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**THE GROVE,
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FOREWORD

We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to all those who have contributed to this and previous editions of the Grove, by submitting their articles, reviews, and literary contributions. Without all these valuable academic contributions we certainly would not now be publishing this 12th edition of this journal.

In an attempt to improve the quality of the journal we intend to open the field to contributions from other countries including United States, Canada, and Europe. In addition, in order to facilitate the work of authors in presenting their articles, we are simplifying and unifying the requirements for publication by adopting the norms established by the MLA. With this idea of giving more quality to the journal from now on, the cover will be laminated, which we hope will also make it more durable and more pleasing to handle.

We sincerely hope that this journal will continue to provide a source of inspiration and a meeting point of ideas for those who wish to pursue their studies in the area of English Philology.

The Editor

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POEMS

Frank Sewell (Back Cover)

AN ANALYTICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY STUDY OF MEDIAEVAL ENGLISH DOCUMENTATION

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Abstract

The main purpose of this article is to show that mediaeval palaeography, book-making and calligraphy let us return Middle English works to a context just because each manuscript involves a unique contextualization. A part of the scholars seem to be making use just of critical editions as a basis for their research, to date. Still to be clarified are the implications on research outputs. It is our goal to raise awareness about misinformation and even misinterpretation from scholars avoiding facsimile editions, microfiches or the real manuscript itself.

Dyes, inks, writing materials, book formats, scripts and scribal hands are essential to understanding the original text. Only they can bring to light information impossible to find in a critical edition. This being so, we have considered them important specifics.

We would like to emphasize that where we are able to see handwriting in its ancient and authentic form, we can find information. This being so, the apparatus criticus might not be enough for some researchers. The way out might be found continuing the process of accumulating knowledge by seeking it wherever it might be found, seeking other texts, the extant and real ones, in any appropriate format.

New versions differ from the originals in some six thousand places. They are several times further removed from the originals than the King James Version

Dr. Wilbur Pickering

Trying to learn about mediaeval manuscripts and their scribes, we find that no usable critical editions¹ exist for the purpose of some types of research. Think for instance on looking for the geographical origins of mediaeval England documentation by means of lexicometrics and the analysis of spelling in poetry, on the study of individual scribal hands or on a study of the inks. This being so, we may not avail ourselves of printed information for some types of research since a good part of the spelling system of the extant manuscript may be never integrated into the edition.² Besides, a critical apparatus would leave us wholly dependent on the editors' judgement.

At this point, the researcher may begin to think about palaeography and manuscripts. They may seem enigmatic, far-out and even disagreeable *stuff* for anyone coming to them with a contemporary print making mind. Notwithstanding this, the *unappealing after-effect* can become totally productive, rich and fruitful since it implies a first and last object, a unique production, a one and only manuscript that can be studied on its own by means of microfilms, microfiches, facsimile or digitalized editions, the manuscript itself and so on. In addition, a manuscript is a one-off work of art and it is just because of this that it reveals special, proper, exclusive and distinctive information in the way any other work of art does.

Once we get to know palaeography and calligraphy, we can also learn to place a Mediaeval English text in space and time, and even to assign it to a particular author if we are lucky enough. And this is what has made some researchers remain captivated and fascinated with mediaeval palaeography, book-making³ and calligraphy; it is that it lets us return Middle English works to a context just because each manuscript involves an unrepeated and unique contextualization, because each and every manuscript is an individual and extraordinary work of art. We should not underestimate the efforts and difficulties these artists faced. An effort that has turned to be useful for medievalists since the abiding

¹ There are obviously good critical editions of mediaeval works but when doing research on the place of origin of a manuscript, for instance, they are not totally trustworthy since they do not exactly reproduce original spellings.

² Notwithstanding this, a critical edition and its apparatus criticus might be really useful for academics interested in literary questions because of its rich introduction, the editor's attempt to give a translation and its notes.

³ The term "book-making", and not current "bookbinding", will be used in this paper due to the period we are dealing with.

manuscripts offer at least the following evidence: the linguistic and spelling information within the text, the individual scribal hands and other hands within the text which come in useful not only for ownership studies but also for dialect mixture ones.

It is our aim in this essay to apprise the reader of new forms of art and consequently, of historical explanation, to meet the need. This paper has been regarded as a description of the essential characteristics of book production and calligraphy. It has been planned as an analytical⁴ and descriptive⁵ bibliographic study⁶ of mediaeval England documentation. It is not our goal to suggest avoiding critical editions since they are really useful for some types of studies. However, all the information we are about to describe in this paper can be only brought to light by means of facsimile editions, microfilms, microfiches or the real manuscript itself. This is then, a defence grounded upon the untrustworthiness of texts underlying translations.

It is our hope that those who follow their way through the paper will acquire a clear understanding of the various stages of handwriting as well as of the writing materials. We aim at encouraging readers to see and let themselves become captivated by manuscripts themselves, by this form of art because it is this that reveals knowledge we would not possibly find in an edition. A good part of philological work might be largely accurate had we work with a manuscript instead of a critical edition.⁷ "Palaeography means, in the strict sense, the study of ancient handwriting and [...] [It] studies all aspects of books produced by hand (manuscripts)" (Batley *et al.* 1993). It began with handwriting and has contributed since its beginnings, to the study of texts and consequently, to textual criticism.

Without the contribution of palaeography, our knowledge of the history of scholarship and thought would be much poorer than it is, since we should have to rely for our information about literary traditions mainly on quotations or paraphrases of, and references to, one author by another. (Batley *et al.*, eds. 1993:49)

⁴ Or historical study.

⁵ A branch of analytical bibliography. Its primary function is the physical description of documents.

⁶ The term bibliography is used here to describe documents as physical objects and their production history. It is expanded to include non print media such as microfiche or microfilm.

⁷ For further details on this statement, see McIntosh et al. A Linguistic Atlas of Late mediaeval England.

The basic elements we need to get to know so as to begin the study of palaeography are calligraphy and book-making. Calligraphy dates back to ancient times. It continued to evolve and flourish until the printing press was created in the 15th century. The first letters the Romans wrote were made with a broad nib.⁸ The history of calligraphy can be seen in the many handwritten manuscripts of Mediaeval England. The art of calligraphy flourished about the 6th century since it was then that monks began to be taught the skills that they needed in order to be scribes. The church was the centre of society in England at this time. The monks' duties were strict, they had to work long hours with no talking and distractions, and their task included the reproduction of many manuscripts. Teams of monks spent months and even years, copying and illustrating each copy.

The need for manuscripts increased more and more and about the 8th century and the so-called *itinerant writing master* became, along with the scribe, a main figure in the history of calligraphy. The *itinerant writing master* used to travel quite a lot, offering help, advice and his experience to those who wanted to learn calligraphy. It was about 221 B. C. that paper began its journey to Europe from China, arrived into Islamic countries around 751 and into Spain by the 10th century. Paper came into England after 1300 and it was not manufactured there until 1494, and not widely used until after 1400. As Hector puts it:

Occasional paper documents were reaching England from abroad as early as the reign of Henry III; and after 1300 the new material rapidly became familiar to Englishmen [...]. During the 14th century paper was gradually taken into use in England for the humbler kinds of documents; and by the end of the century paper was gradually taken into use in England for the humbler kinds of documents; and by the end of the century paper is almost as likely as parchment to be the material chosen for household accounts. (1958: 17)

Medieval paper was cheaper than skin. It was not as sturdy as skin, but tougher and thicker than the one we make use of nowadays. Book-making involved copying all the words and illuminating by hand. Practices differ as to bending methods and shapes. We can distinguish four main types of booklets:

⁸ A nib is the point of a sharpened quill.

- (1) The roll, a piece of parchment or paper that may be rolled up, was mainly used in old times but also for medieval texts in England.
- (2) The *bifolium* booklet consists of two leaves and one single sheet folded in the middle. The typical medieval quire was composed of four *bifolia*.
- (3) The multifolded booklet consists of two large sheets folded once each direction, and cut.
- (4) The *quaternio* booklet is a volume formed of four or more sheets. There is no determinate number of leaves per quire. As a matter of fact, this number might vary even within one manuscript. Additional leaves were occasionally added.

“From the second to the early fourth century, parchment was replacing papyrus as the standard writing material for books and the codex⁹ was replacing the roll as their standard form” (Batley *et al.* eds., 1993:60). The copying was made until around the year 1400 on vellum¹⁰ or parchment:¹¹

The standard writing surface of medieval England for all purposes was provided by parchment, prepared from the skins of animals, of which the most usual were the sheep and the goat. Vellum, a similar product [...] is commonly applied also to parchment prepared from the skins of lambs and kids. (Hector, 1958:15)

The flesh-side could be prepared with more accuracy than the hair-side. The preparation was made by letting the vellum or parchment soak in water and lime for quite a long time so as to make it suppler and softer. Then, it was extended on a surface; the top skin would be removed by passing a sharp blade over it¹² and they would get a thinner and smoother writing surface. The next step consisted of rubbing the flesh-side hard in order to clean it, using a pumice stone. To get it whiter, it could be rubbed with chalk. As Hector puts it:

Well-made parchment is thin, smooth and white, the whiteness often helped out by the pulverised chalk with which the surface was

⁹ Latin for “book”. A Codex is formed of bound leaves of parchment or paper.

¹⁰ A uniform appearance preparation of calf skin shaved and smoothed on both sides. It was also made of unborn calves.

¹¹ It is a general term for sheep, calf or goat skin that had been scraped until it was clean and smooth. It was prepared for writing or printing. Parchment antedates paper by possibly 1500 years as a writing material.

¹² This was also useful to squeeze out the moisture.

rubbed. Traces of this chalk can sometimes be seen on poor-quality parchments, which often present also an appearance of greasiness or semi-transparency. (1958:15)

As for the vellum, the sheets needed to be cut to rough size, and then put in groups of three or four, folded in half and fitted to the correct size. Then, they would rule the lines in each quire individually, by means of a sharp instrument. They got a slight impression on the surface of every sheet.

The next stage was to rule the sheets. Taking a few at a time, with the cream-coloured hair side and the whiter flesh side alternately upwards, they would be folded and pricked through with an awl or a knife point to indicate the margin and to show where the lines were to be ruled. This process ensured that each page in a gathering would match its neighbour perfectly, in the colour of the writing surface, the text area and the line spacing. (Jackson, 1981:84)

There were three main margins in each page and up to thirty six lines. There was a left hand margin and two right hand ones. The most important margin was to the right. The other right hand margin was the lesser of the two and was used to write capital letters that would head the separate paragraphs. The left hand margin was used for justifying the text. This margin was smaller than the main right hand one.

The words would be written onto the vellum or parchment with a quill¹³ or with a reed pen.¹⁴ The reed pen antedates the quill. 'It is probable that some of the stiffness of the earliest hands is due to their being written with a reed pen, before the general employment of the goose-quill' (Johnson & Jenkinson, 1915:xvi). Both were common writing tools in Anglo-Saxon England. The reed pen is less flexible than the quill. It is not difficult to distinguish a manuscript written with one or the other. The nib shape¹⁵ would vary depending on the work to be undertaken.

Various breeds of birds were used to supply different quills, including duck, goose, swan and pheasant. They were used both plumed and

¹³ Quills are cut from feathers and move with ease across the vellum, parchment or paper. It permits quick cursive movements of the hand. The point may be cut to fine, medium or broad. The width of the line may also vary.

¹⁴ The reed pen is cut from fine canes and bamboo. It is the oldest type of pen. It has a blunt end and a coarse structure. It produces short, thick lines. It lacks flexibility.

¹⁵ There is variation from a thin straight nib to a wide flat one.

stripped. Also, reed pens used to be made of bamboo. The quills were ordinarily those of geese or swans (Hector, 1958:18). They could be made by hand in varying widths. The filling of the pen was a matter of habit since the ink surrounded the tip of the nib all the way around. It was difficult to achieve a clean stroke.¹⁶ The length of the quill was often cut down to a manageable size.

Once the written work was complete, the pages would be illuminated by means of fine colours and metals. The illuminated capitals used to be outlined in ink and then painted with fine brushes, which could be made of boar, horse, goat and even camel hair. Once the pages were finished they might be stitched together. They would be covered with leather and decorated.

Many colours were used in the production of manuscripts. They came from natural sources. Fish glue or the white of an egg were the typical substances used for the colours. They would prepare some colours from the earth itself: ochre, terre verte, umber, and sienna. To get them the earth was mixed with gum Arabic¹⁷ and it was then that the colours could be used. They used to prepare some colours from natural minerals such as lapis lazuli, azurite, malachite, orpiment, white lead, red lead, lead tin yellow, verdigris, and vermilion, which were refined to get the pigments needed. Blues were obtained by means of organic materials such as wood and indigo whereas yellows were produced with weld or saffron. As for green and red, they would get the first from ripe buckthorn and the latter with roots or even insects such as kermes and cochineal.

To begin with, the scribe would prepare the inks to be used in the script. He would take much care of the production to ensure that the even paste he needed, was similar in consistency to cream. The inks used in medieval manuscripts are carbon blacks, iron gall, and sepia. There are many ink recipes passed down from one scribe to the next. The C 12th text *On Divers Art*¹⁸ by Teophilus¹⁹ says that the ink was mainly composed of iron *tannate* or *gallate* and that the acids were extracted from decomposed bark and, after drying for storage, were mixed for use with wine and green vitriol. The text says that the ink could be

¹⁶ A stroke is a single trace made by the pen on the page. (Parkes, 1979:xxvi)

¹⁷ A binder.

¹⁸ c. 1125

¹⁹ He was a German monk who wrote during the first half of the twelfth century..

made blacker by adding iron or iron oxide directly. Two very traditional ink recipes of the period are the ones that come next. On the one hand, we have a simple recipe: the scribe would take a quantity of albumen or egg white and mix it meticulously with soot. Then, he would add honey and mix it till he would get a smooth paste. The ink was then ready to be used by the scribes. On the other hand, some mushrooms would be gathered and placed in a pot where they would be left warm for several days to liquidize. The liquid would then be poured out and ready to be used. Also, it could be boiled until it was blacker and about half its original volume. In Anglo-Saxon England liquid ink was kept in inkwells made of horn.

Dyes²⁰ used to be put with chalk so that a chemical reaction would be produced. By means of this process would come up with the so-called *lakes*.²¹ These pigments were sometimes mixed to form get new colours. Medieval craftsmen, through apprenticeship would gain knowledge and experience to know what colours would and would not work together.

English Scripts have evolved during their history very much. From the 1st century to the 6th century we find the so-called Roman Rustic Script. It was popular and functional and became a standard book script²² for the Roman Empire until the Middle Ages. In spite of the fact that no examples survive from the period of the Roman occupation, we have instances of these scripts in other Roman lands. We can distinguish three main varieties of Roman Rustic: Square Capitals, Rustic Capitals and Cursive Capitals. Square Capitals were laborious to write because they consisted of complicated letter forms. Square capitals provide a good illustration of the cyclic history of our own handwriting and of its Roman origins, since they have nearly the same form as modern block capitals.

The name “square” (*quadrata*), which is at least as old as Petronius, is due to their proportion, since they are all (at any rate in principle) of one height and almost all either as wide or half as wide as they are high, so that each can be contained fairly exactly within a square or half-square. (Hector, 1958:49)

²⁰ Vegetable or insect.

²¹ Lakes are opaque pigments.

²² A script is the model which the scribe has in his mind's eye when he writes, whereas a hand is what he actually puts down on the page (Parkes, 1979: xxvi).

Rustic Capitals were written more quickly and easily than Square Capitals. We tend to locate this particular script on papyrus and parchment. Rustic capitals were majuscule and narrower than square capitals.

Rustic capitals were conspicuously better suited to the materials and instruments of writing. Modelled originally on the freehand lettering of the painted signboard, they are taller and narrower in proportion than square capitals, of which, nevertheless, they are only a more negligently and economically written form. (Hector, 1958:49)

“The elaborate letter forms of rustic capitals, with their numerous pen lifts, began to be abandoned and experiments were made with new book hands [...]” (Batley *et al.*, 1993). Cursive Capitals consisted of letter forms that had been made easier to understand and do. They were elongated and gave minuscule a particular style. Roman Rustic evolved into Uncial, which was common from the 3rd to the 6th century. Uncial was popular because it was a formal and quick script. Roman Half Uncial or Majuscule lasted for more than 50 years –from the 3rd to the 9th century– ending only when it was replaced by a more uniform script. It is a further step towards minuscule. It is a more cursive script than uncial. We find Uncial²³ hands up to the 10th Century. In general appearance uncials are open and round (Hector, 1958:50).

Uncial, brought by the missionaries from the north, was not the only script Mediaeval England had from its early days of Christianity. We also find another script brought from the south. It is based on the Roman Half-Uncial and it was developed by the Irish in the 5th century. It was in use from the 6th to 9th Century. It is known as Irish Insular script although a somewhat confusing variety of names has also been applied to Insular or Anglo-Saxon script in England, including *Scriptura Scottica*, *Scriptura Saxonica* and *Hiberno-Saxon*. The Insular script presented two main varieties: (1) the earlier, the so-called Half-Uncial or Majuscule is rounded and rather fat; it shows serifs in the form of a spade. We can see it in its height of perfection in the *Book of Kells*.²⁴ This script presents wide and curved letters, which are considered to be easier

²³ From Latin «uncial,» «inch-high».

²⁴ 8th century.

and faster to write than straight lines and angles. Insular Majuscule²⁵ suffered from being too formal by the 9th century and in the next 100 years it became obsolete. (2) By about the 7th century a more angular, cursive and thinner script was evolving. It is really minuscule and is known as Insular or Anglo-Saxon Minuscule. We could say that it is a combination of Irish Minuscule and Anglo-Saxon Minuscule. Insular Minuscule²⁶ was developed from Half-Uncial in the sixth century in Ireland and brought to England by the Irish ca. 560; it was then adapted, in the Old English period, for transcribing English. It is much narrower and more vertical than Majuscule, and the letters touch one another more often. It was in use from about the 730's. With the Norman Conquest in 1066, Insular Minuscule died out. The Irish, however, continue to use the hand to this day as the script for Gaelic. "By the early eighth century these Insular hands, majuscule and minuscule, were dominant not only in their native Ireland, where no others were in use, but in all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms" (Batley *et al.* 1993:63).

In the 8th century, under the patronage of Charlemagne (742-814) there was a major reform of handwriting. It resulted in the development of a hand both easy to write and to read, combining clarity of uncial with some of the quickness of cursive. Its models were derived from diverse sources so many scripts influenced the development of Carolingian Minuscule. Both the Carolingian and the Insular Majuscules and Minuscule arose from the same base script. In the very beginning both forms were similar in appearance but by the eighth and ninth centuries, the letter styles had evolved into recognisably different scripts not only in shape but also in form.

Carolingian²⁷ Minuscule was in use from the 8th to the mid-twelfth Century. Caroline Minuscule forms the basis of modern printed minuscule. Carolingian Minuscule was developed to be easily recognized. It is one of the most common scripts in Latin documents in England from the 10th to the 13th centuries. It was used to write classical texts, religious books and educational material. The script is generally said to be a representation of real Renaissance calligraphy. However, when the

²⁵ Insular Majuscule is also known as Insular Half Uncial, Insular Round, Anglo-Saxon Majuscule and Anglo-Saxon Round Hand.

²⁶ Insular Minuscule is also known as Anglo-Saxon Pointed Hand, Scriptura Gotica, Insular Pointed and Scriptura Saxonica.

²⁷ Also known as Caroline. The model upon which it is based has never been discovered.

Gothic era came about, it became obsolete. "Towards the end of the twelfth century the round, fat shapes of the Carolingian letter were squeezed thinner and thinner until almost all the curves were excluded, and the compressed and upright Gothic letter emerged" (Jackson, 1981:81).

Early Gothic²⁸ or *Littera Moderna* was in use during the 11th and 12th centuries. It was born from Carolingian Minuscule, from its alteration from a rounded to an angular hand. Scribes developed a narrower writing style so that more words would fit on a single line. A possible reason for this is the fact that vellum and paper were expensive at the time. This style was known as Gothic and lasted as a popular scribing technique throughout much of the Middle Ages. However, by the end of the 12 century, the hand became so embellished that the style became difficult to imitate. Early Gothic disappeared when the 13th century brought various Gothic *Textura* scripts.

Formal Gothic²⁹ or *Textura* was developed in the 13th century and was primarily used for grand liturgical books. It shows angular, vertical letters overlapping and touching others. It offers several variations:

- *Textura Precissa* is unserifed and stands flat. This script was well established in use in 13th century. It originated in England but when the Renaissance arrived, Gothic *Textura Precissa* lost its popularity. *Textura Precissa* is considered the most elite form of gothic lettering. The reason for this is the great skill that goes into the letters themselves. Scribes who lettered in *Textura Precissa* often made a considerably higher wage for their work (Brown & Lovett, 1999:87).
- *Textura Quadrata* developed from Precissa. It has small, square shaped serifs and feet. Its main distinction from the more elite *Textura Precissa* is its consistent use of wedge serifs at the bottom of each vertical stroke on the baseline. (Brown & Lovett, 1999:87). Gothic *Textura Quadrata* was in use during the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. Gothic *Textura Quadrata* was used in printed books well into the Renaissance since it became a model

²⁸ With the establishing of gothic script, Roman capitals gave way to uncials, which were adapted to the angularity of the minuscule by elongation and broken strokes.

²⁹ Formal Gothic is also known as Black Letter, *Littera Textuales Formata*, *Littera Misales* and *Littera Psalterialis*.

for the first typefaces. The script was later no longer used by the scribes because of its severe calligraphic restrictions.

- *Textura semi-quadrata* is a hybrid of *Textura Precissa* and *Textura Quadrata* which varies from letterform to letterform in its use of wedge serifs or no wedges. (Brown & Lovett, 1999:87).

By the late 12th century there was a separation between formal book-hands, the ones we know as *Textura*, and the documentary hands. Also, there was a growth of a group of scripts adapted to purpose. This was understandable since *Textura* was an elaborate and laborious script to write. By the end of the 13th century cursive hands evolved for literary purposes too, and were completely developed by the time of Chaucer. From Chaucer's time –late 14th century– to the death of Skelton (1529) the main scripts for English literary works are *Textura*, the two cursives, the so-called *Anglicana* and secretary, and mixtures of *Textura* and cursive known as hybrid or bastard script.

There are two main types of Gothic hybrids. As often happens when two or more distinctive scripts are current, secretary and *Anglicana* borrowed from one another in features and graphs. Both scripts became combined with *Textura* to form what we now know as hybrid scripts, though the term bastard³⁰ is still prevalent. Hybrid *Anglicana* or *Bastarda Anglicana*³¹ is a Gothic cursive hand used in England in the mid-14th century. It was perfected by the beginning of the 15th century and survived in a deteriorated form until the 16th century. It is a hybridisation of *Textura* with cursive *Anglicana* since it shows *Anglicana* and *Textura* features. Its main difference from *Anglicana* is that it is a little bit larger. Hybrid *Anglicana* is somewhat easier to write than *Textura Formata*. It was the chief literary cursive hand at the time of Chaucer. Though it was probably imported in its earliest form from France, it has been given the name *Anglicana* because of its widespread and distinctively English use.

Written in England over a period of at least two hundred years and by scribes of every degree of competence, bastard naturally varies perceptibly between writer and writer and from date to date. [...]

³⁰ This term comes from the practitioners themselves.

³¹ The term originates with M. B. Parkes.

The general characteristics may be summed up as uprightness and angularity, both inherited from text, and a certain discretion in the use of “ties”, or linking-strokes. The angularity is due to the same causes, and is brought about by the same means, as had formerly produced the characteristic appearance of text: the letters are laterally compressed and what had originally been curves are “broken” into angles. (Hector, 1958:55)

In the 14th century *Anglicana* suffered many modifications. A remarkable one was the development of *Formata* Grade, based partly on *Textura* from which it acquired a squarer appearance, some broken strokes and hooked serifs. It made use of thicker and more angled pen strokes than *Anglicana*. The graphs were quite similar, though.

No sooner was *Anglicana* at its height than it was challenged by another cursive script: the Hybrid Secretary or Bastard Secretary.³² This hand shows Secretary with some *Textura/Anglicana* features. It was far more popular than *Textura* and occurs quite frequently in formal manuscripts. It arrived into England from France³³ in the third quarter of the 14th century, during the reign of Richard II. It is a much more angular hand than *Anglicana*, which looks rounded if compared. As for size, and range of graphs it is a much more variable hand than *Anglicana*. Secretary is also more angular than *Anglicana*, since it could be written more swiftly. It is found in Chancery legal documents. It became a popular script and was extensively in use by the middle of the 15th, being the most prominent hand in the 16th century. In the fifteenth century we find the following Gothic Court Hands:³⁴

- (1) *Cancellaresca* cursive or *Italica* was developed in Papal chancery and spread through Europe as a documentary hand.
- (2) *Cancellaresca formata* was sometimes used as a book hand and is mainly formalized chancery.
- (3) Exchequer hand is the English pipe roll³⁵ hand in use since the 12th century in Exchequer documents. The hand practised in

³² Book hand developed in England from the hybridisation of Gothic *Textura* with the French Secretary hand.

³³ The earliest forms of secretary seem to come from Italy.

³⁴ The Commonwealth attempted to outlaw these by Act of Parliament as medieval, royalist relics, but Chancery survived to the nineteenth century when it was finally dismissed in 1836 by Act of Parliament.

³⁵ Exchequer pipe rolls are written records of the king's accounts for one financial year. The earliest surviving pipe roll covers the 1129-1130 financial year.

the Pipe Office is perhaps the only Exchequer hand at all likely to be met often in documents in private ownership. (Hector, 1958:62).

- (4) Chancery hand was adapted in the 15th century as a court hand in the English chancery and survived to the 19th century. It has Anglicana forms.
- (5) In the 15th century, Court of Commonpleas hand was adapted as a court hand in the English Court of Commonpleas. It also presents Anglicana forms:

By “court hand” the later writing masters primarily understood the hand written in the records of the courts of Common Pleas and King’s (Queen’s) Bench. It was not, however, confined to such records, being extensively used by lawyers and their clerks not only for documents such as deeds, etc. but for such purposes as personal memoranda and commonplace books. (Hector, 1958:63)

- (6) The style of King’s Remembrancer hand is almost the same as the Chancery hand.
- (7) Lord Treasurer’s Remembrancer hand is nearly like the hand used in legal documents.
- (8) The style of Humanist script is formal. As for Humanistic Round, we can appreciate some Gothic features and this is really helpful so as to differentiate it from Carolingian. We have also another way to distinguish them: the material they make use of to write is paper, not vellum. Besides, these texts are known to have been composed later than the 13th century. Humanistic Round is the script that has given the features and quality of the Roman font.

A cursive hand, which is the ancestor of modern handwriting, was invented in the 1420s by Niccolò Niccoli.³⁶ Later, it was adapted to printing as the italic font. It is the so-called Humanistic Cursive. With the fact of printing starting into existence, and the end of the Middle Ages, we come to the end of our History of English Scripts, although handwriting of course did continue to develop right up to the present day. But it was no longer an extremely important and necessary part in the production of books and other documents.

³⁶ An Italian Humanist (c.1364-1437) who was one of the leading scholars at the Medici court in Florence.

The aspirations of the virtuous art and skill of writing by hand are still respected and admired by many of us but many more feel that handwriting and calligraphy are for ornament only and not a place where we can find information. Handwriting may find its absolute loss with the coming into use of cleverer technology in the next centuries.

We have seen that mediaeval palaeography, book-making and calligraphy let us return Middle English works to a context just because each manuscript involves a unique contextualization, because each and every manuscript is a work of art. This being so, working just on critical editions would not let us get our goals by themselves. When facsimile copies have been translated into text files, for instance, we can no longer appreciate such details as the ones previously described. We need the *real* manuscript as well. Then, scholars might identify, classify and analyse different aspects of the text as well as emend and annotate them either historically, geographically, or culturally. To be explicit, and thus to illustrate this point, one might classify such variants as printing errors, typographical errors or spelling variants that may lead researchers to their goal. All in all, we must also admit that the construction of *apparatus criticus* is a major advance for our discipline.

One of the problems with critical editions is that they keep changing and not always for the better. And many critical editions have their problems with methodology. Some of them leave parts of the real manuscript out or even mix some of them. It seems to me that any good critical edition is much more prone to omission and corruption than any manuscript, microfiche or facsimile edition, for instance. Besides, there is no reason why a critical edition leaves out part of a manuscript unless their aim is just that of enjoying the reading of it. We should also be aware that there are many times when there is a problem with a manuscript and the alternatives are not included in the *apparatus criticus*³⁷ and sometimes it may even be misleading. The construction of an *apparatus criticus* is an art worthy of admiration in its own right. However generous, ample and reasonable it may be, it is after the text.

³⁷ See for example: Nestle's and Metzger's Greek New Testaments or Offord's The Parlement of the Three Ages. Relevant spelling explanations are not always included and this misinformation may lead the researcher to misinterpretation.

What is held here is that a particular and specific part of philological work might be largely accurate had we avoided making use of critical editions that may present subtle changes with respect to the original manuscript. To return to the main point of the article, if we use the tools of modern textual criticism, we are using tools developed by other scholars who have approached the extant manuscripts. The problem is that they are not always exactly preserved and that is a fact. There are a substantial number of important passages, spelling variations, scribal hand changes, ink differences...which the modern versions present in an altered and weakened form. I do not suggest that researchers should always avoid critical editions for their research since they are really useful for some types of studies. We must recognize, however, that all the information here described can be only brought to light by means of facsimile editions, microfilms, microfiches or the real manuscript itself, a defence grounded upon the untrustworthiness of translations underlying manuscripts. Finally, and however helpful critical editions may be, it is advisable to be given the physical evidence of what was written and to interpret it for ourselves, providing scholars the opportunity to read the past by themselves. Scholars of Middle English have not yet agreed to any standard editorial practice for textual presentation. Editing texts continues to be a concern in most domains of linguistic and literary studies.

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CONTEMPORARY IRISH POETRY: ACTUAL PLACES AND TERRITORIES OF THE MIND

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To Ada and Nuño

Problems connected with identity have always been regarded as highly productive in Irish literary criticism, particularly in the postcolonial scenario. This quest for identity has reshaped many of the traditional cultural landscapes. The English language has become an accepted form of communication in spite of being the language of the colonizer. From a literary point of view, the well-known dichotomies, such as north/south, island/continent, and, above all, rural/urban, have been progressively eliminated, probably thanks to the subtle influence of globalisation, but also by means of the gradual reinterpretation of landscapes and the powerful influence of the language, especially English, which has proved to be an outstanding tool when used from an Irish perspective. Poets, above all, mainly after the great divide of the 50s, and mostly after Seamus Heaney's glorious achievement, should be considered as giants in the current Irish literary system. They represent the revitalisation of language. It is amazing the ability of some contemporary poets to bring Irishness to the surface, to reveal Irishness even in the most domestic activities by using the wise combination of English as the general linguistic background and, say, some words in Irish, namely Geographical or Place names, which greatly contribute to adding flavour and memory to the text. However, it is not a literary artefact. On the contrary, it looks like a natural device, derived from reality as we know it. The old rural boundaries, perceived as distinct from the city and also heavily marked by a regional bias, folklore and somewhat unnatural political and cultural visions, have been blurred

by converting places into memory tanks, identity *chronotopes* as they have been described using the Bakhtinian terminology. As Dianne Meredith points out, citing Broadbridge's words, "Heaney calls the bog a sort of Jungian as well as a geological memory-bank, a dark casket where we have found many of the clues to our past and to our cultural identity" (Meredith, 1999:127). In fact, Seamus Heaney and his representation of the bogs is responsible, in my opinion, for much of this new rural conception of the territory, more intimate and individualistic, but at the same time more representative of the Irish concept of Identity. Again, the well-known concept of "sense of place" becomes useful to elucidate the energy derived from childhood landscapes, mostly rural landscapes, and the contribution of these places to the construction of Irish identity, not just because they make memories present, but because they are reformulated and retold in a new and amazingly fresh language. What is important here is the function of rural landscape as a memory tank or bank, used in a very similar way to Seamus Heaney's bogs. Objects and persons, and mostly their names, are brought to the surface by means of a 'digging operation'. However, the poet doesn't dig in the earth, or in actual territories but in the so-called territories of the mind. The process consists in moving from landscape to mindscape, as Dianne Meredith herself suggests.

In my opinion, Seamus Heaney represents the turning-point of this redress of language or, if you prefer, of using his own words, the "redress of poetry". But one of the first poets who redefined the concept of rural landscape was, no doubt, Patrick Kavanagh. The towering effect of Lady Gregory and Yeats's construction of an imaginative Western landscape provoked Kavanagh's reaction in more ways than one. Yeats's romanticised and symbolist construction was regarded as a brilliant one, but also as highly artificial and too intellectualised. It was promptly assumed that there was a lack of naturalness in the classical views of Irish landscapes, and, as a result, a great part of the efforts made by poets in the last 50 years were devoted not only to the "de-anglicization" of Irish history, but also to the reshaping of the perceptions of the Irish rural landscape in a more reliable and natural way. It is true that Heaney takes Kavanagh as a reference, at least in his early works, though re-elaborating and reinterpreting the so-called parochialism promoted by Kavanagh. Kavanagh represents an evident opposition to the Irish Literary Revival's conception of rural territories. As Antoinette Quinn points out,

Kavanagh's role as champion of the oppressed and misrepresented Rural Catholic Irish brought him into conflict with the previous generation of Irish writers, specifically J. M. Synge, Lady Gregory and W. B. Yeats, a core grouping in what is known as the Irish Literary Revival. (Quinn, 1996:xx)¹

In order to undertake a postcolonial reading of the Irish literary system, Kavanagh placed himself at some distance from the Irish Literary Revival, and put Catholicism as one of the main elements of his production. Kavanagh abandoned his leading role in Irish poetry, but he maintained his rural and Catholic origin. Localism soon became his main interest, analysed through the so called 'parish myth', and lending the language a more informal atmosphere, as compared with Yeats, he conveyed more credibility and naturalness. Quoting Antoinette Quinn again: "Kavanagh believed that poetry should avoid artificial diction and express itself in personalized vernacular. The whole thrust of his aesthetic was towards increasing freedom of speech" (1996:xxviii). She also says:

Whereas Irish Ethnic poetry emphasized craft, Kavanagh increasingly cultivated a casual, impromptu attitude. The tendency of his verse is towards an ever more relaxed, easy and informal manner, letting 'rip', blabbing out confidences, commenting on trivia. (ib. 1996:xxix)

Heaney uses memories from childhood as the first raw material for composing his poetry, but he reaches a superb level of craftsmanship producing brand-new artefacts, as if all the linguistic elements were weighed in a very accurate way. At times he is more a chemist than a poet. So Mossbawn represents a memory tank, as we have already said, a place in which the poet digs metaphorically, using not the spade, but the pen which rests in his hand "snug as a gun" (as he says in "Digging"). The objects are represented with a fascinating aura of luminescence, which can be equated to a sort of resurrection or animation. Not only does he bring old memories to the present but he also makes these memories alive and almost physically evident. Quoting Quinn again,

In poem after poem he named the familiar sounds and sights of home: 'mass-going feet' crunching 'the water-ice on the potholes', 'the sow's rooting where the hen scratches', 'the steam rising from the load' of dung, the 'barrels of blue potato-spray... on a headland of July'. He adopted the perspective of a child or a nostalgic adult exile

¹ Introduction by Antoinette Quinn to *Selected Prose*, in Patrick Kavanagh. See Works Cited.

to convey the magic of the ordinary and often conventionally ugly rural images, transforming the yard where his mother reared hens and sows into the Garden of the Golden Apples... (1996:xvi)

Heaney builds a telluric poetry, strongly attached to the earth, though he rapidly moves towards a progressive spirituality, from actual objects to the territory of the mind. In fact, mindscapes are only sublimations of actual landscapes, but this sublimation contributes to erasing rural boundaries and, in a way, makes parochial elements more universal. Heaney moves towards a more spiritual conception of the Place, with capital letter, when he leaves the North for the South, probably because by doing this he can get rid of the persistence of concrete elements, which are strongly marked as belonging to the North, and as a result he changes his voice into a more general or unmarked Irish view. As it also happened with Kavanagh, Spirituality is irradiated by daily events and common objects, not by the solemn ones. This is what Seamus Heaney has called “the ignorance of the day to day”. And, commenting on the influence of Kavanagh, Gilsenan says:

Heaney readily acknowledges the influence of Kavanagh, who in his poetry showed what Heaney calls “the need to be open, unpredictably susceptible” to everyday happenings and experiences. Kavanagh, as Heaney himself puts it, “cherished the ordinary, the actual, the known, the unimportant”, and saw in the simple everydayness of things the echo of the universal, and in his writing gave a face and a voice to rural Ireland, by showing that the local idiom was strong enough to extend beyond the local (Gilsenan, 18).

No doubt Heaney’s vision of Irish identity is to be found in buried things, as they are supposed to preserve the full features of ancient times, thanks to the chemical composition of the soil. This is the reason why memories, buried or incarnated in objects and names, encapsulate identity, which seems to be still operating when brought to the present. The mission of the poet consists in digging in the memory tank until he finds the precious objects of the past or the linguistic formulation of these. Such objects, or their poetic reflection, though heavily marked by a concrete rural landscape, attached to a concrete place and time, react as universal entities and contribute to the creation of Irish identity in present times. They also have, as we have pointed out elsewhere, a curative effect: the poet as an ancient *shaman*, invoking the luminescent objects of childhood, when objects are still innocent.

This process of purification is also connected with the search for Irish essentials, but also with the search for knowledge, as it was represented in the Classical World: descending into the darkness, into the darkness of bogs but also into the darkness and unpredictability of our memories. *Seeing things* is exemplary in this sense. But Heaney's influences are manifold: from Gerald Manley Hopkins to T. S. Eliot, whose musicality seems to be constantly present in his work, from Robert Frost to Robert Lowell, and also *Beowulf*, a poem Heaney translated recently, which acts in a way as a linguistic bog, revealing the ancient flavour of sounds and the fascinating obscurity of the origins. The anthropological views of Ted Hughes are also present in Heaney's works, and, in more ways than one, denote a similar passion for rescuing objects and words, this magical collusion of physical entities and linguistic signals where the essentials of identity are encapsulated.

The concept of identity, associated to the "sense of place", as in Heaney, reflects the importance of childhood experiences and the ability of the poet to recover these experiences by using language in an appropriate way. The aforementioned *chronotope*, which is a Bakhtinian concept covers two fundamental elements: time, which is perceived as a frozen image, as a bog body. This frozen image, or well-preserved body, is waiting for the poet to be brought to the present thanks to the intercession of language. So, language operates as a magical spell, and contributes to converting the physical place into a *mnemotope*, a place in which the essentials of the poet's identity, the poet's past, have been buried for a long time.

It is not just by chance that we refer to Seamus Heaney as an innovator of the Irish conception of poetry. Not only does he renew the perception of the native place through his linguistic genius but he also converts landscape into mindscape, geographic space into mental space. He refers to it in his famous essay "The Sense of Place", included in *Preoccupations*:

I think there are two ways in which place is known and cherished, two ways which may be complementary but which are just as likely to be antipathetic. One is lived, illiterate and unconscious, the other learned, literate and conscious. In the literary sensibility, both are likely to co-exist in a conscious and unconscious tension. (Heaney, 1980:131)

What the poet does is to contribute by means of his own particular vision and personal experience, filtered through culture and language, to the construction of the collective identity. Bernard O'Donoghue, a poet born in County Cork and professor of Medieval Literature at Oxford, is also well-known for his celebrated book, *Seamus Heaney and the Language of Poetry*. In this magnificent book, O'Donoghue refers to the energy contained in Heaney's language and analyses the power of his language to reveal the unknown side of places, to transform the private landscape, the inner world, into a metaphor of Irish identity.

O'Donoghue refers, specifically, to the so-called 'place-name poems', where the presence of the Irish geographic names and his phonological texture, contributes in a decisive way to reinforcing the poem with extra meaning, and also to concentrating the general conception of Irish identity in these iconic linguistic signals, which also act as cultural elements scattered in a field of English words. Thomas O'Grady explained this in *The Boston Globe* (May 27, 2001) when in a review of *Electric Light*, he said:

Heaney [is] casting himself in the role of Antaeus, the giant of classical mythology whose source of invincible strength lay in his regularly renewing contact with the Earth. [...] Certainly, [...] *Electric Light* testifies to the poet's career-long valuing of his down-to-earth beginnings on a farm in rural Northern Ireland. Reaffirming his relationship to his boyhood world of south County Derry through the naming of places and landmarks like Toomebridge and Butler's Bridge, and the Bann River. (*TBG*, 2001)

So, this is the aura we were referring to in the preceding lines: the aura irradiated by those names which collaborate in the construction of the poet's territory. As Bernard O'Donoghue points out, for an Irish poet writing in English, the inclusion of meaningful place names, vernacular names or native names, certifies the authenticity of the poem. It is a proof of sincerity:

He tells us that he wrote these poems of place naming with a great sense of release [...] because they convinced him that the poet can be "faithful to the nature of the English language and, at the same time, be faithful to one's own non-English origin", which, for him is County Derry. (O'Donoghue, 1994)

The strategic presence of place names as powerful literary marks represents, according to O'Donoghue's interpretation, the "impressionistic

use of phonological analysis” (O’Donoghue 1994). Though the poet is writing in English, a vernacular word or expression, a place name, acts as a restrictive entity first, contextualizing the territory, but then transforms itself into an expansive element, into a more general signal of Irishness. It is a password into an Irish context, a local evocation which turns itself into an Irish evocation. For instance: “Anahorish, place of clear water” (‘Anahorish’). Heaney himself has made the difference between “the etymological use of place-names by John Montague and Kavanagh’s less learned “naming the actual”, as he says in *Preoccupations*, 142 (quoted by O’Donoghue 1994:13). However, etymology is not always a synonym of an intellectual transformation of a territory. It is also the recognition, the verbal certification of identity, the sentimental flag waving in the ocean of English terms. Heaney introduces many local and vernacular words in his acclaimed translation of *Beowulf*, some of them words which belong to his Derry territory; such as ‘bawn’, the native expression connected with his birthplace, Mossbawn.

This material nature of the language used by the early Heaney is found in the work of Kavanagh but also in that of Ted Hughes, and it appears in O’Donoghue’s own work. This can be seen, for example, in his preference for ‘place-name poems’. This concept has been repeatedly used by O’Donoghue as a concrete territory, the place, he would call his homeland.

In fact, most of O’Donoghue’s poems speak of apparently small and insignificant incidents, which occur within a small area near Cullen, in Knockduff, in the river Blackwater and in the small twin mountains which rise on the horizon, the Paps.

It is obvious that the conservation of names in the phonetical vernacular, in the so-called “poems of place-naming” produces a special effect on both the Irish and the English reader, but this feeling of a ‘Sense of Identity’, of phonetical impressionism which O’Donoghue alludes to, is largely lost when considered outside an Irish context.

The fact that O’Donoghue uses the local place name ‘Caumatruish’ in his famous poem “The Iron Age Boat at Caumatruish”, is not coincidental. The place name, preserved in all its phonetic splendour, spills out the transcendent meaning of the poem itself. A local archaeological find, an iron age boat fossilized in the bog, which takes

us back to the history and the memory, like the fossilized finds in Heaney's work. In its very title, the word 'Caumatruish' carries all the weight of local energy, but also the indelible marks of Irish Identity.

We face another of the great linguistic challenges of Irish poetry. The use of vocabulary with a local flavour, with roots in the Gaelic vernacular, whether of Irish or Scottish origin. O'Donoghue stated:

I feel very strongly that the local writer should take his voice from the local community. The poet must not steal that voice, but speak back to the community in the language they know and understand. [...] One of the things you notice about growing up in the countryside, despite its ascetism and austerity, is the richness and colour of the Irish vernacular. [...] In Irish country language even abstract words have colour. (*Amazon Interview Archive*, 1999)

In fact, we can conclude that where the English word is unable to reach the local, Irish expression can.

The rural landscape is also reflected in many other words which transmit a vernacular flavour. All of these contribute to providing the reader with additional information about the roots behind the poem. But the final effect is globalizing. Irish identity as a whole is derived from this local atmosphere.

Poets in Ireland, as we have said, have generated amazing cultural artefacts in order to reshape the country in the postcolonial period. This is a task which has been carried out mostly by poets. In my opinion, the use of rural elements through a new perspective has contributed to creating a new and extraordinary linguistic tissue far from the traditional construction of tradition and folklore. Yeats's artificial and intellectual constructions have given way to a more vivid representation of the real world. And this real world has produced, paradoxically, a universal metaphor. The transition from landscape to mindscape represents the evolution of place-creation in Ireland. Concrete elements are present, but landscape perceptions go beyond measurable reality and transform themselves into cultural entities, into stronger elements which are, in fact, the real basis of Irishness. As we have pointed out, Kavanagh's assertion that parochialism is universal because it deals with the fundamentals seems to be completely meaningful today.

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‘DISCOURSE AND SOCIETY’ AS A CONCEPT USED AND MISUSED IN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The dialectical relationship between discourse and society justifies the appraisal of the association of both terms as a whole concept. This reciprocal connection is reviewed through its involvement in the parameters that define the purpose of discourse analysis, in the concept of discourse itself and in the interdisciplinary nature that marks the theoretical background of discourse analysis in terms of its mutual relationship with other sciences. However, this paper tackles some other fronts, equally rooted in the concept of ‘discourse and society’, in which a faulty discursive treatment of this idea is preventing a complete development of discourse analysis itself. The interrelationship discourse-society is thus contemplated through the factors that constitute the social dimension of discourse and, especially, through the criticism of the absence of the variable of power as an inherent element in it. This incorrect theoretical view has been perpetuated by some methodological attitudes and by an incoherent link between discourse analysis and the critical discourse approach. The central link discourse-society influences and is affected by all these satellite connections, which produces a whole network of defective associations that breaks the central axiom of discourse analysis as the study of language in use in social contexts.

1. Dialectical relationship discourse-society

In 1952, Harris, in his article “Discourse Analysis”, raised the question of the search for solutions to the problems of the continuation

of linguistic description above the sentence and of the correlation between linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour. Some decades later, some outstanding works (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Brown & Yule, 1983; Stubbs, 1983; van Dijk 1985a, 1985b) appear that constitute a solid background in which the central parameters of discourse analysis (DA) are formulated. All these works agree on presenting DA as a field interested in investigating the use of the language at a suprasentential level and within its social context:

Roughly speaking, it refers to attempts to study the organization of language above the sentence or above the clause, and therefore to study larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts. It follows that discourse analysis is also concerned with language in use in social contexts [...]. (Stubbs, 1983:1)

This second axiom, that is, the study of language use in social contexts, claims that there is an interdependent relationship between discourse and society. “A dialectical relationship is a two-way relationship: the discursive event is shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but it also shapes them” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:258). Lemke (1995b:20) defends the active role played by discourse in society: “it not only reconfirms and re-enacts existing social relationships and patterns of behavior, it also renegotiates social relationships and introduces new meanings and new behaviors”. More recently, Fairclough (2003b:18) states: “Seeing cultures as signifying systems also helps clarify the relationship between culture and language: cultures exist as languages, or what I shall rather call discourses (and in their enactment as ‘cultural forms’ [...])”.

Accordingly, the expression ‘discourse and society’ is not conceived as the representation of two independent entities joined by a coordinating conjunction. The idea of ‘discourse and society’ implies the recognition of the dialectical relationship between both elements, the mutual involvement of language in society and society in language. Thus, a dichotomy language/society, in terms of a discrete conception of both items, is rejected. Language is language as regards the manifestation of the society in which it occurs. Society is never society unless it includes the linguistic expression of its individuals. Discourse symbolizes society and culture, and both of them operate as the framework of discourse. Discourse reproduces society and society is realized through discourse.

Assuming the stressed and varied presence of the social angle in terms of the different ingredients that make up society, an essential step in the building of discourse lies in the establishment of the movement and degree of influences between the linguistic element and its social environment. In the reciprocal relationship of influences between both sides, it makes no sense to give priority to either end. According to Kress (1989[1985]:4), the double direction sketched between the social and the linguistic component presumes the consideration of both elements as autonomous units. Opposing his view, it must be noted that this bi-directional mechanism excludes a dissociation between both parts, so that we cannot talk of a relationship between language and society as if they were two independent entities. Discourses are determined by social phenomena and these, in turn, are influenced by discursive structures.¹

The interrelationship discourse-society also emerges from the social angle the concept of discourse itself embraces: "In using the term 'discourse' I am claiming language use to be imbricated in social relations and processes [...]" (Fairclough, 1995:73). Despite the difficulty in establishing a precise formulation of the notion of discourse: "the concept of discourse is therefore variously understood, and widely contested. Trying to 'pin it down' through definition is a hopeless and fruitless task [...]" (Fairclough, 1996a:53-54), as van Dijk (1997:2) states, there is a concept unanimously shared by discourse analysts, previously anticipated by himself (van Dijk, 1985c:1) and later reiterated by Fasold (1990:65), Fairclough (1995:73; 1996b:71; 2003a:3) or Gee (1999:7): "They agree that discourse is a form of *language use*". Nevertheless, the general character of this statement, as well as Widdowson's (1995:158) more superficial vision, who synthesizes this issue by referring to discourse as a term "in vogue and vague", conceals some specific aspects that delimit the theoretical paradigm of DA.²

¹ Nevertheless, the attention paid to the social component in the study of discourse has not always been a constant. Fasold (1990:65) distinguishes two different trends within DA: one analyses how society moulds its discursive behaviour with respect to its cultural background; in the other one, the interlocutors occupy a secondary role in the discursive event in process. Similarly, Widdowson (1995) talks about a double tradition in DA: one of them has made statements about beliefs and social attitudes with a poor reference to linguistic data; the other one has made statements about the features of language use, though they have neglected the social factors. Previously, van Dijk (1988:131) criticized the weak social dimension that affects important notions, such as that of power, institutional control and ideology. However, unlike Bowers & Iwi (1993:386-387), not many have tackled a conceptual refinement of the term 'society' to give account of the more appropriate notion for DA: "reconceiving society performatively, as the outcome of a multiplicity of struggles to define the social and make definitions endure [...] society is indeed performed through discourse".

² Fairclough (1996a:53) has criticized Widdowson's (1995:158) statement by asserting that "Discourse is indeed fashionable, and does indeed have many meanings. But to suggest that its complexity is merely an effect of its popularity [...] and of 'confusions' is superficial".

Facing the initial position maintained by Stubbs (1983:9), who rejected any significant distinction between discourse and text, or the more recent one defended by Beaugrande (2001:114) who states that “a real text cannot be decontextualized, that is, removed from any context [...]”, discourse analysts have agreed on accepting that only by contextualizing the text, can we talk of discourse, which anticipates, to a great extent, the importance attached to its social dimension: “Unless it is activated by this contextual connection, the text is inert” (Widdowson, 1995:164). In this sense, Fairclough (1995:73) maintains: “In using the term ‘discourse’ I am claiming language use to be imbricated in social relations and processes which systematically determine variations in its properties, including the linguistic forms which appear in texts”. From this perspective, texts are the manifestations of discourses, of their meanings and their attempts to solve certain problems, so that both are marked by different, but complementary functions. As stated by Lemke (1992:82), we have to distinguish between the text as a semantic unit and the corresponding social practice termed discourse.

2. Interdisciplinarity and research limits in DA

The concept of ‘discourse and society’ can also be contemplated in terms of the invitation it implies to explore the different paths of research that not only emerge from this idea, but also help it evolve. The theoretical component of DA is characterized by its interdisciplinary nature, which defends the necessity of supporting this research field with the theoretical substance coming from neighbour social sciences. In the last few decades, the study of communication and human discourse has turned into an interdisciplinary sphere where many contributions have arrived from anthropology, philosophy, psychology or sociology. These, in turn, have examined their object of study through language, carrying out their own discourse analyses.³

Maingueneau (1999:176) explains the reciprocal contribution made from both sides when he considers that the disciplines that use DA as

³This social presupposition has also been present in literary texts: “Literary works, far from being airless aesthetic heterocosms, are complexly consubstantial with ongoing processes of discourse in society as a whole” (Sell, 1991:xxi). The main criterion that supports Fowler’s (1996[1986]) work establishes the importance of linguistic structures in literature in terms of the reciprocal relationship between the construction of the text and the social concepts of institution and social condition surrounding it. The social basis of discourse has to be stressed by admitting that literary communication and literary representations can be defined in social terms, and not strictly in linguistic terms.

an instrument may become an object itself for this field of inquiry. Iedema & Wodak (1999), Fairclough (2001; 2003a) and Chiapello & Fairclough (2002) prefer to use the term 'transdisciplinarity' to refer to this phenomenon in which researches are surpassing their disciplinary limits to give account of social life and the manifestations of discourse in terms of new problems:

There is a need to develop approaches to text analysis through a transdisciplinary dialogue with perspectives on language and discourse within social theory and research in order to develop our capacity to analyse texts as elements in social processes. (Fairclough, 2003a:6).

The relevance of the concept 'discourse and society', valued as an extension of that common interest in the examination of discourse as society and society as discourse, is now confirmed by that symbiosis that has backgrounded the line of action of DA and these neighbour disciplines. As well as enriching themselves through this mutual collaboration, these derivative paths of research benefit the study of discourse as the portrayal of society and the assessment of society through its realization as discourse.

On the opposite side, the emphasis conferred to the social angle of discourse has led analysts (Delu, 1991; Fairclough, 1995; Schiffrin, 1997; Gunnarsson, 2000) to promote the necessity of counting on an ethnographic support, since they maintain that these correlations between language and social structure do not explain anything unless they are included within a general theory about human behaviour.⁴ In a similar way, Hodge & Kress (1993[1979]), Kress (1993), Lemke (1995a; 1995b), Chiapello & Fairclough (2002) and Fairclough (2003a) have claimed the intervention of social semiotics, as it conceives discursive formations as socio-semiotic products in which language is contemplated as a system of meaning resources deployed with social purposes. "I use the term social semiotics as a reminder that all meanings are made within communities and that the analysis of meaning should not be separated from the social, historical, cultural and political dimensions of these communities" (Lemke, 1995b:9).

⁴Dell Hymes' (1962) call for an ethnography of communication, included later by Schiffrin (1994) as one of her *Approaches to Discourse*, came to fill in the gap left by an excessive attention to the language as an abstract system. This new research field, derived from anthropology and linguistics, revolutionized the study of the relationship between language and culture.

The social dimension of discourse not only allows the interdisciplinary nature of DA, but it also delimits its association with other research fields, as in the case of the hierarchy of priorities between DA and pragmatics. In this situation, the idea of ‘discourse and society’ operates as an additional proof of the fact that the social side of discourse must specify the horizons of research of DA as well. Some years ago, Leech (1983:231) concluded his *Principles of Pragmatics* with a proposal to extend the paradigm of pragmatics “which has been largely restricted to individual utterances or exchanges, to the study of connected discourse, i.e. to discourse analysis”. Fairclough (2001[1989]:8) dissolves any connection between both by pointing out that pragmatics, because of its reference to isolated and fictional expressions, has favoured individualism, thus neglecting the social side of language, in opposition to the attention paid by DA to real and longer segments of the text.⁵ Because of that omission to the social side of language denounced by Fairclough, and which acts as a basic precept in DA, the hierarchy question of the traditional academic labelling cannot be solved either by extending the research field of pragmatics, as proposed by Leech (1983), or by claiming incongruously its priority and more general character over DA. The interrelationship discourse-society cannot be betrayed by attitudes such as these, in which pragmatics is included within DA or placed as an umbrella term where DA is inserted.

3. Variables of the social dimension of discourse

The social dimension of discourse is composed of some elements that realize the dialectical relationship discourse-society. As stated by Chafe (1996:61), “The discourse environment itself is always multifaceted”. According to Schiffrin (1994:383), the main difficulty in specifying the idea of context is motivated by the fact that contextual information is always information identified in relation to some other point that acts as the primary focus of attention, “the identity of that ‘something else’ influences our decisions about what counts as context”. Despite acknowledging that difficulty, van Dijk (1997:19) refers to that

⁵ Likewise, Wodak (2001:5) criticizes the use of the sentence and its components as the basic units of analysis in pragmatics. Schiffrin (1994) describes and compares several approaches within the linguistic analysis of the discourse, among which she includes pragmatics, similarly to the position maintained, some years before, by van Dijk (1985b), who treats pragmatics as a dimension of DA. As opposed to these, Ötsman & Virtanen (1995) defend pragmatics as a more general term.

contextual identity mentioned by Schiffrin “as the structure of all properties of the social situation that are relevant for the production or the reception of discourse”.

Discourse analysts have described the social dimension of discourse attending to some contextual factors that not only influence the construction of discourse, but are also affected by it. These elements focus on the function and condition of social members, the relevance of their adherence to a certain institution and the influential role of ideology in all this whole. By means of them, the influence network between discourse and social context is channelled. Discourse, as a social practice, is an articulation of analytically different elements which are not discrete, but dialectically interconnected, so that each one internalizes the others. Nevertheless, when valuing the identity of the components that constitute the social dimension of discourse, the concept of ‘discourse and society’ is misused in some ways.

Van Dijk (1997:19) talks of structures of context on a double level, local and global. In the first group, “we find for instance a setting (time, location, circumstances), participants and their various communicative and social roles (speaker, chairperson, friend, etc.), intentions, goals or purposes, and so on”. In the second one, we identify ongoing discourse “as constitutive of organizational or institutional actions and procedures [...] and when participants are involved in the interaction as members of social categories, groups or institutions [...]”. Taking into account the placement of the social position of individuals as structures of local context and their implication, as members of a certain institution, within a global level, it must be noted that the social dimension of discourse proposed by the interaction of these variables illustrates accurately, through the fusion of the contextual strata proposed by van Dijk, the multifaceted nature of discourse Chafe refers to.

3.1. Social condition

Language is viewed as a kind of social practice in which the individuals involved are obliged by their socio-cultural condition to take a certain position within their linguistic code (Bernstein, 1974[1971]; van Dijk, 1988, 2001; Kress, 1989[1985]; Delu, 1991; Fairclough 1992, 1995, 2003a; Bowers & Iwi, 1993; Lemke, 1995a; Hammersley, 1997;

Kops, 1997; Iedema & Wodak, 1999; Gunnarsson, 2000; Wodak, 2001; Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002).

To recognize the individual as a social member implies assigning an identity to him: “to use language is always, inevitably, to enter into particular positions” (Kress, 1990:90). As Lemke (1995b:86) states, the main and most recurrent social activities define the functions of social participants. Moreover, among the most basic principles of intertextuality which Lemke (1995a:87) defends, we have to include the relationship between discourse and the activity models of individuals occupying different positions in the social scale. In many ways, the patterns of social relation exert a strong influence on the linguistic possibilities of the individual, these possibilities restricting, simultaneously, his behaviour.⁶ Social agents are also linguistic agents formed “in the experience of texts that are themselves products of the meanings of the social and linguistic processes and structures of particular social positionings” (Kress, 1995:119).

However, the subject has also to be valued as a social agent placed in a network of relationships with other individuals. Hence, the text is constructed through the interaction of linguistic agents having a certain position in the complex of the global structure (Kress, 1995:118). Within these interactions, what is really important is not the isolated role of the social member, but his relationship with the rest of the participants, which leads us to consider social condition in a comparative way: “status is a relative and graded concept” (Delu, 1991:302).⁷ As Kops (1997:400) contends, the construction of discourse is sustained by the presupposition of the social order in the world: “The loose fit of discourse upon the object of its description, as a feature of the normative assumption of order within the world, provides further evidence for its status as social in origin”. Social activities define the function of each participant, “discourse both symbolizes and encodes social activity” (Martin & Rose, 2003:5). Consequently, any segment of discourse may be studied from a perspective that presumes a social order, this being a premise that, opposing Kops’

⁶ An important point of reference for discourse analysts is provided by Bernstein (1974[1971]), who far from describing merely linguistic divergences, proposed to frame them within a more general social theory in which the dissimilarities in the position of the individuals are rendered as differences in the habits of language use.

⁷ Delu (1991:302) employs the concept of ‘distance’ to measure the relation between individuals of different levels. A ladder-like diagram is used as a device to represent the distance between different positions: “The status distance between roles is measured by determining how far apart the two roles are in the social role ladder”.

(1997) view, is not only exclusive of interactive communicative process, but is also present in the monologue manifestations.

3.2. Institutions

Social position is thus specified in terms of the relationships maintained with other participants in the communicative event, but, at the same time, determined by the adherence of the individual to the ideological values of a certain institution. Institutions, included by van Dijk (1997:19) as global structures of context, are not only social entities, but also influential linguistic organisms that articulate their meanings and principles in a systematic way, so that, by means of the act of communication of their members, these institutions are continuously reinforced (Kress, 1989[1985]; Fairclough, 1995, 1996b, 2001[1989], 2003a; Iedema & Wodak, 1999; Maingueneau, 1999; Gee, 1999; Gunnarsson, 2000; Wodak, 2001; Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002).

The variable of institution operates under the cloak of the interrelationship between discourse and society: "Studying the way in which situations produce and reproduce institutions, and are, in turn, sustained by them, is an important part of discourse analysis" (Gee, 1999:83). As Maingueneau (1999:186) states, discourse, as an activity and as a text, is firmly linked to discursive institutions, where groups and textual genres are articulated. Iedema & Wodak (1999:12) justify this statement by claiming the benefits this process confers to DA, since it emphasizes the social dynamism of institutional relationships and structures. Nevertheless, Gunnarsson (2000:5-6) criticizes the fact that the great majority of researches on the interaction between discourse and institutions have focused either on problems caused by asymmetrical relations between their members, or on relations between discourse and the norms and rules of a certain institution.⁸ Both paths of analysis, also dissociated by van Dijk (1997:19) as structures of local and global context, are tightly connected, so that it is incongruous to tackle the social role of participants at a local level, omitting the global stratum that values them as integrating elements of a group or institution.

⁸ Gunnarsson's (2000) analysis on some interviews made in three different banks reveals discursive models shaped not only by the specific norms of each organization, but also by some more general national values. However, despite his insistence on establishing differences in the discursive creation determined by the several institutional strata that operate jointly in society, it must be stressed that different institutional levels within the same social framework are all materialized in discourse through some common working patterns.

According to Fairclough (2001[1989]:23), one of the most essential aspects in discourse is produced by the network called ‘orders of discourse’, a term adopted from Foucault to refer to the conventions associated with different social institutions. As he (Fairclough, 2001:124; Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002:194) explains, “An order of discourse is a social structuring of semiotic difference -a particular social ordering of relationships amongst different ways of making meaning [...]”. Fairclough (1995:9) maintains that the analysis of the text should not be artificially isolated from the analysis of the institutional practices within which texts are embedded.⁹ He also justifies the necessity of contemplating the institution from a double perspective, that is, facilitating the social actions of its members by offering them a frame of action without which they could not act, but also limiting their own movement within that frame (Fairclough, 1995:38).

Accordingly, accepting the socio-cultural position of the individual as a relative and graded concept implies the recognition of social inequality as an inherent factor in the consideration of social condition. Social condition is linked to status, and status cannot occur unless there is a variable of control. Status and social inequality can hardly be accomplished without the intervention of power, and without it institutions and their values cannot evolve either. The creation or adherence of new participants is dependent on the success of the control actions enacted by the institution over them. The frame of action provided by institutions can only work within some limits, and to those limits themselves institutions submit the establishment of their lines of conduct and behaviour. Therefore, power and control are involved in the relationships between institutions and individuals as well. Social groups, through their integration in socio-cultural institutions, give form to social activities. At the same time, cultures, groups and institutions are produced and transformed through human activities. Discourse as a human activity and as a linguistic product can hardly be feasible and effective without the inherent variable of power, which guides the assessment of social condition as a relative concept and of institutions as a socio-linguistic entity whose existence is submitted, in turn, to the inequality of its members.

⁹ At the same time, Fairclough (1995:9) reproaches Fowler *et al.* (1979) for not respecting this principle.

3.3. Ideology

The clue to the acceptance of power as an immanent property in the social dimension of discourse is evinced through the analysis of ideology. The connection discourse-society cannot be properly established through an incomplete social dimension of discourse. The assessment of texts as social realities implies admitting the role of ideology as a modulating factor in discourse (van Dijk, 1988; Kress, 1989[1985], 1990, 1993; Hodge & Kress, 1993[1979]; Fairclough, 1995, 2001[1989], 2003a; Lemke, 1995b; Widdowson, 1995; Iedema & Wodak, 1999; Gunnarsson, 2000; Wodak, 2001; Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002). It must be noted that “cultures exist as languages, or what I shall rather call discourses [...] But cultures are not only discourses, they are also systems and forms of consciousness, and they may be ideologies [...]” (Fairclough, 2003b:18-19).

Ideology refers to an ordered representation of reality, defined by Hodge & Kress (1993[1979]:6) “as a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view”. Foucault (1970, 1972) has centred on the definition of discourse in dialogue with and in reaction to the definition of ideology.¹⁰ In conjunction with him, the Marxist linguist Pecheux (1982) has emphasized the ideological conflict as the essence in the structure of discourse. Discourse does not exist in an isolated way, but as the object and the field of the ideological conflict. From a similar position, Martin (1992:507) fixes ideology as a third level of context and delimits it from a double perspective: “Viewed synoptically, ideology is the system of coding orientations constituting a culture [...] Viewed dynamically, ideology is concerned with the redistribution of power [...]”. The first approach converges with a descriptive idea of ideology as a code of values, whereas the second one claims the intrinsic character of the variable of power within the ideological component.

The social dimension proposed here has exposed the complex of elements that give form and enrich discourse. The dialectical relationship between language and society has been outlined through the variables of social condition, institution and ideology. If we accept the interrelationship between institutions, social members and ideology, and attach the dialectic character of the correspondence discourse-society, we obtain a network of links, in which all these factors get involved, so

¹⁰ As explained by Mills (1997), Foucault's ideas on discourse have been integrated into various disciplines in different ways.

that by drawing any of them we get information about the rest. Ideology permeates the whole system as a code of values shaping a culture, emerges as the basic ingredient that embraces the concepts of institution and social condition, and thus influences them all, though it is also affected by the whole discursive scheme. However, any social dimension where power is absent is not properly articulated. Power is not an additional component, but the necessary glue to make this whole work.

4. Critical discourse analysis

The analysis of these discursive factors manifests a power and hierarchical environment that, on the one hand, leads us inevitably to talk of critical discourse analysis (CDA), but that, on the other hand, poses the question of the coherence that entails the creation of a specific analytic angle in DA that accounts for the presence of what emerges as immanent features of inequality and control. The critical discursive approach has regarded discourse as a form of social practice concerned with social inequalities. At the same time, a particular interest in ideologies has been taken as a fundamental device to maintain those inequalities. From this perspective, critical analysts have defended the study of discourse not only as a tool for the social construction of reality, but also as an instrument of power and control that “implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:258).

The variables of social condition, institution and ideology have been unanimously considered by discourse analysts as components of the social dimension of discourse. However, power has only been accepted as inherent from the CDA approach, and not from DA itself. With the establishment of the CDA paradigm, DA has downplayed the role of power and control, and has thus damaged the concept of ‘discourse and society’ by distorting and offering a partial vision of the dialectical relationship between discourse and society. Moreover, CDA has only made explicit immanent factors and considerations in the relationship between discourse and society that are already present in the origins of rhetoric and DA itself. As pointed out by van Dijk (1985c), the beginnings of DA may be traced from a double perspective, either going back two thousand years ago, to the sources of classical rhetoric, or restricting ourselves to

the last four decades. Similarly, although as Wodak (1989:xv; 2001:3-4) states, "CDA as a network of scholars emerged in the early 1990s, following a small symposium in Amsterdam, in January 1991", she also admits that the study of the relationship between language and power may be tracked down in the beginnings of rhetoric or stylistics. This same double historical projection detected in CDA makes the origins of both, CDA and DA, coincide, and hence casts overwhelming doubt, within DA, on the real nature of the features attached as characteristic to CDA.

Another side of the distortion of the link discourse-society comes from the analytical behaviour displayed by the critical approach itself. Despite Kress' (1993:174) statement: "There are therefore no texts which can escape critical reading", and Fairclough's (2003a:203) more recent one: "I should emphasize that the claims for CDA as a resource in social research are not at all limited to its contribution to research on new capitalism [...]", the fierce propaganda made by critical analysts (Fairclough, 1995:1, 2001[1989]:1; Kress, 1996:15; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:259) claiming the application of CDA on the discourse of contemporary capitalist societies makes no sense. This position contrasts with the historical ingredient suggested by Kress (1995:140), previously included by himself (Kress, 1990:86) as a component within the paradigm of CDA: "The focus of a language always bears the traces of such history, no doubt reaching back thousands of years, no less real for being no longer visible. The social structures similarly are the product of such history [...]". Seen from this perspective, the creation of CDA as a branch within DA has damaged DA itself, since by restricting critical research limits in time and space, we can but offer a partial vision of the relationship discourse-society in other contexts.

From another perspective, this macro historical ingredient is also essential to guarantee the diachronic path of intertextuality. According to the principle of intertextuality, discourses are not valued as units with precise limits, but as hybrids of other discourses that submit their full meaning to that provided by the latter (Fairclough, 1992b, 1995, 2003a; Lemke, 1995a, 1995b; Gee, 1999; Wodak, 2001). The extension of this factor in time proposed by Foucault (1970, 1972) allows us to value the discursive quality of the present in terms of the background provided by the discursive heritage of the past, which legitimates the present validity and utility of any study placed in the context of the past. Consequently, the link between discourse and society is sustained

through a line of connection with the discourses of earlier times. Critical analysts have broken this line and have thus damaged not only the principle of intertextuality, but the component of macro history as well.

It follows that the appearance of CDA as a branch within DA is not entirely justified. Many statements and proposals made from a DA point of view can only acquire their full meaning and usefulness from a CDA perspective. As we have argued, from a theoretical side, each one of the factors that make up the social dimension of discourse is not completely effective unless included within a parameter of power. Likewise, as we will argue below, from a methodological angle, some systemic proposals have been formulated within an implicit perspective of DA as CDA, whereas others have not deployed their full potential by not admitting explicitly that CDA has to be presented, in fact, as DA.

5. Method

Method and theory cannot be separated, despite the fact that methods are often taught as if they could stand alone. Any method of research is a way to investigate some particular domain [...] There can be no sensible method to study a domain, unless one also has a theory of what the domain is. (Gee, 1999:5)

Within DA, the wrong theoretical attitudes performed with the manipulation of the concept 'discourse and society' have been transferred to the methodological side. This fact has damaged the development of the research enterprise of DA, since it has restricted the full potential of methodological proposals to be obtained in terms of the mutual assistance registered between DA and systemic linguistics.¹¹

In English Text (ET), Martin (1992) not only provides a theoretical concept of ideology. By establishing ideology as a contextual stratum, he also allows DA to handle it from a methodological perspective. Nevertheless, its building through the contribution of the information provided by the linguistic structures and contextual levels of register and genre leads Martin to doubt about the possibility of establishing a firm ideological paradigm:

¹¹ Discourse analysts have favoured systemic linguistics, especially, Halliday's (1994[1985]) functional grammar, as their most suitable analytical instrument (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Kress, 1989[1985], 1990, 1995; Fairclough, 1992b, 1995, 2001[1989], 2003a; Hodge & Kress, 1993[1979]; Gee, 1999; Wodak, 2001). This movement of influences is made reciprocal with the projections towards DA from systemic linguistics (Halliday, 1985; Martin, 1992, 2000; Eggins, 1994; Ravelli, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2003).

Coding orientation need always to be interpreted in context –that is, with respect to the genre and register through which they are manifested. Given our present understanding of these planes, this is a challenging task; and certainly not one for which even a provisional network of oppositions can be provided at this time. (1992:581)

Despite Martin's concern about the lack of a solid pattern where this tension produced by the unequal distribution of power could be framed, it must be noted that it is this semiotic tension itself -defining the ideological field in its dynamic side- the one that is sketching a framework of interpretation based on a network of oppositions where 'ideology and power', as a whole concept, fits in. This concept of ideology, far from being strictly submitted to the dynamic vision, is also modulated by the synoptic perspective, which enables a high degree of variation in terms of the differences imposed by the idiosyncratic characteristics of each culture. Martin presents a contextual method for the analysis of English texts from a non explicit CDA perspective, though his statements offer an implicit view of DA as CDA. However, by not acknowledging completely ideology in terms of power, he is not trusting the importance of his own ideological proposal in ET, the main consequence being the abandonment of the path initiated there and the later confinement of context to only two levels, register and genre (Martin & Rose, 2003).

Moreover, Martin's (1992) model of register, through the variable of tenor, provides a framework where the link between linguistic information and extralinguistic reality is established strictly in terms of social inequality. By means of this variable, social relationships are mediated along the three dimensions of status, contact and affect.¹² These three dimensions allow us to frame social relationships in the terms considered by CDA, that is, investigating "critically social inequality as it is expressed, signalled, constituted, legitimized and so on by language use (or in discourse)" (Wodak, 2001:2).¹³

¹² Status refers to the relative positions of interlocutors in a culture's social hierarchy, contact refers to their degree of institutional involvement and affect covers the degree of emotional charge in the relationship between participants (Martin, 1992:523-536).

¹³ In Martin & Rose (2003:248-249), they reduce the key variables in tenor to the interpersonal dimensions of power and solidarity: "The power variable is used to generalize across genres as far as equalities and inequalities of status are concerned. The horizontal dimension of tenor, solidarity, is used to generalize across genres with respect to the alignment of social subjects into communities of all orders [...]"

From a methodological approach, Martin has established a model of context that, despite not being explicitly recognized by himself, is designed within some theoretical parameters involved in the idea of power and social inequality. As previously argued, the reciprocal relationship discourse-society has been enriched through the reciprocal contributions between DA and other areas of social research. In the same way, the link discourse-society could be enhanced by extending this reciprocal network of fields of study to a methodological side. However, the development in the establishment of methods of analysis is being hindered by not admitting that the full potential of some instruments can only be obtained by turning the paradigms of power and social inequality from critical into descriptive.¹⁴ This same presupposition can be applied to Martin's own statements concerning the four discourse-semantics systems established in ET.¹⁵ Nevertheless, far from re-examining his own formulations, Martin (2000) has later exemplified some of the ways in which Halliday's (1994[1985]) metafunctions enable a kind of analysis on discourse that addresses a number of CDA concerns.¹⁶

The distortion of the concept 'discourse and society' comes from theory and is being moved to method. Analysis, as the second part of the term DA, is dependent on the establishment of a method. A mistaken posing of the methodological question leads inevitably to a mistaken analysis, which affects negatively the idea of DA as the study of language use in social contexts. An improved link between theory and method would enrich, in turn, the link discourse-society.¹⁷ Martin's discourse-semantics level and Halliday's lexico-grammatical stratum have both converged towards an erroneous attitude that has not started by recognizing a critical perspective as total, rather than partial. This may also be the point of departure to rediscover systemic grammar in terms

¹⁴ This attitude is also perceived in Melrose (2005), who from a CDA perspective, constructs a system network which attempts to show how ideology is realized in the text semantics.

¹⁵ As a proof of that, Martin omits the usefulness of his identification system in order to assess the category of social inequality in discourse. This scheme examines the way in which language is structured to make reference to the participants in the text and to value their importance by means of the referential chains they generate: "The more central the participant [...] the more likely it is to provide a referent for a phoric item [...]" (Martin, 1992:107).

¹⁶ Martin (2000) interprets Halliday's ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions as meanings that, respectively, construct, enact and naturalize power.

¹⁷ According to Scheuer (2003:144), critical analysts are not respecting the connection between theory and method: "CDA is in danger of insisting on political agendas without simultaneously offering methods that adequately justify the analysis, independent of its political agenda".

of its close links with DA. The achievement of new proposals in the study of the concept 'discourse and society' is dependent on the reinforcement of those links.

6. Conclusion

The idea of 'discourse and society' has been used as a trigger to elaborate the interdisciplinary nature of DA, in terms of its mutual relationship with other sciences, and to draw the scheme of the different elements that constitute the social dimension of discourse. However, the misuse of the concept is preventing DA from being properly developed. In the case of CDA, DA seems to be evolving through the creation of new approaches that, far from completing the diagram of the interrelationship discourse-society, are breaking the discursive picture of society by offering partial views of the full connection discourse-society. The portrayal of the social side of discourse has to be completed with the addition of inherent ingredients, such as those of power and social inequality, not with the attachment of these components to other DA approaches. It should not be forgotten that an incomplete social dimension of discourse hinders a detailed dialectical relationship between discourse and society, and hence a completely beneficial relationship between DA and other disciplines.

This conclusion marks the beginning of further research to be carried out to discern if some other branches within DA are to be contemplated as different approaches to the same reality or as different perspectives that merely present one side of that reality and that by disintegrating it are betraying the complexity of the dialectical relationship discourse-society. In the case of CDA, the enrichment of the concept 'discourse and society' must be sustained by a point of convergence between its common origins with DA two thousand years ago and the new paths of development in the future towards those common origins. Only by doing this, the basic axiom of DA to study language use in social contexts may remain intact, the dialectical relationship discourse-society undamaged, and the concept 'discourse and society' used, not misused.

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“GOOD NIGHT SWEET PRINCESS”: THE PROBLEM OF FILM ADAPTATION. ASTA NIELSEN’S HAMLET

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1. Shakespeare in the 20th century. The adaptation as a problem.

It is curious to see the interest which the works of William Shakespeare still produce four centuries after they were written, not only by the academic world but also in different artistic expressions. Whereas contemporaries of the bard like Ben Jonson or Christopher Marlowe are a common topic in the university world, it is not so easy to find such interest out of it, not even in more recent writers. This is not the case with the works of William Shakespeare, since it is frequent to find references about them in cinema, press, television, music or even as inspiration for further literary creations, not even just limited within the Anglo-Saxon culture. If we only take into account film productions, which will be our main focus of interest in this paper, he is perhaps the most adapted author of all time, in productions for the big and small screen in films, TV series, or even animation. His life has also been a matter of interest for the screen, either as “real” biography or fiction.¹ The stories, plots and characters have always been presented with an unusual connection to present day society, leading some critics like Jan Kott to consider the bard as “Our contemporary”, as it is stated for the title of one of his books.² The link of his plays with different societies and cultures throughout time has transformed them into icons, objects of study on their own and depositories of a tradition which goes beyond

¹ There have been accounts depositories about his life in series like *Life of Shakespeare* (dir. Mark Cullingham and Robert Knights, 1978), produced In Great Britain starring Tim Curry As a fictional narration of his life, we have the highly awarded *Shakespeare in Love* (dir. John Madden, 1998), which also included in the collaboration of the script with the prestigious writer Tom Stoppard, who has often dealt with the Shakespearean world in some of his plays such as *Rosencratz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966), *Cahool’s Macbeth* or *Dogg’s Hamlet* (1979).

² See *Shakespeare: Our Contemporary* (Jan Kott. London: Routledge, 1965)

Shakespeare's Elizabethan period. Critics such as Patrick Cruttwell, have emphasized this connecting ability with different societies as one of the main features of Shakespeare's plays like *Hamlet*:

Hamlet is one of the handful of literary creations which have turned into something more than simply characters in a novel or poem or play. He has become a figure of myth; and just as Odysseus is the myth character of the Traveller, Faust is the Seeker, Quixote of the Knight and Juan of the Lover, so Hamlet has been made the myth [...] character of the doubting self-contempting intellectual.³

The plays and the characters have progressively increased their richness, growing with the traditions of following centuries and different cultures, providing them with new nuances and interpretations which have accumulated up to the present, frequently mirroring the situations and concerns of the society where they have been presented.⁴ Maria M. Scott emphasizes the importance of reflecting that connection between Shakespeare and society, allowing a play like *Hamlet* to be more available for a wider audience and to achieve an increasing interest in it after several centuries:

Whatever subsequent texts we choose, we have the opportunity to show that *Hamlet* remains relevant as a cultural icon and continues to evolve. Students already recognize *Hamlet* as a known cultural phenomenon; the chance to see how phenomenon relates to their own culture through various interpretations of the story can make Shakespeare in general, more accessible to them. [...] Thus, in order for us to pass on *Hamlet's* story faithfully, we present-day Horatios should consider the original text of *Hamlet*, rather as astronomers think of the big bang and Hamlet itself as the ever-expanding universe.⁵

Apart from direct adaptations, the presence of the bard can commonly be noticed in a large amount of film and TV productions which

³ Patrick Cruttwell, "The Morality of Hamlet." in *Shakespeare: Hamlet*, John Jump, ed. London: MacMillan, 1968, 174-188, esp. 175

⁴ As example, John Jump (*Shakespeare: Hamlet*. London: MacMillan, 1968:23) traces a history of criticism on Shakespeare, collecting the views, not always positive, of many different writers, such as Voltaire, Harley Granville Barker, o George Bernard Shaw. For example, it is curious to see the highly critical position which Voltaire adopts about *Hamlet*, considering it as a "a vulgar and barbarian drama which would not be tolerated by the vilest populace of France or Italy; [...] one would imagine this piece of work of a drunken savage." However, he praises the poetic qualities of the play in stating: "But amidst all this vulgar irregularities [...] there are to be found some sublime passages worthy of the greatest genius."

⁵ Maria M. "Cheating death: The immortal and Ever-expanding universe of Hamlet" in *Approaches to teaching Shakespeare's Hamlet*, Bernice W. Kliman. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2002:239-243, esp. 242

are not really concerned with Shakespeare in a direct way. This is done with two main intentions, apparently opposing, but which are a result of his presence in our present day culture. First, the intention is to endow a new character or creation with depth, seriousness or shrewdness. According to Douglas M. Lanier:

The prestige associated with Shakespeare on film depends at one level on the fact that Shakespeare represents a constellation of values that putatively transcends the vulgar tyranny of commerce to which mass culture and particularly the film industry must, otherwise answer.⁶

Therefore, the “use” of Shakespeare helps to provide seriousness and gravity to an artistic genre that due to its youth and its connection to mass culture is frequently underestimated. However, Shakespeare has also been employed as a parody, questioning an old fashioned tradition which has established some consolidated values along the centuries as undeniable truth.⁷ This second view frequently attempts to provide a personal and original view not on Shakespeare, but on that traditional perception of the world, questioning those aspects of our society which seem untouchable. In recent decades, a new generation of critics such as Peter S. Donaldson have emphasized how the qualities of the Shakespearean text have changed according to the different circumstances of the societies it has been studied: “The Shakespearean text is not a fixed immutable monument [...], nor the artifact [sic] of a society long dead, but a vital source of possibility and challenge, the site or ground on which contemporary artists define their modernity-and our own.”⁸

⁶Douglas M. Lanier, Lanier, “Shakescorp Noir” (157-180) in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53, (2002):157-80, esp. 163. In connection to Lanier’s words, we will also consider two different films of arguable quality, which show this situation in which Shakespeare, and not other writers, not even more recent ones, are considered. In *The Rock* (dir. Michael Bay, 1995) Sean Connery is an old prisoner who worked for the British Secret Service. His old, reckless, hairy, shabby look, is at odds with a book containing the works of William Shakespeare. We can also consider *Renaissance Man* (dir. Amy Heckerling, 1993) in which an unemployed literature professor refers to Hamlet to awaken other kinds of interest and attitudes in a group of privates in the army.

⁷TV series such as *The Simpsons* (episode, 14, series 13; dir. N. Affleck & B. Anderson, 2002), *The Monty Python’s Flying Circus* (episode 43, series 4; dir. J. Howard Davies. et al., 1974), or theatre plays such as *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (Abridged) have presented characters such as Hamlet in different situations which may be considered as irreverent and even absurd, playing the Danish prince in situations like visiting a psychiatrist. Even Spanish television has taken part of this approach. The programme *Buenafuente* in the channel Antena 3, (first season, February, 2005) a small sketch in which the most representative characters in the bard’s plays argued with each other.

⁸Peter S. Donaldson, *Shakespearean Films / Shakespearean Directors*. Boston: Marvin Hyman, 1990:x

Therefore, a new model of tradition has been created, evolving in its meanings, more dynamic and in which it is possible to connect a four hundred year old play with a present society and history. The great variety of means or artworks in which we can see references to *Hamlet*, allow us to understand that, in order to establish a connection between the importance of Shakespeare within our society, we cannot limit ourselves to regard him just through the written page, simply because it has been so for centuries. This is particularly true in the case of 16th century plays because they were conceived for being performed and the printed versions were only a result of their success on stage.⁹ If we don't take performance into account, we are limiting the power of Shakespeare's theatre. John Russell Brown notices some of these elements which would be difficult to emphasize simply by reading:

When we watch a play in performance certain words will stand out, force themselves upon our attention. However, when the production is staged and performed, some words in the performance of a play are as if they were in great capital letters, others are almost invisible: and yet on the printed page, every letter is the same size. [...] Suddenly all our attention in a theatre is focused upon a silent figure, perhaps walking off the stage while other speak: for this on the printed page there is simply the one word: *Exit*.¹⁰

When we think about performance, it has been most generally neglected by critical research over the centuries, and however popular, Shakespeare was no exception. Many are the problems which it has encountered to be valued as a source of research.¹¹ The academic world has usually been too careful to introduce new elements into study. The estimation of performances, commonly devoted for the masses, and also too ethereal in comparison to the permanence of the words on the page, seemed to lack depth in content so as to be included in those researches. It is also important to mention how many adaptations have been accused

⁹ The film critic Béla Balasz (*Evolución y esencia de un arte nuevo*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1978):211), already states how this action was not proper only in the Elizabethan period: "En la Edad Media y en la Antigua Grecia, la obra escrita era siempre posterior a la representación. La representación es mucho más antigua que el texto. Es sabido que los dramas de Shakespeare fueron compuestos posteriormente a partir de los papeles escritos para los actores."

¹⁰ John Russell Brown *Shakespeare's Plays in Performance*. London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 1970:4-5

¹¹ The term performance will be here initially applied to both theatrical and cinema adaptations. Despite its greater tradition, theatrical performance also lacked interest for many groups of critical investigation, and as a result, as Dennis Kennedy (*Looking at Shakespeare: A visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993:15) points out: "Shakespeare on the stage has been detached from any aesthetic investigation of what the stage does and why it does."

of an alleged lack of fidelity. However, Carmen Peña Ardid rejects this accusation when she questions what we should understand with the term “fidelity”: “Si se trata de ser ‘fiel’ es inevitable preguntarse a qué aspectos de la obra literaria: ¿al espíritu, a la estructura, a su ritmo interno? ¿A la ‘letra’?”¹² Furthermore, in regard to this “fidelity” matter, the present convention of theatrical performance has changed so much in the last centuries that it would be difficult to sustain what these critics refer to by the term “fidelity”: the elements of the theatre, such as the building, the scenery, costumes, or even the prohibition of women to act on stage (which for example, keeps us from understanding some of the implied puns) keep us a far distance from that term.¹³ That is the reason why Anthony Davies states that we can only be faithful, not to that so-called tradition, but to our personal perception of the play:¹⁴

It is clearly not helpful to suggest that the filmmaker has an obligation to be faithful to Shakespeare’s intention. Who is to decide what is, or was? It would therefore seem sensible to argue that a filmmaker will make the most effective film adaptation of a Shakespeare play if he is faithful to his own vision of what may be called the play life’s force.¹⁵

In the specific case of film productions, they have had to face many similar reservations. Cinema is commonly placed in-between entertainment and the depth of thought of most classical writing compositions,¹⁶ rising doubts from the most traditional critics. However, in relation to theatrical performance, we cannot deny that films present certain advantages which allow the process of research. For example, a Shakespearean theatrical play has certainly a very limited range of performance. Few of them (and only most famous productions) hardly

¹² Carmen Peña Ardid, *Literatura y cine*. Madrid: Cátedra, 1992:26

¹³ The theatre director and critic Harley Granville Baker (*Prefaces to Shakespeare*. Vol. 1. London: BT Batsford, 1930: 2) rejects the idea of Shakespearean tradition, since it has been common to employ certain elements on stage to express immutable views which are only “recent”: “[...] acting is crippled by pseudo traditions which are inert because they are not Shakespearean at all: They are the accumulation of two centuries of progressive misconception and distortion of his playwrights’ art”. This leads him to state as a conclusion: “There is no Shakespearean tradition” (Latest quote of this author in Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare: A visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance*, 15)

¹⁴ As a convention for this paper, the term “fidelity” will be only applied to the amount and literariness of dialogues which will be included in the adaptation we will be commenting on, leaving the pace and the implications of the dialogue to the film director’s own devices.

¹⁵ Anthony Davies, *Filming Shakespeare’s films* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988):4

¹⁶ We would like to sustain the view of the critic Richard Schikel (*Cine y cultura de masas*. Buenos Aires: Paidós 1964:85) who considers that cinema cannot be considered without a combination of both of them: “Estas tradiciones antitéticas sostienen, por un lado, que el cine es un arte y por otro que es entretenimiento [...]. Para toda persona seriamente interesada en el cine, la gran cuestión está en la actitud básica que asume al respecto. Si dice que es sólo un arte, perderá muchos placeres sencillos. Si insiste en que es entretenimiento, y nada más, perderá muchos placeres sutiles”.

ever go beyond the borders of the United States or Great Britain (and if they do, the audience will also be very limited). On the contrary, we cannot forget the fact that cinema is also an industry, based on an extensive release system which allows productions to be shown in almost any part of the world and to reach different sectors of society. Furthermore, the fact that the film is registered in a solid material as celluloid, means that it can be revised and even re-released once and again, being this fact almost a necessity for its study, something very different from the ethereal construction of a play, which has to change, in most of the circumstances, to the different circumstances which meet at the moment of the performance (which also becomes one of its beauties). However, it also presents advantages against the omnipotent power of the word.¹⁷ It is not illogical to think that in the case of plays, the linguistic reconstruction of the text within a visible context of situation may open the way to new interpretations apart from clarifying doubts about the playwright's intention in certain passages. Even so, cinema adaptations have been commonly rejected raising many criticisms.¹⁸ Carmen Peña Ardid summarizes some of the reasons for that negative evaluation:

¹⁷ Some modern critical movements like deconstructivism disapprove of the excessive value which has been endowed to the written word and how it has become a measure of significance. Mary Alemany Galway (*A Postmodern Theory. The Voice of the other in Canadian Film*. Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2002:8) states the vision of Derrida who: "criticizes western philosophy for being 'logocentric' and believes that structuralism has not been able to rid itself of this tendency. Logocentrism entails a way of thinking that is ultimately committed to a belief in some ultimate word, presence, essence, truth or reality that will act as a foundation for all thought, language and experience."

¹⁸ As an example, we would like to point out the book *Los escritores frente al cine* by Harry M. Geduld. Fundamentos: Madrid, 1981. Here, he gathers the various opinions of different writers who saw or participated in the beginnings of cinema productions. Some of them are quite positive, such as Leon Tolstoi: "[El cine] es un ataque directo a los viejos métodos del arte literario. Tendremos que adaptarnos a lo sombrío de la pantalla y a la frialdad de la máquina. Serán necesarias nuevas formas de escribir [...]. Pero la verdad es que me gusta. Estos rápidos cambios de escena, esta mezcla de emoción y sensaciones e mucho mejor que los compactos y prolongados párrafos literarios a los que estamos acostumbrados [...]. Cuando estaba escribiendo el cadáver viviente me tiraba de los pelos y me retorcía las manos porque no era capaz de crear suficientes escenas apoque no podía pasar de un acontecimiento a otro con bastante rapidez. El maldito teatro se parecía a la maldita sogá que aprieta el cuello del dramaturgo" (24).

Other opinions, like Virginia Woolf's, have not been that supporting, emphasizing the falseness of the medium: "Ojo y cerebro son cruelmente desgarrados cuando tratan en serio de trabajar en pareja. El ojo dice 'He aquí a Ana Karenina'. Una voluptuosa dama vestida de terciopelo negro y adornada con perlas se presenta ante nosotros. Pero el cerebro dice: 'Esta no tiene más de Ana Karenina que la reina Victoria'" (104). This view was shared by Henry Arthur Jones who considered that book creations "Son literatura. Exigen seriedad de pensamiento y sentimiento por parte del público. Piden una actitud crítica y en base a ella ofrecen disfrute emocional e intelectual. Es evidente que el cine no puede proporcionar la calidad y el nivel de placer que sí aporta el drama dialogado: el placer de la literatura" (181).

Finally, we would also like to mention the view of William Faulkner, who praised those adaptations that took literary creations as a starting point: "Entre mis obras llevadas al cine, lo que más me

El problema de la adaptación ha generado una extensa bibliografía, donde abundan los análisis cuyo propósito no parece otro que el de *confirmar* la inferioridad divulgadora y reduccionista de los films creados a partir de textos literarios; inferioridad que se atribuye bien a las carencias expresivas del lenguaje cinematográfico, bien a sus condiciones de producción y de recepción (el heterogéneo, si no ínfimo nivel cultural de un público de masas).¹⁹

Resuming the stances that lead us to our topic, we would like to point out how film adaptations provide a new point of interest on the bard’s plays, not a better one, simply different, which go beyond the analysis of the academic world.

2. Cinema adaptations. Asta Nielsen’s Hamlet: Ein Rachedrama (Hamlet: A Drama of Vengeance, 1920).

The arrival of the 20th century meant the development of a new art/industry, which Martín A. Jackson²⁰ considers as: “uno de los depositarios del pensamiento del siglo XX, en la medida en que refleja explícitamente las mentalidades de los hombres y mujeres que hacen los films”. This view is sustained by Ángel Luis Hueso, who esteems that its role goes beyond mere entertainment, becoming a mirror of the present world, and a means of connecting past and present, even though this final component is hardly ever regarded:

El cine se ha ido convirtiendo no sólo en un espectáculo de amplia difusión geográfica y social, sino en un escaparate en el que se muestran muchas de las peculiaridades de nuestro mundo. Este carácter testimonial es el que nos lleva a propugnar la necesidad de utilizar el cine como uno de los elementos más idóneos para poder conocer e interpretar las claves propias de la sociedad contemporánea. No debemos dejar de reconocer que el cine produce una actitud hasta cierto punto despreciativa por parte de bastantes estudiosos; ello puede ser debido a que con mucha frecuencia se han resaltado, quizás de manera excesiva, las claves que hacían de él un

satisfizo fue una en que actores y escritor se desviaron por completo del guión para inventar las escenas en vivo, junto antes de hacer las tomas” (218). In any case, time has gone by, and this question seems to be still a common matter of discussion. It is the intention of this paper to provide arguments to those ideas which do not try to state what the adaptation “is” or “should be” (either on its own or in relation to the original literary work), but rather, to stay in the unstable road of the possibility and the suggestion, opening the way to the things it “can be”, so that things can be envisaged from an alternative, more enriching point of view.

¹⁹ Peña Ardid, 1992:23

espectáculo, un pasatiempo, como puede ser los deportes para el hombre de nuestro siglo.²¹

This art for the masses has made it possible to take Shakespeare out of the strictly academic world, allowing the expansion and extension of particular and personal views as experiments, in which the text is modified to establish a new connection with the present. As Suzanne L. Wofford points out:

Everyone recognises that there are aspects of the plays that are distinctly Elizabethan or Jacobean, and yet players and readers tend to feel that the plays rise above these differences and reach out a hand to us today. They find in Shakespeare's plays a universality of spirit and concern that traverses not only historical periods but national boundaries.²²

Thanks to this new vision, it has been possible to move away from the most traditional positions of the critic, which, as Dennis Kennedy and John Jump state, conceived Hamlet as a play impossible to perform, and much more superior on written paper than in its performance.

From Charles Lamb to Cleanth Brooks and beyond, the dominant literary critics in English tended to treat Shakespeare's work as a special case, detached from its theatrical genesis and subsequent representation of last interest chiefly because of its verbal power and philosophical applicability to the human condition.²³

As they developed and refined their psychological analysis, some of them began to prefer the play as they might read it in a library to the play as they might watch it in a theatre. Such a preference became widespread during the Romantic period [...] Coleridge, Lamb and Harlitt believed that no actor, living or dead, would be adequate in the role.²⁴

Oposing the most classical opinions, critics like John Russell Brown support the idea that Shakespeare's greatness lies beyond the words he employed:

²⁰ Martin A. Jackson, "El historiador y el cine" in *La historia y el cine*, J. Romaguera, and E. Rimbau, eds. Barcelona: Fontamara, 1983:13-39, esp. 14.

²¹ Angel Luis Hueso, *El cine y el siglo XX* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1998): 19-20

²² Suzanne L. Wofford, *Hamlet*. Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1994:183

²³ Dennis Kennedy, 1992:7

²⁴ John Jump: 1968: 12. See also Jean Mitry, *Estética y psicología del cine*. Volumen 1 y 2 (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España, 1978): 409, and Wilson Knight, 1964, 29

Shakespeare wrote poetic drama of great verbal power, but the words are not all. Always the text is accompanied by continuous physical performance which can transform the effect of spoken words; it is sometimes necessary for more intelligibility. Silence and gesture are also important. And the text often lies.²⁵

Other critics, such as Jean Mitry share this view, considering the relative importance for the written text, since in Shakespeare’s days, it was a means and not an end in itself:

Shakespeare por el contrario emplea las palabras no como un fin en sí sino como un medio. En sus obras, la significación desemboca en un mundo imaginario que no es reductible a la única cualidad verbal. En otros términos, mientras Racine y Corneille expresan una interioridad definida y limitada por las palabras, Shakespeare crea, con las palabras, un universo que envuelve los sentimientos que expresan. Es dinámico (virtud que comparte con los españoles) allí donde otros son estáticos, y se ha dicho con frecuencia que si hubiera vivido en el siglo XX hubiera sido cineasta y no dramaturgo.²⁶

Film adaptations can be divided into two main kinds. There have been a group of actors, who usually became directors, continuing a long theatrical tradition which they tried to show in some of the most classical adaptations. We can consider within this classical group film adaptations like Lawrence Olivier’s (1948), Tony Richardson’s (1968), or Kenneth Branagh’s (1996). On the other hand, we can consider that they are “complementary” to other films which try to experiment with Shakespeare, even using him as a pre-text, to show different points of view. We have to consider within this group certain productions such as those by directors such as Michael Almereyda (2000), or Sven Gade and Heinz Schall (1920) and even those films in which Hamlet is a starting point to develop a parallel story, such as *To be or not to Be* (dir. Ernst Lubitsch, 1942) or *In the Bleak Midwinter* (dir. Kenneth Branagh, 1995), both describing how a group of actors attempted to represent Shakespeare in very difficult circumstances. This latter type of adaptations has also presented the prince in different situations like a woman (either disguised as a man -*Hamlet* by Sven Gade and Heinz Schall, 1920- or performed by a woman who fakes being a man -*Le duel d’Hamlet*, directed by Clement Maurice, and starring Sarah Bernhardt

²⁵ John Russell Brown, 1966:66

²⁶ Jean Mitry, 1978:417

in 1900); a gangster in *Let the Devil Wear Black* (dir. S. Title, 1999); a shop owner in contemporary Japan in *The Bad Sleeps Well* (dir. Akira Kurosawa, 1960); a “real” character in 6th century old Denmark in *Prince of Jutland* (dir. Gabriel Axel, 1994); an animated character (as a human, or even a lion starring in a successful Disney film in *The Lion King* (dir. R. Allers & R. Minkoff, 1994), etc.

Nowadays, most early productions from silent cinema are lost in the realm of oblivion. Not many remember the narrative strength of many films shot before recorded speech appeared, and what different resources they employed to make a story “speak” to the public. This kind of cinema is commonly related to the music employed while the film was being shown, the frequent close-ups to see the reactions of the characters of the story, the exaggerated and almost hysterical movements to make more obvious the character’s motions which made them more like theatre than any later film productions. The fast pace associated to its sequences means that, if lucky, only some of their comedy actors such as Buster Keaton or Charlie Chaplin are remembered. However, few people regard the blossoming industry which was being created in the early 20th century, with hundreds of films produced every year, in some cases parallel to nowadays “big budget productions” because of the number of extras, the quality of the film crews, the precious artistic design, etc., or how Europe was in full competition with a beginning Hollywood which was giving shape to its star system. As Liam O’Leary points out, cinema was creating its own language but at the same time in a time of great artistic creativity:

The period [of silent cinema] was one of great ingenuity, experiment and ever-changing variety. It was an era of originality and intense creativity. Because it was new, it had to invent its own language. Because it had no tongue it relied on visual action, and it was this which gave it its great beauty and directness of approach. It learned to weld the written word to the moving images. It learned to bend time and space to its needs. It developed a soul.²⁷

Despite its many limitations, Shakespeare was one of the first authors to be filmed in cinema. *The Death of King John* was shot in September 1899 by Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, in a three minute productions showing the last moments of the play. It would be shown at Her Majesty’s Theatre in London. Strange as it may seem today, it was

²⁷ Dennis O’Leary, *The silent cinema*. Suffolk: The Chaucer Press, 1965:7.

a woman who first took the role of the Danish prince in cinema.²⁸ It would be performed by the great actress Sarah Bernhardt in the year 1900 in the film *Le Duel d’Hamlet* (Clement Maurice), a mere seven minute French production which would show the final moments of the play. Even though Sarah Bernhardt was almost fifty years-old when she became Hamlet for the screen, she thought that she was more adequate to perform the part than a young male actor as “A boy of twenty cannot understand the philosophy of Hamlet [...] without understanding there is no delineation of character [...] the woman more readily looks the part, yet has the maturity of mind to grasp it.”²⁹

A few years later, the French director Georges Méliès fulfilled a short production on *Hamlet* for Gaumont in 1907, performing also the main role. However, as Kenneth S. Rothwell states, these kind of films were low-profile productions for American *Nickelodeon* cinematographers (also known as the “five cent theatre”) and English *Penny-Gaffs* (both of these machines which were usually activated with a low value coin, getting thereby their name), shown at county fairs and vaudevilles. They could only contain small fragments of the play in one-reel productions which lasted from ten to fifteen minutes at the most. Rothwell also considers them as no more than: “a record of a theatrical performance on a conventional set, a first step in the evolution of the Shakespearean movie.”³⁰ The first production which approached a “full-length” adaptation of the play (still with great limitations) was shot in 1913, in a 59 minutes adaptation by the theatre director Hay Plumb and starring the Jonathan Forbes Robertson, who was considered as one of the best Hamlets in history. Shakespeare was a quality sign, but the reaction of the public to his play in cinema was uncertain. He employed the Drury Lane theatre whose stage company had held frequent collaborations with him. The film was shot at the Hepworth studios in Walton-on-Thames and on natural locations in Hertfordshire and Lulworth Castle in Dorset, an amount of 10,000 pounds being necessary to carry out the production.³¹

²⁸ Other examples in film and theatre productions would be Asta Nielsen (1920) whose production will be our object of discussion, Judith Anderson (1970), Diane Venora (1982), or Marnie Penning (1998). See Kenneth S. Rothwell, *A History of Shakespeare on Screen. A century of film and television* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004):22

²⁹ Rothwell, 22

³⁰ Rothwell, 3

³¹ See Luis Enrique Ruiz, *Obras pioneras del cine mudo. Orígenes y primeros pasos (1895, 1917)*. (Bilbao: Mensajero, 2000): 54; Kenneth S. Rothwell, 2004:17; Ann Thompson, 1997:217

In those days, Asta Nielsen (1881-1972), simply known as “Asta” or “Die Asta”, was already a well-known actress in Europe. She was a Danish origin, but her fame was enlarged by working in Germany around 1910. She had some practice in theatre, but most of her career developed in cinema, so she managed to develop a fully filmic style. As Siegfried Kracauer asserts:

En una época en la que la mayoría de los actores aún adoptaban recursos teatrales, Asta Nielsen desplegó un innato sentido del cine que no pudo sino inspirar a sus compañeros. Su conocimiento de cómo producir un efecto psicológico determinado por medio de un vestido adecuadamente elegido era tan profundo como su perspicacia para los impactos cinematográficos que se expresan con los detalles.³²

Her fame in Europe and her qualities and attitudes as an actress can depict her as a predecessor of later Hollywood’s European stars in America such as Marlene Dietrich or Greta Garbo.³³ However, she only worked in Europe, which is why she wouldn’t become that well known in the future. Like these previous actresses, her acting qualities would be complemented by the features of her cold beauty and androgyny, which according to many witnesses, were equally attractive for men and women. Guillame Apollinaire commented on her presence on screen: “¡Ella es todo! ¡Es la visión de un borracho y el sueño de un solitario. Ríe como una chica totalmente feliz y sus ojos expresan tanta ternura y timidez que no se puede hablar de ella [...] Hay que verla”.³⁴ More interesting for us is the opinion of the film critic Bela Balasz, who employed similar expressions to compliment her performance on this particular film: “Arriad las banderas, ante ella” [acerca de su interpretación de *Hamlet*] [...] arriad las banderas ante ella pues es única. “Ella es típicamente nórdica como sacada de las leyendas salvajes del ‘Edda’”.³⁵

During the days of the Republic of Weimar, a number of productions on Shakespeare plays such as *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello* and *Hamlet*, were attempted in Germany. They departed from the one-reel films that fitted the Nickelodeons to fit the new cinema Palaces that were being built. Under her own production company, Asta Films and

³² Siegfried Kracauer, *De Caligari a Hitler. Una historia psicológica del cine alemán*. Barcelona: Paidós, 1985:33

³³ In fact, Nielsen and Garbo would appear in the same film, *Die Freudlose Gasse* (*The Street of Sorrow*) in (1925). See Rothwell, 2004:21.

³⁴ Kracauer, 33

³⁵ Quoted here from Lotte H- Eisner, *La pantalla demoníaca*. Madrid: Cátedra, 1988:255-56

directed by Heinz Schall and her husband Sven Gade, she starred in the 1920 adaptation of *Hamlet: Ein Rachedrama Hamlet: A Drama of Vengeance*), a 131 minute film,³⁶ in which she reserved the main part for herself.³⁷ One of the curious elements about Sven Gade’s film is that, apart from Shakespeare book, the script refers to other Hamletian compositions such as Saxo Grammaticus’, and especially, the critical research by Edward P. Vining *The Mystery of Hamlet* (1881). The idea assured that Hamlet had female features such as lack of decision or contradictory spirit, which explained his behaviour. Monika Seidl states that the idea had already been presented by Goethe’s who had suggested in *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* (1795/96) the opinion that Hamlet was “effeminate and fragile”.³⁸ In his book, Vining went much further stating that not only Hamlet had these female qualities, but simply that he had been born a woman:

We imagine that the poet here portrayed a woman incapable of accomplishing the revenge which the perturbed spirit of her father had imposed upon her, driven to the borders of distraction by unbearable burdens, suffering from a hopeless love that she might never reveal, tortured by jealousy, sorely sensitive to all a woman’s natural faults, and incensed far more at the sacrifice of personal purity made by her mother in marrying again so speedily, than even by the murder of her father; shrinking from the mortal struggle with the king, fearing bloodshed, and viewing the possibility of her own death with a shuddering horror, and hence anxious to find some escape, some easier method of fulfilling her duty; that which before seemed at variance with all ordinary modes of thinking now becomes an exhibition of the deepest human feeling.³⁹

³⁶ The terrible conditions in which films were kept in and the lack of a copyright law, which allowed cinema owners to cut those parts which they considered that the public could find less interesting, has resulted in the fact that most of those films have come to us crippled, so that different copies of the same film may contain different scenes. This makes difficult to be sure about the real duration of these silent films, and it is possible to find different lengths in different sources. For our case, we will be employing the data which can be found at possible the best cinema database in the internet, the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com).

³⁷ When we refer to Asta Nielsen’s character, we will mainly consider her as a female, but depending on the situation she is introducing on screen we may occasionally refer to her as male. May this be granted as indulgence for this writing, even though it may be confusing on occasions for the reader.

³⁸ Monika Seidl “Room for Asta: Gender Roles and Melodrama in Asta Filmic Version of *Hamlet* (1920)”, (208-16) *Literature/Film Quarterly* 30, 2002:3. This article can also be consulted on-line in the website: <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3768/is_200201/ai_n9057293> accessed: 12 August 2005)

³⁹ Nowadays, it is difficult to find this book for sale. However, it is possible to review some of the most relevant excerpts of the book in different web sites. The excerpts herein included have been taken from: <http://shea.mit.edu/ramparts/commentaryguides/hamlet_a_woman/vining.htm> (accessed: 12th August 2005)

In doing this, according to Kenneth S. Rothwell she succeeded in “liberating the Shakespeare movie from theatrical and textual dependency, moving toward the filmic.” Nielsen not only shows a character with female qualities; she goes beyond that point as her character is obliged to fake being a man since childhood. In doing so, we are present to *Hamlet*’s well-known story with a twist, “a split vision, the Doppelgänger effect [...] Hamlet in a bad dream, a step away from a Dada-suffused Buñuel film”, as Rothwell himself emphasizes.⁴⁰

We know of Hamlet’s situation even before the moment of her birth. The first images of the film place us in two different scenarios. Queen Gertrude is giving birth at Elsinore while king Hamlet fights against the king of Norway. At the moment of birth, the queen receives news of her husband’s death in battle, and both she and her nurse decide to declare that a boy is born to assure the succession to the crown.⁴¹ When the king returns alive, they are forced to follow their own lie, educating their offspring as a boy. As a result, the character is conceived and played in a much different way from previous adaptations. The fear of being discovered makes Hamlet into a lonely, shy person who is only connected to the world by her parent’s love, even though the prince is esteemed and respected by the people of the kingdom. Her attitude is that of a person who is aware of being a woman, but is expected and agrees to behave like a man in a kind of society which has prepared a different destiny for them. However, Ann Thompson considers, against Vining’s view, that being born a woman was not a problem for her to take actions. On the contrary, she wouldn’t have been able to perform her duty, had she not been born a woman:

There is not only a masculine type of human perfection, but also a feminine type and when it became evident that Hamlet was born lacking in many of the elements of virility, there grew up in him, as compensation, many of the perfections of the character, more properly the crown, of the better half of the human race.⁴²

⁴⁰ Rothwell, 21-23

⁴¹ The words of the dialogue can be read in a title card: “The nurse’s crafty scheme: “Tell the people it is a son. You can save the crown and still be queen’”.

⁴² Ann Thompson, “Asta Nielsen and *The Mystery of Hamlet*” in *Shakespeare the Movie. Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, and Video*, L.E. Boose and R. Burt, eds. London and New York: Routledge, 1997:215-24, esp. 218

Hamlet becomes a character who takes male and female features as a benefit, but also as a curse. In public, her gestures, the way she moves and the way she treats those around her, even the way she sits and crosses her legs must always remind of a man.⁴³ However, she desires to act according to what is expected from her true sex, free from her secret, and her body language is more proper of a female character. From the beginning, sexual confusion and identity games (something which was common in Shakespeare’s comedies such as *Twelfth Night*) become a constant. It also allows the director to add many other alternative situations to Shakespeare’s text, approaching to many different moments of alleged common life for the prince, her family life, her relationship with her father, being closer than her mother’s in an Elsinore which is depicted more similarly to a palace, comfortable and at times cosy, than to a medieval castle. Tragedy is hardened by her sexual condition, which makes it more difficult for her to establish sentimental bonds with anyone outside her secret. Horatio is no more a witness and becomes a great participant in the story. He represents some of the male features which Hamlet cannot present in this story. He becomes an object of desire for both Ophelia and Hamlet, from the moment he and the prince met at Wittenberg. Horatio also becomes Hamlet’s guardian, deciding to go with the prince to Elsinore once she knows about her father’s death, and defending her whenever it is necessary. For example, at Ophelia’s burial, it is Horatio himself who unsheathes the sword for the accusations against the prince. Her confidences with Horatio reveal her desire for him, but also her impotence for the impossibility of confessing her love. On the other hand, her relationship with Ophelia is necessarily distant, as Hamlet is reminded by her mother, and she only becomes a matter of interest when she is used as an instrument to reveal the real intentions of the members of the court. As a matter of fact, Hamlet regards Ophelia as a competitor, and feels a certain degree of jealousy, as she is a woman of the same age who can show her real nature and act as she is supposed to behave according to her sex, for example, with Horatio. Hamlet’s insinuations to Ophelia raise the anger of Gertrude, who outraged reminds the prince of her sexual condition. Hamlet is forced to accept Horatio’s approaches to Ophelia, silencing her own feelings for him. This

⁴³ However, she keeps long, carefully dressed nails, making us to wonder if this was intentionally, to remember always this double dimension of the actress in the public’s subconscious, or just an indulgence that the actress was not ready to give in.

situation gives rise to many confusions, like the moment when Horatio puts his head on Hamlet's shoulder while they are walking around Elsinore's gardens, moments in which she seems to be about to reveal her real condition. However, she is a committed and responsible character, and her need for real justice, and being the kingdom in the hands of an unable king, always oblige her to remain silent. Her true nature is discovered only too late, after her duel with Laertes, and when she has already died. Horatio kneels and puts her hand on her dead friend's chest. Her condition as a woman is revealed, and so is an even greater tragic understanding of the situation of her character, which leads Horatio to kiss her on the lips as if love had been implicit between them. His cape covers her face as Fortinbras soldiers enter the castle to remove her in arms.

Ophelia's position also shifts into an even greater sense of weakness. She portrays Hamlet's position if she had grown up like a woman. Both men and women have different lives. As Monika Seidl⁴⁴ indicates they occupy different spaces: "men the public and open space of the battlefield and women a confined and private space, namely home, and more specifically, the bedroom." As a consequence, male characters are regarded as active while female are considered as passive. Therefore, because of their female condition, women live their life standing in regard of others, creating even greater false expectancies which cannot be fulfilled, being forced to accept the decisions and circumstances of the members of their families. Hamlet can only show her true nature when she is alone, aside from anybody else, mainly in the family vault where she cries for her father and expects death to come. It is the male characters of the story who mark the destiny of the women, Polonius⁴⁵ and Laertes in the case of Ophelia and the dead king and Cladius as usurper of the throne in the case of Hamlet.

Both of them are betrayed by their families. In the case of the king's old Councillor, he has no shame in offering her daughter to the needs of the king in order to discover the true intentions of the prince. As a result,

⁴⁴ Seidl, 3; also: <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3768/is_200201/ai_n9057293>

⁴⁵ This character becomes initially the object of Hamlet's jokes and a target for Hamlet's feigned madness, which show the most relaxed moments of comedy along the tragedy. Polonius is always alert to the prince's conversations or writing, but he shows no wit in hiding his intentions. The result of his daring and inquisitive attitude is initially just a few bruises and in continuing with his attitude, death, which cause no regret from the prince in her action.

Ophelia simply wanders from one character to another in a naïve attempt to find love, feeling equally attracted to the prince and to Horatio, and behaving like a meek daughter and sister. Her death is mourned and regretted by everyone, including Hamlet, for its uselessness, as she becomes collateral damage.

The rest of the characters also present prominent differences with the Shakespearean text. Gertrude becomes a fully conscious character, who no longer moves in the indeterminacy of Shakespeare’s play. She sees Claudius’ courtship with good eyes as she is considered as a woman full of vices and sins such as lust or greed. When she is told by the nurse to lie about the child’s sex, she seems the first interested in doing so as she is mentioned the possibility to keep the throne. She even plots to kill her husband with Claudius, going down with him to the snake pit. The prince becomes progressively more suspicious with her mother’s involvement in the crime (even though it is only Claudius who performs it.) Hamlet accuses her of her change of attitude,⁴⁶ assisting initially with impotence to her mother’s flirtings with Claudius in front of the old king, and then to the celebration for the new wedding, a representation of the capital sins in which Claudius comes to portrait all the bad qualities of a king. Hamlet’s return from Wittenberg allows the prince to attend to a grotesque wedding banquet, in which she is eagerly taking part. Gertrude decides to reject her past when she rips and throws away any remaining sign of mourning for her past husband in her wedding banquet. When her new husband dies and sees her position in danger, she decides to kill her own daughter, plotting the duel between Hamlet and Laertes. Poisoning the prince during the duel seems also a more proper way of killing for a woman, according to different medical and forensic researches, more subtle and not so bloody or violent. Her death is seen almost like a punishment for her crimes, when she accidentally drinks the poison she had prepared for the prince.

In relation to Claudius, his manners and lack of measure in drinking and eating, together with his greed for power as he takes the crown, and his lusty attitudes with Gertrude, show him as an opposite

⁴⁶ Directors like Lawrence Olivier or Franco Zeffirelli would later add to their adaptations psychological theories like Sigmund Freud’s or Ernst Jones, in which Hamlet and Gertrude’s relationship unveils an Edipo’s complex when he is displaced by her mother’s new relationship, which make him guilty for his actions. For this adaptation, we assist to a small change of roles for an Elektra complex. We see the prince taking care of her old father, trying to cover her mother’s and uncle’s flirtations.

to the previous king's mild manners. It will be that attitude that will later take him to death, since Hamlet will later kill him after being drunk in a new celebration for the assumed death of the prince. After Hamlet had killed Polonius and being Claudius conscious that it could have been his own death, he sends Hamlet with two plotters as servants to Norway, so that Fortinbras puts an end to Hamlet's life. During his trip, as they rest in an inn, Hamlet becomes aware of Claudius intentions, but he changes the contents of the letters taking advantage of his dagger, discovered at the snake pit. Hamlet had become acquainted with Fortinbras at Wittgenstein, and after getting rid of the two conspirators, he helps the prince to claim back the throne from her uncle, following her to Denmark with a large company of soldiers. When Hamlet arrives at Elsinore, she witnesses the celebration of her own death. Everybody, even the new king is drunk and sleeping, and Hamlet uses the moment to close the gates of the Hall and set it on fire. He shares many qualities with Shakespeare's Claudius. He is aware of his sins, and in some shots of the film, he apparently feels guilt for his actions. On the other hand, he shows none of the subtleties and none of the double game that his counterpart do. His actions are more obvious and there is nothing that cannot be expected from this type of king.

The possibility of referring to those earlier moments of the prince's life also allows us to understand the circumstances of the characters of the play. We attend to other moments of the life of the prince such as her life at Wittenberg, behaving like any other student, and where she also meets people who will be important in her future life such as Horatio, Laertes or Fortinbras, the heir of the Norwegian crown with whom she decides to call an end to past disputes. Here, she can rest from the hard days that lie ahead, even though she always keeps herself as a responsible young person (becoming the ideal prince stated by Machiavelli, a man of arms and letters, as opposed to spoilt young Laertes, more interested in gambling, women and drinking, and constantly borrowing money from whoever he can, such as the prince.) However, she cannot behave like the rest of the male students. Horatio and Laertes encourage him to make compliments to other women, and she can only pretend. This situation hardens when she gets to know of her father's death at the university, and the mysterious circumstances in which they take place, also attending to this decadent situation in which even her mother eagerly takes part. In this case, there is no need to refer to supernatural

elements such as a ghost to explain the doubts and suspicions arisen, as they become a progressive discovery for Hamlet. The prince knows the king has been murdered by one of the father’s servants who tells her how he discovered a snake next to her father’s body. Hamlet also finds a dagger with Claudius’ seal in the dungeon where lies the snake pit. Hamlet will also gradually discover that Gertrude was involved with Claudius in plotting the murder, increasing the dramatic tone of the play from a more rational point of view.

Death looks like a relief as she seems to be continually waiting for its arrival, on the verge of suicide. When it comes in the final moments of the film, it means not only an end to her suffering but also fulfils the possibility of finally appearing as a woman in front of others. Horatio’s kiss on the lips is the translation in images of his words “Good night, sweet Prince”⁴⁷ but its meaning goes far beyond Shakespeare words. The story is closed like in *Hamlet* with a bittersweet and sour feeling, but the amount and complication of the feelings involved goes far beyond the bard’s play.

To many critics, this was the best *Hamlet* ever adapted. The situation is similar to Akira Kurosawa’s adaptations, like *Throne of Blood* (1957), which differ from the Shakespearean original text and situation, but contain higher dramatical power. It’s for this reason that M. Willems takes other critics opinions in stating that the best results derive from those films which start in the Shakespearean play, not considering it as an end in itself.⁴⁸ When it is compared to future adaptations like Olivier’s, it stands on its own, being praised with even with higher qualities and preparing the way for future productions:⁴⁹

Asta Nielsen nationality is often alluded to in discussion of the film, as for example in James’s Card’s salute in 1979: “In many ways Asta Nielsen’s performance as Hamlet is far more moving than that

⁴⁷ It can be read in the title card: “he [Horatio] cries out: ‘Death reveals thy tragic secret. Now I understand what bound me to that matchless form’.”

⁴⁸ Michelle Willems “Verbal-Visual and Verbal-Pictorial or Textual Television? Reflections on the BBC Shakespeare Series.” in *Shakespeare and the Moving Image: The Plays on Film and Television*, A. Davies and S. Wells, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994:69-85, esp. 72

⁴⁹ Olivier employs some elements that had already been employed by Gade, like stairs which place the characters at different levels to mark the different intellectual and moral situation of some characters in relation to others. The stage designer Roger Furse, influenced by the German expressionist movement, provided Olivier the idea, since it had been something common in the German expressionist movement.

of Lawrence Olivier. Even with the advantages of Shakespeare's verse, Olivier was far less a haunted and melancholy Dane than was Asta Nielsen in 1920".⁵⁰

This Paradoxical bondage to and liberation from nineteenth century "Hamletism" as well as the Quarto and Folio texts, paved the way for more probing treatments in the Hamlet films of Wirth, Lyth, Kline, Richardson, Zefirelli, Kozintsev and Branagh.⁵¹

We may agree that it can be arguable whether to consider this film a Shakespearean adaptation. Nonetheless, the truth is that this film wouldn't have been produced if it had not been related to Shakespeare. On the other hand, we must be aware of the difficulties we may find in approaching to a group of characters whose intentions and motivations were very different from our present society. It is certainly impossible to try to know for certain the implicit references which lie behind every single indication of the written text, since we live in different points of view. Hamlet has often been considered as a melancholic character, and it is a certain achievement of the film as it helps us to consider the female qualities of the prince in Shakespeare's play. It is that mixture of a warrior and a serene observer (which was then one of the main features of the inner female world) the reason why the play is so complex, showing a dual world. As a result, the more experiences we have in relation to this text, the better they will help us to understand it and to open new sources for interpretation. This is how this film should be envisioned. First, as a collateral consequence of the creative richness of William Shakespeare. Second, as a new attempt for interpretation employing some of the weapons that the 20th century has provided, and that would have been impossible much earlier. In the end, this all comes to justify the vision that it is difficult to consider the existence of a Shakespearean tradition. Perhaps, it is better to speak about the Shakespearean world, as a group of approaches in time which have arisen as a consequence of the fascination to that cultural icon which William Shakespeare became. That is why critics such as Terence Hawkes have come to say: "Shakespeare's plays have no essential meanings, but function as resources which we use to generate meaning for our own purposes. [...] In the 20th century, Shakespeare doesn't mean: *we* mean by Shakespeare."⁵²

⁵⁰ Thompson, 1997:218

⁵¹ Rothwell, 2004:25

⁵² Terence Hawkes *Meaning by Shakespeare*. London: Routledge, 1992:3

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THE CHORAL GOWER IN *PERICLES*: “LEARN OF ME, WHO STAND I’ TH’ GAPS TO TEACH YOU”

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Abstract

The character Gower in Shakespeare’s Pericles attempts to constrain our understanding of the play, and specifically its representation of the family, through strategies of interpretation appropriate for a fourteenth-century poet. His overriding concern is to differentiate between incestuous and natural, or licit, father-daughter relationships. Finally, however, the play suggests that the sexuality, as a construct of family relations, is fundamentally and inevitably incestuous.

Shakespeare’s *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* offers a clear, and on the face of it routine, illustration of Renaissance medievalism.¹ The play is based upon the popular tale of Apollonius (here renamed Pericles), which dates back to the ninth century in a Latin version entitled *Historia Apollonii* and which later circulated widely throughout medieval Europe in numerous vernacular translations, making its first appearance in English at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period (Archibald, 1991:3). The tale is a highly episodic romance that defies brief summary, and it no doubt owed its popularity to the element of adventure and fantasy, but it also carries out a serious investigation of the patriarchal family, represented by King Antiochus and his daughter (the woman the young hero initially seeks

¹ The question of the play’s authorship has no bearing on my argument, and I have used the designation “Shakespeare” as a matter of convenience, although it has always been known that at least one other playwright contributed to *Pericles*.

to marry), who are engaged in an incestuous relationship, and by Apollonius's own family, which is fragmented when his daughter is born (with the apparent death of his wife) and not reunited until many years later. At the end of the fourteenth-century John Gower again translated the *Historia Apollonii* into English, and this is the version, from Book 8 of the *Confessio Amantis*, that Shakespeare drew upon for his primary source. It is therefore fitting that Gower takes his place among the play's dramatis personae with the role of a chorus, who presides over and comments upon the action. The Gower of *Pericles* usually speaks in old-fashioned octosyllabic couplets, in imitation of the verse form of the *Confessio*, and professes a medieval, specifically Augustinian, *raison d'être*: "I do beseech you / To learn of me, who stand i' th' gaps to teach you" (IV.iv.7-8) -to teach us first the "stages of [the] story" (IV.iv.9), or the plot, but beyond that to teach us a moral lesson by interpreting the action as it unfolds and passing judgment on the participants in these actions.² Most obviously, in the final moments of the play Gower construes each of the principal characters as a moral emblem: "In character X may you well descry a figure of moral quality Y" (to paraphrase the rhetorical formula he uses, V.iii.85-100). With respect to the two father-daughter pairs around which the play is structured, he points to Antiochus and his daughter as a figure of "monstrous[ness]" and to Pericles and his daughter, Marina, as a figure of "virtue," and declares that in witnessing their several fates we have learned how heaven allocates its "due and just reward." Gower's choral function in the play recalls the authorial apparatus, so to speak, in the original text, where marginal Latin glosses mark steps in the *fabula*, and other marginal glosses or remarks to the reader embedded within the poem enunciate the *sapientia* that justifies, in medieval terms, the poet's literary enterprise.³ The first gloss makes this didactic intention perfectly clear by describing the story as a "mirabile exemplum de magno Rege Antiocho" (at 8.271), an *exemplum*, or instructive fiction, that "loquitur [...] contra incest[um]"; and in the last lines of Book 8 we are again told that the story serves as a profitable "ensample" (8. 1999), from which we may learn how "love unkindely [...] hath his penance" in the case of Antiochus (8.2005-2008) but on the other

²This and all other quotations from *Pericles* are taken from Evans's edition.

³For a description of the manuscripts and printed editions of the *Confessio*, see Macauley (1901:cxxvii-clxxiii); all quotations from the *Confessio* are taken from Macauley's edition. Line numbers with asterisks indicate an alternative recension.

hand how “love and reson wolde acorde” in case of Apollonius (8.2023). The moral Gower (as he was fatally dubbed by Chaucer) thus guides the reader from “game” to “ernest,” from “pleye” to “wisdom” (see 8.3106-3124, 8.3056*-3062*), and concludes with a celebration of love in the specifically Christian form of charity (“charite”):

[...] thilke love which that is
Withinne a mannes herte affirmed,
And stant of charite confermed,
Such love is goodly forto have,
Such love mai the body save,
Such love mai the soule amende, [...]
(8.3162-3167)

Gower’s exegetic practice is in concert with Augustinian hermeneutics, finding a Christian truth within the letter of the secular text and converting the fabulous tale of adventure to a better use as a “restorative,” in the play’s word (I.chor.8), for the audience’s soul.⁴ In this way, “ancient” Gower, newly resurrected “[f]rom ashes” (I.chor.2), brings with him onto the Renaissance stage the theological and poetic spirit of the Middle Ages. I would argue, however, that *Pericles* not only illustrates medievalism but is *about* medievalism, and that it presents medievalism, embodied in the chorus, as a thematic concern, and as a problem.

If Shakespeare’s Gower is an Augustinian exegete, he is also an Iserean reader. According to Wolfgang Iser, the text is a system of discontinuities that must be reconstituted by a process of thought on the part of the reader:

[...] there must be a place within this system for the person who is to perform the reconstituting. This place is marked by the gaps in the text -it consists in the blanks which the reader is to fill in. [...] The gaps function as a kind of pivot on which the whole text-reader

⁴For Augustine, secular literature, and in particular the legacy of classical culture, was dangerous, but could be successfully appropriated through certain hermeneutic strategies, as he explains in *De doctrina Christiana*: “Just as the Egyptians had not only idols and grave burdens which the people of Israel detested and avoided, so they also had vases and ornaments of gold and silver and clothing which the Israelites took with them secretly when they fled, as if to put them to better use.[...] In the same way all the teachings of the pagans contain not only simulated and superstitious imaginings and grave burdens of unnecessary labor, which each one of us [...] ought to abominate and avoid, but also liberal disciplines more suited to the uses of truth, and some most useful precepts concerning morals [...]. These are, as it were, their gold and silver [...] [which] should be seized and held to be converted to Christian uses” (1958:75).

relationship revolves. Hence the structured blanks of the text stimulate the process of ideation to be performed by the reader, [...] [who] cannot help but try and supply the missing links that will bring the [textual] schemata together in an integrated gestalt. (1978:169, 186)

Likewise, Gower views the text as a system of blanks and gaps; these are the sites at which he stands. As a reader of the drama-text, and one unable to tolerate any break in “good continuation” (1978:189), Gower hastens to fill the gaps he stands in by supplying the audience with additional information: “I’ll plain with speech,” he says (III.chor.14). The “process of ideation,” so performed, creates narrative links that bring dramatic scenes together in an apparently natural, self-evident sequence. When the drama cuts abruptly from one geographical locale to another, or from one group of characters to another, as it frequently does, Gower connects the two “stages of the story” by means of a profoundly literal explanation: Pericles took a boat. And he tries to restrict his audience’s imaginative activity to a literal level as well: “In your imagination hold / This stage [a] ship” (III.chor.58-59). Gower’s reading of the drama thus rewrites it for the audience, converting what Iser terms a “fictional” text into an “expository,” or “thesis” text. Iser explains the difference as follows: In expository texts the “multiplicity of possible meanings [is] narrowed down by observing the connectability of textual segments, whereas in fictional texts the very connectability broken up by the blanks tends to become multifarious” (1978:184). The conversion of textual multifariousness to a single determinate meaning, is, of course, a radically Augustinian project, as outlined, for example, in *De doctrina Christiana*, whose purpose was to establish rules for right reading in order to control the proliferation of heterodox scriptural interpretation.⁵ Like Augustine, Gower carefully regulates the site of textual indeterminacy -the gap- which is also the site of textual productivity. Through regulation of the fictive gap, he works to foreclose unexpected possibilities of meaning and thereby guarantee a clear exposition of his thesis.

I would argue that Shakespeare makes this delimitation of meaning conspicuous—and therefore problematic. Against Gower’s didactic and

⁵ See, for example, the Prologue: “There are certain precepts for treating the Scriptures which I think may not inconveniently be transmitted to students [...] (1958:3), and “[...] he who receives the precepts we wish to teach [...] may come to the hidden sense without any error, or at least he will not fall into the absurdity of wicked meanings” (1958:7).

thetic agenda, inherited from the Middle Ages, Shakespeare sets a drama that stubbornly resists every effort at totalization, that remains irreducibly strange. I have in mind here something other than the marvels and wonders characteristic of Shakespeare's late romances, although these are telling manifestations of a more fundamental strangeness. According to Iser, strangeness is, in fact, the defining property of the fictional text, and the property that gives fiction a purchase on the social world it represents. Fiction takes the "conventions that regulate our society and culture" out of their original context and "brings them before us in unexpected combinations"; fiction "depragmatizes" social norms and conventions (1978:61)- the Russian formalist would say "defamiliarizes." Fiction incorporates the conventions to be found in the real world –this is why we recognize its representation of the world in the first place– but it deploys these conventions in ways that are more or less strange and unfamiliar. Such deployment has an unsettling effect: "We usually remain unaware of them [social norms and conventions], but when they are depragmatized [in fiction] [...] [they] are exposed" as such, as ideological construction, and we then have the "chance to perceive consciously a system in which [we] had hitherto been unconsciously caught up" (1978:212). I now want to consider one particular instance of depragmatization in *Pericles*, namely, its exposure of the norms and conventions governing the family, and specifically the father-daughter relationship. What we hear from Gower as chorus is an ideology of the family; what we see played out in the drama is a critique of that ideology.

As previously noted, Gower is anxious to present a clear moral image of Antiochus and Pericles, and of each father's relationship with his daughter. It is essential for him to regulate the blank between the two distinct plot-lines juxtaposed at the beginning of the play (the story of Antioch, the story of Tyre) so that the audience will not be left to seek out connections, missing thematic links, among the rich network of possibilities, for themselves. Gower formulates his link with evaluative adjectives and literal explanations. Early in the play:

Here have you seen a mighty king [Antiochus]
His child, I wis, to incest bring;
A better prince and benign lord [Pericles]
That will prove awful both in deed and word.
Be quiet then, as men should be,

Till he hath pass'd necessity.
 I'll show you those in troubles reign [Pericles],
 Losing a mite, a mountain gain.
 The good in conversation [i.e., behavior]
 To whom I give my benison
 Is still at Tarsus. [...]
 (II.chor 1-11)

In the play's final scene:

In Antiochus and his daughter you have heard
 Of monstrous lust the due and just reward.
 In Pericles, his queen and daughter, seen,
 Although assail'd with fortune fierce and keen,
 Virtue preserv'd from fell destruction's blast,
 Led on by heaven, and crown'd with joy at last.
 (V.iii.85-90)

Gower links the two sets of characters as antitheses, drawing a clear distinction between the incestuous father and the father whose relationship with his daughter is licit, holy, natural. Critics of an earlier generation followed his lead. C. L. Barber, for example, argues that the play "begin[s] with overt incest and arrive[s] at a sublime transformation" of the father-daughter motif when Pericles is reunited with Marina and then, through Marina, with Thaisa, his wife and legitimate sexual partner (1969:64). More recently, however, some critics (and directors) have discerned what Alexander Leggatt calls the "shadow of Antioch" falling over the entire play (1991:174). It is important, I think, if we are not to sacrifice possible meanings, to read against the grain of Gower's moralizing agenda and trace the lineaments of that shadow, especially as it touches upon Pericles and Marina.

By doing so, we would find, for one thing, that Marina speaks in riddles -the distinctive verbal mode of Antioch. As a suitor for the hand of Antiochus's daughter, Pericles is required, on pain of death, to solve a riddle about her identity:

I am no viper, yet I feed
 On mother's flesh which did me breed.
 I sought a husband, in which labor
 I found that kindness in a father.
 He's father, son, and husband mild;
 I mother, wife-and yet his child.

How they may be, and yet in two,
 As you will live, resolve it you.
 (I.i.64-71).

Years later, as a grief-sticken exile, Pericles is confronted with another riddle, this one about the identity of his lost daughter. When Marina first speaks to him to offer comfort, it is in puzzles and paradoxes: “I am a maid, / My lord, that ne’er *before* invited eyes, / But have been gaz’d on like a comet” (V.i.84-86, my emphasis). The maid, the marvel of chastity, has been widely admired, like a comet, by “many a wight,” as was Antiochus’s daughter (I.chor.39), but, despite these amorous attentions, she has reserved herself exclusively for the delectation of one, to whose eyes she now issues an express invitation. Revived by her kindness, Pericles asks: “Pray you turn your eyes upon me. / [...] What country-woman? / Here of these shores?” (V.i.101-103); to which Marina again makes an oblique and mysterious reply: “No, nor of any shores, / Yet I was mortally brought forth, and am / No other than I appear” (V.i.103-105). Slowly coming to awareness, Pericles asks more plainly: “Where do you live?” (V.i.113); to which Marina responds with yet another puzzle: “Where I am but a stranger” (V.i.114). Marina’s identity, like that of Antiochus’s daughter, is at once veiled behind and revealed through a riddle, the effect of which is at once to engage Pericles’s imagination and to disturb him.⁶ As folklorists and literary historians have observed, riddles are traditionally associated with incest themes, Oedipus being the readiest example (Archibald, 1991:23-24), and the recognition scene between Pericles and Marina would therefore seem to be, as Terence Cave puts it, a “‘problem’ moment rather than moment of satisfaction and completion” (qtd. in Archibald, 1991:17).

The problem that haunts the father-daughter relationship, and that unsettles the comedic resolution of this motif in Act V, is the potential for the father and daughter to assume other family roles, as enumerated by the Antioch riddle: “He’s father, son, and husband mild; / I mother, wife, and yet his child.” The husband-wife roles -Barber’s “overt incest”

⁶The disturbing quality of Marina’s riddling is much more apparent in Shakespeare’s play than in the *Historia Apollonii*. In the Latin version, the riddles are disinterested and recreational, as it were, touching on a wide, and seemingly random, variety of subjects (see Archibald’s text and translation, 1991:163-169), whereas in the play the riddles all pertain strictly, and uncomfortably, to questions of the daughter’s origin and identity.

-are strictly prohibited to fathers and daughters under patriarchy, and Pericles, unlike Antiochus, honors this prohibition. But two aspects of Pericles's behavior toward Marina in the recognition scene have attracted critical commentary. First, there is the inarticulate violence with which he rebuffs her when she approaches him: "Hum, ha! [*Pushing her roughly back*]" (V.i.82) (Leggatt, 1991:173). Pericles seems overwhelmed by something that cannot find acceptable social expression, and Marina is left with only the wishful hope that normality will ultimately be restored: "[...] if you did know my parentage, / You would not do me violence" (V.i.99-100). Second, there is the precipitate haste with which Pericles marries Marina off to Lysimachus: "You [Lysimachus] shall prevail, / Were it to woo my daughter" (V.i. 259-60) (Archibald, 1991:16-17). One might note that Lysimachus has done little more to qualify himself as a son-in-law than frequent the bordellos of Mytilene in disguise. Although Pericles does not force Marina into the role of wife, what paternal desire do these exaggerated gestures, which keep her rigorously at a distance, suggest? what potential is forestalled? what threat defused? Such questions qualify the satisfaction we would otherwise take in the scene.

Likewise, the son-mother roles, though metaphoric ("covert incest" perhaps), are also indicative of illicit paternal desire and are, for this reason, condemned by Pericles in Act I: "now you're both a father and a son / By your uncomely claspings with your child" (I.i.127-129). Yet the very line with which Pericles acknowledges Marina as his daughter recalls –and, one is tempted to say, fulfills– the Antioch riddle: "Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget" (V.i.195). It is only with this notorious line that the full meaning of the incest riddle becomes apparent. Whereas it is immediately obvious that Antiochus is both father and husband to his daughter, it remains obscure how he is also her son until Pericles himself, in his own person, here defines the filial role. The father is reborn through, in King Lear's words, the "kind nursery" of the loving daughter, whose selfless desire is taken as a reflection of his own. Even if, as in Marina's case, this maternal daughter does not serve as her father's wife, she acts to displace her mother and thereby disrupt the conventional alignment of family roles. In appearance and demeanor Marina reminds Pericles of what Thaisa was once like as a maid, when they were first wed (V.i.107). And Marina gives Pericles access to what he once sought as a youth when he wooed Antiochus's daughter, but failed then to achieve: "The music of the spheres! List, my Marina! / [...]"

Most heavenly music!” (V.i.229, 233).⁷ Marina thus repairs the two amorous losses Pericles has suffered. Reunion with the daughter rejuvenates Pericles, bringing him back to life; by contrast, the subsequent reunion with Thaisa, his legitimate erotic interest -a reunion that seems, at any rate, anti-climactic-summons up the specter of death and dissolution for them both:

[...] No more, you gods! [...]
[...] You shall do well
That on the touching of her lips I may
Melt, and no more be seen. O, come, [Thaisa,] be buried
A second time within these arms.
(V.iii.40-44, my emphasis)

With Thaisa so buried, the natural family is formally restored, but harbored within its holy structure we perceive a strange trace of the incestuous family: the filial father, the maternal daughter, and the dead wife.

The clear distinction Gower attempts to draw between Antioch and Tyre cannot finally be maintained. The drama itself, as opposed to the choral gloss, defamiliarizes the family, revealing the affinity between its normative conventions and that which patriarchal ideology condemns as monstrous aberration. Shakespeare’s critique of the early-modern family anticipates Michel Foucault’s. In the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*, Foucault argues that the family is not only a system of alliance but also the primary site for the production and support of sexuality (1990:108). The system of alliance –that is, marriage and kinship ties– is concerned with biological and social utility (reproduction, transmission of property, and so forth) and is based upon “rules defining the permitted and the forbidden, the licit and the illicit” (1990:106). First among these rules is the incest prohibition, the force of which is exerted most strongly on the parent-child relationship within the marital cell. The family is governed, however, by a strange logic that “ensures the production of a sexuality that is not homogeneous with the privileges of alliance” (1990:108). Sexuality transgresses alliance and, as a result, the boundary between the licit and the illicit. In particular, sexuality is

⁷ Disenchanted after solving the incest riddle, and disappointed in his expectations of marriage, the young Pericles says of Antiochus’s daughter, adopting an obscene metaphor: “You are a fair viol [...] / Who finger’d to make man his lawful music, / Would draw heaven down, and all the gods to hearken; / But being play’d upon before your time, / Hell only danceth at so harsh a chime” (I.i.81-83).

the product of incestuous desire, “incestuous’ from the start” (1990:108-109). If incest is absolutely forbidden by the law of alliance, it is nevertheless “constantly being solicited and refused; it is an object of obsession and attraction, a dreadful secret and an indispensable pivot” (1990:109). The family is therefore, Foucault concludes, a “hotbed of constant sexual incitement” (1990:109). This is the scandal that Gower stands in the gaps to conceal.

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THEOPOETIC EXPRESSION IN TERMS OF EMBLEM AS REFLECTED IN JOHN DONNE'S SERMONS

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Abstract

Traditionally, the sermonic theopoetics is either parabolic or emblematic. John Donne's method of achieving both poetic and homiletic effects comes out to be prevalingly emblematic. His sermons are marked with an extensive use of emblems. The poet-preacher is aware of the ontological assumptions that stand behind the emblematic imagery. He often turns the old metaphors into an emblematic usage thereby expanding the traditional horizons of imagery. As a graphic and a verbal construct, the emblem demonstrates a compact and easily decoded representation of the spiritual as well as a nearest approach to the perception of the world and human existence. The emblematic technique makes the divine and the transcendental immediately present to human consciousness. The emblem always implies artificiality by presenting life as a picture, a stage or a dream. Donne's conception of the emblem is founded on the intensive culture of spirituality and thinking imbued with mystical Christian tradition. His vivid emblematic imagination delights in relating the natural with the transcendental into an unbroken chain of relationships. There seems to be a deep impulse in human nature to orient itself in the unknown by pictorial representations that are still eloquent and resonating in contemporary culture.

John Donne, the seventeenth-century English Metaphysical poet-preacher, seems to have ignored the traditional Elizabethan visual implications of description by analogy. In fact, he did not enjoy sustained description. Rather, his method of achieving both poetic and homiletic effects is emblematic. Traditionally, the sermonic theopoetics is either

parabolic or emblematic. However, in Donne, the parabolic mode is very rare, the genre fluctuating between a fairy-tale, a fable and a pure parable.¹

Donne strove for verbal images “suggestive in their compression” (Hogan, 1977:31) and graphic quality. As the majority of his contemporaries, he had a great interest in art: paintings, engravings, etchings, book illustrations, the English miniature portraits by Nicholas Hilliard (1537–1619), etc. The author was fascinated by the specific *picture-concept* technique.

Another source the poets and devotional writers of the seventeenth century often drew upon was the early emblem books that were the treasure-house for their imagery. The process gave birth to the tradition of the literary emblem. On the whole, the emblematic mentality was an essential feature of the epoch.

The Greek word *emblema* points to insertion or ornament. In the original use, it is an object that stands for an idea by figurative, not direct, representation. Thus, in an emblematic discourse, abstractions are presented as pictures. Consider Donne:

[...] [God's] hailestones, and his thunderbolts, and his showres of blood (emblemes and instruments of his Judgements) fall downe in a direct line, and affect and strike some one person, or place: His Sun, and Moone, and Starres (Emblemes and Instruments of his Blessings) move circularly, and communicate themselves to all. (Donne, 1987:221)²

Technically, the emblem is a multidimensional rhetorical device based on a complex play of semantic elements. It is a graphic as well as verbal construct whose semantic unity is designed for a compact representation of the unrepresentable. Its working mechanism betrays the allegorical character: “through a veritable fragmentation of image, line, graphic art and [...] language it breaks up reality and represents time by hieroglyphs and enigmas” (Buci-Glucksmann, 1994:70). Here an abstract notion sticks to an individual object thus limiting its semantic field to a single concrete meaning. According to Yelena Grigoryeva,³ both

¹ For a more exhaustive analysis of Donne's parabolic technique see: KRŪMINIENĖ, J. (2003).

² All quotations from Donne's homiletic prose will be referred to by the preacher's surname, the year of publication and page.

³ All translations from Russian are mine (J. K.)

iconographic and verbal elements demonstrate a greatly narrowed functional spectre (1987:80). The result is a fixed and clear meaning, as in the case of Donne's well-known compass emblem: "Our two souls [...] / [...] they are two so / As stiff twin compasses are two" (*A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*, lines 21; 25-26).⁴ The two joint feet of the compass stand for the union in love, the marriage of the souls and blessed dependability: the lovers are two and they are one. The emblem conveys a message of hope at the moment of departure. Though "moving of th' earth brings harms and fears" (ib. line 9), the movement carried out by the compass suggests another quality as long as its both feet work in accord:

*Thy soul the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if th' other do,*

*And though it in the centre sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans, and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.*

*Such wilt thou be to me, who must
Like th' other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.*

(ib. lines 27-36)

Here the poet relies on rich graphic suggestiveness of the image. The more so, that the pictorial representations of compasses in woodcuts, engravings and emblem books were abundant at his time. As Patric G. Hogans claims, the most popular emblem was produced by the Belgian printer Christopher Plantin in which a fixed compass foot had a subscription *Constantia* (1977:31). Though Donne experiences no doubt about the reader's familiarity with the instrument, nevertheless, he centres his attention on the emblematic details, in other words, the author extends and clarifies the emblem. The emblematic technique fascinated him as a libertine poet. Donne is famous for his attempt at creating a mock-emblem in *The Flea* by an extravagantly brave transformation of the traditional emblematic image of the rose in love

⁴ Donne's poems are quoted from: PATRIDES, C. A. ed. (1996).

poetry:

Mark but this flea [...]
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is.
 (lines 1; 12-13)

Ultimately, Donne's writings claim the superiority of emblems over symbols. As the emblem comes close to allegory, it cannot be synonymous to symbol. By its nature, the symbol is homogenic and potentially ambivalent. However, emblems are easily recognized, conceptualised and easily decoded. As Grigoryeva affirms, they display stability and a passive absorption of the message (1987:81). In the case of the symbol, on the contrary, the meaning is shaped gradually, out of the subtlest semantic changes. The process is very dynamic: it may even happen that an initial meaning will finally turn into its opposite (ib. 87). To sum up, the emblem and the symbol represent the two distant poles. Their strict division—love for symbolism and hatred of allegory—started with the classical and Romantic traditions. In his essay *On the Objects of the Figurative Arts* (1797), Goethe writes that allegory moves from the abstract or general to the particular by means of directly conscious signification. It is therefore utilitarian, conventional, and impoverished, since it merely embodies well-known ideas. The symbol, on the other hand, by moving from the particular to the general is an inexhaustive and infinite image.

The emblematic language, in its turn, is based upon the semantic correlation between iconographic and conventional signs (Grigoryeva, 1987:79). Here an iconographic sign strives for correctness, while a conventional sign retains its abstract character: "All that is temporal, is but a caterpillar got into one corner of the garden" (Donne, 1992:235). There exists the inner conflict between them which is immediately reconciled by one single notion. In her analysis of the emblematic discourse, Grigoryeva arrives at the conclusion that the emblematic language illustrates the tendency in a verbal culture to preserve a concrete meaning behind a verbal sign (1987: 80). Basically, emblems evoke a strict reading programme built on the immediate identification with strikingly vivid pictures. They are not subject to alteration and fulfil their function exclusively within the absence of varying interpretations (see Grigoryeva, 1997:426), thus *caterpillar* = *temporariness*. In Christian tradition, the caterpillar symbolically represents the body of the Christian and was often depicted in early

iconography. The metamorphosis of an ugly wormlike insect in the retirement of its cocoon (an emblem of the coffin) into a beautiful butterfly is not as much the image of the soul rid of its carnal coverings as it was in Greek mythology but the image of the sinful broken flesh transformed into the glorious resurrected body reunited with soul which emerges from the darkness of the tomb. Donne, to encourage hope and cheer in the congregation, concentrates on the passing character of an earthly divided existence that will be translated into the everlasting splendour of heavenly reality: temporariness bears the promise of eternity.

The emblematic mentality manifests itself not only in his poetic and prose writings. As mentioned above, Donne worked out emblems in which his personal portrait served as a pictorial pattern. The poet-preacher posed for his final portrait wound in a shroud thus turning his picture into the emblem of a humble sage in a winding sheet as if a caterpillar in its cocoon ready for the fruitful metamorphosis of the *vermis quia resurrexit* to take place.

Evidently, the emblem focuses on comparison. It includes the movement of challenge: naturally, an emblem-reader expects ambivalence out of the two types of expression. However, he/she is finally caught up in a trap, as the emblem makes a single text out of two, a graphic and a verbal one. The two projections—the general and the concrete—duplicate each other. Only the whole throws light on the separate members through division and final inclusion into a system (see Grigoryeva, 1997:431). In fact, emblemization operates on the basis of disagreement-agreement. The emblem could be described as a sudden informative thrust (achieved by the collision of the two codes resulting in a clash), which is followed by wonder:

As soon as we were clothed by God, our very apparel was an Embleme of death. In the skins of dead beasts he covered the skins of dying men. As soon as God set us on work, our very occupation was an Embleme of death; It was to digge the earth. (Donne, 1987:179)

The effect achieved is that of a *short circuit* when the mind is not sketching the information on the ground of casual relationships but discovers the connection between the two elements at a sudden leap (see Eco, 2002:62). The emblematic mode embodies the element of oddness that vivifies an expressed idea. However, the emblem does not offer any possibility of an imaginative voyage, a spiritual pilgrimage as

it is, for instance, in the case of the parable. On the contrary, the emblem presents the audience with “the dead-lock way of acquiring information” (Grigoryeva, 1987:82). As Grigoryeva says it, such a type of discourse exhibits “a ready-made block of cultural and religious memory” (1997:432). In fact, human memory functions on the emblematic level: people have weakness for pictorial forms of fixation. Donne, the poet as well as the preacher, enjoys perfect emblematic consistency and at the same time makes use of the typical mental processes of the epoch. He chooses emblematic presentation for edification on aesthetic and theological basis. In some sermons, the preacher returns to the much appreciated images of his secular poetic pieces. Yet now they acquire the devotional aspect displaying eschatological (i.e. redeeming) power that the emblem may give:

First then, Christ establishes a Resurrection, a Resurrection there shall be, for, that makes up Gods circle. The Body of Man was the first point that the foot of Gods Compasse was upon: First, he erected the body of Adam and then he carries his Compasse round, and shuts up where he began, he ends with the Body of man againe in the glorification thereof in the Resurrection. (Donne, 1987:256)

The reader/listener discovers enrichment of meaning brought in by emblematic associations. As this type of discourse offers a nearest approach to the perception of the world and human existence, the audience “is aware of the ontological assumptions that stand behind emblematic imagery” (de Man, 1984:170). The quoted emblem communicates the transcendental hopes as well as the manifestation of the divine will in this world. Emblematic technique leaves no place for doubt, it resists explanation and makes an image “automatically convincing, instantly inserted into consciousness” (Grigoryeva, 1997:432), which de Man understands as “the strict orthodoxy of the emblem” (de Man, 1984:236). Thus, the emblem is a closed homological semantic unit not subject to entropy (see Grigoryeva, 1987:83). Yuri Lotman, in his turn, stresses the singularity of meaning and the sameness of the content traced out in the emblematic conception of the language (1997: 416). Moreover, both Grigoryeva and Lotman are apt to identify its reading process as a logical operation similar to that of translation. Here the transformation from one language (graphical) to another (verbal utterance) is obvious. Both languages are in the state of “mutual translatability” (ib.). However, in the case of the symbol, the translation

acquires the paradoxical quality: the languages demonstrate “mutual non-translatability” (ib. 417). No doubt, Donne felt a great appeal for emblematic communication as he was self-involved into the process of “translation of the heavenly into the worldly; of the infinite into the finite; [...] of divine truth into the language of earthly truth” (Brodsky, 1981:3). He firmly believed that “God’s hand is in every translation” (Donne, 1987:125).

The emblematic mode reveals a direct and intensive dialogue between a picture and a word. It embodies both a question and an answer simultaneously. This brings Grigoryeva and Lotman to the conclusion that the emblematic poetics could have developed from the poetics of a riddle (Grigoryeva, 1987:80; Lotman, 1997:418). Compare: “I am a solitary dweller wounded with a knife, stricken with a sword, weary of battle deeds, tired of blades. / Shield /” (*An Outline of History of English Literature*, 1958:16) and “the glory which we receive in the next world, it is [...] the stamping of a print upon a Coyn” (Donne, 1987:183).

Donne also defines emblems as “the Riddles of Heaven, and the perplexities of speculation” (ib. 289). In the above given illustrations, each member may be taken both as a question and an answer. The emblem thereby turns into “a self-questioning vehicle” (Grigoryeva, 1997:431) provoking reconstruction through deconstruction. From this it follows that the emblematic discourse entails the moments of secrecy and pleasure at discovering the key.

The reason for creating the emblematic pattern does not depend solely on the idea that “our sight of God in this world is [...] *In speculo*, we see as in a glass [...] we see not the thing itselfe, but a representation onely” (Donne, 1987:297). All religions and mysteries have felt the obligation to construct rigid codes of symbols kept secret by a strict discipline of caution. No doubt, the first Christians knew the danger of persecution and experienced the need for protection. On the other hand, they tried not “to allow the secrets of the holy mysteries to be indiscreetly exposed to the daylight of the profane world” (St Dionysius the Areopagite, cited in *Charboneau-Lassay*, 1992:VII). Thus, the sacred emblems display “the mysterious hierarchical authority” (Charboneau-Lassay 1992:XII) in which the secrecy and the religious mystery converge.

In the emblematic structure, each element taken separately reveals an entirely different meaning than the one achieved in a combination.

Here a concrete concept is valuable only as an illustration to the abstract one. Such a mechanism brings strong aesthetic and mental delight: the emblem refers to a complex experience.

It should be stressed that Donne's poetry and his prose exhibit the superiority of emblems over natural images. Being allegorical they "had their meaning by traditional and not by a natural right" (de Man, 1984:171). As the primal experiences of life had been obscured by civilizational processes, they still could be approached by the emblematic presentation in art. Sacred emblems embody the religious temper and communicate the sense of assured belief. A poetics of faith displays the emblematic possibilities that help to rediscover the unity between man and God. Everywhere in the universe man might find evidence of the power and providence of God. To quote Henry More, the Cambridge Neo-Platonist, "Divine Providence by natural Hieroglyphicks read short Physick Lectures to the rude wit of man" (More, cited in *Nicolson*, 1962:39). Emblems were extensively used to illustrate a Christian dogma. In Christianity the world itself is considered to be a language by which God speaks to human beings. Hence the theopoetic expression in terms of the emblem attempts at relating the natural with the transcendental into an unbroken chain of relationships.

The roots of an emblematic mystical tradition may be discovered in the Incarnation event. Accordingly, the emblem is a unity founded on, to put it in de Man's wording, a "problematic analogy between matter and spirit" (de Man, 1984:152), i.e. body and soul. It has a great effect on both imagination and will as the main faculties of a conscious mind. Here natural objects are not what they seem to be, they are but mere signs, "a mouthpiece without actual substance" (ib. 168). Consequently, the emblem always points to artificiality where life is taken as a picture:

We may be bold to call it [memory] the Gallery of the soul, hang'd with so many, and so lively pictures of the goodness and mercies of thy God to thee as that every one of them shall be a catechism to thee to instruct thee in all thy duties to him for his mercies: And as a well made, and well plac'd picture, looks always upon him that looks upon it; so shall thy God look upon thee, whose memory is thus contemplating him and shine upon thine understanding, and rectifie thy will too. (Donne, 1987:152)

There is a detachment between the emblem and the natural image. Donne seems to have felt a certain alienation from nature: natural images

are exclusively rare in his writings. The emblem is the key to true understanding in the realm of Donnean theopoetics. Here the pleasing charm is conveyed by the emblematic but not natural analogy. The devotional writer takes the emblematic cohesion versus the instability and fragility of the natural objects, since what is natural is under decay, hence vain. Just as William Butler Yeats, the poet-preacher contemplates “the artifice of eternity” (*Sailing to Byzantium*, line 10).⁵

In his homilies, Donne claims for the explicitly emblematic objects as “the carriers of a divine, and therefore permanently repeated, pattern of experience” (de Man, 1984:172). As many other learned men of the seventeenth century, he accepted the *doctrine of signatures* which claimed that God had imprinted signatures upon natural objects, since weakness of human senses and spirit required signs and material means to raise them to the understanding of the immaterial and the spiritual. The visible is of value only in the measure that it covers the invisible. It is true that an emblem once accepted acquires stronger reality than the natural object itself. The poet-preacher draws widely on the *bestiaries*, *volucraries* restricted to the symbolism of birds, *florilegia* for plants, *lapidaries* dealing with the miraculous properties of precious stones and minerals which emphasized similarities between man and animals, plants and minerals or metals:

Therefore David who was metall tried seven times in the fire, and desired to be such gold as might be laid up in Gods Treasury, might consider, that in transmutation of metalls, it is not enough to come to a calcination, or a liquefaction of the metall, (that must be done) nor to an Ablution to sever drosse from pure, nor to a Transmutation, to make it a better metall, but there must be a Fixion, a settling thereof, so that it shall not evaporate into nothing, nor returne to his former nature. Therefore he saw that he needed not only a liquefaction, a melting into tears, nor only an Ablution, and a Transmutation, those he had by this purging and this washing, this station in the Church of God, and this present Sanctification there, but he needed Fixionem, an establishment. (ib. 190)

Here the author also uses alchemical terminology derived from Paracelsus' books (*Concerning the Transmutation of Natural Objects; The Alchemist*) which he exploited in a religious context as suggestive of refinement and resurrection of body and soul.

⁵ W. B. Yeats' poem quotations are taken from: JEFFARES A. N. ed. (1962).

In the sermons, Donne glorifies the intensive culture of spirituality that measures the value of all things by the degree in which it favours the ascension of the soul. The audience is faced with the idea that reality is but an image:

But in a glasse [...] we may see [...] directly that there is a God [...] it is a true sight of God, though it be not a perfect sight, which we have this way. This way, our Theatre, where we sit to see God, is the whole frame of nature; our medium, our glasse in which we see him, is the Creature; and our light by which we see him, is Natural Reason. (Donne, 1987:297-298)

However, the parallel between the world and the theatre is not based on Shakespeare's popular passage *All the World's a Stage*. Rather, it comes close to St Thomas Aquinas' understanding of the theatre as an artistic reflection of human life. In his seeing of every creature as a stage but not "all the men and women [as] merely players" (Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, II, VII, 140), Donne meditates on the Medieval theatre, most probably, a mystery play with many separate stages, the drama revealing the mystery of divinity.

On the whole, the preacher applies traditional Christian emblems thoughtfully. Faithfully transmitted by tradition, they constituted "a kind of artistic orthodoxy" (Chardonneau-Lassay, 1992:XI) which did not allow them to be considered as solely a product of imagination. However, for him, the emblem is one of many techniques of sermonic amplification. The reader/listener cannot help admiring "the skill with which he weaves iconographic concepts into the word-fabric of his sermons on intensely serious purposes" (Hogan, 1977:38). The following passage is set up as a visible scene; however, its reality is but the graphic reality of the picture:

This may be some Embleme, some useful intimation, how hastily Repentance follows sinne; Davids sinne is placed but in the beginning of the night, in the Evening (In the evening he rose, and walked upon the Terase, and saw Bathsheba) and in the next part of time, in the night, he falls a weeping: no more between the sweetnesse of sinne, and the bitternesse of repentance, than between evening and night; no morning to either of them, till the Sunne of grace arise, and shine out, and proceed to a Meridianall height, and make the repentance upon circumstance, to be repentance upon the substance, and bring it to be repentance for the sinne itself, which at first was but a repentance upon some calamity, that sinne induced. (Donne, 1987:296)

Besides, here Donne seems to redevelop the poetically-philosophical meditation on love's nature given in his *A Lecture upon the Shadow*: "Love is a growing, or full constant light / And his first minute, after noon, is night" (lines 19-26).

The emblematic style reveals the existence of the two correlating languages in the consciousness of the devotional speaker and writer. According to Hogan, the graphic parallels were taken from book illustrations, numerous service books devoted to or containing *Offices of the Dead or Burial Offices* or *The Order for the Burial of the Dead* (1977:28). The visual stimuli could be received from the death-bed scene pictures in various graphic representations. It is amazing how Donne fittingly manipulates with the possibility implicit in the word *picture* for the homiletic needs:

Here I shall only present to you two Pictures, two pictures in little: two pictures of dying men; and every man is like one of these, and may know himself by it [...] When the devil imprints in a man, a mortuum me esse non curo, I care not though I were dead, it were but a candle blown out, and there were an end of all: where the Devil imprints that imagination, God will imprint an Emori nolo, a loathness to die, and fearful apprehension at his transmigration [...] All [...] publique actions [...] the lights, and all [...] private shadows of this Picture. And when this Picture comes to the Presse, this Man to the streights and agonies of Death, thus he looks, this he is. (Donne, 1987:292; 294)

As many other rhetoricians, theologians and poets, Donne was facing the problem of how to speak of God appropriately. Being an Elizabethan, he retained the fondness for a linkage of the picture and the word, which promised the possibility of mystical correspondence. The poet-preacher was possessed with a vivid emblematic imagination. In his homiletic writings, images are transformed into emblems which "claim to be the divine Logos" (de Man, 1984:167). Donne often relies on the emblematic archetypes, i.e. pictures created to illustrate theological concepts that were difficult for uneducated people to comprehend. On the other hand, his intention is not merely "to please/And profit vulgar Judgements" (as George Wither writes in the preface to *A Collection of Emblemes*, 1635), but rather to appeal to "the learned and those [...] of good judgement" (as Geoffrey Whitney puts it in *A Choice of Emblemes*, 1586). The content of his emblems is erudite, and the appeal is mostly aristocratic:

Take a flat Map, a Globe in plano, and here is east, and there is west, as far asunder as two points can be put: but reduce this flat Map to roundnesse, which is the true form, and then East and West touch one another, and are all one: So consider mans life aright, to be a Circle [...] In this, the circle, the two points meet, the womb and the grave are but one point, they make but one station, there is but a step from that to this [...] Birth and death is all one [...] We bring the Cradle, and the Grave together by a course of nature. (Donne, 1992:149)

Although the picture is often traditional, the amplification is always individual:

The contemplation of God, and heaven, is a kinde of buriall [...] and rest of the soule; and in this death of rapture, and extasie, in this death of the Contemplation of my interest in my Saviour I shall finde my self and all my sins enterred and entombd in his wounds, and like a Lily in Paradise, out of red earth, I shall see my soule rise out of his blade in a candor, and in an innocence, contracted there, acceptable in the sight of his Father. (Donne, 1987:149-150)

In Christian iconography, the white lily is an attribute of the saints implying innocence and purity of their souls; it is the flower associated with the Blessed Virgin, Archangel Gabriel in the Revelation, and Christ. Because of the perfection of its forms, the lily is an iconographic representation of sacred beauty. Since in heraldry it is a hieroglyph of the king, the lily emblem also bears the royal connotation. In the sermon, the preacher focuses his attention on the significance of the Christian mysteries, especially the mystery of the Resurrection of man, explored through the private experience of the believer.

Moreover, the concentration upon self manifest in Donne's secular poetry dominates in the religious context as well and is reflected in his personal aspiration towards perfection and the urge for an absolute:

In the kingdom of heaven [...] we shall have this image of God in perfection [...] Where, as the sun by shining upon the moon, makes the moon a planet, a star, as well as it self, which otherwise would be but the thickest, and darkest part of that sphere, so those beams of glory which shall issue from my God, and fall upon me, shall make me, (otherwise a clod of earth, and worse, a dark soul, a spirit of darkness) an angel of light, a star of glory, a something, that I cannot name now, not imagine now, nor tomorrow, nor next year,

but, even in that particular, I shall be like God, that as he, that asked a day to give a definition of God, the next day asked a week, and then a month, and then a year, so undeterminable would my imaginations be, if I should go about to think now, what I shall be there: I shall be so like God, as that the Devil himself shall not know me from God. (Donne, 1992:392-393)

Another example presents the reader/listener with the traditional emblem of the dove which refers to the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Ghost, who is a Dove, shadowed the whole world under his wings; Incubabat aquis, He hovered over the waters, he sate upon the waters, and he hatched all that was produced, and all that was produced so, was good. Be thou a Mother where the Holy Ghost would be a father; Conceive by him; and be content that he produces joy in thy heart here. (ib. 248)

Already from the very beginning of Christian times the white pigeon appeared in iconography as the accepted emblem of the Holy Spirit. It was placed above the Virgin Mary's head descending from heaven at the moment of the Annunciation and abiding on her. The mystical tradition emphasized the connection between the loving God and men suggesting the possibility of a bodily union in love between divinity and humanity. The pattern seems to be rooted in classical mythology and art—the fecundation of a virgin (Leda) by a god in the shape of a bird (Zeus disguised as a swan)—which may be taken as “the prefiguration of Mary ‘overshadowed’ by the Holy Ghost” (Chardonneau-Lassay, 1992:276). Deliberately, the main difference is discovered in the behaviour of the bird-gods: one is austere, imposing his seductive will upon the girl, the other demonstrates gentle and peaceful habits stressing the importance of the virgin's complete freedom. In his authentic ecstatically-erotic amplification of the traditional emblem, Donne puts an emphasis on spiritual fertility in a strictly individual and intimate context through aesthetical identification with the picture. His *Holy Sonnets*, however, introduce the imagery associated with the Leda-Zeus myth of divine possession by force:

*Take me to you, imprison me, for I
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.*

(*Holy Sonnet 14*, lines 12-14)

In the emblematic archetypes, central meanings have already been established by the Bible and the Christian theopoetic tradition, which conceived Logos as incarnate thus “locat [ing] divine essence in the object” (de Man, 1984:169). Through binarity and “mnemonic operation” (Lotman, 1997:416) characteristic of the emblematic discourse, the divine is immediately grasped by human consciousness thereby bringing enlightenment to spirit.

Allusions to antique mythology which was a tempting supply of graphic images in his time are curiously limited both in his poetry and homiletic prose. Consider: “When Satan in that serpent was come, as Hercules with his club into a potters shop, and had broke all the vessels, destroyed all mankind” (Donne, 1987:186). Naturally, the emblems based on Greek or Roman mythical imagery are also rare.

The emblem and the hieroglyph represented to Donne “a fusion of the spiritual and material, of the rational and sensuous, in the essential terms of formal relationships” (Summers, 1962:234). As a logical construction, it requires reading rather than adoration, which leads to rediscovery of the voice of God. Nevertheless, it contents the eye as well as the mind and is simultaneously delightful and edifying. Furthermore, the “Elizabethan and Jacobean vogue for emblems” (Sanders, 1994:181) reflected the aesthetic needs of the time, an aesthetic delight at recognizing witty correspondence in the synthesis of the two means of expression. In the case of the emblems, the pictorial rendering centres on the graphical distinctness with strong emphasis on linear contour. The painting technique is limited in avoidance of rich colour or plastic effects. Such a subtle linear style and a sense of contour are also present in Donne’s emblematic discourse which strives for the precise and clear message:

I have seen minute-glasses; glasses so short-lived. If I were to preach upon this text, to such a glass, it were enough for half the sermon; enough to show the worldly man his treasure, and the object of his heart [...] to call his eye to that minute glass, and to tell him, There flows, there flies your treasure, and your heart with it. But if I had a secular glass, a glass that would run an age; if the two hemispheres of the world were composed in the form of such a glass, and all the world calcined and burnt to ashes and all the ashes, and sands, and atoms of the world put into that glass, it would not be enough to tell the godly man what his treasure, and the object of his heart is. (Donne, 1992:398)

The extract quoted above demonstrates Donne's theopoetic innovations in constructing ingenious emblems. In this he tries to imitate God, the Greatest Creator of hieroglyphs. Here the preacher is captivated by the graphical parallel between the form of a sand-clock and of the two hemispheres of the globe. By the deconstruction of the globe image and its further reconstruction into an hour-glass he interweaves the poetic and iconographic inspiration with religious emotions. For John Donne, as well as for George Herbert, "the hieroglyph did not exist as a total mystery or as isolated beauty, but as beauty and mystery which were decipherable and related to all creation" (Summers, 1962:234). The preacher uses the emblem as the central image in his meditations retaining its original religious function, "the hieroglyph [being] valuable as content" (ib. 229).

Moreover, in his devotional writings, both poetic and sermonic, the author daringly exchanges places (or roles) with God Almighty by displaying emblems to the Lord on his part:

When I shall ask my soul Davids question, Quid retribuem, what shall I render to the Lord I shall not rest in Davids answer, Accepjam Calicem, I will take the cup of salvation in applying his blood to my soul, but proceed to an Effundam Calicem, I will give God a Cup, a cup of my blood that whereas to me the meanest of Gods servants it is honour enough to be believed for Gods sake: God should be believed for my sake. (Donne, 1987:290-291)

The emblematic exchange of the cups, extended by Donne, manifests the archetypal roots of the divine-human and human-divine communication. According to Udo Becker, this particular dish is associated with the cosmic skull, i.e. a metaphorical expression of the archetypal relationship between human microcosm and universal macrocosm (1995:112). Besides, it displays spiritual connotations since in many ancient rituals it is regarded as the dwelling of the spirit. In alchemy, likewise, the cup indicates a spiritual container. The divine chalice offering the abundance of nourishment is one of the most frequent Biblical emblems. It is met both within the context of Creation and the context of Redemption. In general, the cup implies God's generosity in the protecting and nourishing of His flock. Analogically, mythical imagination often associates it with the crescent that, in its turn, due to the form and white colour, points to the maternal breast. For instance, in Indian mythology, as a dish offering nourishment it symbolizes

maternity (Becker, 1995:278) and hence points to protection and security. Jung's psychoanalysis relates the cup with the womb and regards it as a protecting reservoir. Although traditionally it is an image of overflowing abundance of the divine grace, to Dionysius the Areopagite, the chalice is also the emblem of heavenly wisdom and the boundless nature of Providence. He maintains that, since in form the cup is spherical and open, it expands itself and, being without beginning and without end, encircles all. However, the cup image is ambivalent and, although always expressing abundance, it may point to endless suffering as in the case of the Biblical cup of God's wrath that associates with punishment and the Last Judgement. The Scriptures speak of the cup of faith that man receives from God's hands (consider also Christ's allusion during His prayer on Mount Olive). In Christian imagination, this emblem also points to the legend of the Holy Grail which symbolizes the highest level of spiritual perfection achieved only through overcoming spiritual ordeals. As the Celtic story tells, the Holy Grail is the dish with which Christ celebrated the Last Supper and into which one of His disciples, Joseph of Arimathea, caught the drops of blood from the wounds of the Saviour during His crucifixion. Thus, it acquired supernatural powers. According to Rene Guénon, the Holy Grail, as a container of Jesus' blood, is an emblematic equivalent of the Sacred Heart of Christ (Guénon, 1997:41). The cup, as the emblem of the divine heart, is also found in Egyptian sacred hieroglyphics. Thus, the chalice filled with blood displays a sacrificial element and is the symbol of suffering wrought up with boundless love. Besides, the cup containing Jesus' redeeming blood also alludes to the archetypal dish filled with the drink of immortality, the motif found in ancient rituals and iconography. Since it is a frequent attribute of the Christian saints, it points to the personalized faith as well (Ramonienė, 1997:303). This suggested Donne the idea that each believer, by following the pattern of Christ's life, has not only his own *cross* but also his personal *chalice*. The giving and the receiving of the cup are the signs of intimate relationship. In the above excerpt, the preacher alludes to the intimacy of the soul with its Redeemer. It should also be mentioned that, in various cultural traditions, the exchange of the cups symbolizes fidelity. Thus, the blood in the cup that the speaker offers to God is the symbol of his suffered love for God. Furthermore, it also suggests that the virtue of Jesus' sacrificial blood is transferable, i.e. its spirit may be maintained by the sinful to show forth a little of the glory of God.

Sometimes the dialogue between God and the poet-preacher turns into a dynamic interchange of emblematic signs. Consider:

*In what torn ship soever I embark,
That ship shall be my emblem of thy ark;
What sea soever swallow me, that flood
Shall be to me an emblem of thy blood.*

*(A Hymn to Christ, at the
Author's Last Going to Germany, lines 1-4)*

The sea in mystical symbolism points to merging with God. However, in Donne's poem, there is no suggestion of a tiny stream flowing into the sea of heavenly love as in the ecstatic contemplations of St Teresa of Avila. Here the human-divine relationship is expressed in terms of drowning and rescuing. Man's earthly existence is envisioned as the sea-voyage in a "torn ship" (ib. line 1). These motifs recall the archetypal story of Noah's ark that was rescued by God during the Great Flood. The ship-ark analogy implies the promise of renewal. The more so, that the ark is associated with the womb through the Virgin Mary who is called the Ark of the Covenant. The emblem of the "torn ship", as it were, suggests the suffering imposed on man by sin. Besides, the ship, particularly the boat is paralleled with the crescent (see Becker, 1995:292) that implies the promise of the full moon and hence points to pregnancy and birth, i.e. life's victory over death. In classical mythology, the boat is associated with Charon, the ferryman of the dead across the river Styx to their final abode in Hades and thus implies the passage from life to afterlife. Furthermore, in Christian iconography, Noah's story is presented as a typological illustration of the Resurrection. In Donne's theopoetic expression, the flood is an indicator of the Divine working in mysterious ways to proclaim the abundance of God's anger and His delivering grace. The salvation of the human race through Noah is the way of Christ's redemption of mankind through His crucifixion. Jesus' bleeding upon the cross acquires the dimensions of the Flood. In other words, the Crucifixion is viewed as a second deluge.

The abundance of the living waters that spring from eternal love paradoxically redounds to God's greater glory than during the Flood. God showed His grace by delivering mankind from the deluge exclusively through Noah and his family. By Christ's redeeming blood all of mankind has been preserved. Therefore, for Donne, the bleeding on the Cross is regarded as the most generous divine act.

Contrary to other Elizabethan preachers and traditional theologians who used to employ graphic details of the torments of the damned souls in hell, Donne seldom takes advantage of such agitating and thrilling imagery. Moreover, he seems to ignore rich iconographic apocalyptic implications found in the etchings of Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), to whom Donne alludes in *Satire IV*:

*And then by Dürer's rules survey the state
Of his each limb and with strings the odds tries
Of his neck to his leg, and waist to thighs.*
(lines 204-206)

It is obvious that the writer “makes Dürer’s concept integral to his own poetic purpose” (Hogan, 1977:35). Though accepting his theory of drawing, Donne is not vexed by his representations of posthumous penance. In fact, he may have been familiar with *The Last Judgement* of the Van Eycks (1420) and other pictures. However, the preacher is not absorbed in hellish or apocalyptic proportions as he concentrates on other admonitions of damnation:

That [...] there is damnation, and why it is, and when it is, is clear enough; but what this damnation is, neither the tongue of good angels that know damnation by the contrary, by fruition of salvation, nor the tongue of bad angels who know damnation by a lamentable experience, is able to express. (Donne, 1992:318)

Donne, in his turn, suggests a new approach by stressing that any description of “the locality of hell [...] and the materiality of the torments [...] neither settle [...] reason, nor bind [...] faith” (ib. 318). In his theopoetic instructions, the preacher at the most part draws on the Scriptural representations of hell or *Tophetas*, the emblem of a pile of fire and much wood (which, as Donne claims, informs of the durability and vehemence), and “the breath of the Lord to kindle it, like a stream of brimstone” (ib. 319). To the preacher the very fact of being “secluded eternally, eternally, eternally from the sight of God” (ib. 320) is “the hell of hells, the torment of torments” (ib. 319). The more so that the damned soul is deprived of the possibility to “contribute something to His glory” with the grievous knowledge that God takes care and preserves “every weed, and worm, and ant, and spider, and toad, and viper” but “never [has] more to do with it” (ib.). Thus, hell is not as much the place but a damned state, the punishment by loss, as the Latin *damnum* stands for ‘loss’, ‘fine’, ‘penalty’ (Skeat, 1994:108).

The devotional writer does not involve the grotesquely rich variations of penance that he surely was familiar with. Rather, he centres on likeness, on the sameness of punishment preserving an equally powerful emotion: the most terrible thing is an isolated fragmentation of existence associated with darkness, and “weeping, gnashing, and gnawing” (ib. 319). One of his instruments in the description of hell is the principle of negation developed by the neo-Platonists and St Thomas Aquinas. The method was successfully applied by Donne as a libertine poet: “If that be simply perfectest / Which can by no way be expressed / But negatives, my love is so” (*Negative Love*, lines 10-12). It served properly for homiletic edification as well in evoking pious emotions: “Tophet is not Paradise [...] brimstone is not amber [...] gnashing is not a comfort [...] gnawing of the worm is not a tickling” (ib. 320). By the worm he refers to Satan disguised as a snake, “an immortal worm [gnawing man’s] conscience in the torments of hell” (ib. 394). Sometimes the preacher just concentrates on the opposition of hell and paradise: “Howling is the noise of Hell, singing is the voice of Heaven” (ib. 367). In his theopoetic meditation on joy and melancholy, the predominant sickness of the age, the poet-preacher provides the reader/listener with a deep insight that “soul that goes to heaven meets Heaven here”, hence “all the way to Heaven is Heaven” (ib.).

Donne stresses the senselessness of understanding paradise or hell as certain locations. The focus being on the state, a heavy resonance is felt in the reader’s/listener’s bones when the statement is unconsciously reworked into *all the way to Hell is Hell*.

Paradise, as it were, appears to be more unimaginable than hell. “He that asks me what heaven is, means not to hear me, but silence me” (ib. 387), the Dean of St Paul’s used to joke. The preacher views paradise as “an infinite, a super-infinite, an unimaginable space, millions of millions of unimaginable spaces in heaven” (ib. 366). Heaven is also associated with endlessness: “And our afternoon shall be as long as God’s forenoon; for as God never saw beginning, so we shall never see end” (ib.). It is eternity itself in which the fragmentation of time ceases to be known: heaven is envisioned as a place that “reckons not by minutes” (ib.). However, sometimes Donne, the preacher, does not manage to hold Donne, the poet, back, the result being a purely lyrical vision: “In paradise, the fruits were ripe, the first minute, and in heaven it is always autumn” (ib. 356). The idea could be drawn from abundant graphic

representations of the Garden of Eden in art and lead to a pictorial rendering of the passage. Above all, the emphasis is on the ripeness of the fruit, which suggests spiritual maturity of resurrected men, soul and body in reunion: “the Kingdome of Heaven hath not all it must have to consummate perfection, till it hath bodies too” (Donne, 1987:24).

The emblem of God as an artisan is particularly revealing in the realm of the theopoetics. In other words, worldly crafts are but the signs referring to divinity, transcendence and eternity. For instance, in the act of Creation, Donne visualizes God as a map-maker. He speaks of God carrying “his compasse round” and “shut [ting] up where he began” (Donne, 1987:214). The preacher follows the Medieval Christian iconographic tradition in which God the Creator is pictured with a huge compass in His hand drawing the circle of the universe. Christian iconographers seem to have adapted the Platonic concept of the Creator as a demiurge, a master and constructor of the cosmos (Becker, 1995:241). Here Donne chooses a graphically spectacular way of paralleling God the Creator to a workman who on a blank globe designs the whole world:

*On a round ball
A workman that hath copies by, can lay
An Europe, Afric, and an Asia,
And quickly make that which was nothing, all.*

(A Valediction: of Weeping, lines 10-14)

Evidently, the author does not experience disenchantment with or, to say more, the failure of the emblem in the realm of the sermonic theopoetics. The sermons reveal no attempt at the rediscovery of the natural image. On the contrary, both the devotional speaker and the audience are delighted in the power and beauty of the emblematic image. Donne’s conception of the emblem is based on the intensive culture of spirituality and thinking imbued with mystical Christian tradition. As it comprises spatial as well as temporal types of signs, the functioning of the emblematic mechanism proves to be universal thus bringing reassurance from the anxieties of the transient character of human endeavour, the alienation and unhomeliness of human predicament.

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**MONSIGNOR QUIXOTE:
WRITING/RIDING WITH THE ‘ANCESTORS’**

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Until then I had thought each book spoke of the things, human or divine, that lie outside books. Now I realized that not infrequently *books speak of books*: it is as if they spoke among themselves. In the light of this reflection, the library seemed [...] the place of a long, centuries-old murmuring, *an imperceptible dialogue* between one parchment and another, a living thing, a receptacle of powers not to be ruled by a human mind, a treasure of secrets emanated by many minds, surviving the death of those who had produced them or had been their conveyors. (Eco, 1998:286; emphasis added)

Arnold Wesker’s Portia exclaims towards the end of Wesker’s rewrite of Shakespeare’s *The Merchant*: “I am not a thing of the wind, but an intelligence informed by other men informed by other men informed! *I grow*” (Wesker, 1983:81). She exclaims in desperation at others’ insensitivity to the insensitivity of certain inert ‘laws’. But from another perspective this also gives us an insight into Wesker’s own practice in the play as well as into the practice of intertextuality itself.

All the angry remonstrations of Wesker—as explicit in the ‘Preface’ and implicit in the play—however serve to highlight the continuing ‘reality’ of the fictional /textual [intelligence] through ages by negating the idea of the closure of a text with one particular author at one particular time. A ‘text’ of the past can remain so real a thing for him as to invite challenge, interrogation, and a good wrestling with, even after it has percolated through centuries.

Monsignor Quixote (1982), Graham Greene's 'Spanish' novel, which is of course not angry subversion but rather reverentially parodic—while being celebratively evocative too—of a classic parodic text, shows a similar [un]awareness of the fictionality of fiction. Greene's text defines itself against the 'reality' of a palimpsest of another text. The author, and also the personae, here are very much 'readers' of another text which continues to resonate through evocative echoes while informing the theme, the characters, the events and the structure itself of the later text. It is not just quotations and allusions,¹ but being the very text itself that *Monsignor Quixote* does not only 'speak of books' but continues its 'dialogue' with the other book/s. The 'raw materials' (i.e., the original book) which were again, according to Fowler, "never [really] innocent"² since having their own origin and mooring in even remoter and prior ideological discourses, are adapted here with love and nostalgia and then transformed in accordance with the postmodern context.

"One of the reasons why some literary works give new reading experiences time and time again", Jeremy Hawthorn maintains, "may well be that we make different figure-ground distinctions on successive readings" (1998:81). These figure-ground distinctions, varying with the respective 'ephebe' and 'precursor' (*a la* Harold Bloom)³ pairs—and also with each distinct set of ephebe-precursor—can also account for the particular tenor of an intertextual rewrite of some earlier text along with the ephebe's creative departures from the precursor's text. Greene, as an ephebe, chooses for his rewriting project Cervantes's 'romance'—and writes his text by carefully layering it out on his precursor's with minimal departures.

¹Watts represents a typical view as he places it as a 'comic novel' enjoyable for offering "ingenious present-day equivalents, variously whimsical, farcical and satiric, to scenes in Cervantes's novel [...]" (1997:81).

²Roger Fowler claims: "All production entails [...] certain determinate techniques of transformation [...] Because of the intervention of [this] stage [...], this product can in no way be reduced to the 'expression', 'reflection' or mere reproduction of the initial raw materials. [...] Literary raw materials, for Marxist criticism, are essentially of two kinds. On the one hand there is the specific historical experience available to a given writer, which will always be ideologically informed, directly or indirectly relevant to the processes of political, cultural and sexual power. On the other hand there are previous writings, equally ideologically formed, which the writer, in that practice known as intertextuality, may also transform. These raw materials are 'never innocent' or easily pliable: they come to literary productive process with specific degrees of resistance, particular valencies and tendencies of their own" (1983:45).

³Harold Bloom speaks of the "dialectic that governs the relations of poets as poets" (1975:25), by which he implies the fructifying rebellion or departure ("swerve" is his term) that the 'ephebe' strikes in order to wrench himself free from the 'precursor's influence.

J.L. Borges's 'Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*', "did not want to compose another Quixote—which is easy but the *quixote itself*" (1987:65). Borges further clarifies Menard's intention which was not to copy the original text but "to produce a few pages which would coincide—word for word and line for line—with those of Miguel de Cervantes" (ib. 66); it was, again, the ambition "to go on being Pierre Menard and reach the *Quixote* through the experiences of Pierre Menard" (ib. 66). [An artistic endorsement of Roland Barthes's insistence—that the author is not the main producer of the text].⁴ *Monsignor Quixote* (1982), Graham Greene's penultimate novel, —though generally viewed as "a genially comic novel" (Watts, 1997: 81), shows the author actually engaged in a Pierre Menard-ian pursuit. He writes a novel which is unmistakably new, of its own time and setting, *i.e.*, post-Franco twentieth century Spain, and yet carefully layered upon Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, written four centuries ago, against the backdrop of that specific contemporariness, which also gets inseparably interwoven into Greene's text.

Indeed, considered from the Barthes-Kristeva theoretical matrix *vis-à-vis* intertextuality, no text is original; rather "a text consists of multiple writings, and writings which are drawn from a range of discourses already in circulation in some form or other" (Webster 1990: 96). In this sense, all literature could be considered repetition to some extent. But there could be instances of authors—and this trend has been specially noticeable since the late '60s—very consciously falling back on one or more familiar text/s and re-using it in his/her own way, to create meanings;⁵ while the process of launching such rewrites may be variously informed by their respective locational-ideological-perceptual factors, Graham Greene carries precisely this practice to a fine pitch in *Monsignor Quixote* by capturing the reflection of the old text in his end-twentieth century mirror. Here Greene liberally borrows from, and re-uses, Cervantes's *Don Quixote* which forms the basis for the setting, characters, action, theme, dialogue in his novel; indeed Cervantes seems to peep through every page of Greene's book, and it is impossible to fully enjoy/

⁴ In the two essays "Death of the Author" (1968) and "From work to Text" (1971) and the book *S/Z* (1970).

⁵ Jeans Rhys's *Wide Sargossa Sea* (1966), rewriting *Jane Eyre* from the first Mrs. Rochester's point of view. Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1967) and John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969), Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant*, Edward Bond's *Lear*, are just a few of the countless examples of texts which re-open earlier texts, to appropriate the textual space by means of erasure and re-inscription. Examples are indeed countless.

interpret the ‘pleasure of (Greene’s) text’ here without continuously consulting/recalling the other text. Indeed, to achieve his effect here, Greene has to depend entirely on the reader’s ability to recognize and adequately respond to the various points of synchronization and departure between the two texts. Thus, here we have an example of what Barthes would have categorized as the ‘writerly’ text (*S/Z*, 1970) (unlike the *readerly*) where the reader has got to play an active role instead of playing the ‘passive consumer’, because unless the reader exerts her/himself to identify the fine shades, and threads of the prior text in the fibre of the present text, the points where the two much of its charm and meaning.

Greene has not been normally recognized—at least until recently, and that too by few—as a consciously experimental writer. Probably his reputation as a ‘popular’ and/or ‘Catholic’ writer may have got to do something with this critical snobbery.⁶ Anyway, the last bunch of novels that Greene wrote, beginning with *The Comedians* and ending with *The Captain and the Enemy* gives one a glimpse of a writer who was indeed much more than a writer of ‘thrillers’ or even ‘legends’. As Watts acknowledges in a charming observation: “[...] in his old age he [Greene] took his readers and himself on numerous holidays of the imagination” (1997:151). Even among these exquisite ‘holidays’ *Monsignor Quixote* stands out as a case apart where Greene seems to have set himself very consciously to the application of the Barthesian concept of intertextuality—that a text is an intertext, a new tissue of past citations, with other texts being present in it at varying levels, in more or less recognizable forms (“Theory of the Text”).

Greene’s *Monsignor Quixote* indeed requires to be studied in the light of the above by locating the novel in the wider narrative of Cervantes which is carefully and subtly woven into the present text: although a twentieth century text, it has to be read in the context and framework of the other text written four centuries ago. At the same time, Greene also ensures, even while appropriating, incorporating and recycling old

⁶ “The popular image of Greene [...] a master technician with a crucifix behind his back” (Lodge, 1971:88). Miriam Allott, however, pointed out in 1982 (though she had not yet read *Monsignor Quixote*): His [Greene’s] novels span the long period from the fag end of modernism in the thirties, through the revival of documentary realism in the fifties to the indulgence in narrative games about the fictionality of the real and the reality of fiction which have become familiar to us since the sixties” (in Jefferson & Martin, 1982:237-248).

discourses that his work is “never the same, never completely repeated” (Webster, 1990: 97). Because of the book’s overt referentiality the reader has to remain doubly engaged while reading it. To follow Greene in this act of creation and re-creation, of weaving the intertwined threads into the structure and texture of an intertext, can be an exciting experience. There are also many references to other ancient and modern writings (including moral theology and Marx), and they are never ornamental; rather essentially organic. But what seems to attract the reader’s attention most is Greene’s use of the devices of ‘collage’ and ‘montage’ in order to bring two particular texts together, and occasionally even create the illusion of one continuing text in which both the tales of *Don Quixote* and *Monsignor Quixote* get merged into one re-circulated, and thereby unbroken, narration. The process is indeed so interesting and so meticulously elaborate that it is not within the scope of a single paper to cover its entirety or profundity. However, this paper will try to show summarily how Greene carefully relates his text to Cervantes’s and how each of the countless points of convergence shimmers with the radiant joy of recognition—recognition of the ‘ancestor’ in the successor. It is both continuity and parallelism; the continued story of the successor/inheritor/ descendant of the great ‘Don’ actually gives a rerun to the sequence of events in the original ‘romance’.

Greene’s Quixote, who claims to be a ‘descendant’ to the great ‘Don’ of Cervantes, is a middle-aged Catholic priest in post-Franco Spain who sets out on his first ever holiday trip along the ‘high road’ once followed by his ‘ancestor’; as companion he has his friend Sancho—an experienced, hedonistic Communist. In course of journeying, or resting by the roadside, they analyze and weigh each other’s belief and also review their own respective faiths, sometimes with aggressive intensity or brilliant humour, and in the mood of sad confession at times. Traps, however, wait for them even along the prosaic road of today: the ‘guardia’ take the truants by surprise. Though Sancho, who is more down-to-earth, tries to protect and guide innocent Quixote along the dangerous road, the latter cannot avoid arrest; the charge is of helping a ‘criminal’ to escape, and behaving ‘madly’.

The second phase of the adventure starts with the pair’s escapade from ‘house-arrest’: from this point onwards fun and hilarity gradually recede to give place to a sense of doom, of a desperate directionless journey which finally ends up in an unequal fight and death. Father Quixote

rushes into the midst of an alien crowd of an unknown city to tear away the vulgar garland of currency notes pinned on the icon of Mother Mary. The consequence is a chase by the ‘guardia’, a bullet in the tire, and Quixote’s subsequent death inside a Trappist monastery.

Greene retains the old story-frame intact, and arranges his material so as to fit into the schema of the old familiar paradigm—although with certain slight narrational contractions and compressions in terms of time-period and number/details of happenings, and along with the addition of a few details to suit the need of a contemporary scene.

At the same time, the basic structure of events in *Monsignor Quixote*, as well as its use of details show that the writer has carefully maintained two distinct levels of reality—his own story and that of Cervantes—and has subtly got them connected at points, and on occasions has brought them to merge into each other. Greene’s twentieth or twenty-first century reader is indeed never for once allowed to be oblivious of the other seventeenth century text. The pattern of simultaneous fission/fusion, and of separation/overlapping/intermingling of the two texts has been made to operate on the juxtaposed planes of distinctly different times. In this unique labyrinth of creative imagination past and present intersect and copulate in a wimpling chiaroscuro, as names, places, incidents surge up from across four centuries atop the rippling waves of memories/associations. By some weird stroke of fantasy a rural priest emerges to be the descendant of a fictional character, and the question of plausibility becomes irrelevant to the writer as well as to the reader. Even the shabby old car is no machine but a living creature, “Rocinante” (*MQ* 19), to its owner’s loving mind; and the modern Quixote and Sancho go along the same road that their ancestors covered, which is still marked by posts carrying such loaded names as El Toboso, Valladolid, La Mancha—names that are signs reverberant with associations, both personal associations of the ‘ancestors’, as well as the endless associations of countless readers who have gone through the book over the past four centuries.

* * *

Even a few instances from Greene’s novel can give some idea about how the spell is made to work through a systematic careful accumulation of details intended to telescope two time-periods, two sets of ‘ancestors’ and ‘descendants’, two sets of adventures and misadventures along the same road.

In the very second sentence of the novel one 'Father Quixote' (*MQ* 11) is introduced who lives in 'El Toboso' (ib. 11) and drives some kilometers along the main road to 'Valencia' (ib. 11) to buy his wine. His is, again, an old car and people warn him "you can't trust it Don Quixote" (ib. 11). But he would mention it with endearing fondness as "my Rocinante" (ib. 11).

His bishop of course shows no regard for his "distinguished ancestry" (*MQ* 12) and is openly skeptical about his line of 'descent'. "How can he be descended from a fictional character" (ib. 12)? Significantly the bishop's listener refuses to subscribe to his notion of 'fictional'; the "house of Dulcinea in El Toboso" (ib. 13) is as real to him as General Franco, though the bishop makes no attempt to hide his opinion of such an 'origin': "A character in a novel by an overrated writer called Cervantes" (ib. 12-13), which would probably have been banned in General Franco's Spain: "a novel moreover with many disgusting passages which in the days of the Generalissimo would not even have passed the censor" (ib. 13), thereby obliquely establishing the respective historicity of the two texts. The bishop's addressee, however—unselfconsciously though—admits the continuity and persistence of the earlier literary text in the historical reality of the present moment as he points out that there is still the house of 'Dulcinea' in El Toboso, with a plaque on it. Here the borderline between fiction and reality seems to melt into unsubstantiality and fiction seems to assume as much validity as the living moment itself. Although the local bishop would prefer to dismiss the idea with the trite conclusion: "Men of that class have no ancestors" (ib. 13), the bishop of Motopo accepts this transfusion between reality and fiction with delight and grace as he enters the priest's modest parlour saying, "It is an honour for me to be a guest in the house of Don Quixote" (ib. 15). The two bishops appear to represent the two ends of the spectrum of romantic to postmodern notions regarding the issue of the closure of texts—whether texts were autonomous and self-contained or spilling over beyond the frontiers, bursting the jackets.

Indeed, the priest's parish itself still retains and cherishes the flavour of Cervantes's story, firstly by its name and secondly by its museum of signatures by the heads of various states on the book of Cervantes, while Father Quixote himself is soaked with Cervantes's tale—even to the extent of perceiving his old *seat* as a twentieth century incarnation of 'Rocinante', the lean old horse of the Don. The innocent man would even

seek assurance from the sympathetic bishop of Motopo, if it were heretical to pray for the “happiness” and “good death” (*MQ* 19) of his inanimate ‘Rocinante’. The priest is never for a moment beyond the pale of his ancestor’s shadow, and this becomes apparent in all his little and big thoughts and action.

The bishop, contented with his steak and cognac, takes from the shelves of theological textbooks “a copy of Cervantes’s work which Father Quixote had bought when he was a boy” (*MQ* 21-22). Here the personae of Cervantes (or strictly speaking the ‘descendants’ of the personae of Cervantes) appearing on the pages of Greene’s text as they are, are also readers of Cervantes, much as Hamlet is a spectator of *Hamlet*, Rama is an auditor of the *Ramayana*. It is, as it were, an endless story contained within an infinite circle that has no end. The bishop is seen smiling over a page where Cervantes had insisted on unflattering honesty in a servant. Father Quixote, in spite of all his innocence, knows the irony hidden in the message. So he does not tell the bishop that the problem with his car was that it had simply run out of petrol.

On the eve of leaving, the bishop, very happy and pleased with Father Quixote, says he would like Father Quixote to ‘go forth’, not simply as he is but to “go forth like your ancestor Don Quixote on the high roads of the World [...]” (*MQ* 23). This is followed by interesting talk that again highlights the validity of a process by which fiction can overlap into reality. Feeling assured by the friendliness of this particular bishop, the priest, ventures to say: “He [Quixote] was a fiction, my bishop says, in the mind of a writer” (*MQ* 24). The bishop assures: “perhaps we are all fictions, father, in the mind of God” (ib. 24).

A humorous, though proleptic, query follows: “Do you want me to tilt at windmill?” (*MQ* 24). In a later context the subtle affinity between the ‘windmills’ of Cervantes and the ‘guardia’ of Franco’s Spain will be drawn out. And Father Quixote will, like his ancestor, have his encounter with this modern version of ‘windmills’. The phrase ‘to tilt at windmills’ also carries its age-old connotation of absurd adventurism verging on the ridiculous. But the bishop appears to consider the event from another, serious, angle. “It was only by tilting at windmills that Don Quixote found the truth on his deathbed” (ib. 24). He even quotes the famous phrase of Cervantes in this context: ““There are no birds this year in last year’s nests”” (ib. 24). Both express their simultaneous incomprehension

of the phrase and fascination at its beauty. Incidentally, this phrase rhythmically⁷ recurs through the text, ringing a note of sadness at the inevitable departures that any 'going forth' in life involves.

The priest, with his endearing openness of nature, can accept the 'heretic' mayor as his friend who incidentally happens to be the only person in the priest's parish to have "read Cervantes' work, though [...] it was doubtful if the latter had got much further than the battle with the windmills" (*MQ* 15). This Mayor had once clapped Quixote on the back calling him "a worthy descendant of his great ancestor who had released the galley slaves" (ib. 27); the occasion was when he was scolded by the bishop for diverting his own Easter money to another organization who was supposed to look after the spiritual needs of the prisoners, but actually tried to help them escape.

The Mayor, whom the priest insists on calling 'Sancho', contested one of the local elections held in the province of *La Mancha* (another evocative name):

The Mayor's name was Zancas, which was the surname of the original Sancho Panza, in Cervantes' *truthful history*, and though his Christian name was Enrique he permitted his friend Father Quixote to tease him with the name of Sancho. (*MQ* 30; emphasis added)

Zancas too joins the game of evoking ancestors with adequate mirth and persistence. The priest, during one of his séances with Zancas, alias Sancho, concedes with a little sadness that parts of the Bible are not read any more, as should anyway be natural in this age of space technology. The Mayor at this point underscores the priest's likeness to the other Quixote: "you know, father, you remind me of your ancestor. He believed in all those books of chivalry, quite out of date even in his day" (*MQ* 34). Again, as they talk and almost quarrel on the issue of their respective faiths—one being a Catholic Christian and the other a Communist—the father feels uneasy regarding the appropriateness of their companionship and the prospect of their proposed travel together: "A big gulf separates us, Sancho". Sancho, however, assures placidly—and the basis of this assurance is drawn from Cervantes—"A big gulf separated your ancestor...from the one you call mine, father, and yet

⁷ According to Forster, the function of rhythm was "not to be there all the time like a pattern, but by its lovely waxing and waning to fill us with surprise and freshness and hope" (2004: 136).

[...]" (ib. 37). The father does not need any further persuasions after this authentication from the ancestral tale.

The father's leave being granted his replacement comes from 'Salamanca'. This replacement, Father Herrera, is a doctorate in moral theology, a subject in which Father Quixote is not interested, and he frankly confesses: "[...] like my ancestor perhaps I put my trust most in old books" (*MQ* 40), books, in his case, written before Jones was born," (ib. 40). Father Herrera's reaction to this is, understandably rather adverse: "[...] Your ancestor's books were only ones of chivalry [...]" (ib. 40). But he fails to embarrass Father Quixote who frankly admits: "Well, perhaps mine in their way—are of chivalry too. [...] 'Let's go up to Jerusalem and die with Him'. Don Quixote could not have put it better than St. Thomas" (ib. 40).

Once out on the 'high road', Sancho—being more pragmatic than Quixote (this too in accordance with the Cervantes pattern)—insists on buying purple socks for the new monsignor and his argument is based on Cervantes's. "Your ancestor had a proper respect for the uniform of a knight errant, even though he had to put up with a barber's basin for a helmet" (*MQ* 43). Sancho further underscores the similarity of the respective situations of the 'ancestor' and the descendent: "You are a monsignor errant and you must wear purple socks" (ib. 43). The priest stretches the parallelism further: "They say my ancestor was mad. They will say the same of me" (ib. 43). He also apprehends that like his ancestor he too "will be brought back in disgrace" (ib. 44). He proves uncannily correct, indeed.

Before leaving for the 'high road' he goes back just for once to his old room and sits down on the armchair. He had been using it over the years and its "shape" had become as familiar to him as the curve of the saddle must have been to his ancestor" (*MQ* 44).

After going some miles Rocinante needs rest. So the Quixotic pair have their brief lunch and long drink by the roadside along which the "debate without rancour" (*MQ* 48) continues regarding their respective and mutually conflicting faiths until the sun goes down. On realizing that they will have to spend the night on the roadside Father Quixote remembers: "Our two ancestors lay down for the night under the trees more than once", although "there are no trees here" and "there is a castle wall" (ib. 49) instead.

The shadows of the ancestors never really desert the descendants. At the same time Greene also takes care to give his personae their own unique identities. Thus, their faiths are completely different from their ancestors, and each holds staunchly on to his own respective brand of faith although both warily admit scope for 'doubt' or uncertainty. Again, unlike the Sancho of Cervantes Greene's Sancho always addresses Greene's Quixote as "friend". With reference to the parable of the prodigal son Sancho offers his own interpretation that Christ is dismissing obscene wealth like that of Job and uses this context to remind Father Quixote: "Christ was nearer in time to the author of Job than you are to your great ancestor, the Don" (*MQ* 60). However, in spite of their distinct individuality or uniqueness, Greene's Quixote and Sancho are never completely separable from the other identities that accumulate upon them from Cervantes's pages. Every big or small detail seems to quiver with the delightful burden of accumulated memories. Not only do the friends proudly flaunt their respective 'ancestors', the "very old" (ib. 62) car too follows its own "ancestor's" (ib. 62) very slow ways; and the priest says with affectionate indulgence, "That's Rocinante's favourite speed" and that he "can't make her strain—not at her age" (ib. 62). Sancho complains that they are being passed by every car on the road (ib. 62). But Father Quixote does not care: "What does it matter? *Her ancestor* never got up to thirty kilometers an hour" (ib. 62). Quick comes the repartee: "And *your ancestor* never got further in his travels than Barcelona" (ib. 62; emphasis added). But this does not perturb the father "What of it? He remained almost in hailing distance of La Mancha but his mind traveled very far. And so did Sancho's" (ib. 62-63).

The ancestor does not only control the pace but also the track, the road-map of the journey. On reaching Madrid, Father Quixote, quite innocently though, brings his friend to an ignominious place; the obvious allusion to the other Quixote halting at the brothel. As they are made to sign some papers on the eve of checking out Sancho prompts the father to write "Barcelona" for destination. The Father is surprised—"you never said anything about Barcelona". Sancho says, "Who knows? We might go there. Your ancestor did" (*MQ* 78).

On journey, the two discuss all possible subjects from religion to politics, morality to love, helping each other with glasses of wine all the time and the mayor recalls his 'ancestor' for inspiration: "I can say, like *my ancestor Sancho*, that I've never drunk out of vice in my life" (*MQ* 90;

emphasis added). As Sancho once tries the priest's collar on his own neck, and then in a flash of recognition realizes there is nothing priestly about the priest, who is such a lovable human individual in spite of his vocation, he exclaims: "How odd, father, without your collar I would never take you for a priest and certainly not for a monsignor" (ib. 92). The priest reminds the Mayor: "When his housekeeper took away his spear and stripped Don Quixote of his armour you would never have taken him for a knight errant. Only for a crazy old man" (ib. 92), thus defining his own image in terms of the self-reflexive paralleling with the shadow in the 'ancestral' mirror.

The mirror is sought not only in mirth but also in critical moments of apprehension, and later, of sadness. As they are stopped by the suspicious Guardia for cross-examinations regarding their travel plan, Father Quixote feels uneasy at this turn of events because no such thing had ever happened to him before. But Sancho encourages by reminding: "It wasn't until he left his village that your ancestor encountered the windmills." And he compares the two situations to prove that they are in an advantageous position. "Look. Our task is easier. We have not thirty or forty windmills to encounter, we have only two" (*MQ* 96). The analogy of the windmill is stretched further. "The fat Guardia, who was returning with his companion, certainly brought a windmill to mind by the way he waved his arms as he explained to his companion the strange contradictions he had encountered" (ib. 96-97). Quixote and Sancho take a little time for starting again. In the meantime the two Guardia come back in a jeep and pass them. "We have conquered the windmills", the Mayor said. The Mayor's answer to the father's innocent "What windmills?" springs from the whole disillusioning historical-sociological text of Greene's times: "The Guardia revolve with every wind. They were there with the Generalissimo. They are there now. If my party came to power they would still be there, turning with the wind from the East" (ib. 103). The analogy serves to metaphorise the present while casting a sharp ironical flash upon people's obnoxious servility to the powers that be. After the Guardia leave the friends resume their talk about life, love and faith. As the evening draws on the talks become more intimate. Quixote speaks of his own 'Dulcinea' (ib. 104) (in this case she turns out to be none else that St. Therese) whose letters—and especially one sentence: "Before we die by the sword, let us die by pin stabs" (ib. 104)—had consoled him during his days of difficulty with the bishop. Sancho points out, "Your ancestor would have preferred the sword" (ib. 104); but

Quixote corrects him: "All the same, perhaps, in the end it was by pin stabs that he died" (ib. 104). Thus the two texts continue to coalesce, thereby underscoring, on occasions, some universal wisdom; that real life is not heroism, adventure, glory, but often involves inglorious torture, and small but intense anguishes.

The respective spatial frames too mirror each other, thereby leading to a similar illusion of 'space'. Thanks to the tardiness of the Father's old 'Rocinante' the two friends cover small distance in proportion to the time they have spent on the road. Nevertheless they realise that it is not so much the actual measurement of space but the illusion of space that matters. "It seemed to him that his journey had already extended across the whole breadth of Spain, though he was not much more than two hundred kilometers from La Mancha. The slowness of Rocinante made a nonsense of distance (*MQ* 106). In this perception of the difference between empirical reality and 'virtual reality' (*a la* Baudrillard, 1993) of space again he draws a special comfort from recalling: "Well, the furthest that his ancestor had gone from La Mancha in all his journeys had been the city of Barcelona and yet anyone who had read the *true history* (emphasis added) would have thought that Don Quixote had covered the whole immense area of Spain. There was a virtue in slowness which we had lost" (*MQ* 106).

The pair has been, as it were, following in the footsteps of the ancestral pair. As they take the road to Arevalo in order to give the Guardia a slip they find some old torn posters of a traveling circus on the walls, with a large-sized man called 'El Tigre'. The sight of the poster starts off the conversation that Spain seems to change very little with time, and continuing to be the same old Spain as in the days of Don Quixote. This prompts the Mayor's conjecture—"We shall have our adventures on the road, father, much as your ancestor did. We have already battled with the windmills and we have only missed by a week or two an adventure with the Tiger. He would probably have proved as tame when challenged as your ancestor found the lion" (*MQ* 108). In response to this the modest father points out the difference between himself and the original Don: "But I am no Don Quixote, Sancho. I would be afraid to challenge a man of such a size" (ib. 108). However, his friend knows him better. "You underrate yourself, father. Your faith is your spear. If the Tiger had dared to say something derogatory of your beloved Dulcinea!" (ib. 108).

In course of this resumed journey they arrive at ‘Salamanca’. The father’s “knowledge of hotels was necessarily limited” (*MQ* 114) just like his ancestor’s knowledge of inns and Sancho brings him to a brothel. The priest’s innocence is only as touching as that of his ancestor in a similar situation.

There are certain occasions when the focus is slightly readjusted so as to include not only the other *Quixote* but its author too. As the pair set out next morning “Father Quixote suggested they take the road to Valladolid in order to see the house where the great *biographer* (emphasis added) Cervantes had completed the life of his forebear” (*MQ* 119). [In a later context Quixote also mentions Cervantes as the “historian” (ib. 198)]. The friends discuss the event of Cervantes’s arrest by mistake, and its possible impact on a detail of his book. “Of course he was let out on bail”. Father Quixote tells Sancho, “But think of going on with the life of my ancestor under the weight of that threat. I sometimes wonder whether he had that night in mind when he wrote of how *your* ancestor, after he became governor of the island, ordered a youth to sleep a night in gaol” (ib. 21).

In the meantime other books figure in their road-side siesta, which again are perceived in connection with Cervantes. During this trip Father Quixote has gone through the *Communist Manifesto* which he had borrowed from Sancho. And he notes striking similarities between the two dreamers, *i.e.*, Karl Marx and Don Quixote. “I think my ancestor would have got on well with Marx. Poor Marx—he had his books of chivalry too that belonged to the past” (*MQ* 123). An interesting angle indeed! Marx has produced hosts of admiring followers and no lesser number of hostile detractors, but this kind of affectionate-amused response to Marx, equating the sombre idol to the delightful adventurism of Quixote is at least unusual. Sancho, expectedly, is put on the defensive: “Marx was looking to the future” (ib. 123). But Quixote points out that Marx was also “mourning all the time for the past, the past of his imagination” (ib. 123). And he reads out several passages from Marx alternately with similar passages from Cervantes, to come to the conclusion—“this man Marx was a true follower of my ancestor”(ib. 123). Here Greene underscores the element of innate Quixotism in all brands of serious idealism. The father analyses the lack of realism in Marxism and asks in conclusion: “If the whole world becomes bourgeois, will it be so bad—except for dreamers like Marx and my ancestor?” (ib. 125). Father

has enjoyed his first reading of the *Communist Manifesto*, and offers Sancho some of his own “books of Chivalry”, *i.e.* gospels in return. Sancho retorts, “I would find your taste as absurd as Cervantes found your ancestor’s” (ib. 127). Greene’s book thus turns out to be a book about ‘books’ of ‘chivalry’—very much like the book of his literary ancestor, Cervantes, and both look back to books of the past—somewhat dated and yet popular ‘grand narratives’ with synchronic critiquing and nostalgia.

As Father Quixote is disturbed over the question of his own possible incapacity for love he wants to get back to the comfort of his religious books which Sancho had called “his books of chivalry, but he could not help remembering that Don Quixote at the last had renounced them on his deathbed” (*MQ* 140). And he apprehends: “perhaps he too when the end arrived [...]” (ib. 140). Sancho too is apparently carried away by the game of ancestor-claiming; “Remember father,” he would say, “what a good Governor my ancestor made. Don Quixote with all his chivalry and courage would never have governed so well. [...] My ancestor took to governing just as Trotsky took to commanding an army” (ib. 142-143).

For explaining the motivation and justification of every act the ancestor must represent the referral point. As the father helps the bank-robber to escape he explains his motive to Sancho by referring to Don Quixote’s sense of justice: “You remember what my ancestor told the galley slaves before he released them, ‘there is a God in heaven, who does not neglect to punish the wicked nor to reward the good, and it is not right that honourable men should be executioners of others’” (*MQ* 146-147). When the escapee folded up in the luggage boot of Rocinante complains about their delay, Father Quixote rebukes him in much the same words as his ancestor had used. “We are not your judges, but your conscience should tell you that ingratitude is an ignoble sin.” The escapee, however, like his original version (the galley slaves) is very rude; he forces Quixote to exchange his pair of shoes and to take the road of his own choice. When the rogue leaves at last the Father can feel thankful by looking back to his ancestor; because “At least he didn’t assault me like the galley slaves assaulted my forebearer” (ib. 151).

In the meantime news has reached home. The new Father and the bishop together have almost decided to put Quixote up in the madhouse. He gets the information from Teresa and anxiously reports to Sancho

who seeks assurance, again, by invoking the instance of his ancestor: “Well, there’s no harm in that. They thought your ancestor was mad too” (*MQ* 156). They halt on the roadside and take glasses of wine in quick succession. At this point we get glimpse of an exceptional moment when Father Quixote angrily stresses his difference from Don Quixote, by asserting his own distinct identity. The Mayor too takes cue: “I am glad that unlike your ancestor you enjoy your wine” (ib. 160). He further elaborates his point by mischievously citing how Don Quixote frequently stopped at an inn but never drank a glass, although like them he had many meals of cheese in the open air. While listening to this comparative study Father Quixote suddenly flares up:

“Why are you always saddling me with my ancestor?”

‘I was only comparing...’

‘You talk about him at every opportunity, you pretend that my saints’ books are like his books of chivalry, you compare our little adventures with his’.

He goes on emphatically to pronounce his freedom from the ‘ancestor’ and the ancient text: “Those Guardia were Guardia, not windmills, I am Father Quixote, and not Don Quixote. *I tell you, I exist.* My adventures are my own adventures, not his. I go *my way—my way*—not his. I have free will. *I am not tethered to an ancestor who has been dead these four hundred years*” (*MQ* 161-2; emphasis added). Ironically the angry assertion itself betrays a Bloom-ian ‘anxiety’—the ephebe’s desperate ‘swerve’ in order to get over the shadow of the precursor.⁸ However, for Father Quixote it proves only a momentary desire.

Soon afterwards, when Father Quixote, like his ancestor, is forcibly brought back home (by Father Herrera and Dr. Galvan), he tries to brace up for the adversity by means of recalling the ‘ancestor’ who was caught up and put under similar ordeal: “My ancestor was at least spared the bishop when the priest brought him home. And I prefer Dr. Galvan to that stupid barber who told my ancestor all those tales about madman” (*MQ* 180). The accusation of madness is a handy device (anticipating Foucault!) to validate the marginalization—often landing in imprisonment—of the accused.⁹ While Cervantes represents an early

⁸ In his book *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973), Harold Bloom emphasizes the desire to evade earlier writings as a central motivation in literary production.

⁹ Foucault, in his *Madness and Civilization* (1961) focused on the practice since Enlightenment of banishing alternative modes by labeling them as ‘madness’.

anticipation of the Foucauldian concept, Greene deliberately reworks on the same from his late twentieth century vantage point, and the two texts again converge on this discourse of madness, censor and imprisoning. Greene's Quixote emphatically declares that he doesn't "for a moment believe" that Don Quixote was a madman, thereby challenging the age-old discourse of madness. He also hopes that "they" will not try to burn his books as they did to his ancestor's. But he is informed that the bishop has already ordered his study to be kept locked. "So I am a prisoner, he thought, like Cervantes" (*MQ* 192), he exclaims. The exclamation equates Father with both Quixote and his author Cervantes.

As the father remains blissfully unaware of the grave danger his act of sheltering the criminal has landed him in, Sancho gets apprehensive, and he sounds his warning in referential terms. "You don't seem to realize, father, what a grave crime you have committed. You've freed a galley slave" (*MQ* 202). Thus, the different activities of the two protagonists again and again get layered upon some common paradigmatic action in which times, histories and texts get conflated. In the process of this conflation the ancestor can acquire the dimension of an addressee or even a deity with whom the successor can get engaged in a dialogue or prayer; for instance, the father's sympathy for the unsuccessful criminal: "I shall pray to my ancestor¹⁰ for him. How often the Don knew failure. Even with the windmills" (ib. 202).

Once out on the road the second time—this time it is going to be an indefinite journey along an unplanned route—the two take the countryside road, and stopping by an unknown stream, chill their bottles. As the "two survivors" (*MQ* 204) drink a toast to themselves—one a committed Marxist who has survived persecution of the party and the other a devout Catholic who has survived the persecution of the church—it is also a toast to a deeper mutual bond they have arrived at. The two can become friends because in spite of being sincere believers, they are not orthodox; both of them recognize the faint "voice of uncertainty" that sometimes stirs in the minds of both. Here also the father seeks a support from his ancestor. "Did the Don really believe in Amadis of Gaul, Roland and all his heroes or was it only that he believed in the virtues they stood for?" (ib. 204). Even in regard to small details they would refer to

¹⁰ Frazer mentions the practice prevalent among some ancient communities of praying to a dead 'ancestor' for an extraordinary benediction like rain during draught (1993:71).

the ancestors: “Was it your ancestor or mine who used to say ‘patience and shuffle the cards?’” (ib. 206).

The melancholy shadow of an impending doom hangs low over their resumed trip. With the bishop’s letter of suspension in hand Quixote feels his days in El Toboso are now permanently over. Sancho broaches a proposal that the father could stay at the Trappist monastery while he would cross over to Portugal. The father suddenly makes what might appear a desperate effort to evade the fate of his ancestor and take a ‘swerve’ ahead: “I don’t want our travels to end. Not before death, Sancho. My ancestor died in his bed. Perhaps he would have lived longer if he had stayed on the road. I’m not ready for death, yet, Sancho” (*MQ* 210). Here is one last, though brief and eventually ineffective, struggle to disentangle himself from the shadow of the ancestor. But his fatal encounter with ‘windmills’ is not very far. They have already covered a long distance over steep mountain paths in order to avoid the Guardia and have reached Galicia, where everybody talks apprehensively about the ‘Mexicans’. Before the final catastrophe, however, there is still time left for one last Rabelaisian jaunt when past and present meet in a graceful embrace. Searching for some good wine, Monsignor Quixote and Sancho arrive at Sen~or Diego’s house and when the Mayor introduces his friend, Sen~or Diego is delightedly [not skeptically] surprised:

“Quixote, not surely.....’

‘An unworthy descendant’, father Quixote interrupted him. [...]

‘As for myself: the Mayor said, ‘I cannot claim to be a true descendant of Sancho Panza. Sancho and I have a family name in common, that’s all, but I can assure you that Monsignor Quixote and I have had some curious adventures. Even if they are not worthy to be compared [...]’.” (*MQ* 219)

As they sit down to taste the very best wine of Señor Diego’s vineyard, Father Quixote toasts “to the Holy Father and his intentions’. Sancho asks with an unusual sadness: “Do you think that the Monsignor’s ancestor really represented the chivalry of Spain: Oh, it may have been his intention, but we all make cruel parodies of what we intend” (*MQ* 222). Father Quixote has to take hasty leave from this exquisite séance in order to encounter the vulgar Mexicans’ insult of ‘Our Lady’, and Señor Diego bids him an emotion farewell: “I shall always remember how under this fig tree I was able to entertain for a short while a

descendant of the great Don” (ib. 224). Apparently Señor Diego is one of those imaginative minds for whom the fictional is no less real than reality.

The father is decided now to prevent the Mexicans offending ‘Our Lady’; even at this crucial moment the ancestor’s genial shadow is not withdrawn. He puts on his *perchera* saying “We are going into battle, Sancho. I need my armour. Even if it is as absurd as Mambrino’s helmet” (MQ 225). As the father is on the point of confronting the vulgar procession Sancho implores him to come away. But like the ancestor he dismisses the warnings of his Sancho; indeed their mind-sets have become so attuned to this intertextual way of thinking that even at this moment of crisis they think, speak and act referentially, as if their very existence derives legitimacy from its textuality or referentiality:

“Oh, you are talking like that other Sancho, and I say to you as my ancestor said when he saw the giants and you pretended they were windmills—‘If you are afraid, go away and say your prayers’”. (MQ 227; emphasis added)

The consequence too proves equally fatal for the ancestor’s descendant. Thus, again and again the two tales appear to coalesce, and the barrier line between ‘fact and fiction’ or rather between two fictions seems to disappear, one being imitation at the second remove, by imitating a previous imitation of life.

As Father Leopoldo and Professor Pilbeam in the Trappist monastery talk about the difficulty of distinguishing ‘fact’ from ‘fiction’, the badly mauled Rocinante carrying the fatally wounded Monsignor smashes against the wall of the Trappist church. Sancho introduces his unconscious friend, and Professor Pilbeam exclaims: ‘Quixote! Impossible’. Sancho again proudly claims: “Monsignor Quixote of El Toboso. A descendant of the great Don Quixote himself”. The Professor still contests: “Don Quixote had no descendants. How could he? He’s a fictional character”. Father Leopoldo now intervenes: “Fact and fiction again, Professor. So difficult to distinguish” (MQ 240). And the Mayor further blurs the distinction by quoting Cervantes: “In a certain village in La Mancha, which I do not wish to name” (ib. 242): Apparently the suggestion that both the Quixotes—of Cervantes as well as of Greene—were born in the same place, in the anonymous region of creative imagination, further reinforces the idea of “the *difficult distinction* between fact and fiction” (MQ 242; emphasis added).

Even in death the father remains loyal to his ‘ancestor’. In his feverish delirium on the eve of death the father asks for Mambrino’s helmet (*MQ* 245) and offers Sancho not a governorship but a kingdom (ib. 246). At the climax of the dream Mass he succumbs in the arms of Sancho, saying “*Compañero*” (ib. 250), while the Mayor repeats in murmur, “*Compañero*, [...] this is Sancho’, while feeling in vain for the heart beat (ib. 250-251)

* * *

While examining the impact of *Don Quixote* on creative and critical writing across space and time (in the chapter ‘*Don Quixote* as Landmark’) A.J. Close observes: “Cervantes touched an archetypal spring here which, as is the way with great myths, would inspire and still continues to inspire a prodigious quantity and range of creative activity” (*MQ* 112). Close’s long list of such activity includes *Monsignor Quixote*, which is also commonly viewed as “this seriocomic offshoot of Cervantes’s gigantic fable.”¹¹

Greene’s *Monsignor Quixote*, however, is not just another item on this long list; rather it stands out as a unique example of the impact of Cervantes on a modern writer. At the age of seventy-eight, at almost the end of his long literary pursuit, Greene, like Borges’s Pierre Menard, examines his life-long commitments, uncertainties, illusions in the light of Cervantes’s book, and presents through his version of *Quixote*, an aesthetic that challenges and subverts the traditional divide between fictionality of fiction and facticity of fact, in addition to a tale that is simultaneously modern and ancient, a fresh novel which is at the same time four hundred years old, and thus aptly illustrates Michael Foucault’s idea of a book :

The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut [...] it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences [...]
The book is simply not the object that one holds in one’s hands [...]
its unity is variable and relative. (Foucault, 1969:23)

Monsignor Quixote illustrates the process of absorption and transformation of a prior text by means of a respectful, careful and celebrative evocation, in which the practice of ‘transposition’ leads to a

¹¹ Robert Towers’ review-article “An Amiable Greene” represents a typical view of the novel.

layering of meanings which is again achieved through a meticulous layering of the texts.¹²

Monsignor Quixote can be considered a unique example of transtextuality involving overt relation between two particular texts—the ‘hypotext’ of Cervantes and Greene’s own ‘hypertext’ (*a la* Gerard Genette), as result of which intertextuality leads to simultaneously diffuse and enrich penetration of the individual text by echoes, resonances, reminders, transformations, of the other text. *Monsignor Quixote* is not just automatically intertextual,¹³ but rather deliberately, self-consciously, self-reflexively, nostalgically, ironically, parodically, delightedly and delightfully interinvolved. Indeed here we have an instance of intertext as “an activity that foregrounds the boundaries as well as the boundary-crossings between texts” (Shastri, 2002:332). It is essentially an interdependent, interinvolved text which is built upon a continuous chain of cross-referencing and interplay. It is also a double-voiced text, continuously offering and inviting points of comparison between the overt text and the covert one(s).

Whereas the ‘horizontal axis’ invites us readers to join the author in following the adventures of Monsignor Quixote, the author himself derives his inspiration and the authenticity of his story by connecting himself through the ‘vertical axis’ (*a la* Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 1980) to the pursuits of the great Don in the generator text. In the process the two texts are continuously criss-crossed. The endlessly referential hypertext never really allows the reader to be oblivious about the dominating overshadowing hypotext which hangs over the pages like some exquisite, mellowed and beautifying evening light.

It is also a kind of dialogue between the two texts—an illustration of Eco’s “books speak[ing] of books” in their unique “imperceptible dialogue” (Eco, 1998:286); a dialogue between authorial voices, as well as between the past and the present, anteriority and posteriority,

¹² Kristeva challenges traditional notions of literary influence, saying that intertextuality denotes a transposition of one or several sign systems into another or others. So that discourses or sign systems are transposed into one another—so that meanings in one kind of discourse are overlaid with meanings from another kind of discourse, resulting in a kind of ‘new articulation’.

¹³ Abram’s definition: “The multiple ways in which any one literary text is inseparably interinvolved with other texts”; or the text stirring Barthes-ian ‘pleasure’ from the recognition of: “the impossibility of living outside the infinite text”, thereby making intertextuality the very condition of textuality (Barthes, 1976:51-52) or Barthes’ famous remark: “any text is a new issue of past citations” (1981:39).

ancestors and descendants, which is further enriched by continuous cross-references to the other books [with mild irony]—theological and political—that have been operative behind the grand narratives of history and culture—and books like the *Bible* or the *Communist Manifesto*, thus typically illustrating “intelligence informed by other men informed by other men informed!” (*a la* Wesker). The ‘dialogue’ between the last two books again, presents a debate between Greene and Greene—the one-time Communist and the ‘Catholic turned agnostic’; the author interrogates thus his two ‘faiths’ through the ‘Pyrrhonian’¹⁴ ‘voice of uncertainty’ while exploring the issues of faith and doubt, hope and despair, and love and lovelessness—issues that had kept him preoccupied throughout his life and writing career. On the eve of ‘going forth’ on the roads the priest does not forget to pack, in addition to wine, cheese and sausage, volumes of St Francis de Sales, St John of the Cross and St Teresa which correspond to the Don’s old books of chivalry [The father’s books of theology are mentioned by Sancho as “all your books of chivalry” (*MQ* 110)] along with Heribert Jone’s book on moral theology and a copy of the *Communist Manifesto*, which will inform the nature of their (referential) talk on this loquacious journey. [Father Leopoldo in the Trappist monastery even compares Saint Ignatius to Don Quixote who, in his perception, “have a lot in common” (*ib.* 237)].

The trip along the road to La Mancha is no less delightfully bibulous than loquacious in course of which the traveling duo can even launch a Bacchanalian discourse (and daringly hilarious treatment of sanctimonious theological texts) on the Holy Trinity with the means of two big bottles and one smaller bottle of wine; this is also a significant innovation upon the original text while drawing upon the road map of the author’s real life excursion.¹⁵

Again, the book would also automatically remind a reader of another very delightful book—*The World of Don Camillo* by Giovanni Guareschi—in which a village priest, named Don Camillo, and the local mayor Peppone are engaged in endless interaction of ideological opposition and mutual affectionate admiration. One may also trace the shadow of two

¹⁴ Watts observes: “Greene was thoroughly Pyrrhonian: like a devoted follower of the great sceptic, Pyrrho of Elis, he was prepared to be sceptic about skepticism” (1996: 106).

¹⁵ Father Duran gives account of the genesis of this chapter at the dinner table of a roadside Spanish hotel where Greene himself jokingly used a similar device towards explaining the Holy Trinity (Duran, 1995:214).

other pairs: one fictive, the other autobiographical; the anonymous priest and lieutenant, caught up in the hunted-hunter relationship, in Greene's own earlier novel *The Power and the Glory*;¹⁶ and the real life friends, Graham and Leopoldo, the agnostic and the believer, out on trips together along the countryside Spain of the post-Franco era.¹⁷ Father Duran claims that the book sums up the many trips he and Greene had taken together across Spain over a decade preceding the book.

It may also be noted in this connection that Cervantes's *Don Quixote* itself is self-consciously preoccupied with a fictional world. As a book it continues to comment on the fact that it is a book; not only does the narrator in Part II go on to comment on the readers' complain about the many digressions in Part I, he also comments that the story is about telling stories, and that it has been 'recovered' from other books, while Quixote himself believes that he is the hero of a book (though not *the* book of which he is actually the hero!). As Glover claims: "The novel (*Don Quixote*) followed several historical trajectories at once. While one kind of novel followed the path of conventional realism, what we might call an alternative tradition of self-consciousness, complexity, experiment, elaboration and playfulness has flourished simultaneously, though perhaps with leaner commercial success" (2004:88). Greene has apparently taken cognizance of the complexities that exist within the novel-writing universe of Cervantes.

Cervantes's Don has been and will be so many things to so many readers,¹⁸ Greene himself, however, while highlighting the rejection of dogmatic authority—the favourite theme of his later years—through his 'Father', his gentlest and most amiable character, personalizes/appropriates the 'Don' as the beloved 'ancestor' figure of his own charming 'Father Quixote' and synchronically carries on a wonderful experiment of embroidering new threads into the intrerstices of the colourful old texture.

¹⁶ Watts notes: "[...] in *Monsignor Quixote*, the conflict between communist and cleric, which, in *The Power and the Glory*, culminated in the priest's execution, has been transformed into an affectionate, good-humoured running debate between two old friends as they advance from escapade to escapade in a land of sunshine, wine and hospitality"(1997:150).

¹⁷ "*Monsignor Quixote* was born in the cemetery of Salamanca (in 1976). Miguel de Unamuno's tomb would become almost a place of pilgrimage for us on our summer jaunts" [...] (Duran, 1995:212).

¹⁸ Ramón Rami Porta, the Greene enthusiast from Barcelona, who had traveled the itinerary described in *Monsignor Quixote* in order to reflect on the underlying message of this 'travel story', concluded that theology, doctrine and religion were the real issues here. ("The Itinerant Theologian: A Commentary on *Monsignor Quixote* by Graham Greene" in *Just Good Company: A Cyber Journal of Religion and Culture*).

What seems remarkable is that the relationship of the texts here is that of “complicity and affinity”¹⁹ instead of the animosity or subversion which characterizes so much postcolonial and postmodern rewrites of our times. Though it is common to have intertextual re-workings necessarily reflecting an opinion, an attitude of ‘irreconciliation’ to the parent text, here we have complete reconciliation. It is an instance of an intertextual rewrite which aims at optimum convergence with, rather than divergence from, the original. Yet it is not at all an exact replication of the previous text, although it so closely follows in the heels of the same. It is same and not the same; it is an ongoing dialectic of fission and fusion in which ‘difference’ is the most important ingredient to help underscore the intertextual affinity.²⁰

To conclude this essay I would cite from Rushdie’s beautiful summation of “Influence”:

How does newness enter the world? Influence, the flowing of the old into the new, is one part of the answer. In *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino describes the fabulous city of Octavia, suspended between two mountains in something like a spider’s web. If influence is the spider’s web in which we hang our work, then the work is like Octavia itself, that glittering jewel of a dream city, hanging in the filaments of the web, for as long as they are able to bear its weight. (Rushdie, 2003:73)

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¹⁹ “Intertextuality on the other hand, encompasses a larger field of interplay, where complicity and affinity between texts is as much a feature as mutual animosity” (Shastri, 2002:335)

²⁰ The Concept of intertextuality requires that we understand the concept of text not as a self-contained structure but as differential and historical [...] Texts are therefore not structures of presence but traces and tracings of otherness”(Frow, 1990:45).

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“I FOUND IT ON THE WEB”: RESEARCH IN ENGLISH STUDIES IN THE DIGITAL FUTURE

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Abstract

Initially suspicious of the implications of computer technology, scholars in English and the humanities have come to see the great advantages of digital programs and the World Wide Web to their research and teaching. Indeed, for most scholars today, these products of information technology have become essential to their daily pursuits. However, a number of problems can be identified which compromise the ability of scholars to make maximum use of the new technology, or raise political and ethical questions which must be considered seriously in relationship to that use. These problems—discussed at length below—are summed up in four words: validation, ownership, preservation, and privileging.

When George Orwell wrote his celebrated novel *1984*, in reality he was writing about the world in 1948, the year before the book was published. Similarly, to speak of the digital future in humanities research is to speak of something that, in many respects, is already upon us. Digital technology provides a constantly changing environment of increasing capabilities and uses: a seemingly infinite universe that in many respects has created its own culture—and its own future—as it has developed. No aspect of our profession—whether political, social, intellectual, or personal—has remained untouched by this remarkable phenomenon.

Only slightly more than a decade old, the World Wide Web has especially impacted the community of humanistic scholars. And this is ironic, because it was once humanists who were most likely to dismiss

the potential of the computer and its resources, or to see it as a sinister force not unlike the computer HAL in Stanley Kubrick's film *2001* (1969)—a malevolent creation of technology whose aim is the destruction of humankind. Instead, it is on the computer that we write our papers, articles, and books; it is on the Web—where, increasingly, the work of colleges and universities is conducted—that we share the results of our research interests and communicate them to others via e-mail messages and chat rooms; and it is in digital form—readable (and sometimes retrievable) on the web—that libraries in increasing numbers are storing their journals and special collection materials, where these resources can be accessed by a browser just as they might be picked off a library shelf.

In Spain, the project of the Biblioteca Nacional in the digitizing of rare, un-copyrighted texts and images—for instance, all the printed versions of the works of Cervantes—is one important aspect of a movement that has become common to virtually all developed nations of the West. These projects attempt to find solutions for problems of the storage—and deterioration—of such invaluable materials and provide access to them on a global level. In Europe, similar efforts involving national literatures and historical documents are under way in France, Germany, Russia, Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands, the U.K., and Scotland (Raitt, 2000). In the United States, in addition to significant efforts in digitizing special collections on the part of major university libraries, the Library of Congress—itsself a major player in digitization—has undertaken the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program to deal more broadly with the problem of long-term retention of digitized materials (David Seaman, quoted in Olsen, p. B14).

The range of materials which can be archived in digital form is equally remarkable, and in many ways still unrealized. In addition to printed texts and standard audio and visual materials, even web sites themselves are being archived. Brewster Kahle's Internet Archive, founded in 1996, has as its goal maintaining an archive of the Internet itself, including snapshots of the W3 and Usenet, movies, recordings from live concerts, books, and software (<http://www.archive.org/>) With approximately fifty million sites currently in existence on the Web, with an average life of only 100 days per site, this archive set itself a daunting task in compiling even a fraction of such a historical record. Its mandated

wait period of six months eliminates the addition of many sites, but, as of 2004, the archive had reached over a petabyte—i.e., 1000 *trillion* bytes—and was growing at the rate of 20 terabytes a month. Worthwhile? Kahle is persuasive in arguing the importance of documenting the development of this important aspect of information technology—and he proves that anything can be saved in this form, though for how long? His answer to that question is the same as everyone else’s: “We don’t really know.” (Kahle, 12/13/04)

For scholars in the field of English language and literature, the uses of digital technology have other important applications in the field of textual criticism, defined as scholarly activity that attempts to establish the authoritative text of a work. With the focus on critical theory in graduate education in Europe and the United States during the past several decades, textual criticism has frequently been ignored. The result is several generations of scholars in English with few skills in this area and no particular reason to think it important to develop them. Many scholars feel the time has come to redress this situation, and developments in digital technology lend reinforcement to their argument.

One of the leaders of this movement is Jerome McGann of the Department of English at the University of Virginia, which has become a national leader in the United States in the development of computer applications in the humanities. McGann—a scholar of Romantic poetry—was part of the group of scholars, including American historian Ed Ayers, who, in 1992, formed the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (<http://www.iath.virginia.edu>). In the next half-century, he predicts that “the entirety of our inherited archive of cultural works will have to be re-edited within a network of digital storage, access, and dissemination.” (McGann, 12/13/02, B7) At the same time this “transnational and transcultural” network is under development, few graduate programs—in the United States at least—are providing the kind of training such projects sorely need. In Europe and in England the situation is perhaps less dire, if only because the tradition of scholarship in philology—a necessary component for an understanding of the theory of texts—has not been so widely abandoned. Such knowledge is at the root of recent major achievements like Hans Walter Gabler’s synoptic and critical edition of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1984), the basis of the reading text issued two years later.

For McGann and other scholars for whom the digital text has become an object of critical concern, applications of the theory of texts go beyond merely establishing accurately and with current technology authoritative versions of important literary documents. They also involve entering the realm of interpretation, where, in McGann's words, the scholar explores "not so much the 'meanings' of materials as their many possibilities of meaning," with interpretation emerging "only as a performative operation and event"—"a sociologics of textuality in a digital frame of reference." (Op. cit., B9)

McGann's ideas can be seen at work in the digital compilation of materials—including both writings and paintings—of the English Pre-Raphaelite Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in the Rossetti Archive developed at Virginia. (<http://www.rossettiarchive.org/>) The same ideas are the basis of what McGann calls the IVANHOE game—"a Web-based software application that organizes a collaborative work space for research and interpretation of humanities materials, traditional as well as digital." The IVANHOE theory is discussed at length in his book *Radiant Textuality: Literature After the World Wide Web* (2001)—an important exploration of the theoretical ramifications of humanities research in the age of digital technology.

Despite all these important and fascinating developments, many problems still exist. In the remainder of this essay, I want to highlight four areas of particular concern in digitally based research in English and the humanities: *validation*, *ownership*, *preservation*, and *privileging*.

The problem of *validation* takes many forms at all levels of the educational enterprise. At the undergraduate level students rely increasingly on Web-based information for their research, but often fail to grasp the importance of questioning the validity of their information or crediting their readily available sources. What appears on the Web is taken as truth; what is more, truth that need not be assimilated but simply incorporated into another text, to the point of committing plagiarism. I have even seen instances of students using one Web source, acknowledged or not, for an entire paper and neglecting to put their own contribution to the paper, however brief, in the same font, an especially disingenuous result of the new technology.

For genuine scholars of the humanities, a different problem in validation exists—namely, the reluctance of their peers to accept

research published on the Web as valid as research published in traditional print media. This lack of acceptance is based as much on issues of authenticity—of what constitutes “genuine” means of transmitting scholarly knowledge—as on social forms—print media being given more status than digital. For young scholars under consideration for permanent tenure in professorial positions, this reluctance of their peers to accept digitally based research is especially problematic as the economics of scholarly publishing becomes tighter and tighter.

Scholarly monographs—once a staple of academic publishing and often based on doctoral dissertations—have become harder to place, mainly because of cost. Academic libraries—at one time the biggest customers of such works—face shrinking budgets and rising costs for acquisitions. Increasingly, scholarly journals are being housed not on the shelf but on line, and many books never make it to the acquisitions list at all. Recently—in recognition of this problem and its effects on the future of young scholars—several projects have been developed to attempt to deal with it.

One of the most notable of these is the Gutenberg-e project of the American Historical Association, which, through a grant from the Mellon Foundation, subvents publication on line of dissertation-derived monographs on specialized topics. These are the kinds of studies that increasingly do not find publication in print form, yet contain valuable research. Participating scholars have received grants of \$20,000 each to give them extra time to turn their research into digital form, complete with visuals and other features made easier in such a format. Columbia University Press’s serving as publisher for the project lends it an authenticity it might otherwise lack, and the results so far have been very favorable, though the press has apparently come nowhere near recovering its costs for the project to date. Nonetheless, in the words of Jennifer Crewe, Editorial Director of the press, “it looks as though electronic-only publication, as long as it is legitimately peer-reviewed and published by a reputable press, will not stand in the way of the normal academic career” (Crewe, in *Profession 2004*, 2004:29). Leading organizations in the English field in the United States, such as the Association of Departments of English (ADE), are considering similar programs, and, in fact, it was to such departments that Crewe’s words were addressed.

The problem of *ownership* is situated in the intricate universe of international copyright and intellectual property law. Thanks to Mickey Mouse and former United States Attorney General John Ashcroft, that universe has become all the more confusing in the past few years. The striking of the renewal requirement on copyrighted works (as a result of the Berne Convention Implementation Act of 1988 and, in the United States, the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act of ten years later) has had the effect not only of extending protection for pop culture icons of the Disney Corporation but also of preventing many Web-worthy works from entering the public domain. “The phenomenon of ‘copyright creep,’ however much one might regret its reapportioning of public and private domains,” writes Paul Saint-Amour in his book *The Copywrights* “appears to have resulted from the influence of the private sector on the legislative climate, rather than from some privatizing drive inherent in copyright’s metaphysics” (2003:6).

This tendency to extend copyright and perpetuate it is a world-wide problem, affecting traditional as well as non-traditional scholarly projects in the humanities—but especially projects aimed for the Web, where the lines of protection are not so clearly drawn in the canons of law as they are for traditional forms of publication. As long ago as 1967, Benjamin Kaplan, in *An Unhurried View of Copyright*, a history of copyright law, observed prophetically: “Conceived as conduits for the transmission of signals, the [digital] systems will have intense responsibilities of a ‘public utility’ type enforced by law—if indeed the systems (or some of them) will not come under direct government ownership and control” (1967:118-119). Recent actions suppressing cybercafés and other forms of political expression in China exemplify his prediction—but government control can be exerted in more subtle, yet no less effective ways by means of legislation and bureaucratic edict.

Literary scholars and their publishing conduits are currently experiencing their own special problems with copyright. Joyce studies have been particularly hard hit by the seemingly irrational protectiveness of Joyce’s grandson Stephen (named for Joyce’s fictional alter ego Stephen Dedalus), who seems reluctant to allow the smallest use of Joyce texts without exacting a pound of (symbolic) flesh in return. Such denials are the source of great frustration today among editors, scholars, and their publishers, all of whom are caught in the same net of restrictions. A literary scholar unable to cite relevant passages, whether flattering or

not, in dealing with twentieth century literature, is like a singer without a song. So negative have the Joyce estate's actions been that Thomas Staley's excellent *Joyce Studies Annual* (University of Texas Press)—long dedicated to “articles on original materials, archives, textual criticism, bibliography, and bibliographical research”—has ceased publication because of the difficulty of gaining permissions. The digital *Ulysses* project of Michael Groden of the University of Western Ontario—“an annotated hypertext and manuscript archive”—also had to be suspended early in 2004 because of similar problems with the Joyce estate.

So bad has the situation become, in fact, that an international panel to deal with the matter has been announced. A fact-finding panel headed by Paul Saint-Amour and endorsed by the Joyce Foundation, this group has the declared purpose “to gather information about the permissions history and criteria of the Estate” (*JJLS*, Fall 2004:9). The hope of the panel is to “use the experiences of those who have interacted with the Joyce Estate to inform future artists, publishers, and scholars who hope to reprint or adapt Joyce's work.” It's ironic that an author like Joyce—who faced such difficulty in having his work copyrighted and published in his lifetime—should have an heir so intent on keeping it out of print after his death.

Open access journal articles are less common in the humanities than they are in the life sciences, if only because funding agencies and foundations that support such scientific research, unlike those in the humanities, frequently require that any work that results from their support be given public access. Nonetheless, as the practice of electronic publication of original research spreads through such projects as the Gutenberg-e, the same questions about ownership and distribution will arise. And how will such open access even be possible if those who control the rights of quotation exert extremely tight controls? This is a question of practical, ethical, and hegemonic dimensions: at some point, restrictions of scholars' rights to quote in whatever form amount to a form of suppression of free thought.

A third problem of the digital future in the humanities is not so politically charged, but no less long standing. I refer to the problem of *preservation*. With the very first written records, the problem of preserving texts also began. The phrase “graven in stone” persists in

the English language to remind us that the earliest records were acts of sculpture, chiseled into stone tablets, and the library shelf to remind us that, with the development of the codex, a means to store printed texts in some logical fashion—unlike the method of storing scrolls—had to be found. The preservation of texts and images in digital form poses equally daunting problems.

Libraries do not have the option that many individuals follow with digital materials, of creating a paper archive. In my own case, my first instruction, on learning to use the computer to write papers, keep records, and so on, was to create back up files and print copies of everything, a practice I still follow as much as possible. Libraries, on the other hand, would gain little by of such duplication. It would compound, not help to solve, their problems of preservation. The best solution currently is to use microfilming, the only “fail-safe medium for preserving digital files” (Olsen, B14).

An additional problem posed by growing digital archives is how to manage them on such a large scale. Current solutions to this problem take the form of commercially available content management systems with large storage capacity, which are expensive to acquire. Other challenges facing digital libraries are deciding precisely what digital data should be preserved, developing appropriate standards for cataloguing such material, and creating sharing mechanisms among all libraries for digital materials analogous to those long available for printed materials. Preserving digital texts and images is an important aspect of today’s research in English studies and the humanities, with the ultimate goal of providing the widest possible access for all users.

Access issues lead naturally to the fourth and final problem for digital research in the humanities, one with political and ethical dimensions—namely the problem of *privileging*. In general, it is only people of certain social classes, income, and power who are privileged to take advantage of the Internet world. As historian Ed Ayers has put it, “A digital divide still separates people of low income and education from the wealth of the Web” (Ayers, B25). In a real sense, the W3 is world wide only in name—the technological equivalent of the baseball World Series in the United States. It is a resource from which millions of people are quite literally excluded—because they are poor, because they have governments that don’t want them to know what it offers, because their nations are not powers on the global map.

Thus the great potential of the Web—to unite diverse peoples, to break down barriers between nations, to create a global vision strong enough to supersede regional and national differences in the common concern—remains far from realized. Gurus of the Web always point to its undeniable capacity for *interactivity*. “At its deepest level,” says Richard Lanham, one such prophet, “humanistic expression, and the means which disseminate it, have moved from a static to a dynamic medium” (Lanham, in Handa, 2004:461), changing “the central humanistic artifact [...] from printed book to digital display” (ib. 457).

All such theorizing is well and good—though, frankly, I think Lanham goes much too far in predicting the demise of the printed book. But nothing can truly become central to human existence when in fact it is the privilege of a relatively small, though growing, percentage of the human race.

Those of us who are privileged by our education and other factors to have easy access to the burgeoning technology of information owe a special obligation to all who have been thus far excluded and should do all that we can to bring about changes to redress the huge imbalance. The project currently under way in India, for instance, to bring computers to villages where they have never been seen and connect their citizens to the Web, is one such attempt to address this problem. Such projects need governmental as well as private support—and the endorsement of international organizations, as well as the international scholarly community. With such empowering actions, the Web may one day become a truly world wide environment, in which the scholarship of the humanities has its place in the lives of millions.

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LA SOMBRA JUNGUANA EN “THE MINISTER’S BLACK VEIL” Y “YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN” DE NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

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Abstract

In this paper I intend to give an explanation to the conduct of Parson Hooper and Goodman Brown, protagonists of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “The Minister’s Black Veil” and “Young Goodman Brown” respectively. By doing so I concentrate on C. G. Jung’s concept of the shadow and its connection with that of the uncanny, the latter clearly shown by the protagonists’ fear of the Devil.

La sombra, ese rincón siniestro que todos llevamos dentro, puede, en opinión de C. G. Jung (1968:par.13-19), llegar a ser una fuerza realmente devastadora. Ésta—explica el psiquiatra suizo—se compone en su mayor parte de deseos reprimidos e impulsos incivilizados que, consciente o inconscientemente, son desterrados por el sujeto al considerar que son moralmente intolerables de acuerdo a su forma de ser, o mejor dicho, a la que cree que es su forma de ser. La aceptación de esta sombra como parte de uno mismo, aunque deseable, no puede sino suponer un auténtico conflicto moral ya que exige que aceptemos como propio ese lado oscuro de nuestra personalidad. Este reconocimiento, para el que —según Jacobi (1976:172)—se necesita una conciencia crítica y despiadada es, no obstante, esencial para llegar a conocerse y poder vivir en armonía con uno mismo y los demás. Sólo así, siendo uno tolerante consigo mismo podrá serlo con los que le rodean. Aunque la voluntad—apunta nuevamente Jung—puede, hasta cierto punto, hacer que la sombra se integre en el Yo, la experiencia viene a confirmar que hay ciertos rasgos de ésta que se oponen obstinadamente a ser moralmente

controlados por el individuo. Esos elementos rechazados e incontrolables son los que el sujeto acaba finalmente percibiendo en los demás a través de un mecanismo de proyección inconsciente. No importa, continúa Jung diciendo, que alguien ajeno se dé cuenta de que se trata de proyecciones. Hay pocas esperanzas de que el que las proyecta perciba esa realidad, ya que no es su yo consciente el que las origina. Las proyecciones—concluye—aislan al sujeto de su entorno, pues no hay una relación real sino ilusoria de éste con él. Todo esto, lejos de ser un argumento obsoleto para entender determinadas actuaciones, explica muchos de los conflictos sociales, políticos y religiosos de nuestra historia más reciente.¹

Desde esta perspectiva, no parece pues que sea anacrónico explicar el comportamiento de determinados personajes literarios a través de la que es su sombra, sobre todo si atendemos a las semejanzas de ésta con el elemento ominoso freudiano tan de moda en esta última década en la literatura y el cine² y que forma parte de la tradición gótica, la cual, sabemos, tuvo una gran influencia en Nathaniel Hawthorne.³ Robin Lydenberg llegaba a decir que el elemento ominoso constituye la cualidad esencial de la narrativa (1997:1073), afirmación que Arnzen, unos años después, ampliaba con este otro comentario:

One might say that this is not only the century of the uncanny [...] but also a century of uncanny scholarship—a century of heightened self-awareness and self-criticism, appropriate for a time when we are incessantly confronted with the sublime horror of our cultural past, and a time which seems to be turning progressively more “strange” and yet hauntingly more “familiar” as we stream toward the grand end of the second millennium. (2003:1)

El término original alemán “*das Unheimliche*”, traducido al español, unas veces, como “lo ominoso”, otras, como “lo siniestro”, es un concepto

¹Marie Louise von Franz comparte esta opinión (1997:172), coincidiendo de esta forma con Jung, quien, al hilo de esto, destacaba la gran influencia que tuvo la sombra de Hitler en el comportamiento del pueblo alemán durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial (1970: par.444-57).

²La traducción del término original alemán “*das Unheimliche*” por “lo ominoso” procede de José L. Etcheverry, traductor de las obras completas de Freud (Buenos Aires: Amorrortu Editores, 1998).

³Entre los estudiosos que destacan ese elemento gótico en Hawthorne se encuentran Lundblad (1946/47) y Doubleday (1946). En la actualidad hay un gran número de críticos que siguen apostando por la vigencia del género gótico como algo representativo de la realidad humana. Por ejemplo, Kilgour sostiene que la naturaleza humana es gótica (1995:141). En esa misma línea se encuentran Derrida y Zizek. El primero afirma, desde la lógica hegeliana, que la humanidad no es más que un conjunto de espectros (1994:138); el segundo, por su parte, que el tropo del regreso de los muertos vivientes es la fantasía que da sustento a la cultura contemporánea de masas (1993:22).

bastante complejo. Arnzen sostiene que se trata de una experiencia subjetiva y enigmática que se resiste a la razón y que escapa totalmente al lenguaje, si bien—matiza—, está estrechamente vinculada a su estructura (2003:3). Tal vivencia puede ser producto, sostiene Freud, tanto de complejos reprimidos durante la infancia como de creencias primitivas que, creyéndose superadas u olvidadas, vuelven a cobrar veracidad. Dichas creencias tienen que ver normalmente con el más allá, con lo sobrenatural, y en general con todo aquello que en un tiempo fue motivo de superstición para el individuo. El elemento ominoso, cuya relación con la sombra en los cuentos que vamos a analizar parte del miedo visceral que sienten sus protagonistas hacia la mítica figura del diablo, no procede—según Freud (1959:369)—de algo estrictamente ajeno o desconocido al sujeto, sino de un ente que le es extrañamente familiar y del que no puede desprenderse por más esfuerzos que haga.

De toda la extensa obra hawthorniana, hemos seleccionado para nuestro análisis dos de sus cuentos más conocidos: “The Minister’s Black Veil” (1836) y “Young Goodman Brown” (1835).⁴ La pesadilla que viven sus protagonistas tiene lugar dentro de ellos mismos, concretamente en esa turbia y lúgubre conciencia que caracterizó el espíritu calvinista de los primeros cristianos de Norteamérica y que Henry James definió elocuentemente como la sombra del pecado (1997:45). Tanto el caso de Mr Hooper en “The Minister’s Black Veil” como el de Goodman Brown en “Young Goodman Brown”⁵ resultan ciertamente difíciles de explicar. Es inconcebible cómo éste último, a sólo tres meses de desposarse, desea una noche abandonar, sin motivo aparente alguno, a su compañera, siendo ésta para él su amor y su Fe (II, 89). No más fácil de razonar es el hecho de que un hombre de conducta intachable como Parson Hooper (I, 66), se obceque en ocultar su rostro con un misterioso velo negro. La paradoja a la que sin remedio nos conduce la pía naturaleza de sendos personajes es evidentemente compleja, y quizá no merezca la pena en ningún caso recurrir a argumentos racionales si tenemos en cuenta que Nueva Inglaterra no destacó precisamente por su lógica (Hill, 1996:9). Ante

⁴ La edición de la obra que hemos utilizado es *The Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne with Introductory Notes by George Parsons Lathrop*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, The River Side Press. 1883. 13 vols.

⁵ Los títulos “Lord”, “Sir”, “Mr” y “Mrs” designaban a los miembros más ilustres dentro de la jerarquizada sociedad puritana, a diferencia de los términos “Goodman” (para hombres) y “Goody” o “Goodwife” (para mujeres), con los que se discriminaba a los más humildes (Hill, 1996:8).

esto y si queremos entender algo de aquella lúgubre conciencia de la que hablaba James, quizá lo más sensato sea recurrir a ese ilógico mundo de la sombra que hemos mencionado.

En relación a “The Minister’s Black Veil”, hemos de empezar diciendo que no es el velo como objeto en sí el que ocupa el centro del argumento. Aunque relevante, debemos entenderlo como un símbolo necesario al servicio de una fatalidad que surge en la persona del reverendo de Milford a raíz precisamente de ese sencillo trozo de gasa que, si bien—comenta el narrador—lo único que hace es cubrir su rostro, vierte toda su influencia sobre él (I, 57). Esta tenebrosa fuerza, y en particular sus maléficos poderes (65), son al fin y al cabo los que hacen de un simple velo negro, como el que podría lucir cualquier mujer en su sombrero (56), un objeto verdaderamente atroz en la cara de Parson Hooper (57).⁶

Aprovechando el sugerente poder que tiene el velo en toda la narración, no hemos podido evitar manipular el significante inglés, “v-e-i-l”, para ver si con ello podíamos aportar algo de luz al misterio que se oculta tras la singular prenda, y que aflige a Hooper a la vez que hace estremecer a toda la aldea de Milford. Y es que el ministro puritano no es prisionero de un simple “Black Veil” como sugiere toda esta oscura parábola, sino de algo realmente terrible, esto es, de “his Black *Evil*”. Pero, ¿qué maléfico poder tras el velo era ése que condenaba a su portador a la oscuridad y paralizaba su voluntad, no ya ante las insistencias de Elizabeth, su prometida, y demás colegas por devolverle a la luz, sino

⁶ Hawthorne, que se mostrara claramente contrario a influir en los demás (VII, 46), reiteró en varias ocasiones la idea de que toda influencia era en sí misma negativa, en especial la que un individuo puede llegar a ejercer sobre otro, por la sencilla razón de que, como explicaba Oscar Wilde, cuando influimos en una persona le estamos transmitiendo nuestra propia alma y le estamos haciendo perder al mismo tiempo sus propios pensamientos e ideas (1944:24-25), de manera que no es su voluntad la que prevalece si no la nuestra. Ese es uno de los mensajes que Hawthorne nos hacía llegar a través de cuentos como “The Ambitious Guest”, “Roger Malvin’s Burial” o “The Birthmark”, o de manera más explícita, en algunas de las anotaciones hechas en sus cuadernos. “Some man of powerful character”—decía en una de ellas—“to command a person, morally subjected to him to perform an act. The commanding person suddenly to die; and, for all the rest of his life, the subjected one continues to perform that act” (IX, 272). En otra, escrita por 1838, puede leerse: “the influence of a peculiar mind, in close communion with another, to drive the latter to insanity” (Hawthorne, 1978:65). Cuando, por el contrario, la influencia es positiva, hecho que no ocurre con frecuencia, Hawthorne tiende a adjetivarla de manera conveniente. Por ejemplo, en “The New Adam and Eve”, la protagonista, Eva, salva en un momento determinado a Adán del mal, evitando con ello que la historia del pecado vuelva a repetirse, actuación ésta que provoca la exclamación del narrador: “Happy influence of woman!” (II, 299). Otros casos similares nos los proporcionan “A Rill from a Town Pump”, “The Birthmark” y “A Bell’s Biography”. En el primero, el novelista resalta, hablando de las buenas propiedades del agua, su “beneficial influence on mankind” (I, 170). En el segundo, comenta a propósito de la naturaleza cómo ésta “assimilates all her precious influences from earth and air, [...] to create and foster man her masterpiece” (II, 54); y en el tercero nos cuenta cómo el obispo encargado de bendecir la campana protagonista de la narración dijo una oración para que “a heavenly influence might mingle with its tones” (III, 500).

ante sus propias obligaciones con Dios? De tan vigorosa influencia el relato no da muchos detalles. Sólo menciona un poder sutil (55) que, aunque resulta difícil de definir, se trata sin duda—en opinión de Dryden—, de una fuerza oscurecedora más que iluminadora (1993:140), capaz de ahogar la sonrisa del clérigo cada vez que ésta intenta traspasar el infranqueable velo, y de avivar en sus atormentados feligreses la sensación de estar bajo el dominio, si no del mismo diablo, sí al menos de un ser diabólico. Aunque el cuento no descubre qué tipo de pecado o sufrimiento—real o imaginario—fue el que llevó al buen pastor a velar su rostro, hay dos momentos claves que nos indican la procedencia de esa fuerza indómita. En uno de ellos, Hooper entra a una habitación en la que se encuentra el cadáver de una joven ante la que se inclina, todo circunspecto, para dar su último adiós. Al encorvarse sobre ella, comenta el narrador:

The veil hung straight down from his forehead, so that, if her eyelids had not been closed forever, the dead maiden might have seen his face. Could Mr. Hooper be fearful of her glance, that he so hastily caught back the black veil? A person who watched the interview between the dead and the living, scrupled not to affirm, that, at the instant when the clergyman's features were disclosed, the corpse had slightly shuddered, rustling the shroud and muslin cap, though the countenance retained the composure of death. (I, 57-58)

Más revelador aún, si cabe, es ese otro pasaje en que, después de officiar el ministro una boda y levantar su copa de vino para brindar por la felicidad de los novios, aquél se vio reflejado en el cristal y,

the black veil involved his own spirit in the horror with which it overwhelmed all others. His frame shuddered, his lips grew white, he spilt the untasted wine upon the carpet, and rushed forth into the darkness. (59)

Si algo enturbió la vida del reverendo lo suficiente para hacerle cubrir su cara, difícilmente podemos llegar a saberlo. Es tal la ambigüedad del texto en relación a este asunto que podríamos pasar largo tiempo especulando sin llegar nunca a un acuerdo sobre si tal decisión fue por causa de una pena incierta, de un pecado, o por algún sentimiento de culpa derivada de éste. La controversia que suscita la historia del pastor puritano en lo que a su simbología se refiere es mayor incluso, apunta Lang, que la que genera "Young Goodman Brown" (1966:92), aún cuando en éste último los intensos contactos entre lo imaginario y lo real hacen

prácticamente imposible saber con certeza lo que está ocurriendo (87). Nosotros, por nuestra parte, creemos que el velo no tipifica pecado o culpa alguna, o al menos no de forma lo suficientemente clara como para considerar tal opción. Lo que el protagonista oculta detrás de esa doble gasa no parece ser otra cosa que miedo; miedo de sí mismo, no tanto por un acto consumado como por la posibilidad de llegar a hacer, o incluso pensar, algo contrario a lo que predica su estricto código moral.

Cuesta trabajo creer, tal y como apuntábamos antes, que un hombre como Hooper, “holy in deed and thought, so far as mortal judgement may pronounce” (I, 68), sea autor de algún acto ruin. Por ello mantenemos la hipótesis de que su medroso comportamiento se debe, más que a una acción perpetrada⁷, a la sola idea de verse a sí mismo capaz de cometer algún tipo de error que pudiera esclavizarlo de por vida a esa poderosa y diabólica fatalidad que Hawthorne mencionara unos meses antes en “The Haunted Mind”⁸ y de la que el propio autor quedó inadvertidamente preso.⁹ Pero, volviendo de nuevo al personaje, y concretamente a esa susceptibilidad suya al error, debemos decir que ésta era ya tal antes de

⁷ Hawthorne comenta el caso de otro pastor, también de Nueva Inglaterra, que, tras matar accidentalmente a un entrañable amigo suyo, cubrió su rostro con un velo. Nuestra hipótesis de que no hay un acto que justifique esa misma excentricidad en Hooper la respalda el comentario del propio autor que dice expresamente que la imposición de dicha prenda en éste último tenía un significado diferente de aquél (I, 52).

⁸ “The Haunted Mind” fue escrito durante el invierno de 1834 y “The Minister’s Black Veil” en los primeros meses de 1835 (Chandler, 2002:57-58). La fatalidad que mencionamos es vista por el escritor como “an emblem of the evil influence that rules your fortunes; a demon to whom you subjected yourself by some error [. . .], and were bound his slave forever by once obeying him” (I, 346). Esa fatalidad que sufre el ser humano por causa de sus errores se repetiría en varias ocasiones a lo largo de la obra hawthorniana. Posiblemente la afirmación más categórica en relación a la imposibilidad del individuo de enmendar sus faltas se encuentre en *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), donde se nos dice: “it is a truth that no great mistake, whether acted or endured, in our mortal sphere, is ever really set right” (III, 316).

⁹ Hawthorne, que describiera en 1843 el hecho de quedarse desmembrado del mundo como la peor suerte de todas para una persona (II, 250), fue víctima de ello. Así lo pone de manifiesto el propio novelista que nunca pudo deshacerse de la terrible sensación de rezago que le dejaron aquellos doce años que vivió aislado en el domicilio materno con el único sueño de alcanzar un día la fama. En un momento de reflexión y sosiego, posterior al día de Navidad de 1854, Hawthorne se sinceraba al hilo de esa fatalidad que cayó sobre él a raíz de aquella decisión escribiendo la siguiente nota en su cuaderno:

For a long, long while, I have occasionally been visited with a singular dream and I have an impression that I have dreamed it, even since I have been in England. It is that I am still at college or sometimes even at school and there is a sense that I have been there unconsciously long, and have quite failed to make such progress as my contemporaries have done and I seem to meet some of them with a feeling of shame and depression that broods over me as I think of it, even when awake. This dream recurring all through these 20 or 30 years must be one of the effects of that heavy seclusion in which I shut myself up for 12 years after leaving college, when everybody moved onward and left me behind. How strange that it should come now, when I may call myself famous and prosperous! —when I am happy, too! (VII,

I: 549-550)

cubrir su rostro que—comenta el narrador—”if he erred at all, it was by so painful a degree of self-distrust, that even the mildest censure would lead him to consider an indifferent action as a crime” (60). Esta aprensión permanente del pastor, y que en principio no era más que “[an] amiable weakness” (60) en su carácter taciturno, es evidente que ahora, con la imposición de tan oscura prenda, se ha convertido en toda una obsesión. Nadie del pueblo sabe o entiende lo que le sucede al venerable reverendo para permanecer en la oscuridad. Éste, por su parte, y en contra de lo que pudiera parecer, no desea voluntariamente esa oscuridad. Su relación con ella es una relación de esclavitud en la que él es obviamente el dominado. Su miedo, ejemplificado en el luctuoso velo, no deja ni un resquicio a la luz. El rechazo y la angustia que siente Hooper hacia el que es su carcelero se refleja en esa “antipathy to the veil” (64) que, en venganza, actúa contra sí mismo proyectando a la más mínima oportunidad la imagen velada de su rostro y, junto a ella, “the horrors which it [the veil] shadowed” (63-64), dando así certeza al viejo dicho de que se teme todo lo que se desconoce y se odia aquello que se teme. Es tal el pánico que éste siente al verse, el mismo que le propina la idea de aceptarse como individuo capaz de equivocarse, que, dice el texto, “he never willingly passed before a mirror, nor stooped to drink at a still fountain, lest, in its peaceful bosom, he should be affrighted by himself” (64).¹⁰

Hooper, podemos afirmar, es un caso claro de perfeccionismo llevado a sus extremos más neuróticos. Su impecable trayectoria por la vida, exenta de errores y limpia, por tanto, de pecado, es una muestra evidente de los esfuerzos y sacrificios que éste ha tenido que hacer para estar al más alto nivel, hecho éste que inadvertidamente le ha llevado a ser

¹⁰ La imagen reflejada fue en varias ocasiones considerada por Hawthorne como símbolo de lo verdadero y auténtico. Paseando cierto día en bote por el río Concord, comentaba a propósito de lo hermoso del paisaje que estaba casi convencido de que “the reflection is indeed the reality” (IX, 170). Ese mismo mensaje queda de manifiesto no sólo en “The Minister's Black Veil”, donde el pánico del protagonista a verse reflejado debe interpretarse como miedo visceral a la realidad. También el narrador en “Dr. Heidigger's Experiment” (1837) tiene oportunidad de dejar clara su posición con respecto al significado que el lector debe dar a la imagen del espejo en la que se ven los sujetos a los que el prestigioso científico rejuvenece. Sobre este particular Hawthorne comenta: “the tall mirror is said to have reflected the figures of the three old, gray, withered grandshires ridiculously contending for the skinny ugliness of a shrivelled grandam” (I, 268-69). En “Monsieur du Miroir” (1837) también muestra el escritor su interés por la imagen, en este caso la suya propia que tiene frente a sí, para dejar patente la zozobra que le produce su otro yo, esto es, el que, a la vista de todo lo dicho, debería entenderse como su verdadera identidad. Esta curiosa introspección quedó bosquejada en una de las entradas que el novelista anotó en octubre de 1835, y en la que dice: “to make one's own reflection in a mirror the subject of a story” (IX, 15).

intolerante con la idea de equivocarse. Aunque incomprensible a simple vista, varias son las circunstancias que pueden aclarar la descomedida sugestión del ministro. En primer lugar, San Agustín—figura central del puritanismo—mantenía en su doctrina que hasta el error más leve debía considerarse, si no siempre pecado, sí al menos como una clara evidencia del poder que tiene el mal sobre los individuos (*Enquiridión*, xx-xxi), enseñanza ésta que llevó a los puritanos, y en particular a los de Nueva Inglaterra, a creer que los errores no sólo se limitaban a separar a la persona de Dios, sino que además la dejaban a merced del Diablo (Matthiessen, 1940:306). El miedo que siente Hooper y que Lang deja entrever cuando, al referirse al cuento, dice que éste narra la historia de un hombre que ve dentro de sí mismo el mal (1966:92), está respaldado por esa terrible verdad en relación a la naturaleza del error que aquellas gentes daban por absoluta e incuestionable. Si a tal creencia le añadimos, por otra parte, la horrible profecía que circulaba por aquellas comunidades cristianas del siglo XVII, en la que se decía que Satanás había hecho su promesa de volver a aquel lugar—precisamente el elegido de Dios— para reconquistar la tierra que, según él, le pertenecía por derecho (Hill, 1996:41), podemos entender mejor todo este horror. No sólo el que le produce al religioso su lado oscuro, sino el impacto y el pavor que éste causa por donde quiera que va a los habitantes de Milford que, como el resto de gentes de Massachusetts Bay, oían en cada uno de los sermones de sus dirigentes espirituales cómo el diablo, en su afán de apoderarse del país, ya había empezado a hacer uso de sus artimañas para ganar adeptos (Loggins, 1951:113), lo que, viendo a Hooper, parecía innegable.

Y no es que la decisión del pastor de ocultar su cara fuera para los feligreses un hecho sin precedentes. Moisés, figura de enorme popularidad entre los puritanos de Norteamérica, también se vio obligado a lo mismo, pues era tal la luz que su faz desprendía después de haber estado en presencia de Dios que los israelitas no podían mirarla de frente (Exodus, 34:33-35). Sin embargo, y salvando las primeras semejanzas, es evidente que el caso del rostro velado del reverendo era para los habitantes del lugar radicalmente distinto. Moisés dio a su pueblo la Ley que Dios le había confiado para que a través de ella pudieran alcanzar la salvación; Hooper, en cambio, envuelto por una misteriosa e inamovible oscuridad dista mucho para ellos, no ya de parecerse al profeta del Antiguo Testamento, sino de ser un sencillo ministro capaz de llevar a su

congregación por el buen camino. Su lúgubre y extravagante presencia, unida a sus oscuras palabras allá donde va, sirven a Hawthorne para denunciar la concepción tan esperpéntica que tenían de la vida y la religión los pueblos de la aún joven nación (Hill 1996:86).¹¹

Pero si las circunstancias históricas de aquel tiempo y lugar, unidas a la visión que de los errores tenían los adeptos de San Agustín, son determinantes para entender la obstinación del reverendo de Milford a admitir su lado oculto, hay todavía un detalle que puede ayudar a aclarar aún más su inhabilidad para reconocerse como es. Basta leer el relato una vez para observar que el clérigo, reconocido por todos en la aldea como “good Mr. Hooper” (I, 53), es un hombre melancólico. Algunas pinceladas en relación a su personalidad y carácter, tales como su escasa vitalidad, su lúgubre temperamento o el tono triste de su voz (55), confirman que estamos ante un personaje con una naturaleza eminentemente depresiva y por consiguiente proclive a dar una veracidad desproporcionada a los contenidos de la mente donde precisamente, según Oscar Wilde, se libraban las auténticas batallas del ser humano. La disposición del pastor a dar a través del velo “a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things” (53) apunta, más que a un simple defecto de visión, a una clara incapacidad en él para sentir y obrar correctamente.¹²

La animadversión por la sombra, decíamos, conduce inevitablemente al individuo al aislamiento de ahí que no sea nada extraño que el ministro puritano vaya paulatinamente separándose de los suyos al tiempo que también de Dios hasta quedar, literalmente, prisionero de sí mismo en la más lúgubre de las prisiones: su propio corazón (67). Este distanciamiento, humano y espiritual, se personaliza de forma palpable a través del personaje de su prometida, Elizabeth, quien—es importante destacarlo—no sólo no da crédito alguno a los rumores que circulan acerca de Hooper y la prenda que cubre sus ojos, sino que además no siente

¹¹ Al hilo de esto Berkove opina que el cuento hace hincapié principalmente en esa peligrosa inercia del sujeto a deformar la realidad (1978:156), y J. Hillis Miller lo pone de ejemplo de cómo ciertas obras literarias pueden llegar a desenmascarar culturas e ideologías (1991:89).

¹² Hawthorne padeció a lo largo de toda su vida frecuentes episodios depresivos, algunos de ellos tan terribles e insoportables que en ocasiones llegó a contemplar el suicidio. Esta circunstancia, unida a esa tendencia natural suya a la soledad, le hicieron merecer, dentro del círculo de amigos y colegas, el seudónimo de “Mr Noble Melancholy” (Mellow, 1998:332). Sobre la incapacidad del escritor de sentir como, según él, debía hacerlo, probablemente debido a ese lado oculto y misterioso de su ser—su propia fantasía—y que, al parecer, no terminó nunca de aceptar, véase Madrid Jurado (2004:126-38).

ningún temor de mirarle a la cara, segura de que tras la singular gasa se halla el mismo rostro agradable de siempre (61). Su condición humana, dotada de un amor puro—sin velos ni miedos—permiten apreciar aún mejor las carencias que sufre el clérigo y tras las cuales, pensamos, podría estar la propia incapacidad del novelista para amar.¹³ A pesar de todos los intentos de Elizabeth por apartar la horrible prenda de la cara de su compañero, éste no cede. Y no es porque no la ame o pretenda con su negativa ser cruel con ella.¹⁴ Esta última posibilidad no podríamos además justificarla si tenemos en cuenta que la persona del reverendo se describe como “kind and loving” (66). Hooper ama a su prometida, como ama a sus feligreses y a Dios, pero desde detrás de su obstinado velo. El horror que siente de sí mismo y que lo domina no le permite sino amar a distancia, convencido además de que no puede ser de otra manera, algo que para Elizabeth es imposible. He aquí un fragmento de esa conversación:

‘Have patience with me, Elizabeth!’ cried he [Hooper], passionately.
 ‘Do not desert me, though this veil must be between us here on earth. Be mine, and hereafter there shall be no veil over my face, no darkness between our souls! It is but a mortal veil,—it is not for eternity! Oh, you know not how lonely I am and how frightened, to be alone behind my black veil! Do not leave me in this miserable obscurity for ever!’
 ‘Lift the veil but once, and look me in the face,’ said she.
 ‘Never! It cannot be!’ replied Mr. Hooper.
 ‘Then, farewell!’ said Elizabeth. (63)

Miedo y amor son incompatibles para Elizabeth, quien encarna en el relato el verdadero espíritu de la religión siguiendo el principio bíblico: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear because fear hath torment” (I John, 4:18). El reverendo debía de tener a buen seguro en algún lugar guardada esa enseñanza, pero hasta para recordarla

¹³ En *Fragments from the Journal of a Solitary Man* (1834) Hawthorne ponía en boca de Oberon la siguiente confesión: “I have never truly loved, and perhaps shall be doomed to loneliness [...] because [...] my soul has never married itself to the soul of a woman” (XII, 26).

¹⁴ Crews sugiere que la imposición del velo podría responder a una artimaña de Hooper para impedir a toda costa su inminente boda con Elizabeth. A este respecto, añade el crítico, el reverendo y el joven Goodman Brown, comparten un mismo miedo en cuanto a las obligaciones matrimoniales que ambos tienen contraídas con sus respectivas parejas. Tanto la permanencia física del velo en el rostro del clérigo como la retirada del mismo en sentido figurado en el caso de Brown apuntan a una concepción inmadura del amor (1966:108-109).

habría hecho falta apartar de sus ojos y de su alma aquella oscuridad que le envolvía “so that love or sympathy could never reach him” (I, 65). Impotente para apartar de él la luctuosa gasa y con ella el miedo que durante buena parte de su vida le había acompañado, Hooper aparece en la escena final moribundo en su lecho. El horror es tan grande que ni siquiera en esa hora postrera en que el cristiano se dispone a confraternizar con Dios, el puritano consiente retirar la oscura prenda para darse a la Luz. Su sombra se interpondría por última vez entre él y los demás para proyectar ante sus ojos la imagen más horrible y grotesca que en su caso se le podía presentar: “I look around me, and, lo! on every visage a Black Veil!” (69), exclamaba el reverendo viendo sobre todos los que le acompañaban, Elizabeth incluida, el mismo velo que durante años había llevado y cuya realidad había repudiado.

De nuevo, y así como decíamos que era difícil justificar que Hooper hubiera cubierto su rostro con un velo por algún acto perverso, cuesta trabajo creer lo que a todas luces parece impensable, esto es, que Goodman Brown se hubiese atrevido a pactar con el diablo. Lo único de la narración que no ofrece dudas es el comienzo y el final: la escena en la que el protagonista abandona a su esposa, Faith, hasta que se adentra en el bosque y el regreso de éste a la aldea de Salem. Los motivos que inducen al joven esposo a alejarse del hogar son, como es habitual en Hawthorne, todo un misterio. No obstante y en el caso siempre dudoso de que con su acción Brown hubiera tenido intenciones de hacer algún mal, es evidente que el resultado no fue nunca el que esperaba. Cierto que los primeros pasos del puritano en el bosque son guiados—señala el narrador—por “[an] evil purpose” (II, 90), pero tal propósito, sea lo que fuere, no tarda en desaparecer de su mente ante los impactantes e inesperados sucesos que le van sucediendo.

Nosotros compartimos la opinión de Cook, quien sostiene a propósito del puritano que, al penetrar en el bosque, éste pasa automáticamente del mundo consciente al subconsciente (1970:474), con lo que podemos decir que las percepciones sensoriales que le llegan no son otra cosa que manifestaciones de ese rincón oscuro de su alma tan odiado como temido,

¹⁵ Entre aquéllos que restan protagonismo a la figura del demonio en el cuento están Walsh y Hurley. El primero afirma que la agonía que sufre el personaje procede de la oscuridad de su alma y no del diablo (1958:336) y el segundo mantiene que las alucinaciones que sufre Brown se deben más a “his suspicion and distrust” que a las perversas artes de Satanás (1966:411).

en cuyo centro habitaba la terrible figura del diablo.¹⁵ Nada más entrar en tan inhóspito paraje Brown empieza a sentir miedo. La soledad que le rodea despierta en su interior aquel elemento ominoso inefable que mencionaba Freud y que está vinculado al pavor que sentían aquellos pueblos de Nueva Inglaterra por Satanás. Si hay algo realmente peculiar de esa soledad—explica el narrador—es que el viajero que se ve envuelto por ella no sabe quién puede estar oculto en la espesa arboleda de troncos y copas, de modo que con solitario caminar pudiera estar pasando por medio de una multitud invisible (II, 90). “There may be a devilish Indian behind every tree,¹⁶—decía Goodman Brown afectado por la singular soledad del lugar, para segundos después mirar aterrado a sus espaldas y exclamar: ‘What if the Devil himself should be at my very elbow!’”(90).

El hecho de que sea nuestro subconsciente, y no nuestro consciente, el causante de las proyecciones hace que el sujeto no pueda crearlas, sólo encontrarse con ellas (Jung, 1968:par.17). Ese carácter de encuentro distingue a todos y cada uno de los espejismos que desfilan ante el protagonista, si bien el primero de ellos es especialmente significativo. El joven, no repuesto aún de sus primeros miedos y tras pasar una de las curvas del camino, ve la figura de un hombre que aguarda sentado al pie de un viejo árbol y que, a su llegada, se levanta para empezar a caminar a su lado (II, 90). El dato de que esa figura masculina sin rostro—la misma que posteriormente se descubre que se trata del mismo Satanás—se parezca a Goodman Brown hasta el punto de poder pasar ambos por padre e hijo (91), sugiere de alguna manera que, en efecto, el encuentro que se ha producido no es otro que el del protagonista con su sombra, cuya repentina aparición le causa cierto miedo lógico, aunque no total sorpresa (91).¹⁷ Si, como le comenta Georgiana a Aylmer en “The Birthmark” a propósito de la marca que afeaba su mejilla, uno no puede amar aquello que le turba (48), parece natural pensar que el impacto que causa en Brown tan oscura figura no sea sino reflejo del rechazo que siente hacia su propia sombra. Esa repulsa se pone de manifiesto en las primeras palabras del joven puritano quien, no hay duda, ya sabía de ese lado sombrío, si bien su conversación con quien lo encarna apunta a

¹⁶ Hill aporta un dato que permite comprender mejor el miedo que siente el joven Brown ante la idea de verse rodeado y acechado por indios. Los puritanos tenían entre sus creencias la de que los indígenas de Norteamérica —los indios— eran siervos del diablo, cuando no auténticos demonios (1996:2).

¹⁷ Tanto en los sueños como en los mitos, la sombra se personifica principalmente en personas del mismo sexo (Jacobi, 1976:168-69).

que nunca hasta ahora se había adentrado tanto en él.¹⁸ He aquí un fragmento de ese primer momento en que, además, queda de manifiesto la incapacidad de Brown para deshacerse de esa parte oscura de su ser:

'Come, Goodman Brown,' cried his fellow-traveller, 'this is a dull pace for the beginning of a journey. Take my staff, if you are so soon weary'.

'Friend,' said the other, exchanging his slow pace for a full stop, 'having kept covenant by meeting thee here, it is my purpose now to return whence I came. I have scruples touching the matter thou wot'st of'.

'Sayest thou so?' replied he of the serpent, smiling apart. 'Let us walk on, nevertheless, reasoning as we go; and if I convince thee not thou shalt turn back. We are but a little way in the forest yet'.

'Too far! Too far!' exclaimed the goodman, unconsciously resuming his walk. (91-2) (cursiva mía)

Para justificar su determinación de no dar ni paso más, el joven explica a su misterioso compañero que nunca en el pasado su padre, ni antes su abuelo, habían llegado a adentrarse en el bosque en compañía tan singular como la que él llevaba (92), la que no se atrevía a nombrar. Las espontáneas palabras de Brown lo han llevado a un momento de silencio no deseado pero sumamente elocuente, en el que su contertulio, al igual que el propio lector, percibe el rechazo que el protagonista siente hacia él:

'Shall I be the first of the name of Brown that ever took this path and kept'—

'Such company, thou wouldst say,' observed the elder person, interpreting his pause. (92)

A esa primera manifestación de repulsa, aún tímida, le seguirían otras más, permitiendo con ello a la sombra hacerse cada vez más poderosa y destructora. Perplejo y decepcionado por la familiaridad y la amistad que el diablo dice haber mantenido con su padre y abuelo, además de con algunos de los miembros más destacados de Nueva Inglaterra, Goodman Brown no tardaría en reiterar su deseo de abandonarlo todo,

¹⁸ Morsberger sostiene en esta misma línea que el mal para Brown antes de su experiencia no era más que un concepto, una realidad que como puritano conocía, pero que en ningún momento antes había experimentado (1973:178).

esta vez visiblemente más molesto y resuelto, después de que su compañero de trayecto se hubiese reído de él al oírle decir que, de perseverar a su vera, ya no podría volver a mirar a la cara a ese buen pastor suyo en Salem. Ante las irreprimibles carcajadas de aquél, el puritano intentaba dar por zanjada toda esta aventura apoyándose en la persona más sagrada para él: “Well, then, to end the matter at once [...]. There is my wife, Faith. It would break her dear little heart; and I’d rather break my own” (93). En ese momento en que el joven manifiesta su temor por Faith, su sombra sabe que aún es pronto para separarlo de ella. Antes de llegar a eso, era necesario primero mancillar los vínculos que unían al puritano con los miembros de su comunidad por los que sentía verdadera admiración:¹⁹ “Nay, if that be the case [...] e’en go thy ways [...] I would not for twenty old women like the one hobbling before us that Faith should come to any harm” (93), contestaba su lado oscuro aplacando el miedo de Brown a la vez que, con su vara serpentina, forzaba a dirigir su mirada hacia una figura femenina. Se trataba de Goody Cloyse, la pía anciana que años atrás le había catequizado y que aún seguía siendo su consejera moral. Avergonzado y temeroso de ser descubierto por tan distiguada señora en tan indigna compañía, Brown renegaba una vez más de su acompañante y lo hacía en los siguientes términos:

[...] with your leave, friend, I shall take a cut through the woods until we have left this Chritian woman behind. Being a stranger to you, she might ask whom I was consorting with and whither I was going’. (94)

Oído esto, el diablo accede con sumo agrado a la petición, si tenemos en cuenta que el objetivo de esa transitoria separación no era sino sembrar la discordia entre el protagonista y su catequista, la cual, para su sorpresa, ora aparecía en cordial entente con quien precisamente acaba de dejar, ora desaparecía como por arte de magia. Ostensiblemente horrorizado por esa visión, Brown vuelve de nuevo, esta vez de manera irrevocable, a manifestar claramente su determinación de abandonar a Satanás y con él a la parte más oscura de su ser: “Friend [...], my mind is made up. Not another step will I budge on this errand”—, decía para

¹⁹ Hurley sostiene que en el subconsciente de Brown está la creencia de que “the morality of society must be destroyed [...] before total commitment to evil is possible” (1966:413).

añadir a continuación: "What if a wretched old woman do choose to go to the devil when I thought she was going to heaven: is that any reason why I should quit my dear Faith and go after her?" (95-96). Las palabras de condena del joven hacia tan casta dama y su rechazo hacia quien hasta ahora lo había acompañado son prueba evidente de que la sombra del puritano está empezando a ganar terreno, y que de seguir viendo en los demás lo que niega en él, las consecuencias serán imprevisibles. Brown ha desarrollado plenamente, aunque no es consciente de ello, esa hipocresía e intransigencia de la que habla la Biblia: muchos son los que ven la paja en el ojo de su hermano sin apreciar la viga en el suyo (Luke 6:42). Si Brown, ahora y antes, ve abierta la posibilidad de volver al hogar, es porque no ha dejado en ningún momento de creer que está en su voluntad el hacerlo. Nada le hace pensar que no pueda ser así, sobre todo ahora que había conseguido librarse definitivamente de su incómoda sombra, que tras haberle oído increpar a Goody Cloyse decide que es el momento de abandonarlo. Brown se siente enormemente feliz de poder retomar su antigua vida; por fin respiraba libre ahora que había conseguido alejarse al que ya empezaba a ser una pesadilla. Así nos describe el narrador este momento de deseada liberación:

The young man sat a few moments by the roadside, applauding himself greatly, and thinking with how clear a conscience he should meet the minister in his morning walk, nor shrink from the eye of good old Deacon Gookin. And what calm sleep would be his that very night, which was to have been spent so wickedly, so purely and sweetly now, in the arms of Faith! (96)

Pero la pesadilla no había hecho más que empezar, pues tras esos loables pensamientos llegan a los oídos del joven el ruido de unos caballos acompañado de las voces de dos jinetes que Brown identifica, sin llegar a ver siquiera, como la de su reverendo y el diácono Gookin, los cuales decían encaminarse a un impúdico encuentro que iba a tener lugar esa misma noche. Esta nueva percepción, la primera que tenía lugar desde que el demonio lo dejara, unida a las anteriores, acabaría por destruir la ya dañada imagen que el protagonista tenía de los miembros más castos de su comunidad. La desesperación de Brown ante tales sensaciones, producto del rechazo inconsciente que le produce la idea de ser él también uno más de los llamados por el demonio, empieza a hacerse insoportable. Las tinieblas y los horrores de la noche surgen en estos momentos con evidente fuerza, aumentando la confusión y, con ella, las alucinaciones

en la mente del joven, que ahora cree distinguir en medio de tanta anarquía “the accents of towns-people of his own, men and women, both pious and ungodly, many of whom he had met at the communion table, and had seen others rioting at the cavern” (98). Entre todas aquellas voces que le eran familiares, destacaba la de una joven abrumada por una pena incierta (98). Brown, que hasta ese momento había confiado en su amada para hacer frente a los acosos de Satanás, grita el nombre de Faith con intensa agonía, aterrado por la idea de que ésta pudiera encontrarse en el corazón de ese infierno dispuesta a entregarse al diablo. Quizá ella era la persona que, según decía aquella voz parecida a la del diácono, iba a participar en la impía comunión de esa noche (97). Sólo faltaba confirmar lo que no dejaba de ser un angustioso presentimiento con una prenda, la que toda neófita debe entregar a Satanás antes de firmar el Pacto Solemne (Donovan, 1973:88).

Varias podrían haber sido las prendas, pero ninguna mejor, dada la deforme mente del puritano, que una de esas cintas rosas tan sugerentes que Faith llevaba en el momento de la despedida (II, 89). En ese instante algo bajó del cielo para posarse finalmente en la rama de un árbol. Cuando el puritano se dispuso a cogerlo, éste no pudo “ver” otra cosa que la prueba con la que su receloso lado oscuro ya había condenado a su amada: una cinta rosa (99):²⁰ “My Faith is gone!” [...] “there is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come devil; for to thee is this world given” (99), decía el joven Goodman Brown rindiéndose al diablo, cuando, su verdadero dueño y señor no era otro que su propio lado oscuro, el cual le hacía ahora enloquecer hasta convertirlo en el mayor monstruo de cuantos poblaban en esos instantes aquel siniestro lugar, más temible aún que Satanás (99). Sepa el lector que “the fiend in his own shape is less hideous than when he rages in the breast of man” (100).

Completamente dominado ya por ese elemento diabólico de su personalidad, no es extraño que Brown, después de haberlo proyectado sobre los miembros más queridos y castos de su comunidad—su propio padre y abuelo, la anciana Goody Cloyse, el venerable reverendo de Salem y el diácono Gookin—lo haga ahora en toda la humanidad entera, la

²⁰ El color rosa de la cinta sugiere, por sus insinuaciones a la carne y a la sensualidad (Cirlot, 1990:54), que Faith se ha entregado sexualmente a Satanás como es costumbre entre las brujas en los aquelarres.

cual aparece ante él representada por una impactante multitud heterogénea de santos y pecadores, justos e impíos congregados en aquelarre en torno al Señor de las Tinieblas. "But where is Faith?" (101), se preguntaba el puritano, quien parecía exigir en estos momentos algo más que una cinta rosa para reprender a la única que aún no había visto, si bien, su subconsciente daba por hecho que se encontraba allí. Una sospecha tan horrible no podía ser desaprovechada por la sombra, la cual proyectaba ante Brown la misma imagen de Faith junto a él y la de ambos frente al diablo. En ese momento, justo cuando la adusta efigie del mal se disponía a poner sobre ellos la marca del bautismo para hacerlos siervos del pecado, el joven, agotando sus últimas fuerzas, gritaba: 'Faith! Faith! [...], 'look up to heaven and resist the wicked one!' (105). Brown—afirma el texto—no supo nunca si ésta obedeció o no a su requerimiento, pero ¿cómo podía haberlo hecho después de haber sido puesta bajo sospecha?

Si lo vivido por Brown en el bosque fue real o, por el contrario, un mal sueño (105), esto no debería ser motivo de polémica. No se trata de que el lector crea o deje de creer en la veracidad de lo sucedido, sino si lo ocurrido es real o no para el protagonista. ¿Por qué no aceptar que todo fue verdad, aun considerando viable la posibilidad de que sólo se tratara de una pesadilla en torno a un aquelarre? El mundo onírico para el puritanismo va inexorablemente unido al mundo real a todos los niveles (Levy, 1986:29). Para el joven, de igual modo que para muchos de los personajes hawthornianos y el propio autor (XI, 242-243), no es más verdadero lo que se percibe por los sentidos que a través del espíritu, pues, para bien o para mal, debemos admitir que "the dominions which the spirit conquers for itself among unrealities become a thousand times more real than the earth whereon they stamp their feet" (II, 71).

El final para Goodman Brown no podía ser distinto al de Parson Hooper. Si éste veía en su última hora rostros velados a su alrededor, aquél estaba convencido de que todos en Salem eran siervos del diablo; todos excepto él. Decir que Brown se convirtió a raíz de aquella horrible experiencia en un individuo solitario, no alcanza a describir su verdadera tragedia. Los términos "a stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate, man" (106) lo asemejan a un autista inmerso en un negro infierno del que no pudo nunca salir.

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**“ABSTRACT STRUCTURES AND CONNECTIVE
PATTERNS”: SCIENCE AND FICTION IN DON
DELILLO’S *RATNER’S STAR***

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Abstract

*This paper addresses Don DeLillo’s 1976 novel *Ratner’s Star*, possibly one of his most complex books to date. The difficulty of defining and classifying it in generic or historiographic terms has been noted by many critics, most of whom have related it to the intricate tissue of intertextual and scientific references that render it a problematic text. The novel, moreover, seems to disappoint the interpretative expectations it creates, due to its formal structure, which seems to imitate that of scientific models, and to the hermeneutic collapse that takes place at the end of the story. My principal aim is to propose a literary adscription for the novel that accounts for these hermeneutic difficulties in narratological terms.*

Ratner’s Star tells the story of a 14-year-old genius, Billy Twillig, in charge of deciphering and interpreting a codified message received from outer space at a secret research center where everyone expects it to constitute the key to the meaning of the universe. When the message is discovered to have been sent from Earth and not from outer space, the project is abandoned and substituted by another one devoted to the development of a perfect metalanguage for scientific use.

From this storyline Don DeLillo weaves a complex structure of accumulation in which cartoon-like characters succeed one another during Billy’s ramblings within the claustrophobic enclave of Field Experiment Number One. The novel has been praised for its shocking formalism, the intricate tissue of cross-references and the complexity of

its writing. Don DeLillo himself has claimed that the novel is built as a mathematical model, that he wanted “to produce a book that would be naked structure”,¹ and critics such as Tom LeClair have tried to confirm that statement (1987:111-144). The critical reception of the novel has primarily focused on its structure, reading it as a departure from traditional literary forms in search of alternative narrative logics. Moreover, the complexity of the novel’s structure springs from a very intricate interweaving of influences, patterns and references from an amazingly large number of literary, philosophic and scientific traditions.² All these references work together to trigger a hermeneutic process on the part of the reader, who must collect them and give a coherent interpretation to them.

The aims of this paper are three: first, to point to the different ways in which science and scientific references are used in *Ratner’s Star*, in order to determine to what extent we can consider the novel as a mathematical model. Second, to propose a generic and historiographic horizon for the novel, which will help to locate it and its concern with science within the literary tradition of allegories of knowledge. It is my view that the novel’s structure, together with the horizon of expectations it creates, can be said to place the novel in the interpretative frame of the allegorical tradition. Third, to point to the novel’s lack of narrative closure and the way it has been (wrongly, in my opinion) interpreted by some critics as a suggestion of the failure of science to offer responses to reality. I will argue, on the contrary, that the novel’s *failure* responds to an interpretative collapse brought about by its departure from the literary conventions to which it had previously ascribed, rather than to any attempt to parody a failure of scientific activity.

Science is present in many different ways in *Ratner’s Star*, which can be enumerated and explained as follows: In the first place, the novel employs one of the most common topics of science fiction: the message coming from outer space. According to Tom LeClair, “DeLillo uses a

¹ “I was trying to produce a book that would be naked structure. The structure would be the book and vice versa. I wanted the book to become what it was about. Abstract structures and connective patterns. A piece of mathematics, in short” (LeClair, 1983:86).

² Tom LeClair designed a chart in which to trace the relations between the novel’s structure and several stages of the history of mathematics, providing a tool for the analysis of the novel of the kind the Linatti schema was for Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1987:125). In spite of his worthy classificatory effort, however, no comprehensive map has been traced to allow the reader a complete vision of the novel’s references and allusions.

science fiction device, the extraterrestrial message, to probe backward into scientific assumptions” (LeClair, 1987:117). DeLillo, says LeClair, writes “fictional science”. The novel’s starting premise, resumed in this statement, reflects the metalinguistic and epistemological concerns intrinsic to the genre:³ “Mathematics is the one language we might conceivably have in common with other forms of intelligent life in the universe” (48).⁴ The novel can thus be said to be born out of a growing awareness of the imperfection and inadequacy of natural languages to describe reality in simple, verifiable terms, echoing the poststructuralist concerns which were already present in most postmodernist fiction.

In the second place, the novel can be read as an “allegorical history of mathematics” (Osteen, 2000:61) in which DeLillo traces parallels between the main theories and figures of mathematical thought and several of his characters (Osteen, 2000:61). In overt or indirect ways, Pythagoras, Descartes, Einstein, Gödel, Newton, Leibniz or Frege are present in the novel (Osteen, 2000:66-77). Bolin and Edna, for instance, mirror Chomsky’s transformational grammar in their attempt to construct a meta-language for Logicon, submitting natural language to the constraints of logic; in the same way Robert Softly, Billy’s mentor, echoes the concerns of Gottlob Frege and the Vienna Circle, while Newton and Leibniz would have their counterparts in Henrik Endor and Othmar Poebbels (LeClair, 1987:128). The same encyclopedic effort can be perceived in the comprehensive compilation of scientific jargons carried out by DeLillo. *Ratner’s Star* can be read as a monument to intertextuality because of the way in which it collects samples of technical languages introduced as characters succeed one another discussing their respective research fields.

Science can be said to be present in *Ratner’s Star* in a third way, in the novel’s fascination with scientific models and their formal properties.

³ It appears in the works of Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, Philip K. Dick, Brian Aldiss and Kurt Vonnegut, among others. The metalinguistic dimension usually springs from thematic motives such as the extraterrestrial encounter or the relationships between humans and robots, computers, androids, etc. The act of establishing communication with alien societies or machines triggers a reflection on the concept of communication itself. The epistemological concern appears in the very name of the genre—science fiction—which indicates the use of scientific premises, methods and concerns for plot development. For further analysis of this topic, see Peter Stockwell, *The Poetics of Science Fiction*. London, etc.: Longman, 2000; Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction*. London and New York: Routledge, 1987, pp. 59-72.

⁴ *Ratner’s Star* by Don DeLillo, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976. All further references are to this edition and will be quoted by page number.

In order to make a book that would be “naked structure”, DeLillo reproduces in its narrative construction the formal pattern of an invented figure: the “stellated twilligon”, a mathematical entity named in Billy’s honor (116).⁵ It is a boomerang-like geometrical figure, similar to a “whale’s tail” (49), that represents a structure bending back on itself, going back to its departure point. This figure is part of the set of *pseudo-scientific* concepts and theories invented by the author for the novel, such as Moholean relativity (418)—named in Orang Mohole’s honor and defined as an inversion of Einsteinian relativity—or zorgs (20; 417-418), a kind of irrational numbers discovered by Billy.

Ratner’s Star seems to be quite an unstable text: between scientific divulgation and postmodern novel, between fiction and epistemology. Frank Lentricchia has said about it that “it wouldn’t do to call it a novel” (Lentricchia, 1991:8), and Tom LeClair has called it a “conceptual monster” (LeClair, 1983:80). Even if we try to remain within the realm of literature, it is still quite problematic to define it in terms of generic or genealogic adscription. Lentricchia characterizes it as “Menippean satire via Lewis Carroll” (Lentricchia, 1991:8) and “a recollection of Joyce’s methods in *Ulysses*” (ibid.). Michael Valdez Moses claims that “*Ratner’s Star* stands as DeLillo’s contemporary version of Book III of Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*” (Valdez Moses, 1991:69). Charles Molesworth also links it to *Gulliver’s Travels*, and adds to the list Flaubert’s *Bouvard et Pecuchet*, “with its endless round of empirical quests” (Molesworth, 1991:145). J.D. O’Hara calls it “the American version of a European novel of ideas” (O’Hara, 2000:37) and mentions Thomas Mann, Beckett and Borges (ibid.). Finally, Tom LeClair points to Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* as “structural model” for the novel (LeClair, 1987:112). All of them are right in relating *Ratner’s Star* to works that do not fit into the traditional concept of “novel”, defined in realistic, nineteenth century terms. *Ratner’s Star* can be linked to satirical eighteenth century fiction, to the tradition of the *Prüfungsroman* or allegories of knowledge, to the form of the ancient novel as analyzed by Bakhtin regarding the work of Apuleius, among others (Bakhtin, 1981), to Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s* books, to science fiction, to postmodern fiction. The connections, however, do not stand as a mere game of references for

⁵ The figure is mentioned, described and even drawn several times in the novel. See pp. 116-118; 241; 322; 388.

its own sake. A closer look at all those different traditions, genres or tendencies will show that all of them share structural similarities and epistemological concerns, of which *Ratner's Star* acts as crucible.

To begin with, all the works just mentioned share a similar structure, organized as a quest for some ultimate form of meaning, redemption or illumination. Lucius in Apuleius' *The Golden Ass* starts his journey moved by a desire "to know all things, or many at least"; curiosity is also Alice's reason for following the White Rabbit, and the desire for knowledge is what drives Candide's and Rasselas' lives in Voltaire's and Johnson's respective works. Like the protagonists of *Piers Plowman* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Billy has a dream in which he envisions his objective in life: "the world was comprehensible, a plane of equations, all knowledge able to be welded, all nature controllable" (64). Billy, like the man in the dream at the beginning of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, is torn apart from his family in the Bronx and asked to join the project to decode the message. *Ratner's Star* can thus be read as an allegory of knowledge in which divine inspiration is substituted by scientific pursuit, and the ultimate goal is scientific truth, understood in terms of control and systematization of reality.

Billy's quest is organized as a series of encounters with several other characters completely alien to his vital logic that consecutively expose their opinions and worldviews. As in *Alice in Wonderland* and as is usual in the allegorical tradition, characters act mainly as frames for the exposition of ideas, representatives of a struggle of concepts and theories, as Philosophy in Boethius' *The Consolation of Philosophy* or the Confessor in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. In this way, DeLillo orchestrates theoretical discussions between characters, which are nothing more than the narrative support for those theoretical positions, and which account for the extensive use of scientific languages that has been mentioned before. Billy's quest, moreover, is expressed topographically in terms of physical movement, as in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. While Bunyan's pilgrims move in a linear way towards the Celestial City in which they will find salvation, Billy just keeps on rambling around Field Experiment Number One trying to decipher the code, without a definite destination, and often getting into the maze devised as entertainment for the members of the project (112). The message from *Ratner's Star* stands in this novel in the same place as the Celestial City did for the characters in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, as an objective to be reached, the

end of a quest in which many have failed before: “Space Brain has printed out hundreds of interpretations without coming up with anything we can call definite. Dozens of men and women have also failed [...] You’re our last hope, it looks like” (47-48). But in the same way the pilgrim’s linear path is substituted by Billy’s labyrinthine wanderings, the message is not exactly its end, but the absent center triggering the plot, the point around which the story is built.

In this novel, plot does not spring from action and incident but from discussion and dialogue among the characters. The succession of characters and their theoretical expositions constitute the plot of the novel, in which scientific truth appears to be the ultimate goal to be achieved. The logic is epistemological, or in this case, scientific, rather than narrative in the traditional nineteenth century sense.⁶ The plot is not incident-motivated but induction-motivated. The construction of scientific truth is described in the novel as the work of struggling forces, as explained by Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962): “Scientific revolutions are here taken to be these non-cumulative developmental episodes in which an older paradigm is replaced in whole or in part by an incompatible new one” (Kuhn, 1996:92). The idea is taken to its extreme in the novel when the “MIT language riots” are mentioned: “Did people really throw stones at each other and overturn cars and the like? I mean was there actual killing in the streets?” ‘I was simply trying to assert that what there is in common between a particular fact and the sentence that asserts this fact can itself be put into a sentence’ ‘And this led to rioting?’”(33). Characters argue with each other in an attempt to impose themselves as scientific paradigms are imposed each on the previous one:

‘We used zorgs’, he whispered.
 ‘For what?’
 ‘Identifying the mohole’.
 ‘Zorgs are useless’.
 ‘We used them’, Mainwaring said.
 ‘Practically nobody knows what they even are’.
 ‘Softly knows, doesn’t he?’
 ‘He’s one of the few’.

⁶ Incident motivated, based on peripatetia and sanctioned by psychological motivation or justification.

‘Softly explained how we might use zorgs. I briefed my sylphing teams. Without zorgs we would never have found the mohole.’
‘Amazement’. (417)

The construction of the argument, in its double sense of reasoning and discussion, permeates the story, echoing another etymology for the word: *argumentum*, plot. Roland Barthes’ distinction between proiaretic and hermeneutic codes is pertinent here (Barthes, 1974:28). In *Ratner’s Star*, the hermeneutic code, that of discourse, dominates the proiaretic, that of actions and events, or rather parasitizes it, using it to develop itself. The novel appears as a space of epistemological discussion, its narrative momentum created out of opposing forces fighting to impose their truth. Argumentum: plot and reasoning, turned against each other. The proiaretic code is more and more limited as the novel advances. Action and plot are very limited, reduced to the claustrophobic limits of Field Experiment Number One. On the other hand, the hermeneutic code, that of discourse, is overcharged with theories, scientific references, clues and ideas, which will end up swallowing the proiaretic.

In the allegorical tradition, the narration requires an interpretative effort on the part of the reader, who must read and interpret “allegorically”, that is to say, identifying every element with what it stands for. An allegory, according to Angus Fletcher, is a double literary construction, “a structure that lends itself to a secondary reading, or rather, one that becomes stronger when given a secondary meaning as well as a primary meaning” (Fletcher, 1964:7). The characters’ quest in allegories of knowledge forces also a quest on the part of the reader, one destined to interpret the meaning of the novel. Reading *Ratner’s Star* triggers the hermeneutic process described by Peter Brooks in *Reading for the Plot* (1984): “We read only those incidents and signs that can be construed as promise and annunciation, enchainned toward a construction of significance—those markers that, as in the detective story, appear to be clues to the underlying intentionality of the text” (Brooks, 1984:94). The idea of a quest for pattern, order and design underlies the construction of the novel, and it becomes an obsession and narrative motor at the level of reader response. It is assumed that all the symmetries that determine the novel’s structure, that all the geometric figures and parallelisms are motivated and not arbitrary: “The whole may determine the sense of the parts, and the parts be governed by the intention of the whole” (Fletcher, 1964:85). We try to get to an

interpretation which renders the whole novel meaningful, just as characters try to make sense of the message from outer space.

As “a piece of mathematics”, as DeLillo wanted it to be, the novel is made of abstractions and connective patterns, parallelisms and symmetries, in response to what he understands to be a general human tendency to look for pattern, for correspondence, at all levels, in science as in literature:

What we need at this stage of our perceptual development is an overarching symmetry. Something that constitutes what appears to be—even if it isn't—a totally harmonious picture of the world system. Our naïveté, if nothing else, demands it. Our childlike trust in structural balance. (49)

Symmetry is actually the principle governing allegory, which is built on the correspondence between two series: one narrative, the other epistemological, religious or, as in this case, scientific. Each element in one of the series must correspond to an element in the second one, so that the reader, in order to understand the allegory, has to trace lines across the two levels (Fletcher, 1964:2). According to Angus Fletcher, allegory is “teleological ordered speech” (Fletcher, 1964:85). In *Ratner's Star* we are led to quest for a certain kind of figure and pattern which will provide some ultimate truth about what is being told, on the one hand, and which will render meaningful the way in which the novel is constructed, on the other hand. Twentieth century allegory, in Fletcher's words, “demands a solution to riddle, making it a member of the oldest allegorical type, the *aenigma*” (Fletcher, 1964:6). There is an implicit promise at the beginning of every allegory, as is expressed in *Piers Plowman*: “I shall now explain to you clearly what all this means—the mountain, the dark valley, and the field filled with people” (Langland, 1992:8). We sense that “an explanation *ought* to be forthcoming” (Molesworth, 1991:147). Its structure, its narrative strategies and its tropology will become meaningful in this way, signs of a truth that matches its written expression. In Roland Barthes' words, “the hermeneutic terms structure the enigma according to the expectation and desire for its solution [...] Expectation thus becomes the basic condition for truth: truth [...] is what is at the end of expectation” (Barthes, 1974:75-76).

The structural balance required for an allegorical reading, however, is never reached in DeLillo's novel. Truth, solution, or what DeLillo has

termed “a kind of redemptive truth waiting on the other side, a sense that we have arrived at a resolution” (DeCurtis, 1991:56), is endlessly deferred, provoking the sense of failure that pervades the end of the novel, as has been noted by some critics. According to them, the novel’s lack of closure implies its claim of the failure of science: “Illusion, DeLillo suggests in *Ratner’s Star*, dogs all scientific aspirations to objectivity” (Coward, 2002:145); “Ultimately, then it interrogates even its own design as a ‘piece of mathematics’ challenging readers to make it cohere and yet undermining such system-building impulses” (Osteen, 2000:63); “In its larger thematics the novel suggests that science is futile, an exercise that is largely a displacement of human neurosis, and practiced by people who are otherwise gullible and thoroughly impractical” (Molesworth, 1991:145). As long as the novel’s highly stylized structure is considered as “a piece of mathematics”, as DeLillo wanted it to be, its failure to convey a meaning can also be read as the failure of science itself to communicate its results.

It would be quite inaccurate, however, to claim that there is a complete failure of science in *Ratner’s Star*. In the first place, because, in spite of Mark Osteen’s claims on the contrary (2000:62), Billy does solve the enigma proposed at the beginning of the novel: “That was it then. He’d deciphered the message, found the answer, cracked the star code” (385). In the second place, because the failure the novel points to is not so much that of science itself as of the inability to communicate its results to other fields of knowledge. The scientists at Logicon Project Number One are so immersed into their metalinguistic project that they are not able to interpret the data they receive.

It is my view, on the contrary, that the novel’s “failure” responds to an interpretative collapse brought about by the way it overloads the literary conventions to which it had previously ascribed. As an allegory of scientific knowledge, the excess of materials saturates the interpretative process, departing from the linear conception of plot typical of those literary forms to which *Ratner’s Star* was associated. The failure is not so much that of science as of the expectations created out of its generic and genealogic adscription, which it disappoints after having encouraged them. The end of the novel is a failure from the point of view of science fiction, as it lets down every expectation raised by that generic convention.⁷ In an ironic twist, the source of the message is discovered to be the Earth itself, an echo from an extinguished civilization trying to

warn future generations against the dangers of a *Mohole*. The message from extraterrestrials is turned in this way into the annunciation of apocalypse: a date, a sign (a solar eclipse) and a catastrophe to come. But like every apocalypse, according to J. Hillis Miller in *Others* (2001), this one is endlessly deferred: we only get to see its trace, the eclipse, while revelation itself, total disclosure of truth, will only take place beyond the limits of the written text (Miller, 2001:117).

Ratner's Star, that “conceptual monster”, provides so much information, so many terms to be interpreted, that our allegorical reading starts to fall apart due to the impossibility of establishing all the correspondences. The novel, then, presents itself as an excessive system, saturated with information, as noted by Glen Scott Allen (2000:123). This brings about the interpretative collapse of the novel, as it follows in its course many contradictory lines of discourse. As Charles Molesworth has noted, overabundance of information results in “an inability to evaluate” (1991:147). The narrative becomes hermeneutically unaccountable, and it seems, as Peter Brooks suggests, that there exists a “disproportion between the ordering systems deployed and the triviality of their effect, as if someone had designed a machine to produce work far smaller than the energy put into it” (1984:241). We will never reach that promised truth, that meaningfulness, and therefore many of the signs we had gathered—like a detective accumulating clues to solve a mystery—have to be left apart, because they are useless.

Failure in *Ratner's Star* is not the failure of science but the failure of the allegorical line; the impossibility to keep a linear path of meaning in which there is a B corresponding to each A; it is the destruction of the “storyline”. In Glen Scott Allen's words: “Thus it is the ‘voice’ of *Ratner's Star* that disperses, and that anticipates and evades the imminent revelation that its own end implies but does not quite reach” (2000:128). J. Hillis Miller (1992) explains how the end of a story should act as apocalypse for that which came before:

The end of the story is the retrospective revelation of the law of the whole. The law is an underlying ‘truth’ that ties all together in an

⁷ As J.D. O'Hara mentions in his review of *Ratner's Star*, “DeLillo's choice of a science fiction form [...] obliges him to reach answers and to impose a dramatic conclusion on his discrete materials” (O'Hara, 2000:37). What renders *Ratner's Star* problematic as science fiction is precisely the absence of answers and dramatic conclusions.

inevitable sequence revealing a hitherto hidden figure in the carpet. The image of the line tends always to imply the norm of a single continuous unified structure determined by one external organizing principle. (Miller, 1992:18)

Ratner's Star definitely challenges the principles governing allegorical reading provoking in the reader the already mentioned frustration by its lack of hermeneutic closure. Failure, in *Ratner's Star*, is expressed as the subversion of the conventions governing the *Prüfungsroman* tradition. On the one hand, by means of an accumulative structure which raises the problem of endless semiosis (Eco, 1977:222). On the other hand, by giving a turn of the screw to the symbolic use made of the stellated twilligon, suggesting a non-linear structure for the interpretation of the novel.

As it has been mentioned before, the accumulation of information to be interpreted, the excess of allusions, clues and cross-references, renders *Ratner's Star* an excessive system. In this way, the novel gives one more turn to its connection to scientific models, entering the fields of semiotics, systems and information theory, and testing some of the ideas theorized by Umberto Eco and Yuri Lotman. Lotman describes the normal reading process as one in which the systemic elements of the message are interpreted as meaningful and the extrasystemic ones are discarded as useless: "In the process systemic elements, which are the carriers of meaning, are distinguished in the message. Non-systemic elements are not perceived as carriers of information and are discarded" (Lotman, 1977:56). According to Eco, an excess of connectivity among the constituents of a message can result in a collapse of linear interpretation, provoking an unlimited hermeneutic process in which the reader would be unable to reach a conclusion as to the meaning of that message. The phenomenon has received the names of "hermetic semiosis", "endless semiosis" and even "paranoiac interpretation" (Eco, 1992:47-48). This is precisely what happens in *Ratner's Star*, both at the intradiegetic level and at the level of reader response. On the one hand, the saturation of the system results in the characters' inability to discriminate and respond coherently to new data. For instance, when Mainwaring tells the rest of the characters about moholes, they seem unable to react and process the information: "Rob, we don't know. That's it. We don't know what it means. This is space-time sylphed. We're dealing with Moholean relativity here. Possibly dimensions more numerous than

we've ever before imagined" (410). At the level of reader response, on the other hand, the collapse of the interpretation process takes place due to the accumulation of irrelevant data. In just a few pages we learn about the ongoing investigations in several scientific areas. For instance, in chapter 12 we are successively introduced into the fields of zoology (experiments on animal behavior), number theory (definition of zero), dream analysis, logic and metalanguages (Logicon Project). All this information, however, will prove to be absolutely useless for the understanding of the plot and for the resolution of the enigma. This accumulative structure helps to understand the unsatisfactory ending from the point of view of hermeneutic processes. The inability to distinguish between relevant information and noise in the cognitive process of reading can be said to be specially threatening for allegorical narratives. Allegory establishes a convention in which discrete elements enter into motivated relationships creating a meaningful whole, a convention which is challenged in *Ratner's Star* by the excess of connectivity among elements and the misleading suggestion of a closed, motivated system.

From the point of view of its formal structure, *Ratner's Star* departs from the linear patterns typical of the *Prüfungsroman*. Instead of following the linear path of allegories of knowledge, *Ratner's Star* "bends back on itself" (LeClair, 1983:87). The use of the stellated twilligon as a (fictional) formal model has been related by several critics to the symmetrical structure of the novel (LeClair, 1987:116, 132; Keesey, 1993:83-85). Mark Osteen, for instance, claims that "the figure represents *Ratner's Star's* self-reflexive examination of self-reflexivity" (2000:62-63), while David Cowart considers that the novel's plot reinforces the idea of reflexivity implied in the thematic use of that figure: "the message that propels the plot of DeLillo's novel proves to have arrived, boomerang-like, at its point of origin" (2002:148). The clearest example of this is the way in which the extraterrestrial code which sets the plot into motion is traced back to Earth, so that the whole quest brings us back to our departure point: "we get back only what we ourselves give [...] We've reconstructed the ARS extant and it turns out to be us" (405). It responds to a structural model described by J. Hillis Miller in *Ariadne's Thread*: "the line contains the possibility of turning back on itself. In this turning it subverts its own linearity and becomes repetition" (Miller, 1992:19). *Ratner's Star* does indeed become repetition. The second part of the no-

vel, entitled “Reflections”, can be said to be a repetition of the first, “Adventures”, in several ways: it proposes a quest inside the quest, the creation of a metalanguage to be used for the interpretation of the code; moreover, the second part takes place in the basement of FENO, an underground reproduction of the secret center above it; Billy goes back to Endor’s hole at the end of the novel just to find out that Endor had already solved the enigma when he visited him at the beginning, so that Billy’s own quest is a repetition of Endor’s. Other details link the beginning and the end of the novel in this boomerang movement: “In *Ratner’s Star*, Softly, who is a sort of white rabbit figure, leads Billy into the hole that will take him back to the beginning of the book. In Chapter One Billy had a bandage on his finger—the finger he cut near the end of the book.” (LeClair, 1983:87). The boomerang-like stellated twilligon can be said, therefore, to constitute the formal model for the novel’s subversion of linearity, an emblem for the dangers of “overarching symmetry” carried to its extreme.

DeLillo, we can conclude, is not so much interested in dismantling scientific procedures, but in using scientific models to challenge and subvert the traditional, linear, monologic conception of narrative development/plot/storyline. After all, he wanted “to produce a book that would be naked structure” (LeClair, 1983:86). The sense of failure in *Ratner’s Star* comes from its divergence respecting its initial *anchorage* systems: its final challenge to the generic conventions of science fiction, its rambling away from the structures proper to the allegorical tradition, and its abandonment of the exigency for synthesis and hermeneutic closure expected from every epistemological process, in the sense of reaching a conclusion, resolution, or answer, any kind of *Eureka!* which organizes previous analysis and speculation, and which provides, in Miller’s terms, “the retrospective revelation of the law of the whole”.

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A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS YOUNG FAUSTUS: THOMAS WOLFE'S *OF TIME AND THE RIVER*

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Abstract

*Wolfe's Eugene Gant, a student who says spells compulsively to master the great world, has been an American cult figure for generations, constantly thwarted by the "manyness and muchness of things" in his drive to exhaust through art instead of magical artifices. After a study of the parallels between his story in *Of Time and the River* and various versions of Faust's story, I examine how Wolfe's personal experience of boundless desire in youth comes out in his craft. The emphasis placed on the transcendental, poignantly apparent in the effects of love, may be the most significant link to Faustian legend. The intertextual references to Faust thus situate Wolfe's autobiographical character beyond the common pale, as one who participates in the affirmation of life.*

In *Look Homeward, Angel*, published in 1929, the young novelist Thomas Wolfe gave a minimally fictionalized account of his childhood and adolescence in North Carolina. This *bildungsroman* soon attained cult status, due to the personality of its hero, Eugene Gant, an intelligent, hypersensitive boy, who gradually liberates himself from the influence of what is today termed a dysfunctional family. When his continuing adventures were published in 1935 in *Of Time and the River*, the book sold out immediately. In this second novel, Eugene tries his hand at playwriting at Harvard and winds up teaching literature in New York, finally putting together enough money to realize his dream of making

the Grand Tour of Europe. The main link with *Look Homeward, Angel* (which Wolfe had considered naming “The Childhood of Mr. Faust”)¹, is that Wolfe focuses on Eugene’s devouring appetite for life; it turns the small-town boy’s story into “A Legend of Man’s Hunger in his Youth”—such is the subtitle of *Of Time and the River*. An explicitly Faustian leitmotiv runs through this “legend”: although six of the eight “Books” the novel is divided into are named after heroes of Greek mythology, the longest section is entitled “Young Faustus” and the concluding section is entitled “Faust and Helen”. The myth of Faust clearly held special significance for Wolfe, and the parallels between Eugene’s story and the German alchemist’s give his novel meaning and a form, as Eugene strives “to have the whole riddle of this vast and swarming earth as legible, as tangible in his hand as a coin of minted gold” (*TR* 137).

It may seem surprising that an American, writing in the 1930’s, should have woven mythical figures into his work as intertextual references, but Wolfe’s work was not particularly highbrow at the time that it was published. The mythical allusions, a homage to Joyce’s *Ulysses*, were clearer to the American public then, when classic tales were studied in school; and Faust, in particular, was far from belonging to German or European heritage exclusively. American readers who might not have encountered the character in Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* were familiar with Goethe’s *Faust* in Bayard Taylor’s American translation, reprinted dozens of times since its first publication in 1871; music-lovers knew Gounod’s Opera, a staple of the Met’s repertoire far into the twenties; and American imitations of Méliès’s *Faust* film had sprung up as early as 1900. Although (as elsewhere) few may have known or cared about the historical necromancer Georg Faust, his legend was alive in American culture in the 1930’s, and its main lines were widely known. Faust, a dissatisfied scholar who burns the midnight oil studying, makes a pact with the devil to achieve his goal of total knowledge and power through magic for a number of years, after which he will have to serve the devil for all eternity. With Mephisto at his service, he gives himself over to the life of the senses, uses his magic to play tricks and to travel in space and time, conjuring up historical and mythological heroes, until his time runs out and he is claimed by the devil. Although in the German *Faustbuch*,

¹ See David Herbert Donald, *Look Homeward, A Life of Thomas Wolfe*, London, Bloomsbury, 1987 (p.205).

in Christopher Marlowe's tragedy, and in the early, more conventionally moral versions of the story, Faust is dragged down to Hell by demons, the tale has come to be shaped by Goethe's second *Faust*, and usually ends with the magician being rescued from eternal damnation. Faust has indeed transgressed morality and the limitations set on Man, but God on High recognizes that higher aspirations had motivated him all along.

"The course of the play is well known to everyone", said Wolfe; however, Klaus Lanzinger has traced Wolfe's interest in Faust as incarnating his own problem, and "the problem of modern life", to a 1928 performance of the first *Faust* which Wolfe attended at the Burgtheater while on a trip to Germany². "[Faust] wants to know everything, to be a god—and he is caught in the terrible net of human incapacity", is the way Wolfe defined Faust's problem to a friend after the performance; and he made the Faustian motif explicit in his work from that time on. In "Thomas Wolfe's Modern Hero—Goethe's Faust", Lanzinger studied the structural importance in Wolfe's novels of some themes of Goethe's *Faust*: the dichotomy between the senses and the intellect, and the elitist lifestyle of the artist as opposed to middle class humanity. Those themes are indeed central in Wolfe's fiction. Yet Lanzinger did not broach one further aspect of Wolfe's adaptation of Faustian lore: in *Of Time and the River*, the fact of striving for great things is presented as valid of itself, irrespective of the excess and error of one's ways, so long as one has accomplished something at personal cost to oneself, in an attempt to transcend one's condition. "Whoever strives in ceaseless toil / Him we may grant redemption", the seraphs sing at the end of Goethe's *Faust*. This was the moral Wolfe retained from the legend, an approach that (along with the themes that Lanzinger identified) fitted in well with the romanticism of the early decades of 20th century America, although it took on more sinister implications at a later date—the Manns, father and son, used the Faustian model to reflect the deadly perversions of nazi Germany. But as regards Wolfe's autobiographical fiction, there is no greater self-justification than that of having "striven in toil" to realise oneself.

I shall discuss the elements of Faustian lore I find most relevant to Wolfe's *Of Time and the River*, namely: that Eugene feels too much is

² Klaus Lanzinger, "Thomas Wolfe's Modern Hero—Goethe's Faust", in Richard Kennedy ed., *Thomas Wolfe, A Harvard Perspective*, Athens, Croissant and Company, 1983, 21-29; Wolfe quotations: p.21.

beyond his grasp, while he wants everything. Rather ineffectually, he depends on magic to master the great world, only to find that, like Goethe's Faust, he is never satisfied. However, his limitless desires are a proof of higher aims, and he achieves a form of empowerment through his own labors. Wolfe (who admitted to feeling an all-devouring hunger for experience) relates Eugene's progress in a style that may in itself be termed Faustian, and he effectively suggests redemption, through the love of God and of woman, a woman who recognises the transcendent urges at work within the youth.

When we first meet Eugene, in *Look Homeward, Angel*, he wants everything that he has heard the world beyond his native Appalachians contains (*LHA* 176).³ The image of Helen of Troy haunts his daydreams: "Upon a field in Thrace Queen Helen lay, her lovely body dappled in the sun" (*LHA* 176). Eugene feels that a "demonic force" broods over him (*LHA* 550): it is his consciousness of all that awaits him; at times, it gives him the illusion of possessing the superhuman strength necessary to realise his million desires. But at other times, Eugene doubts that he will ever achieve the greatness he longs for, given the circumstances of his life as a poor country boy—

But moments of clear vision returned to him when all the defeat and misery of his life was revealed [...] His eagles had flown; he saw himself, in a moment of reason, as a madman playing Caesar. (*LHA* 186)

Resorting to homespun magic is one way for Eugene to reassure himself that things will go his way: he practices his own brand of magic, believing it to be more efficacious than religious rituals, "muttering a set formula over sixteen times, while he held his breath" (*LHA* 550). Linking the character of Eugene to that of Faust later enables Wolfe to prove that his hero is not just "playing Caesar", but has the touch of genius necessary to create art, and has earned the right to be respected for his dreams, no matter how chaotic his impulses may seem.

In *Of Time and the River*, Eugene's ravenous desires are referred to as a "Fury" that drives Eugene from the South. He feels equal to anything, feels "a rending and illimitable power in him as if he could twist steel

³ Editions used : *Look Homeward, Angel*, New York, Scribner Classics, 1957 and *Of Time and the River*, New York, Scribner Library of Contemporary Classics, 1971. The abbreviations LHA and TR will be used for these works throughout.

between his fingers" (TR 36). *Of Time and the River* is an apologia of excess, an outing of the "demon" that had brooded over Eugene as a child. And as a student in Cambridge, Eugene still believes in occult forces:

He would have the whole cake of the world, and eat it, too—have adventures, labors, joys, and triumphs that would exhaust the energies of ten thousand men, and yet have spells and charms for all of it, and was sure that with these charms and spells and sorceries, all of it was his. (TR 150)

Magic powers will come if he will only refrain from breathing when riding the subway in Boston, for example; he never doubts that he can influence events just by hitting on the right spells: "To make that mystery of rite and number, and to follow it with a maniacal devotion seemed as inevitable and natural to him as the very act of life, of breath itself" (TR 151).

Yet, despite his home-made magic, Eugene's drive to exhaust experience and possess the earth is constantly thwarted by the limitless variety of life. This variety he takes on in an agonistic manner, "hurling the great shoulder of his strength forever against phantasmal barriers [...]" (TR 454), as his behavior at Harvard shows. In the Widener library, "he read insanely, by the hundreds, the thousands, the ten thousands [...]. He pictured himself as tearing the entrails from a book as from a fowl" (TR 91). But there is always more to be read. As with reading, so with travel, and all of the things left undone:

He would get up in the middle of the night to scrawl down insane catalogs of all that he had seen and done [...] And at one moment he would gloat and chuckle over these stupendous lists like a miser gloating over his hoard, only to beat his head against the wall, as he remembered the overwhelming amount of all he had not seen or done, or known [...]. (TR 92-93)

And Eugene is often submerged by waves of exhaustion as he realises he is just an atom among others; in *Of Time and the River*, Wolfe writes of the times when

[...] his spirit would drown in an ocean of horror and desolation, smothered below the overwhelming tides of this great earth, sickened and made sterile, hopeless, dead by the stupefying weight of men and objects in the world, the everlasting flock and flooding of the crowd [...]. (TR 91)

Eugene mulls over his failure to conquer the world—"all that he had to 'show' for these years of fury, struggle, homelessness and hunger was an academic distinction which he had not aimed at, and on which he placed little value" (*TR* 244). He is weary of people:

[...] he seemed to squeeze their lives dry of any warmth and interest they might have for him as one might squeeze an orange, and then was immediately filled with boredom, disgust, dreary tedium, and an impatient weariness and desire to escape [...]. (*TR* 274)

And yet, still buoyant, he is often convinced that a "life more fortunate than any ever known" is accessible, and tries to bring it about through other artifices, for it is in the nature of youth, Wolfe suggests, to be unrealistic. Eugene turns to the artificial stimulation of alcohol; with his Harvard companion, Francis Starwick, he wanders through the streets at night—"[...]immortal confidence and victorious strength possessed them—and they knew that they could never die" (*TR* 281).

Eugene is enrolled in Professor Hatcher's celebrated postgraduate course for dramatists, where vacuous young men pick up assorted tricks of the trade, all of them expecting realize their dreams by some magical alchemy, "a miracle [...] a magic transformation", "some magic and miraculous scheme or rule or formula [...]" (*TR* 168-9). His classmates heap scorn on anything of a genuine nature, and mediocre imitations are hailed as sophisticated. Consequently, the first play that Eugene sends off to the theater companies is a banal artifact: "[...] he went snooping and prowling around the sterile old brothels of the stage, mistaking the glib concoctions of a counterfeit emotion for the very flesh and figure of reality" (*TR* 360). At this point, Eugene is unrealistic about his craft, wanting the door to fame to open magically for him and his trite offerings; when not in despair, "he was sure that the door would open for him, the magic word be spoken, and that he would make all of the glory, power, and beauty of the earth his own" (*TR* 194) and he daily expects a "magic letter" informing him that his work has been accepted (*TR* 334, 353). When this fails to occur, lonely and cast down, Eugene feels that he would be completely fulfilled if only he could recapture the past, when his father was alive:

[...] this dreamlike and phantasmal world in which they found themselves would waken instantly, as it had once, to all the palpable warmth and glory of the earth, if only his father would come back to make it live, to give them life, again. (*TR* 328)

In his subsequent adventures, recounted in the sections named after mythological heroes, Eugene tries to revive that world of glorious certainty and plenitude. But it is through Faustian “striving”, not through his brand of magic, that he achieves a form of redemption. He pins his hopes on New York, the “magic city” (*TR* 308), the “enchanted city” whose beguiling song he thinks he can hear (*TR* 366). However, once in “the everlasting shock and flock and flooding of the million-footed crowd” (*TR* 593), he chafes against the limitations of anonymity and routine. He finds himself hemmed in, seized by an “overwhelming [...] desire to burst out of these canyoned walls that held him in” (*TR* 468-469), and, as a writer, powerless to express what he has in him, “a congruent and unspeakable legend which he knew, and all of them knew, down to the roots, and which he could not speak about and had to speak about, somehow, or die” (*TR* 370). More than ever, Eugene is baffled by the irreconcilability of the One and the Many as he struggles in “the maelstrom”. He sees the proud Hudson river as emblematic of a life in which “the possession of all things, even the air we breathed, was held from us, and the river of life and time flowed through the grasp of our hands forever” (*TR* 509). Making no mark, unable to put into words his feelings or his vision of the America he is discovering, he feels an immense frustration. And yet, though it is about his difficulties and setbacks, *Of Time and the River* is about his progress, too. First in New York as an instructor, then in France when he puts everything he has into his writing, Eugene learns how to work. At the city University, Eugene proves his fortitude and worth:

Night by night he sweated blood over great stacks and sheaves of their dull, careless, trivial papers [...] rising suddenly out of a haunted tortured sleep to change a grade. (*TR* 441)

[...] he became a mad, driven zealot, but he was a good teacher [...] he went into the brain of a dullard like a surgeon, and he blew some spark of fire into a glow in even the least and worst of them [...]. (*TR* 444)

A few months later, in Paris, where he allows himself to be influenced for a time by his ever more dissolute and fatalistic friend Francis Starwick, Eugene comes to the conclusion that “There are other things that may be more important than leading a graceful and pleasant life [...] Getting your work done is one of them [...]” (*TR* 708).

Here some differences with Faustian lore are worth noting: Eugene's past belief in magic was naïve, and gave him no real power. It is the world he discovers that is dangerously corrupt, not him and his desires. In Boston, New York and Europe, Eugene has to fend off "the perverse and evil demons of cruelty and destructiveness" in other people (TR 784), "the damned and evil swarm of sourceless evil that crawled outward from the rat-holes of the dark" (TR 790) making an "unwholesome chemistry" (TR 724) of the time which should be allotted to restoring one's strength. When Eugene tries to justify his own absorbing desires, saying "[...] in order to get knowledge, Doctor Faust sold his soul to the devil", Starwick quips: "Alas [...] where is the devil?" (TR 709) —but Wolfe meant his Eugene to be good enough, in his own way, *without* the devil. He does play some "tricks", as when he lies shamelessly and makes an innocent family in Boston "the butt of his jokes" (TR 208), or plays along with the misrepresentations of a Countess in France who passes him off as a journalist for "*Le New York Times*" (TR 846); he does exceed limits, as when he nearly kills Starwick in the fight that puts an end to their association (TR 779). But apart from these lapses, Eugene's rejection of convention and prudence makes him a foil to those he calls "these damned, smug, vain, self-centred egotists—who would milk this earth as if it were a great milk cow here solely for their enrichment and who [...] remain nothing but the God-damned smug, sterile, misbegotten set of impotent and life-hating bastards that they are" (TR 319).

It becomes ever more evident that Eugene, *because* of this quality of excess, functions on a higher plane. His "stern labor and grim loneliness" (TR 401) are redirected after a magical trance in the section entitled "Kronos and Rhea: the Dream of Time", and Eugene finally has the stuff of a "pure" work of art:

The words were wrung out of him in a kind of bloody sweat [...] he wrote them with his blood, his spirit [...] In those wild and broken phrases was packed the whole bitter burden of his famished, driven, over-laden spirit [...] all the impossible and unutterable homesickness that the American, or any man on earth, can know. (TR 858-859)

Kronos, who devours his children, is an allegory for the cruel passage of time, and yet Eugene is finally taking stock of what he has learnt from passing time, as he ponders "the bitter enigma" that "some foul, corrosive poison in our lives [...] has taken from us" (TR 895). In America,

feelings of loss and impotence had worn him down. In Europe, Eugene begins to be certain that he carries within himself what he seeks—the writer's and every man's store, "a life that he had lost, and that could never die" (*TR* 898).

In the story of Eugene, Wolfe gave a form to his personal experience of boundless desire in youth, and its effects come out in his craft. Many autobiographical elements went into *Of Time and the River*, such as Eugene's jobs, journeys, and journals; names and dates are, in many instances, taken from life. In interviews and autobiographical essays Wolfe confirmed that, like Eugene, he had been possessed of a "wild, exultant vigor" (*SN*, AAN 8),⁴ a "wild desire" (*SN*, AAN 12), and stirred by the same dream: "to be famous and to be loved [...]" ("WL", AAN 137).⁵ Wolfe, too had alternated between certainty and lack of confidence in his own power to accomplish what he wanted to do ("WL", AAN, 114-115). And at the time he was writing *Of Time and the River*, Wolfe was no more satisfied by his wanderings abroad than was Eugene; he was to explain how he derived the material and the structure of his second book from "this memory of home that could not be appeased, that would not stop or vanish [...]" (*SN*, AAN 29). Like Eugene, Wolfe showed determination and readiness to experiment: Wolfe, too, read books by the thousands as an aspiring writer, hoping that the material gleaned would be fashioned into art by his unconscious—as if by enchantment; and it had indeed seemed to many critics that *Look Homeward, Angel* was a reworking of all that the author had ever read. In *Of Time and the River*, with its diffuse plot and reliance on intertextuality, Wolfe zestfully develops these innovative techniques. Moreover, Wolfe always had ambitious projects as a writer, and was notorious for writing exceedingly long books. One 1935 cartoon had reviewers picketing Scribners when the 912-page *Of Time and the River* was published (their placards read "We want time to eat", and so on), while Wolfe confessed to having written "hundreds of thousands of words that could not be used [...]" tempted by the enchanting prospect of grand and magic vistas [...]" (*SN*, AAN 40).

Beyond the obvious biographical echoes, Wolfe's insistence on youth and life, on romantic excess in Eugene, who is constantly replenished, is

⁴ SN stands for *The Story of a Novel*, in *The Autobiography of an American Novelist*, Leslie Field ed., Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1983.

⁵ "WL" stands for "Writing and Living", in *The Autobiography of an American Novelist*, Leslie Field ed., Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1983.

mimetically expressed through what we might call incremental repetition, which Wolfe typically uses to swell his prose and charm the reader. In this respect, his writing is self-referential. In the Kronos and Rhea section, for example, several pages are unified by melodious variations on the theme of time:

Play us a tune on an unbroken spinet [...] Play us a tune on an unbroken spinet, play lively music when the instrument was new, let us see Mozart playing in the parlor [...] By the waters of life, by time, by time, play us a tune on an unbroken spinet. [...] By the waters of life, before we knew that we must die, before we had seen our father's face [...]. (TR 855-856)

Poetic phrases and symbols sometimes recur at distant intervals, emphasising an underlying conviction or lyrical longing. Sometimes several repetitions, occurring in one paragraph, build these feelings to a crescendo; or entire paragraphs, repeated almost word for word, frame a vignette in the story, acting as codas that fix its significance. Moreover, Wolfe's desire to get all of life into his work is expressed in accumulations of adjectives and adverbs, in enumerations and catalogues. As in *Look Homeward, Angel*, he lists luscious smells (TR 139-140), succulent foods (TR 502), or the joys of the passing seasons (TR 137-138); these catalogues can serve as bases for entire sections, such as a famous, Whitmanesque, five-page description of America—"It is the place where [...] it is the one place where [...] It is the place of [...] it is the place where [...] And always America is the place of the deathless and enraptured moments [...]" (TR 155-160). Wolfe relies heavily upon exclamations, lyrical and rhetorical questions, expressing longing, despair, outrage, or a combination of the three as he renders Eugene's *Weltschmerz* under "the most-oh-most familiar blazing of the stars [...]" (TR 601). Hence Wolfe's reputation for writing in an "opulent manner", quite unlike his contemporaries' style (Hemingway's, for example).

In addition, some thematic links with the Faust legend of hunger for knowledge and certainty held personal meaning for Wolfe, though they are not all explicitly Faustian. As his editor Maxwell Perkins became a trusted friend, when the two men worked on the manuscript of *Look Homeward, Angel*, Wolfe had analyzed young men's need for heroic figures, "stronger and wiser than themselves, to whom they can turn for an answer to all their vexation and grief [...]" He told Perkins: "You are for me such a figure [...]" (D 205),⁶ but his Eugene is still looking.

Therefore, according to Wolfe, the “central legend” that he had wanted *Of Time and the River* to express was

[...] the fundamental adventure [...] man's search to find a father
[...] the image of a strength and wisdom external to his need and
superior to his hunger, to which the belief and power of his own life
could be united. (SN, AAN 37-38)

Another theme is more obvious, and some say it is the subject of *Of Time and the River*: the “Search for America”—long before Kerouac, beatniks, and hippies popularized this impulse. Wolfe took on the subject, undaunted by the vastness of the continent, although he never lets the reader forget its “immense and cruel skies”. Eugene is only just learning what it takes to write the great American novel, but Wolfe, it is clear, believed he could accomplish it, by revealing the secret of the land that he had found to be its very elusiveness. Autumn sweeps down over “an immensity of fold and convolution that can never be remembered, that can never be forgotten, that has never been described [...] rank, crude, unharnessed, careless of scars or beauty, everlasting and magnificent, a cry, a space, an ecstasy! —American earth in old October” (TR 331).

Finally, the emphasis Wolfe places on the transcendental and the effects of love may be the most significant link to Faustian legend. As a good friend of Wolfe's remembered, “Tom believed that people knew more than they knew— that is what their ancestors had known” (D 149-150). The “proem” at the beginning of *Look Homeward, Angel* was an affirmation of transcendence (“Remembering speechlessly we seek the great forgotten language, the lost end-lane into Heaven [...]”—LHA 3), and, from birth to adolescence, Eugene is conscious of a hidden world, one from which his dead brother briefly comes back in a final scene of magic-realism. *Of Time and the River* begins on a similar note, an assertion of the invisible power of love on earth: “Immortal love, alone and aching in the wilderness, we cried to you: you were not absent from our loneliness” (TR proem, 2). Eugene's life is fueled by forces and knowledge greater than his own, his veins pulse with his ancestors' juices, and in foreign lands, he finds “the years are walking in his brain” (TR 861). Just as it was with Faust, the apparent vanity of life causes Eugene anguish; but flashes of supernal beauty convey the same message as the angels in the various Faust plays:

⁶ The abbreviation D stands for David Herbert Donald, op.cit.

The dry bones, the bitter dust? The living wilderness, the silent waste? The barren land? [...] Birth and the twenty thousand days of snarl and jangle—and no love, no love? Was no love crying in the wilderness?

It was not true. The lovers lay below the lilac bush; the laurel leaves were trembling in the woods. (*TR* 149)

Because he knows how to read the signs, Eugene remains faithful to a figurative father, who like God in Goethe's "Prologue in Heaven", gives meaning to life by being stronger than evil: "Father, I know that you live, though I have never found you" (*TR* 856). But Eugene is not exactly carried off to heaven as a reward for his agonistic involvement in life. Personal and interpersonal empowerment complete his learning process. At the end of the novel, he returns to the America he had sought even while walking its streets. Realising that an American is, by definition, "Lost", "with no goal or ending for his hunger" (*TR* 858), Eugene begins to feel for his land a love that is, like God's, based on forgiveness at the end of strife. And when Wolfe explicitly takes up the Faustian thread in "Faust and Helen", the last section, it is the love of a woman that will redirect Eugene's life to the compound strength of fusion. Aptly, Eugene meets the woman who will become his Helen on his way "home" to America:

After all the blind, tormented wanderings of youth, that woman would become his heart's center and the target of his life, the image of immortal one-ness that again collected him to one, and hurled the whole collected passion, power and might of his one life into the blazing certitude, the immortal governance and unity, of love. (*TR* 912)

Whereas Goethe's God loves "he who exerts himself in constant striving" because Woman intercedes as a sort of *mater gloriosa*, in *Of Time and the River* the pathetic Gretchen is dispensed with, and Esther, the powerful Helen-figure, defines and redeems Eugene for us in an instant:

Ah secret and alone, she thought—[...] and his eyes are starved, his soul is parched with thirst [...] and he is mad for love and athirst for glory, and he is so cruelly mistaken—and so right! (*TR* 911)

If Eugene does not exactly return from his voyage "wearing the great coronal of the world upon his modest brows", as he had dreamt of as a child (*LHA* 99), but possessed of a bitter knowledge, his worth is

nonetheless transparent for those who, like Esther, are gifted with creative insight. Such a "moral" was, of course, a good way of justifying an existence on paper which would otherwise lack closure, for being so closely based on Wolfe's own random experiences as to have very little plot. Nor was Esther's seal of approval Wolfe's last word on the Faust-like pursuits he associated with his own youth. In his next, posthumous, novel, he bestowed on his partly autobiographical hero George Webber the hungers of Eugene, specifying, lest older readers should dismiss them as immature, that "they have forgotten that below all the apparent waste, loss, chaos, and disorder of a young man's life there is really a central purpose and a single faith which they themselves have lost" (*WR* 257-258).⁷ In *Of Time and the River*, at any rate, the swiftness with which the final stages of Eugene's growth are rendered suggest that the attainment of oneness is relatively fortuitous; and it is the furious integrity of the young man's myriad aspirations that make the book memorable.

Faustian conflict is therefore resolved into a force for the good in Wolfe's prose. It situates him, as do his experiments in prose and his obsession with getting to the heart of what is American, as an heir of Walt Whitman, whose "voice goes after what [his] eyes cannot reach"⁸ in what sometimes seems a chaos of poetic exuberance, and as a precursor of the disenchanting lyricism of American literature of the latter half of the 20th century. Jack Kerouac, for one, openly acknowledged his debt to Wolfe. Perhaps Wolfe's positive view of Faustian stirrings inspired Kerouac's *Dr. Sax: Faust Part 3* (1959), in which Dr. Sax combats the realms of evil and is the tutelary spirit of the author's alter ego, Jacky Duluoaz, in his death-haunted hometown of Lowell, Massachusetts: like Eugene, Sax is the keeper of the life-force in a world that tries to repress it.

Granted, Wolfe's Eugene would not be a powerful figure if he did no more than lash about, always wanting more. He learns how to work and to create. On the whole, however, Wolfe seems to posit that repressing Faustian desires would make worse men of us all. The least one can say is that his example illustrates their value in the creative process.

⁷ *The Web and the Rock*. Edition used: New York, Dell, 1963.

⁸ Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*, 1881, l.565.

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SEARCH FOR THE LITERARY UNIVERSAL: INDIA AND THE WEST

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There is no doubt about the fact that literature is essentially culture-bound, in the sense that a particular culture produces a particular kind of literature, as it is equally true that the culture of a particular country at a particular point of space and time is reflected in the literature produced by that country. In other words, just by reading the ancient European classics of Aeschylus, Sophocles or Euripides we can form an idea about the Greek culture of the time. To read *Antigone* is to understand the importance of the burial of the dead as a religious ritual. We learn their notions of the Dyke, the Nemesis and the supreme importance of God and the various gods and goddesses in the lives of the Greek people. Similarly by reading Homer we can have a fairly correct idea of the culture that prevailed in Greece at his time, including the cultural heritage enshrined in the great epics in the actions of the various characters and the situations described. We can have an idea of their values, their priorities and the dominant ideas that prevailed in Greece of his time. The same is true about Roman literature. To read Plautus and Terence or Seneca, or Virgil or Theocritus, or Bion or Moschus is to have an idea of the different facets of the Roman culture. Again, when we read the stories of Charlemagne, or *Roman de la Rose* we at once realize the importance of the values that the French cherished. We learn about the medieval knight-errantry and the values that it cultivated from the stories of the Arthurian romances. But what is more important is that a literary work is produced at a particular point of time incorporating in it the culture of the time. Thus the great Indian epic, the *Mahābhārata* or the *Rāmāyana* embodies the essentials of the Indian culture of the time, although as epics of growth these two epics cover a long period of Indian culture. It is impossible to appreciate the poetry of

Tulsidas or Kabir or the Bhajans of Meera without an awareness of the Bhakti movement that swept the North of India in the fifteenth century, nor is it possible to understand and enjoy Milton's *Paradise Lost* without having an idea of Christianity in general and the Bible in particular. Similarly, the poems and plays based on the life and teachings of the Buddha, such as Tagore's *Natir Puja* or a poem like "Pujarini" cannot be appreciated without some knowledge of the Buddhist cult that dominated the Indian culture for a long time. The same is true about any literature of any country of any time. It is the cultural base of a country at a particular point of space and time that produces the superstructure of literature. A literary work while incorporating the culture of the time is also frozen in a particular space and time. But the paradox is that readers of different countries, of different cultures, of different religions and beliefs, of different ideologies, of different passions and prejudices do appreciate literatures of other countries, other cultures, other religions, other beliefs, other ideologies, immaterial of the fact whether a literary work was produced centuries ago, or only the year before, whether it was produced by the neighboring country or a country situated on the other side of the globe. This leads us to the conclusion that there is something in these literary works produced across continents and centuries that has an appeal which is both timeless and universal.

But the more basic question is: what is literature and, then, what constitutes literariness. Our main concern is poetry, but poetry is only one form of literature. Literature is the *genus* and poetry is the *species*. So, in order to understand the true nature of poetry it is first necessary to understand what literature is. Language is the tool of literature as it is a means of communication. But communications can be of different kinds. When one is interested in giving just information—such as two plus two make four—we do not consider it as a literary expression. But the moment a person tries to say something in a beautiful and charming manner we have a feeling that he is engaged in a literary enterprise. It is not always that a writer can say something in a memorable manner, but when he does succeed he has produced literature, however small or however little its value may be. Matthew Arnold said in his *Essays in Criticism* that literature is the record of the "best that is known and thought in the world". It is also true that not many people do deliberately try to produce literature but the records of their thoughts and experiences describing certain situations, real or imaginary, contain in them immense

literary value. Such were the writings of Winston Churchill whose writings on the second World War brought him the highest literary award, the Nobel Prize for Literature. Rousseau's *Confessions* or De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* are regarded as literary works. In fact a literary artist is more concerned with interpreting himself rather than in revealing himself to others. None of the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins was published during his lifetime. It is only some twenty years after his death, when his friend Robert Bridges brought out an edition of his poems in 1918, that the world became aware of the rich storehouse of literary wealth that the poems contained. It is possible also, then, that a writer produces some of the finest *specimens* of literature in blissful ignorance of the fact that his private thoughts and feelings expressed in some poems may be publicly shared, enjoyed and immensely valued. But most writers, however, write with target readers in mind who they believe would appreciate the world view that they present, their philosophies of life and the stories they tell to communicate the fabrics of their visions. They try to express themselves in a way, which they think would help their readers to understand them best. Literature thus can be defined as an art by which a striking expression is achieved in language. But literature is not a one-sided affair. It is sometimes said that a poet talks to himself; we simply overhear him. If that were so then the poet could later burn his poems or bury them or tear them up. But he does not do so. He publishes them, unless as in the case of Hopkins his feelings that as a priest he should not indulge in writing poetry make him refrain from publishing them. If we believe that literature is produced by the writer for the sake of his own pleasure we are taking an extremely subjective point of view. Again, if we hold that literature is produced with a definite aim of propagating certain ideas, as in propaganda literature, which is meant for the readers as consumers, we are taking an objective view, or at least we are over-emphasizing the objective element which leads to one form of realism in which the substance exhibited is the most important thing. It would be much safer to say that literature is emotive communication where words, in addition to thought-content, have also feeling-content. On one side is the writer and on the other side is the reader and they are connected by the literary work. In Marxist terms the writer is the producer, the literary work is the product and the reader is the consumer. Communication is, thus the fundamental thing in literature. If there is no communication there is no literature. The product may be there but if I do not know how to use

it it has ceased to be a product for me. For me it is useless stuff. There could be some fine poetry written in old Chinese. But if I do not understand the language, for me it is only a body of meaningless sounds. In other words, any literary work written in a language which is not known to the reader fails for that reader as a literary work, simply because no communication has been established.

The art consists in the establishment of communication between the author living or dead, and the reader. Communication is thus the most important thing. In fact, until a certain relation has been established between the mind and the mood of the writer, his individual experience distilled into a condition where it can be publicly enjoyed, and the sensitive reader we cannot really say that a literary work has been produced. The work must produce some reaction in the reader, must transport him to the world that the writer is trying to present and produce some meaning for the reader, which he may accept or reject depending on his personal passions and prejudices. Otherwise, it remains just a dull and drab account of an experience. Oscar Wilde rightly remarked that “the meaning of any beautiful created thing is as much in the soul of him who looks at it, as it was in his soul who wrought it”. Wilde even went further to assert that “it is rather the beholder who lends to the beautiful thing its myriad meanings and makes it marvelous for us”. The idea of beauty naturally brings in the idea of aesthetics. When we say that a book is not literature we generally mean that it has no aesthetic value. And, by the same token, when we call a book of history such as Churchill’s, literature we mean that it has great aesthetic value.

In the first place, therefore, we distinguish between scientific writings, which are concerned only with scientific facts or interpretation of scientific facts where the writer uses language not for its aesthetic value but for a logical, purely intellectual exposition of matters leading to certain conclusions or establishments of certain facts. Utilitarian writings or writings which are done only to further one’s commercial interests or for the business of earning a living—describing an electric bulb or a new product, for example cannot be called literature in the true sense of the term. Thus, both the scientific writings and utilitarian writings are outside the purview of literature, because they are mainly concerned with information and neither with imagination nor with emotion. Literature, then, consists of those imaginative writings in which the writers exploit the resources of language and the evocative powers

of words for the expression of various kinds of experience. Literature, therefore, may be described as a kind of imaginative writing, because it is only through the faculty of imagination that a writer can sift his experiences, select a few and recreate into a verbal artifact.

If literature is communication of a special kind, language is the means of that communication. The language of scientific writings is informative with very definite denotation and connotation. But the language of literature is emotive; it has a feeling-content. This is, however, true about all literary forms: novel, poetry, drama, *belles lettres* and personal essays for that matter. But since we are concerned with poetry we must bear in mind the distinction between poetry and other kinds of literary forms like fiction or drama or a short story. Basically, the difference, as Coleridge pointed out in *Biographia Literaria*, is that in a poem the total value of the poem is more than the summation of the value of its parts. In a novel every chapter is a link to the next chapter; in a story the description of every incident leads to another incident or situation, and its value consists mainly in the function it does in building up the chain of events leading to the final conclusion. In other words, no chapter, no incident is complete in itself. But in poetry every line is complete in itself, and the end is pleasure. So the language of poetry has to be different from the language used in other literary forms, because it is in and through the language that the poem comes into being. It is the language that subsumes the meaning and the music, the denotation and the connotation, the symbols and the images, the thought-content and the feeling-content, the sonic and the semantic etc.

Now that we have separated poetry from scientific writings, utilitarian writings and other literary forms we have to call attention to another important aspect of poetry before we proceed further. Poetry is not only language in whatever peculiar ways we may use that language. It is, like music, painting, dance and sculpture, a theme of aesthetics. In other words a poem is an aesthetic object and is governed by various aesthetic criteria such as harmony, intensity, depth, structural tension etc. It is evident that a literary theory, which emphasizes the uniqueness of the literary object and analyzes it in terms of its inner consistency of parts is confined to the area of aesthetic judgment.

So, aesthetically speaking or looking at a poem as an aesthetic object one can say that a poem has no extra-territorial loyalty. But one major

difference between poetry and other forms of art—music, painting, dance and sculpture, for example—is that other forms of art can exist without the use of any language, but a poem cannot, because in addition to being an aesthetic object it is also a cognitive discourse. As an aesthetic object its meanings are immanent and intransitive rather than immediately referential as is the language of science. But, at the same time, it is a cognitive object and, therefore, it is bound to say something; it is referential and it does reveal something of the external world. So a poem is at once non-referential in terms of its inviolable context and referential in terms of the outside world from which it can never be completely alienated. The claim that literature has cognitive value can be broadly divided into three groups according to the cognitive theories involved: the predication theory, the revelation theory and the intuitive theory.

According to the predication theory a poem is a verbal discourse in which statements are made or implied. Let us take a few examples:

- (1) “The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace[...]" (Byron, *Don Juan*,
Canto I).
- (2) “Amen stuck in my throat” (*Macbeth*).
- (3) “I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!” (“Ode to the West
Wind”).
- (4) “[...] it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing” (*Macbeth*).

The first excerpt refers to a supposedly existing past situation, and one can ascertain its historical validity. It is also possible to examine the historical validity of the second statement by looking up Holinshed’s *Chronicle*, although we must hasten to add that there is a difference between the historical truth and poetic truth because poetry is not bound by history. In *Poetics* Aristotle made it absolutely clear how poetry is superior to both history and philosophy. About the third statement, we can also examine its historical validity in the light of the available biographical data of Shelley, although the finding can never be conclusive, because it is a figurative statement. The fourth statement, however, does not refer to any really existing thing. And there is no way to determine whether the statement is historically true or even true within the framework of the drama itself. We must again hasten to add that the

truth or falsity of the reports or statements in these cases have little bearing on the poetic value of the lines quoted above. In terms of the thought content or as cognitive discourse the fourth statement can also be called a thesis. The thesis or philosophy or idea may be more or less coherent as in the case of *The Divine Comedy* or *The Faerie Queene*, or it may be more or less complex as in the case of "The Waste Land" or "Sailing to Byzantium" Is the poetic value independent of the value of the thesis? Critics like Sidney, Arnold and Babbitt would advocate that the cognitive value and the poetic value are inextricably interlinked. This might be true about all moral critics, because moral value of literature is a function of cognitive value. Some critics like Eliot would hold that the cognitive value and the poetic value are theoretically separable, but a work cannot be great unless its cognitive value is also of supreme importance. The revelation theory claims that a work of art through the concrete particular reveals the universal. One can show, for example that by portraying the pangs of separation of the Yaksha from his beloved, Kalidasa portrays a universal feeling. The idea can be traced back to Aristotle about whose Theory of Imitation Butcher writes:

Imitation is the expression of the concrete thing under an image which answers to its true idea. To seize the universal, and to reproduce it in simple and sensuous form is not to reflect a reality already familiar through sense perception; rather it is a rivalry of nature, a completion of her unfulfilled purposes, a correction of her failures. (Butcher, 1951:154)

Another major claim for the cognitive value of literature is based on the intuitive theory. The intuitionists hold that there is a kind of knowledge of nonconceptual form, which is immediately intuited by a special faculty usually called the imagination. The peculiarity of the intuitive knowledge is that it cannot be communicated in the form of a logical proposition. When Croce talks about the impossibility of ever rendering in logical terms the full effect of poetry he is actually thinking in terms of the intuitive theory. Croce writes:

The critic does not offer as his completed judgment either intuitive remakings or logical equivalents of poetry but does something very different: he gives a characterization of it. This characterization is properly based on the content of poetry, the sentiment that the poem has amplified by transference to the poetic atmosphere. The object of this investigation [...] is human reality in its completeness, in all its infinite subdivisions. (In Allen and Hayden Clark, 1962:637)

While discussing the nature of literature Jacques Maritain also writes:

The fine arts aim at producing, by the object they make, joy or delight in the mind through the intuition of the senses. Such joy is not the simple act of knowing, the joy of possessing knowledge or having truth. Such joy, therefore, presupposes knowledge, and the more knowledge there is, the more things given to the mind, the greater will be the possibility of joy. For this reason art, as ordered to beauty never stops—at all events when its object permits it—as shapes or colours or sounds or words, considered in themselves as things—but considers them also as making known something other than themselves, that is to say as symbols. And the thing symbolized can be in turn a symbol, and the more charged with symbolism the more immense, the richer and higher will be the possibility of joy or beauty. (Maritain, 1973:31)

Then there is the question of the moral value of poetry. A poem, it is claimed, must have a moral value. What exactly is meant by moral value is difficult to decide. It may mean, for example, that the process of writing a poem is a moral act. It may also mean that the experience of reading a poem has, can have, or should have an effect on human acts. When Sidney says that the writer through his portraits of Achilles, Cyrus, Aeneas, Turnus, Tydeus and Rinaldo “doth not only teach and move to truth, but teacheth and moveth to the most high and excellent truth” (1951:37) he is actually emphasizing the moral value of a poem or literature for that matter. When Beardsley pleads that “the aesthetic experience resolves tensions and quiets destructive impulses” (1958:575) he is actually describing an indirect moral effect. It may be possibly argued that a greater aesthetic value would necessarily imply a greater capacity for occasioning such indirect moral effects, although the converse of the proposition may not always be true. As long as we subscribe to the view that poetry is knowledge we have to admit that it illuminates life and thus aids the reader in sitting in judgment over life. Morality in literature is, at bottom, criticism of life. A great work of art has to be morally right. *The Divine Comedy* is a case in point. The greatness of the poem is as much due to its aesthetic richness as to the philosophy enunciated in it.

The key issue, then, is that since a poem is both an aesthetic object and a cognitive discourse with moral values embedded in it, and the end is either delight (Aristotle) or instruction and delight (Horace) it is difficult to decide what constitutes the *locus* of literariness or the *poesis*

of a poem. The problem becomes all the more fascinating when we consider—as we stated in the beginning—that literature is culture specific. Yet our experience bears testimony to the fact that we enjoy literature produced in a different culture across space and time. This naturally means that in spite of specific differences there is some generic similarity in all the literatures of the world. There is a hard core the presence of which makes one work an authentic literature, or a poem an authentic poem. It is this undefined core, which may be described, for lack of any better term the literary universal. But what is the nature of that literary universal?

It is this question that has engaged the critical attention of poetics of the highest order both in the West and in India. If European literature is more than two thousand years old, the Indian intellectual tradition also dates back to the second century B.C. In both India and the West great aestheticians have tried to examine the nature of literature, its ontology and the secret of its appeal. They have tried to define in their own ways the nature of poetry and what constitutes literariness or the poesis of a poem. The notion of the literary universal and its timelessness implies that there must be affinities between the Western thinkers and the Indian thinkers down the centuries in regard to these problems. Indian poetics developed into eight schools: Rasa, Alamkāra, Rīti, Guṇa/Doṣa, Vakrokti, Svabhāvokti, Aucitya and Dhvani. The cross-currents and overlappings notwithstanding these eight schools represent eight different approaches to poetry depending on their understanding of what constitutes literariness. Seen in the light of these theories Western critical approaches seem to have an interesting affinity with many of them. Some of the central issues related to the process of literary creation, expression and reception could possibly be better understood in the light of Indian poetics.

Broadly speaking there is a common agreement that the end of poetry is pleasure derived out of the aesthetics of a poem, although for the Horatian school the end is not just pleasure, but pleasure with instruction (*dulce et utile*). There is also a common agreement that a poem is a verbal artifact and everything happens or is made to happen through language. So the central issue is the relation between the end and the means. What is the nature of the aesthetic pleasure and how to use the language to achieve the end effectively and successfully? Different schools have different views regarding this. If the Rīti school focuses on

the style and Vakrokti on deviation and obliquity, the Aucitya school believes in propriety in the use of language and the Dhvani school believes that the poetic language should be used in such a way that it should be suggestive and not just statement, and so on and so forth.

It is amazing to see how the Western thinkers mainly from Aristotle to the present have also thought on the lines that have engaged the attention of the Indian thinkers beginning with Bharata.

It is interesting to note that great thinkers across space and time—like Aristotle in Greece and Bharata in India—wrote treatises on drama, and in the process made utterances which shed light on the nature and function of poetry and introduce ideas in embryonic forms which are later developed into elaborate theories and schools. Aristotle says that the end of poetry is pleasure. Bharata also talks about *Rasa* leading to aesthetic relish. It must, however, be borne in mind, that what Bharata or Aristotle say in the context of drama is, by and large, applicable to poetry as well. If Bharata talks about the *Guṇas* (merits) and *Doṣas* (blemishes) that one must bear in mind while writing a play Aristotle also writes in *Rhetoric* about the various uses of words which one must remember for the purpose of successful persuasion, and in the process implies the effects of the right and wrong uses of words. Thus there is a common agreement that it is the effective and successful use of language that can lead to the aesthetic pleasure. So, ultimately it is the use of language on which everything depends. Indian poetics broadly developed into eight schools: *Rasa* (aesthetic relish), *Alamkāra* (rhetorics), *Riti* (style), *Guṇa/Doṣa* (merits and blemishes), *Vakrokti* (oblique statement), *Svabhāvokti* (natural statement), *Aucitya* (propriety) and *Dhvani* (suggestion), corresponding roughly to the Western theory of pleasure, rhetoric or figures of speech, theory of form, oblique poetry, statement poetry, propriety and suggestion respectively. But it should be noted however, that while *Rasa* or pleasure is concerned with the effect of poetry other theories are concerned with the linguistic means by which this effect is produced.

The early speculations about poetry, like the speculations about painting were confined to casual attention to different elements of poetry. The exponents of the *Alamkāra* school held that the mode of figurative expression, grammatical accuracy and the sweetness of sound constitute poetry. Although the idea of *Alamkāra* can be traced back to a period

before Bharata, it is Bharata who used these ideas in his theory of dramaturgy. The early history of Sanskrit poetics started with the theory of *Alamkāra* and developed into a system with Bhamaha in the sixth century A.D. Bhamaha and later Dandi confined themselves mainly to what they called *Kāvyaśasarīra* or the body of poetry and held that the two factors that go to the making of *Kāvśasarīra* are *śabda* (word) and *artha* (meaning), and that poetry is born when there is a perfect harmony between these two factors—*sabdārthasahitaukāvīyam* (perfect harmony of word and meaning makes poetry)—and further held that the *alamkāras* or the poetic figures of speech are essential ingredients of this harmony. As it began to develop into a system there appeared endless divisions and subdivisions of these *alamkāras*. However the *Alamkāra* in its finest manifestation has an affinity with the Western concept of metaphor. The view that metaphor is a trope can be traced back to Aristotle. While in *Rhetoric* Aristotle writes at length about the value of rhetoric or figures of speech in creating the mood of the listener, in *Poetics* he says that a metaphor consists in giving a thing a name which belongs to something else, and held that the greatest thing was to be the master of metaphor. He further believed that it is one thing that cannot be learned from others. According to Aristotle the use of metaphor is a sign of genius since good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilar. In Coleridgean terms it is also born out of the esemplastic power of imagination that dissolves, diffuses and dissipates in order to unify.

Since a poem is written in words, and a word has both sound and meaning it has naturally *śavdaguṇa* and *arthaguṇa*. Bharata's enumeration of various *Guṇas* are meant to be borne in mind depending on the kind of mood one is interested in inducing in the auditor as well as on the context in which the speech is uttered. Gokak, an eminent scholar, has rightly remarked that mere language is “just lexis and syntax. There are no *guṇas* in it” (In Khuswaha 1988:145) and language acquires or fails to acquire *guṇa* depending on how effectively it is used in a particular situation. It is only then that the language is transformed into a style. A comparison of the Western rhetorical school and the Indian *Alamkāra* school shows how profoundly and meticulously the Indian *alamkāris* have analysed the language in terms of the figures of speech and their function in contributing to the poesis of a poem Bharata's treatise on drama thus, and particularly his notions of *guṇas* and *doṣas*

practically involve all the subsequent schools of poetry whether be it *rīti* (style) or *vakrokti* (oblique poetry or deviations), *svabhāvokti* (statement poetry), *aucitya* (propriety) etc.

We have already seen that the idea of *rīti* is embedded in Bharata's notions of *guṇas* and *doṣas*. In other words he implies, though he does not state it explicitly, that the style must be commensurate with the matter presented and the prevailing mood of a particular situation. Daḍdi, Vāmana and Kuntaka only provide an elaborate and slightly varied interpretations of the ideas suggested by Bharata. In *Poetics* Aristotle also puts enormous emphasis on diction as one of the six important elements of a drama. But *rīti* is not just diction. Kapoor has insightfully remarked: "basically it is a theory that handles the psychophonetic fitness of language for speakers, themes and sentiments, and therefore becomes a study of craftsmanship and psychology of approach" (1998:20). Here again, when one compares the Western theories of style one is amazed by the threadbare discussion of the exponents of the *Rīti* school of the subtle nuances of stylistic variations and their effects on the texture and the poesis of a poem. To say this is not to undermine the remarkably valuable work done in the West on style so that it has become an independent discipline known as Stylistics ranging over phonology, morphology, prosody, syntax, lexicology and the study of figures and tropes. From Longinus to Coleridge and from Coleridge to Pater, and from Valery to Remy de Gourmont critics have all been concerned with style. But what distinguishes the Indian exponents of the *Rīti* school is that while the Western critics are generally concerned with style the Indian theorists are mainly, if not solely, engaged in the relation of style to poetry, and see how it makes or mars it.

The same is largely true about *Dhvani* which may be compared to the Western theory of suggestion. Stephane Mallarme is the greatest exponent of the theory of suggestion in the West. His credo that poetry should not state but suggest, has become the shibboleth of modern poetry. It has to be admitted, however, that although Mallarme in his letters and various writings repeatedly reaffirms his position he does not care to develop his doctrine either systematically or scientifically. But, Anandavardhana, on the other hand, develops a whole treatise on the solid foundation that good poetry must suggest and not just describe. There are as many as 5355 subdivisions of suggestion!

Derrida's concern with the peculiar nature of language and particularly his idea of *écriture* was anticipated by Bhartr̥hari in *Vākya-padīya* where he develops the theory of *Sphota* at great length.

The Indian theory of *Vakrokti* which can be traced back to the critical speculations of Bhamaha, Vāmana Daṇḍin, Rudraṭa and others and reaches its finest exposition in Kuntaka has affinity with the importance of deviation or obliquity in poetry. But the way Kuntaka develops the theory and shows fine insight into the nature of poetry is just not available either in Tillyard or any other theorist for that matter. The same is true about *svabhāvokti*, which is often compared with statement poetry. But there, too, the meticulous care and alert attention to the minutest details that we find in the Indian theoreticians is simply absent in their Western counterparts. The idea is more or less the same, but there is a world of difference in the brilliance of the systematic exposition.

What is poetry if it does not produce *rasa* or gives the reader an experience of aesthetic rapture? Both the Indian theoreticians and the Western theoreticians are of the opinion that the aim of poetry is pleasure, which according to the Indian aestheticians arises out of the experience of *rasa* in poetry. But while starting with Bharata all the Indian aestheticians have broken their lances on how this pleasure is created, and have taken great pains in describing the nature of different moods leading to different kinds of *rasas*, the Western theoreticians have been rather reticent about these aspects. About some other ideas like imitation or catharsis Aristotle speaks very little compared with the volumes that we get in Bharata and the subsequent theorists.

Theorists of all ages and all schools of poetic thought have felt that the language of poetry is different from the language of ordinary prose. They further agree that the sonic and the semantic—the sound and the sense—are the two most important elements of poetry, and that poetry is born when they are blended harmoniously together. The speculations about how his blending can be effected lead to different schools—*alamkāra*, *riti*, *svabhāvokti*, *dhvani*, *vakrokti* etc. The fact of the matter, however, is that neither *alamkāra* nor *riti* nor *vakrokti* etc. can individually account for the poesis of a poem. An *alamkāra* or embellishment cannot be superadded; it must be integral to the poem. Similarly a particular style cannot make poetry unless it is in keeping with the cultural level of the speaker or the nature of the thought-content

of a poem. There are various factors that would determine the style. Again, just deviation or stating a thing in an oblique way cannot make poetry unless what is stated is modified by a predominant passion or in the words of Coleridge, “by associated thoughts or images awakened by that passion”. In other words, the production of *rasa* demands the use of some or all the elements depending on the nature of the idea envisioned in the poem, because a poem is an organic unity. We must have suggestion, we may have figures of speech or deviation also; we may have a particular style, and so on, but all these elements must be integrated into the matrix of the poem.

To compare the correspondences between the Indian schools and the Western schools is to be amazingly aware of the immensity and profundity of the systematic study of the Indian aestheticians. By comparison Western poetics appears perfunctory in spite of occasional bright insightful flashes that we find in Aristotle, Coleridge, Croce or Mallarmé for that matter.

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Book review

*El bisturí inglés. Literatura de viajes
e hispanismo en lengua inglesa.*

Carmelo Medina Casado y José Ruiz Mas (editores).
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En las líneas, caminos y encrucijadas de un libro se encuentran lector y autor porque ambos decidieron de antemano viajar hasta el envés de la hornacina literaria, pacto de ficción mediante. El escritor despertó temprano—impelido por inquietudes y necesidad comunicadora—o permaneció en estados de duermevela para esbozar su itinerario, bien lloviendo sobre mojado, adecuando sus huellas a las ya existentes, bien surcando las provincias de la creatividad y la imaginación con periplos experimentales, propios. Equipaje de intuición en mano, sensibilidad alerta, un reloj de tiempo convencional, mil y una esferas de temporalidad interior, además de maletas con compartimentos para metáforas, marcas de estilo e improntas del imaginario personal, se deslizó por las sendas del mundo y la realidad testimoniando el perfil de su sombra, de su espíritu, dejando subir a su calesa a personajes de ficción, pintando sobre mapas de cotidianidad las escalas de su periplo o, lejos de tales entornos reales, soñando con otros universos, como alegato a la invocación mágica y la conceptualización de mundos posibles. Tal es el viaje del escritor, emprender la marcha, partir y no abrir los ojos con alivio—gozoso o resignado—hasta llegar a la última posta del camino, justo donde el viaje da a luz mil y un trayectos potenciales o toca a su fin, dependiendo de si su obra permanece abierta o no a la postre.

El lector, es evidente, también viaja; siente la llamada de la tinta

hilvanada y recorre la geografía de causalidad argumental, los marcos de acción, refrendando con su aproximación al texto el viaje del creador ausente, hilando caminos a través de la palabra presente, barajando las fotografías y enmarques de esos caprichos novelados, heredando la inercia de aquél, la sombra de su pluma, y haciéndola suya, pintando sobre los esbozos, llenando los huecos, recreando. La literatura, pues, nacida sobre el pliego, como proyección del autor, y renacida en el regazo del receptor, no es sino viaje—en muchos casos iniciático— desplazamientos más allá de los márgenes temporales de nuestro presente, también allende los límites de nuestro entorno, incluso de nuestra lógica o realidad, no ya sólo en la esencia dinámica inherente a las obras, sus tramas (recuérdese que uno de los hechos que marca el devenir de una historia en su desarrollo es el cambio, generalmente producido a partir de la irrupción de un elemento que provoca una crisis o disfunción de la lógica del presente y la consecuente búsqueda de la compensación de tal falta o la vuelta al equilibrio de génesis)¹ sino en cuanto al propio carácter testimonial y de identificación por parte del autor y lector respectivamente. Todos los géneros suponen un trayecto tal, no sólo el claro exponente de la literatura de ciencia ficción o el horror sobrenatural, la literatura feérica, la fantástica o la utópica; también la más costumbrista, la realista y sus modalizaciones textuales de lo social, suponen, aun dentro de los límites de la realidad, un trayecto a diversos enclaves, microcosmos de nuestro mundo, cuando no al interior de las personas que protagonizan tales historias mínimas.

A la luz de lo expuesto, la literatura de viajes no habría de ser una “rara avis” dentro de las actualizaciones de inspiración textual, no tendría que ser ese género de trastienda, como se la ha tildado generalmente, siguiendo los patrones críticos del canon. Ante lo relativo de los principios de enjuiciamiento del valor literario, hemos de, cuando menos, recelar de la no inclusión de escritos dentro de esta corriente en el predio de obras canónicas, pues la literatura de viajes supone, en muchos casos y

¹ Vladimir Propp es explícito al respecto. En su anhelo de sistematizar la estructura potencial de las tramas, describir constantes y, en general, una morfología sobre la dinámica argumental de los cuentos maravillosos, trazó una serie de funciones, treinta y una en concreto, que se repiten de cuento a cuento y vehiculan el desarrollo de los argumentos. Para él, toda trama partía de un movimiento de alejamiento del protagonista con respecto al entorno habitual, lo cual provoca una carencia, una ausencia, a posteriori acentuada por la transgresión de una prohibición por parte del propio protagonista (o uno de los personajes) que lleva al castigo. Las consecuencias de éste—acción punitiva por parte del antagonista—habrán de ser subsanadas—mediante pruebas y pericia por parte del héroe y coadyuvantes—para poner fin a la secuencia episódica, restituyendo el equilibrio y compensando tal carencia.

a todas luces, un modo testimonial y vivencial de nuestros espacios, de nuestros universales, una introspección sin límites, una caracterización de personajes, tanto el colectivo como el individual, la activación de mil y una tradiciones autóctonas, así como la exhumación de leyendas, y, cómo no, un medio de expresión ideológica—vindicación, denuncia, justificación, reafirmación, según el posicionamiento del viajero escritor o el escritor viajero² con los hechos y las circunstancias—, además de, no en pocas ocasiones, la plasmación de un estilo depurado, lenguaje figurativo, lejos de lo meramente divulgativo y, por ende, generador del placer textual, esa potencialidad escripible del gozo literario a la que alude Roland Barthes.

En nuestra contemporaneidad, dominada por el best-seller que indaga en las asunciones del presente, líneas que juegan a reconstruir verdades incontestables durante siglos, dogmas sobre todo de la Iglesia Católica, y nos plantea viajes intrincados, trayectos de retrospectiva para despertar las más sorprendentes conspiraciones y códigos letales, surge *El bisturí inglés*. Es ésta una antología que nos devuelve la esencia del viaje en su estado más primitivo y disfrutal, con unas coordenadas temáticas precisas, perfectamente acotadas—más que necesarias en un género tan amplio como la red de caminos y experiencias del escritor de sendas—que son de agradecer, pues se teoriza en sus páginas sobre los modos en los que

² Es ésta una de las claves en torno a la literariedad del género que nos ocupa en la presente reseña si bien la cuestión puede parecer fuera de lugar, inmersos como estamos en una era en la que, según se dicta, están de más las diferencias entre modos de arte tradicionalmente canónicos y expresiones populares varias. Con todo, cabría preguntarse si cualquiera puede escribir un libro de viajes, si habría de establecerse una distinción entre aquel que escribe un diario de trayecto sin otra pretensión que no sea la de datar sus vivencias, por ende, el viajero que se torna en escritor al ser la anotación su modo de inmortalizar las postas y reverberaciones de su periplo, y, en el otro extremo, el escritor propiamente dicho, quizás no ducho en el viaje, pero convertido en testimoniador de sendas. El escaso bagaje o práctica literarios de aquél podría legar un escrito en el que todo fuese anécdota, aun directa, transparente y vívida; por el contrario, el prisma y las herramientas estilísticas de éste podrían monopolizar el recuento, llegar a la artificiosidad en detrimento de lo verosímil, la frescura e inmediatez espontánea y emotiva de la dicción del viajero. Nos cuestionamos, pues, acerca de la conveniencia o no de la recreación, la activación de fabulaciones subjetivas, imaginarias a partir de aspectos objetivos, dentro de la literatura de viajes y concluimos que esta remodelación de lo existente a partir de la visión personal es inevitable. En este sentido, nos atreveríamos a decir que incluso el estilo más puramente documental, el más aséptico, contendría una impronta subjetiva aunque sólo fuese por la mera elección de sustantivos, adjetivos, la disposición de las palabras o el orden de elementos en una descripción. Ya lo advierte Bernal Rodríguez en este libro, “es obvio que un libro de viajes no puede ser objetivo en sentido estricto” (65). Con respecto a la diferenciación entre viajero y literato en el marco de la literatura de viajes, apostamos por una solución a medio camino, un equilibrio que contemple la pasión indómita o el ojo avizor de aquél y la impostación estilística, recreadora y figurativa de éste. Decidirse por la idoneidad de uno u otro sería privar a este género de esa hibridez entre la ficción y la no ficción que la caracteriza. Al referirnos al productor de los diarios de viaje, hablemos simplemente de un actante dinámico, observador, escriba, que recorre el camino, descifra la impronta de los lugares, e incide en la realidad como la luz, como los sueños, activando su recreación en líneas, objeto de otras recreaciones en el seno interpretativo de los lectores.

nómadas de pluma en mano han escrito sobre España—ese marco exótico cuasiparadisíaco para autores tan ínclitos como Lord Byron o Percy Bysshe Shelley—y, más en concreto, sobre su paso por diversos puntos de la provincia de Jaén. El elenco de críticos reunidos en esta obra analizan la matemática del bisturí con el que hispanistas, viajeros y otros allegados a España diseccionaron (que no trepanaron) el marco español, nuestro espíritu, nuestra historia, nuestro hábitat, impelidos por un afán de definición o búsqueda personal de la tierra prometida. El viaje en esta antología se nos presenta como experimentación de parajes exteriores y de interior, estímulos vivenciales con la consecuente respuesta a través del “souvenir” literario, las líneas testamentarias que immortalizan diferentes etapas de cada viaje en cuestión.

El trayecto testimoniado por un narrador autodiegético—situado a la vez fuera de la narración, en una posición de retrospectiva cuasiomnisciente y, en la mayoría de los casos, inserto en el recuento como personaje—suele presentarse como un desplazamiento iniciático o modo de reencuentro consigo mismo, un acicate de expansión e incluso de colonización intelectual, un viaje que se transita una vez en la realidad, varias veces en la mente del autor, además de otras tantas en la del lector, siendo la lectura de este tipo de literatura, por tanto, una experiencia colectiva, tal y como defiende García-Romeral Pérez (139) en uno de los artículos incluidos en la antología.

Los editores Medina Casado y Ruiz Mas han logrado confeccionar un compendio de artículos que conforman globalmente una aproximación jugosa al fenómeno de la literatura de viajes, basculando entre los apuntes teóricos, exégesis sobre parámetros y constantes de la literatura de viajes, además de la más que agradecida ilustración por medio de textos a modo de reseñas y pilares de argumentación crítica sobre los términos defendidos por los estudiosos que aportan su voz analítica en esta antología. Elogiable es la coherencia temática entre los diferentes trabajos—con intertextualidad y referencias cruzadas latentes—, además de la unidad resultante, por ende, un compendio de recetas vivenciales, una guía de caminos recónditos y, más figuradamente, un mosaico de colores y modos autóctonos con riqueza plástica y empaque intimista insoslayables. Hay una metódica complementación entre todos ellos, llegándose a la raíz mediante el análisis puntual, por parte de cada autor, de diferentes aspectos relacionados con la temática general de la obra o, por el contrario, gracias a la diversa aproximación, enriquecedora, a uno

solo. Destacables, igualmente, son la concisión expositiva y el equilibrio entre las diferentes secciones en las que se desglosan los análisis.

Medina Casado y Ruiz Mas han concebido una estructura ideal para su trabajo, un enmarque teórico da luz y apostilla el cuerpo principal de la antología, los textos de temática más concreta. El “incipit” al que aludimos está constituido por un prólogo a modo de estudio de generalidades sobre la literatura de viajes—en el que también se viene a aludir a ese carácter legendario, arcaico e, inevitablemente, mítico de nuestro país—,³ razón por la cual hemos de subrayar que la antología está dirigida a todo aquel que, incluso profano en la materia, quiera acercarse a esta suerte de literatura de acendrado vitalismo y pulsión por el descubrimiento, la aventura bizantina o la revelación de experiencias. Como “coda”, encontramos los artículos escritos por los propios editores, líneas que nos acercan con mayor concreción al recuento textual de viajes por la provincia de Jaén.

Los autores que nos brindan su aproximación a la literatura de viajes en esta antología saben bien lo que tienen entre manos, un género inclusivo, muy heterogéneo, en el que, en muchos casos, los eventos no son sino pretexto para pintar un cuadro de costumbres, aunque, cierto es, la anécdota—tanto como detalles nimios entre los que destacan los dichos populares o los giros humorísticos—también constituye un puntal expresivo seminal en los libros de viajes. Son todos ellos, los descritos, trayectos de vuelta segura en los que la labor del escriba no es sino la de hacerse una composición de lugar, datar, describir, como respuesta al ademán o impulso taxonómico de sistematizar la realidad que se descubre y con la que se convive, aquélla que enriquece o con la que se choca.

El primer artículo, a cargo de José Alberich, persigue un doble propósito: en primer lugar, el que evidencia el título de su trabajo, subrayar la visión de los románticos acerca de las constantes del carácter

³ Ya en las líneas introductorias de esta compilación, los editores nos adelantan el nombre de los más señeros escritores que pasaron por nuestras tierras y legaron en páginas sus reflexiones sobre parajes, gentes y aventuras varios. Entre ellos, Washinton Irving (*Tales of the Alhambra*), George Borrow (*The Bible in Spain*) y Richard Ford (*Handbook For Travellers in Spain*), sin olvidar a Gerald Brenan (*Málaga Burning, South of Granada*) o George Orwell (*Homage To Catalonia*).

⁴ Éste es de un atractivo ineludible para el escritor romántico, especialmente por su halo de primitivismo, esencia recóndita y salvaje. España figura como un mundo aparte habitado por bandoleiros, lares en los que la pobreza convive con la magia, la superstición y la gracia. De impronta romántica es, igualmente, la simbiosis entre el estado interior y el entorno descrito, además del animismo que se le confiere a los parajes, tematizados en su gran mayoría.

español⁴, si bien se nos antoja más importante aún, al menos a la hora de desvelar un aspecto que hemos de considerar entre los paradigmas caracterizadores de este tipo de literatura, su afirmación de que las obras del género no son sino metatextos, influencia clara de esos otros viajes que son las lecturas de escritos alusivos al país visitado, referentes como las Cartas de España, de José Blanco White. Las líneas son rayanas en la denuncia, pues, en muchos casos, los libros de viajes no son sino meros plagios o extrapolación de datos tomados de obras ya existentes.

Manuel Bernal Rodríguez analiza las epístolas periodísticas de William Jacob, mientras que Eroulla Demetriou, en el único artículo escrito en inglés dentro de la antología, expone sus disquisiciones sobre la obra *The Reformed Spaniard*. Carlos García Romeral Pérez se decanta por una aproximación de amplias miras, con ingente cantidad de referencias al fenómeno de la literatura de viajes, dejando constancia de una tipología genérica de escritos (moralizantes, satíricos, vestigios de picaresca o simplemente diarios de viaje) y explicitando su exégesis esa curiosidad del viajero que lo lleva al conocimiento. De un sesgo más antropológico es el trabajo de Blanca Krauel Heredia, esbozos de un retablo de la mujer española según el punto de vista de viajeros que acudieron a España durante el último tercio del siglo XVIII y las primeras décadas decimonónicas. Sus líneas desvelan un crisol de referencias en los escritos de tales allegados que bien podrían constituir un estudio semiótico de significantes sociales, sobre todo acerca de la mujer andaluza: ropajes y ciertos complementos de connotación simbólica evidente entre los que destaca el abanico, un arma de conquista pasional.

Al hilo del último enfoque, si bien trasmutando el papel de la mujer de focalizada a focalizadora, María Antonia López-Burgos del Barrio nos acerca a las vivencias de ciertas aventureras inglesas o americanas por los caminos de España. Su aportación revitaliza con inmediatez y frescura las líneas de esos diarios de viaje escritos por auténticas peregrinas que se enfrentaron a vicisitudes varias, además de momentos de desarraigo y soledad en nuestras tierras. López-Burgos se hace eco de citas en pluma por parte de intrépidas autoras como Lady Chatterton, Lady Holland, Cecilia Hill o Lady Grosvenor. En sus viñetas, con un naturalismo transido de posos de creencias populares, se nos habla de parajes ruinosos, de noches de ventisca, lugares encantados, el plenilunio y la silueta de gitanos danzando en torno al fuego o bandoleros de madrugada, además de imbuir de poesía nostálgica y aspectos periféricos al viaje, detalles

casi fetichistas, como la diligencia, las bridas o el látigo. En pureza, estos textos son refrendo de un apasionamiento de contemplación, interiorización, y alquimia de recreación espiritual y de entornos.

El bisturí inglés tiene dos últimas postas que hacen de su lectura a la postre un viaje más apasionado si cabe. Si José Ruiz Mas analiza en profundidad la figura del “expatriate”, estableciendo una distinción entre turistas, antropólogos, hispanistas, escritores y otros, refiriéndose, con ello, a figuras tan relevantes como Gerald Brenan, Ian Gibson, Marguerite Steen, Robert Graves o Derek Lambert, para destacar un denominador común en todos estos idealistas telúricos —la búsqueda del retiro edénico— que en ocasiones usan su literatura como expresión panfletaria, Carmelo Medina Casado, nos sirve, sin lugar a dudas, el más completo y riguroso estudio de la colección, la más fiel y precisa impronta de la pluma-bisturí. Sus líneas comienzan por dignificar el género, con fundamento y convicción. Sondea el autor en los orígenes de la literatura de viajes—retro trayéndose incluso al siglo XIV A.C., con el anónimo *The Journeying of the Master of the Captains of Egypt*—y, pasando por el momento de eclosión de esta corriente—con escritores señeros como Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, George Borrow o Richard Ford—desemboca en el siglo XX, dando fe de la importancia de personalidades literarias como Aldous Huxley y, cómo no, Graham Greene. Sea como fuere, allende este recorrido por las etapas y grandes nombres de la literatura de viajes—ese modo de “viajar sin desplazarse” (229), afirma el autor—, Medina Casado nos plantea un trayecto aún más concreto y fascinante, hasta la médula de la provincia de Jaén, a través de la mirada versada en líneas de autores que transitaron diferentes puntos de la geografía jiennense, sin obviar los textos de otros que incluso hicieron de estas tierras su hogar. Parte el crítico de dos viajeros británicos—Frederic Wittelsbach y Andrea Navagiero—para referirse posteriormente a románticos como el Capitán Rochfort Scott—en cuya obra *Excursions in the Mountains of Ronda and Granada with characteristic sketches of the inhabitants of the South of Spain* se incluyen referencias a Andújar, Arjona y Escañuela, entre otras poblaciones—, Samuel Cook Widdrington, quien, entre reflexiones sobre la tauromaquia, el comercio o las minas, dedica palabras a enclaves tan pintorescos como Orcera, Úbeda y Baeza, o el fundacional Richard Ford, cuyas líneas se adentran en el corazón rural de Bailén, Guarromán, Santa Elena o La Carolina.

En definitiva, *El Bisturí Inglés* no es sino un conciliábulo de reconocidos investigadores dentro del campo de la literatura de viajes, un paso firme en el camino de los estudios relativos a esta materia en la que la creación se encuentra con la senda, el hábitat, el retiro, la posada, la imaginación, la epístola, el diario, el alma de ficción y la identificación receptiva. Salvaguardando el palpito de lo recóndito, la creatividad colonizadora, los artículos incluidos en esta antología buscan los parámetros de una utopía costumbrista a través de enunciaciones sumarias sobre aspectos globales, auráticos de los lugares que tematizan sus frescos descritos, pero sobre todo mediante un acopio ingente de estímulos sensibles, olores, tacto, enunciaciones visuales, la cotidianidad más familiar o la más recóndita, esbozando para imponer el exotismo de parajes olvidados por la memoria selectiva, entronizando como míticos, anómalamente exóticos, enclaves rurales varios. La ensoñación que preside estos diálogos testamentarios con la tierra, al son de pinceladas de palabra, hace del objeto focalizado un referente casi virtual, una tierra del nunca jamás, con un magma multicolor, ecléctico, pero unitario, con diversos motivos recurrentes o trazos diferenciales entre tierras de un mismo país de leyenda.

Así, mediante la sistemática revelación de acuarelas de viaje, se llega a lo atemporal, al sustrato egregio del alma del sujeto observador, el literato testimoniador. El lector manejará documentos de primera mano, narración, descripción, tapices de enumeración e inventario de aspectos insólitos por parte de “juglares” de tierra embebecidos en distanciamiento o empatía al transmitirnos arquetipos o prejuicios, lo grotesco, lo caricaturesco, un modo testimonial rayano en la tradición oral, aspectos éstos que evidencian a través de la voz crítica expresa que esas anotaciones de trayectos, esas fotografías literarias, esas incisiones en el alma del paisaje y las gentes españolas refrendan la archiconocida aseveración de Charles R. Scott: “Spain is different”. Nuestra esencia vista a través de ojos ajenos, una mirada entre realista, alienada y fascinada, un tratado social con la realidad como pilar novelable que nos impele, además de al propio viaje de degustación, a un ejercicio de concienciación sobre nuestros orígenes; todo esto y más es este antológico bisturí.

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