

CINCINNATI

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REVIEW

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PREFACE

I am delighted to present to you our sixth volume of the Cincinnati Romance Review. CRR continues to be an annual publication of scholarly articles on the Romance literatures generally selected from papers read at the University of Cincinnati's annual May conference which has been well attended since its inception.

What I wrote in the preface to Volume II (1983) still holds true and merits repetition: "The warm reception accorded our Conference confirms our original belief that an annual gathering of scholars to exchange ideas on various aspects of Romance literatures satisfies an urgent need." In the May 1987 Conference over 200 papers were read by scholars from the United States and abroad. We appreciate your support of our Conference and CRR and welcome any suggestions.

It has been a pleasure to serve as Executive Editor over the past six years. Under the new editor, CRR will strive to adhere to the standards we have established.

We wish to thank the graduate students of the University of Cincinnati Department of Romance Languages and Literatures for making the last Conference run so smoothly. Thanks are also due to our colleagues who chaired sessions and helped determine which papers should be included in this volume.

Donald W. Bleznick

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On the Suicidal Style in Modern Literature
(Goethe, Nerval, Flaubert)

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"Et ainsi se forme une compagnie de fantômes déjà nombreuse, qui nous hante familièrement, et dont chaque membre vient nous vanter son repos actuel et nous verser ses persuasions."

Charles Baudelaire, "Edgar Allan Poe, sa vie et ses oeuvres."

A suicide note, in at least one respect, is a hopeful document. It expects to be given a reading, and one that amounts to much more than casual scrutiny. There is, of course, a price to be paid for the acquisition of such an intensified text-reader relationship, and it is a high one: the physical death of the subject. But the hoped-for reward is proportionately great: if we assume that a suicide is a victim of social alienation (and thus of a metaphorical murder), if furthermore the alienation manifests itself particularly as a problem of communication, then what is potentially achieved by the suicide note and the careful attention accorded it by its readership, is a disalienation. The subject "explains" the (alienating) circumstances that led to suicide, to a reader who is now strongly motivated to "understand" those circumstances, and to see the situation, from the point of view of the suicidal subject. A suppressed "person" lives on, as a subject of "writing," but who, or what, is a "subject of writing"? Is it not a construction produced by an act of reading?

On the other hand, since the addressee of a suicide note is characteristically that person or those persons who are perceived as the agents of

alienation, the function of the suicide note can be seen also to be that of bringing about a change in the reader. Through the power of text, immeasurably strengthened by the dramatic disappearance of the subject, the alienating figures who constitute its readership are to be converted into understanding figures; and since the subject they are to understand is a suicidal subject, we can see that the reader's conversion is, in general terms, a conversion from attitudes that cause suicide to the "suicidal point of view," that is, to some understanding of the "rightness," or at least the appropriateness, of suicide in an alienating world. The suicide note, in this respect, is paradigmatic of the ability of discourse to change its addressee, and specifically of the power of text to change its addressee through the process of reading. My hypothesis is that it may consequently help us to understand more generally what happens when readers are changed by their contact with literary texts, viewed for the purpose as something like a symbolic suicide note.¹

The ability (or ambition) to change the addressee is posited, however, as I have said, on the death of the subject. And in this respect the suicide note is a paradigm for writing, if by writing one understands a form of discourse that is not anchored in the controlling "presence" of an individual subject but, to the contrary, is "subjected" to the endless process of interpretation, and hence to what is called the "drift" of the signifier. To read a suicide note, I must somehow slip my own subjectivity, so to speak, "under" the signs of the text in hopes of coinciding with the writing subject whose view of things is passionately inscribed there. But all guarantee of such a coincidence is spectacularly gone, along with the subject; and all that is left for me to "go by" is the words themselves, now cut adrift from their personal subject.

To parody a famous dictum of Freud's, one

might say that, in the case of the suicide note, but also in the case of what we call literature, wo Ich war soll Es werden, where "Es" can be taken to refer to the text that survives and supersedes the disappearance of "Ich." But what is this "Es"? It is itself a Werden, a becoming that is defined only by the movement of the successive readings to which it gives rise. That is the underlying sense, I think, of the canonical incipit of suicide notes, which encapsulates at the same time their rhetorical structure: "When you read this I will be dead." It is a paraphrase of wo Ich war soll es werden, in which "this" is given as that object of reading the very condition of which is the subject's absence, so that what is given to be read is something undefined, a "this." It is, in fact, defined as undefined, by the absence of the subject. Nothing more aleatory could be imagined than reading under such conditions, yet nothing at the same time could be more crucial, for what hinges on such a reading is a disalienation of the communicative act, purchased at the important price of the subject's self-sacrifice. A suicide note, and by extension literature, constitutes in this sense an attempt to shift the very bases of "communication," from the alienating (non-) communication of autonomous "subjects" to a disalienating mode founded on the primacy of signs and hence on a "self-" sacrifice that, in the final analysis, is mutual: that of the writer and that of the reader.

We can glimpse here the fact that the suicide note has a redemptory, or would-be redemptory, structure. Through the sacrifice of the subject is to be achieved a redemption of the reader, converted from an alienating figure to one anxious to identify with the textual subject--i.e. an absence of subject--and hence to abandon the limits of "self"-hood. We can see, too, that such a redemptory structure proposes a powerful model for "literature" as the relation of a reading to a writing in the age of "modernity" defined by the

famous Mallarméan pronouncement concerning the "disparition élocutoire du poète." For, as Mallarmé puts it, the "omission of self"--the absence of a "direction personnelle et enthousiaste de la phrase"--liberates the powers of text and "cède l'initiative aux mots," which thus acquire a status of virtuality: "ils s'allument de reflets réciproques comme une virtuelle traînée de feux sur les pierreries." Reading becomes the attempted realization, always uncertain and partial, of that extraordinary latency. And so, in an essay that is a meditation on the Mallarmé passage, the Québec novelist Hubert Aquin concludes boldly that, under the conditions of elocutionary disappearance, reading and writing become interchangeable: "L'écriture est une lecture inversée et la lecture une écriture inversée. Donc, l'écriture est l'inverse de la passive lecture, et la lecture, l'inverse passif de l'écriture."²

Not surprisingly, perhaps, Aquin was to realize the latent suicidal metaphor that hovers over much modern writing (not least his own), in the fragment of an unfinished novel, Obombre, that he left behind after his own suicide.³ "Quand tu liras ces lignes, je serai déjà absent": these words immediately place the narrative under the sign of suicide and give it the elocutionary status of a suicide note. However, the text continues, "l'auteur est absent; mais son ombre encre chaque caractère": the black "characters" of the printed text function as the dispersed "shadow," or shade, of the absent subject; and the task of reading is consequently--as an "écriture inversée"--to give life to that phantom:

Si ce livre me représente, c'est uniquement dans la mesure où tu le fais accéder par la photogénie des cadratins de cette page, à la vie de ta pensée. C'est toi qui vis, lecteur, et non pas moi, non plus moi. Rien de moins métaphorique que cette dernière

phrase.

But "quads" ("cadratin") are a printer's term, and designate the means whereby blanks are produced on the page: where the "author" shades the ink of the print, the reader is being instructed to read between the characters, between the words. And that is why it is necessarily the life of the reader's mind (reading the blanks) that will be conferred on the ghostly subject (shading the inky characters); and the inverse relation of reading and writing consequently becomes, at the same time, the principle of a necessary displacement. For "c'est toi qui vis, lecteur, et non pas moi, non plus moi." In the case of an Aquin text, nothing is less metaphorical indeed than this statement; but in figuring the enunciatory situation of any literary text, to the extent that it can be viewed as the site of a symbolic suicide (that "omission of self" that makes the discursive "death" of the subject), the phrase has also a more general allegorical force. It tells us that literature is subject to the rules of reading that are those of a suicide note, rules that imply an attempted self-identification with the text and at the same time its interpretive displacement, so as to give it "life."

I cannot develop here the full implications of such an insight, nor mention the numerous contemporary writers (Blanchot and Leiris spring immediately to mind) whose texts would enrich it.⁴ I want to do something much simpler, and to look at some texts that have in common a certain combination of features. These texts present a suicidal personality as that of their protagonist; and simultaneously they deploy narrative techniques that enact the "elocutionary disappearance" of the subject and so produce themselves, qua texts, as discursively "suicidal," in the sense that they necessarily entrust their interpretation to "la vie de ta pensée...lecteur."

To put my point briefly, the combination of melancholic protagonist and ironic text that is found in certain works is a particularly eloquent device because it dramatically embodies both the ambitions and dangers, the hopes and the aleatory conditions, of literature as suicidal discourse. The implied solidarity of the narrative discourse (with its "disappeared" subject) and of the self-suppressing subject who is the hero(ine), functions as an implicit appeal for a sympathetic, that is suicidal, reading--I mean a reading in which the reader's own subjecthood allows itself to be erased in submission to the textual signifiers. But simultaneously, the text having sacrificed, with "la direction personelle et enthousiaste de la phrase," its power to orient the reader's interpretations, its chance of promoting such sympathy--or indeed of controlling its own reading in any way--is necessarily considerably diminished. As a result, the suicidal protagonist, whose "heroism" is necessarily of the kind that more practical heads would call "unrealistic," is left open to the possibility of the harshest judgments, and to a condemnatory stance on the reader's part that would--far from producing disalienation--reproduce the alienations against which the protagonist struggles. But these alienations are simultaneously those that the text itself, in its suicidal solidarity with the protagonist and in its attempt to produce reading as a similarly suicidal act of self-erasure, is also struggling against; so its chances of failure, and its own unrealism are exactly proportional to its (unestimatable) degree of solidarity with the personage I shall call the "unrealistic hero."

The sociological phenomenon of the "wave of suicides" is a well recognized one. It is on just such a phenomenon that the suicidal text, defining reading as a form of symbolic suicide, also relies. Its model of communication is not, and cannot be, that of the so-called "autonomous"

human subject exchanging "messages" with another autonomous human subject. Rather, it must assume the primacy of discourse and rely on the "elocutionary disappearance" of the writing subject into that discourse to produce an effect of attraction, or "contagion," such that readers will be drawn, similarly and "inversely," as Aquin says, to abdicate their autonomy in submission to textuality.

But, in the bourgeois social context with which modern literature contends, and which supplies the milieu for each of the three texts I will briefly discuss (Goethe's Die Leiden des jungen Werthers, Nerval's "Sylvie," and Flaubert's Madame Bovary), such an abdication of individual selfhood on the part of readers is precisely, unlikely. Failure is the most probable outcome for the suicidal text in its attempt to install a new, disalienating mode of communication; but the idea that failure is a way of succeeding--a form of "heroism"--in a world whose values are all wrong is not only part of the axiomatics of the suicide. It is also the ironic dictum of the anti-bourgeois literature of the bourgeois age, a literature which proves its alienation by being misread.

On the other hand, where some sort of success is achieved--where a suicidal narrative achieves for its suicidal protagonist a sympathetic reading that, consequently, acknowledges and enacts the powers and attractiveness of suicide (including the suicidal attractiveness of the text)--the victory, however melancholic its implications, will be that much more notable for the chances of failure having been so great. That is why it is possible to accord considerable symbolic significance to the Europe-wide wave of suicides that was touched off by the publication in 1774 of Werther. I do not mean, of course, that the success of the suicidal style in literature is necessarily to be measured by the number of self-inflicted deaths recorded among its readership. But those deaths,

in the case of Werther, were the sign of the efficacy of an esthetic stratagem which, precisely because it was such a gamble, is one of the sure markers of literary modernity.

* * *

At odds, as an upwardly mobile Bürger, with a still largely aristocratic society, and as a dreamy young man, with the mercantile class he is born into, Werther is manifestly a misfit, an "unrealistic hero." The question is only whether his impracticality should be read as a sign of maladaptation or of alienation. In the former case, his suicide will pose only the question of the meaning of this character's inability to accept things and live with people "as they are," i.e. rule- and convention-bound, settled in their ruts. In the latter case, however, his suicide will imply an indictment of society's inability to adapt itself to one whose superior values and powers of feeling place him above the rules and norms. The essential irony of the novel lies in the fact that it tends to lend support to both of these incompatible judgments, without permitting either to prevail.

Werther's melancholic personality makes him negligent of business, impatient of bureaucratic punctilio (such as that required by his employer, the ambassador), unwilling to accept the sensible advice showered on him by his friend Wilhelm. He objects, reasonably enough, to the snobbish rules of society; but he is also impatient with rules and regulations in general, which he sees as impeding true genius both in art and in the domain of the passions. Knowing that "es gibt Leute, die mir's verübeln würden" (p. 11) ["there are people who would condemn me for it," p. 26]⁵ he admits his need to coddle himself emotionally and to yield to whims ("Auch halt' ich mein Herzchen wie ein krankes Kind; jeder Wille wird ihm gestattet," p. 11). He is capricious and weak-willed

Des Abends nehme ich mir vor, den Sonnenaufgang zu geniessen, und komme nicht aus dem Bette; am Tage hoffe ich, mich des Mondscheins zu erfreuen, und bleibe in meiner Stube. Ich weiss nicht recht, warum ich aufstehe, warum ich schlafen gehe (p. 50).

In the evening, I decide to enjoy the sunrise, but in the morning I don't bother to get up. During the day I look forward to an enjoyment of the moonlight, then at night I stay in my room. I don't know why I get up or why I go to bed (p. 74).

These signs of a weakened structure of identity are accompanied by an intense capacity for feeling and involvement: Lotte notes very early the "warmen Anteil" (p. 29), the excessive participation he displays in mundane and run-of-the-mill affairs.

But finally his way of dealing with difficulties is not through engagement but through disengagement: his tendency, as Baudelaire might say,⁶ is always to "s'en aller." It is in the course of running away from an emotional problem at home (that concerning Leonore) that he meets Lotte, and before solving the resulting triangular situation by suicide, he will have become a veritable wanderer, first leaving Wahlheim, then abandoning his position with the ambassador, then returning briefly to his childhood home before being irresistibly drawn back, once more, to the environs of Wahlheim... Both his willingness to fall in love with Lotte, knowing full well that she is engaged to another but happy to yield to the momentary illusions of happiness, and his way of resolving the situation by means of suicide, exemplify therefore what the reader has already seen to be the constant pattern of his behavior, in which narcissistic self-indulgence (disguised as disdain for the rules) combines with ego-

weakness (thematized as capriciousness, instability of purpose, wandering etc.).

That such a pattern is distressingly and dangerously maladaptive is a view shared by all of Werther's main friends. Wilhelm's steady stream of sound advice is regularly acknowledged, but always ignored by Werther; Albert's opinion of him is fixed after their conversation about suicide; Lotte scolds him on various occasions for over-involvement (p. 29) and excess ("Sie hat mir meine Exzesse vorgeworfen!" p. 65); and in the final crisis she pleads with him--to Werther's despair and anger--for moderation: "Ich bitte Sie,...mässigen Sie sich" (p. 77). The novel seems to support their view of his immaturity by ironically revealing his lack of self-knowledge. The first paragraph shows him dealing with poor Leonore, whose affections he admits to having encouraged, by abandoning her (in a way that clearly foreshadows all of his future flights, but also the treatment of him by Lotte that will so embitter him). The moody future suicide rails against moodiness, and declares that "anything that does harm to oneself or one's neighbor deserves to be called a vice" (p. 47). Werther hates the snobbery of the upper classes, but shows himself class-conscious and snobbish on occasion; and the man who so despises society and its ways allows himself to be cruelly hurt by a petty incident. It is easy to conclude that he is silly and callow.

But at the same time it is difficult not to perceive the force of his critique of the social world as a restrictive and alienating environment. People prefer their comfort and convenience to the floods of passion: "it is not easy for men to understand one another" (p. 61); "we mean so little to each other" (p. 92). These are all clichés of moral judgment; but their accuracy partly accounts for Werther's "peep-show" view of the world:

Ich stehe wie vor einem Raritätenkasten (...) und frage mich oft, ob's nicht optischer Betrug ist. Ich spiele mit, vielmehr ich werde gespielt wie eine Marionette and fasse manchmal meinen Nachbar an der hölzernen Hand und schaudere zurück. (p. 50)

Sometimes I feel as if I were standing in front of a peep-show. (...) I ask myself if it is not an optical illusion. I join in the games, or rather, I should say that I let myself be manipulated like a puppet, and sometimes I touch my neighbor's wooden hand and withdraw mine in horror. (p. 74).

He diagnoses himself as an arid soul involved in a meaningless social existence; but a perceptive reader will be led to attribute his discomfort in society and his sense of the unreality of life to his uncomfortably *déclassé* social standing, and hence to plausible--and intractable--historical forces.

On a more intimate plane, moreover, the masterful account the narrative gives in its final pages of the alienated relationships that have come to exist between Werther and Lotte, Lotte and Albert, Werther and Albert, supports Werther's sense that life could be otherwise.

So verständige, so gute Menschen fingen wegen gewisser heimlicher Verschiedenheiten untereinander zu schweigen an, jedes dachte seinem Recht und dem Unrecht des andern nach, und die Verhältnissen verwickelten and verhetzten sich dergestalt, dass es unmöglich war, den Knoten eben in dem kritischen Momente, von dem alles abhing, zu lösen. Hätte eine glückliche Vertraulichkeit sie früher wieder einander nähergebracht, wäre Liebe und Nachsicht wechelsweise unter ihnen lebendig worden, und hätten ihre Herzen aufgeschlossen, vielleicht wäre unser Freund

noch zu retten gewesen. (p. 88)

These good, sensible people withdrew from one another because of secret differences, each becoming absorbed by what he felt to be right and by the error of the other. Conditions then grew more and more complicated and exasperating, until it became impossible to undo the knot at the crucial moment on which everything depended. If only a fortunate intimacy had brought them closer again before this, if only they could have felt love and consideration for one another mutually, and confided in one another, Werther might have been saved. (p. 122, translation modified)

The suggestion is that, immature and self-indulgent as he may be, Werther's view of the world is not necessarily for that reason an inaccurate one, and that his passionate revolt against it, even to the extremity of suicide, is--if not legitimate and justified--then at least fully understandable. To that extent, the text disculpates its protagonist and simultaneously supports his assessment of human relations, so that in the end the character reminds one of the haunting question Freud asks in his essay on "Mourning and Melancholia," when he wonders why it is necessary to become ill in order to have access to certain truths.

In this way, the text maintains a kind of ironic even-handedness, aided and abetted, of course, by the (largely) epistolary technique, which allows for the representation of critical views of the character's personality (through his citation of others' opinions) while simultaneously espousing, and allowing the reader to espouse, the views, opinions and emotions of the protagonist in an (apparently) unmediated way. The narrative sections at the end are inversely complementary from this point of view, since they adopt now an apparently objective stance, and report "evidence" gained from Werther's friends, but continue to

allow themselves access to the character's mind and hence to represent his own fevered point of view. Indeed, the passage that introduces the narrative section is particularly significant in its irony. All accounts of Werther's end tally, says the narrator, only to add damagingly: "nur über die Sinnesarten der handelnden Personen sind die Meinungen verschieden, und die Urteile geteilt" (p. 70) ["opinions differ and judgments vary only according to the personalities and views of the people involved," p. 100 (translation modified)]. Which is as much as to say that there can be no firm and authoritative judgment on the question.

Should we see in Werther the nobility of his refusal to compromise with petty restraints, or the childishness of one who self-indulgently refuses to adapt to the rules that make society work? It seems that, in the terms with which Werther had earlier responded to one of Wilhelm's rebukes, "in der Welt ist es so selten mit dem Entweder-Oder getan," p. 35 ["in this world, things can be settled in an either-or way only very rarely," p. 55, translation modified]. Needless to say, this view of Werther's is itself ironically handled (since the reader is inclined to think Wilhelm correct in precisely the case under discussion); but on the greater question of Werther's suicide, it is a view that the novel seems very much to uphold by its own refusal to endorse judgments of an either-or sort. And in this respect, the conversation of Werther and Albert on suicide (reported in the letter of August 12) functions as an exact mise-en-abyme of the whole; for Albert is surely correct to accuse Werther of exaggeration, paradox, false analogy and excess in his argument, but Werther is not wrong to describe suicide as a form of revolt against suffering and, at the same time, as an illness, comparable to a fever, for which one should not blame the sufferer.

And yet, in spite of all this even-handedness

and ironic distancing, the text does work in at least one specific way to gain the reader's sympathy for its hapless protagonist, a sympathy perhaps that is to occur not because of but in spite of our inability to know how to judge him and which therefore puts the question of judgment in brackets. I am referring to the scene of sympathetic reading that is produced, again en abyme and hence as a "model" for the text's own communicational situation,⁷ in the celebrated episode in which Werther reads to Lotte his translation of Ossian, an episode that recalls intertextually the Paolo and Francesca episode in the Divine Comedy. The pair come close at this point to a dangerous sexual consummation, but do not yield to it as Dante's characters do. For the real sense of the moment lies elsewhere, and derives from the fact that it is a text of melancholy lamentation, not an erotic narrative, that draws the two together. "Sie fühlten ihr eigenes Elend in dem Schicksal der Edlen, fühlten es zusammen, und ihre Tränen vereinigten sich" (p. 85) ["They experienced their own misery in the fate of these noble people, they felt it together, and their tears flowed as one," p. 118]. Let us recall that Werther has already decided irrevocably to die, and has penned the canonical words: "Wenn du dies liest, meine Beste, deckt schon das kühle Grab die erstarrten Reste...etc." (p. 78) ["When you read this, my dearest one, the cool grave will already cover the rigid remains... etc." p. 109]; Lotte for her part has just realized the misery of her own situation, in understanding the reality and the depth of her love for Werther.

So it is as much a communion in misery as in love that the Ossian text mediates. And consequently, it is not surprising that, as a result of the reading, Lotte has insight now into Werther's suicidal psyche: "ihr schien eine Ahnung seines schrecklichen Vorhabens durch die Seele zu fliegen" (p. 85) ["a hint of the terrible

thing he was planning seemed to brush Lotte's soul," p. 119]. And Werther, for his part, now understands a pact to have been concluded between them, as the next installment of his suicide note (itself a symptomatically episodic document) makes clear; but it is not a pact of love for this life. It is not specifically a suicide pact either, but it is an agreement that they belong to each other in the after life:

Und was ist das, dass Albert dein Mann ist? Mann!--das wäre denn für diese Welt (...). Du bist von diesem Augenblicke mein! mein, o Lotte! Ich gehe voran! geh' zu meinem Vater (...). Dem will ich klagen, und er wird mich trösten, bis du kommst (...etc). (p. 87)

And what difference does it make that Albert is your husband? Husband--that's a word for this world (...). From now on you are mine--mine, Lotte! I go on ahead to my Father. To Him I will complain and he will comfort me until you come (...etc). (p. 121)

It is apparent, then, that reading has the power to promote sympathy (in the strongest sense of the word) between one such as Lotte--whose values until this point have been those of bourgeois common-sense--and a suicidal subject inscribed in a text of melancholy. Werther has appropriated Ossian to his own situation, and Ossian in turn recruits the emotional involvement of Lotte for Werther, in an exemplary enactment of the textual communion that precisely the weakened self-identity of the melancholic subject makes possible. However, unlike the lamentations of Ossian, Goethe's text cannot be described as melancholic. The question being asked by the intertextual configuration is whether, and how, an ironic text can produce the same reading-effect as a melancholic one. And behind that question lies another: what, then, is common between ironic

writing and the melancholic discourse of a suicidal subject?... To this last question, we can already more than glimpse the answer, I think: it is the "omission of self" that characterizes the ironic as it characterizes the suicidal. But the former question requires some distinctions to be made.

For an ironic text cannot omit to ironize itself, and therein lies the most obvious difference between a text such as Werther and the text of Ossian that it embeds within itself. The effect of reading Ossian, it seems, is a sure-fire one; but the ironic text must always foresee its own communicational failure. That is why, open as it is to a sympathetic reading of Werther, it simultaneously permits, if not encourages, a reading that sees, not the nobility of his suffering, but the pettiness of his emotions and the immaturity of his character, in the light of cool common-sense and the values of social adaptation. The mise en abyme technique functions, precisely, in this respect, as an appeal for sympathetic reading, and as a distancing of such an appeal as being more appropriate for a character such as Werther, and a text such as Ossian's than for the coolness and poised wisdom of Goethe...

But where Werther seems, then, to maintain a careful separation between melancholic discourse and ironic writing, the two, in Nerval's "Sylvie" (1853), have become near indistinguishable and their affinity is close. The fusion of the melancholic and the ironic at the rhetorical level is figured by the close proximity in this pseudo-autobiographical text of the unrealistic protagonist and the elusive subject of narration, sharing as they do the pronoun "je." "Sylvie," famously, is one of those "circular" texts which tells the story of how the hero became the narrator: the two ("hero" and "narrator") must therefore be distinguished, but the continuity from one to the other needs also to be

acknowledged. Their meeting-point is in the final chapter ("Dernier feuillet"), in which is described the narrator-hero's final relation--I will call him "Gérard" when I do not need to distinguish the two roles--both to the Valois of his childhood and to Sylvie, her husband and family. In each case, his distance and exclusion is balanced by continued contact and indeed intimacy (so that there is homology between this situation and the relation of narrator to hero). This is the relation being referred to when Gérard alludes to the similarity of his situation to that of Werther, and Sylvie, who from being a peasant has become a novel-reading young lady, easily grasps the reference. "Je l'appelle quelquefois Lolotte, et elle me trouve un peu de ressemblance avec Werther, moins les pistolets, qui ne sont plus de mode" (p. 273).⁸

A Werther without pistols, as commentators have of course realized, is one who survives, and agrees to "live with" the difficult situation of being a rejected suitor but an included family-friend (a situation not unlike that of Saint-Preux, in La Nouvelle Héloïse, with whom Sylvie had previously identified the hero, cf. p. 259). The fact that Sylvie and Gérard can joke about their resemblance with the tragic figures of Werther and Lotte points out the difference between the two situations, and more generally the refusal of pathos which characterizes both Nerval's text and his hero's character. But to see Gérard as similar to Werther, as Sylvie does, is nevertheless still to designate him as a suicidal personality, and the allusion is to the long history of negative options--not to say failures--that has made him an "unrealistic hero" and culminated in his current situation. Gabrielle Malandain, in her excellent recent book,⁹ has stressed that the hero's alleged "failures" are a function of his fidelity to values that are no longer relevant in his contemporary society, that of the "avide curée"

(p. 242) that is the July Monarchy. I would add more specifically that they are characterized in the text as old-fashioned, out-of-date--the values of a Werther or an Oberman surviving into a later and more utilitarian age. Thus the hero avoids contact with the actress Aurélie so as to protect the "image" he is cultivating, and out of preference for "la tour d'ivoire des poètes" (p. 242); and he progressively allows himself to lose Sylvie to his own frère de lait, called "le grand frisé," holding back from courtship in a movement that correlates with her own evolution as she achieves middle-class status and settles down in town as a shopkeeper, a "pâtissière." In each case, the hero's restraint is attributable to the power of his deepest memory, that of an always already unattainable figure of ideal and sacred beauty, Adrienne.

So his "failures" imply a critique of modern society, even as they condemn him to the loneliness of an outsider: he is a social "suicide" as well as a bereft lover, and he has chosen each of these outcomes. There is irony, however, in Sylvie's recognition of his resemblances to Werther, and not simply because the comment has its cruel side (a "Werther without pistols" is perhaps an even weaker character than Goethe's hero, too "weak" even to commit physical suicide and so condemned to survival instead). For this supposedly old-fashioned misfit is here conforming to the dictates of fashion ("moins les pistolets, qui ne sont plus de mode"), and so compromising with the values of his own contemporary society. Even as he produces himself, and is produced by Sylvie, as "a Werther," he is out of touch with the old-fashioned values that he loves (or believes he loves), so that here too the prevailing structure-of distance from and intimacy with a past that represents the "core" of his self-identity--is again realized. It is easy to understand how such a structure can simultaneously nourish melancholy

(a sense of exile and nostalgia) and furnish the occasion for multiple ironies (as the demonstration of unrecognized distance within apparent intimacy and vice versa).

But the phrase "Werther, moins les pistolets" has other implications that commentators seem not to have perceived. It is not simply that Gérard is a Werther who does not kill himself, although that is of course perfectly true. The idea of a Werther without pistols can be taken to suggest also one who does commit suicide, but by other means--an interpretation that is apposite, not to the hero, but to the narrator of the text. Since pistols are out of fashion, the modern way of suiciding is through writing: the pen has its own deadly point.¹⁰ For, at the opening of "Dernier feuillet," it is the narrator's self-consciousness as a writer that stands out.

Telles sont les chimères qui charment et égarent au matin de la vie. [He is dissociating himself from the hero.] J'ai essayé de les fixer sans beaucoup d'ordre, mais bien des coeurs me comprendront. [Here is the appeal for understanding reading, to be mediated by the narrator's writing, but for the benefit of his former self as hero, with whom the word "me" now re-identifies him.] Les illusions tombent (...etc.)--qu'on me pardonne ce style vieilli. (p. 271-272)

But this self-consciousness produces a strange dissociation within the narrator's own identity, independently of his identification-with-but-distance-from his former "self" as hero. His style as a writer identifies him with old-fashioned values in literature--but he is aware of, and draws attention to this superannuated quality, with the result that his "style vieilli" simultaneously designates itself as contemporary (the adjective is significant because it so clearly marks temporal distance). His writing, in

short, has the characteristics of a pastiche.

But where, then, is the narrator's writing "self," which is neither whole-heartedly old-fashioned nor fully modern, but somehow shared between the two? This example can serve to demonstrate the Schlegelian principle of permanent parabasis, or endless digressiveness, that underlies both the irony and the melancholy of the narrative writing in "Sylvie," but which itself betrays the absence of an orienting narrative subject capable of giving "direction personnelle et enthousiaste" to the discourse. The irony is that of an elusive narrative point of view that does not allow itself to be pinned down (and in particular precludes the identification of any judgmental attitude on the narrator's part with respect to the options and behavior of the hero); the melancholy is that of an unanchored subject identified with the drift of his own ever-changing discourse. And, of course, the constant slippage between the ironic and the melancholic itself enacts, in an absolutely paradigmatic way, this never-ending digressiveness into which the elocutionary subject "disappears."

Thus, for example, in a characteristic passage (pp. 272-273), we go from elegiac lamentation of a lost past ("Les étangs, creusés à grands frais, étalent en vain leur eau morte que le cygne dédaigne") to the description of an inn-room in which the beloved past is ironically seen to survive ("une chambre...tendue en vieille tapisserie avec un trumeau au-dessus de la glace"), to a self-contradictory comment that virtually defies untangling ("cette chambre est un dernier retour vers le bric-à-brac, auquel j'ai depuis longtemps renoncé"), to a scene of retrouvailles--"nous nous donnons les coups de poing de l'enfance"--that seems to confirm the continuity of things...or would do so were it not for the evidence that a whole generation has passed, and new children are on the scene; "je gravis un certain escalier où les cris de deux

enfants accueillent ma venue." These children, of course, make Sylvie at one and the same time the equivalent of Lotte before her marriage (surrounded by brothers and sisters) and that of Lotte married--they very ironically support both a melancholic reading of the situation (in the mode of loss: Sylvie is mother to another's children) and a non-melancholic reading (but nothing essential has changed, Sylvie is like the sisterly Lotte whom it was permissible for Werther to love).

The scene of reading that now supervenes incorporates both the husband and these children.

Pendant que le grand frisé s'occupe du déjeuner, nous allons promener les enfants (...). Tandis que ces petits s'exercent au tir (...), nous lisons quelques poésies ou quelques pages de ces livres si courts qu'on ne lit plus guère. (p. 273)

Consequently, the Paolo and Francesca precedent has now been completely reversed: reading is not the prelude to sexual consummation, it is through the renunciation of a sexual relation that Gérard has earned the right to the bliss of poring over a book with Sylvie, while husband and children hover contentedly on the edges of the scene. This means that the communion the couple achieves through reading has been achieved, quite specifically, through Gérard's symbolic suicide: one that involves simultaneously his renunciation of self (and ceding of the firmness of "bourgeois" identity as the spouse of Sylvie to his own double, "le grand frisé"), and his recognition of the alterity of Sylvie herself (her bourgeois status, her "modernity"), an alterity that makes her unavailable to him as wife. The very deep resonances of such themes in Nerval's oeuvre cannot be explored here; but reading thus appears as a phenomenon of communion in which the alienating social differences that preclude love

are made to disappear through the form of textual renunciation of selfhood that is figured by Gérard's status as suicidal subject.

For what do the couple read? The description, "un de ces livres si courts qu'on ne fait plus guère," reintroduces the motif of the old-fashioned, but the phrase makes it impossible to determine the actual object of reading over which Sylvie and Gérard bend their heads together. Is it an old-fashioned text, such as Werther (itself a model of ironic writing)? Or is it, to the contrary--an interpretation permitted by the word "guère"--a modern text with old-fashioned qualities, such as "Sylvie" itself? A text that is consequently a historical misfit, through its adherence to out-of-date literary values in an age when cela ne se fait plus guère? A text worthy, then, in this respect, of its own "unrealistic hero," similarly out of phase with his own time, and so suicidal in its own way? A text whose very modernity, perhaps, consists of its inability to march in step either with its own age or with the previous times for which it expresses so much nostalgia but to which it cannot belong?

The point is that we cannot know what text is being designated here. But as mise-en-abyme of the reading situation of "Sylvie" itself, this brief passage tells us that it is precisely on such textual indeterminacy--our inability to know what "this" is that we are reading--that the narrative is relying in order to become accessible to a reading that is of a sympathetic kind. "Bien des coeurs me comprendront"--it is through suicidal writing that the text hopes to achieve the understanding it craves, but on the part of good, common-sensical bourgeois folk--such as Sylvie--whose values are not those of either the suicidal text or its unrealistic hero, and whose normal response to behavior like that of the hero is, like Sylvie's (p. 266): "mais il faut songer au solide." The suicidal text, unlike Werther, is

capable of acknowledging the alterity of its other--but it seems to maintain a strangely optimistic belief, here, in its own ability to be read and understood.

In the case of Madame Bovary, I can exempt myself from demonstrating, even briefly, the relevance of the model of the "unrealistic" protagonist combined with the "omitted" subject of narrative discourse. Criticism has explored both of these topics at length, although the connection between them has been less frequently examined. Bovarysme is the name given to Emma's urgent need to discover "dans la vie"--i.e., in this case, in the petty existence of the rural bourgeoisie under the July Monarchy--something equivalent to "les mots de félicité, de passion et d'ivresse, qui lui avaient paru si beaux dans les livres" (p. 32);¹¹ and it is the famous "impassiveness" of the narrative style--the various techniques (notably that of style indirect libre) that make of it a narration whose narrative subject is at best elusive¹²--that have given this novel the critical status of one of the founding texts of early modernism.

What can perhaps be added, however, in the present context, is that Emma's final suicide is preceded and prepared for by a series of moments in which --in disappointment and frustration--she gives way to symbolic forms of death: fits of melancholy and depression, swoons, periods of mystic religious ardor, nervous maladies. As a result, the narrative itself acquires what might be called--partly in recognition of the relevance of Flaubert's falling fit at Pont-l'Evêque, and partly in homage to Aquin's L'Antiphonaire--its own "epileptic" structure, proceeding in a series of episodic fits and starts that is, in theory, infinitely extensible.¹³ In this light, the proposition that Emma's suicide functions as a diegetic figure for the text's own "absences," its own "omission" of any agent of control, in short

for its own suicidal style, seems a plausible one. The character's suicide is a literalization of the symbolic suicide occurring in the textual discourse.

Such an "apposition" of protagonist and text can be economically demonstrated by a brief gloss on Emma's suicide note, with its dual function: in the plot it represents Emma's dying message, but rhetorically it functions as mise-en-abyme of the textual enunciation itself, producing the novel in turn as a metaphoric suicide note. Emma writes Charles a long letter, and does so under his very eyes, giving him an oral instruction, "Tu la liras demain," that is a variant of the canonical "I shall be dead when you read this." At the onset of her symptoms, however, Charles opens it:

Il bondit au secrétaire, brisa le cachet et lut tout haut: Qu'on n'accuse personne... Il s'arrêta, se passa les mains sur les yeux et relut encore. (p. 294)

Here then is the scene of reading that corresponds to those in Werther and in "Sylvie": there is no longer any hint of the Paolo and Francesca motif, but instead an ironic picture of non-communication between the dying authorial subject and a reader whom we know to be spectacularly unperceptive and unintuitive and whom the text shows passing his hands over his eyes in stunned disbelief and re-reading--the very picture, in short, of incomprehension. I take this to be a counter-model of the text's desired reading, and simultaneously a prediction of the kind of reading it is most likely to achieve in the "real world" of a bourgeois society, which makes Madame Bovary a notably less optimistic text from this point of view than "Sylvie".

As for the "message" of Emma's letter, it is encapsulated, one supposes, in the only phrase we ever learn of it: Qu'on n'accuse personne... It

is very characteristic of Emma, of course, that her last letter should display her love of inflated phraseology and have such a melodramatic ring: to the end, she cannot resist romanticizing herself in the attempt to make real life correspond to beautiful words she has read in books. As a result, the intertextual reference, through cliché, to trashy novels works very differently here from what one observes in Werther and "Sylvie": it is as if Sylvie never got beyond Auguste Lafontaine. Both Goethe and Nerval employ the device of intertextual shift to mark the modernity of their writing and simultaneously to indicate their own displacement of the literary tradition. Werther's taste for Homer, associated with his nostalgic love of "patriarchal" mores, shifts tellingly to a passion for the melancholic Ossian (from which the ironic novel in turn distances itself);¹⁴ in "Sylvie," an identification of the characters with those of La Nouvelle Héloïse (a novel in which suicide is explicitly rejected) is replaced by their identification with Werther and Lotte, suggesting as we have just seen a partial identification of the text of "Sylvie" with the Goethe novel and a partial distancing at the same time. But it is against Emma's fidelity to a discourse of sentimental cliché that Madame Bovary asserts itself as ironic and dispassionate, even while it self-ironically acknowledges, through the dual functioning of the suicide note as in other ways, its own inevitable involvement in clichés such as this one.

For psychologically speaking, Emma's final message requires interpretation; and that interpretation resituates it as a reading-instruction with respect to the novel itself. Emma's instruction not to accuse anyone implies that the possibility of accusing someone of responsibility for her death must at least have crossed her mind (a negative presupposes the positive that it negates). It would be rather uncharacteristic of

the self-absorbed Emma to be attempting here simply to disculpate poor Justin for having abetted her in obtaining the poison; so it seems probable that she has at last, in this final extremity, achieved a glimmer of insight into her own social situation and her status as an exploited victim. In a way entirely typical of the tricky writing of Madame Bovary, the reader, for his/her part, is obliged first to see that Emma's revendication of personal responsibility entails suspicion that there may have been failings, or worse, in her entourage, in order then to be led to reflect on the ways in which the novel does indeed demonstrate the culpability of Emma's society and the many ways in which she is a victim of social forces. (The fact that the poison that kills her emanates from the pharmacist's carphanaum is, of course, in this respect, a major symbolic clue.)

But it is because the reader follows this line of reflection, which leads from a psychological reading of the character to an interpretive reading of the novel's possible meaning, that Emma's dying message can be seen to function simultaneously as a reading-instruction for the novel itself. In this respect, however, to read the novel exclusively as a demonstration of the culpability of society in Emma's death would be, on the face of it, to go against the narrative's own "impassive" refusal to judge its characters or to distribute blame. As textual mise-en-abyme, "Qu'on n'accuse personne" functions in the first place literally, and the neutral, third-person, optative syntax, with its vague "on" representing the addressee, stands in this light for the text's own enunciatory neutrality, with its general avoidance of the I-you of the narrator-narratee relation. It would be a misprision to decide that Madame Bovary is an engaged, committed text of social critique, even though a social critique is clearly readable in it.

On the other hand, it would equally be a misreading not to notice that the novel's impassiveness, which is that of irony, is a pseudo-impassiveness (in its own way a kind of negative that implies a positive). Like the irony of Goethe and Nerval, the ironic distance of Flaubert's novel requires that it be read, and that it be read in a manner sympathetic to the "unrealistic" protagonist. It is not simply that the third-person optative disguises a direct, first-person to second-person imperative (something like "I require you not to accuse anyone"); but that the same reasoning applies to it as to Emma's instruction. Like hers, the textual instruction to accuse no-one functions as an indirect suggestion to consider the possibilities of guilt among those surrounding Emma. And as I have mentioned, the novel supplies strong evidential support for an indictment of the social exploitation of figures such as Emma (as an upwardly mobile woman, a member of the paradigmatically exploitable class for capitalism): it is difficult not to read her as a victim and to understand her death as a form of murder. So the point is that while the novel encourages such a reading it simultaneously implies its own neutrality, so that we are asked to judge and not to judge, to be angry and impassive at the same time. The result is that any reading of Madame Bovary--whether as sympathetic to Emma's plight or as ironically distant and neutral--comes to be defined textually as a (partial) misreading.

There is then, to summarize, a high degree of consonance between the (melancholic) protagonist of Madame Bovary, with her "Qu'on n'accuse personne" and the (ironic) text, with its own "Qu'on n'accuse personne." In each case, an instruction not to accuse functions simultaneously as an encouragement to accuse. But the consonance functions in such a way as to produce a highly volatile tension in the text's enunciatory

situation, since it thereby combines ironic distance from its protagonist with a demand for a sympathetic and understanding reading of her situation. And this reading will be a reading of textual implicature which must by definition be highly aleatory and for whose appositeness the text not only offers no guarantee: it goes further, suggesting that such a reading is incompatible with the neutrality the text gives every evidence of prizing. So the picture of Charles passing his hand over his eyes and re-reading Emma's missive in disbelief is not valid simply for that somewhat thick-headed character; it is indicative also of a more general reading situation that the text produces as relevant to itself and its own reading. The reader of Madame Bovary is being figured here as one whose urgent desire to understand is countered by the only understanding it is given to him/her to achieve, which is that, like poor Charles, a reader will always, in some way and to some extent, get it wrong.

But, in the particular light of Madame Bovary, we can perhaps see now that it is in its demand for reading, combined with an ironic stance that produces all reading as misprision, that the suicidal style in literature demonstrates its closest affinity with, and yet its clearest difference from, the unrealistic heroes and heroines it likes to portray. If the unrealistic protagonists--Werther, Gérard, or Emma--are victims of unrequited love, it is because they are the site of a demand for love (where "demand" has its full, Lacanian force)¹⁵ that does not take account of the restrictions imposed on desire in a world ordered by the Father's Law. The practicality of Lotte and Sylvie, and the exploitation--sexual and economic--to which Emma falls victim, are the indicators of this disproportion between the characters' demand for love and the world's inability or unwillingness to respond; so that their failure, in the last

analysis, can always be seen as a failure to acknowledge the otherness of others.

The suicidal text makes a similarly disproportionate and "unrealistic" demand on its readership: we are asked to provide an "understanding" reading, but within a symbolic order--a law of the father--that the texts themselves produce, in their irony, as precluding such absolute "understanding." Defined as it is by the primacy of discourse, the symbolic is characterized by the absence of any controlling agency capable of guaranteeing an "accurate" communication of sense or construction of meaning... The conditions of the symbolic order function, in short, to make all readings necessarily inadequate as responses to textual demand, just as the Father's Law condemns to "failure" those characters whose revolt against realism and practicality takes the form of an absolute demand for love. It is simply that, where the melancholic character revolts against the law of desire, as the substitutability and iterativity of the object, through fidelity to an internalized ideal, the ironic text inscribes that law as the one that necessarily governs its readings, successive, partial and inadequate as "interpretations" must always be, while nevertheless condemning such readings as somehow failures with respect to the demand for understanding the text makes on us, and the longing for a disalienated world it conveys through sympathy for its character. Such a text acknowledges, but condemns as a form of inadequacy, the otherness of those others who are its readers.

There is something clearly "unrealistic," not to say neurotic, in demanding an absolute reading while defining all readings as necessarily inadequate to that demand. But do we not recognize in that neurotic situation something like the truth of communicative relations as our literary culture currently defines it, as much by

its dominant theories as by its practice of "interpretation" as endless supplementation? That being so, the suicidal style in literature can teach us something, I think, not only about literary modernity as such, but also about the strangely disturbed culture in which that modernity has its place.

NOTES

¹The baffling question of how reading a text changes people is at the heart of my book in progress, tentatively entitled Narrative in Opposition. Story and Situation, II.

²Hubert Aquin, "'La disparition élocutoire du poète' (Mallarmé)," in Blocs erratiques (Montréal: Les Quinze, 1982), 263-267. Quotation p. 263. See, of course, Stéphane Mallarmé, "Crise de vers," in Variations sur un sujet (Oeuvres complètes [Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1945], 360-368, quotation p. 366).

³"Obombre, roman," Liberté, 23, 3 (mai-juin 1983), 15-21. Here is the place to acknowledge that the present essay has the status of prolegomena to a reading of Aquin.

⁴Narrative in Opposition will provide a longer discussion, with extended readings of works by Nerval ("Angélique" and "Aurélia") and Aquin (Prochain Episode).

⁵Page references to the German text refer to J. W. Goethe, Werke, B. II (München-Zürich: Knauer, 1957); and those to the English version refer to J. W. Goethe, The Sorrows of Young Werther and Selected Writings, transl. Catherine Hutter (New York: Signet Classics, 1962).

⁶See "Edgar Allan Poe, sa vie et ses ouvrages," in E. A. Poe, Oeuvres en prose (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1951), 1002-1062: "Parmi l'énumération nombreuse des droits de l'homme que la sagesse du XIXe siècle a recommencée si souvent et si complaisamment, deux assez importants ont été oubliés, qui sont le droit de se contredire et le droit de s'en aller. Mais la société regarde celui qui s'en va comme un

impertinent (...). Et cependant, on peut dire que, sous la pression de certaines circonstances (...etc.),--on peut dire, sans emphase et sans jeu de mots, que le suicide est parfois l'action la plus raisonnable de la vie." (p. 1038). (My epigraph is the continuation of this passage.)

⁷The methodological assumption I am making here is explained at length in Ross Chambers, Story and Situation. Narrative Seduction and the Power of Fiction (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

⁸Page references are to G. de Nerval, Oeuvres, t. I, éd. A. Béguin et J. Richer (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1966).

⁹Gabrielle Malandain, Nerval ou l'incendie du théâtre. Identité et littérature dans l'oeuvre en prose de Gérard de Nerval (Paris: Corti, 1988). On "Sylvie," see especially chap. 4.

¹⁰Both style and stiletto are from Lat. "stilus," a (sharp-pointed) writing instrument.

¹¹Page references are to G. Flaubert, Madame Bovary, Ed. Maynial (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1961).

¹²See Jonathan Culler's now classic analysis in Flaubert. The Uses of Uncertainty (London: Paul Elek, 1974), esp. pp. 109-122.

¹³For an interesting analysis of this phenomenon from a different angle, see Michal Peled Ginsburg, Flaubert's Writing. A Study of Narrative Strategies (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986).

¹⁴The intertextual reference to Emilia Galotti--which is discovered open on Werther's desk after his death--works similarly with respect

to the suicide theme, establishing the modernity of Goethe's treatment by contrast with the "Roman" and patriarchal values displayed by Lessing's characters.

¹⁵See in particular "Subversion du sujet et dialectique du désir dans l'inconscient freudien," in J. Lacan, Ecrits, t. II (Paris: Ed. du Seuil, 1971), 151-91.

On the Making of a "Public Critic": the Genesis
of Jorge Guillén's Essays in Criticism

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Through the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures, published as Language and Poetry in 1961,¹ a much wider audience came to know the authoritative voice generations of students in Europe and America had admired in Guillén's teaching.² The invitation from Harvard University marked the official consecration of the Spanish poet as a representative of the reading public at its most expert and judicious; the becoming, according to Northrop Frye's definition, of Guillén as "a public critic."³ That is, the process had come full circle whereby a deservedly famous poet turned to another literary art whose goal is "to exemplify how a man of taste uses and evaluates literature and thus show how literature is to be absorbed into society." In Language and Poetry Guillén certainly offered literary criticism of a high order, but there is little sense of "an impersonal body consolidating knowledge," nor yet of the avowed intention "to create or enter into theoretical structure." Instead, using the episodic forms of the lecture and the familiar essay, Guillén as "public critic," expounds ideas picked up from a pragmatic study of literature. As a result we have a fine record of poetic taste prevalent in Spain in the years 1929-1936: Guillén provides model arguments for the fashionable prejudices of his generation and gives us a clear insight into a particular defense of poetry from well within that defense.

This "monument of taste" inevitably owes a great deal to Guillén's long and distinguished academic career. Its genesis, however, is to be found in the early "workshop" criticism he wrote as a young man during the 1920s, and mainly under pseudonyms, for El Norte de Castilla (Valladolid) and La Libertad (Madrid). These articles were

collected and republished in 1980 as the section entitled "Correo Literario" of Hacia "Cántico,"⁴ whose curious affinity with Language and Poetry bears investigation. The section contains more than forty articles, written mainly between 1923-24 but also including essays from 1918 to 1929, and deals exclusively with Spanish letters.⁵ It is in itself, therefore, as substantial as the lectures in Language and Poetry and, running as it does from "Literatura arábigo-española" through Góngora, Bécquer and Miró to Guillén's own generation, is quite comparable in theme.

Of course there are differences: none of Guillén's early articles were written specifically on the craft of poetry, neither do they represent a critic's choice of poets whose work exemplifies a theory of poetry. They were reviews of contemporary publications of poetry and prose and every article conforms to some exigency of journalism. Nevertheless, by using the reviewer's license to censure, draw parallels, preach, praise and vilify, Guillén laid the foundations for a poetics in his weekly columns and began a long career as a "public critic."

The contention here, therefore, is two-fold. First is that the remarkable coherence in Guillén's poetry has a mirror image in his critical writings. The lectures in Language and Poetry do, indeed, echo the literary criticism of Hacia "Cántico."⁶ Most significantly, in the "Correo Literario" series we have evidence of a personal aesthetic which had taken shape grosso modo about 1924, that is, just before Guillén's true "annus mirabilis" of 1925-26 in which the first poems of Cántico were rewritten in a familiar form.⁷ This aesthetic, or to paraphrase Guillén himself, this "crítica integral," has continued to mark his later work, particularly, Language and Poetry and Homenaje. If by criticism in this context we are careful to mean the positing of a set of value-judgments informed by taste, which is arguably the distinguishing feature of the humanistic and

liberal ideal which Guillén practiced so conscientiously, then the thesis may be extended. The coherence in valuation that strikes the reader of the critical essays of Hacia "Cántico," the lectures of Language and Poetry, and the testimonial poetry of Homenaje, is, secondly, a record which documents the shift in sensibility brought about by a whole generation of poets who turned public taste away from the nineteenth-century poetry of great feelings to the difficult, often intellectual poetry so characteristic of the twentieth century.

Clearly the substantiation of such affirmations is beyond the scope of a short paper. Here I propose to limit my remarks to the reading of a specific corpus, namely, the eleven articles written by Guillén under the pseudonym Félix de la Barca, in the period between January and April 1924 for the newspaper El Norte de Castilla, with corroboration from four of the nineteen articles published in La Libertad under the pseudonym Pedro Villa. The parameters of such a reading will be fixed by reference to "The Language of the Poem," the final chapter of Language and Poetry. The Félix de la Barca series of articles would seem to be the least well-known of all of Guillén's literary criticism. Yet as a homogenous unit they are representative of the rest in tone and subject matter. Although both series were published almost contemporaneously, the decision to concentrate on the Félix de la Barca series and use only selected essays from the Pedro Villa series rests, finally, on the interpretation of the pseudonyms. The fusion of Felix Lope de Vega Carpio and Pedro Calderón de la Barca implies a definite critical stance: a belief in the authenticating literary tradition which the "rolling stone" criticism of Pedro Villa only touches upon in incidental fashion.⁸

In Language and Poetry Guillén outlined the "historical harmony" (LP 202) which distinguished the taste and purpose of the generation of poets

to which he belonged. That group's main characteristic was a sense of oneness, both with their Spanish heritage and literary traditions and with the most exciting contemporary innovations in Europe and America. Not needing to waste time on either poetical parricide or fratricide, these poets concentrated on what was most important to them: the writing of poetry of such artistic mastery that the "marriage of idea and music" (LP 205) would be brought about. Góngora, Mallarmé, Valéry and Juan Ramón Jiménez all provided stimulus for these younger poets in their search for the perfect metaphor in which reality would not be duplicated but recreated (LP 207). This common requirement that poetry be creation and recreation led not to fashionable "isms" soon out of fashion, not yet to pure or dehumanized poetry, but to "human" poetry, completely lacking in grandiloquence or theatricality (LP 210). Guillén's statements are clear and convincing but the poet is acting as critic with a distance of more than thirty years between the empirical reality and his a posteriori inductions. By reversing his method and extrapolating key ideas and phrases from the early critical essays I hope to show that what the young Guillén has to say about other authors is remarkably close to his mature reflexions on the tradition of good writing, according to which he wrote his own poetry.

In first place in any consideration of Guillén's work must be the notion of form. The poet to celebrate the fusion of form and content was, of course, Stéphane Mallarmé. In 1924 Guillén counted himself among Mallarmé's "devotos" and his article on the "Cartas de Mallarmé" (29.1.24), for which he translated several long quotations from the Master, high-lighted Mallarmé's dedication to a single idea, that of writing one book of poetry which would be complete, perfect in itself, "le Livre." The Revue universelle had just published some early letters written to Théodore Aubanel and Félix de la

Barca's review saluted the evident integrity of Mallarmé's aesthetic:

Y lo sorprendente--y éste es el interés vivísimo de la citada correspondencia--es la identificación, ya completa, definitiva, que es preciso establecer entre la adolescencia y la madurez del poeta. . . . Mallarmé ha echado por entonces los cimientos de su obra total, de la que va a llenar su vida. Es extraordinaria la unidad de este espíritu y de esta conducta. Conviene subrayarla y meditarla. (HC 277)

Mallarmé's imitation of the natural law as noted by Félix de la Barca, "Cuando un poema estará maduro él sólo se desprenderá," had indeed led to the twenty years of constant rewriting Mallarmé had forseen in 1866. As an example of dedication it was not lost on Guillén either in 1924 or in 1961 when he marvelled at Mallarmé's aesthetic of elimination (LP 71) This became de facto the ordering principle of the first edition of Cántico and its effect may be seen even in Final. Clearly there was an art of poetry where order and discipline would ensure that form fitted its content.

The same criterion might be applied to the art of criticism and Guillén the poet, writing as Félix de la Barca the critic, censored scholarship which lacked order or integrity. Thus, in "La fama de Bécquer" (27.2.24) he had sharp words for an incompetent piece of editing:

Era necesario que el autor de las Rimas fuese considerado como clásico, merecedor de una minuciosa búsqueda bibliográfica. Han salido a la luz los primeros resultados de esa búsqueda. Por desgracia, no son dignos del alto poeta. Las Páginas desconocidas, que el señor Iglesias Figueroa ha recopilado en tres volúmenes, no ofrecen ninguna garantía de seriedad. Ni orden ni indicación de fuentes.

Está, pues, por hacer la edición completa y escrupulosa de Bécquer. Hay que hacerla. Nuestro fervor lo exige. (HC 352-53)⁹

Guillén contrasted the lack of corroboration and revision with the fervor and rigor he and his generation (and in this instance reference was made to Juan Chabás and Gerardo Diego) expected either in the poetry or in criticism about the poetry of the new "classic" Bécquer. In "Poemas de adolescencia" (2.3.24), a review of the first volume of the Obras completas of Rubén Darío compiled by Alberto Ghirardo and Andrés González-Blanco, he pointed out that neither "prolijidad ni morosa delectación erudita" (HC 369) was a substitute for research and discipline:

Evidentemente, no es bastante. Todo recopilador, no ya concienzudo, tan sólo honesto, ¿no está obligado a declarar, punto por punto, sus fuentes? Su labor, modesto desde luego, cobra de esta suerte, una dignidad, un sabor que realzan esta modestia. (HC 369)

Without a well-wrought form, in this case that presupposed by integrity of scholarship and a genuine enthusiasm for the poetry under discussion, the critic or editor rather than "recreating" the poetry would do the poet in question a singular disservice:

Desconocemos el valor de tales textos. Desconfiamos de todo lo que atañe al pobre y grande y siempre malaventurado Rubén. No tuvo suerte en vida. Tampoco después de su muerte. Los editores han seguido explotándole villanamente. Las supuestas "Obras completas," hasta ahora lanzadas al mercado, han sido desdichadísimas. Quiera Dios que las colegidas por los señores Ghirardo y González-Blanco se continúen con

mayor fortuna. (HC 370)¹⁰

Form, order and discipline are, of course, not synonymous with formalism. In 1922 Guillén entitled a series of his own poems "Rigor."¹¹ If rigor was a criterion he applied both to poetry and to criticism, the corollary was not, however, that he implied that poetry should be difficult for difficulty's sake, nor that criticism should be life-less erudition. Instead Guillén argued that intellectual rigor would bring not obscurity but greater freedom for the image. As both Félix de la Barca and Pedro Villa, he chose Juan Ramón Jiménez and Góngora to exemplify this. In "El segundo Juan Ramón Jiménez" (16.124) Félix de la Barca stated very clearly that intellectual rigor must be a two-way process: both poet and reader must use it:

Toda poesía nueva, es oscura. Luis Barahona de Soto, por 1500, no entendía en Góngora vocablos como estos: "Esplendores, celajes--salvaje, llama--líquido, candores" ... que hoy andan en labios del pueblo sin asomo de afectación. Se dirá que toda poesía ha de ser evidente. Lo tendrá que ser la poesía narrativa, lo fue siempre, sin duda, la epopeya. La lírica, que expresa sentimientos íntimos, que responde a los movimientos más recónditos, a las intuiciones más leves, puede ser, en algunos momentos oscura. Los que temen a la oscuridad en poesía, no suelen poner gran atención en la que tienen por poesía clara. Las dificultades del verso difícil, en efecto, se resuelven casi siempre con sólo un poco de atención cortés. "Luz de la atención" intitula Juan Ramón a uno de sus libros inéditos. La luz de la atención ilumina, ella sola, muchos de los senos tenebrosos de estas estrofas: "cuevas do el silencio apenas / deja que sombras moren," como se dice en el romance de Angélica y

Medora. ¡Y qué suprema sencillez se descubre entonces! ¡Oh pasión en orden! (HC 442-43)

Talking about Góngora, Guillén was, of course, preparing the way for his own poetry by suggesting that the reader/critic who had sufficient cultural preparation and who read with sufficient attention could unravel even the most difficult poetry. Such poetry was the incarnation of the reality of pure feeling, an idea that appears in Guillén's creative writing as early as 1921 in the title "Encarnaciones" that he used for two series of poems.¹² Years before Antonio Machado made his charge that "the intellect does not sing" and levied it directly at Guillén, Félix de la Barca saw clearly the importance of the singing voice in lyrical poetry. Quoting Juan Ramón's "Luna grande" he emphasized the interaction between music and idea:

Los elementos de la balada aparecen estilizados y ahilados de tal suerte, que la balada no lo parece, aunque en ella sigue "cantando" una belleza esencialmente musical. (HC 441)

At its most musical poetry could free the image from intellectual or linguistic constraints and Guillén pointed to Juan Ramón's "Estío" as an example:

Y ya empiezan, en el ápice musical de la canción, a extraviarse las significaciones de las palabras para quienes exigen siempre la evidencia del pensamiento en prosa. (HC 442)¹³

In 1924 Félix de la Barca concluded his essay with Juan Ramón's aphorism "Lo que se pierde con música, siempre se encuentra;" his critical stance was very close to that outlined in Language and Poetry:

Poetry as art of poetry: the form of an incarnation. We could write this word with a capital I: the mystery of the Incarnation. The spirit becomes form incarnate mysteriously, with something which cannot be reduced to the intelligence, in this marriage of idea and music. (LP 205)

Form would give poetry freedom; in a variety of meters, strophes and modulations of tone could be found the harmonies of pure feeling.

Experimentation must, however, never be an academic exercise as Félix de la Barca declared in "Curiosidades" (12.2.24). The tone of the review is one of ironic amusement, amusement provoked by an anthology of literary "monstruosities" or collection of occasional pieces illustrating the writers' virtuosity. The division made between mastery and virtuosity is, in contrast, deadly serious and one Guillén would repeat again:

Monstruosas son, ciertamente, las poesías que recoge el señor Aguilar y Tejera; no, a decir verdad, extravagantes. El monstruo desarrolla el sentido, la idea que el arquetipo mantiene dentro de sus límites. No extravaga; dilata los límites sin romperlos ni abandonarlos. Estas aberraciones poéticas "abundan", por decirlo así, en sentido poético; malas, feas, sí, pero con la maldad y fealdad de poesía. Todo lo que ellas deforman es forma y estricta forma. (HC 332)

So many examples of pie forzado, alliteration, occasional sonnets, versos esdrújulos and all the possibilities of Pandora's box of poetry were roundly repudiated as mere artifice by the young poet already known for the formal excellence of his poetry:

¡Horrendo virtuosismo! Así deforma el gran poeta su egregia virtud: el "sentido" del verso, de lo que es esencialmente verso. (HC 334)

In defense of his kind of poetry Félix de la Barca cited Juan Ramón's "arte menor" and Valéry's Charmes as examples of mastery to combat Manuel del Palacio's essentially unpoetic contrivances in alliterative rhyme. His conclusion was a profession of faith in the well-wrought form and a warning against misreading this as a dehumanization of poetry:

Manténgase siempre vivísima la gran Curicsidad: la Poesía bien trabajada. Artista: artífice. Arte: artificio. Nunca el virtuosismo del mal artífice excusará el abandono del buen artificio. (HC 337)

The distinction between poetry as an art and poetry as an artifice rested upon the belief that the "poet" would create and recreate a reality whereas the "artificer" would be content to construct, albeit with great skill. Ortega's much abused phrase "the dehumanization of art" looms large at this point. Out of context it is, I suppose, possible to cry "foul" at an apparent divergence in belief and practice implied in Félix de la Barca's words:

El caso de Góngora es más complicado. La oposición universitaria y la oposición profana--los dos vulgos--han de mostrarse, en cierto grado, siempre recalcitrantes. El docto, ante Góngora, no saldrá de su indiferencia; el semi-docto blandirá sus argumentos y apelará a su buen gusto; el indocto se refugiará en su ignorancia. (¿Quién, de ellos es el más contumaz? El segundo: ese que abomina de esta poesía clásica porque no es "sincera," ni "vívida,"

ni "entrañable;" como si el clásico, de cualquier linaje, tuviera algo que ver con las "entrañas") (HC 287)

In my view this would be to misunderstand fundamentally the spirit of these words. The cause célèbre which was Góngora, was the opportunity to effect an important change in literary taste in Spain. Rehabilitating Góngora's reputation took literary criticism away from the sterility of Academe and pseudoerudition; by defending his poetry Félix de la Barca was forming the reading public's taste for the difficult poetry of Jorge Guillén.

Góngora provided the touchstone for the debate on sincerity but defense soon turned to attack on what Guillén and his generation perceived as the lowest common denominator in taste. For this Guillén frequently used his other alter ego, Pedro Villa. In a fine performance as a multiple critic, Pedro Villa often took advantage of examples from the literary canon drawn up by Félix de la Barca to signal shortcomings or herald the continuing tradition in the work of contemporary practitioners. A good example of the "public critic" at work in this way may be found in the short shrift given Villaespesa's fin-de-siècle "Zarzuela" (22.3.24), Vasos de arcilla, which Pedro Villa dismissed as "poesía personal, poesía de circunstancias sentimentales, poesía biográfica, poesía de historia" (HC 402). Quoting d'Ors and Ortega himself as his mentors, Pedro Villa discerned in Villaespesa's "romanticizing" only "avariosis" or the syphilitic condition of much of modern poetry:

Esa avariosis, ¿perjudica o favorece la salud poética de este arte? En arte no basta estar enfermo o ser desgraciado para merecer la atención. Lo que se nos dice en Vasos de arcilla será muy sincero, muy vivido, muy entrañable. Pero no se trata de entrañas.

Se trata de vasos de arcilla. Nos importa tan sólo la calidad de la arcilla y la construcción del vaso. Los usos a que den lugar no son de nuestra incumbencia. Recogerán lágrimas o agua de lluvia; pero no momentos privados, íntimos, biografía, historia, anécdotas de autor y de lector en su fuero interno de hombres--de hombres que lloran o tienen jardín. Atendamos, atendamos a los vasos y la arcilla. Toda otra inquisición sería intromisión. (HC 403)

Sentimentality had no place either in the forensic criticism practiced by Félix de la Barca and Pedro Villa, or in the art of poetry practiced by Jorge Guillén. Sentiment, on the other hand, was essential in the personal involvement between the creative artist and his work, be it criticism or poetry.

Félix de la Barca gave the point clear illustration in "El 102" (23.1.24) where he traced the history of the "Guerilleros-Eruditos" or those Academicians whose pettiness and professional jealousy were largely responsible for the sorry state of literary criticism, and, therefore, taste in poetry, in Spain. The humor was as merciless as the intention was serious:

Uno de los Episodios Nacionales que están por escribir, podría titularse: Los Guerilleros-Eruditos. El guión y las dos mayúsculas patentizan que los dos términos son sustantivas y equiparables en importancia. . . . Sí; el erudito indígena ha vivido y sigue viviendo en una indefatigable Guerra de Independencia. De la independencia individual, defendida con el ardor que se pone en la salvación de una sagrada causa, y apelando a aquellos recursos de solitaria estrategia que han hecho inmortales a nuestros guerilleros . . . El antigalicismo no falta en ninguno, no cejan en su inquina

contra el fantasma del afrancesado. Tampoco cejan su animosidad contra los demás compañeros de lucha . . . Riñen con los de afuera y riñen con los de casa. Suspicious, celosos, quisquillosos, celosos, ¿quién contará, para nuestra lección y nuestro regocijo, sus solapadas batallas y sus rencores? (HC 420)

Academic wrangles were not the proper stuff of criticism. The then contemporary panorama was all too crowded with dilettante editors, mere "recopiladores," and too many literary historians bent only on amassing essentially trivial material. Certainly those who approached literature scientifically through linguistic analysis at least dealt with literature as the optimum achievement of language. Their numbers were, however, small, their work incomplete, and at no point either did Guillén advocate jargon as a substitute for a comprehensible interpretation. If the Academy suffered from cultural myopia and if the democratization of the vox populi approach merely introduced the enormous red herring of "sincerity," Guillén opted for authenticity as the measure for poetry. Criticism as the formation of the public's taste, was thus to become "la síntesis superior" whose guiding principle he outlined without equivocation in 1924 as "el texto recreado, el texto que vuelve a nacer al ser comprendido" (HC 422). Such was the situation perceived by Félix de la Barca in 1924. That we find his point of view contemporary and valid is the measure of Guillén's success as a "public critic." There are key words and phrases in, particularly, the Félix de la Barca series: "poesía en orden;" "la gran Curiosidad;" "la Poesía bien trabajada;" "leer y amar;" "fervor;" "deleite;" "música, sí música"; and "poesía auténtica." Taken together they outline a whole aesthetic and a complementary practice of criticism. Moreover, such an aesthetic represents a

shift in sensibility and taste away from the rhetoric of Ramón de Campoamor and Nuñez de Arce or the poetasters of the fin-de-siècle to a definitively modern poetics.

In 1961 Archibald Macleish claimed that in Language and Poetry "we see in images of other poets what this poet is" (LP 12). Guillén had, in fact, perfected this technique years before. In 1924 praising a now forgotten author, Francisco Antón, Félix de la Barca outlined what would become Jorge Guillén's personal aesthetic:

El autor renuncia, en voluntario voto ascético, a toda generalización bonita, a la comfortable y amena vaguedad sin compromiso. Siempre dice con una minucia bien recortada cuanto dice: siempre se compromete. Ni se soslaya, ni se escabulle; aquí está, tranquilo, a pie firme, ante el monumento que analiza y explica. La palabra es clara, el ademán, sumario, el tono, técnico y seguro, y por eso, tan sobrio, tan modesto. Claro: nada se le ocurre por inspiración divina; todo lo sabe por vía del sabio: busca, contempla, medita, coteja, se afana, y al cabo, concluye: sabe. No tiene tiempo ni vagar para ufanías. El esfuerzo que requiere la conclusión exacta vuelve a solicitarle. Trabaja, estudia: tiene que ser modesto. (HC 428)

Thus Guillén defined the role of "public critic." In the years to come he applied himself to his art without abatement or sacrifice of these standards which speak of the genuineness of the poetry rather than the greatness of its author. From such a "public critic" came the "direct value judgment of informed good taste, the proving of art on the pulses, the disciplined response of a highly organized nervous system to the impact of poetry,"¹⁴ as Guillén assumed fully the tasks and responsibilities of "portavoz y portaconciencia"

of his own historical time.

NOTES

¹Jorge Guillén, Language and Poetry. Some Poets of Spain (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1961). All references hereinafter are made to LP in the text.

²Accounts of Guillén's dynamic qualities as a teacher in Europe and America are given by a former student and a colleague, respectively, in J. Ruiz Peña, "La época sevillana de Jorge Guillén," Insula, 435-36 (1983), 6, 17; and J. Ruiz de Conde, El Cántico americano de Jorge Guillén (Madrid: Turner, 1970), pp. 252-75.

³Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957), p. 8. I have found Frye's definition convenient, but in using it I do not seek to convey quite the disparaging tone employed by Frye.

⁴Jorge Guillén, Hacia "Cántico": Escritos de los años 20, recopilación y prólogo de K.M. Sibbald (Barcelona: Ariel, 1980). All references hereinafter are made to HC in the text together with information on the date of the first publication of the particular essay.

⁵There are three sections in the book: Poesía dispersa made up of the poems and prose poems discarded when Guillén made his selection for the first edition of Cántico (1928); Desde París, a series of articles written mainly between 1921-24, when Guillén was a foreign correspondent for La Libertad; and Correo Literario.

⁶It is worth noting that Góngora, Bécquer, Miró and Guillén's own contemporaries received most attention in his early critical writings. It

⁷Guillén began writing poetry in 1919. All of his earliest poetry was rewritten in 1925-26 and then republished prior to appearing in Cántico (1919-1928). For more information see K.M. Sibbald, "Some Early Versions of the Poems of Cántico 1919-1928: Progress towards claridad," Bulletin of Hispanic Studies 50 (1973): 23-44.

⁸For a more detailed discussion of Guillén's pseudonyms see K.M. Sibbald, "La producción crítica de Jorge Guillén en 1924 bajo los seudónimos de Félix de la Barca y Pedro Villa," Actas del VIO Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas (Toronto: Paul Malak, 1980), 699-700; and K.M. Sibbald, "Jorge Guillén, crítico y poeta: El desdoblamiento de la personalidad," Hispania 64.1 (1981): 23-30.

⁹There are significant differences in tone and preoccupation between reviews by Félix de la Barca and Pedro Villa of the same works. A good example are the commentaries of Bécquer where Félix de la Barca concentrated upon "La fama de Bécquer" (27.1.24), whilst Pedro Villa dealt with "Las nuevas rimas de Bécquer" (11.1.24) and "Páginas desconocidas" (28.1.24), much of which, it should be noted, was later incorporated into the chapter on Bécquer in LP.

¹⁰Never slow to press home an advantage, Guillén carried on his review of this same edition of Darío under the guise of Pedro Villa in "Las primicias de Rubén Darío" (5.4.24). Here Guillén concentrated on berating the consumerism which was undermining the literary tradition defended by Félix de la Barca:

Las portadas de los tres primeros volúmenes de estas Obras completas rivalizan en mal gusto. ¡Pobre Rubén! Para atraer al comprador, se le da como cebo, a ver si pica,

comprador, se le da como cebo, a ver si pica, unos horrendos "monos" policromos, como antes se hacía en los folletines de los quioscos. Hoy, todo es quiosco en la librería española. Ya tiene categoría el libro con portada lisa, sin cromito. Probablemente, en este caso, el mercader, el mal mercader, calumnia al posible lector de Rubén Darío. Muy pervertido podrá estar el gusto de ciertos entusiastas de "la princesa está triste." No les creemos, sin embargo, tan mal nacidos que se decidan a comprar Poemas de adolescencia o Poemas de juventud, por el aliciente de las portadas. (HC 366)

¹¹Jorge Guillén, "Rigor," La Pluma, 30 (1922): 345-47.

¹²Jorge Guillén, "Encarnaciones," La Pluma, 15 (1921): 110-12; and La Pluma 24 (1922): 270-72.

¹³Cf. "Tantos artistas de hoy se complacen en la discordancia, que algunos quisieran refugiarse exclusivamente en Mozart. Y alguno de la misma vanguardia propugna ante todo la vuelta a la línea pura, al contorno melódico. Que ninguno de estos enamorados de la difícil sencillez oiga a Villaespesa. Frente a todo futurismo, la tradición. Pero antes un futurismo cualquiera que la tradición vulgar. La melodía, sí. Pero la melodía que persigue al vecino en los patios de vecindad, no y no. Vasos de arcilla es una zarzuela." (HC 406)

¹⁴Northrup Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, p. 27.

Poe/Baudelaire: Poetics in Translation
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One of the more obdurate enigmas of modern literary reception is represented by the notorious discrepancy between Edgar Allan Poe's original reputation in the Anglo-Saxon world and the immense recognition he attained in France through Baudelaire's translation, a phenomenon that, while arousing much critical attention, has consistently resisted most attempts at a comprehensive and satisfactory explanation. Relying predominantly on cultural, biographical or stylistic criteria, such attempts have failed to articulate the problem in terms most conducive to elucidating its specificity, namely those of a theory of literary translation.¹ The linguistic difficulties inherent in the translator's task of mediating between two autonomous, structurally incompatible language systems are compounded in literature by the existence of a supplementary, specifically poetic code that governs the production and reception of the original text and that cannot itself be directly translated. It is thus not surprising that conventional wisdom defines any translated text, irrespective of its intrinsic merits, as a reduced, inevitably distorted, and in any case rapidly out-dated shadow of the absent original. This attitude, historically confirmed by countless examples of once acclaimed, now obsolete translations, and in harmonious conformity with linguistic explanations of the practical problems, indeed the theoretical impossibility, of translation itself,² nevertheless conceals a number of doubtful assumptions about the immutable, self-contained nature of the literary text and its independence with respect to the historical conditions of its reception. These presuppositions are forcefully challenged by the unexpected results of Baudelaire's definitive translation of Poe.

In America, the reception of Poe's work was

for a long time determined by the prevalent code of puritanical ethics brought to bear on its author who, in the words of one of his biographers, "has been variously pictured as a sado-masochist, dypsomaniac, drug addict, manic depressive, sex pervert, and egomaniac."³ But even after the clouds of moral reprobation had settled, leaving room for a more sober analysis of the literary characteristics of the work itself, Poe's texts continued to grate harshly against the Anglo-Saxon esthetic sensibility and to produce a visceral reaction of discomfort. Poe was generally acknowledged to be a craftsman of strong sensations--horror, intellectual fascination, lyrical ecstasy. These efforts, however, were supposedly achieved through gross tactics of manipulation that made heavy use of "slip-shod rhyme," "shoddy syntax," "awful diction," and an "irresponsibility towards the meaning of words," a catalogue of complaints that had earned Poe the epithet of "the jingle-jangle man."⁴ His literary corpus was seen as a heterogeneous assembly of various isolated stylistic tours de force that produced their desired effect only once, during the first, preferably adolescent reading, and whose apparent qualities dissolved under a more analytical reperusal. Poe, in short, carries the stigma of immaturity; he has, according to T.S. Eliot, "the intellect of a highly gifted man before puberty" (19). Henry James puts it more succinctly: "An enthusiasm for Poe is the mark of a decidedly primitive stage of reflection."⁵

For American critics, therefore, it came as a rather mortifying surprise that they, with their direct access to the original, the "authentic" Poe whom they had authoritatively proclaimed to be mediocre, should be blithely ignored by readers of the French--and hence derivative--Poe who was being hailed in France and in Europe in general as one of the greatest authors of the century. Baudelaire addressed his evening prayers to him, Mallarmé and Valéry considered him the founder of

their own poetic practice, and there was scarcely an author who did not in some way pay homage to him. In the face of this euphoric admiration for an indigenous work that they themselves would much rather consign to oblivion, American critics express estrangement and indignation. "We all of us like to believe that we understand our own poets better than any foreigner can do," asserts T.S. Eliot (7) and Harold Bloom frankly deploras "French Poe" as a "scandal" and a "Gallic mystification" (1).

To resolve their predicament, these critics declare Baudelaire's genius to be infinitely superior to Poe's: the French poet, due to his defective understanding of English, read into the original texts qualities that are simply not to be found there, thus effecting an immense stylistic improvement. As Harold Bloom puts it: "Poe's awful diction seems to demand the decent masking of a competent French translation" (4). While not altogether devoid of a certain intuitive value, such claims are, at least as global explanations of the success of French Poe, simplistic and quite false, as any careful comparison of the source language text with the target language text will immediately demonstrate. In any case, a purely linguistic analysis of the two texts, based on a comparison of their respective structural features, is inherently inadequate as an account of the total process involved in the production of Baudelaire's French version of Poe. Indeed, one of the fundamental principles of the theory of literary translation is that "the basis of the act of translation is not the original text, but rather the representation of the text that is eventually generated in the translator's mind."⁶

It is therefore revealing to see that Baudelaire himself perceived his function as translator in precisely such terms. In 1856 he wrote to Sainte-Beuve: "Il faut, c'est-à-dire je désire qu'Edgar Poe, qui n'est pas grand-chose en Amérique, devienne un grand homme pour la

France,"⁷ What becomes immediately obvious is the fact that Baudelaire is not a translator by profession or inclination, but by necessity--his commitment is exclusively to Poe, and this commitment is total. For the French poet, the act of translation is the only means by which he can realize a broader project, a project to which he was to devote the better part of his life: the imposition of his personal reading of Poe, concretized in the translated version, onto the French literary scene; the transformation of Poe from his marginal status in what he considered a relatively obscure culture to a seminal position in mainstream French--and therefore European literature. The decisive factor in this transformation is not to be found in Poe's scattered texts, which Baudelaire translated with remarkable faithfulness, but in Baudelaire's experience of them, and the nature of this experience is very clearly expressed by Baudelaire himself:

Savez-vous pourquoi j'ai si patiemment traduit Poe? Parce qu'il me ressemblait. La première fois que j'ai ouvert un livre de lui, j'ai vu, avec épouvante et ravissement, non seulement des sujets rêvés par moi, mais des PHRASES pensées par moi, et écrites par lui vingt ans auparavant.⁸

Much has been made of the obvious biographical as well as of the subterranean psychological affinities between Poe and Baudelaire: their lives and works have provided rich material for psychoanalysts, socio-critics and existentialists who have feasted on the psychotic tendencies, the dandyism, the troubled sexuality and other features shared by both poets. What is relevant to a theory of translation, however, is the important fact that the conceptual map which presided over Baudelaire's own creative practice was identical to the one that he derived from his reading of Poe

and that was to inform his translation.⁹ Behind the veil of a foreign, unfamiliar language, Baudelaire discovered his own work, written by "un autre." For him, then, translating became an act of repossession--not in the sense that he "improved" in any way on Poe or tried to minimize the latter's authorship (quite to the contrary)--but in the sense that he transformed Poe, and Poe's work, into a French literary phenomenon of which he--Baudelaire--was the exclusive author and which in fact occupies five of the twelve volumes of his collected works.

To understand how this literary symbiosis came about, we must return again to the initial reaction of the American public and to its representative critic, T.S. Eliot. In his discussion of "The Raven," he analyzes the line "In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore," of which he says:

Since there is nothing particularly saintly about the raven, if indeed the ominous bird is not wholly the reverse, there can be no point in referring his origin to a period of saintliness, even if such a period can be assumed to have existed. We have just heard the raven described as stately; but we are told presently that he is ungainly. . . . Several words in the poem seem to be inserted either merely to fill out the line to the required measure, or for the sake of a rhyme . . . (15)

T.S. Eliot thus correctly defines Poe's poetic usage of the English language in terms of a difference or deviance with respect to its normal, every-day application--a characteristic that defines the specificity of all literary discourse and hence constitutes one of the fundamental factors of literary translation. But to him, this deviation is pushed beyond the bounds of the acceptable: the words "stately" and "saintly," for

instance, do not, in his view, make sense when applied to the raven. Worse still, Poe also violates the constraints of the prevalent poetic code which informs the reception of the literary text: "saintly" and "stately" are in flagrant contradiction with the metaphorical associations elaborated elsewhere in the poem and thus undermine the very possibility of any textual coherence. Moreover--and this is the ultimate disgrace--the poem contains superfluous words whose only function is to fill out the verse. Thus Poe's texts refuse to yield any kind of consistent meaning to the original reader in terms of either a purely linguistic code or an established literary poetics. In fact, to the American reader, whose understanding of the text is determined by both these codes, it appears that Poe simply did not master either of them.

What T.S. Eliot and other critics refused to acknowledge was the fact that Poe had himself very consciously elaborated a poetics of his own which he expounded in articles such as "The Philosophy of Composition" and "The Poetic Principle."¹⁰ According to Poe, the purpose of a literary text is not pedagogical, moral, or historical; it does not seek to attain and deliver the Truth, but to create an effect to which all its constituent elements are oriented. These are therefore not representational, but functional, and the literary text has no ulterior purpose: it exists in itself and for itself. If words are there to satisfy the needs of rhyme and meter, it is because the effect of the poem relies predominantly on the signifier; "saintly" and "stately" are not meant to provide an accurate, referential description of the raven but to create semantic and acoustic resonances: the principle motivating them is constructivist in nature and not mimetic as was taken for granted by T.S. Eliot who dismissed Poe's entire theory as an elaborate hoax, for, he claims, "the result hardly does credit to the method" (16).

Baudelaire's approach to Poe is almost dia-

consequential appendage.

It is thus the explicit interrelationship between theory and practice, if not created, then at least made obvious by Baudelaire, that on the one hand allowed the French reader to perceive Poe's work as an autonomous, self-contained totality, and that on the other represented a generally applicable model for subsequent authors. This universality of Poe is articulated most explicitly by Paul Valéry:

Jamais le problème de la littérature n'avait été, jusqu'à Edgar Poe, examiné dans ses prémisses, réduit à un problème de psychologie, abordé au moyen d'une analyse où la logique et la mécanique des effets étaient délibérément employées. Pour la première fois, les rapports de l'oeuvre et du lecteur étaient élucidés et donnés comme les fondements positifs de l'art. Cette analyse . . . s'applique et se vérifie aussi nettement dans tous les domaines de la production littéraire.¹³

Poe thus stands for both a model and an illustration of a particular kind of literary practice in which Baudelaire himself and his successors perceived themselves to be engaged. It was this type of model, this autonomous, intellectualized poetics, that had been lacking in French literature and that Poe was able to supply. Baudelaire's translation was thus favored by a propitious set of circumstances and could fulfill a precise need that existed in the target literature of which it immediately became an integral part, a situation circumscribed and accounted for by modern models of literary translation:

In such a situation it (translated literature) is by and large an intergral part of innovatory forces, and as such likely to be identified with major events in literary.

history while these are taking place. This implies in fact that no clean-cut distinction is then maintained between original and translated writings, and that often it is the leading writers who produce the most important translations. Moreover, in such a state when new literary models are emerging, translation is likely to become one of the means of elaborating these new models.¹⁴

This, then, is precisely the function that devolved on Baudelaire's translation of Poe.

There was another factor facilitating the actual translation, namely the relative absence of explicit allusions to the referential context in Poe's writings, the logical consequence of the author's insistence on the functional, constructivist nature of the textual elements. Thus, for example, T.S. Eliot taxed Poe with provincialism and accused him of being "a kind of displaced European": "There can be few authors of such eminence who have drawn so little from their own roots, who have been so isolated from any surroundings," he complains (9). To the extent that referential specificity is present at all, it is contained in the prefaces, where Baudelaire explains to the French reader the context of Poe's life, presented not as cause for moral condemnation of his work, as had been the attitude of American readers, but as the logical effect of Poe's dedication to his poetic vocation, a view that is largely the product of Baudelaire's own conception of the condition of the artist. In this way, Poe's life as well as his theory becomes integrated as part of the interpretative system into the total literary phenomenon presented by Baudelaire's translation.

The final irony in this interrelated process of literary reception and translation--and the ultimate outrage to Anglo-Saxon critics--is the fact that the unfavorable reaction of the American public became itself an important factor in the

universal acclaim that Poe achieved in France. Baudelaire presented Poe as a forlorn and proud aristocrat, devoted to his artistic integrity wandering unrecognized through a hostile America-- "cette grande barbarie illuminée au gaz"--and suffering in dignified silence under a new type of tyranny that he called the tyranny of animals, of the zoocracy that is American capitalism.¹⁵ Baudelaire was only reiterating, rather hyperbolically, it is true, an attitude about America that was quite common in a certain French intellectual milieu, but the implication of his statements was obvious and well-received: it was precisely because Poe was misunderstood in America that he deserved to be cherished in France. To read Poe in French is to free him from the fetters of zoocratic repression and incomprehension, it is to restore him to his "true" nature. This "true" nature, soon to be enshrined as a classic in the authoritative canon of the Pléiade edition, remains Baudelaire's creation, a creation produced through the distinctive interplay of literary reception and linguistic transposition that defines the specificity of all poetic translation. In the words of Paul Valéry:

Baudelaire procure à la pensée de Poe une étendue infinie. Il la propose à l'avenir. Cette étendue qui change le poète en lui-même, dans le grand vers de Mallarmé ["Tel qu'en Lui-même enfin l'éternité le change ..."], c'est l'acte, c'est la traduction, ce sont les préfaces de Baudelaire qui l'ouvrent et qui l'assurent à l'ombre du misérable Poe.¹⁶

¹Such a theory has been discussed and elaborated by: Jiri Levy, Die literarische Übersetzung. Theorie einer Kunstgattung (Frankfort am Main: 1969); André Lefèvre, "The Translation of Literature: An Approach," Babel, 16.2 (1970): 75-80; James S. Holmes, José Lambert & Raymond van den Broeck (eds.), Literature and Translation: New Perspectives in Literary Studies (Leuven: Academic Publishing Company, 1978); and especially Robert de Beaugrande, Factors in a Theory of Poetic Translating (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1978).

²For an exhaustive discussion of these theoretical problems, see Georges Mounin, Les problèmes théoriques de la traduction (Paris: Gallimard, 1963).

³David Galloway in his "Introduction" to Edgar Allan Poe, Selected Writings (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980) 23.

⁴T.S. Eliot, From Poe to Valéry (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1948) 14 and 21; Harold Bloom, ed. Edgar Allan Poe (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1985) 4. Further references to these critics will be incorporated directly into the text.

⁵Henry James, "Comments," The Recognition of Edgar Allan Poe, ed. Eric W. Carlson (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1966) 66.

⁶Robert de Beaugrande 25.

⁷Charles Baudelaire, Correspondance (Paris: Gallimard, "Pléiade," 1973) 1:343.

⁸Charles Baudelaire, Correspondance (Paris: Gallimard, "Pléiade," 1973) 2:386.

⁹For the notion of "conceptual map" in literary translation, see, for instance, James S. Holmes, "Describing Literary Translation: Models and Methods," in Literature and Translation, 69-82.

¹⁰Edgar Allan Poe 480-92 and 499-513.

¹¹Edgar Allan Poe, Oeuvres en prose, traduction par Charles Baudelaire, édition établie et annotée par Y.-G. Le Dantec (Paris: Gallimard, "Pléiade," 1951) 1089, note 10.

¹²Of which there are three: "Edgar Allan Poe, sa vie et ses ouvrages," 1852, a general introduction published in the Revue de Paris; "Edgar Poe, sa vie et ses oeuvres," a revised version of the former, which constitutes the preface to Histoires extraordinaires (1856); "Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe," the preface to the Nouvelles histoires extraordinaires of 1857. A later "Avis du traducteur" remained unpublished. See Oeuvres en prose.

¹³Paul Valéry, "Situation de Baudelaire," in Edgar Allan Poe, sous la direction de Claude Richard (Paris: Editions de l'Herne, 1974) 359. Through Baudelaire's translation and Valéry's theoretical formulations, Poe came to play an important role in Formalist writings: B. Eikenbaum, "Sur la théorie de la prose," in Théorie de la littérature, présenté par T. Todorov (Paris: Seuil, 1965) 205-8, and also became part of structuralist concerns; G. Genette, Figures I (Paris: Seuil, 1966) 261-62. As for renewed American interest in Poe, it also is directly attributable to the success of Baudelaire's translation: "if Poe is ever to be seriously appreciated in this country it will not be owing

to traditional American criticism," Patrick F. Quinn, The French Face of Edgar Poe (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1951) 14.

¹⁴Itamar Even-Zohar, "The Position of Translated Literature Within the Literary Polystream," in Literature and Translation 120.

¹⁵Oeuvres en prose 1031.

¹⁶Paul Valéry 360.

Garcilaso o el alcance de una poética
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I

En la lírica de Garcilaso puede trazarse una línea de demarcación entre el hecho literario constituido y la reflexión que supuso su escritura para el hablante lírico básico. En este sentido, existe una conciencia del fenómeno escritural y su contrario, la lectura. Se reflexiona sobre el proceso creativo y se establece el alcance de una poética.

Claudio Guillén señala este hecho al referirse a la selección que hace el escritor (Garcilaso) por la veta satírica en la "Epístola a Boscán" y en la "Elegía II."¹ Aquí, expone Guillén, el escritor:

...elige entre las distintas normas que existen en su época, en que digamos con mayor exactitud, unos géneros poéticos revelan su vigencia (como modelos que influyen o intervienen en el proceso creador), en que poesía y poética se tocan y se entrelazan.
 (213)

Esta selección supone, para Guillén, ese alcance de una poética:

... (o sea, de unas ideas teóricas eficientes acerca de los principales géneros de poesía lírica) en trance de nacer o reconstituirse.
 (213)

Como se ve, de la lírica de Garcilaso existe una lectura posible: la reflexión sobre la poesía que se da en el mismo texto poético ya constituido.

He aquí, entonces, el propósito de este trabajo: hacer un breve estudio de esa reflexión

sobre la poesía en la lírica garcilasiana partiendo de tres poemas ("Soneto VIII"; "Canción V"; "Égloga III").

En el primero, se establece una poética de la lectura y de la escritura. La creación en relación con la "vista" de la amada contextualizada con la lírica trovadoresca y la tradición del amor cortés (esa distancia o ausencia de la amada [el referente en este caso] que mueve a la escritura).

En el segundo, se determina una reflexión sobre la estrofa, la lira, la cual será nombrada así en la poesía posterior. Además, se pretende un tipo de poema específico: una poesía órfica que tenga el efecto de aplacar la ira donde se trasluzca al arte influenciando a la naturaleza.

Por último, en el tercero, se asiste a la realización plena del género nuevo del que hablaba Boscán. La conciencia del fenómeno escritural tiene aquí su mejor ejemplo, al punto de transformarse en una conciencia del fenómeno artístico en general. No sólo la literatura, sino la plástica, la música y el arte en su manifestación heurística.

II

La carta que escribiera Garcilaso en 1534 como prólogo a la edición castellana de El cortegiano de Baldessar de Castiglione hecha por Boscán, puede tomarse como una referencia a la proposición de un ideal de lengua. Esta proposición consiste no sólo en una conciencia de la traducción como género (lo que constituye una versión del original siendo en realidad una interpretación de éste atendiendo al 'rigor' de las sentencias) sino en el beneficio lingüístico de la traducción. En este caso, el asumir, haciendo un juicio de valor literario, la 'desventura' lingüístico-literaria del mundo hispánico en ese momento:

Y también tengo por muy principal el beneficio que se haze a la lengua castellana en poner en ella cosas que merezcan ser leídas, porque yo no sé qué desventura á sido siempre la nuestra, que apenas á nadie escrito en nuestra lengua sino lo que se pudiera muy bien escusar... (Garcilaso 488)

Garcilaso comenta la dificultad de traducir ("romançar") y el logro de Boscán al haber huido de la afectación sin producir 'sequedad' en el estilo poniendo en la lengua castellana, y esto es lo más importante de esta proposición, toda la fuerza y el ornamento de la italiana (Garcilaso 489). Aquí, se reconoce la actitud italianizante y el objeto implícito de dinamizar su escritura por medio de una lectura poética, o una lectura del poeta a toda literatura, apropiándose de aquellos elementos que le sirven para crear nuevos textos de las obras ya establecidas.²

Este objeto implícito de una lectura poética puede trazarse en el "Soneto VIII,"³ donde se da la realización de esta lectura en un pasaje de Il cortegiano⁴ produciéndose un poema donde se reflexiona sobre el proceso creativo: la fijación de un referente, la amada, y su transformación literaria. El análisis de este soneto se hace desde dos perspectivas: 1- la contextualización de la relación hablante lírico: amada, con la tradición del amor cortés; y 2- la teoría literaria implícita del referente (presencia o ausencia de la amada).

Garcilaso compartía la opinión de sus contemporáneos que veían en el enamorado la víctima de una fuerza arbitraria e irresistible que le impulsaba a rendir su voluntad a los caprichos de su dama (Green 138-60). Esta opinión tiene su origen en el género literario establecido por los trovadores del siglo XI, los cuales escriben en un lenguaje originariamente técnico con voces y expresiones propias del documento jurídico o del código feudal que establece la relación también

feudal entre amante y amada.

En su estudio, The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love, Roger Boase propone que el amor cortés es una retórica, una preceptiva literaria:

Courtly love was a European and rhetorical tradition from which the medieval writer could draw certain themes and stylistic devices... The poet's scope for inventiveness was limited to the rearrangement of established topics, themes, motifs and key words. (Boase 109)

Responde, entonces, el "Soneto VIII," no sólo al eco petrarquista de la concepción de la amada, sino a esa retórica amorosa propia de la tradición literaria del amor cortés; además de representar el otro eco del "dolce stil nuovo" italiano que transformó el amor en una especie de teología.

En este soneto se teoriza sobre cómo el amante recibe en presencia de la amada toda la fascinación psicológica-fisiológica de la óptica del amor (como la llama Otis Green), que es tema versificado en la Vita nuova de Dante y en un madrigal de Bernardo Tasso.

La amada sería el referente (ese "objeto real extralingüístico designado por el enunciado" [Todorov-Ducrot 123]) y de su vista (sus ojos, o su mirada) salen espíritus ("aquellas partículas de sangre de las que se componen los rayos visuales" [Garcilaso 44]) que son recibidos por el enamorado. Este primer nivel es el que Terry Eagleton llama, en su ensayo "What is literature?", el "fact" o hecho del cual se pasa a un segundo nivel, el "fiction" o la ficción (Eagleton 1). El hecho aquí es una breve mirada de la amada, casi acaso de soslayo, y su efecto en el poeta. Este, ya en ausencia, recuerda aquella breve mirada y entonces prorrumpe: "mis espíritus, pensando que la vían, / se mueven y se encienden sin medida" (Garcilaso 44).

La creación artística en su primera fase de ensueño o inspiración se describe aquí a partir de un primer contacto con la amada, y en ausencia de ésta, el motivo que supone la escritura (la cual supuso a su vez una lectura del referente extralingüístico para luego constituirse en el hecho literario posible: el "Soneto VIII"). En el mismo, hay una teoría literaria implícita: el discurso literario se da desde el momento en que el referente no está ya presente y se reelabora recreándose en las fronteras mismas del texto literario para que reviente "por salir do no hay salida" (Garcilaso 44). Y este elemento del "No-exit," de la aporía casi filosófica, es aquí el poema. La escritura en su dimensión límite de mero reflejo o reelaboración del referente extraliterario que supuso, en este caso, su origen.

El hablante lírico reflexiona estableciendo una distancia con la amada, dada su ausencia, y recupera en la obra literaria, por medio de la memoria, el efecto de los 'espirtus' en sí mismo y consigo mismo, de la escritura. Ésta, como un acto imaginario; es decir como un llevar en la memoria el objeto señalado para la realización de la obra de arte.

Este afán de esconder el referente tiene su explicación en la retórica trovadoresca del amor cortés. Una de las razones por las cuales los trovadores tenían la necesidad de mantener el secreto amoroso, por medio de un seudónimo o 'senal' (signo, distintivo, enseña) adjudicado a la amada, era el hecho de no revelar el nombre de la dama en cuestión sino por medio de la designación de un nombre supuesto (Riquer 9-102).

Una lectura que cabe, dentro de estas relaciones, de la lírica garcilasiana es la de la 'senal' Elisa designando a su Isabel de Freyre. De ahí que la Elisa de Nemoroso sea una evocación del amor imposible y ya perdido. Otra lectura más literaria y mucho menos biográfica es la de considerar ese signo distintivo que se le adjudica a la amada como la convención mediante la cual se

establece el espacio estrictamente literario en el que se da la relación amante/amada. El "Soneto VIII" es una reflexión de la escritura renacentista como una lectura poética de la realidad bajo la consecución de un ideal para todo hecho real.

III

En el primer verso de la "Canción V" ("Ode ad Florem Gnidi"), "Si de mi baja lira..." (Garcilaso 93), se inaugura en las letras españolas una estrofa hasta entonces desusada (Lapesa 147-66). Esta oda se inserta en el grupo de poemas que podrían denominarse como experimentales en la actividad poética de Garcilaso. El grupo está constituido por la "Epístola a Boscán," la "Elegía I" y la "Canción V." En la epístola hay, lo que Lapesa llama "primicia de un género literario" (149) y junto a la elegía es el producto de la selección, antes citada de Guillén, por una veta satírica.

La "Canción V" es, a juicio de Lapesa: "uno de los poemas garcilasianos que tuvo más influencia sobre la literatura posterior" (154). La combinación métrica de la estrofa 'lira' fue en Tasso, como señala Dámaso Alonso, una forma estrófica dentro de las muchas con las que se experimentaba (Alonso 458-63). El uso que hiciera Garcilaso de ésta, en su poema, tuvo una gran trascendencia en la poesía española pasando a los dos poetas mayores del siglo XVI: Fray Luis de León y San Juan de la Cruz (Alonso 461-62).

Es por esto que Peter N. Dunn señala que la "Oda a la flor de Gnido" es el tipo de poema apropiado para que en él tropiecen las teorías poéticas. Desde el empleo de la palabra 'oda' se muestra la deuda que se tiene con Bernardo Tasso (Dunn 288-309). La conciencia del fenómeno escritural es aquí el aprendizaje de un nuevo metro de su contemporáneo napolitano.

Además de una reflexión literaria sobre el uso de una forma estrófica se reincide en la transformación del referente. De la anécdota generalizada que se desprende del título (el poeta como intercesor entre Doña Violante Sanseverino y Mario Galeota, para que la primera quiera al segundo) puede pasarse a una teoría del referente. Se deja de lado la idea de este como objeto real orientándose hacia el 'interpretante' y hacia otra noción del referente como una unidad cultural. Por 'interpretante' se entiende, según el artículo "Hacia una teoría del referente literario" de Thomas Lewis, "una entidad mediadora entre el signo y el objeto que es garantía de la validez del signo por referencia directa a un objeto real o estado verdadero del mundo, sino más bien por el desplazamiento constante de la significación hacia una serie continua de ulteriores funciones del signo" (Lewis 6).

Es decir, el hablante lírico ha poetizado la relación Violante-Mario. Se erige en el 'interpretante' o el mediador entre ambas partes siendo garantía de que el signo poetizado (Violante: 'hermosa flor de Gnido') valga en el contexto de la obra literaria desplazando la significación de la siguiente manera. El hablante lírico hace claramente referencia a una dama cuyo nombre no se permitía que apareciese en el poema, dada la convención de la 'senal' o seudónimo por el cual se mantiene el secreto amoroso. La información que provee el mediador o 'interpretante' es que la 'flor de Gnido' (o Violante) recibe adoración en el barrio napolitano de Nido, que es un templo de Venus por asociación al Cnidus griego (Dunn 129, 150).

Aparte de esta reflexión implícita sobre la elaboración del referente, el título deja patente, según Dunn, el hecho de que el mundo antiguo del mito y del arte es parte de la realidad contemporánea del poema como lo ha sido para cualquier humanista italiano (Dunn 152).

Otra vertiente que se teoriza en la "Canción V" es el principio de selección del tono que quiere utilizarse en este poema. David William Foster ha señalado la estructura particular de composición de esta oda, como "No A, sino B," en varios fragmentos.

Se evoca la potencia del canto órfico que el hablante lírico desearía igualar (Gómez-Bedate 11-30) y se plantea la selección condicionada y sólo posible de que si se realiza una poesía órfica que tenga el efecto de aplacar la ira trasluciendo al arte influenciando a la naturaleza, no elegiría la épica:

no pienses que cantado
 sería de mí, hermosa flor de Gnido,
 el fiero Marte airado,
 a muerte convertido,
 de polvo y sangre y sudor tenido
 (Garcilaso 94)

Así lo señala Foster: "The poet insists that even if he could, he will not use his lyre for epic purpose" (148).

IV

La "Égloga III" sitúa el alcance de una poética en la lírica de Garcilaso en su apoteosis.⁵ Ya no sólo será la literatura sino el arte en general: la pintura (en los tapices de las ninfas) y la música (en los cantos de los pastores al final del poema) el motivo de la reflexión desde la escritura misma. En la estrofa 8 se describe el lugar ameno posible para la realización del fenómeno estético y en las estrofas 14 y 15 se hace referencia a los materiales del arte y su proceso de selección de la naturaleza. La labor de las ninfas se contextualiza con la pintura de los famosos pintores griegos: Apeles y Timantes. Esta labor

consiste en varias 'historias' de amores frustrados de la antigüedad clásica (Orfeo-Eurídice, Apolo-Dafne, Adonis-Venus) y en un suceso de la realidad inmediata y contemporánea a ese lugar ameno a orillas del Tajo (la relación Nemoroso-Elisa de la "Égloga I") que se eleva aquí a la categoría de mito. En este sentido, Elias L. Rivers señala que existe una analogía entre la actividad creadora de las ninfas y la del poeta mismo (Rivers 130-44). La selección de la ninfa Nise constituye, para Alan K.G. Paterson, una reflexión sobre la imitación de los modelos clásicos en la poesía renacentista, y en este caso, una autoimitación ya que el poeta retorna de su propia obra (de la "Égloga I") y se autoimita leyendo su propia obra de manera poética (va de las Geórgicas de Virgilio, a la Metamorfosis de Ovidio, al Lamento de Teócrito y a su primera égloga) (Paterson 73-92).

Patrick Gallagher ha señalado, en su artículo "Locus Amoenus: The Aesthetic of Garcilaso's Third Eclogue, la teoría poética implícita en la "Égloga III":

...crossing the boundaries of successive enclosures as we do so, we are moving towards the aesthetic centre of a composition whose very structure enacts a theory of poetry. (64)

Esta teoría, define Gallagher, propone que la égloga trata de la historia del arte y de cómo Garcilaso se sitúa a sí mismo como poeta (la doctrina de la imitación ya mencionada por Paterson).

Si se inserta este poema en el circuito del "Soneto VIII" (referente: la amada), la "Canción V" (referente: Flor de Gnido - Violante); la "Égloga III" no fija su objeto enunciado en la realidad empírica sino en la realidad literaria. Esto es, toma su referente de la mitología clásica y del propio discurso literario de Garcilaso, en

el cual ya la referencia o el estado de cosas que la provoca queda fijado en un espacio estrictamente literario. Lo que supone, a su vez, una lectura e imitación de su propia obra. Aquí, el referente es autorreferente (refiere al texto garcilasiano general y anterior, la "Égloga I") y se realiza un proceso de intertextualidad autártica o autotextualidad (la relación de un texto consigo mismo) (Dallenbach 282-96).

De este breve análisis de tres poemas de Garcilaso se concluye que el alcance de una poética en su discurso literario propone la elaboración de un referente que se literaturiza o adquiere categoría literaria a partir de su lectura (por parte del hablante lírico básico) que lleva a una escritura particularmente consciente, lo que a su vez es parte de un fenómeno estético mayor: una conciencia de la realización del arte en sus distintas manifestaciones.

NOTAS

¹En esta misma dirección, Guillén comenta la 'voluntad teórica' de los escritores de 1530 a 1540 por conciliar los metros y las formas existentes, mostrando una coyuntura europea en la historia literaria del Renacimiento. Este hecho es señalado también por Edward O. Riley en su Teoría de la novela en Cervantes: "La teoría literaria en la España del Siglo de Oro había progresado muy poco hasta el último cuarto del Siglo XVI. Sin embargo, este lento desarrollo anterior contribuyó a precipitar señaladamente los acontecimientos que tuvieron lugar entonces. Los humanistas habían prestado atención a la literatura imaginativa como una parte de la educación general. Habían ido apareciendo tratados de retórica en castellano. Los comentarios, a escritores de la Antigüedad favorecieron la aparición de una crítica sistemática en torno a Garcilaso, el cual, a los cincuenta años de su muerte, era reputado ya como un clásico" (16).

²Esta noción de 'lectura poética' se relaciona con la idea de T. S. Eliot de que el creador tiene a su haber en el momento de su creación toda la tradición artística que lo precede.

³"De aquella vista pura y excelente/ salen espirtus vivos y encendidos,/ y siendo por mis ojos recibidos,/ me pasan hasta donde el mal se siente;/ éntanse en el camino fácilmente/ por do los míos, de tal calor movidos,/ salen fuera de mí como perdidos,/ llamados d'aquel bien que'stá presente./ Ausente, en la memoria la imagino;/ mis espirtus, pensando que la vían,/ se mueven y se encienden sin medida;/ mas no hallando fácil el camino,/ que los suyos entrando derretían,/ revientan por salir do no hay salida."

⁴Elias L. Rivers, en su artículo "The Sources of Garcilaso's Sonnet VIII," señala como fuente directa de este soneto un pasaje de Il cortegiano (Libro IV).

⁵Dámaso Alonso en su ensayo "Garcilaso y los límites de la estilística" dice que en la "Égloga III," se tiene el arte último de Garcilaso o su total impregnación en el medio renacentista de Italia (pensamiento, arte y poesía). Elias L. Rivers, por su parte, define este poema, en su artículo "The Pastoral Paradox of Natural Art," como una síntesis de los convencionalismos clásicos y del paisaje toledano, del arte y de la naturaleza. Rivers aporta su visión de una representación de Nemoroso de manera indirecta. El artista se borra como persona y permite ser vislumbrado como un reflejo de espejo velazqueño. Con este comentario, Rivers acierta en la contextualización, de la "Égloga III" en el juego renacentista de la autoría.

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Femme et fin'amors dans les Lais de Marie de France
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L'interprétation des textes et des concepts médiévaux est toujours une entreprise périlleuse par sa gageure d'élucider des signes complexes, disparates, et réfractaires à toute catégorisation; entreprise rendue encore plus délicate qu'elle ne peut ignorer un corpus critique, abondant et polémique. Ainsi en est-il de l'oeuvre de Marie de France qui a divisé la critique tant sur le plan de l'identité et du sexe de l'auteur, que sur le plan du genre et du contenu idéologique de son texte.

Marie adepte ou critique de l'amour courtois? Le texte des Lais s'associe-t-il à l'idéal de la fin'amors? Les avis critiques sont partagés à ce sujet. Moshé Lazar, dans Amour courtois et fin'amors, retrouve dans les Lais plusieurs motifs courtois et accorde à Marie le rôle d'une initiatrice dans "la transformation morale qui s'opère dans le traitement des conceptions amoureuses . . . avec le passage de l'idéologie courtoise du Midi vers le Nord de la France."¹ Bartina Wind réduit au contraire le rôle des théories courtoises dans les Lais à une simple mode et couleur locale.² Ernest Hoepffner décèle une hostilité au concept de l'amour courtois et pense qu'un "des secrets qui font le charme des lais de Marie [est] de ne pas avoir adopté sur ce point la mode de son temps et de ne pas avoir cédé à l'engouement des cercles courtois."³ Dans son article "Fin'amors dans deux lais de Marie de France: Equitan et Chaitivel," Robert Green cherche à démontrer, à partir de ces deux contes constituant selon lui le noyau de l'oeuvre, que l'ensemble des douze lais forme une unité narrative qui rejette l'idéal proposé par la fin'amors.⁴ Philippe Ménard conclue que "l'amour, tel que le décrit et l'imagine Marie, est, pour l'essentiel, étranger aux représentations et aux

rites courtois."⁵ La fin' amors en tant qu'idéal auquel aurait souscrit Marie se trouve donc sérieusement remise en question. L'étude présente aimerait proposer une vue moins radicale, non un pour ou contre de Marie envers l'idéologie courtoise, mais son utilisation toute personnelle et sélective des motifs de la fin'amors qu'elle transforme notamment par la dimension qu'elle accorde au rôle féminin. Ces deux thèmes fondamentaux, fin'amors et femme, sont en fait intimement liés. Deux volets organisent cette étude, le premier repérant les éléments textuels qui justifient l'insertion des Lais dans le contexte de la fin' amors, le deuxième examinant le rôle de la femme, un rôle déterminant et original dans le dire poétique amoureux des Lais.

L'écriture des Lais datant du dernier tiers du XII^e siècle s'inscrit clairement dans un contexte social courtois. Dans son prologue, Marie dédie ses lais à un protecteur royal témoignant de grâces toutes courtoises, un "nobles reis, / Ki tant estes pruz e curteis, / A ki tute joie s'encline / E en ki qu'er tuz biens racine" (v. 43-46),⁶ et son audience est celle des "seignurs" (G, v. 3) de la cour. D'autre part, elle insiste à plusieurs reprises sur la qualité noble et les vertus courtoises de ses inspirateurs bretons: "Mut unt esté noble barun" qui composaient des lais "par pruësce, / Par curteisie e par noblesce (Eq, v. 1-4) et "De lur amur e de lur bien" (M, v. 531). Marie se réclame donc d'un monde courtois. De même les actants de ses Lais appartiennent au milieu éminemment aristocratique, riche et raffiné de la noblesse et de la chevalerie et manifestent des traits et des comportements typiquement courtois. On trouve plusieurs stéréotypes de la littérature courtoise. Les yeux des dames sont vairs, leurs cheveux blonds et leurs corps blancs. Les hommes sont valeureux, preux et courtois. Tous font preuve de ces qualités éminemment courtoises que sont la générosité et la largesse. Mais bien sûr ce décor ne saurait suffire pour

inscrire l'expression poétique des Lais dans un contexte de fin'amors. Comme l'a justement fait remarquer Lazar dans Amour courtois et fin'amors, il convient de bien distinguer courtoisie et amour courtois. Si Marie donne clairement à ses lais un décor de cour, ses thèmes et leur traitement s'apparentent-ils à ceux de la fin'amors chantée par les troubadours et codifiée par des théoriciens comme André le Chapelain?

L'amour inspire et commande la poésie des chantres occitans. Il est la racine de toute courtoisie. En cela, Marie leur ressemble. C'est bien l'amour dans tout son absolu qui est l'inspiration fondamentale et la force motrice de ses lais. C'est lui qui est source de joie, bien suprême, unique préoccupation de l'être véritablement courtois. Ainsi l'indifférence amoureuse de Guigemar, par ailleurs doté de toutes les autres vertus courtoises, est-elle une méprise de la nature et le fait tenir pour "peri" (v. 67). Cette indifférence de Guigemar enfreint la première et la plus impérative des lois de l'éthique courtoise qui est celle d'aimer. Pareillement, l'absence d'amour fait dépérir la dame d'"Yonec": "Sa beuté pert en teu mesure / . . . mieuz vousist / Que morz hastive la preisist" (Y, v. 47-50).

D'autre part, la fin'amors se nourrit de l'obstacle et de la séparation. Le véritable amour ne peut s'obtenir sans tourments et c'est l'épreuve de la souffrance qui lui donne son prix et le fait grandir. La narration des Lais s'articule autour de cette thématique de l'obstacle et de la souffrance. Ils relatent des amours contrariés et présentent les images répressives d'un ordre social hostile à la passion: maris jaloux, père possessif, rivaux, geôliers, chambres-prisons, losenquiers. Comme dans la fin'amors, les amours des Lais se réalisent le plus souvent en dehors des liens matrimoniaux. L'adultère n'est pas jugé coupable. Car chez Marie comme chez les poètes courtois, l'amour prime tout et a une valeur d'absolu qui ne saurait se limiter ni se

définir en termes institutionnels. Illégitime, cet amour s'expose fatalement aux obstacles. Mais, alors que la lyrique courtoise se complait dans la séparation et, tel Jaufré Rudel, "l'amor de lonh," les lais célèbrent ultimement l'amour de près, le triomphe de l'obstacle et la réunion des amants. Si Marie se rattache à l'éthique courtoise en associant l'obstacle et la souffrance à l'amour, si les lais de "Milun" ou du "Laüstic" illustrent dans une certaine mesure le motif de "l'amor de lonh," la poétesse transforme l'idéal de la fin'amors--en particulier dans "Guigemar," "Lanval," "Milun"--en y apposant la satisfaction du désir et la possibilité d'un vécu heureux.

Autre motif caractéristique de la fin'amors est la naissance de l'amour comme une force violente, irrésistible, qui s'empare de l'amant au point de le posséder. C'est un feu consumant, une blessure qui provoque une souffrance intense et qui se traduit par des signes physiques de pâleur, d'inquiétude, d'insomnie, de tremblement. Rappelons ces règles de comportement rapportées par Le Chapelain: "Tout amant doit pâlir en présence de son amante"; "Quand un amant aperçoit brusquement celle qu'il aime, son coeur doit commencer à tressaillir"; "Celui que tourmente le souci d'amour mange moins et dort peu."⁷ Guigemar ou Equitan, pour ne citer que ces deux exemples, affichent ces symptômes caractéristiques du "fin amant" et offrent une illustration toute courtoise de l'apparition et des effets du phénomène tout-puissant de l'amour. Ainsi l'exemple d'Equitan:

Amurs l'ad mis en sa maisniee:
 Une seete ad vers lui traite,
 Ki mut grant plaie li ad faite:
 El quor li ad lanciee e mise!
 N'i ad mestier sens ne cointise:
 Pur la dame l'ad si suspris,
 Tuz en est murnes e pensis.
 Or l'i estuet del tut entendre,
 Ne se purrat nient defendre.

La nuit ne dort ne ne respouse,
 Mes sei meïsmes blasme e chose:
 "Allas! fet il, queils destinee
 M'amenat en ceste cuntree?
 Pur ceste dame qu'ai veüe
 M'est une anguisse al quor ferue,
 Ki tut le cors me fet trembler:
 Jeo quit que mei l'estuet amer.

(v. 54-70)

Il convient de s'arrêter sur ce lai d'"Equitan" dont la thématique de la fin'amors prête à controverse. En effet ce lai semble vouloir faire un recensement systématique des principes et de la rhétorique de la fin'amors: l'amour a ses propres lois; il est adultère; il ennoblit l'amant; ce dernier risque la mort si la dame ne le secourt pas; apparaissent également les thèmes du vasselage et du service d'amour et de la foi échangée par serment. Or de tous les lais, c'est celui qui est le moins attrayant et certes le moins représentatif d'un amour noble, exaltant, et source de joie. Ce paradoxe n'est certainement pas gratuit et a donné lieu à des interprétations critiques divergentes. Lazar y voit l'acceptation de la fin'amors: "Marie accepte la fin'amors: 'Que devendrait sa curteisie / s'elle n'amast de druërie'. Elle désavoue seulement le projet criminel des amants."⁸ Par contre Hoepffner y décèle sa condamnation par Marie: "Toute son oeuvre proteste contre cette théorie outrancière. . . . Marie prononce une condamnation discrète et voilée, mais pas moins sévère de cette conception spéciale de l'amour, qu'elle ne peut approuver. Sa nature droite et franche, son sentiment de la justice et de l'équité, s'insurgent contre une théorie qui repose sur le principe de l'amour coupable, un amour qui ne connaît ni frein ni loi, la passion égoïste, qui, pour se satisfaire, ne recule pas devant un crime odieux et se prépare à sacrifier sans scrupules un être honnête et innocent."⁹ En fait Marie ne veut faire ni le procès

ni l'apologie de la fin' amors, mais plutôt donner une mise en garde contre l'inauthenticité d'un sentiment amoureux qui se cache derrière une façade courtoise. Equitan, qui désire la femme de son sénéchal bien avant de l'avoir vue, fait davantage figure de jouisseur incontinent que d'amant courtois respectant la mesura. Il est chasseur--Marie insiste sur sa passion de la chasse et la variété de ses gibiers de forêt ou d'eau--la femme de son sénéchal, tant louée et admirée, serait le plus beau fleuron de ses prises amoureuses. Equitan est conscient de la trahison, de la bassesse et de la cruauté de son geste vis à vis de son dévoué sénéchal. Aussi, pour faire taire ses scrupules et se convaincre, lui-même ainsi que l'objet de ses désirs, de la légitimité de son amour, il recourt à une rhétorique de la persuasion, manipulant les conceptions et le langage courtois pour justifier son désir. Il n'est pas amant courtois authentique qui cultive le sentiment pur, absolu et ennoblissant de l'amour. A travers Equitan, Marie ne condamne pas la fin'amors mais elle démystifie le terme en soulignant la différence entre le nom et la chose, l'essence et l'apparence. L'observation de préceptes et de comportements codifiés ne garantit nullement la qualité du sentiment.

Ainsi Marie prend une distance par rapport aux théories courtoises. Elle est suffisamment séduite par l'idéal de la fin'amors pour en incorporer nombre de motifs essentiels dans son schéma narratif. Parallèlement elle se méfie des codes qui figent, stérilisent et dénaturent le sentiment amoureux. Les amants authentiques de ses contes sont ceux dont l'amour naît réciproquement et spontanément de leur rencontre. Il se produit une reconnaissance mutuelle qui n'a nul besoin de se convaincre par une casuistique courtoise. L'amour est et il se vit dans toute la puissance et l'absolu du moment, il est sa propre justification.

L'élément qui individualise le plus nettement

le texte de Marie par rapport à la lyrique occitane est son traitement de la femme et d'un amour féminin. Avant d'aborder plus avant cette dimension féminine dans le texte des Lais, une précision d'optique par rapport à certaines interprétations critiques s'avère nécessaire. Malgré les nombreux travaux dont elle a été l'objet, l'identité de l'auteur reste une énigme. Bien plus, l'énigme de l'identité se double du mystère du sexe. Richard Baum¹⁰ en 1968, et plus récemment Jean-Charles Huchet¹¹ en 1981 remettent en question l'assignation du sexe féminin à l'auteur des Lais. Cette "Marie" qui signe les Lais serait-elle un homme? L'étude présente ne prétend certes pas résoudre cette question et là n'est pas son propos. Mais cette remise en question du sexe de l'auteur s'est accompagnée d'un constat de misogynie sous la plume de Jean-Charles Huchet qui trouve dans les Lais "l'expression fréquente d'une misogynie toute cléricale. La responsabilité d'une femme est toujours engagée dans la naissance du malheur. Equitan meurt ébouillanté à cause de l'épouse du sénéchal 'Dunt puis vint el país granz mals'; Bisclavret, circonvenu par sa femme, se voit condamné à rester loup-garou car elle a dissimulé les vêtements qui lui permettraient de recouvrer son humanité."¹² Il est pour le moins réducteur de voir dans les Lais la peinture du malheur de l'homme, victime de la femme, et l'expression d'un clerc mysogine. Huchet oublie la responsabilité de l'homme dans la naissance du malheur. Reprenant le même exemple d'Equitan, force est de constater que c'est bien l'homme qui prend l'initiative de la relation adultère et est l'instrument de son propre malheur. C'est Equitan, jouisseur incontinent, qui fait coucher la dame sur le lit du mari où ils prennent leur plaisir et leurs ébats, alors même que, selon le plan meurtrier manigancé par les amants, le mari sénéchal est à la porte de la chambre, prêt à prendre un bain avec Equitan. La responsabilité du malheur imminent semble bien partagée entre les

deux sexes. Les amants d'"Equitan" ne cessent d'enfreindre la loi courtoise de la mesura. Dans le lai des "Deus Amanz," c'est encore l'homme, par son manque de mesura, qui porte la responsabilité de la mort des amants. Certes certaines femmes sont coupables, celles d'"Equitan," de "Bisclavret," de "Chaitivel," mais d'autres sont victimes, celles du "Laüstic," des "Deus Amanz," d'"Eliduc." Huchet oublie également la responsabilité de la femme dans la naissance du bonheur, par exemple dans "Lanval" et "Guigemar." Il ignore le rôle conciliateur de la femme dans "Eliduc" ou "Deus Amanz." L'écriture des Lais n'est pas mysogine, elle propose au contraire la vision égalitaire d'une responsabilité partagée. Elle prône avant tout la qualité courtoise de la mesura, principe essentiel de la fin'amors, qui, selon Marie, doit s'incarner aussi bien dans l'amant que dans l'amante.

Bien plus, loin d'être mysogine, cette écriture dynamise la dimension féminine, lui accordant une place et un rôle essentiels dans la représentation de la fin'amors. Dans la poésie des troubadours, la femme est une personnification de l'amour. En fait l'amour et la dame sont pratiquement interchangeable, les mêmes images étant souvent utilisées pour les deux au point qu'il est parfois difficile de savoir duquel il est question. Car le chantre incarne l'amour dans la Dame. Elle sert de symbole et n'est donc pas individualisée. Elle est en fait une projection de l'esprit du chantre, une image façonnée selon ses désirs, le support de son expression poétique. Dans The Courtly Love Tradition, Bernard O'Donoghue fait très justement remarquer: "In nearly all cases it seems that the poet is more concerned with his feelings and the form he gives to his expression of them than with the object of his love in herself."¹³ Le centre d'intérêt n'est pas la Dame, mais le chantre. Les éléments poétiques convergent sur la psychologie de l'homme, l'emprise et les effets de l'amour sur

lui, les conflits qui l'assaillent. Avec Marie de France, on assiste à un phénomène différent, presque inverse: le dire poétique s'énonce selon une perspective non plus exclusivement masculine, mais également, et peut-être pourrait-on même dire surtout, féminine. Elle présente des alternatives au modèle courtois de la Dame en transformant les rôles traditionnellement attribués à l'amant courtois et à sa dame.

Ainsi la souffrance d'amour n'est nullement l'apanage exclusif de l'amant, comme dans la lyrique occitane: Guilliadun ou la dame de Guigemar sont atteintes par les flèches du dieu Amour, connaissent la blessure d'aimer, pâlissent, soupirent et se consomment à la manière du fin amant. Les amantes des Lais connaissent l'obstacle et souffrent de la séparation et de l'absence de leur amant. Sans l'amour, l'amant de la fin'amors meurt; il en est de même pour les dames des Lais: sans amour la dame d'Yonec dépérit; la dame de Guigemar dit préférer la mort à une vie sans amour; dans "Eliduc," Guilliadun meurt symboliquement et Guildeluëc choisit l'exil du couvent. La fin'amors a un effet anoblissant, elle est source d'héroïsme et d'abnégation: ainsi dans le lai de "Lanval," la fée pardonne à Lanval qui a trahi la loi du secret; l'épouse d'Eliduc, par amour pour lui, choisit l'abnégation. Les amantes des Lais connaissent également le jois d'amour, telle la dame d'"Yonec" qui est transfigurée par la joie d'aimer. Ainsi le texte des Lais reformule la fin'amors dans la perspective du féminin: la "fin amante" fait face au "fin amant."

Ces exemples de fin'amors incarnée dans le personnage féminin soulignent l'originalité de la pensée de l'auteur des Lais au sein du courant courtois. Alors que la dame des troubadours est existentiellement absente de leur poésie, étant la projection immatérielle d'un amour finalement très narcissique, les dames des Lais au contraire ont une présence bien tangible. Non pas de belles abstractions, elles sont des êtres à part entière

avec un coeur sensible et un corps sensuel. Elles sont sujettes à la souffrance, elles sont tendres et réceptives à l'amour, elles guérissent, elles pardonnent. Loin d'être désincarnées, leurs émotions se peignent sur leurs visages: "Tute en fu sa face vermeille" (G, v. 272). Elles sont chair et donc sensuelles. Sitôt l'amour reconnu, elles n'imposent ni l'attente ni la chasteté à leur amant et s'abandonnent sans réserves aux plaisirs sexuels. Ceci n'est en soi nullement contraire au code de l'amour courtois: André le Chapelain définit l'amour comme "une passion naturelle qui naît de la vue de la beauté de l'autre sexe et de la pensée obsédante de cette beauté. On en vient à souhaiter par dessus tout de posséder les étreintes de l'autre et à désirer que, dans ces étreintes, soient respectées, par une volonté commune, tous les commandements de l'amour."¹⁴

Coeur et corps, la femme des Lais est aussi cerveau qui choisit et décide. La femme a un rôle déterminant, tant sur le plan de l'action narrative que sur celui de la création poétique. Dans les Lais, ce sont les femmes qui souvent font les premiers pas et initient la relation amoureuse. Ainsi il nous est dit dans "Guigemar" que bien des femmes lui firent souvent des avances; la nièce compagne de la dame est audacieuse, aventureuse, prompte à reconnaître le sentiment amoureux qui lie les deux héros et à aider à sa réalisation; la dame du reste avait déjà pris la résolution de "Mustrer e dire sun curage, / Turt li a pru u a damage" (v. 473-74). Dans "Lanval" la fée déclare très explicitement ses sentiments et dirige la relation amoureuse. Même la jeune Guilliadun fait des avances à Eliduc, l'envoyant chercher, lui prenant la main, lui offrant des cadeaux symboliques. Les femmes des Lais décident de leur amour et agissent pour l'obtenir: "La pucele ki l'ot veü / Vodra de lui fere sun dru: / Unques mes tant nul ne preisa!" (El, v. 327-29). Elles ne sont pas support passif à l'expression d'un amour masculin, mais actantes dans l'expression et la

réalisation de l'amour.

"The lover sings the song" nous dit O'Donoghue,¹⁵ "lover" entendu du point de vue masculin. Avec les Lais, on pourrait ajouter: "the 'loveress' sings the song." L'inspiratrice commune des chansons et des Lais est la dame, mais l'une est inaccessible, indifférente, et muette alors que celle des Lais est accessible, sensible et audible. Cette divergence fondamentale est subtilement illustrée dans "Yonec":

Jeo vus ai lungement amee
 E en mun quor mut desiree;
 Unkes femme fors vus n'amai
 Ne jamés autre n'amerai.
 Mes ne poeie a vus venir
 Ne fors de mun paleis eissir,
Si vus ne m'eüssez requis.
 Or puis bien estre vostre amis!
 (v. 127-34; je souligne)

Ces vers dénotent la position foncièrement individuelle de leur auteur au sein de la littérature courtoise. Conjointement aux troubadours, Marie célèbre l'intensité, la durée et l'unicité du vrai amour. Contrairement au lyrisme occitan qui se désespère d'obtenir l'amour d'une dame lointaine, la création poétique du lai s'accomplit dans et grâce à l'appel amoureux d'une femme. Sans cet appel féminin--"Si vus ne m'eüssez requis"--"Yonec" ne serait point, et le chevalier serait resté muet. Il s'agit bien d'une inspiration spécifiquement féminine qui ouvre la voie fertile de la création poétique. L'amant de la poésie occitane flirte avec l'idée même de l'amour--il est amoureux de l'amour, dirait De Rougemont--alors que l'amant de Marie répond à un appel humain, précisément un appel féminin. La dame des troubadours est simple support poétique, la dame de Marie est parole poétique.

Ainsi Marie occupe une place tout à fait originale à l'intérieur du courant courtois. Il

ne s'agit pas de la libeller courtoise ou non courtoise, comme certains critiques ont tenté de le faire. La poésie résiste à la codification tout comme la poétesse reste indépendante des conventions courtoises. Sa palette poétique accueille des éléments courtois et, surtout, célèbre la valeur primordiale de l'amour. Cet amour ne peut s'épanouir que dans des rapports amoureux basés sur la réciprocité, l'égalité, et la mesura. L'auteur est visiblement séduite par le concept de la fin'amors mais d'une part, elle en mesure les dangers--la démesure et la manipulation de ce concept à des fins égoïstes et corrompues--et d'autre part, elle le reformule dans la création poétique d'une fine amante. Ecriture de femme? Je tendrais à prendre la signature de Marie à la lettre; mais peu importe le sexe de l'auteur, son texte est là et il se suffit à lui-même. Ecriture féministe? Le terme ferait sans doute figure d'anachronisme avant Christine de Pisan. Par ailleurs, les Lais prônent plutôt un équilibre entre les principes du masculin et du féminin. Plus justement, le texte des Lais fait signe d'une sensibilité poétique qui repense la fin'amors en y intégrant la dimension du féminin.

NOTES

¹Moshé Lazar, Amour courtois et fin' amors dans la littérature du XII^e siècle (Paris: Klincksieck, 1964) 174.

²Bartina H. Wind, "L'idéologie courtoise dans les lais de Marie de France," dans Mélanges de linguistique romane et de philologie médiévale offerts à M. Delbouille, 2 vols. (Gembloux: Duculot, 1964) 2: 741-48.

³Ernest Hoepffner, Les Lais de Marie de France (Paris: Nizet, 1971) 170.

⁴Robert B. Green, "Fin'amors dans deux lais de Marie de France: Equitan et Chaitivel," Moyen Age 81 (1975): 265-72.

⁵Philippe Ménard, Les Lais de Marie de France: Contes d'amour et d'aventure du Moyen Age (Paris: PUF, 1979) 133.

⁶Les citations du texte des Lais se rapportent à l'édition de Jean Rychner (Paris: Champion, 1966). Les abréviations suivantes sont utilisées: G: Guigemar; El: Eliduc; Eq: Equitan; M: Milun; Y: Yonec.

⁷André Le Chapelain, Traité de l'amour courtois, ed. Claude Buridant (Paris: Klincksieck, 1974) 182-83.

⁸Lazar 196.

⁹Hoepffner 158.

¹⁰Richard Baum, Recherches sur les oeuvres attribuées à Marie de France (Heidelberg, 1968).

¹¹Jean-Charles Huchet, "Nom de femme et

écriture féminine au Moyen Age: Les Lais de
de France," Poétique 12 (1981): 407-30.

¹²Huchet 409.

¹³Bernard O'Donoghue, The Courtly Love Tr
tion (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1982) 5.

¹⁴Le Chapelain 47.

¹⁵O'Donoghue 5.

De los documentos de Colón a
Cien años de soledad: El paso de la invención
 a la inversión
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En 1492, los españoles no descubrieron América sino que comenzaron a inventarla. Colón y los primeros conquistadores atribuyeron sus propias leyendas e ideas a las nuevas tierras descubiertas. Como apunta Edmundo O'Gorman:¹

. . . no sólo se debe desechar la interpretación según la cual América apareció al conjuro de un mero y casual contacto físico con unas tierras que ya estarían constituidas--no se explica cómo y por quién--en el ser americano, sino que debemos substituir tan portentoso acontecimiento por el de un proceso inventivo de un ente hecho a imagen y semejanza de su inventor. (152)

A América se le atribuyó una identidad equivocada--se identificó con las Indias Orientales y con el paraíso terrenal--e igualmente se le asignaron características que sólo existían en el mundo preconcebido por sus conquistadores. El Nuevo Mundo se convierte, según Durán Luzio,² en un ente en el cual se proyectan las utopías de la cultura europea. "El 'descubrimiento' de América propició la resurrección de las utopías, olvidadas desde los tiempos de Platón" (13). Durán Luzio señala que los cronistas de Indias van a debatirse en sus escritos entre la fidelidad al "medio" o a la "tradición" (15). Es por esta atribución de una falsa identidad a América--entidad formada por las leyendas en torno a las Indias y por los proyectos utópicos europeos--que, en parte, las crónicas están plagadas de sucesos que parecen pertenecer más bien al terreno de la fantasía. Además, según Durán Luzio, los conquistadores españoles, lectores creyentes y fervientes de

novelas de aventuras y de caballería, transfirieron el mundo imaginativo de sus lecturas a las nuevas tierras (16). La América presente en las Crónicas de Indias es, pues, la proyección de la cosmovisión de sus conquistadores, cuya realidad estaba en parte formada por la ficción y la leyenda:

. . . lo que no hay de "real" en la literatura de la época no se debe a que el autor no lo viera o viviera, se debe a que toda una concepción del mundo es todavía parte del reino de la ficción. La imaginación tiene el dominio entonces sobre la mitad del saber humano. Fantasía y realidad se fueron mezclando--y no podría ser de otra manera--para dar como resultado toda una historia cuyos límites eran bastante imprecisos: estaban al borde de la ficción. (Durán Luzio 18)

A raíz de esta invención de América surge, según Irlemar Chiampi,³ su primera definición o ideograma: la América como "maravilla" o "utopía plausible" (163). Dicha concepción de América inaugura el discurso de las Crónicas de Indias que, como apunta Irlemar Chiampi, se caracteriza por una actitud de asombro por parte del cronista: "Son frecuentes en los cronistas expresiones como "encantamiento," "sueño," "maravilla," "no sé cómo contar," "me faltan palabras," que si bien denotan el asombro natural ante lo desconocido, reflejan también la falta de referencia para los nuevos objetos, seres y fenómenos" (125). Esta actitud maravillada se produce en parte por la novedad del paisaje y en parte por la carencia de un referente lingüístico para definirlo. Ante un nuevo espacio, los conquistadores siguen utilizando las mismas viejas palabras dándose paso a la designación de una falsa identidad a América a través del lenguaje.⁴

Como apunta Angel Rosenblat,⁵ Cristóbal Colón atribuye a la realidad americana los monstruos míticos presentes en sus lecturas y, a su vez, designa con nombres erróneos elementos de su flora y su fauna:

En el mar de esas Antillas asomaron en una ocasión tres manatíes o vacas marinas, y Colón creyó ver sirenas, "con forma de hombre en la cara," "que salieron bien alto en la mar, pero no eran tan hermosas como las pintan. . . ." En plantas silvestres de Cuba y Haití creyó reconocer el áloe, el ruibarbo, la almáciga. Oyó un pájaro cantar y lo identificó con el viejo ruiseñor de los paisajes idílicos: "cantaba el ruiseñor y otros pájaros de mil maneras en el mes de noviembre por allí donde yo andaba." (Este nombre pasó a designar un pájaro antillano de canto y plumaje bastante distinto al europeo.) Y por las señas de los indios entendió que había hombres sin cabellos, hombres con un ojo solo en la frente, hombres con cola y hombres con hocico de perro que comían a otros hombres. (18)

El ideologema de América como una maravilla--presente en las Crónicas de Indias--ha sido actualmente retomado por Carpentier,⁶ quien afirma la ontología maravillosa del nuevo continente y propone, además, la historia de América como una crónica de lo real maravilloso:

Y es que, por la virginidad del paisaje, por la formación por la ontología, por la presencia faústica del indio y del negro, por la revelación que constituyó su reciente descubrimiento, por los fecundos mestizajes que propició, América está muy lejos de haber agotado su caudal de mitologías. ¿Pero qué es la historia de América toda sino una crónica de lo real maravilloso? (99)

Algunos novelistas hispanoamericanos contemporáneos, como narradores de la realidad americana, han encontrado sus fuentes en la literatura fundacional. García Márquez se inscribe en esta tendencia.

Iris M. Zavala, en su artículo "Cien años de soledad: Crónica de Indias," señala las crónicas como fuentes de algunos hechos insólitos presentes en la novela--como la "cola de cerdo" del último Buendía, por ejemplo, presente en el diario de Colón.⁷ Pedro Lastra, en su análisis sobre Juan Rodríguez Freyle,⁸ comenta que el galeón español hallado por los Buendía en medio de la selva está prefigurado en Nafragios y comentarios, de Cabeza de Vaca (36). Por su parte, Carlos Fuentes⁹ señala que Cien años de soledad es una revisión de la historia de América y, por lo tanto, de la época fundacional historiada en las Crónicas de Indias. "Auténtica revisión de la utopía, la épica y el mito latinoamericanos, Cien años de soledad domina, demonizándolo, el tiempo muerto de la historiografía a fin de entrar, metafórica, mítica, simultáneamente, al tiempo total del presente" (63).

Durán Luzio coincide con la idea de que Cien años de soledad novela la historia del continente americano (179). Añade, además, que García Márquez invierte en algunos casos la historia fundacional de América.¹⁰ Señala como ejemplo el hecho de que, en oposición a los conquistadores españoles, José Arcadio Buendía no busca conquistar las tierras desde el mar hacia el interior sino desde el interior hacia la costa (179). Apunta también que, a diferencia de Cristóbal Colón, José Arcadio descubre la redondez de la tierra cuando ya Macondo estaba establecido.

Partiendo de la idea de Carlos Fuentes y Durán Luzio, nos proponemos investigar la forma en que García Márquez revisa las Crónicas de Indias a través del proceso escritural de Cien años de soledad e intentaremos delinear el discurso que

nuestro autor opone al del cronista maravillado de las Crónicas.

La reelaboración de la Crónica Indiana en Cien años de soledad permite una lectura paródica. Los Buendía no sólo conquistan inversamente--del centro hacia la costa--, sino que además van en busca de una tierra "que nadie les había prometido"¹¹: "Fue así como emprendieron la travesía de la sierra. Varios amigos de José Arcadio Buendía, jóvenes como él, embullados con la aventura, dismantelaron sus casas y cargaron con sus mujeres y sus hijos hacia la tierra que nadie les había prometido" (27). Es ésta una obvia parodia de la empresa conquistadora iniciada por Colón en América.¹² A diferencia de los fundadores de Macondo, el Almirante se consideraba como una especie de escogido de Dios destinado a descubrir e iniciar el proceso de evangelización de nuevos mundos.¹³ En una carta enviada por Colón a los Reyes Católicos en su tercer viaje se manifiesta lo siguiente:

La santa Trinidad movió a Vuestras Altezas a esta empresa de las Indias y por su infinita bondad hizo a mí mensajero d'ello. (204)

Yo, bien que llevase fatiga, estava bien seguro qu'esto no vernía a menos y estoy de contino, porqu'es verdad que todo pasará y no la palabra de Dios, y se cumplirá todo lo que dixo, El cual tan claro habló d'estas tierras por la boca de Isaías en tantos lugares de su escriptura, afirmando que de España les sería divulgado su sancto nombre. (205)

La empresa colonizadora se despoja de todo heroísmo en Cien años de soledad; lo que para Colón era un destino--una promesa--es para los fundadores de Macondo una aventura disparatada y cotidiana.

Por otro lado, la fundación de Macondo no se lleva a cabo por la "maravilla" de haber encontra-

do el lugar ideal sino por la acción de quienes no encontraron nunca una salida al mar: "En su juventud, él y sus hombres, con mujeres y niños y animales y toda clase de enseres domésticos, atravesaron la sierra buscando una salida al mar, al cabo de veintiséis meses desistieron de la empresa y fundaron Macondo para no tener que emprender el camino de regreso" (16). Esto es una parodia de Hernán Cortés, quien en su conquista de México se empeña en encontrar un puerto que le permitiera fundar un poblado en las mejores condiciones.¹⁴ Hernán Cortés--a diferencia de nuestros fundadores--logra éxito en su empresa. Por otro lado, mientras Colón se empeña en hallar palabras para describir la "indescriptible" maravilla de las nuevas tierras, los habitantes de Macondo se limitan al acto común de señalar las cosas con el dedo. "El mundo era tan reciente, que muchas cosas carecían de nombre, y para mencionarlas había que señalarlas con el dedo" (9).

Sin embargo, mientras la empresa fundacional se cotidianiza y disminuye en Cien años de soledad, elementos nimios se exaltan al plano de lo maravilloso. Los habitantes de Macondo se maravillan al ver los efectos del imán (9), de la lupa (10), del hielo (23) y de la dentadura postiza de Melquíades:

De modo que todo el mundo se fue a la carpa, y mediante el pago de un centavo vieron un Melquíades juvenil, repuesto, desarrugado, con una dentadura nueva y radiante . . . El pavor se convirtió en pánico cuando Melquíades se sacó los dientes, intactos, engastados en las encías, y se los mostró al público por un instante . . . (14)

El hecho milagroso del supuesto rejuvenecimiento de Melquíades no se debe en este caso al encuentro de la "fuente de la juventud" sino a una común y corriente dentadura postiza.

De modo que la parodia de las Crónicas de Indias se logra, en parte, en esta novela mediante la naturalización o disminución de lo maravilloso--la empresa de la conquista, por ejemplo--y la magnificación de lo cotidiano. Ambos procedimientos se caracterizan por ser dos tipos de inversión. Pero, como hemos señalado, en Cien años de soledad también se invierten los sucesos de la conquista y fundación de América. Después de establecido y fundado Macondo: José Arcadio Buendía empieza a preocuparse, de la noche a la mañana, por la forma de utilizar el imán--invento introducido por Melquíades--para conseguir oro. El oro no aparece, pues, como fin inmediato de la empresa colonizadora de Macondo: "José Arcadio Buendía, cuya desaforada imaginación iba siempre más lejos que el ingenio de la naturaleza, y aún más allá del milagro y la magia, pensó que era posible servirse de aquella invención inútil para desentrañar el oro de la tierra" (9).

Colón, sin embargo, se preocupa desde su primer contacto con el Nuevo Mundo por obtener información sobre cómo y dónde conseguir oro. De hecho, la búsqueda de riquezas fue móvil de la empresa que dio paso al descubrimiento, conquista y colonización de América. Como apunta Angel Rosenblat: "En busca del oro, Colón lo interpreta todo, no sólo las señas de los indios: el calor que padecía era para él una prueba de que en estas Indias debía haber mucho oro" (19).

Después de su "fiebre de oro," José Arcadio Buendía se entretiene diseñando un arma de guerra basada en la utilización de la lupa:

Un mediodía ardiente hicieron una asombrosa demostración con la lupa gigantesca: pusieron un montón de hierba seca en mitad de la calle y le prendieron fuego mediante la concentración de los rayos solares. José Arcadio Buendía, que aún no acababa de consolarse por el fracaso de los imanes,

concibió la idea de utilizar aquel invento como arma de guerra. (10)

Tras la indiferencia del gobierno ante el nuevo invento, Melquíades retribuye a José Arcadio regalándole "unos mapas portugueses y varios instrumentos de navegación" (11) mediante los cuales descubre la redondez de la tierra:

Úrsula perdió la paciencia. "Si has de volverte loco, vuélvete tú solo," gritó. "Pero no trates de inculcar a los niños tus ideas de gitano." José Arcadio Buendía, impasible, no se dejó amedrentar por la desesperación de su mujer, que con un raptó de cólera destrozó el astrolabio contra el suelo. Construyó otro, reunió en el cuartito a los hombres del pueblo y les demostró, con teorías que para todos resultaban incomprensibles, la posibilidad de regresar al punto de partida navegando siempre hacia el Oriente. (12)

Mientras Colón, motivado en parte por la búsqueda de riquezas y en parte por su interés en demostrar la redondez de la tierra y hallar una ruta hacia las Indias, diseña y se vale de mapas e instrumentos de navegación para llegar a América--donde luego los conquistadores utilizaron sus armas de guerra para rendir a sus habitantes--, José Arcadio Buendía padece una fiebre de oro, se interesa en las armas de guerra y descubre la redondez de la tierra a través de mapas portugueses e instrumentos de navegación, después que ya Macondo está fundado y establecido. De modo que los hechos de la literatura fundacional retomados en la novela aparecen sin la relación causal con que aparecen, lógicamente, en los documentos de Colón.

La reelaboración de las Crónicas de Indias -- y en especial de las cartas y relaciones de Colón-- en Cien años de soledad, se caracteriza por un

discurso en el que se naturaliza lo maravilloso, se desnaturaliza lo cotidiano y en el cual, además, la causalidad está ausente. Estas son, precisamente, las características que según Irlemar Chiampi definen el discurso real-maravilloso.

Si el discurso de las Crónicas de Indias está dado por el ideologema de la maravilla de América, el ideologema del mestizaje--la idea de la cultura americana como espacio de conjunción de lo heterogéneo, síntesis anuladora de contradicciones, fusión de razas y culturas dispares--es, según Chiampi, el referente de lo real maravilloso. Este mestizaje se traduce en un discurso literario que consiste en la no disyunción de los opuestos. Chiampi afirma que lo real-maravilloso--a diferencia del discurso realista--responde al principio de la no disyunción (178).¹⁵ Añade también que mientras en la narrativa realista la causalidad está explícita y en la fantástica está cuestionada, en la literatura real-maravillosa la causalidad está ausente.

Lo real-maravilloso tiene, según Chiampi, dos variantes: la desnaturalización de lo natural (190) y la naturalización de lo sobrenatural (192). Ambas variantes están regidas por la no disyunción. Por su parte, Heida Zambrana añade la idea de que, para que un enunciado se acepte como mágico realista el dato insólito tiene que apoyarse en una realidad extratextual que puede ser tanto de naturaleza empírica como metaempírica, natural o sobrenatural.¹⁶

De modo que el discurso mediante el cual se retoma la Crónica Indiana en Cien años de soledad es un discurso real-maravilloso puesto que en éste se naturaliza lo maravilloso, se desnaturaliza lo natural, la causalidad está ausente y se alude, además, a un referente extratextual, es decir, las crónicas mismas.

Podemos, pues, concluir que Cien años de soledad es una revisión de nuestra historia fundacional puesto que en ésta se niega el ideologema de la maravilla de América que definió el discurso

de los conquistadores. Ante un cronista asombrado, Cien años de soledad opone un narrador que narra lo sobrenatural sin inmutarse y desnaturaliza lo natural, y ante un conquistador que intenta explicar mediante el lenguaje cada fenómeno del nuevo continente, opone una narración en la cual la causalidad está totalmente ausente. García Márquez invierte, pues, la América que inventaron los conquistadores mediante la creación de un discurso puramente latinoamericano que consiste en la incorporación del ideologema de la América mestiza en el lenguaje no disyuntivo de lo realmaravilloso.

NOTAS

¹Edmundo O'Gorman, La invención de América (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1977).

²Juan Durán Luzio, Creación y utopía: Letras de Hispanoamérica (Costa Rica: Editorial de la Universidad Nacional, 1979).

³Irleamar Chiampi, El realismo maravilloso (Caracas: Monte Ávila Editores, s.f.).

⁴Fernández de Oviedo es el cronista que mejor representa este fenómeno. Recordemos, por ejemplo, su imposibilidad lingüística al tratar de nombrar "tigre" a un mamífero que, sin embargo, carecía de algunas de las características de éste: ". . . pero yo no me determino si son tigres, viendo lo que se escribe de la ligereza del tigre y lo que se ve de la torpeza de aquestos que tigres llamamos en las Indias" (Sumario de la natural historia de las Indias [Salamanca: Biblioteca Anaya, 1963: 56]).

⁵Ángel Rosenblat, La primera visión de América y otros estudios (Caracas: Colección Vigilia, 1969).

⁶Alejo Carpentier, Tientos y diferencias (Buenos Aires: Calicanto Editorial, 1976).

⁷Iris Zavala, "'Cien años de soledad': Crónica de Indias," Homenaje a Gabriel García Márquez, ed. Helmy E. Giacoman (New York: Las Américas, 1972).

⁸Pedro Lastra, "Sobre Juan Rodríguez Freyle," University of Dayton Review 16.2 (1982): 35-43.

⁹Carlos Fuentes, La nueva novela hispano-americana (México: Cuadernos de Joaquín Mortiz, 1980).

¹⁰A pesar de que Durán Luzio señala esta inversión presente en la novela, no analiza su función dentro de ésta.

¹¹Gabriel García Márquez, Cien años de soledad (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1970).

¹²También podría interpretarse como una alusión paródica de La Biblia. Moisés conduce al pueblo de Israel, una vez liberado de la esclavitud en Egipto, hacia la tierra prometida por Dios.

¹³Entre los documentos de Colón se encuentra el "Libro de profecías," en el cual podemos leer varios pasajes que son profecías que en cierto modo predestinan al Almirante a ser descubridor de nuevas tierras. Una de estas profecías lee como sigue:

Séneca in VII tragetide(sic) Medee in choro "audax nimium" (vv. 375-79). Vernán los tardos años del mundo ciertos tiempos en los cuales el mar oceano aflojera los atamentos de las cosas como aquel que fue guía de Jasón, que obre nombre Tiphi descubrirá mundo y entonces non será la isla Tille la postrera en las tierras, "Libro de profecías," Cristóbal Colón: Textos y documentos completos, ed. Consuelo Varela (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1982) 262.

¹⁴En su primera carta de relación, Hernán Cortés apunta lo siguiente:

Como de los españoles que vinieron de esta provincia me informé ser ella aparejada para poblar, y del puerto que en ella habían hallado, holgué mucho, porque después que en

esta tierra salté siempre he trabajado de buscar puerto en la costa de ella, tal que estuviese a propósito de poblar, y jamás lo había hallado ni lo hay en toda la costa desde el río San Antón . . . (Cartas de relación [México: Editorial Porrúa, 1983: 58]).

¹⁵El principio de la no disyunción permite la coexistencia de "lo real" y "lo maravilloso." Mediante dicha coexistencia se logra dar verosimilitud a hechos insólitos. Un ejemplo señalado por Chiampi es el de la ascensión de Remedios, la bella. La ascensión, hecho sobrenatural, ocurre junto a la ascensión de la sábana que Remedios estaba doblando en el patio. El elemento cotidiano introducido por el narrador--la sábana--coexiste con lo maravilloso--la ascensión--y lo naturaliza.

¹⁶Cito de la conferencia de Mercedes López-Baralt titulada "Cien años de soledad ante la crítica: el estado de la cuestión," leída el 8 de noviembre de 1983 en el sexto "Encuentro Caribeño" auspiciado por el Departamento de Lenguas y Literatura de La Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras.

Le Diable amoureux: Experiment in
Pornography or "Conte moral?" Sex as Metaphor:
a Parable against the New Liberated Woman
of the Enlightenment
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Men's perception of women in 18th-century French fiction tends to be more and more liberal, particularly in sexual matters. This new attitude reflects the gradual relaxation of morals at the time, when the frontier between virtue and vice becomes increasingly hazy. From Crébillon fils to Laclos and Sade, erotic literature in France flourishes in spite of governmental censorship.

Within this context, we are not overly surprised that a twentieth-century critic construes Jacques Cazotte's novel, Le Diable amoureux (Devil in Love, 1772) set in Italy and Spain, as "soft-core pornography."¹ Did Cazotte, a pillar of the traditional order and ardent defender of throne and altar, turn in his grave at such an indictment? "Pornography"--the term pornographe, in French, was barely coined three years earlier (1769)--was certainly furthest from his mind when he wrote Le Diable amoureux.² Nothing really obscene or licentious surfaces when one reads the novel, particularly in comparison with the libertine literature of the time. Cazotte's contemporaries never viewed him as a pornographer. The novel was highly praised in the press of the time, particularly by the more conservative critics; widely read and successful, it was thought of as an ingenious "badinage" or graceful "bagatelle," i.e. fundamentally pleasant and harmless.³

Has the modern critic's interpretation, singularly at variance with the eighteenth-century assessment, any validity? A cursory view of the novel might first seem, distantly, to lend credence to some of the critic's assumptions. For instance, its suggestive title, with the word "amoureux" (in love), is a direct invitation to

read a book concerned with love. This could be viewed as a cliché of the genre, novels being traditionally structured around a love interest. But the first term in the title, "diable" (devil), gives it, from the start, a negative connotation contrasting with the conventional concept of love, intriguing to the would-be reader, and enticing him or her to reconnoitre further. It clearly indicates a departure from the literary norm, forewarning of possible dark amorous undertakings, while remaining ambivalent at this preliminary stage.

As the narration unfolds, what appears to be the major theme rapidly becomes evident; it is the story of a seduction, both physical and spiritual, with yet another departure from the norm. The seducer is not a man; it is a creature who has assumed female characteristics. Seemingly a product of the hero's imagination--one of his dreams--her true identity remains a mystery. We only know she is a beautiful blonde, graceful and naive in appearance, who purports to be a sylph, but whose origins may be demonic--a tantalizing incongruity in the Age of Reason.

Since the author's ostensible objective is to describe a seduction, he cannot really dispense with some of the milder erotic paraphernalia used and abused by his predecessors. Who knows? He may even have enjoyed it, vicariously, like the proverbial forbidden fruit. Readers, for example, come upon two short scenes of inoffensive voyeurism. In one, Alvare, the hero of the story, is depicted as peeking at the graceful blonde--appropriately called Biondetta--through a keyhole, while in another scene he stares, through a light gauze, at her nude body, in a corner of his bedroom after a silent séance of seasoned striptease. Both are demure "tableaux"--as Cazotte himself calls them--which definitely do not borrow their poses or colors from Boucher's daring and explicit bedroom scenes (327, 340-43). A few tentative aperçus of bare flesh and tame sexual

metaphors of volcanoes, emblematic of passion, further adorn the novel.

Thus, when compared to genuine erotic literature of the French Enlightenment, bold and unreserved, Le Diable amoureux appears, in that regard, singularly innocuous and adolescent. And if the already short novel were to be reduced solely to its so-called pornographic passages, we would have to dispense with most of its pages. To qualify its author as a pornographer--of any type--is, therefore, considerably overshooting the mark. An inquiry into the novelist's real motive for writing this particular piece becomes necessary as Le Diable amoureux deserves more than a cursory look. The mild erotic varnish of a few of its episodes is not the message.

The writer's intentions are not crystal-clear at first glance.⁴ A close reading of the text as well as an examination of Cazotte's ideology and actions are necessary to discover the deeper meaning of what eventually emerges as a fable with a moral. Disregarding those basic steps may result in distortions or misinterpretations.

A thorough study of the novel, its prefaces, and epilogue reveals the author's purpose. It becomes apparent this is not simply the story of a seduction, but more accurately that of a prolonged, dangerous temptation ending in a ghastly and ambiguous "seduction." In the final scene, the graceful sylph Alvare, to whom he succumbs, turns into a monstrous, enormous, and threatening camel's head that laughs at him sardonically, claiming to be the devil. The "hero" is so horrified that he hides under the bed, paralyzed by fear.

Such a climax to the novel could not be characterized as an inducement to love and sexual fulfillment in the eyes of a majority of readers, were they to be tempted themselves to interpret the story as a mere exercise in pornography. The apocalyptic vision and terrifying experience might, instead, render them forever impotent, with

recurrent nightmares. Alvare himself barely escapes, precisely believing this was just a bad dream. He has learned his lesson: giving up all wishful reveries, he decides henceforth to lead a life of chastity and sanctity; he renounces the world and its temptations to become a priest, highly encouraged by his mother, Doña Mencia, described by Cazotte as the "most religious and respectable woman in Estremadura" (325).

This dénouement can hardly be interpreted as an apologia of sexual freedom and pornography. The lesson of the story clearly demonstrates a strong disapproval of such enticements. Le Diable amoureux warns the readers against dangerous, illicit temptations, and Cazotte's contemporaries, for whom the book was intended, unequivocally understood the message.

The question yet to be resolved is the exact nature of the solicitations which entrapped the unwary. In spite of all appearances, those amorous allurements are not essentially of a sexual kind. Sex here, to a great extent, is but a metaphor of another kind of seduction. What is, then, the author specifically referring to? In the epilogue of the second edition (1776), the writer enigmatically declares that his novel is an **allegory**--in fact, a "double allegory"--easily perceptible to his readers (378). A clue that might have helped the eighteenth-century public, however, sheds little light on the subject today. Further exploration of the dominant ideology in the seventies and of Cazotte's position in that regard is indispensable to find a satisfactory answer.

One of the probable keys to the enigma may be found in the novelist's political and religious beliefs. He belonged to the "anti-Philosophical" clan. Both a devoted Catholic--with leanings towards Illuminism--and a staunch royalist, he was determined to fight his adversaries, the Philosophes, and their "deity," Philosophy. Le Diable amoureux can thus be viewed as a veiled counterattack against the latter at a time when

the forces of tradition were gradually losing ground to the Enemy under its constant assaults for progress and humanism.⁵ From this standpoint, the ambiguous figure of Biondetta may represent Dame Philosophy, outwardly innocent and beautiful, with generous ideals and a commitment to help improve the human condition, but as the devil herself, she is inwardly as evil and destructive of man and the socioreligious order.

Cazotte was equally concerned with French morals. In his mind, religion, politics, and ethics were inescapably interrelated. Far from contributing to the ambient moral decay through "pornography," he was extremely affected by the breakdown of morality in his age and pointed an accusing finger at the Philosophes for the major role he believed they played in this regard.

A progressive estrangement from traditional ethical values characterized the French Enlightenment. The moral revolution that ensued foreshadowed and, eventually, induced the social and political upheaval of the French Revolution in the last decade, with widespread aspirations--from both men and women--for individual and political liberation from the old norms.

To prevent what was to be, in his eyes, total moral disintegration, Cazotte devised the fable of Le Diable amoureux as an urgent warning to the public. Putting in Biondetta's well-shaped mouth the very words of the Philosophes, while attaching to her the stigma of a diabolical origin, he alerted his readers to the dangerous persuasive powers of Philosophy and exhorted them not to succumb to the temptation of listening to its subversive discourse, or else, like Alvare, they would risk their own destruction and damnation. In the manner of legendary prophets, the writer foretold tragic events, should they not heed his premonitory message. Cazotte's narrative is thus, essentially, a "conte moral" (moral tale), as Edward P. Shaw observed, as well as a profession of faith in the religious and political arenas. ⁶

The choice of a Spanish hero, in that respect, confirms the author's intentions as Spain was generally considered a bastion of traditional values in politics and religion.

Our earlier question, however, has been only partially answered. The novelist suggested a "double allegory." If Biondetta personifies Philosophy, we may wonder what other entity she can represent. Since the author left the reader free to decipher his enigma, we accept his invitation and propose a novel hypothesis.⁷

As a new female creature, fallen from her previous celestial status, Biondetta experiences several stages of womanhood. She first assumes the traditional subservient role of women; weak, humble, and self-sacrificing, she is also vain, flirtatious, and, unsure of herself, seeking the favor and protection of man. She both enjoys being a woman and apologizes for it, emphasizing the richness of her new-found emotions and the apparent concurrent loss of her rational faculties: "I chose to be a woman, Alvare, but I am just a woman, exposed to endure every feeling and impression . . . Forgive me for taking the risk of assuming all the imperfections of my sex. . . but my act of folly is irrevocable." "I am only six-months old and filled with enthusiasm for the range of emotions I am experiencing" (355). Thus, she first seems to accept the conventional female stereotype which reassures her lover. Alvare perceives in it a natural element of everyday reality, distancing him from the supernatural he fears: "I believe I can see nature itself in your admitting such penchants" (355-356).

As her hold over Alvare grows and she reaches the "age of reason," her language and behavior markedly change. She no longer tolerates easily the submissive role required of her sex: "'I will surrender to them. I will be a prodigy of sweet compliance, obedience, docility, and patience; I will meet ordeals steadfastly.' She pauses for a

moment. 'Are you stooping low enough, unfortunate Sylph?' she exclaims painfully" (368).

Her statements gradually betray a "philosophical" bent as she praises the virtues of sentiment, love, and passion over duty, and promises to share with Alvare arcane knowledge so that he can discover "the sublimity of his nature" as well as "the prerogatives to which he is entitled": riches and power over the world, all emblematic or parodic of the Philosophes' demands for a new, fairer society (347).

Biondetta's declarations do not just reflect general philosophical rhetoric. They ultimately focus on women's concerns, notably her desire to become an equal partner--"I have to find my own greatness in yours"--and to be emancipated socially and sexually (349). She now refuses to be treated as a mere object and aspires to act as a full-fledged subject. She flouts conventions and follows in hot pursuit the man she loves. Alvare does not particularly appreciate that dubious honor as her impetuosity denies him traditional male initiative and control. When she advocates free love and proposes to act upon it, he is reduced to escape from her and seek refuge with his saintly mother, Doña Mencia, a strange reversal of traditional male/female roles. At one point, Biondetta goes so far as to press for total power over Alvare: "You must give yourself to me, without any further reservations, for ever . . . I want your absolute surrender" (349). Her speeches, wishes, and actions strangely echo some of the new liberated women of the eighteenth century.

Thus, Biondetta, as an emancipated woman of the Enlightenment, is also considered a dangerous temptation to be avoided at all cost. Philosophy and one of its products, the new liberated woman--combined into one entity--are allegorically presented by Cazotte as evils of the new age that one must guard against for the salvation not only of one's soul, but of church, king, and country.

Under its jocose veneer, Cazotte's novel denotes a stern refusal to accept the present and its changing values. It expresses a dark, momentous message which, until the French Revolution, was not taken very seriously. His fateful prophecy falls on deaf ears, just like the gruesome predictions of the revolutionary guillotine he is supposed to have made, according to legend, one evening in 1778, at a high-society dinner.⁸

In the final analysis, the she-devil is perhaps too beautiful, graceful, and reasonable to terrify the reader and allow the author's thinly veiled message to become effective. Her seduction overrides every other consideration. We may surmise that Cazotte, unaware, succumbed to temptation himself as his novel, after delighting generations of romantic writers in France, Germany, and England, perpetuates Biondetta's ambiguous image to this day.⁹

¹Le Diable amoureux (Naples/Paris: Lejay, 1772). Edition used: Romanciers du XVIIIe siècle: preface by Etiemble, text, notes, and variants by Marguerite du Cheyron (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), II, 303-378. All quotations from this edition have been translated into English by us. Laurence Porter, "The Seductive Satan of Cazotte's Le Diable amoureux," L'Esprit Créateur, (summer 1978) 18:2, 5.

²See Paul Robert, Le Petit Robert. Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française (Paris: Société du Nouveau Littré, 1967).

³Elie Fréron, L'Année littéraire, March 7, 1772, 100; Le Mercure de France, April 1772, 96-101.

⁴Cazotte's "badinage" consists of playing a game of hide-and-seek with his readers, piquing their curiosity into deciphering his cryptic message. For further details on this, consult our article: "Les Mille et une sources du Diable amoureux de Cazotte," Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, 1985, vol. 230, notably pp.249-50, 269-70.

⁵On this, particularly consult Dietmar Rieger, Jacques Cazotte, Ein Beitrag zur erzählenden Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, Universitätsverlag, 1969), and Georges Décote, L'Itinéraire de Jacques Cazotte (1719-1792): De la fiction littéraire au mysticisme politique (Genève: Droz, 1984).

⁶Jacques Cazotte (1719-1792) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942) 60.

⁷Also see Chapter 3 of our book, presently in press, La Femme devant le "tribunal masculin" (New York: Peter Lang), in which our interpretation of Cazotte's "double allegory" merges both female representations--philosophy and liberated woman--into one for tactical and rational motives; its confrontation with the masculine viewpoint is not discussed here as it does not directly pertain to the present topic.

⁸Consult the notorious passage from La Harpe's memoirs reproduced by Max Milner in his edition of Le Diable amoureux (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1979) 150-55.

⁹We are particularly referring here to Nodier, Baudelaire, Nerval, Lewis, and E.T.A. Hoffmann.