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PREFACE

This is the seventh volume of selected papers from the Cincinnati Conference on Romance Languages and Literatures, held in May 1987. This annual conference was begun eight years ago by the graduate students of the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures of the University of Cincinnati, who also prepare, with faculty assistance, the **Cincinnati Romance Review**. The Department is proud of its students both for organizing the conference and preparing the proceedings. The Editors and Council of the **CRR** are also proud of the articles assembled here, and we believe that you will find a number of thought-provoking approaches to language and literature, whether French, Italian, or Spanish.

The choice was particularly difficult this year, for we had to select 10 papers from more than 80 excellent submissions. The final selection, based on two blind readings of each paper, looked for papers that were innovative or broad in approach to their topic, papers that would be of interest to scholars and teachers outside the literature on which the paper was written, as well as to specialists. Thus, we believe that the papers on Spanish literature, for instance, offer ideas of interest to scholars of French or Italian literature. These papers demonstrate that the exchange of ideas among scholars of the various Romance languages and literatures can be as fruitful and stimulating as exchanges within a particular specialization. We believe that this volume of proceedings, and the conference which it reflects, show that we have much to say to each other.

A number of the papers in this volume deal with how language in fictional works structures our view of the world, both as we remember it and as we imagine it. Charles J. Stivale and Liliane

Papin, for example, present provocative analyses of the works of two modern French writers, Boris Vian and Marguerite Duras. Jeanne A. Nightingale, in "The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes as Adventures in Interpretation," shows how romance narrative became in the twelfth century an expressive means of formulating the unity of human experience. David H. Bost's paper, "The Operatic World of **Concierto barroco**," describes how the explorations of narrative in Alejo Carpentier's **Concierto barroco** are a tool for understanding both the past and the contemporary social contexts which shape an individual's identity. The creative use of language which plays with tradition while at the same time reflecting contemporary social expectations is explored by Gabriele Niccoli in "The God of Love in **Pastor fido: Blindness in Arcadia**." The papers of Peter G. Broad, Edwina Spodark, and James J. Baran show how we can apply contemporary pedagogical and critical ideas--even those of Lacan and speech act theory--in teaching language and literature to undergraduates. The relation of ideology and contemporary social problems to literature is explored in the papers of Kern L. Lunsford and Carolyn J. Harris as this relation was experienced by two modern Spanish writers, Arturo Barea, whose autobiography reflects the Spanish Civil War, and Ignacio Aldecoa, whose short stories express the author's view of Spain's social troubles in the Franco period.

This volume of the **CRR** reflects the work of many people, whom Gisèle and I thank once again for their generous giving of time and effort: the readers who helped us select the papers; the Executive Council who advised us; Luan Mizer, who never complained when we asked her once again to make changes in the typescript. I would like to thank most of all the managing editor herself, Gisèle Lorient-Raymer, a Ph.D. candidate in the department, whose conscientious and skillful

editing of the typescript was exemplary. It is to her that the credit largely goes for putting together what I believe is an outstanding collection of papers on the Romance languages and literatures.

Heather M. Arden

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The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes as Adventures in Interpretation

Jeanne A. Nightingale

The legend of King Arthur and the knights of his Round Table, the labyrinthine forest of adventure fraught with unknown peril and populated with fairy damsels, the perennial quest of the Holy Grail, the magic fountains and hidden castles that spring mysteriously from the landscape, the mythic figures of Merlin and Morgan le Fay, Uther Pendragon, Lady Guenevere, Sir Lancelot and Sir Gawain: why are these such enduring and compelling archetypes? How do we account for their power to enchant and to speak to the depths of the human heart?

Scholars who have studied these legends tell us that these stories provide their readers with an escape from the living world of reality, a flight of the imagination into the enchanted landscape of romance, adventure, and fairy tale. Yet the origins of the Arthurian cycle can be traced back to the existence of a real historical person in the distant past, a British warrior known as Arthurus miles, and the realistic depiction of the world of romance--its jousting tournaments and feats of arms, its accounts of chivalric pursuits of fair damsels, its elegant court ceremonies and rituals, its codes of courtly conduct and graceful manners--seems to offer us colorful vignettes of feudal life in the closing years of the twelfth century. Still scholars maintain that the romances, though first written down in France in the twelfth century, were derived from old Celtic folk legends recounted over the centuries in the songs of wandering Welsh, Irish, and Breton bards. As one leading medievalist, Richard Sherman Loomis, has concluded, "the Matter of Britain originated in the blending of historic reminiscences of a

British battle-leader with a highly fanciful mythological tradition going back to pagan times" (22). The Arthurian romances do not pretend to mirror the socio-political reality of French courtly culture; their imitation of reality is purely illusory. According to Erich Auerbach, "The courtly romance is not reality shaped forth and set forth by art, but an escape into fable and fairy tale." It represents an attempt on the part of the ruling class to portray itself, he says, "in extra-historical terms as an absolute aesthetic configuration without practical purpose," and as such, it cannot give us a penetrating view of contemporary reality (138).

Yet, it was precisely because it was so removed from reality that romance narrative could be used to shape an alternative world, an inner world, one in which knights were guided on inward journeys toward a personal and absolute ideal. The series of adventures can be viewed as paths to discovery for protagonist and for reader alike, an invitation not to escape, but rather to confront, through the allusive medium of fictional images, the basic issues and dilemmas that confound the human experience.

The emergence of courtly literature as a written genre and dominant narrative form in the late twelfth century is a phenomenon that remains somewhat of a mystery for modern literary historians. It represents an innovative synthesis of many narrative traditions, both written and oral: Celtic legend, Breton *lais*, Provençal lyrics, *chansons de geste*, romance adaptations of classical epics. Although this new hybrid form of narrative did not express awareness of itself as a distinct genre at the time, it is evident that an author such as Chrétien de Troyes was consciously combining elements abstracted from the early traditions of story-telling with the long-established and carefully-defined literary conventions, techniques, and aesthetic principles derived from the Latin scholarly tradition. This

creative fusion of pre-existing narrative forms--seen not only in twelfth-century romance, but also in the Latin cosmological fables written during the same period--may be seen to reflect the desire of twelfth-century man, overwhelmed by rapid historic change and the accumulation of scientific knowledge, to find an expressive means of formulating the unity of human experience. The creation of questing fictions both in the schools and in the courts seems to indicate a need, shared by both the aristocratic and intellectual classes, to articulate a common ideal toward which people of the twelfth century could aspire, one that would give shape and purpose to the anarchy of contemporary history through the allusive medium of poetic narrative. It was an attempt to restructure the world by restructuring its discourse.

Yet this great flourishing of the imagination that occurred in the twelfth century cannot be explained simply as a response to political and social ferment. It also represents a response to the challenge of the past. Twelfth-century writers saw order and coherence in the past and the more chaotic the times, the more people sought to emulate the ordered coherence they saw in the past. This innovative revitalization of ancient culture belonged to what Stephen Nichols has shown to be a "definite program to be fulfilled by art, architecture, and literature." In Nichols' words, "They wanted to make the past present and to show that the present belonged to a coherent cosmogony, that it manifested a divine plan of the universe" (xi). Although written texts and iconographic programs did not pretend to mirror reality, the emergence of a written culture did have a profound effect on the way people of that time perceived and organized the reality around them. As Brian Stock notes in his study of the implications of literacy, texts served as models of experience, shaping man's consciousness and influencing his perceptions of reality. As the culture became

more literate, textual models served to bolster the evolving structures and codes of human behavior:

Sets of rules, that is, codes generated from written discourse were employed not only to produce new behavior patterns, but to reconstruct existing ones. Literacy thereby intersected the progress of [social] reform. At an individual level, a change was brought about in the means by which one establishes personal identity, both with respect to the inner self and to external forces. And the writing down of events, the editing (so to speak) of experience, gave rise to unprecedented parallels between literature and life: for as texts informed experience, so men and women began to live texts (3).

Both romances and cosmologies demonstrate the interdependence between reality and texts. By translating what they felt to constitute the invisible structure of reality into familiar terms and metaphors borrowed from visual reality and literary precedents, their authors made this hidden order accessible to the inquiring spirit. A deep understanding of this hidden order of the universe could be grasped through a "metaphorical reading of the sensible world" (Wetherbee 16) or a "symbolic transposition through interpretation" (Chenu 100). Such symbolic transposition, Chenu says, "was an admirable means of penetrating the material density of things, of getting 'through the shell to the savory kernel of truth'" (90). The "text" of Nature was approached in the same way as the "nature" of the text. "Just as in nature one proceeds from sense data to understanding," Stock says, "so in interpretation one is led from the seen to the unseen, from the surface to inward meaning" (90). The tales of the twelfth century were designed to exploit not only the powers of the creative imagination but also

those of the rational intellect. They were, if you will, adventures in interpretation and creation, in reading and writing, the reading of the text of God's universe and the restructuring of the ineffable with the stuff of ancient fictions, myths, and dreams. The author saw himself as a little God of his verbal universe and used fictional constructs as pedagogical tools to instruct his own reader in the mysteries of the universe. These texts mapped out an ordered epistemological program of perfection and renewal by which the individual could be led--as he penetrated the figural surface of the text--to a deeper understanding of its meaning and to a better understanding of himself.

The analogy between the creative powers of God and those of the poet, however, was conceived as inherently imperfect. The inadequacy of poetic language to translate God's Creation and the defective nature of man's reasoning powers to decipher its mysteries were assumed to be a direct result of the alienating effects of the Fall. The flaws in human discourse were, so to speak, "written in" to its very nature. Yet the twelfth century was humanist in its orientation and had great faith in the powers of the human intellect (guided by the study of the seven liberal arts) and its ability to overcome the effects of the Fall. The cosmological poems were typically crowned with the creation of a homo novus, the recreation of prelapsarian man: The authors of the cosmologies, in their dual role as inspired God-like creators and sinful yet educated interpreters of the divine text, could act as mediators between their vision of the cosmic plan they sought to emulate and the interpreting reader who sought to understand. "The author is a pivotal figure," Robert Hanning says. "He shares a creative vision and task with God, but with his human subject a fallenness and limitation that threatened constantly to frustrate the translation of his vision into a practical instrument of moral

recreation" (123). Hanning goes on to suggest that the twelfth century courtly poets conceived of their fiction-making activities as the cosmological poets conceived of theirs: as a form of creativity modeled on the divine order but limited by fallenness. If we read the cosmologies as "parables of the artist's task," they can perhaps help us formulate a method, based on the conceptual apparatus of the times, by which we can approach a more meaningful reading of medieval romance.

Romance, like the cosmologies, was a questioning or "questing" mode of discourse. Both attempted to work out moral, social, and literary problems using the elements of popular fiction and myth as an adaptive narrative medium. Romance poets referred to their work as a radically new form of narrative discourse. Yet the novelty of romance was not that it represented a distinct break from the earlier traditions of narrative art, but that it, in Eugene Vinaver's words, "drew from the deep recesses of the contemporary mind something which until then had no place in vernacular narrative poetry: the urge not merely to move and impress, but to understand and to stimulate understanding" ("From Epic to Romance" 503). The key to this new kind of narrative, Vinaver said, "was to be found in the 'marriage' between matter and meaning, between narrative and commentary" (Rise of Romance 23). Writing romance was a process of animating traditional material with one's own imagination and insight and restructuring it into a coherent narrative structure, one that referred to itself as an aesthetic and meaningful whole and one that challenged the reader to share the author's interpretive vision. The interpretive nature of romance, Vinaver surmises, was related in some way to the exegetic traditions of reading of sacred and pagan texts (Rise of Romance 23). Romance, like Scriptures, like Virgil's Aeneid, invited the reader to see narrative not as an ordered sequence

of events, but as the embodiment of hidden meaning: allegories of the life of the mind. The writing and reading of courtly romance, a personal quest of adventure, was at the same time, to use Todorov's terms--"une quête du récit," an adventure of narrative itself (195-214). Indeed, the clerkly narrating figure of romance might himself be seen as a kind of protagonist who struggled to discover and elucidate the meaning of his material just as his hero struggled to find his way out of the forest.

Medieval readers were asked to read this kind of narrative then not as a linear mimesis of causally ordered events, but as a structurally complete verbal universe whose implicit design would become progressively apparent as the reader, reading forward and backward along the surface of the fiction, gradually perceives the elaborate network of internal resonances and allusions. The development of the narrative is consistently paralleled by a controlled evolution of understanding, i.e., the ability to interpret otherworldly events and images as signs pointing to some hidden structure of meaning.

The rationale for constructing analogies between poem and cosmos, between the figural language of myth and the visible signs of the natural world--a commonplace in neoplatonic thought--was most clearly articulated in the writings of the late classical author, Macrobius. Interestingly, it was at the very time romance was beginning to flourish as a written genre that Macrobius's authority was invoked with increasing frequency. He was recognized as the founder of an authoritative poetic method that justified the re-use of myths inherited from past civilizations as a means by which a present culture could link itself with the past and at the same time transcend it. Chrétien de Troyes, in fact, makes two references to Macrobius in his first romance, acknowledging him as his mentor and teacher. Although this reference to a Latin author has been

dismissed by romance scholars as out-of-place in an Arthurian context or as an ornamental "tag" advertising the author's erudition, it is my belief that it can provide us with a significant link between the strangely analogous "textual universes" of courtly romance and cosmic epic (see Nightingale, "Court, Cosmos, and Conjointure").

One of the most important themes shared by both romance and cosmological fables--a theme that governs the very dynamic of the narrative--is the transformation of a situation of initial discord into a restoration of order in terms of an individual quest. While the forest of adventure suggests a symbolic landscape in which wandering knights are called upon to wage psychomachean struggles, the celestial hierarchies depicted in the cosmologies are patterned after a twelfth-century feudal court, and allegorical personae, parading in their heavenly palaces, observe the protocol of ideal courtiers. Whereas romance tends toward allegory, the allegorical epic tends towards romance! Both fictions borrowed from a distant mythical past--one from the mythology of classical antiquity, the other from the indigenous lore of the Celts--in order to create an ideal model for the future and a goal of human endeavor. Both fictions articulate a formally structured conceptual space in which to stage and program the drama of human experience.

Macrobius's argument for the use of mythical discourse as a mode of truth was an attempt to put to rest an old debate between the Platonists and the Aristotelians over the inadequacy of figurative language to convey a direct apprehension of truth. Plato argued that images of beauty--like the visible world of appearances--were deceptive imitations of reality. They were believed to endanger the processes of human reason and obscure its vision of truth. Aristotle held that every abstract thought can only exist by means of concrete representation. Macrobius tried to resolve this conflict by adapting Plato's

notion of the essential falsehood of mythical forms to Aristotle's justification of its usefulness. He argued that it is precisely the false nature of myth that makes it useful as a "cover" for truth. If myth is conceived as a fabulous disguise, or a dark labyrinth of images, then its function becomes two-fold: one, to challenge worthy minds to "dis-cover" profound insights that lie hidden under the surface of fictions, and two, to conceal the sacred mysteries from vulgar minds. Myths and fables were at once a mode of cognition and mystification. To sanctify this double function of myth, Macrobius drew upon the analogy between poetic imagery, which he called integuments, and the vestment of visibilia with which Nature herself was seen to protect her most arcane secrets from common sensibilities. Her truths should be interpreted and exposed by the worthy elect in an equally discreet manner, i.e., under the veil of fiction (per integumentum). All of the works that Macrobius examined in his commentaries, Homer's Iliad, Virgil's Aeneid, Plato's Myth of Er, Cicero's Dream of Scipio, were seen as questing fictions whose protagonists were all typologically related. The heroes of these "philosophical" epics all represented the human soul on its journey toward perfection and fulfillment. Future authors such as Martianus Capella, Boethius, Bernardus Silvester, Alain de Lille, sensing common narrative patterns in the myths of Orpheus, Narcissus, Ulysses and others, created new philosophical fables which replicated those patterns. It was Macrobius's method of representing and discovering truth and meaning beneath the "cover" or "integuments" of poetic fable and the progressive elaboration of his theories by successive commentators that opened the way for this kind of creativity in the twelfth century.

The narrative argument of each of these philosophical tales can be generally described as

a movement that proceeds from a fall into a deceptive world of the senses to a progressive detachment from the material world and to a discovery of the hidden significance of things. The neoplatonic conception of Creation as a fall into an unreal world of mirrors, the imperfect image of the ideal archetypal order, supplies a structural frame, as well as a set of metaphors, that lends itself to the creation of an alternative world of mirrors, a literary world in which the poet could stage the drama of human experience.

In the literary mirroring of this conceptual universe, the poetic obscurity of the verbal construction, the sensus litteratus of the poem, becomes metaphorically equivalent to the soul's immersion in the material body, or in Christian terms, to man's emersion in the hapless state of sin. The text becomes a deliberate production of deceptive appearances, which reveal the protagonist's--and the reader's--state of intellectual and moral confusion and which forces him to "reflect" and made a series of interpretive choices. Poetic obscurity and ambiguity are rooted in the fallible medium of mythical language, which at once conceals and reveals its inherent meaning as the protagonist confronts, tests, and is tested by, the hidden import of each mysterious image or event. Revelation of meaning occurs both horizontally as the narrative unfolds and vertically through the allusive nature of imagery, topoi, and literary conventions which make reference beyond the text. Horizontally, the reader shares the limited perspective of the protagonist as he proceeds through the confusing maze of the figurative text. Unlike the protagonist, however, the reader ironically participates in the author's knowledge. For in the recognition of implicit and explicit clues given to him by the author, he has an advantage over the protagonist. His perspective extends not only along the yielding horizons of the narrative;

it also has access to understanding that reaches beyond the text. The narrative traces the interpretive journey of the hero as he fulfills his fated destiny and the creative plan of the God-like author. The role of the hero in the fictions is to dispel the curse of ignorance, sterility, powerlessness, or corruption that figuratively prevails in his fictional universe. As agent of the reading process, he must pass through the superficial levels of the poem to reach its ultimate significance.

Chrétien de Troyes was not the first to recognize the archetypal connotations of the mythical Celtic Otherworld, nor was he the first to discern the metaphorical implications of the solitary adventure into the wonderland of Celtic myth. The early missionaries who evangelized the northern islands in the first six centuries of Christianity, Saint Patrick, Saint Brendan, Saint Colomba, borrowed upon the narrative schemes of Irish tales of sea voyages, the imrama, to relate their own personal odysseys in that strange land. These stories of clerical sea voyages were recounted as a kind of informing experience. The archetypal nature of otherworldly details nourished a suspicion of an underlying affinity to the mysterious intelligible forces believed to govern the inner workings of the universe. The floating debris of old mythology was fitted onto an epic frame and woven into the fabric of the new tale. The supernatural motifs were seen as veiled signifiers of the ineffable. By deciphering the imprint left by God in the visible world of marvelous events, the Irish clerics believed they could discover the sunken substructure of God's thought. The landscape was viewed as a kind of text or écriture, analogous to Old Testament Scripture: both pre-Christian adumbrations of New Testament Truth. The obscure and enigmatic quality of otherworldly images were purposely retained in order to invite silent exegesis.

Chrétien seems to have been heir to two interpretive traditions which shared a common intellectual origin but which subsequently evolved in separate directions. Sensing the similarity between the integumental readings of classical myth, and the ecclesiastical interpretations of Celtic myth, Chrétien integrated features of both traditions into his work. Two important points must be made here. First, the Celtic legends reworked by Chrétien were not simply a repertory of stock story episodes from which Chrétien freely borrowed. Celtic myth had already been transformed into integumental material. It had already been "inscribed" with hermeneutic possibilities prior to his text. The second point is that, although the successive interpretations of Celtic myth had rendered them into integumental material, the paradigm of the spiritual journey in the saint's voyages serves a decidedly different function from the paradigm of the knight's adventure in romance narrative. Whereas the clerical voyage records a sequence of visions in a "wasteland" of exile, and the revelation of hidden mysterium through glossing and translation, romance dramatizes the progressive stages of the interpretive act itself. The themes of the wasteland and exile, the corruption of narrative forms, are all linked to the fallen state of man's condition. The task of the hero-elect--as agent of the interpretive process--is to restore the unity of meaning in the fictional universe of romance.

Winthrop Wetherbee has suggested that in Chrétien's first romance, Erec et Enide, the hero's progress through the narrative is paralleled by the penetration of a series of integuments (220ff.). If we view the romance in terms of Macrobius's theories on the use of fictions as figural disguise of the truth, however, we can subject the entire romance to an integumental reading (Nightingale, "Chrétien de Troyes").¹ Chrétien has used the mythic imagery

of the Celtic Otherworld to represent the "lying images" of the sense world. As we read the tale, the meaning of these veiled signifiers becomes progressively revealed as the protagonist--whose fictional identity is embedded in the mythical legend to which he originally belongs--transcends the limitations written into his mythical "script" and liberates his fictional world from corruption and decay. Erec first "misreads" the meaning of his new bride's parole (her first significant utterance in the text) as she hesitantly relays the court's disapproval of the couple's excessive self-indulgence. Yet it is the unexpected audacity of her parole that awakens the offended hero from his uxorial sloth, dispelling the magic enchantment of their indiscreet idyll (a failed fairy-tale "happy ending"), galvanizes the couple into new action and reopens the narrative.

When Enide claims her parole came from a "songe," Erec accuses her of "mesdire" and "mensonge," yet he is quick to admit that the force of her speaking comes from the tragic soberness of its truth. Although he forbids her to speak again as they set out together on their fated adventure, his acknowledgement of the underlying truth of what at first appears false--be it "songe" or "mensonge"--marks the first step in the program of the hero's transformation. At the same time, this moment of recognition marks the first step in Chrétien's literary transformation of the Conte d'Erec, a process by which he "inscribes" the old mendacious fiction with new meaning. Enide's parole becomes a leitmotif whose urgency replaces the magical exhortation of Celtic legend and determines the development of the new plot. Chrétien uses the eloquent wisdom of the female protagonist--a persona he has forged from Celtic myth and from scholarly topoi (Enide's unparalleled beauty was said to be copied directly from the divine template by the goddess Natura) to remake the folk hero of the old conte d'aventure. Her function in

the fiction is to redefine through love and reason Erec's proper role in Arthurian society and in the cosmic order. At the same time, it is through her role that Chrétien infuses the mythical world of the Erec tale with higher meaning and gives the crude matière bretonne a more sophisticated form.

Although Erec and Enide belong (as do their names) to the old Welsh tale, the parole functions in Chrétien's narrative as a compelling force that acts almost independently of Enide's will yet contrary to the will of Erec who continually tries to silence it, as time after time it prompts the couple into decisive action. Each time Enide must weigh the alternatives between certain peril and the risk of disobeying her husband's orders by pronouncing the forbidden parole. In the conflict between the obstinate and somnolent Erec, who would salvage his worth by reinvigorating the old chivalric formulae, and the vigilant and persevering Enide, who would obey the laws of reason and selfless love, the reader can follow the dynamics of a constructive dialectic between the old mythical material and the new poetic meaning. Enide's inner person becomes the arena in which the données of the old tale (i.e., the forces that drive Erec) and the dictates of Chrétien's oeuvre (those that compel Enide to use her better judgement) battle for supremacy. As Erec struggles to preserve his former persona as Arthurian hero by adhering to the old conventions of the pre-literary legend, his physical strength and prowess diminish, and, close to death, he becomes gradually more acquiescent to Enide's love-inspired ingenuity and strategies for survival. The motif of the parole enables Chrétien to reshape the couple's destiny by symbolically killing off the old hero and resurrecting the new. He uses it as a kind of narrative device, a means by which to challenge and oppose the old archetypal causal patterns that structure the reality of the conte and to offer as a substitute a more fundamental set of directives

whose laws are "written into" the depths of the human heart.

It is finally in a symbolic passage from death to new awakening--prompted again by the urgency of his wife's voice--that the sacred bond of true conjugal love becomes confirmed. Invigorated by the joy and courage born of that love and recognizing at last the true goal of his blind quest, Erec learns to become the willful architect of his own destiny as well as that of the Arthurian community. Combining heroic prowess with consoling wisdom, chevalerie with clergie, the couple dispels the hapless idyll of another couple trapped in an enchanted garden of self-gratifying "joie"--a kind of mythical metaphor of their own tragic situation--by transforming it into a communal "joie de la cort." It is in the very process of strengthening the bonds of mutual love and restoring the fabric of Arthurian society that Chrétien's conjointure begins to cohere as a meaningful text.

Chrétien has created an ambiguous discourse based on the opposition between the imperfect literal meaning of the old fictional conte, from which his tale was derived, and the inner coherence of the author's new conjointure (Chrétien's own term for his written retelling of the tale), whose meaning becomes increasingly clear to the reader through his retrospective consciousness as he reads through the tale. Each element of the narrative, each key image or figure, including the protagonist himself, participates on both levels of discourse. The knights in King Arthur's service, all shadow figures who belong to the imperfect matrix of the fictions, are called upon to expand their vision, penetrate the integumental surface of their text and restore the lost ideal that Arthur's court represents. In each of the four romances, Erec et Enide, Le chevalier au lyon, Le chevalier de la charrette, Le conte du Graal, the narrative proceeds from a story of initial failure to a

story of success (or at least a vision of success), which is intended to restore order at court, and at the same time, the harmony of the written composition. The two successive phases of the story always hinge upon a crisis of interpretation.

The romances are structured around a key image which is at once illusive and allusive, a locus of error and a locus of recognition. Through the double optic of these veiled signifiers, we perceive a double discourse, or rather a dialectic between two competing discourses--the progressive displacement of one discourse with another--as the oral conte becomes transformed into the written conjointure. In each romance, the titular image--the Grail, the cart, the lion, and Enide (or her parole)--defines the locus of a particular problem which the hero is called upon to solve. The crisis of interpretation that centers around these images serves to break the movement of descent into the literal dimension of the narrative, one that inevitably ends in failure, with a new movement of ascent toward fulfillment and meaning. The titular image thus provides the keystone of meaning in each romance and gives the hero's destiny its distinct character and profile.

If there is an evolution in Chrétien's narrative art, it can be seen in the development of a less optimistic attitude toward the adequacy of fabulous narrative as a mode of truth. Images become more enigmatic and solutions become less certain. The reader can never be sure if the otherworldly figures are glittering signs of hidden significance or fictions emptied of reality. Arthur's court is seen in an increasingly less favorable light, and instead of representing an elusive ideal, it becomes the symbol of the degraded temporal order. The failure to finish the tales of Lancelot and Perceval may reflect Chrétien's increasing dissatisfaction with the fictional mode as a means

of reconciling deeper human conflicts. The ambiguity assigned to otherworldly images continues to propel the hero on in his quest, but without the presence of hermits to explain the hidden secrets of the Grail or the mystery of the Eucharist--a feature which becomes progressively more important in the world of Arthurian fiction--the hero may never find the Grail. He must, as in life, keep searching, questioning, and evaluating.

Miami University

NOTE

¹Some of the material that appears in this paper has been used and developed further in my "Chrétien de Troyes and the Mythographical Tradition: The Couple's Journey in Erec et Enide and Martianus' De Nuptiis," in order to substantiate the argument that Chrétien's romances be read within the broader context of the Latin commentary tradition.

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Integrating Writing into the Renaissance Literature Classroom

Edwina Spodark

/ In October of 1984, the Hollins College faculty had the opportunity to study the teaching of writing in the contemporary college classroom with Andrea Lunsford, Associate Professor of English at the University of British Columbia. This project represents a segment of an on-going process of faculty development at Hollins which is intended to provide the means and the resources necessary to enhance the quality of teaching at the College. The initial goals of the workshop were to redesign individual class offerings in order to incorporate more innovative writing techniques into courses across the curriculum and to use the collective resources of the participants to develop a wide range of approaches from which to choose. The organization was informal, with Dr. Lunsford providing the topics of discussion and each of the participants adding comments, suggestions, or related personal experiences. The responses of our students to writing within different liberal arts disciplines also furnished us with a rich source of discussion. This exchange of experiences with the teaching of writing in our various disciplines generated an assortment of new ideas about teaching that had an interdisciplinary usefulness.

My original purpose in attending the seminar was to look for ways to redesign the six compositions that I regularly assign in an advanced intermediate-level French course required of students before their year on the Hollins Abroad Paris Program. As a result of my participation in this "brainstorming" session, I gained a new understanding of the composition process. I discovered the value of the multilevel concepts of free writing and pre-writing as

integrated components of any writing assignment. The notion of pre-writing encompasses two meanings: first, writing on any topic at all, even one unrelated to an assigned piece of writing, and, second, a more structured attempt to organize writing into a completed, purposeful composition. The examples of a diary or journal as opposed to drafts for a standard essay illustrate these two facets of pre-writing. Free writing, strictly speaking, represents a subset of the first category of pre-writing. This technique allows for loosely structured periods of time during which students may experiment with expressing their ideas using the foreign language to the best of their abilities. This step allows students a chance to reflect creatively in the language on a given subject without being graded. As Ken Macrorie points out: "Free . . . writing . . . involves no pressure. If the writer goofs he has not failed" (22). Here, then, the focus clearly falls on generating ideas rather than on writing itself.

In the second, integral type of pre-writing, the emphasis shifts to the actual writing process. Donald Murray laments that "few teachers have ever allowed adequate time for prewriting, that essential stage in the writing process which precedes a completed first draft" and, thus, they do not reveal "the complicated process writers work through to get to the first draft" (55). It is essential that students be shown that the writing of a successful paper is not a one-step process that involves simply translating complex English thoughts into the foreign language. During this phase of pre-writing, students learn to generate material in the foreign language for their final writing projects by using words and expressions with which they feel comfortable. Multiple rough drafts then lead the students toward a clear use of the language to convey their ideas.

My participation in the workshop also served to remind me of the importance of considering the audience for any individual piece of writing. To whom is the writing to be addressed? How would knowing one's audience inform the writing itself? Students tend to write for the teacher whenever an audience is left unspecified. They do not know exactly what the teacher wants and, therefore, their writing is often disjointed and confused. By placing each writing assignment into an approachable context with a clearly defined audience, students gain a better understanding of where to start their writing and where their writing needs to go.

My experiences in the writing seminar were invaluable in helping me to create more interesting and relevant compositions by using the knowledge I had acquired to my students' advantage. But in addition to fulfilling my stated seminar goal, I also used what I had learned to develop techniques of integrating writing into the daily activities of my advanced undergraduate Renaissance French literature course. As Janet Emig demonstrates in her article, "Writing as a Mode of Learning," some of the most distinguished contemporary psychologists have implied "a role for writing as heuristic. Lev Vygotsky, A. R. Luria, and Jerome Bruner, for example, have all pointed out that higher cognitive functions, such as analysis and synthesis, seem to develop most fully only with the support system of verbal language--particularly, it seems, of written language" (69). Working in part from that premise, I ask students to spend ten to twenty minutes in each class session writing about the reading assignment in a notebook that they will carry with them to every class. The students' writing grows out of their responses to the study questions that accompany the texts or to questions that I create about the selections. Questions provided by the textbooks range from straightforward inquiries into the

method of the author: "Les rapports de l'auteur [Rabelais] et du lecteur: sur quel ton sont-ils définis?" (Lazard 47) to more far-reaching, analytical and thought-provoking issues: "Pourquoi Montaigne peut-il affirmer que seuls ceux qui jouissent de la vie savent accepter la mort? Cette acceptation vous paraît-elle naturelle?" (Mathieu 129). My own questions tend more toward the synthesis of certain elements of the author's work: "Quels sont les éléments de la méthode d'enseignement de Montaigne?" and "Quelles sont les idées de Rabelais sur l'enfance en général?" The variety of the types of questions provides the students with a number of cognitive challenges that keep their interest throughout the semester.

After the students finish their "discussion in writing," the class turns to an oral discussion of the ideas presented in the readings. As is often the case with undergraduates in a foreign language literature course, many have not spent any time "thinking" about the text beforehand but merely "reading" it. The in-class writing activity, therefore, gives them a chance to reflect on the material and to be more productive in the class discussion. Less accomplished students who do not think quickly in the foreign language also have time to become familiar with words and expressions that they need to discuss the literature at hand. It provides those students with the opportunity to be an active part of the class rather than simply observers. In addition, it allows all the students the freedom to think creatively about the texts because, although I collect each piece of writing at the end of class, I circle but do not correct the grammar or spelling errors. Each writing assignment is read for content only, which greatly simplifies the amount of work the teacher must do. While thoughtfully reading the students' writing, I am careful to compliment a point well made. By way of illustration: when writing about the

chapter in Gargantua where the fatuous, bad King Picrochole is flattered and led astray into war by his scheming counselors, one student astutely drew an analogy between this scene from Rabelais and a current event in American government. But unlike Picrochole's evil counselors, I do not confine my comments to flattery and compliments. I am just as likely to suggest additional areas to be explored as well as to indicate an error in interpretation that may occur. When discussing the links between the film The Return of Martin Guerre and Montaigne's Essais, for example, one student stated: "Avec ces deux hommes c'était le besoin de se connaître; Montaigne comme Montaigne, et l'autre comme Martin Guerre." Although I indicated to the student that this was indeed an excellent observation, I also suggested to her the following: "Mais est-ce que l'on peut se connaître? Même le faux Martin Guerre a commencé à se prendre pour le vrai Martin, n'est-ce pas?" The students will then respond to my notations either orally in class or, occasionally, in writing along with the next writing assignment that they hand in. In this manner, each student is able to establish a continuing personal dialogue with the teacher about the various authors of the French Renaissance.

The free writing that the students experience on a daily basis functions in yet another important mode for the class. At the undergraduate level, literature in a foreign language tends to be taught almost exclusively through oral discussion of the texts. However, testing continues to be done in writing by means of the traditional papers and midterm and final exams. This gap between the oral and the written causes the downfall of many a good student. By integrating writing into the literature classroom on a daily basis, we subtly tell the students that their writing and their ideas about the texts have value. By incorporating pre-writing activities into the class routine, the students have the

opportunity to practice what they will need and use. They learn to generate material during the pre-writing stage and to express themselves as clearly as possible in the language. Thus, the integration of a regular writing component into the foreign language classroom bridges the gap between how the content is taught and what the final expectations about that content appear to be.

The reactions of my students to the integrated writing component are highly favorable. As one student states: "Daily writing assignments were a great idea--allows students to get their ideas out in a relaxed atmosphere, without being graded." The more reticent students take an active part in the discussion of the texts, in some cases for the first time; the more advanced students have the opportunity to reflect more profoundly on the material. In both cases, we are all often pleasantly surprised at some of the intriguing insights that they offer. Another student writes: "I like the focus on ideas and literary interpretation; this encourages students to push themselves to try to express very complex ideas in French." Finally, a student comments: "I find ideas come together more clearly and accurately on papers and tests as a result of the in-class writing." Once again, the students are all able to "compose" their thoughts much more clearly and that adds tremendously to the productiveness and progress of the class as a whole as well as to the self-confidence of the individual students and their ability to use the foreign language as a means of communication.

I find that the writing component is particularly useful for the advanced foreign language literature class but I believe that it is flexible enough to be incorporated at various levels of literature instruction. Even at the early stages when the writing would be about simple plot summary, this technique allows students to prepare themselves as they would

almost never do at home. By using pre-writing in the classroom, the teacher prompts the students to learn more and more quickly. As the process of literary analysis becomes more complex, the students begin to rely on developing their own ideas about the texts while doing the pre-writing activities. Asking students to prepare themselves by writing in class makes them more comfortable with the class and the language and facilitates their attempt to make the language and the literature their own.

Hollins College

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**The God of Love in Pastor fido:
Blindness in Arcadia**

Gabriele Niccoli

In applauding himself on the stage handling of the pastoral Cupid convention and on its cathartic release moderated by a just dosage of verisimilitude and decorum, Giovan Battista Guarini, in his "Annotazioni sopra il Pastor fido," strongly argues that his staging of the conventional god of love scene in his pastoral play is the actual staging of a miracle (124-28). The miracle is the humanization of Silvio, the unfaithful shepherd, and it lives theatrically through the stage utterances and movements of the actors. The scene deploys, however, a kind of hidden theatricality which relies heavily on what has been termed "language games," games whose rules are determined by selective verbal components, their properties, and the uses to which these can be put--"in exactly the same way," Jean-François Lyotard remarks in La condition postmoderne, "as the game of chess is defined by a set of rules determining the properties of each of the pieces, in other words, the proper way to move them" (10). Aided by the echo illusion, Guarini utilizes this language game with skill and sophistication, presenting it theatrically in such a way as to have each sound viewed by the audience as a "move" in a chess game. Lyotard again makes the point that "to speak is to fight, in the sense of playing, and speech acts fall within the domain of a general agonistics" (10).

In Guarini's pastoral tragicomedy, the "echo microstructure"¹ is thus fused with the Cupid convention as it appears in the eighth scene of the fourth act. In this scene, the handsome young hunter, Silvio, in vain loved by Dorinda, has just learned of the nymph Amarilli's tragic fate. Perturbed by the news, he gives vent to a vicious

invective against Venus, the goddess of love. From this indictment and through a contrasting laudatory hymn for Cintia, or the goddess Diana, Silvio finally launches a challenge to Cupid himself:

Ma che? Troppo t'onoro,
 vil pargoletto imbelle;
 e, perchè tu m'intenda,
 ad alta voce il dico:
 la ferza a castigarti
 sola mi basta. - Basta. (IV.viii.63-68)²

Silvio knows, and the audience along with him, that Amore is present in the pastoral landscape, perhaps even dressed as a shepherd boy, so as not to be recognized. Guarini wishes to maintain a psychological link with Tasso's god of love. But due to his avowed intent to challenge every facet of Tasso's Aminta and to assure his play's dramatic superiority, thus legitimizing his codification of the pastoral dramatic genre, the Ferrarese dramatist wants to place his Cupid in a better dramatic light. In order to bring him out of hiding, Silvio uses selective offensive verbal "moves" which do have the desired effect of getting Amore to respond. The Guarinian Cupid, upon hearing his name and his reputation, as well as his mother's reputation, so loudly defiled, cannot stand by any longer. But he is Amore and, though anxious to put an end to Silvio's remarks and to vindicate himself by striking the shepherd with his arrows, decides to play a while with him. The fact that Guarini opts to present a playful Cupid, though rendered more verisimilar by the use of the echo medium, betrays a wish to reinforce the comic order of his tragicomedy and to effect a psychological continuum to the Tassian Cupid who kept himself in hiding in Arcadia. When Silvio logically asks the identity of this hidden intruder, the game begins in earnest:

Chi se' tu che rispondi?
 Eco, o più tosto Amor, che così d'Eco
 imita il sono? - Sono. (IV.viii.69-71)

The sound "sono" is immediately offered by Cupid in order to sustain the echo illusion. There is irony, of course, in the fact that love's immediate reply, though in the form of an echo, is literally to supply a response to a specific question which asks to imitate the word "sono." Unlike the Tassian Cupid who plays his game visibly, yet undramatically, on stage, for he has to play it in monologue fashion, Guarini's Cupid utilizes the echo medium in order to underline theatrically his hidden presence. The game of "trompe-l'oeil," so evident in the multiple love actions of the play, is here cleverly supplanted by one of "trompe-l'oreille."³

Even though Guarini uses the medium of echo for verisimilitude, he expects his cultured Ferrarese Court audience to realize that this is another pastoral convention. Just as Tasso had his Cupid topos start with an interrogative pronoun as a puzzle which would involve the participation of the audience (an aristocratic audience who, as we know, was all too willing to take part), in like manner does Guarini decide to start the game. "Chi se' tu che rispondi?", Silvio asks, and at the very first reply, which is taken as the effect of an echo, both the character and the audience realize that they are confronted with the god of love.

Once the god's identity has been verified, the rude shepherd continues his attack even more vehemently, by reminding him, in a rather colloquial manner more in keeping with the comic order option, of his mother's lascivious past. He does this, true to his nature and role in the play, in order to question the legitimacy of this mysterious power which has just victimized another of its subjects, namely, the nymph Amarilli. The stylistic artificiality in this scene must have

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proved of great delight to the audience. The author himself, as mentioned, seems to place a great deal of importance on this stylization ("Annotazioni" 125-26). Silvio purposely avoids mentioning the name of Venus in order to add insult to injury. And the all-powerful and eternal god of love here becomes "il figlio di colei. . . ." Unlike the use made by Tasso in Aminta, the mythical allusions are here presented by Guarini in order to demystify the power of love on human beings. Guarini actualizes this change within the structure of the Cupid convention by propagandizing instead the Reformed Church's emphasis on the effects of divine Providence. Seen in its totality, in fact, it is the hand of Fate or divine Providence which directs the workings of the play. Franca Angelini calls attention to this fact when she writes:

...i personaggi, semplici pretesti per lo svolgimento di temi non lirico-affettivi, come nell'Aminta, ma ideologico-razionali, esprimono ciascuno, attraverso la loro concezione dell'amore, una diversa e precisa concezione del mondo a sua volta sottoposta, ed è questa la struttura della favola, al vaglio della legge morale, che coincide coi singoli destini e con l'attuazione di un piano provvidenziale. (17)⁴

Guarini arranges in the interrogative almost all the sounds requiring the echo. This is indeed effective because it places the haughty Silvio linguistically and psychologically as well as theatrically, on a very human level. Silvio asks in order to tease, to poke fun, to undermine the god's ability to control human affairs. But in his all-too-human limitations Silvio, the hunter, fails to see that he has become the hunted; he has been trapped by a net fashioned by his own misplaced ideas about love. Every single sound pronounced by Cupid, who is the traditional and

"controlling deity of the lovers" (Myer 119), is to provide a counterpoint to Silvio's blindness and to correct his human ignorance. The repartee, in its theatrical and spatial movement, falls indeed within a general agonistics in which language plays against itself.

Sensing imminent victory, Silvio challenges Cupid in a very bold manner to come out of hiding: "Vien' fuori, vien'; né star ascoso. - Oso." The founding pastoral metaphor of blindness in Arcadia, as handled by Guarini, is perhaps too easily detected. Guarini's audience could no doubt decode the pastoral and cultural message inherent in this harsh challenge. We should not forget Guarini's efforts to establish the superiority of his pastoral tragicomedy over Tasso's play as well as his desire to measure his Pastor fido on the same scale of dramatic dignity as the other two accepted dramatic forms.⁵ The god of love who is now hiding on the Guarinian stage is the traditional Cupid of the pastoral landscape but, more specifically, he is Tasso's Amor fuggitivo who, as promised in Aminta's prologue ("celandomi," "fuggendo"), is still roaming the countryside and hiding, perhaps still in "abito pastorale."

Every facet, or nearly so, of Guarini's play is directed as a challenge, for comparison with Aminta. The repetitive use of the imperative to come out into the open, not to remain alone and in hiding, may well be an overt invitation or challenge to the Tassian Cupid to face the reality of a dramatic (or active) confrontation. And if this is the case, then the Tassian Cupid's boastful soliloquy was also, in Silvio's words, a "lieve cinquettare al vento" for it lacked the dramatic substance of action. It is for this reason that Silvio now exclaims: "Ed io t'ho per vigliacco." On the other hand, Guarini's adaptation of this dramatic convention has to remain unaltered as far as the hidden theatricality of Cupid is concerned, for to bring

him out into the open would break all laws of decorum and verisimilitude.

Silvio's attack in the language game is relentless and it is expressed in a type of mannered artificiality which is absent in Tasso but which abounds in the Guarinian Cupid scene. The Guarinian language, in this sense, is effectively dramatic in that it consciously moves with the psychology of the dialogue. The utterances or defensive moves effected by the provoked Cupid serve to supply more sparks to Silvio's insidious invective, but we should not miss the subtle humor inherent in the dialogue:

O buon! né figlio di Vulcan per questo
 già ti cred'io. - Dio. -
 E dio di che? Del core immondo? - Mondo. -
 Gnaffe! De l'universo?
 Quel terribil garzon, di chi ti sprezza
 vindice sì possente
 e sì severo? - Vero. (IV.viii.85-91)

Again, the mythical allusion to Vulcan serves not to increase Cupid's value as a god but to minimize it, and even to ridicule it. It is noteworthy that just as Cupid had contrasted the allusion to his mother's inflamed sensuality with the word "goddess," as if to negate that human blasphemy, so does he now counterattack the charges to his own inordinate passion by the word "god." He is the god of universal love, that enfant terrible who has roamed the pastoral landscape, still a fugitive, still hiding, and a harsh "vindice" of those who disobey him. All of this is true, Cupid admits, thus confirming Guarini's topological debt to the dramatic pastoral genre in Ferrara in the second half of the Cinquecento, and most especially to Tasso. The aristocratic audience was no doubt aware of this, but the confirmation of it serves to remind them of the author's challenge and theatrical re-elaboration of the topos.

Silvio, the epitome of human arrogance, always cynical, yet always blind to the doings of Fate, continues his confrontation with Destiny without realizing that, as Norbert Jonard states, "le premier effet du destin est de dérouter les esprits qui s'acharnent à vouloir interpréter les signes, c'est-à-dire les phénomènes extérieurs qui sont toujours décevants" (8). Silvio then asks a question which really requires Cupid to explain, with one word through the echo medium ("Amare"), his formative function in Arcadia and perhaps in the whole pastoral genre:

E quali son le pene
 ch'a' tuoi rubelli e contumaci dâi
 cotanto amare? - Amare. -
 E di me, che ti sprezzo, che farai,
 se 'l cor piû duro ho di diamante? - Amante.-
 Amante me? Se' folle! (IV.viii.92-97)

In his seemingly limitless illusion Silvio is so blind, so deceived, that he does not realize that the answers are supplied by his own questions. The line "cotanto amare? - Amare," for instance, offers the usual repetitive yet antithetical elements so dear to Guarini.⁶ Love's answer is a logical and plausible one to the human query. Guarini's fondness for rhetorical and stylistic artificiality is again evident in this clever line where "cotanto amare?" can easily be taken to mean "with so much loving?" The answer is, therefore, again supplied by the suggestion of the question, or, in terms of our chess game where the chess-men are sounds, a careless offensive move determines the appropriateness of the defensive check. In this manner, the first "amare" loses its adjectival function to become with the second "amare" a subliminal evocation of love.⁷ And when Silvio cynically asks what will become of him, again the answer is inherent in the question. The last sounds in the line are: "di diamante? - Amante." The double sound 'di' 'di' can easily be

taken as the imperative form of the verb 'dire,' thus provoking the all-too-willing Cupid to say just what the interlocutor wants to hear. This would be in keeping with the shepherd's entire confrontation with a fateful presence which turns Silvio's illusions or suggestions into realities, or, as we shall see, blindness to sight. It is also another example of the author's mannered cleverness in the handling of this major pastoral convention. The shepherd-hunter hears, yet does not understand. What he believes to be ludicrously false is becoming true. He is being blinded by the truth, he will soon surrender to this blindness, and that surrender, as Perella (255) suggests, will bring the truth to light.

Amore, the oracle of the Silvio-Dorinda episode, then quickly sets out to tell Silvio that he, the latter, will today fall in love with Dorinda. The shepherd, incredulous, skeptical:

Dorinda, ch'odio più che lupo agnella?
 Chi farà forza in questo
 al voler mio? - Io. (IV.viii.105-07)

Besides underlining the force of this hateful passion, the image evoked by "lupo agnella" serves well to belittle the human will and, at the same time, magnify the overpowering force of love. It is, in fact, love ("Io") that transmutes the wolf's hate for the lamb into love. It is, indeed, a case of evil being turned into good because of a divine intercession in human affairs. From the purely Christian point of view one could even go as far as agreeing with the Estense poet that this is a miracle. This is also, as in the Tassian Cupid topos, the most operative function as far as Cupid is concerned: to convert Diana's followers into true lovers, thus humanizing their lives.⁶ After a few more questions and answers which serve to elaborate on the prophecy as well as to show Cupid's mode of operation, Silvio suggests that the frivolous god of love would do

better to doze his drunkenness away:

Va', dormi! Va'! Ma dimmi:
 dove fien queste maraviglie? Qui? - Qui. -
 O sciocco! Ed io mi parto.
 Vedi come se' stato oggi indovino
 pien di vino. - Divino. - (IV.viii.116-20)

As he departs, as an immediate reaction and challenge to Cupid's prophecy that "queste maraviglie," meaning miracles, will all take place here and now, Silvio cannot resist a parting shot. But, as elsewhere in Pastor fido, "tant d'assurance présomptueuse ne pouvait finalement qu'être tournée en dérision" (Jonard 9). The last two lines of the Guarinian Cupid topos contain the sound "divino" (including the sound "indovino" in line 119) three times. Once again the challenge to the Tassian ending of the same conventional scene, where the word "cieco" also appeared three times in the last two verses, is unmistakable. There Tasso, as we remember, has Cupid boasting that it is not he who suffers from blindness, but the world. Here, in Guarini, the metaphor of blindness is continued, but in a more theatrical vein. To the two attempts to discredit the god's unerring vision ("indovino," "pien di vino"), Cupid readily and succinctly replies with a final "Divino." Checkmate! The language game ends here. The moment of darkest blindness is inseparable from the most luminous insight. As this final utterance is given life by the illusion of echo, there is a dramatic turn. Right after the end of our pastoral commonplace the shepherd, who had almost begun to walk away, suddenly begins to see; the blind man sees: "Ma veggio, o veder parmi. . . ."

As we have seen, and from Guarini's own admission, the Cupid convention in Pastor fido falls not within the main plot of Mirtillo-Amarilli, but, rather, within the episodic one of Silvio-Dorinda. The dramatic function of the

Cupid topos in Pastor fido serves more to satisfy the psychological and cultural expectations of a public desirous to see an elaboration in the stage handling of the recurring theme than to fill any lacunae within the structure of the play. Coming toward the end of the fourth act, it serves well as a deus ex machina to bring to a happy ending the Silvio-Dorinda episode which is dramatically rather extraneous to the main plot. Guarini certainly did not intend to carry Silvio and Dorinda into the fifth act, an act he needed totally in order to work out his Sophoclean-like denouement.⁹ However much he needed this major pastoral convention, for he knew the aristocratic public familiar with the Ferrarese dramatic genre would surely expect it, Guarini would not dream of presenting it in less than a sound way. He was much too preoccupied with the theoretical foundations of the new dramatic genre to do otherwise.¹⁰ The scene, in the total structure of the play, remains, however, more significant for its cleverly elaborated stylistic handling than for its dramatic impact. Its mannered manipulation seems also to underline Guarini's preoccupation with a stage presentation of the scene that would prove more successful than Tasso's. And he believes he has found the answer in the fusion of the Amore-Echo illusion where this clever stylistic side could be better implemented.

The God of Love topos, even though occurring within the episode, can be said to be dramatically motivated by the action of the main plot. In fact, Silvio's attack on the god of love is necessitated by the news of Amarilli's arrest, a tragic misfortune which the shepherd-hunter attributes directly to love. It must also be remembered that prior to the dramatic presentation of this recurring device in pastoral drama, the fourth act abounds in a tedious glorification, by the choruses of hunters and shepherds, of Silvio's exploits. This is to remind us of the hunter's

divine ancestry, a reminder which arguably makes the Cupid confrontation with the human will that much more verisimilar, and hence more acceptable to the public.¹¹ While Tasso opens the play with a soliloquizing "Amore in abito pastorale," a Cupid not to be seen or heard again throughout the rest of Aminta, Guarini challenges that with a hidden god of love who theatrically comes alive. In the sense that the Guarinian Cupid takes part in a dialogue on stage, this pastoral commonplace makes of its protagonist, the god of love, a veritable dramatis persona.

Guarini's avowed philosophical as well as theatrical stance vis-à-vis his celebrated rival at the Ferrara Court is one of challenge and correction. If Tasso's tacit aim was to institutionalize the pastoral dramatic genre, Guarini's polemical aim is to codify and increase the appeal of pastoral tragicomedy. He believes he can succeed in this if he presents multiple love actions with a stronger dose of comic elements. Unlike his predecessor, Guarini is most concerned with principles of dramatic art, as one can see from the acrimonious defense of his tragicommedia pastorale. In his emphasis on the pleasure of the audience and on the taste of the time, significant aspects also advocated by such luminaries of genre theory of the second Cinquecento as Ingegneri, Guarini is attempting to procure lasting legitimacy for the new genre. In his admitted penchant for the comic order, an option he believes essential for the genre, Guarini places a greater degree of emphasis on the theatricality of the presentation. Clearly, the poet's masterful handling of the pastoral Cupid conventional scene, which was to have enormous popularity especially in late 16th and early 17th century France, reflects this changed perspective. The Guarinian ramifications stem, then, not only from his corrective position with respect to Tasso's concept of reality but also from his appreciation for the expectations of the audience

as well as for the comic order. As a result, the Guarinian god of love is made at once more verisimilar and more entertaining through the use of the Echo medium. It is a scene of clever stylistic artificiality which no doubt procured a great deal of delight for the aristocratic class privileged to see it performed. At the same time, wishing to underline the significance of Fate or divine Providence on human beings, a constant in Pastor fido, Guarini seems anxious to provide not only a Counter-Reformation correction but also a psychological continuum to the Tassian Cupid. This corrective positioning is best exemplified by the Ferrarese poet's "piaccia se lice," a reforming formula which pervades the play thematically and which, paradoxically, links to and yet negates the Tassian "s'ei piace, ei lice." More than from any strictly dramatically motivated action, the Guarinian Cupid, still roaming and hiding in an umbrageous locus amoenus, is born out of a need to satisfy the cultural and theatrical exigencies of a public desirous of experiencing an elaboration of the conventional device.

NOTES

¹The term is from Dalla Valle, Pastorale barocca 118-34. See also, by the same author, "Le thème et la structure de l'écho dans la pastorale dramatique française au XVII^e siècle."

²All quotations of Il pastor fido are drawn from the Luigi Fassò edition.

³See Rousset 54; also Perella.

⁴See also Perella 257. Clubb is of the opinion that "variations of the pastoral commonplace were in part determined by the degree of bias a given dramatist intended toward the tragic

or the comic pole and by the amount and kind of allegorical burden he placed on the fiction, whether he sketched around it a ballo in maschera for court gossip and chic eroticism or invested it with neo-Platonic symbols of cosmic and psychological conditions or even with outright Christian precepts" (69). Maria Corti maintains, along the same lines, that a writer may opt for a particular developing genre with a certain adaptability to new rules, as is the case with the dramatic pastoral genre in the second half of the sixteenth century, in order to offer a "certain interpretive model of reality" (16). See, furthermore, Poggioli 58-61.

⁵See Guarini, Il pastor fido e il compendio della poesia tragicomica 276-77.

⁶See Deanna Battaglin 291-353.

⁷Battaglin 293-94.

⁸As Ulivi points out: "Amore è in fondo l'unica vera humanitas del personaggio guariniano . . ." (98).

⁹See Compendio 283-85; Perella 258-59.

¹⁰Ulivi observes that "Il Guarini poeta non è pensabile indipendentemente dall'autore delle pagine politiche e dall'esperto della vita di corte . . . è da un terreno di esasperata empiria artistica, direi quasi di artigianato letterario--sia pure condotto con mezzi rari ed eletti--che si solleva l'ispirazione del Pastor Fido, con un pathos di dedizione formale che ne impronta la pagina . . ." (94).

¹¹It is to be noted that it is only in the presentation of this dramatic convention that Silvio can be seen to live dramatically. See, in this regard, Matteo Cerini 462.

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Chateaubriand's Atala: A Lacanian Atelier

James J. Baran

Shortly before the appearance of the Lacanian psychoanalytic review L'Ane in 1981, there circulated a pseudo-publicity notice which began with the facetious remark that in 1950 there were no more than fifty individuals who failed to comprehend the work of Jacques Lacan but that in the era of the eighties there were at least ten thousand who found themselves in the same troubling predicament. Given the notorious complexity of Lacan's discourse, attributable in part to his penchant for a verbal neo-preciosity which defies any unilinear attempt at translation or reduction, in part to a didactic concern to make the text as difficult of access as the unconscious itself, it may well be asked what purpose is served in attempting to initiate undergraduates with little or no direct knowledge of Freudian theory and even less contact perhaps with linguistic science into the seemingly arcane mysteries of Lacanian thought. And yet it has been my own experience that students, given some direction and instilled with a sense of intellectual adventure, will more than willingly commit their energies to an exploration of the rich and dynamic interplay between Lacanian psychoanalysis and the narrative text.

As an initial step in the adoption of such an approach, it is essential that students be made aware that a Lacanian reading of the text markedly differs from traditional Freudian readings in that it is not concerned with an allegorical view of narrative which too often simplistically equates the characters with various rigid stages of psychic development (the anal-retentive, the orally fixated individual, and so forth) and which becomes too often mired in a gratuitous pursuit of sexual symbolism.¹ A Lacanian narratology is rather concerned with the manner in which

narrative addresses the problematic of the (proto-)subject's transition from a state of dual, imaginary relationships (in Lacanian terms, the register of the imaginary) into the triadic order of language and culture (the register of the symbolic). If Lacan's essential discovery is that the unconscious is "structured like a language," it may reciprocally be stated that the narrative is itself structured "like a subject."² At the Oedipal crossroads of this trajectory lies the regulatory structure to which Lacan has given the name of "the paternal metaphor."³ If the subject is to be founded qua subject, the father must intervene at a certain point in the dual, mirror-like relationship between mother and child in which the latter identifies with the object of the mother's desire. The child seeks, in short, to be the phallus--not the phallus as physical organ but as the mythic, all-fulfilling object which will overcome the essential lack-in-being (manque-à-être) which he perceives in the mother and which will thereby enable him to achieve complete jouissance.⁴ The role of the father in this family romance is effectively that of a spoilsport (or "trouble-fête," as Lacan would have it) who tells the mother that she shall not reappropriate her property and informs the child that he can no longer be the phallus but only possess it (as penis). The father calls upon the child to name his desire (le désir de la mère, the phallus) and simultaneously to repress it. The signifier of desire, the phallus, thus passes into the unconscious, its place being taken by what Lacan terms "le Nom(Non)-du-Père." The child then assumes his rightful identity as subject within the closed triadic relationship of the family and must henceforth content himself with pleasure (le plaisir) in lieu of jouissance. At the same time, this process of foreclosure (which Lacan equates with Freud's die Verwerfung or primal repression)⁵ also marks the advent of the subject into the signifying chain of language through the

institution of an irrevocable rupture between signifier and signified, between the word and the thing (which recalls Freud's own distinction between "word-representation" and "thing-representation").⁶ Once enclosed within the labyrinthine chains of language, the subject is led to pursue the lost object of desire through an endless string of metaphoric substitutions. For Lacan, as opposed to Derrida, however, the flow of meaning is pinned down and arrested by the installation of certain key signifiers in the unconscious, the famous Lacanian "points de capiton." If the subject accepts castration and successfully emerges from the stage of Oedipal confrontation, he thus gains access to the two-fold symbolic order of culture and language and assumes his prepared place in human society.⁷

Chateaubriand's Atala may serve to illustrate the manner in which narrative reveals itself as "structured like a subject" and further to demonstrate to the student that psychoanalytic readings of the text, far from representing an alien structure imposed upon the text from the outside, rather point to the very structure around which narrative itself is, in fact, organized.⁸ In order to focus students' attention on the manner in which the "paternal metaphor" serves to structure narrative, I have found it useful to concentrate initial efforts on a close reading of the novel's prologue, which may then serve as a point of departure for a discussion of the novel as a whole. The following section of this article will, accordingly, limit itself to an illustrative reading of the novel's opening section, ending with suggestions for possible teaching strategies for dealing with the work in its entirety.

As is often the case in the opening moves of narrative, the dynamics of the Oedipal drama are symbolically re-enacted in microcosm in the initial pages of Atala, in the Prologue proffered by the anonymous extra-heterodiegetic narrator⁹ who sets the stage (we might say l'autre-scène,

Freud's der andere Schauplatz) for the story of Atala and Chactas that is to follow. The Prologue begins with a metaphoric retelling of a time of maternal domination and possession:

La France possédait autrefois, dans l'Amérique septentrionale, un vaste empire qui s'étendait depuis le Labrador jusqu'aux Florides, et depuis les rivages de l'Atlantique jusqu'aux lacs les plus reculés du haut Canada. (71; my emphasis)

The Prologue (which may be read literally as "that which precedes the logos"--"pro-logos") thus speaks to the reader of the period before the installation of the letter (the phallus) in the unconscious. These first lines project onto the geographical contours of the New World and the state of Nature which it represents a past period of maternal possession (la France possédait), a period already marked (by the use of the imperfect tense and the temporal adverb autrefois) as ended, so that the narrator is seen to look back with both political and erotic yearning upon a state which no longer exists. Subsequent to this reference to a former state of fusion, the text further speaks of a symbolic loss of identity as it describes the merging and disappearance of the four major rivers of the region into the encompassing maternal body of the sea (la mer but also la mère):

. . . le fleuve Saint-Laurent qui se perd à l'est dans le golfe de son nom, la rivière de l'Ouest qui porte ses eaux à des mers inconnues, le fleuve Bourbon qui se précipite du midi au nord dans la baie du Hudson, et le Meschacebé qui tombe du nord au midi, dans le golfe du Mexique. (71; my emphasis)

This idyllic state of affairs is significantly referred to by the narrator as a new Eden (le

nouvel Eden), the primordial paradise from which the child is, however, destined to be exiled.

The following paragraph introduces the image of castration and inaugurates the passage of the child from the stage of dual, imaginary relationships and fusion with the mother into the triangular order of the symbolic which opposes difference to indifference and marks the founding of the subject qua subject. The text presents the reader with a description of storm-ravaged, uprooted trees (des arbres déracinés, 71) and entire areas of leveled forest (des pans entiers de forêts abbatu[s], 71). The phallus having been tempestuously torn from consciousness, the subject passes into the maze-like chains of language through which his desire must henceforth pursue itself. As the remnants of trees (and desire) assemble at their source (s'assemblent sur les sources), they are cemented (cimentés) by mud, enchained (enchaînés) by vines and consolidated (consolidés). The loss of the phallus to consciousness is both metaphorically and metonymically marked in this passage by the reference to the debris as "les cadavres des pins et des chênes" (72; my emphasis) and by mention of the fact that the debris passes through the "pyramides des tombeaux indiens" (72; my emphasis) which line the banks of the Mississippi. Nor is it coincidental that the agent of this work is a masculine entity, "le Mississippi," which inaugurates this passage by raising its voice (il élève sa voix, 72). As the voice of the Father (of Rivers and of Men) is heard, the chains of trees accumulate and amass themselves in ever increasing numbers. Blocked from entering into the sea (la mer/la mère), these floating islands of debris "[vont] aborder dans quelque anse retirée du fleuve" (72). The text thus speaks of the role of the Father as agent of the Law who symbolically castrates the child, blocks him from the realization of his desire, and channels the flow of desire into the chains of language wherein

the child must henceforth content himself with the attainment of plaisir in lieu of jouissance.

This rupture between the orders of the imaginary and the symbolic is further made manifest in the closing section of this passage which describes the opposing views to be seen on the western and eastern banks of the Mississippi. The western shore is marked by distance (the open expanse of vast savannahs) and signs of social organization (the migrant herds of buffalo leading a communal existence). It is also from the western bank that there emerges, as if to preside over the process of socialization, an aged bison (un bison chargé d'années, 72) who, with his ancient beard (barbe antique) might be taken as the river-god (le dieu du fleuve) and who casts an observant eye over the grandeur of his territory. The bison thus appears as an avatar of the Father and the agent of the Law who ensures order and societal structure through his imposing presence. It is also significant that the paternal bison is described as "fendant les flots à la nage" (72; my emphasis) and thus is further marked as the symbolic agent of castration.

If the western bank, presided over by the paternal presence, is marked by order, difference and structuration, the eastern bank is, however, characterized by fusion, indifferentiation and the chaos of raw nature. To the east lies a tangled mass of forest land where trees of all colors, shapes and aromas intermix (se mêlent), grow together (croissent ensemble), and where savage vines intertwine (s'entrelacent) as they cross (traversent) small streams over which they lay down their flowery bridges (des ponts de fleurs). If the paternal bison reigns over the western shore of the Mississippi, the eastern shore is dominated by the vertical cone of the magnolia, which towers over the forest (il domine la forêt), and its lofty double, the palm tree. Reigning as they do over a scene of undifferentiated nature, emblematic of the phallus and the desire of the

Mother, they stand in stark opposition to the leveled expanse of land on the opposite shore and to the uprooted timber previously described. The text thus metaphorically replicates the splitting (die Spaltung) operated upon the proto-subject by the Law of the Father and the accession into language.

The Prologue further links this historical description of the natural wonders of the New World, via what Flaubert would have termed "une attache intérieure," to the brief biographical synopsis of the life of Chactas, one of the novel's two main protagonists, which follows. Chactas is first described to the reader as "un vieillard . . . qui, par son âge, sa sagesse, et sa science dans les choses de la vie, était le patriarche et l'amour des déserts" (74). Through a process of metaphoric linkage, the text clearly couples the character of Chactas with the figure of the bison in the preceding description. His advanced age (son âge, un vieillard) recalls that of the bison "chargé d'années." His wisdom (sagesse) and knowledge (science) bring to mind the knowing, all encompassing stare of his textual double. The fact that he is referred to as the patriarch (le patriarche) of his tribe again suggests the prior river-god (le dieu du fleuve) with his ancient beard (barbe antique). And the metonymic allusion to Chactas as "l'amour des déserts" similarly evokes the approving paternal eye of the bison as he admiringly surveys his vast domain. As the noble savage who has himself undergone the process of socialization and has, if reluctantly, abandoned his infantile attachment to the maternal Atala, he appears as a New World Oedipus at Colonus, acceptive, in Lacanian terms, of the Law of the Father and stands, therefore, in opposition to his adopted son, René, as well as to the extra-heterodiegetic narrator who, in many ways, serves as the latter's double. This linkage between Chactas and Oedipus has already been textually prepared by the prior semantic field

which links the paternal Mississippi, described as the Nile (le Nil, 72) of the New World flowing among the pyramidal tombs of the Indians, with the patriarchal figure of the bison. Moreover, lest this oedipal connection appear at all spurious (or "unfathered"), attention is drawn to the narrator's comment that the old chieftain, now blind (aveugle, 74), is accompanied in his travels about the Mississippi by a young woman just as Antigone once guided the steps of Oedipus along the Cytherian stream ("comme Antigone guidait les pas d'Oedipe sur le Cythéron," 74). Chactas thus represents he who has not only accepted the Law of the Father but who has internalized it and who, along with Father Souël, will act as agent of the Law for his newly adopted son René at a later date. Chactas is literally, as the text points out, he who is "rentré dans le sein de la patrie" (74).

As if on a final Oedipal note, the Prologue concludes with the embarkation of Chactas, in the company of René and a small troop of Indians, upon a beaver hunt (la chasse au castor, 74) along the reaches of the Ohio. Given the nature of the Prologue, it is not surprising that it ends with this "chasse au castor," which will literally be a pursuit of castration, Chactas' narrative, recounted during the course of the hunt, detailing as it does his detachment from Atala and his acceptance of the Law of the Father incarnate in the personage of Father Aubry. Nor are we playing upon a fortuitous coincidence of phonemes. Medieval bestiaries make mention of the fact that the animal (le castor) was long hunted in the belief that fluids contained within its genitalia were possessed of certain rejuvenative properties: hence, the former popularity of castor oil tonic.¹⁰ The intra-homodiegetic narrative which follows the Prologue will thus detail the same rite of passage from the order of the imaginary to that of the symbolic which is enacted in the opening pages of the novel. In the final

analysis, then, the Prologue must be understood in both of its etymological meanings. It is "pro-logos" both in the sense that it begins with the period 'before' the installation of the letter in the unconscious yet ultimately ends 'in favor of' the installation of the Law.

Once this process of socialization and structuration of the subject has been traced in the microcosm of the Prologue, the student's attention may be directed to the manner in which this same collision between the registers of the imaginary and the symbolic plays itself out within the macrocosm of the novel as a whole. Such a study of the text might be pursued on three levels: those of story, discourse and narration.¹¹ On the level of the story, students might be asked to examine and discuss the structural relationship between the protagonist Chactas and the various characters who represent the Father (Chactas' own dead father, his adopted father, the Spaniard Lopez, Atala's father, and the Jesuit, Father Aubry) and those who represent the Mother (Chactas' own mother, the maternal Atala, her mother, as well as the nurturing figures of the elder women of her tribe) with particular attention paid to the transformation these relationships undergo in the course of the narrative. On the level of discourse, students might be asked to investigate the metaphoric play of signifiers within the text. There is, for example, the image of the cord (emblematic of fusion and attachment) which binds Chactas to Atala during their initial walks together and which anticipates the later image of the umbilical natural bridge to be found at Father Aubry's settlement. (The site of Atala's tomb, the bridge ultimately appears as broken and severed at the close of Chactas' narrative.) More generally, there is the vast metaphoric constellation of signifiers which equate Chactas and Atala with the figures of Son and Mother, not to mention the particularly striking image of the white deer

(biche blanche) nursing its fawn which the text repeatedly links, through often subtle variations, to the two major protagonists.¹² Finally, but perhaps most intriguing of all, there is the conflict within the intra-homodiegetic narrator between the aged Chactas, who has internalized the Law of the Father and acts as agent of the Law for his adopted son René, and the young Chactas of the internal narrative who still remains outside the bounds of the Law but with whom the older Chactas still seems at times to empathize. Students might be asked to relate this conflict to the further opposition between the intra-homodiegetic narrator, Chactas, and the extra-heterodiegetic narrator of the Prologue and Epilogue who is marked by his refusal to submit to the Law of the Father and who, therefore, causes the novel to end on an ambiguous note. It is as if what the text rejects on one narrative level, it ends up by recuperating on a higher level.

Approaching Chateaubriand's novel through a Lacanian analysis of the Prologue has a number of advantages as regards teaching strategies. On the one hand, it helps demonstrate to the student that a psychoanalytic reading of the text, far from being an extraneous intrusion upon the latter, serves to reveal the degree to which the unconscious is implicated in the very structure of narrative itself. On the other hand, it helps to demonstrate to the student the need to take into account the specifics of narrative (the question of levels of narration and the role of the narrator, for example) in any psychoanalytic reading of the text. In addition, as regards the specific case of Atala, the use of the Prologue as a model for Lacanian analysis allows the student to branch out on his own as he completes his reading of the text in its entirety. The student is given, so to speak, a suggested general itinerary to follow as he moves through the text but is left free to undertake his own mapping of the text as he fills in specific lines of

communication and intersection between various elements in the narrative. The adoption of such an approach may thus help to avoid spoon-feeding material and ensure the severing of the other umbilical cord linking teacher and student so that the latter as well may be fully recognized as subject.

Marquette University

NOTES

¹It is precisely this type of reductive approach which Lacan rejects through his mordant allusion to the "culinary" approach of such traditional Freudians as Marie Bonaparte who pursue sexual symbolism in narrative with the rigidity of a cook following a fixed recipe. See, for example, his reference to the latter as "la cuisinière" in "Le séminaire sur 'La lettre volée'" in Ecrits I 47.

²This line of approach has been suggested by Robert Con Davis in "Introduction: Lacan and Narration."

³For Lacan's own presentation of the paternal metaphor, see his Ecrits II 72-75.

⁴Given the multiple meanings of the French jouissance (enjoyment, sexual orgasm, right of possession, etc.), it appeared judicious to avoid any English translation of this particular term.

⁵See Lacan, Ecrits II 73-74; also see Freud, "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis" 187-316.

⁶See Freud, "The Unconscious" 159-215.

⁷For a lucid and concise summary of the structural role of the Oedipus and the paternal metaphor in the formation of the subject, the

teacher may wish to direct students to Anika Lemaire, Jacques Lacan 135-54.

⁸As Roland Barthes has remarked in "Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits" (27), it is perhaps significant that it is during the same period that the child is traversing the Oedipus that he also begins his first attempts at narrative.

⁹Genette distinguishes between four fundamental types of narrator: (1) the extra-heterodiegetic or primary narrator who recounts a story from which he is himself absent, (2) the extra-homodiegetic or primary narrator who tells his own story, (3) the intra-heterodiegetic or secondary narrator who tells a story from which he is generally absent, and (4) the intra-homodiegetic or secondary narrator who tells his own story (255-56).

¹⁰See, for example, The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts 28-29.

¹¹These three aspects of narrative reality are the English equivalents of Genette's histoire, récit and narration. Genette defines l'histoire as "le signifié ou contenu narratif," le récit as "le signifiant, énoncé, discours ou texte narratif lui-même," and la narration as "l'acte narratif producteur et, par extension, l'ensemble de la situation réelle ou fictive dans laquelle il prend place" (72). The distinction between histoire and récit corresponds to the distinction between fabula and sjužet earlier made by the Russian formalists. See, for example, Todorov 268.

¹²See in particular Atala 79, 85, 93, 132, 134-35 and 142-43. To the best of my knowledge, critical analyses of Chateaubriand's novel have to date neglected the connection (often centered around the semantic feature "whiteness") between the maternal image of the white deer nursing its fawn and the story's two main protagonists.

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A Speech Act Approach to Teaching Galdós

Peter G. Broad

In his perennially popular and much taught thesis novel Doña Perfecta, Benito Pérez Galdós works hard to persuade his readers of the need to reform society. This persuasive intent is abundantly clear to any fully competent reader, and, when the book was written in the last century, the issues involved were part of everyday experience. However, for a modern, foreign, and naive audience--our students--a successful presentation of the novel requires a good deal of outside information. Such a presentation can take the form of lectures or readings on social, political, and literary history, or it can be a critical presentation that encourages and enables the students to comprehend the novel's intent. This paper outlines an approach of the latter type.

Because of the novel's overriding persuasive intention, Speech Act theory is ideally suited to helping students, especially typical undergraduates who are still having linguistic problems, appreciate how the author intends for his readers to react. To persuade is a straightforward perlocutionary act, and, as such, it can be dealt with using the theory of perlocutions, an integral if often overlooked part of the general theory of speech acts. Once students learn how to identify the perlocutionary intent of the novel's language they become much more involved in the discovery process of reading, relying less and less on the instructor to tell them what is happening.

The notion of the perlocutionary act comes, of course, from Speech Act theory as originally formulated by J. L. Austin in How to Do Things with Words. There he defines the perlocution thus: "Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects

upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience . . . or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them" (101). For example, if I say to you "Please close the door," getting you to close the door thereby is a perlocutionary act, or perlocution.

Neither Austin nor his best known successor, John R. Searle, did much with the notion of perlocutions, because they are not conventional, that is, they are not predictable in terms of any conventional rules. In the above example, I may get you to close the door, but I might also provoke a refusal. Either of these would be a perlocutionary act, and there is no way of predicting which would in fact be accomplished. As a result of this problem, literary scholars have also tended to shy away from a discussion of perlocutionary acts.¹

However, as Steven Davis has clearly shown in his article, entitled simply "Perlocutions," while perlocutionary acts are not conventional, many perlocutionary intentions are. In the example of the request to close the door, for instance, while there is no way of predicting what your actual reaction will be, it is clear that my intention is to get you to close the door. Similarly a question, unless obviously rhetorical, has the intention of getting an answer. Not all perlocutions are conventional in this way by any means, but a large percentage of them are. Thus, if we can identify these acts in the author's voice, we should be able to state his or her intentions for reader reaction.

In order to accomplish this with Doña Perfecta, we will identify where the author is saying something that implies conventional perlocutionary intentions. Since in much of the text neither (implied) author nor narrator addresses the reader directly, this will involve, to a large extent, an identification of indirect speech acts and the direct acts they imply.² That is to say,

rather than looking at what the characters say to one another, or even at the language acts directed by the narrator to the readers, we shall be examining language acts implicitly directed by the author to the reader. As Mary Louise Pratt suggests, such acts can be identified by applying Grice's Cooperative Principle, apparent violations of which result in clearly identifiable "implicatures."³ That is, when what is said does not fulfill the normal expectations of the act in question, the listener/reader is aware that something else is implied.

For students to be able to make use of this theory they need only two basic tools: they need to know how to identify language acts, and they need to be familiar with Grice's Principle and the Maxims derived from it.⁴ A simple introduction to the classification of illocutionary acts, which is what we mean when we say "language acts," is to be found in Searle's five categories: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations (Classification 10-11).⁵ Grice's Maxims can be briefly outlined for students, and their application quickly becomes apparent (45-46).⁶ The combination of the two provides a succinct schema for uncovering perlocutionary intentions. In other words, without spending an inordinate amount of time on theory, students can be given the tools they need to apply the theory to an appreciation of the text.

An obvious and straightforward example of how this is done can be seen in the first word of the title of the first chapter of Doña Perfecta: "¡Villahorrenda!" Within the fictional world of the novel, this exclamation functions as a warning (a type of directive). Its perlocutionary intent for the characters is obvious: the passengers who intend to get off the train at the Villahorrenda station should get ready. The reader knows this after reading the next few sentences. But when the word is read for the first time its effect is very different. Its meaning is conveyed by the

exclamation points and the semantic content of the word. There is no context other than the word's position as a title and the conventions of punctuation. From this one easily deduces a perlocutionary intention to cause a particular reaction in the feelings of the reader: one of shock or astonishment.

With this initial language act, Galdós establishes a tone for the rest of the novel, a tone which the narrator's voice continues throughout the book. Typical of this is the manner in which he presents the city of Orbajosa, which says in part: "apareció a los ojos de entrambos apiñado y viejo caserío asentado en una loma, del cual se destacaban algunas negras torres y la ruिनosa fábrica de un despedazado castillo en lo más alto. Un amasijo de paredes deformes, de casuchas de tierra pardas y polvorosas como el suelo" (412-13). (There appeared before the eyes of both of them a crowded together and old hamlet situated on a rise, from which stood out a few black towers and the ruined stonework of a shattered castle at the top. A jumble of deformed walls, of earthen hovels grey brown and dusty like the soil.)⁷

In the fictional world of the novel, this act is an assertion (a type of representative), an illocutionary act which serves to communicate information. It is a direct act in that it is directed at the reader and not at a character within the fiction. As literary language it operates on more than one level, and beyond its assertive function it should also be considered a declaration. That is, since the author is the only authority in the world he has created, when he declares that things are one way or another, they are. It is the same as an act of naming, which, when the person performing the act has the right to do so, is an act which is carried out by being said. Thus with these words Galdós creates, in a very strict sense, the only Orbajosa there is.

The perlocutionary intent of this act is deduced through its implicatures. Grice's second Maxim of Quantity says: "Do not make your contribution more informative than is required" (45). That is, assuming the Cooperative Principle to be operative, we can assume that all that is said is said for a reason. Thus, the insistence on adjectives such as "old," "ruined," "shattered," and "deformed" clearly has the same type of perlocutionary intent of causing a reaction in the feelings of the reader as does the first act. The presentation of the environment is always perceived as negative. Even if the students have to look up half the words, thus losing their direct impact, a little practice with the Maxims makes the intention clear to them.

A little farther on what will be the main tension of the erotic plot is introduced with this act: "El señor penitenciario, cuando Rosarito se separó bruscamente de él, miró a los bardales, y viendo las cabezas del tío Licurgo y de su compañero de viaje, dijo para sí: 'Vamos, ya está ahí ese prodigio'" (416). (The priest, when Rosarito separated herself brusquely from him, looked at the garden wall, and seeing the heads of uncle Lycurgus and his traveling companion, said to himself: "Well, the prodigy has arrived.") This assertion by the priest is also an assertion by the text (or implied author) directed toward its readers. Its perlocutionary intention is revealed by applying the same Gricean Maxim. Now, however, its intent is to provoke what Robert N. Gaines identifies as a motivational reaction in the thoughts of the reader (209). That is, it disposes the reader to think of the priest as a character who is hostile to the interests of Pepe Rey, a disposition which is reinforced throughout the remainder of the text.

Having seen how language acts can be shown to produce reactions from readers, let us examine some of the acts related specifically to the persuasive intention of the novel. An important part

of the dichotomy established in the text is the conflict between the modern and the traditional. The latter is represented, *inter alia*, by the official church, and the former by science and mathematics. In two (fictional) assertions we are given the two sides to this theme: "la ciencia, tal como la estudian y la propagan los modernos, es la muerte del sentimiento y de las dulces ilusiones. . . . Con la ciencia destrúyese lo maravilloso en las artes, así como la fe en el alma" (422). (Science, as it is studied and propagated by the moderns, is the death of feeling and sweet illusions. . . . With science are destroyed the marvelous in the arts and faith in the soul.) Then: "La fábula, llámese paganismo o idealismo cristiano, ya no existe, y la imaginación está de cuerpo presente. Todos los milagros posibles se reducen a los que yo hago en mi gabinete, cuando se me antoja, con una pila de Bunsen, un hilo inductor y una aguja imantada" (422). (Fable, whether it be called paganism or Christian idealism, no longer exists, and the imagination is lying in state. All possible miracles are reduced to those I perform in my laboratory, when I feel like it, with a Bunsen burner, a conducting wire, and a magnetized needle.) The perlocutionary effect in the fictional world is that of producing ever stronger feelings in the characters. For the reader it is rather an epistemic reaction produced in the thoughts, in Gaines's classification (209). We have to seek a middle ground between two obviously exaggerated positions.

Shortly afterward Galdós's intentions regarding where the readers' sympathies should lie are made clear when the narrator's voice states: "Pepe, aunque matemático, lo comprendió" (425). (Pepe, although a mathematician, understood.) Applying the Gricean Maxim of Relation ("Be relevant") reveals that Galdós wants us to reject the idea of an incompatibility between the scientific/intellectual and the affairs of the soul.

Farther on Galdós's political intentions are made evident. In what is presented as an exaggeration, Pepe Rey says: "No haré más que aplaudir cuando vea extirpados para siempre los gérmenes de guerra civil, de insubordinación, de discordia, de behetría, de bandolerismo y de barbarie que existen aquí para vergüenza de nuestra época y de nuestra patria" (462). (I will only applaud when I see extirpated forever the seeds of civil war, of insubordination, of discord, of anarchy, of banditry, and of barbarism which exist here to the shame of our times and our fatherland.) As a fictional act, this assertion has the explicit perlocutionary intent of provoking an emotional reaction in Doña Perfecta. But, based again on Grice's Maxim of Relation, we assume that the themes mentioned have something to do with Galdós's purposes, and his perlocutionary intent is clearly motivational in the sense of disposing us to view the things mentioned in a negative light. For a reader of the 1800s the reference would undoubtedly be more direct, but the intention is no less obvious now. Even a naive student in an intermediate literature class, if thinking in terms of relevance, would understand what was happening.

This type of exaggeration, even caricature, is typical of the entire novel. In the following example we have the most explicit overstatement of the basic ideological conflict, which says, in part: "Es cuestión de moros y cristianos. . . . ¿No comprendes que mi sobrino . . . no es una calamidad, sino una plaga? . . . Contra ella, querida Remedios, tendremos aquí un batallón de Dios que aniquile la infernal milicia de Madrid. Te digo que esto va a ser grande y glorioso" (482). (It's a question of Moors and Christians. Don't you understand that my nephew is not a calamity but a plague? Against it, dear Remedios, we will have here a battalion of God which will annihilate the infernal militia from Madrid. I tell you this is going to be grand and glorious.)

In the fictional world we have an assertion, or a series of assertions. The same can be said of the illocutionary acts contained here in the sense in which they are directed to the readers. Their perlocutionary intent--the provocation of an involuntary reaction of feeling together with a disposition on the part of the reader toward a rejection of what is expressed--can be deduced from the obvious violation of Grice's maxims of Quality, especially the second one which says: "Don't say that for which you lack adequate evidence" (45). This assertion, without basis in either the fictional or the real world, is obviously an exaggeration and therefore negative. The reader, recognizing the violation, derives the indicated implicature. As previously shown, students can be taught to recognize such obvious violations with a fairly low level of target language competence.

In all these language acts we see a consistent intention on the part of the author to dispose the reader against a reactionary religion which represses society, sinking it into a continuous, counterproductive violence. At the same time a need for modern thinking has been advocated, but pointedly not at the expense of true spirituality. This is the persuasive intention of the novel, and, as we have seen, it is an intention that even beginning readers can appreciate when given a few simple theoretical tools to work with.

Using the Galdós novel as an example, it is clear how Speech Act theory can make an important contribution to the teaching of literature to foreign language students at the undergraduate level. If students can feel that they have some control over their reaction to the texts they are forced to read, some sense of what is happening in the text at a level beyond that of simple story line, their involvement with the process becomes much more complete and much less an exercise in frustration and trying to figure out "what the

teacher wants me to see." In the end it can make them able to read any text more intelligently and to think critically about what they are doing.

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

NOTES

¹For example, Alison Goddard Elliott, in "The Power of Discourse," an interesting article on the old French epic, uses the concept of perlocutions, but she has greatly distorted Austin's concept in doing so.

²Searle's analysis of indirect speech acts is basic to all subsequent consideration of them. Unfortunately, he ignores the author's voice when he then turns his attention to literature (Expression 30-75).

³In Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literature Mary Louise Pratt makes a convincing case for the Cooperative Principle and the Maxims implicit in it as a way to describe the linguistic origins of the image-constructing process undertaken by the audience (152-200). Our use of it here is a concrete application of the approach she suggests.

⁴The term "language act" is preferred here, because we are dealing with something quite different from "speech." The theory is the same, however.

⁵A concise explanation of each of these five categories, along with a description of other systems for classifying illocutionary acts can be found in Hancher.

⁶Grice's Maxims are: I. Maxims of Quantity: 1. Make your contribution as informative as is required. 2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required. II. Maxims of Quality: Supermaxim: Make your contribution one

that is true. Maxims: 1. Do not say what you believe to be false. 2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. III. Maxim of Relation: Be relevant. IV. Maxims of Manner: Supermaxim: Be perspicuous. Maxims: 1. Avoid obscurity of expression. 2. Avoid ambiguity. 3. Be brief. 4. Be orderly. A thorough discussion of the effect of implicatures derived from apparent violations of these Maxims in literature can be found in Pratt (152-200).

⁷This and all subsequent translations are mine.

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**La forja de un rebelde de Arturo Barea:
Relato autobiográfico de las causas ideológicas
de la Guerra Civil española**

Kern L. Lunsford

Entre las muchas obras literarias cuyo tema es la terrible experiencia cismática de la Guerra Civil española, La forja de un rebelde de Arturo Barea queda como uno de los testimonios más importantes de la guerra. Barea recrea, mediante el lenguaje del texto, su vida, y a la vez una historia de la Guerra Civil española que nos da una explicación ideológica de la conflagración. Por lo tanto, su vida, su autobiografía--su texto--es un reflejo fiel del tajo ideológico en la formación del autor y en la vida española antes y durante la guerra. La autobiografía de Barea entendida así es una historia ideológica de la Guerra Civil española. Aunque sólo la última novela trata directamente del conflicto armado, las tres novelas tratan de los problemas nacionales y personales de los españoles, de sus actitudes conflictivas de clase, del cisma ideológico tanto en Barea como en la nación y de la corrupción en el gobierno y en el ejército. Este ambiente propicio para la guerra se desarrolla lenta pero inexorablemente delante de los ojos del lector a través de las páginas de la trilogía.

La estructura misma de la trilogía recrea cronológicamente, con hiatos de diez años entre las novelas, la vida de Barea vista arredrotiempo desde la altura del exilio. En las tres novelas podemos encontrar en su vida constantes que nos revelan las causas de la guerra. En la Forja la constante es el resentimiento y la rebeldía de Barea niño ante las injusticias en la vida española en los albores del siglo XX, injusticias fomentadas por una sociedad tremendamente jerarquizada en toda su supraestructura: sus clases, sus levas, su política, su religión, su

educación. Hablando de su rebeldía, Barea dice:

Hay en mí todas las iras; la de ver despreciada a mi madre, la de perder la carrera, la de ver gentes extrañas saquear la casa, y nadie puede hacerme callar. (140)

En La ruta la constante es la rebeldía de Barea soldado ante la corrupción y la futilidad de la guerra de Marruecos. Hablando de ese desastre, Barea dice: "Durante los primeros veinticinco años de este siglo Marruecos no fue más que un campo de batalla, un burdel y una taberna inmensos" (272). En La llama la constante es la indignación y la rebeldía de Barea hombre maduro ante las injusticias y los conflictos de la vida socio-política de su país. Hablando del conflicto que se avecina, Barea dice:

Aquello era guerra, guerra civil, y una revolución. No podía terminar hasta que el país se hubiera convertido en un estado fascista o en un estado socialista. No tenía que elegir entre ellos. La elección estaba para mí hecha durante toda mi vida. O vencía una revolución socialista, o yo estaría entre los vencidos. (583)

Otra constante en las tres novelas es la ambigüedad ideológica en Barea. A través de las tres etapas de su vida, vemos a Barea peleándose consigo mismo, identificándose ya con la clase proletaria, ya con la clase adinerada. Esta dicotomía ideológica influye en la trayectoria de su vida, y también es indicativa de la escisión ideológica de las Dos Españas. Otra constante de orden ideológico en las novelas es el anticlericalismo del autor, lo cual refleja su educación represiva en la Iglesia Católica y delata una hostilidad latente hacia el clero en la sociedad española, una hostilidad que irrumpe en violencia abierta contra la Iglesia al estallar la

guerra. Por último, se puede discernir en las tres novelas otra constante--la sinceridad y la rectitud de Barea en su vida personal y en su vida profesional, lo cual da crédito a la veracidad de su autobiografía.

Para descubrir el subtexto histórico, podemos someter el texto de Barea a un análisis "dialéctico." Entendemos por "dialéctico" ese movimiento de la lógica que contrasta un elemento con su contrario o que siempre lo tiene presente para su propia definición. Este tipo de análisis es dialéctico en dos sentidos: en sentido formal y en sentido ideológico. En sentido formal es un movimiento discursivo entre la realidad creada por el lenguaje del texto de La forja de un rebelde y la realidad contextual. Desde un punto de vista epistemológico y ontológico, cualquier realidad creada con palabras es tan válida, o real, como cualquier otra. Pero, en sentido dialéctico-existencial, es obvio que la correspondencia entre la realidad textual y la realidad referencial se puede poner en tela de juicio y comprobar mediante otros textos, tanto literarios como documentales: testimonios del arte, testimonios escritos y orales, etc. Si la realidad actual nos es problemática, lo es aún más una realidad desaparecida en el tiempo. En última instancia, la validación de la correspondencia entre texto y contextos dependerá del proceso organizador del lector, en una palabra, su ideología y su situación histórica. En sentido ideológico un análisis dialéctico demuestra que La forja de un rebelde es significado y significante de la dinámica de clases operante en España antes, durante y después de la Guerra Civil. Es significativo porque señala con su lenguaje la escisión ideológica que desembocó en guerra, y es significado porque la trilogía misma--la vida de Barea, un proyecto individual--es un artefacto cultural que revela esa escisión ideológica en la sociedad. Jameson, hablando de la verdadera tarea de la crítica dialéctica, subraya esta conexión

entre la dimensión individual y la colectiva en la obra de arte cuando dice:

The two dimensions are one, and indeed the propaedeutic value of art lies in the way in which it permits us to grasp the essentially historical and social value of what we had otherwise taken to be a question of individual experience. (406-07)

Sobejano señala que uno de los reproches que la crítica suele hacerle a Barea es que es un resentido egocéntrico que parece preocuparse más de sus propios asuntos personales que de los colectivos. "Pero esto es también consecuencia del propósito autobiográfico, y acaso en esta sinceridad egocéntrica del relato quepa ver uno de los mayores méritos de la obra" (63). En nuestra opinión, es precisamente este egocentrismo sincero lo que más claramente deja al descubierto la dimensión colectiva sin tergiversaciones intermediarias de orden propagandístico.

Podemos ver claramente que la Forja de un rebelde es, ante todo, una autobiografía del autor, pero también es un documento histórico que testimonia la realidad de un Barea personal inserto dentro del marco más amplio de la guerra. Dice González López:

[La forja de un rebelde] es un auténtico documento de la historia de España, de sus tragedias políticas y sociales, escrito por un testigo de singulares condiciones artísticas para reproducir en cada página, en cada figura y en cada incidente la amarga y dolorosa realidad de su vida y la de su patria, conservando dentro del dolor una actitud de consoadora compasión de las cosas y de los seres humanos. (104)

Barea ve la guerra de un modo vivencial peculiarmente suyo--incompartible, en gran parte,

con los demás; pero, a la par, y en tanto y cuanto es posible, su perspectiva única está vinculada a la de miles de españoles. Las palabras siguientes de Blanco Amor reflejan esta actitud crítica y dialéctica del texto de Barea con respecto a su vida personal y a la guerra del país:

Lo más importante en su trilogía es su propia existencia. La guerra llega después, avanza sobre la vida del narrador como una fatalidad y lo convierte en beligerante. . . . Esto quiere decir que Barea, novelista del exilio, no se propuso ser el testigo fiel de la guerra de España, sino el autor de una autobiografía en la que su vida entraba en la guerra y la guerra definía su vida. (214)

Como queda señalado, un análisis dialéctico presupone un concepto ideológico de la obra literaria, es decir, que tal obra es producto de determinadas condiciones históricas operantes en el autor, y que el texto producido puede ser interpretado de manera que queden reveladas esas condiciones históricas, la dinámica de clases y sus ideologías concomitantes. La palabra "ideología" de por sí puede tener connotaciones propagandísticas o políticas, pero nosotros la entendemos en términos más abiertos. Como dice Perú-Cueva, no es simplemente el "sistema explícito de ideas conceptualmente articuladas, sino . . . una matriz socialmente determinada de representación y percepción del mundo en todos sus niveles y dimensiones" (35). La ideología puede llamarse por otro nombre--una visión del mundo (Weltanschauung). Para Goldmann, esta visión del mundo no es un algo ni impreciso ni metafísico, sino algo clasificable y determinado por interacciones sociales. El dice: "La visión del mundo es el sistema de pensamiento que, en determinadas condiciones, se impone a un grupo de hombres que se hallan en análoga situación económica y social, es decir, que pertenecen a

ciertas clases sociales" (1:284). La visión del mundo--la ideología--es una forma determinada de ver y sentir el mundo y no está meramente presente o latente en las páginas de una obra literaria, sino que es más bien la fuerza motriz de su creación. La ideología está incisa en todos los niveles del proceso creativo, desde los postulados teóricos de una determinada escuela literaria hasta la producción física de la obra. Para hacer un análisis ideológico completo sería forzoso estudiar los elementos constitutivos, tanto económicos como ideológicos, de la obra literaria: la forma general de producción económica de la cultura, la forma de producción literaria, la ideología general del autor, la ideología estética vigente, etc. Para Eagleton, la verdadera tarea de la crítica literaria debe ser "to analyse the complex historical articulations of these structures which produce the text" (44). Este tipo de análisis tiene su validez, pero este método tiene el riesgo inherente de reducir la obra a un esquema mecánico que no refleja las verdaderas corrientes históricas vitales que promovieron la creación artística. Para ver y entender aquellas corrientes históricas que produjeron La forja de un rebelde, debemos atender más a las ideas presentes en la ideología del autor, en el texto y en la época, que no a los otros aspectos económicos de la producción literaria. Para evitar una tentación de forzar una correspondencia directa y simplista entre el texto y la ideología del autor o la de la clase dominante, urge tener presente que, aunque la obra de arte, en los más de los casos, es producto creativo de un individuo, lo que refleja es una visión del mundo de una clase social. En las palabras de Goldmann: "las visiones del mundo no son hechos individuales, sino sociales" (1:284). El concepto de "clase" es un concepto diferenciador, como señala muy bien Jameson: "Class is precisely a differential concept, that each class is at once a way of relating to and of

refusing the others" (380). Este concepto es de por sí dialéctico porque siempre tiene presente, para definir la esencia de una clase, la de arriba y la de abajo. Cada clase implica la existencia de las otras en una dinámica dialéctica. Sigue Jameson iluminando este concepto hermenéutico:

In history also there are no substances tranquilly persevering in their essence, but rather a relationality and struggle of every instant, in which the class is no more free than the individual not to be engaged. So it is that each class implies the existence of all the others in its very being, for it defines itself against them and survives and perpetuates itself only insofar as it succeeds in humiliating its adversaries. (381)

El entender esta dialéctica es fundamental para entender la esencia de la dinámica de clases que dimana del texto de Barea. Se pueden aducir ejemplos textuales a lo largo de La forja de un rebelde que revelan las clases sociales y sus ideologías conflictivas en coacción, prontas a estallar. El texto de Barea, como obra de arte, resulta ser un artefacto cultural intermediario entre lo privado y lo colectivo, entre lo existencial y lo histórico. Dice Jameson:

Thus . . . the work of art or the cultural fact certainly reflects something, but what it reflects is not so much the class in itself as some autonomous cultural configuration, as rather the situation of that class, or, in short, class conflict. (388)

A lo largo de La forja, la primera novela de la trilogía, encontramos muchas referencias a la penuria en la vida de Barea, y por lo tanto, a la situación económica de España en los albores del

siglo XX. Podemos ver cómo la pobreza que vivió Barea de chico y las injusticias que observó a su alrededor, sembró en su alma las semillas de su rebeldía. El proceso inexorable del empeoramiento de la economía de aquellos años, años de niñez y aprendizaje de Barea, no sólo condicionó su rebeldía, sino que también potenció las fuerzas ideológicas que irrumpieron en la Guerra Civil. La lucha de clases, en el fondo, es una lucha económica, una lucha por la vida, una lucha por sobrevivir. En la superficie, a nivel de la supraestructura de la sociedad, es una lucha ideológica, una dinámica entre maneras diferentes de ver y experimentar el mundo, las cuales son condicionadas por esa otra lucha más primordial, la de sobrevivir. Vemos en La forja, estas dos luchas tanto en la colectividad--la oligarquía contra el pueblo--como en la vida ambivalente de Barea que se crió entre dos clases sociales.

A lo largo de La ruta, la segunda novela de la trilogía, vemos la dialéctica de clases en los intereses creados y turbios, de gobernantes y de militares a igual, que hacen de la presencia española en Marruecos un desastre y una vergüenza nacional. Los cadáveres españoles pudriéndose al sol africano presagian la guadaña de la Guerra Civil.

A lo largo de La llama, la última novela de la trilogía, vemos ya las ideologías conflictivas encarnadas y peleándose con las armas en la mano. Las Dos Españas, que antaño llevaban otros nombres--castizos, carcas, carlistas, tradicionalistas contra afrancesados, liberales, isabelinos, progresistas--por fin se ponen la guerrera nacionalista o republicana, y el horror fratricida se despliega página tras página.

La dialéctica ideológica de las clases sociales, en que cada clase se define por sí misma pero en contra de las otras, tiene su dialéctica análoga en Barea mismo. A través de las tres novelas Barea se define en contra de todo y en contra de todos: en su vida con su madre la

lavandera, en su vida de señorito privilegiado con sus tíos burgueses, en la escuela en Madrid, en el ejército en Marruecos, en el Madrid republicano durante la guerra. Esta actitud separatista y la rectitud de Barea explica el punto de vista y el enfoque crítico de La forja de un rebelde. Puede explicar también la forma narrativa elegida por el autor. Queriendo o no, el autor escoge la forma autobiográfica que es por definición una forma discursiva que se define en función de otros y de la interacción del yo con el mundo externo. Así, siguiendo la tradición de las mejores novelas picarescas, Barea se define a sí mismo y, a la par, forzosamente va descubriendo y describiendo la realidad circundante y sus males.

Aunque Barea terminó por identificarse con la ideología republicana y, luchar por ella, él condena en su autobiografía a los dos bandos de la guerra. Su forma "objetiva" de contarnos su vida revela la inevitabilidad del último conflicto. El no enarbola patrióticamente la bandera del republicanismo, no canta himnos a la gloria de la República, no denuesta fanáticamente a los nacionalistas. De su texto se desprende una compasión por la tragedia de su nación destruida, y a la par una fe en la creación, algún día en el futuro, de una España libre de los antagonismos e injusticias que la escindieron.

Lynchburg College

OBRAS CITADAS

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**Los cuentos de Ignacio Aldecoa:
Espejo de la España de los años 50**

Carolyn J. Harris

En su conjunto los cuentos de Ignacio Aldecoa presentan un retrato veraz de la España de la postguerra, enfocando sobre todo la década de los años 50 y captando a los seres olvidados y sufrientes que veía el autor a su alrededor. Muchos de los cuentos de Aldecoa fijan su atención en la gente necesitada, y sus protagonistas son hombres tristes y resignados que buscan la forma de sobrevivir en una España vencida, en la que reinan el miedo y la miseria, el temor y la desesperanza. Son frecuentemente trabajadores de oficios humildes: camioneros, pescadores, campesinos, segadores y oficinistas; o son víctimas inocentes, niños y ancianos que no entienden el conflicto que los rodea pero que tienen que vivir las consecuencias de una guerra amarga. Completan la antología de la realidad española que componen los cuentos de Aldecoa algunos protagonistas que representan a la clase media, retratados con menos ternura y simpatía, como una gente mezquina cuya preocupación central es el dinero. Pero son mucho más frecuentes en sus cuentos los seres humildes y dolientes, los marginados y los desvalidos que luchan por salir de su situación. Sus vidas reflejan el mundo de amargura y melancolía que era la España de los años 50. Sin embargo no es todo de color gris ya que Aldecoa trata a sus personajes tristes con afecto y ve en la solidaridad humana esperanza para el futuro de su país. El ha explicado:

Yo escribo de lo que tengo cerca, que es más bien triste. Otros escriben de sus cercanías que son más bien alegres. No sé decirle otra cosa. No creo que España tenga un solo color, negro o azul celeste, como pretenden. Supongo que será vario-pinta como cualquier

nación. ("Yo escribo..." 8)

La España de la postguerra es el principal protagonista de los cuentos de Aldecoa, y nos la presenta directamente, sin explicaciones, comentarios ni instrucciones morales de ningún tipo. Aldecoa se esforzó por descubrir la realidad española, como ha señalado Erna Brandenberger, mediante la observación del país y sus moradores, sin tópicos o prejuicios tradicionales. "Se contentó con captar lugares y momentos determinados," escribe Brandenberger (63). Sus cuentos se limitan a exponer los hechos con el objetivismo máximo y dejan al lector el trabajo de determinar los problemas sociales de una época y sus posibles soluciones. Frecuentemente no ocurre nada en los cuentos de Aldecoa, sino que se describe un momento en la vida de un ser humano. El lector tiene que poner el "antes" y el "después" de una situación cotidiana y determinar la trascendencia de los sucesos. La técnica narrativa de Aldecoa, que parece de lo más sencilla a primera vista, es el resultado de una construcción cuidada en que se presenta el mínimo de elementos necesarios para retratar a unos miembros de la sociedad española.

Siguiendo la técnica del cuento moderno, los mejores relatos de Aldecoa son sencillos en que crean un efecto único, y cada palabra se elige con vistas a este efecto preconcebido. Se logra la intensidad al construir el cuento en función del efecto único y aun los elementos que parecen superfluos al comenzar la lectura tienen una estudiada funcionalidad. Irene Andrés-Suárez, en su estudio de los cuentos de Aldecoa, encuentra cinco constantes en sus relatos breves más logrados: la condensación, la intensidad, la economía de medios, un solo foco de atención y el lenguaje evocativo (34). La obra de Aldecoa sobresale por la sencillez de su prosa pero también por la precisión verbal en que se busca la exactitud y la expresividad de cada palabra.

Porque busca la economía de expresión que crea intensidad, hay en Aldecoa un afán por encontrar siempre el vocablo exacto, preciso e insustituible (Senabre 22). En este aspecto sus descripciones frecuentemente parecen poéticas, mientras presenta la acción y los diálogos tan directamente que algunos han censurado lo que consideran "reportaje" y no narrativa literaria.

En los cuentos de Aldecoa los personajes y las situaciones se nos presentan a los lectores directamente, sin intermediarios, y casi no se ve la mano del autor. De esta ausencia de comentarios por parte del autor que le hace casi invisible, escribe Manuel Durán:

Esta reserva del autor es una forma de respeto frente a sus personajes: no los utiliza como instrumentos para presentarnos sus ideas, los presenta porque cree en su realidad, su validez, los valores que representan o simbolizan. (66)

La simpatía y la piedad que siente el autor por sus personajes forman un invisible perfume para Durán que se nota más en las descripciones líricas que son discretas y poco aparatosas (74). Los relatos breves de Aldecoa suelen empezar con la descripción de un ambiente, y en la mayoría de los casos este ambiente que envuelve el cuento es más importante que el suceso y a veces hasta se convierte en el suceso. El formato más común contiene un comienzo lento, descriptivo, que cede el paso a acción y diálogo rápidos que no se resuelven sino que dejan al lector el trabajo de concluir el acontecimiento narrado. Se estudiarán a continuación cinco cuentos representativos de la temática de Aldecoa para mostrar cómo, en su conjunto, sus cuentos reflejan con maestría la España de los años 50.

Aldecoa dedica frecuentemente sus novelas y cuentos al estudio de una profesión o un oficio, y sobre todo estudia los trabajos humildes. Sus

cuentos tienden a enoblecen el trabajo por el amor y la dedicación de los obreros al oficio o por el sentimiento de compañerismo y solidaridad entre los trabajadores. "Seguir de pobres," publicado por primera vez en 1953, enfoca a los segadores españoles que tienen que dejar a sus familias para buscar trabajo segando en tierras ajenas. En una serie de episodios breves, Aldecoa nos pinta la vida difícil de cinco campesinos pobres: dos del noroeste, dos de la parte verde de Castilla y "El Quinto," que acaba de salir de la cárcel de Murcia, donde ha estado por motivos de "La guerra, y luego, mala conducta," que él explica diciendo, "De hombre, digo yo" (27). Aldecoa comienza el cuento con una descripción del campo en primavera y los anuncios de las Cajas de Ahorro en los cuales labradores sonrientes y fuertes ahorran monedas doradas. Hacen contraste estos labradores de la propaganda "que tienen parejas de bueyes, vacas, maquinaria agrícola y un hijo estudiando en la Universidad o en el Seminario" (25), con "las cuadrillas de segadores que, como una tormenta de melancolía, cruzan las ciudades buscando el pan del trabajo por los caminos del país" (25).

Desde el comienzo de la acción en este cuento, Aldecoa insiste en la pobreza de los cinco mediante observaciones objetivas. Cuando paran a comer, camino al pueblo, el narrador señala: "De la bota del pobre se bebe poco y con mucha precaución. Al pan del pobre no se le dan mordiscos; hay que partirlo en trozos con la navaja. El queso del pobre no se descortezas, se raspa" (27). También es evidente la solidaridad mientras caminan cantando y pasando la bota al compañero. Después de trabajar unos veinte días en el campo, vuelven hacia sus casas y los cuatro reparten sus salarios con El Quinto, quien se ha enfermado y necesita ir al hospital de la ciudad. Su generosidad con un hombre que les era desconocido hasta el viaje al pueblo hace contraste con la mezquindad del alcalde que les ha empleado. El no puede permitir que se recupere el

enfermo en su casa, comiendo su pan, una vez que se ha terminado el trabajo.

Los segadores de "Seguir de pobres" son víctimas inocentes de un sistema injusto, unos seres desvalidos y pobres, sobre los cuales han caído las consecuencias de la desigualdad y la deficiencia económica de los años de la postguerra. Sin embargo, Aldecoa no cae en sentimentalismos al presentarlos, sino que los observa desde una distancia, destacando la resignación con que aceptan la pobreza en que viven y la piedad y humanidad que muestran hacia los demás. Todo en este cuento conduce hacia el efecto único de mostrar la solidaridad entre la gente humilde que hace posible soportar una situación difícil.

En "Un cuento de reyes," también de 1953, se revela la situación de otros marginados de la postguerra, los que han dejado el campo para buscar trabajo en la ciudad y encuentran dificultades en adaptarse a su nueva situación. El protagonista de este relato es el negro Omicrón Rodríguez que ha subido desde Almería hasta Madrid y trabaja de fotógrafo callejero, retratando a los forasteros. Comienza el cuento con una descripción del hambre que siente, "un escorpioncito negro" (292) que le pica, porque lleva veintisiete horas y media sin comer. Además del hambre, Omicrón pasa frío en Madrid porque no tiene abrigo. Pero hay otra vez en este cuento un sentimiento de compañerismo entre los pobres que trabajan en las calles y el Metro vendiendo periódicos o lotería. De nuevo es la solidaridad humana que hace soportable la miseria en que viven los pobres de la ciudad. Omicrón aguanta todo tipo de insulto por su color con un aire resignado, y es irónico que al cobrar importancia por hacer el papel del rey Baltasar en una procesión de reyes se dude si es verdaderamente negro. Un chico pregunta, "¿Será de verdad negro o será pintado?" (296) y el narrador indica a continuación: "Omicrón Rodríguez se molestó.

Dudaban por vez primera en su vida si él era blanco o negro, y precisamente cuando iba haciendo de Rey" (296). El cuento termina con los flash de los fotógrafos de la prensa retratándole a él en una escena de inversión. Pero Omicrón volverá al día siguiente de la fantasía de ser rey a ser un "don nadie" como su nombre indica. La ómicron es la letra "o" o el "cero" del alfabeto griego, y Janet Díaz Pérez ha señalado la ironía de emplear esta simbología apelativa como un ejemplo de los recursos artísticos empleados por Aldecoa, un escritor objetivista (52). El negro Omicrón, después de su día de ser rey, volverá al callejón sin salida que es su vida, otra víctima inocente de la situación económica de la postguerra. La ciudad es un lugar inhóspito y rechazador, y sólo la humanidad de los otros pobres hace posible la vida en ella para el inmigrante desorientado.

Algunos de los mejores cuentos de Aldecoa plantean la situación precaria del hombre y el ambiente de miedo y desamparo de los años 50 mediante la técnica de contar desde el punto de vista de un niño ingenuo e indefenso o de un viejo abandonado y aislado de la sociedad. En "Hasta que llegan las doce," publicado en 1952, el lector participa en las actividades cotidianas de una mañana normal y corriente que termina en tragedia, vista por los ojos del protagonista, Juan, un niño de unos cuatro años. El padre de Juan trabaja en la construcción y no gana lo suficiente para mantener a su familia que consiste en tres hijos y su esposa, Antonia, que para el verano espera el cuarto. El narrador explica que el padre "tuvo mejor trabajo, pero ya se sabe: las cosas... No ganaba mucho y había que ayudarse. Para eso estaba ella [su esposa], además de para reñegar y poner orden en la casa. Antonia hacía camisas del Ejército" (356). Al amanecer suenan las sirenas de las fábricas y Juan se despierta "con ojos de liebre asustada" (355). Pronto se levanta, a la insistencia de su madre, y, tiritando del frío, sale al retrete que está en el patio. Después de

ayudar a su madre con recados, el niño tendrá tiempo para jugar hasta la vuelta de su padre del trabajo. "Hasta que lleguen las doce te queda tiempo; puedes hacer lo que quieras," le dice su madre (358). Pero a las doce menos cuarto, mientras juega en el patio, llega la vecina con una noticia. Algo le ha pasado al padre. Juan empieza a llorar ruidosamente cuando su madre sale a hablar por teléfono con el capataz de la obra. Otra vez se oyen las sirenas porque han llegado las doce. Una noticia de los periódicos ha informado al lector al comienzo del relato: "A las doce menos cuarto del mediodía de ayer se derrumbó una casa en construcción" (355). No hay más explicaciones del suceso, y el lector siente la misma confusión y miedo del niño de cuatro años, una víctima de circunstancias que no puede entender. La tragedia de la vida del pobre, además de la conciencia del destino frágil del hombre, le llegan al lector con fuerza en este cuento mediante la descripción magistral de Aldecoa de una mañana en la vida de un niño de la postguerra.

Se narra otro suceso trágico en "Las piedras del páramo," de 1961, pero esta vez desde el punto de vista de un anciano solo y marginado que no comprende las circunstancias pero, como el niño Juan, tendrá que vivir las consecuencias de la tragedia. Desde los ojos de un abuelo anónimo que espera la muerte sentado en el poyo de la puerta de su casa día tras día, se ve el comienzo de la Guerra Civil española. Lo inconcebible de este hecho histórico se hace más patente visto con una falta completa de comprensión por parte del viejo incomunicado. El cuento comienza con una descripción del estado mental del protagonista anciano que ya no distingue entre los cinco sentidos, y para quien todo se difumina y se confunde. "Todo era un rumor. Todo era indistinto y sonoro. Movimiento, color, volumen, palabra, se confundían en algo cálido y amigo que él llamaba rumor" (399). Está solo y prefiere la

soledad de los recuerdos, esperando la muerte.

No contaban con él; lo sabía. Deseaba que no contaran con él. No debía ser interrumpida su calma lagunar. Quería ser dejado solo hasta su evaporación total, hasta que él se sumase con su última onda de vida al rumor absoluto. (399)

El viejo se acuesta y se duerme pensando en la esposa que ha muerto, hasta que le despierta al amanecer el sonido de lo que primero cree ser disparos de caza. Sin embargo, sabe que son demasiado seguidos para eso, y tampoco son cohetes. La familia golpea en la puerta de su habitación y se oye el llanto de los niños pequeños. Desde su punto de vista todo es impreciso, borroso y totalmente incomprensible. Pregunta una y otra vez, "¿Qué pasa? ¿Por qué hay tiros en la calle? ¿Por qué disparan?" (402) pero no le contesta nadie. El viejo sólo sabe que no va a poder esperar su muerte con tranquilidad y siente que, como José de la Biblia, él ha sido arrojado a una cisterna. Cuando por fin se alejan el camión y los disparos, sabe que no habrá misa porque la iglesia está cerrada y se ha llevado al párraco. El protagonista, quien se ha comparado con una piedra del páramo, ahora siente que "sobre su cabeza se derrumbaban piedras furiosas, gigantescas tronadas, olas retumbantes" (406). "No merezco esto," piensa una y otra vez, "y es demasiado para mí" (406). El horror de la guerra se hace palpable visto desde los ojos de un anciano incapaz de comprender el suceso.

A pesar del estilo objetivista de Aldecoa, los cuentos analizados muestran que es evidente la ternura y la piedad que siente el autor por el trabajador olvidado y sufriente de la postguerra española y por los niños y los viejos desorientados e indefensos. Esta simpatía se vuelve ironía y sátira al retratar a los miembros de la clase media, a quienes el autor ridiculiza

suavemente por sus motivos mezquinos y por su preocupación por lo material. En "Fuera de juego," publicado en 1961, se ve el cambio en la vida española que llega a finales de los años 50. Este cuento dramatiza la comida dominical de una familia de la pequeña burguesía cuya conversación se centra en los negocios y el chisme, y cuyo temor fundamental parece ser la inconformidad del hijo Pablo. Menos descriptivo que otros cuentos de Aldecoa, el narrador de "Fuera de juego" se limita a reproducir la conversación de la familia sin hacer comentario alguno, pero los temas tratados revelan mucho de los valores y la mentalidad de la clase media de la época. El padre de familia y sus dos yernos hablan de negocios a pesar de las protestas de la madre y la hija mayor. "Dejaos de negocios y hablad de cosas más divertidas," sugiere la hija, Nieves (173); pero su marido, explica el narrador, "no perdía el tiempo, él no estaba acostumbrado a perder el tiempo, y para los negocios no había día de fiesta" (173). Los chismes que entretienen a las mujeres revelan también la importancia de lo material para la clase media. Nieves y su madre, platicando aparte, denuncian un secreto con grandes ademanes:

--¿Pero tanto dinero tienen éstos?

--Por lo visto.

--Para mí que hay gato encerrado. Me cuesta creerlo.

--Igual es de la prójima.

--Esa le ayudará a caer, pero no a otra cosa.

--Pues de algún lado tiene que salir. . . .

(174)

En contraste con los pobres de los cuentos de Aldecoa, aquí los personajes se preocupan por comer demasiado y engordar o por la mala costumbre de la criada de comprarles caramelos a los niños antes de que coman. La importancia de la posición social se pone en evidencia cuando se regaña al

hijo, Pablo, por salir con mujeres que trabajan de peluquera o de dependiente. "Las cosas están como están por alguna razón," le explica el padre (178). Y continúa más adelante:

No todos somos iguales. Aunque lo debiéramos ser; pero ya la vida te enseñará y no vas a venir tú a reformar la vida. Lo demás son ideas anarquistas que para nada valen. ¿Es que tu madre es igual a una verdulera o tus hermanas iguales que cualquier muchacha, que será todo lo honrada que quieras, pero que...? Hay una cultura, una educación: eso es lo que hace al hombre o a la mujer. Y eso no se puede saltar, como tú piensas. (178)

Pablo y el padre se levantan disgustados de la mesa, y los otros comentan que es lástima que el hijo no sirva para el negocio aunque es inteligente. La madre lamenta no haberle permitido continuar los estudios, y el cuento termina con las prisas de las dos hijas y sus esposos por llegar a tiempo al partido de fútbol. Los problemas de estos personajes burgueses son frívolos al lado de la miseria que sufren otros en la época, pero se descubre aquí también la sensación de encontrarse limitados por las circunstancias y de no poder salir de una conducta y una mentalidad determinadas por la sociedad en que viven. El que no se conforma, representado por el hijo Pablo, se encuentra exiliado y desplazado del seno de su familia por la incomprensión de los demás (Andrés-Suárez 101).

Se ve claramente el contraste enorme entre ricos y pobres en los cuentos de Aldecoa, que ponen de relieve la desigualdad y las injusticias sociales de la España de la postguerra. Sin embargo, las injusticias prevaletantes no tienen tanta importancia en su obra como las relaciones entre seres humanos de cualquier grupo o clase social. Con un mínimo de palabras para mantener la intensidad, tomando como base un acontecimiento

de lo más minúsculo y cotidiano, Aldecoa observa con cuidado las relaciones humanas, se identifica con los personajes y proyecta hacia fuera su interior. De esta manera sus cuentos no sólo reflejan fielmente la España de la postguerra, sino que se abren hacia los problemas del hombre universal. Sus temas son siempre los conflictos del ser humano, y tiene una gran capacidad para comprender al hombre en su soledad y su miseria. Aunque los cuentos de Aldecoa muestran una visión pesimista del destino del hombre en general y de su circunstancia en particular, el autor levanta contra ello como arma defensora la solidaridad humana, como ha señalado Drosoula Lytra (Soledad y convivencia 137), como el remedio alentador en la diaria lucha por la supervivencia. Es en la convivencia y el compartir la vida que nace la solidaridad que los une a los hombres para confrontar su circunstancia adversa.

Los cuentos de Aldecoa tienen valor testimonial y son "documentos" sociales en el sentido de que proporcionan una imagen auténtica de la sociedad española durante la época de la postguerra. Pero tienen además interés y originalidad en que combinan la emoción dramática con el retrato de las costumbres sociales. Y la impresión dominante en su obra no es la variedad de temas y personajes presentados sino la constancia de las necesidades y los problemas comunes a todo ser humano (Branderberger 67). Al retratar la España de los años 50, Aldecoa nos ayuda a comprender mejor la continuidad y el misterio de la condición humana.

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Of Schmürz and Men:
Boris Vian's Les bâtisseurs d'empire

Charles J. Stivale

When one thinks of French littérature engagée of the post-World War II period, the name and works of Boris Vian do not immediately leap to mind. Yet, as early as 1946, with his succès à scandale, J'irai cracher sur vos tombes, Vian qua Vernon Sullivan produced a work which, by combining the sub-genres of polar and porno, challenged the implacable bourgeois confidence in its seemingly all-powerful literary canon. Then, in the early 1950s, Vian's songs such as "La java des bombes atomiques" (Textes et chansons 37-40) and especially "Le déserteur" (171-72) with its slow rhythm, simple lyrics, and forceful pacifist message, again shocked the complacent ruling class, and established Vian's popularity among young Francophones.¹ Yet, it is perhaps in his theatre (the early works published in two volumes) that Vian's humanitarian, indeed pacifist, sentiments and trenchant wit best combine to create a hybrid between théâtre engagé and théâtre de l'absurde, a form which Morvan Lebesque has compared to the contemporary works of Ionesco, Beckett and Adamov (cited in Vian, Les bâtisseurs d'empire 92). Vian's theater, however, does not correspond merely to a so-called théâtre de la chute since his dramatic works also succeed in ridiculing bourgeois institutions and bad faith both by linguistic and sociocritical means which, if often oblique, lose nothing of their virulence. I wish to discuss Vian's final play, Les bâtisseurs d'empire, precisely to explore its devastating critique of bourgeois social and linguistic rituals and myths and thereby to consider ways in which this play questions the privileged access to sanctioned knowledge and power.

To understand the complex social conflict at the heart of Les bâtisseurs d'empire, we must first consider the most obvious dramatic segment, the family, which is constituted by several "sub-segments"² of hierarchical relationships: first, the conjugal sub-segment, i.e. the characters le Père and la Mère, establishes a fundamental conflict within the play. On the one hand, la Mère occasionally supports her daughter Zénobie rather than submit to the domination of her spouse as when, following the family's precipitous arrival in the apartment at the start of Act I, la Mère questions the assertion by le Père that the new surroundings are an improvement over their previous lodgings:

Père. -- Mais écoute, on a encore de la chance... regarde cet escalier...

Mère. -- Oh, il n'a rien d'extraordinaire, ça, la petite a raison. [. . .] Il est moins bien que le précédent. (10)

But, on the other hand, la Mère usually reinforces the domination by her spouse quite automatically through her willing participation in the different bourgeois rituals which he initiates. For example, when Zénobie confronts her parents, "Pourquoi est-ce qu'on s'en va chaque fois qu'on entend ce bruit?", La Mère maintains a role which supports entirely the obfuscation and authority of le Père:

Mère. -- Zénobie, mon petit ange, on t'a répété cent fois de ne pas demander ça.

Père. -- On ne le sait pas, ce que c'est.
(13-14)

And then, he adds, probably lying: "Si on le savait, on te le dirait." Later, la Mère participates fully in the ritual of the "profession de foi" by le Père (26-31) and in the "distraction éducative" of Act II, a veritable

performance by the conjugal duo during which they dance and enact their betrothal and marriage while mercilessly bludgeoning the silent and bleeding hulk, identified by Vian in the stage instructions only as le Schmürz (50-57).

A second sub-segment of the familial network may be designated as societal in nature, manifested in two modes: on the one hand, le Père and la Mère as a couple interact directly with le Voisin in one scene of Act I, and gauge themselves in relation to him at several moments in Act II. These encounters, although limited in scope, serve nonetheless to legitimize further the bourgeois rituals through which the conjugal duo constructs a comfortable universe. Specifically, the social call by le Voisin in Act I provides the opportunity for le Père and la Mère to broach, if only obliquely, the subject of Zénobie's engagement to the neighbor's son, Xavier. But their reference to this all-important custom really serves as the pretext for another ritual, the aforementioned "profession de foi" by le Père in which he attempts to describe the joys of connubial bliss, but becomes entirely confused in his ramblings. One example will suffice to show not only the marginal, yet necessary, presence of le Voisin as witness, but also the collaboration of le Père and la Mère in this ritual: when le Voisin intervenes to ask le Père, "Est-ce que vous ne perdez pas un peu le fil?", le Père admits his powerlessness vis-à-vis the discourse which he attempts to master and then demonstrates just how overwhelming this language can be:

Père. -- [. . .] Je crois que les mots m'entraînent. [. . .] Je vais essayer d'y revenir [au fil]. (Déclamatoire;) Quel plaisir de voir autour de soi s'épanouir les jeunes bourgeois.

Il s'arrête net.

Mère. -- Vas-y, ça s'annonçait bien...

Père. -- Je suis à court d'adjectifs. [. . .] vas-y, tiens... Je te passe le crachoir.

Mère. -- Les jeunes bourgeons verdoyants.

Père. -- Non... verdoyants, c'est lourd. Je voudrais évoquer le vert tendre des chatons de noisetier; ou la teinte claire qui tourne un peu au tilleul et qui fonce délicatement à la base de cette frêle efflorescence végétale pour virer au vert pistache, cette nuance subtile qui vous met le coeur en boule dans la gorge quand on se promène au printemps dans un sentier plein de merde.

Mère. -- Oh! Léon. (27-29)

Their subsequent attempts to enunciate a marriage proposal are no more successful (29-30), and when le Père, making idle conversation, finally remarks, "Nous sommes ici pour un bout de temps. A vue de nez, je dirais pour au moins... pour au moins une certaine durée," le Voisin abruptly and unceremoniously takes his leave:

Père le conduit à la porte. -- Rien ne vous presse. (Il le pousse dehors.) Au revoir. (Il referme la porte.) Ouf! quel raseur. (32)

He then reaffirms his sense of security with a final cliché, "C'est tout de même en famille qu'on est le mieux" (32).

A second societal sub-segment influences the social and linguistic conflict well into Act II through the presence of Cruche, the maid: as an employee, she serves a function similar to la Mère, that is, in a subservient role vis-à-vis the paternal authority. But she differs from la Mère by frequently exerting a powerful linguistic challenge to this authority and thereby constituting a potential force of subversion within the familial network. At the start of the play, Cruche only

seems to respond mechanically and quite literally to the family's needs. For example:

Cruche. -- Qu'est-ce que je fais pour le déjeuner? [. . .] Du veau, du potage, des radis, de la semoule, du turbot, des carottes ou des quenelles? Ou alors de l'anguille, du salami, du fricandeau, de la tête de porc vinaigrette, ou des moules?

Mère. -- D'abord, qu'est-ce qui reste?

Cruche. -- Des nouilles. [. . .]

Mère. -- Faites des nouilles, puisqu'il n'y a pas autre chose.

Cruche. -- C'est pas la peine d'en faire puisqu'il y en a.

Mère. -- Alors faites-les cuire.

Cruche. Bon. (18)

But, her presence gradually becomes more threatening, as during the "profession de foi" by le Père: when he announces, "Je suis à court d'adjectifs," Cruche suddenly enters and "serves" her master well with a complaint, "Cette cuisine est ignoble, dégoûtante, infecte, sale, moche, sordide, nauséabonde, innommable, dégueulasse, et ainsi de suite. (Un temps, puis furieuse:) Et pourtant, j'y retourne" (28). And in the dinner scene at the end of Act I, the bond between Cruche and her employers is revealed as one of ultimate, yet fragile subservience:

Le père sert.

Père. -- Hum!... Ça sent bon.

Cruche. -- Ça sent les nouilles. [. . .]

Cruche lui met le plat entre les mains et s'en va en évitant le schmürz. Le père mange et n'a pas l'air de la voir. Quand elle arrive à la cuisine, il appelle, brièvement:

Père. -- Cruche... Vous n'oubliez rien?

Résignée, Cruche revient, prend la cravache et commence à cravacher le schmürz.

Mère. -- C'est excellent! [. . .]

- Père. -- Fameux!
Mère. -- Très bon!
Père. -- Succulent!
Mère. -- Délicieux... (34-35)

The curtain descends while Cruche whips le Schmürz, revealing the power that le Père as employer still holds over the maid in prescribing her assigned "duties."

If these were the only sub-segments of the familial network, Vian's play would already contain the elements of a powerful depiction of phallocratic domination and social struggle. But the societal relationships, i.e. between the conjugal duo and Cruche and le Voisin, also serve to legitimize the patriarchal authority vis-à-vis a third, and very crucial, sub-segment which I designate as the parental relationship between le Père, la Mère and Zénobie. Indeed, the very identity of the conjugal duo, as père and mère, is determined by the existence of a daughter whose proper name suggests phonetically an element foreign to the apparent conjugal unity, and their triangular relationship provides the nexus of conflict in Les bâtisseurs d'empire in terms of patriarchal, social and linguistic domination. Even before the characters appear on stage, Zénobie places the father's authority in question: "Voix de Zénobie, qui râle. -- Pourquoi c'est toujours toi qui passes le premier, aussi? Voix du Père, terrifiée. -- Tais-toi..." (5). Furthermore, Zénobie cannot abide the empty rituals which her parents perform during the visit of le Voisin: to the ritual of her proposed engagement, she objects, "Mais moi, là-dedans, qu'est-ce que je deviens?" (21), and during the "distraction éducative" which the parents perform supposedly for her benefit, Zénobie actually leaves the room (52), to return later eating a sandwich and asks: "C'est bientôt fini, ton son et lumière?" (55).

Zénobie's precocious behavior also presents a strong linguistic and filial challenge to the

parental and societal domination imposed during the visit of le Voisin, and in this regard, she appears to be closely allied to Cruche. When le Voisin remarks, "Autrefois, n'est-ce pas, ils [les enfants] étaient assez différents," la Mère agrees emphatically, but Zénobie retorts with a pointed challenge to the parents' authoritative "logic":

Zénobie. -- Autrefois, ils étaient différents de quoi? C'est vous qui étiez des enfants, autrefois; alors? comment voulez-vous comparer?

Le Voisin, au père. -- Vous avez là une fille qui réfléchit beaucoup, c'est visible.

Père se lance dans une explication. -- N'est-ce pas, Zénobie, tu dois comprendre qu'une comparaison peut prendre place dans le temps.

Zénobie. -- Mais qui compare, à ce moment-là? Tu ne peux pas, toi, comparer maintenant, avec ta mentalité idiote, l'enfant que tu étais autrefois avec la jeune fille que je suis en ce moment.

Père. -- Zénobie, tu vas trop loin. (23)

Le Voisin presses Zénobie to continue her reflection on the problem of "l'observateur impartial," but when she outdoes all the adults in this game of "logic," le Père exclaims, "C'est insupportable. Veux-tu te taire, à la fin." And Zénobie calmly replies, "Je me tais" (24).

But, unlike Cruche, Zénobie has an altogether different relationship to the "character" which I have mentioned only in passing, le Schmürz. In the initial stage directions, Vian describes le Schmürz as already onstage as the other characters arrive: "Il est tout enveloppé de bandages et vêtu de loques. Il a un bras en écharpe et tient une canne de l'autre. Il boite, saigne et il est laid à voir. Il se tasse dans un coin" (6). As I have suggested, le Père and la Mère constantly beat, kick and jab this hulking presence through-

out the play in a seemingly unconscious manner, and despite her attempts to avoid contact with le Schmürz, Cruche is reluctantly forced to conform to her employers' behavior. Zénobie, however, besides threatening the hierarchical structure with her linguistic challenges, further threatens the authorized, paternal "logic" through her repeated attempts to acknowledge the presence of le Schmürz. In this way, she introduces the second dramatic segment of Les bâtisseurs d'empire which emphasizes the constant opposition and tension between acknowledging and ignoring the "real." First, Zénobie compares the present lodgings to the family's previous apartments and exclaims,

Zénobie. -- Et Cruche avait sa chambre aussi! Et il n'était pas là!

Père. -- Qui ça, n'était pas là?

Zénobie. -- Lui!

Du doigt, elle désigne le schmürz, immobile. Il y a un très long silence.

Mère, attentive. -- Zénobie, ma fille, de qui parles-tu?

Père. -- Zénobie, tu devrais te reposer.

(11)

Despite the parents' refusal to acknowledge their impoverished circumstances as well as Zénobie's disturbing recognition of le Schmürz, the result is nonetheless evident in their immediate reactions: most obviously, their merciless and seemingly unconscious brutality to the bleeding hulk functions as a deep-rooted symptom of their well-established denegation of reality. But the result of this conflict between the threatening "real" and the couple's persistent and willful ignorance of it is the concomitant disintegration of the subject, a process already at work from the start of Act I, when the parents have once again relinquished their hold on an important bastion of bourgeois status, the more

spacious apartment on a lower floor. It is in Act II, however, that the disintegration of the subject is most keenly dramatized from three different yet connected perspectives. First, Zénobie's so-called illness is a direct result of her continued assaults on patriarchal authority in Act I: she is apparently "ill" at the beginning of Act II, but this "illness" takes the form, first, of a persistent attempt to acknowledge the "reality" of the family's impoverished circumstances as well as of the presence of le Schmürz, and then to gain greater knowledge of the processes which have not only killed her friend, Xavier, but which also control her own existence. When she begins to inquire about le Bruit which continually chases the family upward from one apartment to the next, smaller one, her "illness" becomes manifest:

Zénobie. -- [. . .] Pourquoi on ne reste pas, une fois, une seule fois? Pourquoi on a peur, comme ça... c'est tellement grotesque. [. . .]

Cruche. -- Personne ne reste.

Zénobie. -- Et maintenant, en dessous, qu'est-ce qu'il y a? On n'entend rien... On n'entend jamais rien... Si on écoutait ce qu'il y a? Si on redescendait?

Cruche. -- Tu as la fièvre. Ta température monte. La chaleur augmente. L'agitation moléculaire croît.

Zénobie. -- Moi, je veux redescendre.

(41)

And when she attempts to offer le Schmürz a glass of water in order to exit past it to the stairway, the hulk brutally repels this humane gesture, crushing all of Zénobie's hopes to integrate not only her existence with effective actions, but also her subjectivity with the "reality" that she is compelled to acknowledge.

The disintegration of the bourgeois subject further occurs when Cruche presents a final challenge to her employer's authority by refusing to submit to the patriarchal domination, i.e. to the ritual persecution of le Schmürz:

Cruche. -- Je ne vends plus. Vous irez acheter ailleurs. Ou plutôt, j'irai vendre ailleurs. [. . .]

Cruche revient, pose sa valise, embrasse Zénobie.

Cruche. -- Au revoir, mon petit chat. Fais bien attention.

Elle reprend sa valise et sort.

Père, impératif. -- Cruche... vous oubliez quelque chose...

Cruche regarde autour d'elle, fixe quelques instants le schmürz, secoue la tête en signe de dénégation.

Cruche. -- Non... Je ne vois rien que j'oublie.

Elle sort et referme la porte. (58-59)

Finally, the family unit itself begins to dissolve after Cruche's departure: Zénobie's "health" seems to worsen as she refuses to sleep in the room alone. Le Père then suggests that "le mieux, ce serait que la petite aille elle-même demander le lit de Xavier au voisin," and la Mère supports him fully: "Au fond, c'est pour elle, ce lit, veux-tu essayer d'y aller, ma perle fine?" Thus Zénobie succumbs in her weakened state to this parental ruse, responding in a voice which Vian explicitly indicates as "morte," "Bien sûr... C'est parfaitement normal... Que chacun se démerde" (64). As le Père and la Mère brutalize le Schmürz, and despite the imminent danger of the deafening Bruit, Zénobie staggers from the apartment on a seemingly ordinary errand and is sacrificed to the unknown, exterior forces when the door slams closed on her. After the sound of Zénobie's frantic pounding subsides, le Père

protects his selective "reality" by commenting stoically to his wife, "Calme-toi, ma bonne... Les enfant finissent toujours par quitter leurs parents. C'est la vie. Il va frapper le schmürz" (66). The disintegration of the subject thus develops progressively during the second act through the disturbance of Zénobie's identity (her illness), the loss of her friend, Xavier, and the departure of her sole ally, Cruche, and finally her disappearance, the loss of the only voice which has attempted to acknowledge the "real," thereby initiating the destruction of the "family" itself.

The emphasis of the final act continues to be on the disintegration of the subject through the disjointed monologue of le Père who first loses his capacity to impose any domination whatsoever over another person once he sacrifices his wife Anna to the encroaching forces of le Bruit. His only recourse, then, is to reinforce a threatened sense of identity by repeating a litany of self-serving rationalizations: a "récapitulation" of his social status (69-71), an interrogation and justification of his need to don the reservist's outfit and weaponry that he has carried upward throughout the play (71-74), a "confession," i.e. an apology for war in the name of anti-militarism (74-75), and a disjointed "inventaire" of his physical and personal attributes (75-78). But when these attempts at reintegration fail, le Père slips into recognition of the "real" circumstances surrounding him, specifically, by abandoning the brutal practice which he heretofore exerted toward le Schmürz, thus implicitly recognizing the creature's presence. And the final moments of the play reveal the complete devastation of the patriarchal subjectivity and thus of the hierarchical social order as le Père screams first a series of obvious contradictions:

Je ne suis pas seul ici. [. . .] (Le Bruit commence à se faire doucement entendre,

d'abord très lointain et va se rapprocher très, très doucement.) Fermer les yeux devant l'évidence est une méthode qui n'a jamais rien donné... Un aveugle, passe encore... (Il s'interrompt.) Je n'entends rien. [. . .] (Il crie, tandis que le bruit monte.) Je n'entends rien!!! [. . .] (Le bruit cesse soudain, le schmürz s'affaisse, visiblement mort, le long du mur où il se tenait. On entend des coups à la porte. Le père se relève.) Des comptes? Je n'ai pas de comptes à rendre... J'ai toujours été seul.

Then, as his situation becomes even more desperate, he moves toward the only "exit" possible while enunciating a horrible evaluation of humanity:

(Les coups s'accroissent, il se rue vers la fenêtre, enjambe l'appui.) J'ai toujours été seul... dans la poussière du passé, je ne distingue rien (il chancelle, son pied glisse, il reste accroché à la fenêtre), elle couvre les gens comme des housses... des meubles. C'étaient des meubles... ce n'étaient que des meubles.

While his final cry is a pitiful plea for forgiveness, he still clings to the even more pitiful attempt at justification based on his own ignorance:

(Les coups ont cessé, le Bruit reprend soudain extrêmement proche, il tâtonne, cherche un appui pour son pied.) Je ne savais pas... Pardon... (Il glisse et tombe en hurlant:) Je ne savais pas...

Le Bruit envahit la scène, et le noir, et peut-être que la porte s'ouvre et qu'il entre, vagues silhouettes dans le noir, des schmürz... (80-81)

Finally, the juxtaposition of the familial and subjective segmentation with a third network, one emphasizing the process of legitimation of knowledge and power within hegemonic social structures, allows us to conclude by exploring several allegories which this play suggests from the specific perspectives of the significance of its title, and the roles within it of le Bruit and of le Schmürz.³ As revealed during the different "professions de foi" and "confessions" made by le Père, the image of "les grands bâtisseurs de jadis" (27) and the illusion "de construire l'avenir" (73) underlie, yet confuse and frustrate, this character in his attempts to maintain a grip on stable social practices and to reaffirm thereby his own subjectivity. But, as his illusory construction deteriorates, so does his actual "empire," literal and figurative, and one can thus understand the cruel irony of the full title, Les bâtisseurs d'empire ou le Schmürz: on the one hand, in a given age of "progress" which inspires the confidence of the ruling class, the logic and access to knowledge which underlie that confidence constitute the means of legitimation for an entire mode of existence and of production, and the blind belief in that logic justifies any action, or reaction, in the name of the "method" which the dominant logic dictates. But, on the other hand, the bourgeois, experimental "method" with its underlying positivistic logic and access to certain knowledge has nonetheless been developed by and large with thought given neither to the consequences, nor to the contradictions inherent to errant "empire"-building. So le Bruit and le Schmürz seem to exist as necessary, even inevitable alternatives bearing aural and visual witness to the insouciance of the bourgeois modes of legitimation and production in retreat ahead of incomprehensible and willfully unrecognizable forces. The fundamental fear generated by le Bruit forces the

"bâisseurs" to climb literally, but to descend figuratively, while they are pushed to "build" ever new, yet ever limited empires: as Zénobie remarks, "On est montés trop vite. (Elle regarde autour d'elle.) On ne peut guère descendre plus bas" (39). In so doing, the "bâisseurs" attempt to ignore, but continue to persecute, both the disfigured and literally unrecognizable Other, le Schmürz, and the recognizable, yet increasingly alienated "others" whom Zénobie and Cruche incarnate, and with whom the "bâisseurs" must nonetheless share their miserable existence until this ignorance and persecution result in the final devastation.

Thus, as allegory, we might understand Les bâisseurs d'empire in terms of a specific referent, for example, colonization or nuclear armament, but we can also grasp its significance in terms of what J.-F. Lyotard calls "le postmoderne" which "serait [. . .] ce qui s'enquiert de présentations nouvelles, non pas pour en jouir, mais pour mieux faire sentir qu'il y a de l'imprésentable" ("Réponse" 367), that is, in terms of the linguistic play at the very core of the dramatic development, the difficulties inherent to logic and to communication, especially those that purport to serve as modes of legitimation for certain knowledge. In other words, within the discourse of power wielded by the "bâisseurs" following their self-regulating criteria for legitimating this discourse, language games emerge as the most potent force for justifying any excess within a carefully circumscribed logic. Thus, in depicting a recognizable, yet none too "brave new world," the power of Vian's critique does not merely reside in an absurdist destruction of language and of social rituals firmly implanted and carefully guarded by the ruling class. His dramatic attack follows a strategy which seeks fundamentally both to destabilize the logic which serves to legitimate and control the possibility of language games and to demystify the social

bonds which link communication and power within and outside the originative unit of the family, that is, the very strategy adopted in recent interrogations of language, origin, difference and society in order to deconstruct the canonic "empires" established by several generations of critical "bâtisseurs."

Tulane University

NOTES

¹Arnaud notes that the French jeunesse increasingly identified with Vian "qui mourut un matin de juin 1959, à trente-neuf ans, sans avoir failli un seul instant à sa libre individualité [. . .] généreuse et tendue tout entière vers le seul 'idéal' pour lequel un homme à tête d'homme doit vivre et peut même se permettre de mourir: le bonheur sur cette terre et tout de suite" (188).

²This analysis develops the terminology of literary segmentation suggested by Deleuze and Guattari in Mille plateaux, particularly in "plateau" 8; for further application of this terminology, see articles by Stivale.

³The concluding remarks develop several concepts suggested by Lyotard in La condition post-moderne. As Gauthier points out, Vian's interest in the relationship between language, communication and the sciences extended to his project to translate the general semantics of Alfred Korzybski developed in Science and Sanity.

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The Operatic World of Concierto barroco

David H. Bost

Alejo Carpentier's impact upon Latin America's cultural world has been profound and varied. As a novelist, historian, journalist, and musicologist, Carpentier's literary production has stretched across numerous generic and stylistic boundaries. His novels in particular reveal a keen sense of the rich tapestry of Latin America's cultural history. As Carpentier writes, "Somos un producto de varias culturas, dominamos varias lenguas y respondemos a distintos procesos, legítimos, de transculturación" (Tientos y diferencias 29). His novelistic world is thus receptive to cultural influences as disparate and remote as those from Africa, America, Europe, and Asia. His expansive artistic vision has always embraced an enormous range of talents which, in turn, have led to occasions of highly creative literary adaptation.

One such interest is music. Carpentier's early education included the serious study of music theory and performance, a background which led to a life-long devotion to the study of musical forms and history. Carpentier once justified his passion for music by saying that "todo escritor debe tener conocimiento de un arte paralelo, pues eso enriquece su mundo espiritual."¹ It seems logical, therefore, that his involvement in the musical world of Europe and America should lead to literary expression. Music as a principal topic appears in many of Carpentier's major fictional works, including Los pasos perdidos, El acoso, La consagración de la primavera, and, perhaps most imaginatively, in Concierto barroco. This novel delves into Baroque history and culture and re-creates the eighteenth-century Venetian world of operatic theater. Carpentier is both painstakingly historical as

well as inventive in his portraiture of the characters in Concierto barroco. He engages in his well-known play of fiction against history, invention within the confines of historical reality.

The main character of Concierto barroco, the Indiano, enters into the operatic world of Venice somewhat by accident. He and his companion Filomeno, a black Cuban, arrive in Venice during its Carnival season. While in Venice the two meet famous composers, tour the city's theaters, hospitals, canals, and a cemetery, and watch a dress rehearsal of Motezuma, an unusual opera about the fall of Aztec Mexico. These various experiences allow the Indiano to resolve certain questions concerning his own cultural (and national) identity. He is a fictional archetype cast into the midst of historical authenticity. The Venetian milieu provides a grounding through which the Indiano comes to comprehend the true nature of his proper cultural identification. Ironically, he must travel across an ocean and a continent to see that his real roots are American and not European.

The Indiano's experiences in Venice center on a dialogue with one of its more famous citizens: Antonio Vivaldi. Vivaldi takes an interest in the Indiano's costume--he is dressed as Montezuma--and urges the visitor to tell him the story of the conquest of Mexico. "Buen asunto, buen asunto para una Ópera," decides Vivaldi, and the stage slowly (and literally) becomes set for the novel's raucous climax: history's first performance of Motezuma, complete with a cast of historical characters (including the renowned Anna Giraud), choreography, and costumes. The opera, both as performance as well as text, gives the two strangers an occasion for an extended dialogue about the relationship between art and historical events.

The operatic world of Concierto barroco thus involves the historical occurrences surrounding

the composers, places, and musical events. Carpentier seems to take delight in describing some of the more curious customs of the Venetian public during its annual Carnival. The *Indiano* and Vivaldi are joined by Georg Friedrich Handel, whose opera *Agrippina* was being performed nearby in the Teatro Grimani. Handel, characterized in the novel as a serious, brooding German, has an angry response to his audiences' lack of interest in the performance of his opera: "era un ir y venir de los espectadores, comiendo naranjas, estornudando el rapé, tomando refrescos, descorchando botellas, cuando no se ponían a jugar a los naipes en lo más trabado de la tragedia" (35). An Italian observer of the period, Francesco Algarotti, verified this remarkable behavior when he wrote of "the perpetual chattering of the company, in visits being made from one box to another, in supping there; and finally, in that other remedy, which is a thousand times worse than the disease complained of, and that is, gaming."² Carpentier continues to creatively adapt his story within his chosen historical context by parodying one of the Carnival's most celebrated customs: masking. Under such guise the Venetians could, as Edward Wright observed, "change sexes." This English visitor was particularly impressed by the fact that "women appear in men's habits, and men in women's, and so are now and then pick'd up, to the great disappointment of the lover."³ Carpentier cannot resist turning this process inside out when he writes: "los maricones, vestidos a la mitología o llevando basquiñas españolas, aflautaban el tono de proposiciones que no siempre caían en el vacío" (33). The *Indiano*, cast in the novel as something of a comedic straight-man, reacts indignantly to the overtly libertine behavior of the Italians during this most festive of seasons. The underlying structure of the novel is to illustrate the *Indiano*'s eventual acceptance of his American identification. On one level, his

rejection of these strange customs represents a larger process of reversal. He here begins to sense that his European heritage is an unsatisfactory representation of his own ideals and values.

The presentation of an authentic historical context is carried forth in the utilization of two well-known sites in Venetian musical history: the Ospedale della Pietà and the Teatro Sant'Angelo, two places repeatedly employed by Vivaldi. Of the four largest hospitals in Venice, the Pietà was best known for its all-girl orchestras and choruses directed by the city's most well-known composers, such as Vivaldi. The musicians were generally orphans who had come to live in the convents, though it is clear that the Pietà was also operated as a boarding school for daughters of the nobility.⁴ Carpentier brings the characters to the Pietà in the middle of the night for a musical feast. Vivaldi, Domenico Scarlatti, and Handel join forces for what Carpentier calls "el más tremendo concerto grosso que pudieron haber escuchado los siglos" (41), a performance highlighted by the participation of the seventy-member resident orchestra. The Indiano next finds himself in the Teatro Sant'Angelo, the theater where Motezuma saw its debut in Autumn of 1733. The Sant'Angelo was Vivaldi's favorite theater of the five or six most famous ones in Venice. Practically all of his Venetian operas were staged here. Vivaldi's 1733 production of Motezuma was his first at the Sant'Angelo in over two years; he had been producing operas throughout Italy as well as in Prague and Vienna for an extended period. His return to the Sant'Angelo marks the beginning of his final creative stage, a time in which his interests often turned from music to financial matters (Cross 33-34). Vivaldi was a typical Venetian impresario who, writes a modern historian, not only prepared "his operatic performances down to the last detail but . . . also . . . directed them from the leader's desk or

the harpsichord" (Kolneder 29). Carpentier's portrait of Vivaldi is, in this respect, authentic: ". . . en doble papel de director y de ejecutante impar, dio comienzo a la sinfonía" (58).

However impressive Carpentier's eye for historical detail, Concierto barroco often veers slightly away from a strictly factual rendition of events. In some regards, Carpentier's deviations from accuracy represent at the most a deconstruction of historicity, at the least a parody of historicism. For example, Motezuma's historical performance was during the Autumn season of 1733, one month before Carnival, its time in the novel. Another similar deviation is Vivaldi's association with the Ospedale della Pietà. From 1704 to 1738 Vivaldi had a series of appointments at the Ospedale ranging from Maestro di Violino to the prestigious Maestro di Concerti. Yet in 1733, Motezuma's production date and ostensibly the time of the novel, Vivaldi was not connected with the Pietà in any official capacity.⁵ A more pronounced discrepancy exists between Handel's Agrippina, 1709, and the period in the novel. As Concierto barroco progresses, chronological barriers gradually disappear. The last few pages of the novel include references to jazz, locomotives, past and contemporary composers, and traveler's checks, symbols of an industrial and post-industrial society that here exist in comic simultaneity with the Italian Baroque. The façade of historical fact on occasion doubles or even triples into a splendid ambiguity. When Vivaldi praises Handel's success with Agrippina, he may well have in mind his own version, which he produces six years later as Nerone fatto Cesare.⁶ And when the Indiano encourages Vivaldi to set the Orlando legend to music, the Italian replies: "Ya está hecho: lo estrené hace seis años," when in fact Vivaldi dealt with this theme three separate times.⁷ In this way, Carpentier ultimately connects hundreds

of years of history together in a single textual instant; an actual historical event may thus acquire an infinitude of forms and mutations.

The absence of a faithful representation of historical occurrences becomes a major problem for the Indiano. It does not take him long to see that Vivaldi's rendition of the conquest of Mexico is quite unlike anything he has seen or read before. The Indiano's protests are based primarily on his knowledge of Antonio de Solís' famous Historia de la conquista de México, the text upon which Vivaldi has admittedly based his opera Moteczuma. Solís' work would have been the standard during the Indiano's life against which other histories would be measured. Consequently, the Indiano is astounded to see how far Vivaldi and librettist Girolamo Giusti depart from the "truth" of the historical text. The complex plot of Moteczuma, suited to the tastes of an eighteenth-century audience nurtured on tales of spectacle and novelty, follows its historical source loosely. The Indiano points out to his Cuban companion that Teutile was a general in the Aztec army, but that in the opera she is a woman who falls in love with Ramiro, Hernán Cortés's younger brother. The Indiano also mentions that Vivaldi has created characters with no historical foundation, such as Asprano, "otro 'general de los mexicanos' a quien jamás mencionaron Bernal Díaz del Castillo ni Antonio de Solís en sus crónicas famosas . . ." (61-62).

The Indiano acts and reacts accordingly throughout the duration of the opera. Vivaldi's story perhaps justifies his initial sense of outrage and injustice. The opening scenes of the opera occur during the final days of Montezuma's rule when defeat appears imminent. Montezuma himself seems to have ceded victory to the Spaniards when his wife Mitrena and daughter Teutile urge him to search in his heart for courage, that all is not lost. Mitrena says:

Habbiam Sudditi, ed armi. Armata anch'io
 Faró l'ultime prove
 D'esperienza, e valor... Ma ti cosondi?
 Il coraggio dov'e? (I.i)⁸

Montezuma finally responds to his family's provocations and, after a series of scenes which develop the relationship between Teutile and Ramiro, confronts Cortés directly:

Disarma, o vile
 Tu il petto ancor. In singular cimento
 Vieni, se puoi, ch'allor con armi pari
 Misurarem i sitibondi acciari. (II.v)⁹

Cortés, whose honor is clearly at stake after such a bold challenge, is obligated to accept Montezuma's dare:

Olà, disciolto resti
 L'invincibil Eroè. Tosto vedrai,
 Quale sia il mio timor. (II.v)¹⁰

The two leaders fight and Cortés is captured and imprisoned in a tower. Ramiro chooses honor and duty over love and completely sides with the fleeing Spaniards. Cortés escapes from his tower jail as Montezuma enters it. In the meantime, the Aztecs, having conferred with their gods, set fire to the tower to provide the numi with a sacrifice or two, not knowing that their king has taken refuge there. The Spaniards are ultimately victorious over the Mexican forces when, in the last scene, Montezuma reappears unharmed, having escaped through a secret passageway hidden in the tower. Montezuma's entrance is too late to reverse the Spanish triumph; he must witness the chorus celebrate the new dynasty:

Al gran genio guerriero
 La caduca d'un impero
 L'alte glorie

Le vittorie

Duce invitto ogn' uno ascriva

Viva il Monarca Ispan

Fernando viva. (III.xi)¹¹

And in a melodramatic fashion typical of eighteenth-century operas, Cortés reconciles both warring factions by promoting the marriage of Ramiro and Teutile, thus creating a familial bond that in future generations will abolish ancestral divisions.

All of this is too much for the Indiano to tolerate. He raises objection after objection with Vivaldi concerning the Italian's treatment of history. At first Vivaldi meets each protest rationally by either justifying his choice or, in some cases, correcting the Indiano's knowledge of Solís. But Vivaldi finally tires of having to defend his opera and totally dismisses this sort of concern with accuracy and authenticity: "No me joda con la Historia en materia de teatro. Lo que cuenta aquí es la ilusión poética" (67). Vivaldi is interested in art, drama, and performance, and cannot be concerned with the restrictions that literalists like the Indiano would impose. Besides, claims Vivaldi, "En América, todo es fábula: cuentos de Eldorados y Potosíes, ciudades fantasmas, esponjas que hablan, carneros de vellocino rojo, Amazonas con una teta de menos, y Orejones que se nutren de jesuitas . . ." (68). Vivaldi is referring, of course, to the fabulous descriptions of American reality made by early historians of the discovery and conquest. The Indiano is probably unaware that Vivaldi is cleverly deconstructing the Indiano's faith in historical texts.

How might one interpret the conflict between these two characters regarding the sanctity of the literary or historical text? Quite simply, Vivaldi views the text as an occasion for artistic liberty through which a subjective creation emerges. The Indiano, however, considers the text

as an authoritative repository of truth, objectivity, and absolute meaning. The distinction between these two postures is, in a simplified form, the same distinction that has characterized the conflicts in criticism over reading and interpretation during the past few decades. The novel, in this sense, addresses the problem of reading as an interpretive process through which one either attempts to identify or recover meaning already inhaled in the text, or, in the case of Vivaldi, allows one's own subjectivity to generate a meaningful interpretation. The Indiano unexpectedly finds his own subjectivity controlling his perception of history when he discovers that while he watched the opera he sided with the Indians, not the Spaniards: "Y me di cuenta, de pronto, que estaba en el bando de los americanos, blandiendo los mismos arcos y deseando la ruina de aquéllos que me dieron sangre y apellido" (72). The Indiano's venture into the Venetian operatic culture has enabled him to come finally to terms with his own identity: neither español nor indiano, but americano and all that this entails. He begins to accept that his world is a product of a mélange of cultures and traditions. It is no accident that he travels with a Cuban of African origin, for the three cultures represented here--European, African, and Indian--most fully characterize American identity. The operatic performance creates a psychological lesion within the Indiano that forces him to confront what is ultimately his greatest concern: the origins and foundations of his very existence. He sees and finally accepts that his world is, as Carpentier's citation earlier indicates, a pluralistic chain of traditions and beliefs gathered from a worldly context of great diversity.

In conclusion, Carpentier's use of a precise historical context--the Venetian world of opera--ends up being a defense of the power and effectiveness of cultural, artistic, and literary

syncretism. The characters in Concierto barroco all reach beyond their immediate circumstances and consider new possibilities: the Indiano rejects his European-based sense of personal identity; Filomeno puts aside his percussion instruments and learns to play the trumpet; and even Vivaldi, more or less at the vanguard of artistic experimentation, searches for operatic topics unlike those of the standard repertoire: "Habría que buscar asuntos nuevos, distintos ambientes, otros países, no sé. . . . Soplan aires nuevos" (48-49). The novel's use of history, therefore, is not to limit the action to particular times and places. Carpentier's literary philosophy rejects such restrictions anyway. History provides a horizon upon which the novelist, who cannot create ex nihilo, invents.

Furman University

NOTES

¹Qtd. in Müller-Bergh, Alejo Carpentier: estudio biográfico-crítico 19.

²Qtd. in Cross 10. Müller-Bergh notes that Edward Wright, a British traveler of the time, made the same type of observation: "They have a scandalous custom there, of spitting out of the upper boxes (as well as throwing parings of apples or oranges . . .)" ("Sentido y color en Concierto barroco" 460).

³Qtd. in Cross 4.

⁴For a thorough discussion of the Pietà and other such institutions see Arnold.

⁵Arnold 85. Vivaldi's appointments to the Pietà were, generally, between 1704 and 1710 as Maestro di Violino, 1711 and 1718 again as Maestro

di Violino, 1723 as Maestro di Concerti (part time for an unknown duration), and between 1735 and 1738 as Maestro di Concerti. He was not re-elected to this position after 1738.

⁶For a complete listing of Vivaldi's operas see Cross 224-45.

⁷Carpentier may have created something of an erudite joke here. Vivaldi's treatment of Orlando was extensive, to be sure: Orlando finto pazzo, 1714; Orlando furioso, 1714; and Orlando, 1727. All were produced at the Teatro Sant'Angelo with libretti by Grazio Braccioli. But the other two composer-characters in Concierto barroco also produced Orlando operas. Handel's version also utilized a libretto by Braccioli and was produced in January 1733, the same year as Motezuma. Scarlatti's version was titled L'Orlando and was performed in Rome in 1711. Vivaldi's Orlando furioso has been revived as recently as 1980, when the Dallas Civic Opera staged a production. See Lincoln; also Eric Blom. Obviously, the reference to Orlando in Concierto barroco is loaded. The absence of any single referent to this allusion, however, is entirely consistent with Carpentier's view of culture as a syncretic amalgam of various traditions. For a discussion of this world-view as it relates to Concierto barroco see Echevarría.

⁸The libretto for Motezuma is unedited. The text I have used is from the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense in Milan. The music for this opera has been lost. The following translations are mine.

We have subjects and arms. Armed as well, I will have my last test of experience and valor... But you hide? Where is your courage?

⁹Disarm, you vile one, your heart. Come, if you can, fight with me with equal arms in a singular trial. We will engage our thirsty swords.

¹⁰Let the invincible hero go free. You will soon see what my fear is.

¹¹To the great warrior genius, the unconquered leader, let all attribute the fall of

an empire, high glories and victories. Long live the Spanish monarch, long live Fernando.

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Pratique d'une déconstruction:
Duras, du Barrage à L'amant

Liliana Papin

"Un livre ne commence ni ne finit: tout au plus fait-il semblant." On ne saurait qu'appliquer cette parole de Mallarmé¹ aux livres de Marguerite Duras. L'écriture durassienne est essentiellement plurielle, écriture de mouvance qui ne cesse de déborder de son cadre, en état d'éternel recommencement. On pourrait accumuler les exemples de textes qui, chez elle, se reprennent, se défont, se recommencent, métamorphosés en pièces, films, romans, tous issus d'une même matrice et pourtant dissemblables. Le livre ne conclut pas: il ouvre un autre avenir, un autre devenir. Qu'il suffise ici de citer pour exemple La femme du Gange dont sont issus le roman Le vice-consul, India Song, texte et film, Son nom de Venise dans Calcutta désert, version filmée, ou encore Aurélia Steiner, titre qu'elle donna à cinq textes/films différents. Le modernisme de Duras éclate et s'affirme dans la certitude avec laquelle elle s'empare des différents genres et en brise le concept.

Plus récemment, enfin, est paru L'amant, qui fait partie lui aussi d'une longue série commencée trente-cinq ans plus tôt avec Le barrage contre le Pacifique, deux pôles entre lesquels se trouvent trois textes/pièces qui leur sont reliés: Des journées entières dans les arbres, L'Eden cinéma, et Agatha. Cette série nous intéressera plus particulièrement en ce qu'elle pose de manière fascinante la question de la "vérité" autobiographique et de sa relation à l'écriture.

Derrida, dans La dissémination, nous rappelle le procès auquel, chez Platon, est soumise l'écriture "impuissante à enseigner la vérité" et qui "dénature . . . gravement ce qu'elle prétend imiter" (157). Écriture dangereuse donc, parce qu'elle instaure un rapport de "fausseté et

dissemblance" par rapport aux choses mêmes, et parce qu'elle tend à se substituer à la mémoire active qu'elle remplace et prétend mimer (120).

Quel est donc le rapport texte/vérité autobiographique, pour autant qu'il soit possible de le déterminer, et quel est ce travail sur la mémoire aussi bien que sur sa déformation qui a constitué pour Duras, entre Le barrage et L'amant, trente-cinq ans d'écriture?

Remarquons tout d'abord que, de tous les textes en présence, seul L'amant s'avoue clairement autobiographique, écrit par et au nom de l'auteur. Dès le début du livre, l'espace temporel scriptural est nettement défini entre deux pôles: le présent de l'auteur au moment de l'écriture, "J'ai le visage détruit" et un point du passé, "J'ai quinze ans et demi" (10-11).

C'est un texte qui invite à relire les autres à sa lumière et qui se présente comme complémentaire:

L'histoire d'une toute petite partie de ma jeunesse, je l'ai plus ou moins écrite déjà. Avant, j'ai parlé des périodes claires, de celles qui étaient éclairées. Ici je parle des périodes cachées de cette même jeunesse, de certains enfouissements que j'aurais opérés sur certains faits, sur certains sentiments, sur certains événements. (14)

Les différences qui interviennent entre les récits seraient dues en grand partie à la "pudeur," au fait que les personnes impliquées étaient encore vivantes. Il est devenu facile d'écrire sur son frère et sa mère parce que le temps a fait disparaître les émotions et l'amour:

Ils sont morts maintenant, la mère et les deux frères. Pour les souvenirs aussi c'est trop tard. Maintenant je ne les aime plus. Je ne sais plus si je les ai aimés. Je les ai quittés. . . . C'est fini, je ne me

souviens plus. C'est pourquoi j'en écris si facile d'elle [la mère] maintenant, si long, si étiré, elle est devenue écriture courante.
(38)

L'écriture peut avoir lieu et s'incruster sur un terrain neutre que les émotions ne viennent plus dévoyer, détourner, appuyant ainsi l'accusation de Platon contre l'écriture, "fard qui dissimule le mort sous le vif" (Derrida 163).

Est-ce à dire que les textes antérieurs à L'amant ne seraient que des préfaces à l'aveu final? Faut-il penser que cette lente déconstruction d'un texte à l'autre, ces "détours" ne seraient que le lent cheminement vers la révélation de la vérité, une sorte de lent travail de psychanalyse qui aboutirait enfin, après maintes déviations et fantasmes "romanesques," à l'aveu, au trauma initial?

La tentation est grande en effet de choisir l'approche psychanalytique et de voir ce que révèlent, à la lumière les uns des autres, les "manques" du récit. Aussi fructueuse que puisse être l'interrogation, elle laisse de côté néanmoins la "production" du récit, la marge du "mensonge," la déviation inévitable de l'écriture.

Duras a toujours été particulièrement consciente de ce processus de déformation inhérent à l'écrit. Dans L'amante anglaise, on interroge différents personnages pour tenter de faire la lumière--tâche qui se révélera impossible--sur un crime commis:

--La différence entre ce que je sais et ce que je dirai, qu'en faites-vous?

--Elle représente la part du livre à faire par le lecteur. Elle existe toujours. (9-10)

Dans Le navire Night, basé, tout comme L'amante anglaise sur un fait divers "réel," Duras nous dit, en préface, qu'elle a lu le récit de sa propre histoire à celui qui la lui avait racontée.

Pour lui, "tout était vrai mais . . . il ne reconnaissait rien":

Après avoir lu ce devenir--écrit par un autre--de sa propre histoire, J.M. est resté silencieux. . . . Je crois qu'il devait découvrir que d'autres récits de son histoire auraient été possibles--qu'il les avait tus parce qu'il ne savait pas qu'ils étaient possibles comme ils étaient possibles de toute histoire. (8-9)

L'amant, cependant, bien que faisant directement référence, à plusieurs reprises, aux textes antérieurs, ne s'explique jamais sur cette productivité de l'écriture et les récits différents issus de cette adolescence sur laquelle Duras, une fois encore, revient. L'amant est centré sur la relation qui a uni l'adolescente à l'homme de Lahore et nous aurions enfin la possibilité de connaître la "vérité" sur cette relation et ses circonstances: "Ce n'est donc pas à la cantine de Réam, vous voyez, comme je l'avais écrit, que je rencontre l'homme riche à la limousine noire" (36). Cette relation n'était que marginale dans Le barrage ou L'Eden, où la place centrale était donnée à la cellule familiale, à la relation triangulaire de la mère, du frère et de la soeur, et à la folle tentative de la mère de s'opposer, par la construction de barrages, à la pauvreté et à la misère de "la plaine" en Indochine.

On peut résumer de manière suivante les éléments autobiographiques disséminés au fil des différents textes:

--La mère était institutrice et avait accepté un poste en Indochine française, ignorante de ce qui l'attendait et de ce que pouvait être la vie dans une colonie. Son mari est mort lorsque ses enfants étaient en bas âge. Elle a eu trois enfants que Duras ne réunit que dans L'amant. Nous apprenons alors que le frère aîné était absent lors de la période des barrages mais il

n'est pas même fait mention de son nom ou de son existence dans Un barrage ou dans L'Eden. Le rapport qui unit la mère au fils aîné est isolé dans Des journées entières dans les arbres, d'où sont alors exclus les autres enfants. Ce frère aîné est celui que Duras appelle "l'assassin," celui qui terrorisait son jeune frère, violent, voleur, incapable de travailler et pour qui la mère avait "cette préférence, cet amour irraisonné, illogique, résistant à toutes les désillusions, toutes les débauches et les tromperies" (L'amant 94).

--La mère a eu ce rêve fou de "s'installer," d'acheter une concession, ignorante de la corruption qui régnait dans le monde colonial. On lui a vendu une terre incultivable, régulièrement dévastée par les marées, et elle met toutes ses économies dans la construction de barrages qui s'écroulent dès le premier assaut des vagues. L'échec des barrages, le "malheur" de la mère, coïncident avec l'adolescence des enfants, le moment de la séparation. Dans Le barrage et L'Eden, cette séparation prend la forme fictive de la mort de la mère en Indochine. Dans L'amant, nous apprenons que la mère revient en France. Mais 18 ans, l'âge de la séparation, réapparaît comme un leitmotiv dans tous les textes de Duras: c'est celui d'Aurélia Steiner, celui de l'héroïne d'Hiroshima, mon amour lors de sa relation amoureuse avec le soldat allemand. C'est encore une référence dans L'amant: "Ces cheveux remarquables je les ferai couper à vingt-trois ans à Paris, cinq ans après avoir quitté ma mère" (24). Sans aucun doute on peut voir là, dans une interprétation psychanalytique et lacanienne, les traces du complexe de "sevrage" et de la culpabilité qui a accompagné la rupture. La séparation est un thème constant de tous les textes de Duras: séparation d'avec la mère ("je lui dis que de ma mère une fois je me séparerai, que même pour ma mère une fois je n'aurai plus d'amour" [L'amant 58]), séparation des amants,

toujours initiée par la femme, séparation d'avec soi-même dans l'incapacité à se rejoindre qui caractérise la plupart de ses héroïnes et que l'on retrouve dans L'amant:

L'histoire de ma vie n'existe pas. Ça n'existe pas. Il n'y a jamais de centre. Pas de chemin, pas de ligne. Il y a de vastes endroits où l'on fait croire qu'il y avait quelqu'un, ce n'est pas vrai il n'y avait personne. (14)

--Le personnage anonyme de l'amant, qui s'appelle M. Jo dans Le barrage et L'Eden, subit une transformation majeure. Comme M. Jo, l'amant éprouve un désir et un amour incontrôlables pour l'adolescente/Suzanne. Comme lui, sa qualité d'homme riche en fait un parti désirable aux yeux de la mère et en même temps le fait déchoir aux yeux de celle-ci et de ses fils. Dans les trois textes, il est maladroit, malmené par la famille où il n'est jamais intégré. Dans Le barrage, il n'a quère de courage et n'ose pas affronter sa famille qui n'accepterait pas sa relation avec l'adolescente. Il n'a pourtant pas la force d'abandonner cet amour. L'argent est pour lui une donnée, un état et il ne peut pas envisager d'être déshérité. Dans L'amant au contraire, l'homme arrive à un point où il est prêt à tout. C'est l'adolescente qui l'en décourage et lui rappelle que, de toutes façons, elle partira. Dans les trois textes, les personnages de la cellule familiale font bloc contre lui: il "possède" et c'est là son seul attrait, mais aussi ce qui lui vaut le mépris de tous. Il est évident, à leurs yeux, que sa relation avec l'adolescente/Suzanne est un marchandage, et, puisqu'il a accepté ce marchandage, il est en position de quémendeur. Il n'aura par conséquent aucun remerciement pour les dîners auxquels il les invite, les cadeaux qu'il peut leur faire.

Dans Le barrage et L'Eden, Suzanne participe à l'indifférence générale. M. Jo l'ennuie. Elle lui préfère Joseph, son frère, "le chasseur," libre, sauvage, et ne s'intéresse à M. Jo qu'en ce qu'il peut apporter, donner à la mère et à son frère. Elle est seulement curieuse de son désir, et voudrait se voir comme elle se sait vue par lui. Il est en présence de l'éveil de sa sexualité d'adolescente et elle découvre le désir du désir, du pouvoir de séduction d'un corps qu'elle ignorait. C'est un thème que l'on retrouve dans L'amant, mais, dans Le barrage ou L'Eden, M. Jo est en quelque sorte périphérique au texte. Il n'est qu'un catalyseur qui précipite les événements par le cadeau qu'il lui fait du diamant. Entre lui et Suzanne, la relation sexuelle n'a pas lieu, comme si, dans Le barrage, Duras avait réduit son rôle à celui que la famille pensait--du voulait penser--qu'il jouait pour Suzanne. Elle n'accepte de reconnaître en son personnage Suzanne aucun mouvement d'affection, aucun désir--autre que celui du désir même--pour M. Jo. Elle n'a pour lui que pitié et curiosité. Elle partage pour lui la même indifférence et la même froideur que son frère et sa mère.

La relation au contraire devient centrale dans L'amant qui se présente comme le récit d'un amour qui s'ignorait, d'un amour impossible, un îlot marginalisé par la société, les classes sociales, les familles. Ce n'est que dans L'amant qu'elle précise la race de l'homme de Lahore, un Chinois, pour qui elle est la "petite blanche." Sans doute, dans L'amant, l'adolescente semble divisée entre l'homme et sa famille, et pense qu'elle pourrait dire à son amant qu'elle ne l'aime pas. Ce n'est qu'au moment du départ, semble-t-il à la femme qui se souvient, "qu'elle n'avait pas été sûre tout à coup de ne pas l'avoir aimé d'un amour qu'elle n'avait pas vu" (138). Elle prend soin de ne pas montrer sa peine lors du départ. A-t-il fallu toutes ces années, la mort des membres de la famille, pour que devienne

possible l'aveu de cet amour ou pour que Duras elle-même reconnaisse qu'il s'agissait bien d'une histoire d'amour? Faut-il voir un acte de "pudeur" également dans l'aveu tardif de la relation sexuelle, relation totalement absente du Barrage ou de L'Eden?

Pourtant, dans ces textes déjà, la sensualité de Suzanne est clairement affirmée et reconnue. L'acte sexuel a lieu avec un autre homme, mais il n'est pas fait mention du plaisir ou de l'absence de plaisir. La lecture de L'amant semble nous guider à y voir la projection à la fois de l'ambiguïté et des tabous de la mère:

Je me demande comment j'ai eu la force d'aller à l'encontre de l'interdit posé par ma mère. (51)

La mère n'a pas connu la jouissance. (50)

La fillette "rassure" la mère en lui affirmant que son attrait pour l'homme de Lahore ne réside que dans sa richesse. Dans Le Barrage, L'Eden ou L'amant, la mère la traque, l'êpie, puis la bat quand elle soupçonne l'acte sexuel. Son attitude néanmoins est ambiguë. Elle sait que la fillette peut obtenir de l'argent, et, de ce fait, elle accepte la relation. Dans Le barrage, ce marchandage prend la forme d'un mariage qu'elle encourage sa fille à obtenir et qui est en fait une vente. Elle joue clairement sur le désir sexuel de M. Jo. Dans L'amant, elle va elle-même voir la directrice de la pension qui signalait que sa fille ne passait pas ses nuits à la pension, et demande expressément que lui soit accordée l'autorisation de ne pas rentrer coucher. Cette ambiguïté des messages de la mère, ce mélange d'innocence et de perversité sont disséminés au fil de tous les textes de Duras dans les thèmes de la "prostitution," de la femme "offerte" au regard des autres, dans la culpabilité latente du plaisir pris et connu.² Dans L'amant, durant les

rencontres de l'après-midi avec son amant, l'adolescente est déchirée par les contradictions qu'elle ne peut résoudre, qui lui font désirer à la fois le plaisir et les punitions: "Elle demandera encore et encore, et après elle rentrera à la pension, et personne pour la punir, la défigurer, l'insulter" (112).

Des journées entières dans les arbres isole le frère aîné et la mère dans un essai de comprendre une relation de passion entre ces deux êtres. Mais dans Le barrage et L'Eden, d'où le frère aîné est absent, c'est sur Joseph, le "petit frère," que Duras transfère l'amour de la mère. Elle lui attribue certaines des qualités qui semblent bien plutôt être celles du frère aîné: il n'a peur de rien, alors qu'elle nous dit dans L'amant qu'il a toujours été terrorisé par son frère, il est libre, sauvage. Ce qui transparaît dans ces deux textes, c'est l'amour qui unissait le frère et la soeur, dont elle nous dit dans L'amant: "Cet amour insensé que je lui porte reste pour moi un insondable mystère" (129). La mère aime-t-elle son frère comme Duras aurait voulu qu'il soit aimé? Faut-il voir là aussi le transfert d'un désir?

C'est de la mort de ce frère qu'est morte aussi pour Duras la mère, que s'est brisée son appartenance à la famille.

Elle a poursuivi cet amour magnifique, l'a projeté et intensifié dans Agatha où l'inceste s'est accompli entre un frère et une soeur. Elle a ouvert un devenir possible, une simple différence de degré. Dans Agatha encore, nous trouvons les amants à la veille d'une séparation, voulue par la jeune femme. La prédiction de la mère qui répétait qu'elle savait que sa fille un jour partirait au loin, la quitterait, est constamment réaffirmée, tout comme l'est celle de l'amant qui prédisait lui aussi qu'elle partirait, qu'elle aurait de nombreux amants, qu'elle ne resterait pas avec le même homme.

Pourtant la recherche des origines, du point

initial--c'est à dire du moi, projeté, disséminé au fil des différents textes dans ses contradictions et ses désirs--n'a pas abouti, et de ce point de vue, L'amant est un constat d'échec: "Je n'ai jamais écrit, croyant le faire . . . je n'ai jamais rien fait qu'attendre devant la porte fermée" (35).

L'écriture ne renvoie en fin de compte qu'à elle-même, présence pour une absence, absence pour une présence. L'écriture est "l'hymen," le désir de percer la toile, d'ouvrir la porte, l'entre-deux qui n'existe que de la force de son désir même. Elle ne saurait aboutir et renvoyer à un "réel":

Le référent étant levé, la référence demeurant, il ne reste plus que l'écriture du rêve, la fiction sans imaginaire, la mimique sans imitation, sans vraisemblance, sans vérité ni fausseté . . . aucun présent en vérité ne s'y présente. (Derrida 239)

L'écriture s'éloigne immensément de la vérité de la chose même. (Derrida 158)

Ainsi que nous l'avons vu, Duras est parfaitement consciente de ce "mensonge" de l'écriture et l'accepte comme composante de la trame même de la narration. N'est-ce pas pour cela qu'elle poursuit les devenirs possibles et multiples de sa propre histoire? Tout peut toujours changer, recommencer, suivre une autre direction. Ce qui est fixé n'est qu'un hasard, un "détour." On pourrait songer aussi à Monet et à ses cathédrales, peintes dans des lumières différentes. Sur M. Jo, dans Le barrage, la lumière était crue, violente. Dans L'amant, c'est une lumière crépusculaire, adoucie. Mais peut-on parler d'une vérité de la lumière?

Ce que Duras cerne de tous côtés, le lieu où elle revient puiser, c'est celui de la mémoire et de ses transformations. Là résident la magie et

la perte de l'écriture, une recherche entropique du temps et de l'espace perdus qui ne peut que s'éloigner indéfiniment de son origine. Cette recherche, chez Duras, s'est accompagnée, comme nous l'avons noté, d'une recherche narrative: où placer le regard, que ce soit sur scène, sur l'écran, par l'oeil de la caméra, ou, sur la page, le "je" de l'écrit, celui qui montre et découvre, mais aussi celui qui regarde et lit? Où placer le point d'origine de l'écriture?

Déjà, dans Le barrage, roman de facture relativement traditionnelle, cette conscience de la "voix" de l'écriture est présente. C'est un roman écrit à la troisième personne, avec un narrateur "en coulisse." Pourtant, il est évident que le regard narratif est lié à Suzanne. Lorsque Joseph disparaît dans la ville, il disparaît aussi pour le lecteur et son récit ne nous sera connu que par celui qu'il en fait à Suzanne. C'est avec elle que, constamment, nous restons. Elle n'est pourtant pas à proprement parler une héroïne, et la voix narrative n'est pas, comme elle l'est dans les romans réalistes, une voix omnisciente douée du don d'ubiquité, qui peut suivre les différents personnages et rendre compte de leurs pensées et actions.

Certes, dans ce roman, le développement narratif est linéaire, progressif et c'est à ce niveau que se produit le changement le plus important avec L'Eden. L'"histoire" en elle-même n'a pas changé, bien que le récit en soit extrêmement condensé. Mais à présent, les enfants sont devenus narrateurs de leur histoire et de celle de la mère qui, elle, "n'aura jamais la parole sur elle-même" (L'Eden cinéma 12). La mère est en quelque sorte sculptée par la parole des enfants qui la racontent. Ils deviennent tour à tour narrateurs et actants de scènes qu'ils se mettent à jouer sous nos yeux. Ils sont les maîtres de cérémonie. Le langage est moins violent que dans Le barrage. Le récit est recouvert de la patine du temps et échappe au présent. La douleur, la

colère, le désespoir sont dits avec la même douceur, le même sourire, le même détachement. C'est à une cérémonie de la mémoire que nous assistons, où sont célébrés à la fois ce qu'elle laisse filtrer et sa déperdition. Nous entrons dans le temps de la légende et du mythe, délivrés du poids et des émotions de la durée profane. Dans L'Eden, Duras utilise et maîtrise parfaitement l'aspect religieux du théâtre des origines: la répétition d'un acte primordial, saisi dans un temps cyclique qui échappe à la durée chronologique, qui joue et participe de la dislocation temporelle et spatiale.

Nous entrons dans "l'immortalité" de la mère qui dépasse son histoire personnelle, mêlée au chant crépusculaire d'une société coloniale en décomposition et corrompue. La mère n'est qu'un élément de hasard, entraînée par des forces qui lui échappent, aussi absolues et torrentielles que le sont les eaux du Pacifique auxquelles elle tente en vain de s'opposer. Mais, dans ce récit, il y a aussi un apaisement: celui du souvenir et de la nostalgie lancinante des musiques qui l'accompagnent, musique des premiers phonos et du rythme des premiers fox-trots.

Ce thème de la mémoire hante tous les récits de Duras: douleurs, émotions, amours sont emportés par le même flot et subissent immédiatement le travail du temps. La jeune femme d'Hiroshima, mon amour se meurtrissait les poings contre les murs de la cave pour ne pas oublier la douleur.

Ce n'est pas seulement l'entropie qui fascine Duras, mais ce qui l'accompagne, la transformation du récit au travers du temps qui le filtre. De plus en plus elle a cherché à insérer dans la trame même du récit cette distance de la mémoire, de l'événement reflété dans son jeu de miroirs par l'écrit. Nous sommes toujours placés, avec elle, dans un "après": Hiroshima, vingt ans plus tard, à travers la mémoire d'un homme et d'une femme qui tous deux étaient absents d'Hiroshima quand la

bombe a éclaté. Dans Des journées entières dans les arbres, la mère retrouve son fils après qu'il l'a quittée et quand plus rien ne peut être ajouté ni retranché aux souvenirs de l'enfance. L'histoire ne peut qu'être répétée par la parole et la mère abrègera son séjour, confrontée à ce cycle fermé du passé. Dans Agatha ou L'Eden, l'histoire appartient aussi au passé. Le présent du texte est en équilibre instable entre un passé qu'il ne peut plus recréer et un avenir dans lequel il bascule. L'écriture est une cérémonie de ce moment du temps qui chavire et du texte en procès. N'est-ce pas aussi la cérémonie à laquelle nous convie L'amant: première histoire d'amour redite, récitée, au temps de la vieillesse, une histoire qui ne peut plus être rattrapée, perdue à jamais. Peut-être aimait-elle cet homme. Peut-être.

L'écriture à la fois fait surgir et ensevelit: épaisseur sacrée du texte qui momifie et crée le linceul. Duras ne se bat pas contre cette impossibilité de l'écriture à recréer le passé. Elle l'accentue, intensifie au contraire la distance. C'est pourquoi elle a introduit dans ses textes le "troisième personnage" qui apparaît pour la première fois sous les traits de l'interrogateur dans L'amante anglaise, étrange présence au carrefour de la narration et de la lecture, dont les voix "off" de ses films ou les enfants narrateurs/acteurs de L'Eden sont un développement. L'amant, qui s'avoue autobiographique, balance constamment entre le "je" et le "elle," deux pôles qui ne peuvent pas se rejoindre tout comme ne peuvent se rejoindre "la petite" et la femme âgée qui écrit. La recherche ne peut pas aboutir et la porte reste fermée. L'écriture reproduit la perte, "conduisant à prolifération le manque qui fut sa cause" et sa "dissémination" "ouvre sans fin cet accroc qui ne se laisse plus recoudre" (Derrida 33). L'écriture est un désir en marche dont elle procède. La question du "vrai" devient alors secondaire. La légende,

l'histoire, le mythe sont des éléments de l'humain qui se dit et qui se cherche dans son discours. Ils reposent sur cette immense déperdition collective de la mémoire où demeurent seules les traces, fossiles fragiles et instables, témoignages infiniment interprétés et interprétables: mouvance infinie de l'écriture, instabilité de la parole, lieu du texte où écriture et lecture se rejoignent.

C'est au spectacle de l'écrit qui se dit, qui se transforme, où vie et légende se rejoignent et ne coïncident pourtant jamais, que Duras nous convie. Ce cérémonial de l'écrit en procès confère à son écriture cette dimension "sacrée" si aisément adaptable au théâtre pour le metteur en scène qui se met en demeure de la respecter et de l'intégrer au spectacle. Les personnages sont dessaisis de leur pouvoir de dire "je" et "ce qui leur arrive leur est toujours déjà arrivé." Il s'agit bien là du "présent sans mémoire qui est celui de la parole narrante" (Blanchot 564).

Rutgers University

NOTES

¹Cité dans Jacques Derrida, La dissémination 303.

²Dans L'amant, "la petite prostituée blanche de Salec," 45.

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