucho y la literatura

escrita sobre el gaucho. Generalmente, dice, el gaucho no sabía escribir, esta literatura gauchesca fue escrita por hombres de cultura que se compenetraron en mayor o menor grado con el gauchaje. Borges parte de la hipótesis de que toda literatura es convencional y desde este punto de vista analiza la poesía gauchesca.

El iniciador de la poesía gauchesca, el Adán, es Bartolomé Hidalgo, montevideano. Hidalgo escribió Diálogo entre el capataz Jacinto Chano y el gaucho Ramón Contreras. Hidalgo descubre la entonación del gaucho, el habla, lo cual significa saber quien es; es descubrir una voz y un destino, dice Borges.

Hacia 1841 rompe a cantar en Montevideo el cordobés Hilario Ascasubi, precursor borroso de Hernández y precursor directo de Estanislao del Campo. Ascasubi se propone describir directamente los lugares por los que atraviesa el gaucho y las diferentes situaciones. No hay el arrastre del destino en sus líneas que hay en el Martín Fierro, hay esa despreocupada y dura inocencia de los hombres de acción, huéspedes de la aventura, agrupados bajo un caudillo que no les cohorta su libertad y su valentía, cuyo destino era la guitarra insolente del compadrito y los fogones de la tropa.

El Fausto fue escrito por Estanislao del Campo, que peleó con los unitarios, junto a uno de los abuelos de Borges. Ha sido criticado el Fausto de ignorancia y falsedad y porque no hay una queja real de la condición del gaucho abusado por los jueces. Se dice que no pertenece a la realidad argentina, pero ésto a Borges no le importa, pues un verso siempre es un verso. Repite Borges que todo arte es convencional, así como la payada biográfica de Martín Fierro. Según Borges, lo que más le atrae de el Fausto es la clara amistad que trasluce el diálogo. El Fausto no pertenece a la realidad argentina, pertenece, como el tango, como el truco, como Irigoyen, a la mitología argentina.

Don Antonio Lussich publicó Los Tres Gauchos Orientales en Buenos Aires en 1872. Este libro es una anticipación evidente del Martín Fierro de José Hernández que leyó la obra poco antes. Esta obra profetiza de manera

esporádica los rasgos diferenciales del Martín Fierro.

Finalmente, José Hernández, federalista frente a los unitarios, escribe Martín Fierro. Leopoldo Lugones y Ricardo Rojas revalorizan el poema y lo convirtieron en materia de interés académico. Lugones en el Payador, 1916, lo eleva a la categoría de epopeya, al modo de las epopeyas clásicas.

Ezequiel Martínez Estrada en Muerte y transfiguración de Martín Fierro, 1948, hace un análisis desde un punto de vista psicológico del autor y de la realidad argentina, a través del texto mismo del poema. Frente a estas y todas las desgracias de que es víctima esa clase desheredada de Argentina, Borges en Martín Fierro, 1953, ha reconocido aspectos inadvertidos del poema, pero lo ha incluido sorprendentemente, dentro del género novelesco. El Martín Fierro es para Borges una novela en verso, pues la verdadera ética criolla está en el relato. El poema está narrado en forma autobiográfica en primera persona. Hernández intenta contar la historia de Martín Fierro de forma instintiva y premeditada, cuyo tema sería, según Borges, la narración del paisano, o el contar.

Posteriormente, con Lugones y Güiraldes, la poesía gauchesca tiende hacia la novela y se hace costumbrista. El gaucho es cantado como peón del campo, pues aumenta la inmigración y se cercan los campos. El gaucho se convertirá en "matrero" como don Segundo Sombra que no se detiene ante los alambrados, o por otra parte, el gaucho se hace resentido y duro en el "compadrito orillero" altivo ante la ley, con el coraje como norma y con un sentimiento de la honra mal entendida, que le lleva a adoptar una actitud machista.

Según Borges en "El escritor argentino y la tradición", de la colección de ensayos llamada Discusión (1932), no cree que el Martín Fierro sea la biblia o el libro canónico de Argentina frente a Lugones. La idea de que la poesía argentina debe abundar en rasgos diferenciales argentinos y en color local le parece una equivocación. Lo verdaderamente nativo puede y de hecho suele prescindir del color local. Según Borges, la tradición argentina es toda la cultura occidental y el patrimonio de todo escritor argentino debe ser

el universo, ensayar todos los temas, y no concretarse sólo a lo argentino.

Por otra parte, en "Nuestro pobre individualismo", incluido en Otras Inquisiciones (1937-1952), Borges define los rasgos esenciales del argentino: "El argentino, a diferencia de los americanos del Norte y de casi todos los europeos, no se identifica con el Estado. Tal vez debido a que en este país los gobiernos suelen ser pésimos o debido a que el Estado es una abstracción, algo impersonal, y el argentino sólo concibe una relación personal. Por eso, robar dineros públicos no es un crimen. Lo cierto es que el argentino es un individuo no un ciudadano. El mundo para el europeo es un cosmos, pero para el argentino, el mundo es un caos. El argentino siente que el universo es sólo una manifestación del azar; la filosofía no le interesa, la ética tampoco. Lo social se reduce para él a un conflicto de individuos o de clases o de naciones, en el que todo es lícito, salvo ser escarnecido o vencido. El héroe popular es el hombre sólo que pelea con la partida, ya en acto, (Fierro, Moreira, Hormiga Negra), ya en potencia o en el pasado como don Segundo Sombra."³

Como bien sabemos el mundo visto como un caos y como laberinto representa la cosmovisión de la ficción en Borges, por lo cual, éste al describir literatura fantástica, da expresión a lo argentino por antonomasia. "Profundamente lo confirma una noche de la literatura argentina: esa desesperada noche en la que un sargento de policía rural gritó que no iba a consentir el delito de que se matara a un valiente y se puso a pelear contra sus soldados, junto al desertor Martín Fierro."⁴ Se refiere Borges a su cuento "Biografía de Tadeo Isidoro Cruz" incluido en El Aleph. Borges así da expresión a lo argentino desde un plano genérico que puede ser más intenso que lo concreto.

En El hombre de la esquina rosada (1933), Borges da forma literaria a la ciega religión del cuchillero: el coraje. El compadrito hace del coraje su religión y su ley, con sus mitologías, sus mártires y su historia. Su credo es estar listo para matar y para morir. Por otra parte, el cuchillo que para nosotros nos parece abominable, es para él, la máxima expresión del valor y de la justicia.

Según Ezequiel Martínez Estrada en Radiografía de la pampa, nos dice: "El hombre de la pampa sintió en carne viva el rigor de la ley antes de comprender-

la. Para su alma dilatada y sin forma, todo lo que significaba traba, persecución prohibición, despojo inapelable, representaba la ley. Consideró a la ley como un nuevo mundo de dificultades escritas que se oponía a su voluntad de triunfar y a su instinto de conservación. Se defendió con el cuchillo y la soledad, campo afuera."⁵

La ley del cuchillo siempre fue más fuerte que la ley escrita. Por lo cual, los autores argentinos vienen a caer en la cuenta de que el caos o la barbarie de que hablaba Sarmiento es la realidad profunda de Argentina, frente a la civilización o educación. De este modo, los autores argentinos buscan la identidad del argentino por el camino del cuchillo, cifra de la realidad argentina.

En el Hacedor (1961) Borges habla del cuchillo o puñal y de su fuerza mágica, bello y cargado de poder que le lleva al desafío, al torpe combate con la hoja sangrienta. Según Freud, el cuchillo es un símbolo fálico, propio del hombre y está íntimamente relacionado con su masculinidad y su afán de dominio sobre otros o sobre la hembra. Por otra parte, el cuchillo es un arma secreta, está relacionada con el sacrificio y la venganza, con la defensa repentina, con la persona que lo lleva; también está relacionado con la serpiente, símbolo de vida y de muerte y psicológicamente representa las fuerzas del instinto del ser humano en contraposición a la espada que representaría el espíritu o la ley.

Toda la historia de Argentina se reduce a un pobre duelo a cuchillo, en la que sus componentes: el cuchillero y el cuchillo, son partes integrantes de una realidad inescapable. De este modo, el cuento titulado "El fin" es la historia a cuchillo entre Martín Fierro y un negro que espera saldar la muerte de su hermano desde hace siete años.

Por otra parte, para el argentino que admira la valentía, la misión del tango es darles a los argentinos la certidumbre de haber sido valientes, de haber cumplido con las exigencias del valor y del honor. El tango le recuerda al argentino su pasado apócrifo, a la vez estoico y orgiástico en el que ha desafiado y peleado, para caer, al fin silencioso, en un oscuro duelo a

cuchillo. Así, uno de sus mejores cuentos, "El Sur", es un viaje a ese pasado apócrifo por parte del protagonista Juan Dahlman que viaja a su estancia en el sur para reponerse de una septicemia o envenenamiento de sangre. Inesperadamente, Dahlman se ve envuelto en un incidente en el almacén, cuando unos compadritos le tiran una bolas de pan. Una vez arriesgado su honor, Dahlman se ve forzado a enfrentarse al provocador. Por otra parte, un gaucho sentado en el suelo, como fuera del tiempo, le tira una daga para que pueda defenderse. El no puede volverse atrás, se siente empujado por el destino y tiene que pelear. El arma justifica que lo maten pero él salvará su honor.

En este cuento vemos dos tipos opuestos de la sociedad argentina, pero ambos sucumben por la ley de la sangre que es más fuerte que ellos; por una parte, está el compadrito ejecutor de esa ley, y por otra, Dahlman que sucumbe según las leyes de ese linaje del sur, defendiendo su honor que lo justifica. Se ha dicho que Dahlman es una imagen velada de Borges, que atrapado entre la dualidad de la cultura anglosajona y el pasado argentino o el lado más primitivo de la vida, se decide por este mismo, por el linaje y el pasado argentino. Por lo cual, Dahlman es una víctima de ese mito fatal: la pelea que mueve la historia de los argentinos.

El argentino no puede elegir su destino, el destino se le impone y le revela una realidad terrible a la que pertenece fatalmente y de la que no puede escapar. El destino es la ley ciega de la historia de Argentina. En "Biografía de Tadeo Isidoro Cruz", nos dice el autor que al gaucho le forman la llanura y la selva y en cualquier parte, pues su destino va con ellos por todas partes, no pueden escapar de él. Tadeo ha matado a uno que se burlaba de él y escapa. Antes de entregarse decide pelear y es herido. Después lucha a favor del ejército, se amanceba, tiene un hijo, recibe una fracción del campo y es nombrado sargento de la policía rural. Hasta que una noche comprendió su destino, comprendió quién era. Al ir a apresar a un malevo se ve a sí mismo. Tadeo Isidoro Cruz tenía la impresión de haber vivido ya ese momento. Cruz comprendió: "Un destino no es mejor que otro, pero todo hombre debe atacar el que lleva dentro. Comprendió su íntimo destino de lobo, no de perro gregario,

comprendió que el otro era él. Cruz no iba a consentir de que se matara a un valiente y se puso a pelear contra los soldados, junto al desertor Martín Fierro.⁶

En el cuento "El muerto" Benjamín Otálora, un hombre del suburbio de Buenos Aires, un triste compadrito con la virtud del coraje, mocetón de frente mezquina, de sinceros ojos claros, de recidumbre vasca, a quien una puñalada feliz le ha revelado que es un hombre valiente, y a quien no le inquieta la muerte de su contrario, ni la inmediata necesidad de huir de la República, busca al líder contrabandista Azevedo Bandeira. Se une al grupo de Azevedo, atraído por el peligro, sin saber de qué lado está la razón y comienza una vida distinta para él; vida nueva, pero que ya está en su sangre. Otálora, movido por la ambición y por una oscura felicidad se propone ascender a jefe contrabandista. El quiere valer más que todos los orientales juntos. Poco a poco llega a suplantar al líder, le toma la mujer, el apero y el colorado y es el jefe por una noche, pues esa misma noche Bandeira y dos hombres lo sorprenden y entonces, "Otálora comprende, antes de morir, que desde el principio lo han traicionado, que ha sido condenado a muerte, que le han permitido el amor, el mando y el triunfo porque ya lo daban por muerto, porque para Bandeira ya estaba muerto."⁷

Finalmente, en el cuento "La intrusa" Borges dramatiza otra faceta del compadrito, "el culto al machismo" en su relación con el amor y la amistad. La acción transcurre en las afueras de Buenos Aires al final del siglo XIX. Los hermanos Nilsen: Cristian y Eduardo son temidos por todo el barrio, siempre andan juntos en peleas y comprometerse con uno es hacerlo con el otro.

Una vez Cristian trajo a vivir con él a Juliana Burgos y pronto la comparten los dos. Pero esta situación no dura mucho, pues ambos están enamorados de ella y tienen celos el uno del otro. Deciden devolverla al prostíbulo pero van a verla a escondidas y deciden llevársela otra vez a su casa. Una tarde, Eduardo encuentra a Cristian haciendo los caballos y preparándolos para ir hacia el sur, salen y Eduardo descubre que su hermano ha matado a Juliana y la llevan a enterrar. Cristian la mató para que no les

creara más problemas. Y termina el cuento: "Se abrazaron, casi llorando. Ahora los ataba otro vínculo: la mujer tristemente sacrificada y la obligación de olvidarla."⁸

La actitud de los Nilsen está guiada por el código machista, con la paradoja final de que es necesario matarla para preservar la amistad.

Borges justifica la realidad de sus narraciones poéticamente o literariamente, no socialmente, y cuando escribe no se refiere sólo a su pasado individual, sino al de todos los argentinos, a lo genérico. Por otra parte, el argentinismo de Borges no reside en la idealización del cuchillero, sino en mostrarnos la cruda verdad del destino argentino. Está de acuerdo Borges en que esta ley ciega es un hecho absurdo o una virtud inútil de funestas consecuencias. De este modo dirá a su abuelo, el coronel Francisco Borges:

Porque eso fue tu vida:
una cosa que arrastran las batallas.
El honor, la tristeza, la soledad
y el inútil coraje.⁹

En El informe de Brodie hay un cuento titulado, "Historia de Rosendo Juárez", donde Borges ofrece una réplica a la violencia del compadre. Este cuento es el reverso de Hombre de la esquina rosada donde el coraje era la religión absoluta del compadre y la cobardía era el pecado más aborrecible. Ahora, veinticinco años después, Borges explica por qué Rosendo se niega a pelear, no por cobardía, sino porque las riñas ahora le dan asco a Rosendo y ha comprendido que el coraje del compadre es un acto ciego que rebaja a sus paisanos a la categoría de animales que se destrozan entre sí.

El argentinismo de Borges reside en haber enfrentado esa realidad en haberla presentado sin adornos localistas y sin genuflexiones nacionalistas.

NOTAS

- ¹Jorge Luis Borges, El hacedor (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, S.A., 1960), pág. 51.
- ²Jaime Alazraki, Poética y poesía de Pablo Neruda, (Nueva York, Las Americas Publishing Co., 1965), pág. 40-41. Los dos versos citados son del poema "Calle con almacén rosado" de Poemas, (1923-1958), pág. 70, de Jorge Luis Borges.
- ³Jorge Luis Borges, "Nuestro pobre individualismo," en su ensayo Otras Inquisiciones (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, S.A., 1964), págs. 51-53.
- ⁴Jorge Luis Borges, "Nuestro pobre individualismo", op. cit., pág. 52.
- ⁵Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, Radiografía de la Pampa, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, S.A., Sexta Edición, 1968), pág. 296.
- ⁶Jorge Luis Borges, "Biografía de Tadeo Isidoro Cruz", (1829-1874), en El Aleph, (Buenos Aires, Emecé Editores, S.A., Alianza Editorial, S.A., Madrid, 1980), pág. 59.
- ⁷Jorge Luis Borges, "El muerto" en El Aleph, op. cit., pág. 36.
- ⁸Jorge Luis Borges, "La intrusa" en El Aleph, op. cit., pág. 180.
- ⁹Jorge Luis Borges, "Al coronel Francisco Borges" en Poemas, 1923-1958, (Buenos Aires, Emecé Editores, S.A., 1962), pág. 83.

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