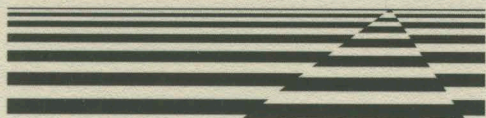


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## TECHNICAL AND THEORETICAL PROBLEMS IN THE MEDICAL TRANSLATIONS FROM GREEK TO ARABIC (VIII-XC)

Our intention is, based on quotations from Galen found in Al-Zahrâwî's<sup>1</sup> *Kitâb al-Tasrîf*'s treatise XVIII<sup>2</sup>, to make a linguistic comparison between the Arabic text and the previous Greek original and to test the validity of medical translations in the Near East from the eighth to the tenth centuries. We have found such a similarity between certain parts of Al-Zahrâwî and Galen, that we think it provides an ideal field for studying the transmission of the Greek science that also reached the Far West.

A quotation from Salah al-Dîn Al-Safadî<sup>3</sup> shows that the translators at the *Bayt al-Hikma*<sup>4</sup> encountered the perennial dilemma of translators: either to be faithful to the original text and translate it literally, that is to say, simply shifting the linguistic code; or to attempt a minimal interpretation of the original text, so that the text in the target language be internally coherent. Al-Safadî mentions both methods, established by translators: "The first is used by Ğuhanna b. al-

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<sup>1</sup> He is one of the most well-known andalusî doctors especially for the western tradition. It is mainly due to the treatise XXX of the *Kitâb al-Tasrîf*, which hands on surgery and which has been used in Europe until the XVII<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>2</sup> All the quotations of this paper are collected from my edition of this treatise.

<sup>3</sup> Humanist and biographer of the XIV century; the quotation is collected by Bahâ' al-Dîn al-Amîlî in al-Kaskul, I, p.388.

<sup>4</sup> Litterally 'House of Wisdom', scientific institution founded in Bagdad by al-Ma'mûn.

Bitriq, b. Nâ'ima al-Himsî and others; the translator assigns to each Greek word an Arabic word that expresses exactly the same meaning, using the same procedure until the end of the text". Al-Safadî himself criticizes this method as being inappropriate for two reasons: "1) there are no Arabic words that correspond to every Greek word, 2) the peculiarities and syntactic constructions are not the same in both languages". "The second method", to continue quoting Al-Safadî, "is that of Hunayn b. Ishaq<sup>5</sup> and others in addition to Al-Yawharî<sup>6</sup>. The translator reads a phrase, understands its meaning and translates it into an Arabic phrase that expresses the same general meaning, not taking into account if the words are equivalent". Al-Safadî considers this method to be the best. Furthermore, Al-Qiftî considers that the fact that Hunayn b. Ishaq's translations are a sort of critical résumé of the original text, adds to its value<sup>7</sup>.

We now shift our attention to the way specific syntactic structures are treated in two types of prescriptions, which, because of their concise form allow thorough observation: 1) those which contain very simple syntactic structures: a list of the relevant sicknesses, the name and amount of the ingredients and, at the end, a precise guide to mixing them and administering the remedy; 2) texts which contain theoretical explanations of the causes of diseases, reasons for including certain drugs and not others, the effects of those drugs, etc.

In type 1, we do not generally meet in the Arabic text any odd syntactic construction, because the structures are so simple that even word-for-word translation is correct. In type 2, in spite of Hunayn b. Ishaq's words quoted above, we must say that, in the case of Al-Zahrâwî's texts, Greek word order is scrupulously reproduced, sometimes not following Arabic syntax. Evidence of literal translation can be clearly seen in the

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<sup>5</sup> He is regarded as the most important mediator of ancient Greek science to the Arabs. It is mainly due to his reliable and clearly written translations of Hippocrates and Galen. Moreover, he is considered his translator par excellence.

<sup>6</sup> All the names quoted *supra* were translators of Greek sources, either from Greek directly or from syriac versions.

<sup>7</sup> The *Tâ'rîh al-Hçukamâ'* of Al-Qifçtî exists in an epitome by al-Zawzânî edited by Lippert in Leipzig, 1903. Cf. p. 171.

fact that there is even an attempt to reproduce Greek adverbs, conjunctions and, occasionally, particles.

Terminological problems in medical texts are centred mainly in the identification of components of remedies, drugs, sicknesses, etc., adopting the following solutions: 1) translation of the Greek term by an Arabic equivalent. This solution made them study and search for the drug; 2) translation of the Greek term by a similar one or by another drug of similar effects; 3) creation of a neologism following Arabic morphological rules. This solution is frequent in texts of an abstract nature, such as philosophy, mathematics, politics, etc., but we have not found it in any of the medical or pharmacological fragments translated from Greek in Al-Zahrâwî; 4) transcription of the Greek word. (On one hand, this option is tied to questions of phonetic realization, reflecting the pronunciation of Greek from a diachronical point of view. On the other hand, we have script problems. As vowels are not written in Arabic, but maximal clarity and exactness are needed, they are transcribed from the Greek word by using a sort of *matres lectionis*. Analyzing this option from a diachronic point of view, it can be observed that it was profusely used early in Syriac translations but it fell into disuse in Arabic translations, and terms created in that way were later substituted by others modelled on Arabic morphology).

As Al-Zahrâwî was an Andalusí surgeon, we must review briefly the situation of medical texts in the West. Virtually until the mid-tenth century, medical doctors in Al-Andalus either came from the East or travelled there to learn medical science and then went back to the West to practise it.

These doctors, however, could learn at Al-Andalus with Arabic books written in Baghdad the moment the *Bayt al-Hikma* was created and started the translating school. Nevertheless, these books often were not clear enough, as they were translated from Syriac versions, before the founding of the school of Hunayn b. Ishaq. As we have already mentioned, these were extremely literal, word-by-word translations and when there was no corresponding Syriac or Arabic word, or the plant or drug was not identifiable, transcription was resorted to. As Ibn ʿul-ʿul points out in his *Tabaqât al-atibbâ'*<sup>8</sup>, these

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Vernet, J, pp. 450-541

translations were utterly incomprehensible in the West, because there were no scholars with knowledge of Greek who could explain the terms or identify the transcribed components of drugs.

Al-Zahrâwî in his treatise preserves ten quotations from Galen. We have identified the Greek text of seven of them in Kühn's edition. To them, we must add a further quotation of a certain Asclepiades who is only known to us through quotations in Galen, a situation which was probably the same for the Arabs. The other three texts left are considered as pseudo-Galen and there is no Greek edition of them, even supposing it ever existed.

We shall approach our texts by analyzing first of all the descriptions of the simple syntactic type on the grounds of two examples considered representative patterns. Let us take description 2.28. Even though Al-Zahrâwî does not supply the title of Galen's book from which it was taken, we have identified it as XII, 600 (*De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos, liber III*) of Kühn's edition. (Within the texts, words and sequences compared are marked with superscript bold numbers — if they agree — and capital letters — if they disagree —.)

### Arabic text

صفة لجالينوس لوجع الأذن وغيره: تأخذ<sup>(1)</sup> بصلة عظيمة<sup>(2)</sup> فتقورها<sup>(3)</sup>  
ثم<sup>(4)</sup> تملأها<sup>(5)</sup> زيتا<sup>(6)</sup> وتسخنها<sup>(7)</sup> على رماد<sup>(8)</sup> معتدل الحرارة<sup>(9)</sup> ثم<sup>(A)</sup>  
تصب<sup>(10)</sup> من ذلك الزيت وهو مدفتى<sup>(B)</sup> في الأذن<sup>(11)</sup>: تبرأ، إن شاء الله.

### Greek text

Τὰς μὲν οὖν ὑπὸ ψύξεως μόνης γινομένης ὀδύνας τὰ θερμαίνοντα  
θεραπεύει τάχιστα. καὶ τινὰς τῶν ἀγροίκων οἶδα<sup>(1)</sup> διαγλύφοντάς<sup>(3)</sup>  
τι τῶν μεγάλων κρομμύων<sup>(2)</sup>, εἶτα<sup>(4)</sup> πληροῦντάς<sup>(5)</sup> ἐλαίου<sup>(6)</sup> καὶ  
θερμαίνοντάς<sup>(7)</sup> ἐν σποδιᾷ<sup>(8)</sup> συμμέτρως<sup>(9)</sup>, ἐγγέοντάς<sup>(10)</sup> τοῖς ὠσὶ<sup>(11)</sup>.

### Translation of the Arabic text:

Galen's description for ears and other pains: take<sup>(1)</sup> a big onion<sup>(2)</sup> and make it hollow<sup>(3)</sup>; then<sup>(4)</sup> fill it<sup>(5)</sup> with oil<sup>(6)</sup> and

warm it<sup>(7)</sup> on cinders<sup>(8)</sup> at a moderate temperature<sup>(9)</sup>. Then<sup>(A)</sup> pour<sup>(10)</sup> some of this warm oil<sup>(11)</sup> in the ear. The person shall be cured if God Almighty wills.

*Translation of the Greek text:*

About ear pain caused by coldness. I have heard that some countrymen<sup>(1)</sup> make big onions<sup>(2)</sup> hollow<sup>(3)</sup>, then<sup>(4)</sup> fill them<sup>(5)</sup> with oil<sup>(6)</sup> and warm them<sup>(7)</sup> on cinders<sup>(8)</sup> moderately<sup>(9)</sup> and then<sup>(A)</sup> they pour<sup>(10)</sup> them in the ear<sup>(11)</sup>.

This would be the pattern of a basic prescription in Greek as well as in Arabic and it is possible to translate it almost word for word because of its minimal syntactic complexity. It is checked that way, not only because of the absence of lexical problems, as the components are very common to both cultures, but also because they are quite intelligible in the version of syntactic forms.

Besides these slight deviations from literal translation, we could consider the substitution of *'I have heard that some countrymen'* by the impersonal formula *'take'* (case 1). This may be the result of the "critical résumé" that is ascribed to Hunayn b. Ishaq, which imposes on the text the preestablished patterns for prescriptions.

We can see that all the Greek words match the Arabic words marked with the same number, and that even adverbs (case 4) and conjunctions (case 7) coincide. However, in the cases marked with capital letters the two texts differ. For example, *'then'*: Arabic needs a periphrasis to express the implicit hypotaxis of the Greek participle (case A). In the Arabic text there is added *'some of this oil while warm'* (case B); we are inclined to think that it is an exegetical addition or that the two texts followed different manuscripts.

The next description (5.9) is of the same type as the above mentioned, but provided that it contains not so common ingredients it presents some terminological problems. In spite of the additional difficulty of not mentioning Galen's treatise from which the information was taken, we have identified it as XIII. 313 of Kühn's edition, book IX of the above mentioned treatise.



*Arabic text*

صفة زور نافع من بروز المقعدة<sup>(1)</sup> لجالينوس: يؤخذ<sup>(A)</sup> من ثمر<sup>(2)</sup> الطرفاء<sup>(B)</sup> وأفاقية<sup>(3)</sup> وعفص<sup>(4)</sup> وإسفيداج الرصاص<sup>(5)</sup> وعصارة الطرائيث<sup>(6)</sup> ولحاء شجرة الصنوبر<sup>(7)</sup> ومر<sup>(8)</sup> وكندر<sup>(9)</sup> من كل واحد جزء<sup>(D)</sup>، يسحق جميع ذلك<sup>(10)</sup> ويذر<sup>(11)</sup> على المقعدة<sup>(F)</sup> بعد<sup>(G)</sup> أن تغسل<sup>(12)</sup> بشراب<sup>(13)</sup> عتيق<sup>(I)</sup>. نافع، إن شاء الله تعالى.

*Greek text*

τὸ ἡμέτερον πρὸς τοὺς προπίπτοντας ἀρχοῦς<sup>(1)(A)</sup>. ἐρείκης<sup>(B)</sup> καρποῦ<sup>(2)</sup>, κηκίδων<sup>(4)</sup>, ἀκακίας<sup>(3)</sup>, ψιμυθοῦ<sup>(6)</sup>, ὑποκυστίδος χυλοῦ<sup>(6)</sup>, πίττος φλοιοῦ<sup>(7)</sup>, λιβάνου<sup>(9)</sup>, σμύρνης<sup>(8)</sup> μινναίας<sup>(C)</sup> ἀνὰ ξηροῖς<sup>(H)</sup> κατάπασσε<sup>(11)</sup> προαπονίψας<sup>(12)</sup> οἴνω<sup>(13)</sup> αὐστηρῶ<sup>(I)</sup>.

*Translation of the Arabic text*

Description of some medicine powder efficient for the prolapse of the anus<sup>(1)</sup>, from Galen: let's take<sup>(A)</sup> the fruit of<sup>(2)</sup> tamarisk<sup>(B)</sup>, acacia<sup>(3)</sup>, galls<sup>(4)</sup>, white lead<sup>(5)</sup>, juice of orobange<sup>(6)</sup>, pine bark<sup>(7)</sup>, myrrh<sup>(8)</sup> and incense<sup>(9)</sup>, a portion of each of them<sup>(D)</sup>. Mash it<sup>(10)</sup> all, spray it<sup>(11)</sup> on the anus<sup>(F)</sup> after<sup>(G)</sup> having washed it<sup>(12)</sup> with mellow<sup>(I)</sup> wine<sup>(13)</sup>. It will be beneficial if God, the Almighty, wills.

*Translation of the Greek text*

My remedy for those who suffer from<sup>(A)</sup> anal prolapse<sup>(1)</sup>: the fruit of<sup>(2)</sup> heath<sup>(B)</sup>, galls<sup>(4)</sup>, acacia<sup>(3)</sup>, white lead<sup>(5)</sup>, the juice of orobange<sup>(6)</sup>, pine bark<sup>(7)</sup>, incense<sup>(9)</sup> and myrrh<sup>(8)</sup> minaiia<sup>(C)</sup>. Mash it<sup>(10)</sup> and spray it<sup>(11)</sup> dry<sup>H</sup> after<sup>(G)</sup> having washed it<sup>(12)</sup> with dry<sup>(I)</sup> wine<sup>(13)</sup>.

We see that Greek terms are translated by exact Arabic terms (using the first solution adopted by translators), but with certain exceptions: we find initially a structure of the text similar to the previous prescription, substituting to 'My remedy for those who suffer from anal prolapse' by the more stereotyped formula 'Description of some medicine powder efficacious

against the prolapsus of the anal (case A). Heath and tamarisk (case B): the relative disagreement between the two texts can be explained by quoting Dioscorides<sup>9</sup> who says that *Calluna vulgaris*, known also as *Erica vulgaris*, is the only heath that has the particularity of looking like tamarisk. 'a portion of each of them' (case D) is added in the Arabic text, and the same occurs in case F with 'on the anus', while in case H, 'dry' is present in the Greek text, but is not mentioned in Arabic. Further on, we find the same problem as mentioned in the preceding prescription [s]: Arabic needs a periphrasis, that is to say, to add 'after', to translate Greek active participles (case G). It is true that the two adjectives that determine 'wine' do not have the same meaning (case I), but we must also think that the mellower a wine the dryer; this fact should explain the difference.

There is also some explanation to be made when the two texts are mirror images: the Arabic term for "acacia" is the transcription of the Greek term. Despite that, they do not refer, strictly speaking, to the same thing: for the Greek (Diosc.) it is the tree, but for Arabs it is the fruit: this is the translators' solution number 3 quoted above (case 3). In the rest of the manuscript the Arabic translation of orobange coexists with the transliteration of the Greek term; this transliterated term, however, does not have exactly the same meaning as in Greek since it means orobange juice and not only orobange, as in the original language (case 6). Arabic needs to add the word for tree, which is not usually used, to make it distinct from pine kernel: that does not happen in Greek (case 7); the adjective 'Minnaia' which determines 'myrrh' doesn't appear in the Arabic text. This may be explained by the fact that Minnaia means in Greek 'from Yemen'<sup>10</sup> and perhaps for Arabs, it is redundant since myrrh comes traditionally from Yemen (case 8).

Let us now study a part from prescription 2.1, of a more complex structure. First of all, we must point out that here we have the title from which it was taken. It is the Kitâb al-Mayâmir, which we have identified as XII, 626-627 of Kühn's edition of Galen, also from book III of *De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos*.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Dioscorides 1.88

<sup>10</sup> V. Pape *sub voce* Minnaïoi, Minaïoi.

## Arabic text

[...] إن كان وجع الأذن وجعا مبرحا واضطرا الأمر إلى الحيلة في تسكينه فإنما نستعمل فيه بعض الأدوية التي تحذر الحس كما يفعل ذلك بمن يصبه الوجع الشديد المبرح من أوجاع القولنج أو من قبل وجع عضو آخر من أي الأعضاء كان جملته فينبغي أن يخلط الدواء المحدد بمنزلة الأفيون بلبن إمره وبياض البيض. فقد وجدتهما غير مرة قد نفع كل واحد منهما بنفسه ومرة من غير أن يخلط بغيره في مواضع الأورام الحادثة في الأذن وينبغي أن يخلط مع الأفيون جندبادستر ويحتاج [إلى] أن يكون هذا الدواء مهيا معاً قبل وقت الحاجة إليه بزمان طويل وينبغي أن يخلطهما أما جزء أجزاء سواء، وأما أن يكون الجندبادستر أضعف من وزن الأفيون والرطوبة التي يعجن بها هذا الدواء ينبغي أن يكون عقيد العنب إذا كان مطبوخا فهو أبلغ في تسكين الوجع من الشراب الحار. <sup>(a)</sup> وينبغي أن يسحق هذين الدوائين سحقاً مستقصى فيسحق أو لا الجندبادستر سحقاً جيداً ثم يلقي على الأفيون مطبوخ مثلث ويسحق به حتى يخلط نعماً <sup>(a)</sup> ثم يلقي على الجندبادستر المسحوق ويسحق الجميع سحقاً جيداً وتعمل منه أقراص ويختفظ بها <sup>(A)</sup> فإذا احتيج أخذ منها شيء فديف بمطبوخ مثلث وعمد إلى ميل فلف عليه صوفة ناعمة لينة وكمد به الأذن ممن كان يشكو وجعا فيها شديداً أو قطر فيها من الدواء على هذه الصفة فافهمها واعمل بها. <sup>(B)</sup> وهو أن تعد الدواء الذي تريد أن تقطره وتجعله فاترا وتأمّر العليل أن يلمسه وتساله عن موقعه منه حتى يخبرك أنه يحسه فاترا فإن كان من الفتورة في حد يحتمل المريض أن يكون على أكثر منه فزد في إسحانك إياه مقدار يستطيع [المريض] أن يحتمل حرارته من غير أن يتأذي بها. ثم اعمد إلى ميل فاعمد رأسه في الدواء الذي أتخذته على هذه الصفة حتى يحتمل منه شيئا وادنه من ثقب الأذن برفق وتؤدة ودع الدواء يشيل ويقطر من رأس الميل على مهل وينخل في ثقب الأذن حتى يصل إلى الصماخ ولا يزال يفعل ذلك مرارا كثيرة ولا يغير <sup>(B)</sup> <sup>(1)</sup> فإن أفاض من الدواء شيء إلى خارج فامسحه برفق من غير أن تمس الأذن ما استطعت فإذا بلغت حاجتك من التكميد فدع ثقب الأذن مملوءة من الدواء على فم الثقب من خارج صوفة لينة ناعمة واغط الأذن كلها من بعده <sup>(1)</sup> فإن لاحتجت إلى معاودة التكميد على ما كنت فعلته واحذر وتجنب ما أمكنك أن تمس شيئا من أجزاء الأذن واجعل ذلك منك ببال وتحذر فإنه باب عظيم من الأبواب التي ينبغي أن يحذر فيها العلاج الأذان إذا كان فيها وجع. فهذا كلام جالينوس نصا. فينبغي أن تمثل في جميع علل الأذان فهو أصل في العلاج وقياس عجيب واعلم أن جميع ما يأتي من سائر الأدوية مفردة كانت أو مركبة فعلى هذا القياس ينبغي أن يستعمل، إن شاء الله تعالى.

## Greek text

βιαζομένης δὲ τῆς ὀδύνης ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι χρῆσθαι καὶ τοῖς ναρκῶσι μὲν αἰσθησιν, ὡσπερ καὶ τοῖς ἐπὶ κώλῳ καὶ νεφροῖς καὶ ὄλωσ ἀπαντα πάσχοντι μορίῳ σφοδρῶς ἀλγούσι. μίγνυται δὲ τοῦτο τῇ γυναικείῳ γάλακτι καὶ τῇ λευκῇ τοῦ ὡοῦ, ἃ καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὰ πολλὰκις ἤρμοσεν ὠτων φλεγμοναῖς. μίγνυται δὲ καὶ καστορίῳ τὸ ὄπιον καὶ χρῆ παρεσκευάσθαι τοῦτο πρὸ πολλοῦ μεμιγμένον, ἦτοι γὰρ ἴσῳ κατὰ τὸν σταθμὸν ἢ διπλασίῳ<sup>(E)</sup> τῇ καστορίῳ, πρὸς μὲν τὰς σπόδροτάτας ὀδύνας ἴσῳ, πρὸς δὲ τὰς ἐλάττονας διπλασίῳ. τὸ δὲ ὑγρὸν ἔστω τὸ ἐκ τοῦ γλεύκουσ ἔψημα, πολὺ γὰρ ἀνωδυνώτερον τοῦτο τῶν γλυκέων ἐστὶν οἶνων. <sup>(A)</sup>εὐθέως οὖν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἀκριβῶς λεία τὰ εἰρημένα φάρμακα τούτῳ μίγνυσθω, τὸ μὲν καστόριον προλελειωμένον ἀκριβῶς, ὃ δὲ τῆς μήκωνος ὅπως ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἐψημάτι λελυμένος καὶ οὕτω μίχθεντα τὰ τρία λειοῦσθω καλῶς<sup>(A)</sup>. <sup>(C)</sup>εἶτα ἐπὶ τῆς χρήσεως ἀνιέσθω ἄλιν ἐψημάτι μέχρι τοσαύτης συστάσεως, ὡς ἐγγείσθαι δύνασθαι διὰ τῶν καλουμένων ὠτεγχύτων, ἐπὶ λύχνῳ χλιανθέντων. ἐγὼ δὲ οὐκ ἐγγέω τοῖς περιωδυνούσιν οὐδὲν φάρμακον, οὐδ' ἐκμάττω δι' ἐρίου, τῇ πείρῳ τοῦτο διδασχθεῖς<sup>(C)</sup>, ὡς ἀμεινόν ἐστι μῆδ' ὄλωσ ψαύειν τοῦ πόρου τοῦ ἀκουστικοῦ κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς ὀδύνης. ἀλλὰ διὰ μηλωτίδος ἀμφισθεσίσης ἐρίῳ μαλακωτάτῳ πυριῶ τε τοὺς περιωδυνώντας, <sup>(D)</sup>ἐμβάλλω τε τὸ φάρμακον ὡδί πως ἐτοιμασθέν, κεχλιασμένον ἐν ὠτεγχύτῃ μετρίως οὕτως, ὡς πυνθανομένωννῆμῶν τοῦ κάμωντος, εἰ χλιαρὸν αὐτῷ οαίνοιτο καὶ εἰ ἐπι δύναται φέρειν αὐτὸ, θερμότερον γενόμενον μέχρι τοσοῦτου προσάγειν τὴν θερμασίαν, ὡς μῆδέπω λυπεῖν<sup>(D)</sup>. βάπτων οὖν εἰς τὸ οὕτω παρεσκευασμένον φάρμακον τὴν μηλωτίδα κατὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ πόρου μετρίως ἐπιτιθεῖς, ἀπορεῖν εἰς τὸ βάθος ἐπίτρεπε καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἄλιν αὐθις καὶ αὐθις καὶ πολλὰκις βάπτων τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιεῖ, μῆδένα διαλείπων χρόνον. εὐδηλον δ' ὅτι τοῦτου γινομένου πάντως <sup>(E)</sup>καὶ ἀπορυήσεται πρὸς τοῦκτος πληρωθέντος ὄλου τοῦ ἀκουστικοῦ πόρου. τοῦτο τοῖνον δέχου μετρίως, καθ' ὅσον οἶόν τε μῆ ψαύων τοῦ ὠτός. ἐπειδὴν δὲ καλῶς πυριάσης, ἐάσας τὸν πόρον, ὃς ἐπληρώθη τοῦ φαρμάκου, μαλακὸν ἐπίθεσ ἐξῶθεν ἐριον αὐτῷ τε τῇ στόματι τοῦ πόρου καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο παντὶ τῇ ὡτί<sup>(E)</sup>. καὶ ἐὰν δεήσῃ πυριάσαι ἄλιν, ἀτρέμα βαστάξας τὸ ἀντεπεκείμενον ἐξῶθεν ἐριον αὐθις ὁμοίως πυριά φυλαττόμενος ὡς οἶόν τε μῆδ' ἄλλου τινὸς μέρουςτου ὠτός ἀψασθαι. καὶ τούτῳ γὰρ πρόσσεχε τὸν νοῦν ὡς μεγίστῳ παραγγέλματι τῆς τῶν ὠτων ἐπιμελείας.

*Translation of the Arabic text*

[. . .] when there is a terrible pain in the ear and it is necessary to relieve it in any way. And we certainly use in it some of the remedies that reduce sensation as it is with those who suffer strong and terrible pain as that of colic or of any other type. It is convenient that the soothing remedy that takes the place of opium should be mixed with woman's milk and egg white. We find that those remedies sometimes are beneficial both together, some others not mixed with the other in the case of ear infections. It is convenient to mix opium with castor. This remedy needs to be prepared and ready a long time before the moment it is needed, either in even proportions or since the measure of castor is smaller <sup>(E)</sup> than that of opium, it is convenient that the humidity required is required to knead this remedy should be from boiled raisins. It is better than warm wine to soothe the pain. <sup>(a)</sup>It is convenient that these two remedies should be thoroughly mashed, first the castor and then add three times as much of boiled opium. Mash until well mixed, afterwards pour on the mashed castor, and mash it thoroughly <sup>(8)</sup>, <sup>(A)</sup> then make pills out of it and preserve <sup>(A)</sup>. When you need it, take a part and mix with three as much of the concoction, take a brush for applying collyria, roll around it a piece of soft and sprung wool, and apply in the ear of the person suffering from strong pain, or insert in it the remedy after this prescription. Try to understand it and do it this way: <sup>(B)</sup> prepare the remedy you intend to insert, leave it to get lukewarm, order the patient to touch it and ask him about how it feels to him, until he says than he feels it lukewarm, and should it be in the limit of lukewarmness that the sick person can stand, or if the limit is higher, go on warming it until the patient can resist the heat without feeling pain, than take a brush for collyria and dip its head in the remedy obtained with this prescription until it retains a certain amount, apply it in the orifice of the ear with care and let the remedy flow and drip from the head of the brush slowly and enter through the ear orifice inside to each the hearing conduct. Continue doing this several times without getting careless <sup>(B)</sup>. <sup>(1)</sup> When some of the remedy falls out, wipe it off carefully touching the ear the least. If you have great need of applying fomentations, leave the ear full of the remedy and put it in the outer mouth of the orifice a piece of soft and sprung wool, covering the whole ear afterwards <sup>(1')</sup>. If you

should have to apply fomentations again as previously done, try not to touch any part of the ear. It is certainly one of the most important chapters to me and it is important that the remedies for the ears be grounded on it, when there is pain.

*Translation of the Greek text.*

When there is pain it is necessary to use remedies that reduce sensation, as when there is pain in the colon, the kidneys or all over. Mix this with woman's milk and white of egg, things that often are good by themselves for ear inflammations. Mix opium with castor, it being necessary to prepare them a long time before mixing them: even proportions for strong pain and twice<sup>(E)</sup> the castor for less pain. The humidity<sup>2</sup> should be a concoction of raisins, that are much more innocuous than sweet wines. The mix the remedies:<sup>(a)</sup> mix the three parts well, thoroughly mixing first the castor and then dilute the juice of the poppy in the concoction<sup>(a)</sup>. <sup>(c)</sup> For application boil it again until it gets consistent enough to be injected with the so-called ear-syringe, which has to be maintained lukewarm by means of a lamp. I do not inject those who have a general pain, nor smear with wool, in accordance with my experience<sup>(c)</sup>, but with a probe covered with most soft wool it is applied on the ear of the person suffering from strong pain.<sup>(D)</sup> I apply the remedy warming it moderately, asking the patient if he feels it to be too hot; and if he can stand it, I warm it until the highest degree of warmth is reached that it is not painful<sup>(D)</sup>. Dipping the probe in the remedy thus prepared let it flow from the mouth of the hearing conduct to the deep part and again until you do it several times. Go on dipping without delay. It is clear that acting so, when the hearing conduct is filled, <sup>(1)</sup> some will fall out, wipe it off carefully touching the ear as little as possible. After applying the fomentations keep the hearing conduct full of the remedy and from the outside apply a soft wool on the mouth and then another on the whole ear <sup>(1)</sup>. Should it be necessary to apply fomentations again, take off firmly the wool placed outside, without touching the ear. For that is, pay attention to this, the most important recommendation for the care of the ears.

Additionally in this text we can find parallels of all the cases mentioned for the preceding texts — for example the sequence between 1 and 1'. Now, so as not to enlarge on the matter, we shift our attention only to certain points of the Arabic

translation that show that the effort to be faithful to the original Greek text is so powerful that the results in Arabic do not allow complete comprehension.

We shall try to show that sometimes the translation of the Greek text results in stilted Arabic, as happens in the parts between a and a'. The inflated Arabic of this paragraph, points to the conclusion that its version could well have been made at an earlier time, before the school of Hunayn b. Ishaq or could have been made at this school, but from a previous Syriac translation and without collating the Greek original.

At other times, however, the text does not exactly fit its original Greek text, even diverging from it at certain points, for example the ones between A and A', and between B and B', in which the Arabic text adds more information or gives more details than the Greek text. The opposite happens in texts between C and C', and D and D'. We should remark that it is very interesting that those cases that in the Greek text we can find Galen's own experience, written even in first person, have disappeared from the translation into Arabic. Can we assume that this is again the so-called résumé of Hunayn b. Ishaq trying to make the text drier and more scientific? We also have to pay attention to case E, in which we find an Arabic word for measuring the quantity of opium, '*smaller*', that has the opposite meaning to the parallel word in the Greek text, '*twice*'. We have to suppose that to make a mistake like that in medicine can be very dangerous. This is the only case that such a thing has occurred in the excerpts by Galen quoted in this treatise, so we shall consider it as an isolated case.

The great enterprise of Arabic transmission can be characterized by making a synthesis of knowledge inherited from Classical Greece, the East, that is to say Persia and India, and the specific Islamic element concerned. The importance of the Greek texts (or those attributed to them) appears not only as a means of reconstructing the texts, but as an enrichment of the classical heritage with a vast scientific and philosophical literature that influenced human thought from the Middle Ages to our day. The validity of those texts to fill in lost originals or existing gaps is shown in the great effort made to achieve a reliable duplicate of the originals. This is so even when we very often observe that of the two mentioned methods the first has prevailed, causing linguistic incorrections that sometimes affect the intelligibility of the text.

Our samples verified that very different transmissions as Al-Zaharâwî in Islamic Cordoba in the tenth century, or the one studied by Kühn in the nineteenth century from Greek medieval manuscripts can be quite similar. This fact demonstrates the importance given in ancient times to fidelity in the transmission of knowledge. The texts here briefly examined constitute a sound test in showing how some interesting material shed light upon manuscript transmission and translation techniques from Greek to Arabic.

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## BURCKHARDT'S HUMANIST MYOPIA: MACHIAVELLI, GUICCIARDINI AND THE WIDER WORLD<sup>1</sup>

Jacob Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860) remains a fundamental text in the historiography of Renaissance Studies. It is not only a great piece of cultural history — indeed, the defining text — which has characterized the multidisciplinary manner in which the subject is addressed but it is also a kind of testament to the humanist mind, refined, of course, by intervening centuries and new ideas, but still a record of what Europeans continued to call high culture. This remarkable book has been the object of revisionist theory and critical assault. It has been shown to be anachronistic, selective, reductionist, driven by the currents of early and mid-nineteenth-century thought, such as Romanticism, Hegelianism, aestheticism, emerging sociological theory and so on. But the fact remains that it is still with us and that it has shaped the academic approach to the study of the Renaissance for 135 years.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to look at Burckhardt not as a disciple or a revisionist but in terms of some of his own assumptions about the relations between Italy and the wider

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<sup>1</sup> A version of this paper was read at the World History Association meeting at Pratolino (Florence) in June 1995. I would like to thank Prof. John Headley of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Prof. Jerry Bentley of the University of Hawaii for their useful comments.

<sup>2</sup> For a general discussion of the historiography of the Renaissance before 1950 see W.K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought: Five Centuries of Interpretation*. Cambridge MA: Houghton-Mifflin, 1948.

world in the Renaissance: to attempt to address his relegation of what some observers thought was the most important event since the incarnation<sup>3</sup> to a short, almost insignificant passage in his chapter on the Discovery of the World and of Man: that is the European contact with the New World.

It is important to place this discussion in the context first of the period Burckhardt helped define and second in the context of Burckhardt's own century. The conclusion will be that these periods are mirrors, not of one another in their entirety but of one central strain which connected the Swiss historian and the humanist mind of Renaissance Italy. In particular, the humanist discovery of the individual self — at least as defined initially by Petrarch in the fourteenth century and his Florentine continuators — reached full development in Machiavelli, whose reflections on historical and political events reflect exactly his deep debt to the ancients and his belief in the individual self as the ultimate determining factor in events, regardless of their significance. In other words, the individual, self-conscious self is responsible for not only what happens but how those events are given meaning.

As an alternative, it is necessary to note Machiavelli's brilliant contemporary, fellow Florentine patrician and fellow historian, Francesco Guicciardini, in order to illustrate that not all late Florentine humanists were blinded by the brilliance of the ancient world and the restrictions of self-constructed personal experience.

An appropriate beginning would be two paragraphs from Book VI of Francesco Guicciardini's *History of Italy*, written between 1537 and 1540:

These voyages have made it clear that the ancients were deceived in many ways regarding a knowledge of the earth: that one could pass beyond the equinoctial line; that one could live in the torrid zone; as also, contrary to the opinion of the ancients, we have come to understand through the voyages of

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<sup>3</sup> López de Gomara wrote in his *General history of the Indies* that, "The greatest event since the creation of the world, excluding the Incarnation and the death of the Creator, is the discovery of the Indies, and so you call them the New World". Quoted in M. Lunenfeld, ed., *1492: Discovery, Invasion, Encounter* (Lexington MA: D.S. Heath, 1991, xxxvii.

others that one can dwell in those zones near the poles which the ancients affirmed were uninhabitable because of the immoderate cold resulting from the position of the heaven being so remote from the course of the sun. These voyages have also revealed what some of the ancients believed and others denied, namely that there are other inhabitants under our feet whom they called the Antipodes.

These voyages have not only confuted many things which had been affirmed by writers about terrestrial matters, but besides this, they have given some cause for alarm to interpreters of the Holy Scriptures, who are accustomed to interpret those verses of the psalms in which it is declared that the sound of their songs had gone over all the earth and their words spread to the edges of the world, as meaning that faith in Christ had spread over the entire earth through the mouths of the apostles: an interpretation contrary to the truth, because since no knowledge of these lands had hitherto been brought to light, nor have any signs or relics of our faith been found there, it is unworthy to be believed, either that faith in Christ had existed there before these times, or that so vast a part of the world had never before been discovered or found by men of our hemisphere.<sup>4</sup>

This passage from Guicciardini offers a remarkable insight into the consequences of the voyages of discovery on the part of a pragmatic — one might say cynical — politician, diplomat and historian of the late Florentine Renaissance. It is remarkable because of its clear recognition that neither the ancients nor Scripture held all knowledge. In fact, the second paragraph above was not restored to the text until the 1774 edition: no printed version between 1561 and 1774 contained the passage that reflects on those parts of the world that Christ forgot. Moreover, there is a wider context for these selections from Guicciardini. He comments insightfully on the effect which the Portuguese voyages around Africa had on the Venetian monopoly of the Spice Trade; and he remarks on the wealth the Spaniards were transferring from the New World to the Old, again implying the consequences for Italy.<sup>5</sup> He

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<sup>4</sup> F. Guicciardini, *The History of Italy*, tr. S. Alexander. (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 182.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 177 et sqq.

builds on the Noble Savage — or virtuous barbarian — tradition in his description of indigenous peoples in America, to the point that the route from Tacitus' *Germania* to Columbus' landfall emerges, except that Guicciardini ends by comparing the New World natives to mild animals easily cheated, humiliated or enslaved by Europeans.<sup>6</sup>

This selection from Guicciardini, moreover, can be seen to mitigate the popular impression of those modern historians who argue that the voyages of discovery had in reality little effect upon the mental geography of Renaissance Europeans, since it was not terribly difficult to fit these new wonders into a world view described by Scripture and ancient wisdom.<sup>7</sup> The prejudices of the European vision persisted, then, despite the fact that the new discoveries fact strained the well-secured baggage of the intellectual elite in profound ways. Guicciardini is definitely aware that something portentous has happened and is happening, and his analysis is sophisticated and germane, even in the context of his purpose, which is to explicate the history of Italy in his own times. One might accept this from the greatest historian since Tacitus and the greatest before Edward Gibbon.

This paper, however, is not an encomium of Guicciardini. Its purpose is rather to ask why Guicciardini added these observations to his *History*, while his contemporary, friend and fellow Florentine Niccolò Machiavelli did not. And, to suggest that over three centuries later Jacob Burckhardt, in his *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* appears to follow the lead of Machiavelli, rather than pursue Guicciardini's and reinforce the recognition that the world had changed fundamentally after the discoveries of the later fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth centuries.

Machiavelli is not at all concerned with the New World. Silvia Ruffo-Fiore's massive annotated bibliography of all works by or on the great Florentine second chancellor records no evidence of any reflection on the events described by Guicciar-

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Michael Ryan, John Elliott, Giuliano Gliozzi.

dini.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, it is not just Machiavelli, of course. Erasmus, for example, is equally unconcerned, despite his wide correspondence and encyclopedic knowledge and curiosity. In the volumes of Erasmus's correspondence up to 1523,<sup>9</sup> there is no mention of the *terra incognita*, even though his very close friend, Thomas More, had used it as the metaphorical island of *Utopia*, placing its discovery in the frame of verisimilitude of the real voyage of Amerigo Vespucci. Furthermore, this Vespucci was a Florentine patrician, whose first trip to Seville was not as a mariner but as the representative of Lorenzo de' Medici's interests. And, his four voyages — which were to make the New World his eponymous revelation — were printed in 1507 and widely read. And, Amerigo Vespucci equally remarks that the ancients did not know of this New World, and cultivated Florentine that he was, added that neither did Dante, or else it would have appeared in his *Commedia*. Machiavelli, then, had no excuse not to know or to appreciate the events of those years.

Also, in the best classical manner, Machiavelli defined himself as he was: a humanistically educated, sophisticated, well travelled Florentine gentleman. This is evident in those areas where he betrays himself most: his letters. Like the ancient Greeks, he saw himself as curious about other nations, other men and their experiences, and he reflected upon them. Thucydides set this model well in noting how Greeks differed from barbarians in their curiosity towards others.<sup>10</sup> Machiavelli exhibits this curiosity perfectly. In his almost too famous letter to Francesco Vettori announcing the birth of *The Prince*, he writes: "I move on down the road to the inn, talk with passers-by, ask news of the places they come from, hear this and that, and note the various tastes and fancies of mankind".<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> S. Ruffo-Fiore, ed., *Niccolò Machiavelli: An Annotated Bibliography of Modern Criticism and Scholarship* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990).

<sup>9</sup> See *The Collected Works of Erasmus: The Correspondence of Erasmus*, vols. 1-7 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974-87).

<sup>10</sup> See A. Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 1992), 47.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in J.R. Hale, *Machiavelli and Renaissance Italy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), 112.

He is, then, interested, and he seeks additional knowledge of the world. His diplomatic dispatches and his treatises are full of the most insightful, brilliant characterizations and political observations. He knows men and the world — but only the Old World, his world of Italian — really Flo-rentine — politics and its context, and only those men who conform to the classical image of human accomplishment established by Greek, Latin and Petrarchan humanist culture. Even when the New World has an impact on his beloved Florence, it does not appear. The wealth of the Spanish generated by their American mines is not a factor in the peninsular incursions which resulted in the Spanish hegemony. Other factors seem sufficient, despite the strength of those sinews of war.

Machiavelli's interest is human character, human causality. History is that shop-worn battle between an intemperate *Fortuna* and an inconsistent *virtù*, or resourcefulness. The events of history are driven, though, by individual, personal qualities and circumstances. Man has replaced God as the *primum mobile* of change.

Consider Francesco Guicciardini, however. His view of history is not that of men acting by opposing *fortuna* with *virtù* but of men driven by their individual self-interest, their *particolare*. There is, then, no model to apply, no evidence to be drawn, except to add to the data to be used to make decisions. In his *Ricordi*, Guicciardini directs a barb at his friend and compatriot Machiavelli by suggesting that it is useless to quote the Greeks and Romans in every incident.<sup>12</sup> Human causality is too complex for that and history does not repeat itself. Rather to Guicciardini history consists of the whole web of events which surround every decision. No one individual can know enough or be prudent enough to drive events. The web is too vast and too susceptible to manipulation by the various, mutually exclusive *particolari* of others. Regardless of how wise, educated, experienced, or prudent a man might be, his individual qualities are only one tiny factor in that web of circumstances. In this, of course, Guicciardini is writing an apologia for his own failure in his work for Pope Clement VII and his inability to control

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<sup>12</sup> F. Guicciardini, *Maxims and Reflections of a Renaissance Statesman* [*Ricordi*], tr. M. Domandi (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 69 (no. 110).

young Cosimo de'Medici. But, it extends beyond that exculpation: it defines a theory of history based on appreciation of all possible factors in historical causality, not merely those driven by individual men and their deeds.

For Gucciardini, then, the discovery of the New World is just another fact, another element to be factored into the complex equation of historical change. All men are accepted for what they are, even if what they are should prove to be dramatically distant from the experience of Florentine humanists. There is no prejudice in favour of self over other in Gucciardini because his "self" is not a metaphor for a cultural collective unconscious stretching back to antiquity and rehabilitated in the centuries after Petrarch. He accepts what is as given and verifiable, even if it explodes the foundations of classical learning and revealed religion. It is not an accident that Francesco rejected his father's Platonism in favour of Aristotelianism and the law.

Machiavelli, though, is most concerned with individual character and with the ancients. His humanist perspective was driven by that same classical humanism first delineated and applied by Petrarch in the second half of the fourteenth century. Petrarch was obsessed with himself. He recovered the genre of autobiography — then as now a category of fiction — psychological motivation and the central role of classical literature in illuminating and defining the individual, autonomous self. Petrarch's interest in individual personality resulted in his rejection of the Aristotelian structures of medieval thought, to the point that he was not concerned with science or external discovery. He wrote in his little book *On His Own Ignorance and the Ignorance of Others*: "What is the use — I beseech you — of knowing the nature of quadrupeds, fowls, fishes, and serpents and not knowing or even neglecting man's nature, the purpose for which we are born and whence and whereto we travel?"<sup>13</sup> It is human experience, informed by ancient literature, which gives us our selves.

There was also in Petrarch something not found in Machiavelli, indeed an element specifically rejected by the au-

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<sup>13</sup> F. Petrarch, "On His Own Ignorance", in E. Cassirer. P.O. Kristeller, J.H.Randall eds, *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 58-9.



thor of the *Discourses* and *The Prince*: that is, a sincere, if often idiosyncratic, Christianity. Later, in that same text, Petrarch remarks that he is a true and genuine son of the faith, "a most ardent Christian"<sup>14</sup>. In this context he consequently notes that, "The voices of the Apostles were heard all over the earth, and their words spread unto the ends of the world"<sup>15</sup>. Here rests the other element of the Western tradition and mind: Christian Revelation, in the very form that by Guicciardini challenged in the quotation above.

These two factors, Christianity and classical learning defined the psychology of the Renaissance Italian mind which had been celebrated as individual and specific by Petrarch and the classical humanists. Or, in the words of Burckhardt, "man became a spiritual individual and recognized himself as such", and not "conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family or corporation"<sup>16</sup>. Such assumptions drove Burckhardt to investigate the civilization of the Renaissance largely in terms of these elements, to which he added the pre-occupations of his own time, that is, modernity (or progress) and a Romantic ideal of genius or *volksgeist*, which he attributes as specific to the Italian people in the fourteenth century and afterwards.

Burckhardt was born a Swiss Calvinist patrician of Basle in 1818, the same year as Karl Marx. He studied at Berlin and was a student of Ranke and was influenced both by the Romantic movement and Hegelism, both of which he was to reject. Like Goethe before him, two trips to Italy transformed him into a humanist, aesthetic observer, an historian of culture. Consequently, although trained as an historian, he became an extremely influential art historian, writing (then) definitive guides to Italian art (*Cicerone*, 1855, and his expansion of Kugler, 1847). Indeed, his *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* was originally designed as a kind of prologue to a massive history of Italian art.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 79. See Guicciardini's comment above on this reference to the psalms.

<sup>16</sup> J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, tr. S. Mid-  
dlemore (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), I, 143.

Burckhardt's other works must be noted as well. Seven years before the printing of his *Civilization of the Renaissance* he had published *The Age of Constantine the Great*. This is a study of cultural decadence in the ancient world, the decline of the classical models Burckhardt so admired. After his death his huge four-volume *History of Greek Civilization* appeared (1898-1902). What is clear is Burckhardt's focus on the ancient world, on the essence of high European culture defined by a knowledge of Greece and Rome.<sup>17</sup>

This naturally becomes a central theme in his *Civilization*. Part III, "The Revival of Antiquity", occupies not only one fifth of the total text but also informs much of the rest of the study. The role of ancient learning and its reapplication in the Italian Renaissance is necessary, but, Burckhardt notes, not sufficient. The other elements noted above must be factored in as well, in particular "The Development of the Individual" (Part II) and his prevailing theme of the *volksgeist*, the Genius of the Italian people, a kind of Romantic racial theory which produced the firstborn of the sons of Europe. All of these elements must exist and in concentration for the explosion of culture and genius which he describes to occur. He writes: "We must insist upon it as one of the chief propositions of this book that it was not the revival of antiquity alone but its union with the genius (*volksgeist*) of the Italian people which achieved the conquest of the Western World".<sup>18</sup>

The conquest of the Western world: what exactly does he mean? He means the world which interested him, as it interested Machiavelli: the world of the cultivated, highly cultured, well furnished mind and imagination, fashioned in the image of antiquity and directed towards the responsibility to perfect your individual self, to turn your own subjective being into a work of art. The world, then, almost becomes a study of the individual genius which escapes this solipsism through the collective function of the *volksgeist*, the genius of a people. One cannot help but be reminded of Machiavelli's Chapter 26 of *The Prince* when the "Italia mia" (canzone 128) of Petrarch becomes a clarion call for the liberation of Italy from the barbarians: "The virtue boldly shall engage\And swiftly van-

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<sup>17</sup> See Ferguson, *op. cit.*, 179 sqq.

<sup>18</sup> Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, 1, 175.

quish barbarous rage\Proving that ancient and heroic pride\In true Italian hearts has never died."<sup>19</sup> Machiavelli knew and believed in his own *volksgeist* and connected it to the ancient world of Roman virtue.

What, then, Guicciardini, Machiavelli and Burckhardt to witness for the Renaissance and the wider world? Is there any connection between the experience of Guicciardini who saw and discussed the revolutionary impact of the voyages of discovery and Machiavelli who was so obsessed with Florentine politics and classical humanist definitions of culture and self that he could not imagine a world not dominated by those considerations? And to what degree was Jacob Burckhardt, writing three centuries after the printing of Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia*, influenced by his subject, to the degree that he accepts the preconceptions of the humanist mind as necessary conditions for the definition of his own scholarship? And, in turn, to what extent did Burckhardt's prejudices inform the writing of subsequent historians of the Renaissance to work within those boundaries of modernity, individualism, and antiquity?

To begin with Guicciardini: his historical method is the most "modern" inasmuch as he points the way to "scientific" history by requiring verifiable documentation before he makes judgements. He brought home to his family palace on the via Guicciardini many of the archives of the Florentine state in addition to the materials he had kept from years in the papal service. He saw all evidence as significant, if insufficient. He could escape from the strait jacket of classical humanist structures because he did not accept the premise that the ancients had known and discovered everything worth knowing. His experience taught him otherwise, as he instructed Machiavelli. Therefore, the news of the discovery of the New World and the contact with unknown peoples outside the Christian dispensation was part of his narrative of historical events. These were important moments because, in part, they reinforced his belief that experience mattered more than classical knowledge; and they reflected truths that in the future would have to be taken into account in any analysis of European circumstances. True

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<sup>19</sup> N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, tr. G. Bull (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), 138 (Virtù contro a furore/Prenderà l'arme, e fia el combatter corto;/Che l'antico valore/Nell'italici cor non è ancor morto.)

Aristotelian that he was, experience and demonstrable fact were of greater moment than all the theories of all mankind.<sup>20</sup>

Machiavelli is profoundly different, however. He remains a prisoner of his experience and learning. He cannot escape from the twin humanist pillars of ancient learning and individual experience. Indeed, classical learning becomes the structure, the medium for his experience, just as the *Decades* of Titus Livius becomes the vehicle for his discussion of contemporary Florentine issues during the republic of Soderini. Machiavelli has chosen to interpret the world through the prism of the content, genre, form and essence of ancient culture. Here, he is a disciple of Petrarch who saw classical wisdom as the only sure model for understanding himself and his world, the subjective world of his own experience. For Petrarch and Machiavelli, these are not facts to be verified: they are moments to be savoured or events to be interpreted in light of their own immediate circumstances. The inner man has won over the outer world and Petrarch's *Secretum* becomes a text of discovery in itself, but the discovery of the interior world of the individual self.

Machiavelli's tradition, then, is powerfully dependent on the Florentine humanist vision of his universe. The earth is the earth of Pliny, Ptolemy and Strabo. He is concerned, like the later two, with the *ecumene*, defined as the world known to the ancients. To go beyond it is unnecessary. And, the discoveries of his own lifetime are at best curious, singular events, but of no interest to him because he cannot translate them into a vocabulary and frame of reference prepared by his humanist mind.

Although neither Machiavelli nor Guicciardini had anything other than a humane skeptic's opinion of the Christian religion, they could not escape it. It has been suggested that before the Scientific Revolution, atheism was inconceivable; the word, in English, after all, was only coined in the mid-sixteenth century. A world without God was like a

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<sup>20</sup> For Guicciardini as historian, see M. Phillips, *Francesco Guicciardini: The Historian's Craft* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), and F. Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Florence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).

world without gravity, intellectually, practically and psychologically impossible. Machiavelli's Florentine anticlericalism and Guicciardini's cynicism thus differentiate them from Petrarch and his honest but confused and self-seeking piety. Still, the Christian God was there acting through another sacred text, revealing an absolute truth both in itself and through authors who were steeped in classical learning, like St Augustine. It would be incorrect and perilous to simply ignore Christianity as a cultural influence in Machiavelli and Guicciardini, as even the latter was driven to observe that there were people whom God forgot and this was significant.

However, it is with Burckhardt that these elements reach fruition. Machiavelli lacked both the interest and the mental equipment to confront the New World being revealed in his own lifetime. But, Burckhardt had no such limitation: he was a well educated European who did not die until the penultimate year of the last century. To him the New World was known, inhabited and sufficiently powerful to have become in the United States of America the third power in the world after Great Britain and Germany in many areas of economic interest. But, he nevertheless relegates its discovery to a few paragraphs in the chapter on "The Discovery of the World and of Man", which begins with the Crusades, progresses through Marco Polo and reaches Columbus in two paragraphs. Most of the chapter deals with literature.

Those first paragraphs, though, which are subtitled "Journeys of the Italians", begin as does so much of Burckhardt's analyses with a return to his book's guiding principles. It merits quotation: "Freed from the countless bonds which elsewhere in Europe checked progress, having reached a high degree of individual development and been schooled by the teachings of antiquity, the Italian mind now turned to the discovery of the outward universe, and to the representation of it in speech and form".<sup>21</sup> What we have, then, is not just a rehearsal of the great Burckhardtian themes of modernity, individualism and ancient learning but a statement that these things drove the Italians, like Columbus, Cabot, Vespucci, among others, to sail west. The forces that could save Italy from the barbarians in Machiavelli impelled the Italians across the seas. No desire

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<sup>21</sup> Burckhardt, II, 279.

for spices here, no attempts to obviate the middlemen of the Mediterranean, no wish to convert the unbaptised, as Gucciardini had suggested. Rather, simple, ancient learning and its fruits: individualism and progress.

Burckhardt's myopia, then, was an affliction carried within the DNA of the cultivated European mind. It was a position founded on the primacy of classical studies as the discipline required for all endeavours. It was a caste mark of the well born and well educated and it was the model for behaviour, understanding and wisdom. There is no real need to confront the realities of a world unknown to Scripture or antiquity. The European world will always be sufficient and self-contained, despite what might happen elsewhere. The conquest of Europe by the Italians in their humanism and manners could easily have been extended by Burckhardt to include the New World as well. The new nations of the new continents were irrelevant because they did not contribute to those fundamental elements seen as the essence of humanity: European classical studies and individualism. This is the heroic individual or, if you prefer the other Burckhardtian tag, unbridled egoism, of Machiavelli's *Prince* transferred to the patrician scholar of Basle. Burckhardt determined how scholars respond to the Renaissance and to a degree how they still study it. What he did not do, however, was to address his own presumptions to understand better that his short-sightedness was conditioned by the very period he studied. He could not escape the humanist, Christian mentality of his subject, despite what he knew, because, like Machiavelli in his time, he simply did not care. It did not matter. It was not to be found in ancient texts or Christian revelation, despite the German humanist, Willibald Pirckheimer's, contention that the ancients had known of the New World, which he proved by collecting and printing dozens and dozens of ambiguous selections from classical authors which might, if laboured, indicate that something wonderful rested on the far side of the Ocean Sea.

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## À LA RECHERCHE DE L'IDENTITÉ CATALANE DANS LES ROMANS D'EDUARDO MENDOZA ET DE MANUEL VÁZQUEZ MONTALBÁN.

*L'hégémonie complète dans l'ordre de l'idéologie, les systèmes de domination politique et d'exploitation économique qui caractérisent une formation sociale.*

Marc Angenot

Tous les systèmes hégémoniques auxquels nous pouvons penser disposent de deux possibilités pour conjurer les éléments étrangers de toute nature qui le menacent: la dictature en les éliminant, la démocratie en les assimilant. Pour cette raison, lorsque la légalité se trouve soumise à la dictature, la légitimité est ailleurs, mais lorsque la démocratie se constitue en système légal, la légalité et la légitimité doivent s'allier.

Le propre de la modernité c'est la crise de légitimité, qui a été définie par Habermas, Lyotard et d'autres. Dans sa recherche d'alternatives à cette crise, la culture du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle a opté pour une tentative de démocratisation de l'art au moyen de l'intégration de certaines formes culturelles qui avaient été ignorées ou proscrites précédemment.

Nous savons, néanmoins, que dès que l'on donne la même valeur à deux systèmes de signes qui ne l'avaient pas auparavant, étant donné que l'un était légitime à cause de sa catégorie de production canonique et l'autre appartenait à la culture populaire, la crise de la légitimité s'instaure.

La crise de la légitimité est perceptible, grâce à la distance critique que l'ironie permet; mais, d'une façon plus précise grâce à la parodie qui, à notre avis, caractérise la crise qu'éprouve l'art particulièrement dans ce dernier quart du siècle. Nous



pensons que tout comme l'ironie, figure rhétorique qui agit principalement sur la phrase et caractérise l'art romantique<sup>1</sup>; la parodie, qui agit sur le texte dans son ensemble, caractérise l'art moderne et postmoderne.

Cependant, il faut admettre que l'ironie aussi bien que la parodie peuvent créer une certaine distance entre l'énoncé et l'énonciation. Nous pouvons affirmer que l'une autant que l'autre ainsi que l'inclusion d'éléments constitutifs des formes les plus populaires de la culture, — ce qui mettrait en évidence la rupture des frontières qui séparaient les différentes manifestations culturelles — constituent en grande partie les bases sur lesquelles est en train de se bâtir la culture littéraire espagnole actuelle.

Un exemple qui peut illustrer ce que l'on vient d'affirmer serait l'inclusion de recettes de cuisine dans certains romans. Nous citons un commentaire gastronomique, qui est, à notre avis, beaucoup plus intéressant que la recette qu'il accompagne:

El hombre es un caníbal [...] mata para alimentarse y luego llama a la cultura en su auxilio para que le brinde coartadas éticas y estéticas. El hombre primitivo comía carne cruda, plantas crudas. Mataba y comía. Era sincero. Luego se inventó el roux y la bechamel. Ahí entra la cultura. En mascarar cadáveres para comérselos con la ética y la estética a salvo (Vázquez Montalbán 29)

(L'homme est un cannibale [...] il tue pour se nourrir et après il appelle la culture à son secours pour qu'elle lui donne des alibis éthiques et esthétiques. L'homme primitif mangea la viande crue, les plantes crues. Il tua et il mangea. Il était sincère. Après le roux et la bechamel furent inventés. Voilà la culture qui faisait son apparition. Camoufler les cadavres pour les manger avec l'éthique et l'esthétique sauves, la traduction est nôtre).

Ce commentaire à propos de la culture gastronomique c'est la réponse donnée par le détective de la série Carvalho à un interlocuteur, dans le roman de Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, *El delantero centro fue asesinado al atardecer*, de 1989. La relation

<sup>1</sup> Il faut penser à l'importance que les romantiques accordaient à l'ironie. Pour eux « l'ironie est la forme du paradoxe. Tout ce qui est à la fois bon et grand est paradoxe » fragment n° 48 de Schlegel, Friedrich : *Fragments critiques ; apud* (Lacoue-Labarthe y Nancy 1978 : 87).

qui s'établie entre gastronomie et culture, éthique et esthétique, peut être considérée comme la prise de position de la part du personnage que l'on reconnaît bien dans l'iconoclaste irrévérent qui est Pepe Carvalho.

Aussi bien dans le livre cité que dans d'autres de la même série, Pepe brûle délibérément, et l'on pourrait même dire rituellement, les livres de sa bibliothèque. Livres, par ailleurs, considérés comme chef-d'œuvres de la littérature ou comme dépositaires du « savoir » humain.

Ce geste, symbole de la destruction de la culture écrite, perd sa transcendance dans les romans car en réponse aux questions de son hôte, étonné par l'acte, sa seule explication est qu'il faut bien chauffer la salle. Il affirme en outre, que les livres ne contiennent que des insignifiances.

La destruction systématique des livres pourrait être prise pour un acte de barbarie dans le cas d'un personnage qui méconnaîtrait la valeur que la culture hégémonique accorde à chaque un des textes. Cependant lorsque le personnage fait preuve d'une connaissance aussi profonde autant des textes choisis comme de la culture à laquelle ils appartiennent, — il procède à l'identification au préalable du texte qu'il va brûler, et le fait passer au feu par la suite — des doutes envahissent notre esprit quant à la signification qu'il faut donner à l'acte posé.

La présence des recettes de cuisine et le fait de brûler des livres acquièrent, donc, une valeur de provocation, mais, ce qui est peut-être plus important, sont la manifestation d'une nécessité de participer dans les manifestations culturelles actuelles. D'autre part, nous ne devons pas oublier que l'auteur, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, continue à écrire.

Tous ces constats nous remettent devant le paradoxe de l'impossibilité/la nécessité d'écrire auquel plusieurs écrivains se sont confrontés depuis le début du siècle.

Quoique le déchirement souffert par certains auteurs soit bien réel<sup>2</sup>, dans la série Carvalho ce déchirement a été littéralisé : banalisation — stéréotype ? Ce qui avait de l'importance auparavant n'est qu'un acte ordinaire à présent. Cette banalisation peut être interprétée comme la manifestation de

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<sup>2</sup> Pensons à tous ceux qui ont exigé que leur œuvre soit brûlée après leur mort.

l'un des traits de la culture postmoderne dans la narrative espagnole contemporaine.

Nous savons, par surcroît, que les romans publiés pendant la période dite de transition espagnole s'adressent à une société en transformation: à la société de la transition entre une longue dictature et une démocratie naissante ; avec tous les troubles et ajustements dus aux changements vers la nouvelle situation. Dans ces circonstances apparaît une nouvelle narrative qui répond aux attentes d'un public plus diversifié, plus exigeant et moins conventionnel. Nous observons qu'une plus grande complexité de la réalité sociale requière de nouveaux instruments de représentation.

Nous ne devons pas oublier, cependant, la présence de la censure imposée par le franquisme pendant quarante ans et qui empêcha la libre expression ; ou, si l'on veut reprendre les termes utilisés au début, élimina les éléments hétérogènes.

Une fois la dictature de Franco terminée, de jeunes narrateurs nés pendant la dictature ont commencé à publier durant les années du post-franquisme. Ceux-ci se sont posés des questions par rapport à la période précédant la guerre civile. Pour répondre à ces questions, quelques-uns ont choisi d'écrire sur des sujets qui avaient une certaine relation avec la Seconde République, la guerre civile ou les événements qui avaient rendu possible l'avènement de l'une ou de l'autre. Ils essayaient grâce à leur écriture de comprendre des faits historiques immédiatement antérieurs.

Ce n'est sûrement pas le cas d'Eduardo Mendoza<sup>3</sup> pour qui l'histoire de Barcelone occupe une place de choix. Il a préféré mettre en évidence des faits qui sont particulièrement significatifs pour la Catalogne. Ceci nous paraît d'autant plus clair si l'on tient compte du fait que les événements dont il nous parle dans ses romans apparaissent comme ayant lieu en marge et/ou en contresens de ce qui est arrivé dans le reste de la péninsule.

Il faut signaler que ce changement de focalisation de l'histoire espagnole vers l'histoire catalane s'inscrit dans le paradigme des manœuvres déstabilisatrices qui ont pour fonction de

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<sup>3</sup> En réponse à la question: pourquoi ne pas écrire sur la guerre civile ? il a dit: « J'aimerais le faire, mais je n'en ai pas encore éprouvé la nécessité » (Propos recueillis par Cortanze, Gérard de in « J'appartiens à une génération qui a voulu oublier » in *Magazine Littéraire*, n° 330, Mars 1995 : 33).

mettre en évidence le manque de légitimité des différents régimes politiques qui en se succédant ont continué à reléguer les régions périphériques en marge d'un centre unique et unifié.

En faisant ceci Eduardo Mendoza donne la parole aux représentants d'une Barcelone moderne qui veut se faire entendre. Il mène son projet tout en évitant de parler des événements historiques hégémoniques, — suivant ainsi, le même schéma que le Centre (l'Espagne) avait utilisé auparavant pour exclure les périphéries — car elles pourraient éventuellement lui ôter le protagonisme<sup>4</sup>.

La bourgeoisie barcelonaise à la fin du siècle dernier, comme toute classe sociale émergente, avait besoin d'une idéologie qui pouvait la justifier, d'origines mythiques sur lesquelles établir solidement sa raison d'être. D'après Mendoza le symbole de la Barcelone moderne et bourgeoise se trouve dans le Lycée :

Wagner fue, en muchos aspectos, el profeta que necesitaba Cataluña, a la que éste, por un extraño azar, había incluido o parecía haber incluido en su imaginaria como lugar de origen o destino de algunos de sus héroes, justificando así la apropiación por los catalanes de la épica fundacional que Wagner había creado para una Baviera tan necesitada de ella como la propia Cataluña. Aquellas gestas primitivas y heroicas unidas a aquella música rabiosamente vanguardista proporcionaron a los catalanes la fórmula mágica que les permitía aunar su pasado legendario con su vocación de progreso : una auténtica mitología de la modernidad (Mendoza, Cristina y Eduardo, 42-43)

(Wagner a été, dans beaucoup d'aspects, le prophète dont la Catalogne avait besoin, à laquelle, par un étrange hasard, il avait inclu ou paraissait avoir inclu dans son imagerie comme lieu d'origine ou destin de certains de ses héros, ce qui semblait justifier l'appropriation de la part des catalans de l'épique fondationnelle que Wagner avait créé pour une Bavière aussi nécessitée d'elle que la propre Catalogne. Ces gestes primitifs et héroïques unies à cette musique rageusement avant-gardiste proportionnaient aux catalans la formule magique qui leur per-

<sup>4</sup> « Pour l'histoire dans sa forme classique, le discontinu était à la fois le donné et l'impensable : ce qui s'offrait sous l'espèce des événements dispersés — décisions, accidents, initiatives, découvertes ; et ce qui devait être, par l'analyse, contourné, réduit, effacé pour qu'apparaisse la continuité des événements. La discontinuité, c'était ce stigmate de l'éparpillement temporel que l'historien avait à charge de supprimer de l'histoire » (Foucault 1992 : 16).

mettaient de joindre son passé légendaire à sa vocation de progrès : une authentique mythologie de la modernité, la traduction est notre).

Pour Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, qui décrit lui aussi Barcelone avec parodie, mais un siècle plus tard, la culture barcelonaise a des héros beaucoup plus prosaïques : les joueurs de foot qui vont mener le club de foot le plus important de Barcelone à la victoire contre le club de foot madrilène.

Examinons une partie de la première lettre anonyme reçue par l'administration du club dans laquelle il y a une menace contre le héros du jour :

Porque habéis usurpado la función de los dioses que en otro tiempo guiaron la conducta de los hombres, sin aportar consuelos sobre-naturales, sino simplemente la terapia del grito más irracional : el delantero centro será asesinado al atardecer (Vázquez Montalbán, 13)

(Parce que vous avez usurpé la fonction des dieux que ja dis guidèrent la conduite des hommes, sans apporter des réconforts surnaturels, mais simplement la thérapie du cri le plus irrationnel : l'avant-centre sera assassiné à la tombée du jour).

Que ce soit au Lycée ou sur le terrain de football, les héros de Wagner ou les avant-centres, la présence de cette sorte de héros dans l'imaginaire populaire catalane devient une parodie qui enlève la légitimation tout en hiper-légitimant ; c'est-à-dire, c'est une nouvelle manifestation de la crise de légitimation dont nous avons parlé plus haut.

L'œuvre d'Eduardo Mendoza — mais aussi celle de Vázquez Montalbán et d'autres — se présente à l'encontre des discours hégémoniques qui dominent le champ historique espagnol depuis longtemps, ceci à un moment clef de l'histoire espagnole. Il faut rappeler l'importance de l'année de la publication du premier roman d'Eduardo Mendoza dans la récente histoire espagnole, aussi bien du point de vue politique que social. Effectivement, *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta* apparut à peine quelques mois avant la mort de Francisco Franco le 20 Novembre 1975.

Nous ne devons pas oublier, cependant, qu'au moment de sa publication — et on pourrait même dire, depuis le début des années 70 —, le régime dictatorial qui avait occupé la scène politique espagnole durant près de 40 ans, agonisait. Il ne reste

pas moins vrai que la société espagnole s'attendait à d'importants changements tout en craignant la période d'incertitude ainsi que les bouleversements que ces changements pouvaient amener.

La crise de légitimité propre à la modernité fait donc son apparition dans la narrative de l'Espagne post-franquiste dans les écrits de toute une série de nouveaux narrateurs. Ceux-ci mettent en relief la crise de légitimité actuelle, tel que l'illégitimité du système dictatorial avait été mise en évidence par certains précurseurs, parmi lesquels nous pouvons citer Luis Martín Santos, Juan Goytisolo et Vázquez Montalbán lui-même.

La construction de l'identité nationale espagnole, qui a commencé à se former il y a cinq siècles, en utilisant les événements que l'histoire a considérés « significatifs » et en éliminant ceux qui pourraient être perçus comme aléatoires, est problématisée dans l'œuvre d'Eduardo Mendoza au moyen de la mise en évidence des contradictions de la nationalité catalane.

À cause des grandes différences culturelles que nous pouvons observer entre les diverses régions espagnoles, des forces centrifuges et centripètes se manifestent avec une certaine périodicité, spécialement durant les époques d'ouverture politique ou de crises de « valeurs nationales ». C'est le cas de la Catalogne du post-franquisme.

Au point de vue culturel, nous pouvions percevoir la nécessité d'un virage mais nous ne pouvions pas connaître les alternatives au « *realismo social* », qui avait dominé la scène culturelle espagnole dès les années 50.

Le « *realismo social* » était né comme une nécessité pour dénoncer le régime, et c'est donc usé tout comme le régime. L'« *experimentalismo* », qui était présenté comme la seule alternative depuis quelques années, échoua dans sa prétention de substituer le réalisme social.

L'expérimentalisme, dans son désir de contrer la simplicité du réalisme social, proposait des textes dont le déchiffrage était impossible. À cause de cela il s'était heurté au refus d'une grande partie de la critique qui l'accusait d'élitiste et du public qui trouvait trop compliqué ce qu'on lui proposait comme lecture.

C'est dans de telles circonstances que le premier roman d'Eduardo Mendoza fût accueilli comme plein de promesse car il s'éloignait des plates dénonciations du réalisme en même temps qu'il présentait au public une histoire lisible. La critique, désorientée par les expériences des années précédentes, retrouvait

dans les romans d'Eduardo Mendoza, des éléments réalistes dont elle se sentait dépossédé par ce qu'elle a commencé à appeler « la parenthèse expérimentaliste ».

À la suite de tout ce que l'on vient de dire, il n'est pas étonnant qu'une grande partie de la critique, qui se sentait rassurée de pouvoir identifier des éléments connus, essaya d'assimiler l'œuvre d'Eduardo Mendoza au réalisme et à la tradition.

Nous nous proposons d'examiner maintenant quelques-uns des aspects de l'œuvre romanesque d'Eduardo Mendoza car nous pensons que depuis son premier roman ses écrits sont particulièrement représentatifs de la littérature espagnole de transition. Pour mieux faire comprendre notre point de vue nous avons choisi de travailler sur l'un des romans d'Eduardo Mendoza : *La isla inaudita*, de 1989 ; plus spécialement, sur le personnage principal de ce roman, Fábregas.

Dans la présentation que le narrateur fait de Fábregas, le lecteur apprend qu'il s'agit d'un personnage déraciné :

al diablo la empresa, pensó. Salvo esta empresa heredada de su padre, a la que había dedicado toda su vida hasta el presente y por la que nunca había sentido ningún interés, nada le ataba a Barcelona (I. I.: 5)

(au diable l'entreprise, pensa-t-il. Sauf cette entreprise héritée de son père, rien ne le lié à Barcelone.

Ce même narrateur se plaît à mettre en évidence que Fábregas manque de relations sociales solides :

hacia sus amigos sentía un desapego creciente (I. I.: 6)

(il se détachait de plus en plus de ses amis.

D'autre part, ses attaches familiales, qui n'ont jamais été très solides, se sont beaucoup relâchées les années précédentes, comme nous pouvons l'observer dans le passage suivant:

unos años antes se había casado llevado de un impulso repentino que seguramente tenía poco que ver con el amor verdadero ; poco después su mujer y él se habían separado en los términos más amigables. De aquel matrimonio tenía un hijo al que ahora veía ocasionalmente (I.I.: 5-6)

(il s'était marié quelques années auparavant, par une impulsion momentanée qui n'avait pas grande chose à voir avec le véri-

table amour ; peu après sa femme et lui s'était séparés dans les termes les plus amiables. De ce mariage il avait un enfant qu'il ne voyait qu'à l'occasion).

Fábregas est l'héritier d'une entreprise familiale et le typique même du représentant de l'industriel barcelonais, ce qui lui aurait permis de mener une vie libre de toute préoccupation économique. C'est pourquoi il s'inquiète lorsque, pour la première fois de sa vie, il prend une décision qu'il qualifie, lui-même, d'absurde (« disparate ») :

— Riverola, me voy de viaje — le anunció.

El abogado hizo un movimiento con la cabeza sin levantar la vista de los papeles que sostenía en la mano. Con aquel gesto quería decir que tal cosa era imposible, que los asuntos de la empresa no permitían que Fábregas se ausentara. Pero éste no estaba dispuesto a renunciar a su proyecto (I.I.: 5)

(— Riverola, je parts en voyage — lui annonça-t-il. L'avocat fit un mouvement avec la tête sans lever la vue des papiers qu'il tenait dans la main. Avec ce geste il voulait dire que telle chose était impossible, que les affaires de l'entreprise ne permettent pas que Fábregas s'en alla. Mais il ne voulait renoncer à son projet pour rien au monde).

Fábregas quitte la ville où il a toujours vécu, laissant l'entreprise familiale à l'abandon, et finit par s'installer dans une ville semblable où il mène le même genre de vie<sup>5</sup>.

Si Fábregas partit en voyage malgré les convenances sociales, c'est à la recherche de la connaissance — dans son cas la connaissance de soi-même — ou comme l'appelle Wladimir Krysinskila *quête aléthique*, qui peut se décrire comme la « multiplicité du transcodage extern » et la « désagrégation du référent »<sup>6</sup>, symbolisé, dans ce roman par la présence du miroir.

L'utilisation du miroir fonctionne comme une médiatisation de l'être « réel » — Fábregas — poussé par l'opinion qu'il veut

<sup>5</sup> Si nous voulons chercher des antécédents littéraires réalistes nous ne trouverons pas mieux que Charles, protagoniste de *Le faucon de Malte* (voir le chapitre de ma thèse doctoral sur le sujet). Malheureusement pour la critique la plus traditionnelle, *Le faucon de Malte* n'appartiennent pas à la tradition espagnole et, comble de malheur, il s'agit d'un texte non canonique.

<sup>6</sup> KRYSINSKI, Wladimir : *Le paradigme inquiet. Pirandello et le champ de la modernité*. Longueuil, Éditions du Préambule, 1989, pág. 36.



donner aux autres de lui-même, de l'opinion que les autres ont de lui et l'opinion qu'il a de lui-même: la non coïncidence de ces opinions donne comme résultat la désagrégation du référent qui va être perçu comme l'« archétype du bourgeois désenchanté » c'est-à-dire l'homme moderne qui a comme représentation littéraire, entre autres :

Vitangelo Moscarda dans *Un, personne et cent mille*, [qui] présente du point de vue sémiotique un intérêt particulier. Dans son discours, trois opérateurs sémiotiques convergent. D'abord, voix réflexive du narrateur : Moscarda raisonne après avoir découvert qu'il avait une perception fautive de lui-même et en tout cas différente de celle que les autres avaient de lui. Ensuite, le monologue explicatif: le discours de Moscarda est une démonstration rigoureuse de son savoir négatif. Et enfin, le métadiscours : le monologue de Moscarda est un déplacement continu des niveaux narratif et métanarratif, discursif et métadiscursif (Krysinski : 37).

Le processus décrit par Wladimir Krysinski pour expliquer ce personnage de Pirandello s'applique aussi chez Fábregas, comme l'on peut s'en rendre compte dans le texte suivant :

— [Fábregas] raisonne après avoir découvert qu'il avait une perception fautive de lui-même et en tout cas différente de celle que les autres avaient de lui :

esta afirmación irritó a Fábregas: ofendía su vanidad que le dijeran que su caso se asemejaba tanto a otro. ¿Será posible que el resultado de toda una vida sea solamente eso: un caso idéntico en todo a muchos otros, desprovisto de individualidad?, pensó. Sí, sin duda los seres humanos estamos predestinados a disolvernó en una sola masa homogénea, un verdadero magma del que sólo está llamado a destacar uno entre decenas de millones (I.I.: 35)

(cette affirmation irrite Fábregas : qu'on lui disait que son cas ressemblait tant d'autres offensé sa vanité. Serait-il possible que le résultat de toute une vie ne soit que cela : un cas identique en tout à beaucoup d'autres, sans la moindre individualité ?, pensa-t-il. Oui, sans aucun doute nous, les êtres humaines, nous sommes prédestinés à nous dissoudre dans une seule masse homogène, un véritable magma duquel seulement un parmi des dizaines de millions peut se distinguer).

— *le monologue explicatif: le discours de [Fábregas] est une démonstration rigoureuse de son savoir négatif:*

Efectivamente, he vivido mi vida como un imbécil, escribí, pero ahora comprendo que no me fue dada otra alternativa y que, puesto que tampoco me será dada otra oportunidad, tanto la queja como el arrepentimiento resultan superfluos. [...] « Para combatir esta desazón, algunos se entregan a una actividad sin tregua; otros, por la misma causa, persiguen el dinero, el éxito, el poder y otros fines igualmente superfluos » [...] « Otros, por último » prosiguió, « se encierran en sí mismos, como si sólo una vida interior llevada a los límites de la demencia pudiera dulcificar la aridez de toda existenci ». De todos, éstos son los peores, pensó; pero no consignó esta idea por escrito : no quería influir en la opinión de la persona a la que iba dirigida la carta (I.I.: 226)

(« En effet, j'ai vécu ma vie comme un imbécile », écrit-il, « mais maintenant je comprends que je n'avais pas d'autres alternatives et que, étant donné que j'aurais pas non plus d'autres occasions, aussi bien la plainte que le repentir sont superflus ». [...] « Pour combattre cette inquiétude, il y en a qui se donnent à une activité sans repos ; d'autres, par la même raison, poursuivent l'argent, la réussite, le pouvoir et d'autres buts aussi superflus les uns que les autres » [...] « D'autres, finalement » poursuivit, « s'enferment dans soi-mêmes, comme si seulement une vie intérieure menée aux limites de la démence pouvait dulcifier l'aridité de toute existence ». De tous, ces derniers sont les pires, pensa-t-il ; mais n'écrivit pas cette idée : ne voulait pas influencer l'opinion de la personne à laquelle la lettre était adressée.

— *le métadiscours: le monologue de [Fábregas] est un déplacement continu des niveaux narratif et métanarratif, discoursif et métadiscoursif, que l'on étudie dans l'incipit et l'explicit du roman.*

L'axe structurateur du roman semble être la tentative entreprise par Fábregas pour se connaître lui-même. Déjà dans les premiers mots de l'incipit on peut observer ses doutes par rapport à la perception qu'il a de lui-même :

quizá lo que me ocurre es que toda mi vida he sido un soñador, pensó Fábregas una mañana de primavera mientras se afeitaba, mirando fijamente en el espejo sus propias facciones embotadas por el sueño (I.I.: 5)

(il se peut que ce qui m'arrive soit la conséquence du fait que tout au long de ma vie je n'ai été qu'un rêveur, pensa Fábregas un bon matin de printemps pendant qu'il se faisait la barbe en regardant fixement ses propres traits engourdis par le sommeil.

Mais aussi dans *l'explicit*, où il reprend les mêmes mots, on peut sentir de l'acceptation de l'impossibilité de changements majeurs dans sa vie:

en la sala de recepción se detuvo: los espejos sin azogue le mostraron desde todos los ángulos su propia figura. Perdido en medio de aquel espacio desolado e iluminado por la luz fría de la luna parecía un personaje de sus propias fantasías. Quizá lo que me ocurre es que toda mi vida he sido un soñador, pensó (I.I.: 236)

(il s'arrêta dans la salle de réception: les miroirs sans étamer lui montraient tous les angles de sa propre figure. Perdu au milieu de cet espace désolé et illuminé par la lumière froide de la lune, il avait l'air d'un personnage de ses propres fantaisies. Il se peut que ce qui m'arrive soit la conséquence du fait que tout au long de ma vie je n'ai été qu'un rêveur, pensa Fábregas.

On pourrait se demander qui est « el soñador » dans la logique interne du texte, il est « celui qui se renferme sur soi-même, comme si seulement une vie intérieure menée aux limites de la démence pourrait dulcifier l'aridité de toute existence ». (I.I., p. 226)

Tel qu'affirmé par Wladimir Kryszinski, le paradigme *pirandellien*:

s'inscrit dans un geste artistique commun au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle à quelques grands créateurs : Joyce, H. James, V. Woolf, Musil, Broch, O'Neill, St. I. Witkiewicz, A. Biély et E. Canetti, pour ne mentionner que ceux-là. Ce geste consiste à affirmer par des modalités discursives diverses et à des degrés différents la mort de l'homme libéral (24).

Le héros du roman est devenu un homme ordinaire dans cette fin du siècle ; si ordinaire qu'il ne pense qu'à lui-même. On peut dire qu'avec lui meurt le héros, puisqu' :

une dialectique parcourt le siècle ; la thèse affirme qu'il n'y a que la vie intérieure qui compte ; l'antithèse, que la vie intérieure n'existe pas. La synthèse est déjà derrière eux, derrière

nous: en réalité, cette tension conduit à la mort du héros, dans la littérature contemporaine d'avant-garde (Tadié 40).

Pour Fábregas, qui s'inscrit dans le complexe contexte de la fin du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, et qui vit dans un épistémé dont la certitude du hasard fait loi :

nous avons conscience de vivre dans des sociétés sans boussole, ayant perdu leurs repères, ne sachant plus relier le futur au passé. Autant dire que les idéologies ne servent plus de référent, qu'il s'agisse du socialisme ou du libéralisme, car les pratiques qui prétendaient les incarner se sont fourvoyées<sup>7</sup> (Ferro 39).

L'accidentel est la seule chose dont il puisse être certain.

L'homme occidental a perdu peu à peu l'assurance que le développement des sciences lui avait procuré. La sécurité qui lui donnait le positivisme au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle a cédé sa place à l'incertitude car il a compris que dans le monde il se passe toutes sortes de choses sur lesquelles il n'a pas contrôle.

Tout au long de notre analyse nous avons essayé de faire voir que Fábregas, entrepreneur catalan mais homme de son siècle avant tout, répond aux caractéristiques qui définissent l'« archétype du bourgeois désenchanté ».

Nous ne croyons pas, à travers tout ce que nous venons de voir dans l'analyse présentée que l'on puisse affirmer qu'Eduardo Mendoza respecte la tradition réaliste et encore moins que l'on puisse utiliser son œuvre pour disqualifier les acquis des expérimentalistes car ses romans partagent certains traits du courant artistique expérimentaliste, notamment l'inquiétude du langage, la subversion des genres d'enquête et l'hybridité.

Nous croyons, plutôt, que l'œuvre romanesque d'Eduardo Mendoza s'inscrit pleinement dans son moment d'émission ; par conséquent, ce serait absurde de parler de réalisme dans un sens traditionnel car même si nous pouvons trouver, en effet, certains éléments réalistes, ils sont très souvent parodiés.

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<sup>7</sup> FERRO, Marc : « Médias et intelligence du monde », in *Le monde diplomatique*, janvier 1993.

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## OLIVER AND AMAT: MYTH, GENDER AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

(Two Novels by Contemporary Women Writers)

Journalist, scriptwriter and translator Maria Antónia Oliver (1946 —), a prolific and significant member of the Mallorcan group, has published short stories, novels, literary criticism, travelogues and screen plays, many of which involve fantasy, mythical creatures or situations, magic, fairy-tale motifs, visions, dream sequences, hallucinations, or elements of science fiction. Metamorphosis, especially, appears as a significant repetitive myth, along with the search for identity. Known for her imaginative style, Oliver often interweaves the mythical or fantastic with utterly prosaic, everyday reality, which frequently constitutes the point of departure and reappears periodically in the course of the narrative. The quest for feminine self-realization or autonomy, characteristically a central concern for Oliver, may be treated psychologically, philosophically or allegorically. A blending of traditional fictional forms with others conservatively viewed as sub-literary typifies Oliver's writing, which includes borrowings from the fantastic, science fiction and detective sub-genres, but also the epic, the chronicle, the adolescent or apprenticeship novel, and the urban novel of quotidian realism.

Her once-somnolent, rural, native island, its history and magical heritage contribute significantly to the ambience and character of her works. Threats of environmental chaos posed by the tourist invasion, booming commercial development and population growth are background themes in Oliver's first two novels, *Cròniques d'un mig estiu* (1970; *Chronicles of a Half Summer*), and *Cròniques de la molt anomenada ciutat de Montcarrà* (1972; *Chronicles of the Oft-Named City of Montcarrà*).

The latter combines treatment of the encroaching destruction of the Mediterranean environment with a family chronicle. Realistic elements of the daily lives of three generations of a proletarian clan are interrupted and relieved via Oliver's incorporation of aspects of *rondalles* — fantastic Mallorcan folktales featuring giants, fairies, and various mythical creatures who (as in the novel discussed below) occasionally involve themselves in human affairs. Although these earlier works are to some extent novels of the interior of the island, Menorca's diminutive dimensions mean that the Mediterranean is never far away, a pervasive presence felt when not actually seen. In her third novel, however, Oliver goes far from shore, to the center (and depths) of the sea.

*El vaixell d'iràs i no tornarà* (Barcelona: Laia, 1976) begins with a single chapter set in unreal, mythic time, with atmosphere and vocabulary evoking both primitive cosmogonies and the fairy tale. In the manner of creation myths, this prologue — prefaced by a rhyming motif — relates how three mischievous, rather childish giants met at an extremely remote moment and place, constructing the "Ship that Sails and Never Returns" of the title. Oliver refrains from drawing any specific connection between this prefatory chapter and the remainder of the novel, set in the present aboard *En Falaguer*, a small Mediterranean steamer making overnight crossings between Mahon (Menorca) and Barcelona. *En Falaguer* possesses most of the accoutrements of larger trans-Atlantic luxury liners, on a smaller, less cosmopolitan scale, carries modern navigational and radio equipment, and accommodates a full crew plus more than 200 passengers, including the indispensable newlyweds and dowager with dog.

Following a routine departure from Mahon with calm sea, clear sky and full moon on a balmy, tranquil night, sometime before dawn space becomes elastic: *En Falaguer* continues to sail on course hour after hour without reaching Barcelona. As those on board begin to question the delay, the officers reassure them that all is normal, so the passengers seek ways to amuse themselves while the crew go about their assigned duties. But time likewise becomes elastic: days and nights last weeks, and most of those on board quickly forget the abnormality of their situation, becoming oblivious to past and future, enjoying the cruise and living for the moment. The ship, with its crew and passengers from varied backgrounds and social classes, constitutes a so-

cial microcosm, and the presence of intercalated philosophical monologues in counterpoint to the action moves the narrative emphatically beyond the realm of mere playful adventure or fantasy, despite the visibility of these elements.

Notwithstanding storms and tempests that have seemingly strayed far from their accustomed latitudes and the absurdly plentiful supplies aboard a vessel that set sail for a voyage of only a few hours, the first half of the novel remains largely in the realm of realism. Up to this point, the narrative might constitute an innovative adaptation of the journey topos, a metaphor for life. Shipboard romances blossom, while the heroine Aina seems to be the only one to question the passive docility of other passengers. Most appear hypnotized, with progressively less and less memory or recollection of earlier events, along with decreasing questions concerning their present situation. At the height of a tempest, Aina witnesses what she interprets as an exchange of messages between the captain and powers of the deep. Her suspicions aroused, she begins to investigate and to attempt to awaken some awareness in other passengers. With considerable difficulty, she convinces a half-dozen that something has gone terribly awry. Nevertheless, time continues to pass while even those most persuaded that something should be done do very little. Aina herself becomes so involved in her passionate love affair with Bernat (also referred to as Gongylus) that an indefinite number of days and nights elapse.

The reader must at some point recall the "Ship of Fools" motif and question whether *En Falaguer* was conceived as a modern variant. Such is the monotony, the sameness of days with no real point of reference, that some readers may also wonder whether this is a ship of death — the living dead. But such a notion is belied by the lightness of the narrative tone, predominantly that of the oral story-teller or weaver of folktales addressed directly to a seemingly youthful group "vosaltres" which includes the reader. Authorial or narratorial interventions addressed to the reader/listeners function especially to convey explanations of how fantastic events occur (how time becomes elastic, how certain events are repeated over and over, how characters age visibly — from fright —, how it happens that there are seven days and seven nights of darkness, etc.). This same voice reflects on gender roles, humorously subverting traditional stereotypes, suggesting that the implied reader(s) or listeners include a female majority. Besides oralism, syne-



sthesia, and rhetorical questions, Oliver's style in this work features a characteristically light touch blending humor and fantasy with occasional intrusions of the violent and grotesque.

Approximately halfway of the novel, when monotony has become the norm, the ship's engines stop suddenly and without warning. Before anyone has had time to worry about drifting or becoming becalmed, *En Falaguer* metamorphoses into a three-masted sailing ship, continuing to sail, although no one has any longer any sense of direction or destination, and the instruments have ceased to function. Delighted with the change, most passengers accept it unquestioningly. Later, they discover that the ship has been occupied by a large number of "rose-colored men", whose purpose is unclear (they appear to be androids whose primary job is vigilance). While Aina and her small group of "aware" friends feel apprehensive of the rose-colored robots, most passengers either ignore or passively accept them. Unquestioning acceptance continues when a still more surprising metamorphosis occurs an indefinite time afterward: without warning, the ship comes to a stop, turning into an island, complete with Mediterranean village. The passengers convert their cabins to shops and restaurants, selling their luggage and bartering for foodstuffs, as reality finally intrudes in the form of scarcity of food. When further passage of time has exhausted all food, they find they no longer have appetites, and shortly after realize they they have also lost their sexual appetites: most people's organs atrophy, they turn uniformly gray, and only a few can tell one person from another or even distinguish male from female.

The fantastic "explanation" proffered involves certain playful giants (seen in the prefatory chapter), denizens of the ocean depths who awaken every seven years to amuse themselves — the inventors of the "Ship that Sails and Never Returns". Their simple-minded play apparently caused the storms, the metamorphoses of *En Falaguer*, and other anomalies. The captain and officers become unwitting accomplices of these beings upon deciding that certain knowledge should be concealed from the passengers. Subsequently, when the captain attempts to ascertain the giants' motives, they treat him as a toy; nevertheless, he reports to his officers that the giants have offered him treasures. The consistent pattern of deception by the shipboard authorities of both passengers and the rest of the crew leads to an atmosphere of mutual distrust. Implied aspects

of censorship, information management or manipulation of public opinion and behavior suggest the "Ship of State" metaphor (while this is more commonly used in English, Oliver has translated works from English to Catalan—including texts of Virginia Woolf—and may well have encountered it elsewhere as well). In any case, several parallels suggest interpretation of the "Ship that Sails and Never Returns" as an allegory of the Franco regime, with the unexpectedly extended voyage and lengthy standing-still as metaphoric representations of the prolonged postwar period and long socio-economic stagnation. The rose-colored robots clearly represent authoritarian control and totalitarian restriction of individual liberties, characterizing the police state. Such hermeneutics may exceed Oliver's intention, but publication of the novel the year after Franco's death strengthens probabilities of a connection. The repeated preoccupation with environmental disaster and social destruction seen in earlier novels of Oliver enhances the likelihood of socio-political allegory. Significantly, the ship's occupants eventually manage to resume their journey by throwing the captain and top officers overboard, after which they begin to recuperate their normal appearances and appetites (a definitive change of command which puts an end to collective or social immobility, stagnation and apathy). *En Falaguer* again becomes a tall-masted sailing vessel, and eventually resumes its original form (perhaps representing the transition to democracy and return to something resembling the Republic). The ship's fuel having been exhausted long before, passengers resolve the crisis by using the lubricant from the robots' veins following a shipboard revolution in which the oppressors are overthrown and killed and their underlings removed from circulation.

Interwoven with the magical tale of the vessel, narrated by the omniscient voice of the oral teller of the tale, Oliver places a second story constituted by the largely stream-of-consciousness style meditations of Aina. Several of Oliver's works interweave two parallel stories, using a contrapuntal technique, with a broader social canvas and narrative of collective transition or impact forming one strand while the other features an individual protagonist with his/her subjectivity, thoughts, emotions and personal development. This basic pattern reappears in "The Ship that Sails and Never Returns", which also interweaves internal monologue with action passages in almost rhythmic regularity. Aina's awakening to love

and eroticism, her reflections on life, are interspersed with concern for the situation of the ship and her fellow passengers. If indeed there be a leader among the passengers, that leader is Aina, who constitutes the force which finally brings them again to port when most others had forgotten any life other than that of the ship. Oliver's translations of Woolf and that writer's acknowledged impact on Oliver's own feminist writing clearly contribute to her conception of the female protagonist, gender roles, and interpersonal relations. Male characters in the novel play decidedly secondary roles.

Unlike masculine novels of the sea, where focus is usually upon a struggle between the protagonist and Nature (whether the elements or denizens of the deep), Oliver's work does not make the sea an antagonist. Nevertheless, it constitutes a significant presence, of which readers are repeatedly reminded:

la mar sempre igual, el mateix paisatge com si no ens moguéssim de lloc, com si cada dia recomençàssim el viatge, on anàvem: ja ni ho record. ¿d'on veníem?, tampoc.... la mar sempre igual, tant com m'agradava l'he arribada a avorrir, abans era un camí obert, ara és un cercle blau í pla que qui sap qué amaga . . . (114)

Because the sea and ships have traditionally constituted a male domain par excellence, it seems particularly noteworthy that Oliver chooses this context as a frame for her strong, thoughtful, decisive heroine who handles multiple threats in low-key, matter-of-fact fashion. From the viewpoint of the feminist writer or critic, additional significance inheres in that fact that Oliver accomplishes this characterization without simplistically reversing gender roles to attribute heroic feats to the female.

The themes of individual and collective identities, the blend of genres transcending normal classifications for prose fiction, and aspects of the female protagonist suggest further appropriate comparisons from Oliver's own work. Her 1985 novel, *Crineres de foc*, likewise employs contrapuntal, parallel plot lines (individual and collective), incorporates aspects of the epic, science fiction and fantasy, the *bildungsroman* and the psychological novel, and features a thoughtfully conceived female protagonist with feminist characteristics. *Punt d'arros* (which is prefaced by a quotation from Virginia Woolf and seen as Oliver's most clearly feminist work) follows *El vaixell d'i-*

*ràs i no tornaràs* in order of publication, coinciding in its presentation of a woman's search for freedom. But *Punt d'arros*, Oliver's most decidedly urban and feminist novel, is her least Mediterranean work, and lacks the characteristic dual plot structure, fantasy elements, and blend of genres.

In addition to the mixture in *El vaixell d'iràs i no tornaràs* of fantasy and realism (with the ocean depths as realm of fantastic creatures and the sea as a place of strange and marvelous happenings), the maritime journey involving motifs of ship, storms and peril, the prolonged wandering, delays and despair before eventual arrival in port must inevitably recall the *Odyssey* as ultimate intertextual referent, with the conventional literary associations and connotations attached thereto. One of the latter, while never specifically enunciated by Oliver, is exile — appropriately evoked since the end of the dictatorship marked the end of the long exile of so many. As epic of exile and wandering, the *Aeneid* constitutes a slightly more distant intertextual echo. Allegorical implications logically deriving from associations with the *Odyssey* also evoke the extended route travelled by Spanish women whose rights — briefly attained under the Republic — were revoked and abolished by the Franco dictatorship, turning back the clock (happenings possibly symbolized by the change of the steamship to a sailing vessel, the near-stoppage of time, and the prolonged immobility). Oliver's novel lacks any specific indication that it targets an audience of female adolescents, but seems particularly appropriate for that group in its provision of a positive feminine role model at the same time that it contributes to remedying a traditional absence or silence in areas of myth and history where only the male voice has been heard, only masculine viewpoints recorded.

Núria Amat, born in Barcelona in 1950, belongs chronologically to the same generation of novelists of transition and democracy as Oliver, but years of expatriation (during which she resided in Paris, Berlin, Bahía Solano [Colombia] and Pittsburgh) seem to have negatively affected her identification with Catalan language and culture. Despite her Barcelona background and Catalan name, she apparently has not written in that language, while Oliver has avoided Castilian. Also unlike Oliver, Amat has developed a specific association with erotic fiction, and her style is characterized as sensual. Her writings are less extensive (I know of only one other, the novel-

ette *Pan de boda* 1979). Failure to write in Catalan would have eliminated her from consideration by the Catalan public with which Oliver has been so successful, and Amat's works have been less noted by critics than Oliver's. Nevertheless, both writers treat feminist themes such as the "liberated" female, feminine sexuality (portrayed with greater specificity by Amat), gender roles and revision of gender stereotypes. Mythological allusions occupy a prominent position in the motivation of Amat's *Narciso y Armonía*, narrated from the viewpoint of the female protagonist, Armonía (who has no intention of resigning herself to the role of Echo).

While Armonía qualifies as a "nymph" in several aspects, not the least of which is her appearance of eternal — or indefinitely prolonged — youth, neither her personality or mythical attributes suggest Echo. Armonía belongs to the class of water nymphs, perhaps the Naiads, but more probably the Oceanids, as seen in her extraordinary love of the Mediterranean, her psychological fusion with the sea and its moods. Even her mother's death in a boating accident (apparently caused by Armonía as a child) does not lessen her love of the water. Once she acquires some degree of independence, she chooses to live alone in her family's seaside summer home in a coastal village while her father remains in Barcelona. Armonía often imagines herself a siren or mermaid, and she swims year round regardless of the weather. The protagonist, a semi-professional dancer — self-taught and intuitive, talented but undisciplined — exhibits a love of ballet second only to her love of the sea. She occasionally performs with a professional troupe, and her associates come largely from the semi-bohemian ambient of the theater. In her thirties when the novel's action commences, Armonía has decided to have herself sterilized. Unmarried, and uninterested in matrimony or motherhood after many minor romances, she views the operation as a guarantee of freedom which will allow her to devote herself fully to dancing and to the sea.

Through her friend Angel, another dancer and a homosexual, she meets Narciso, an extraordinarily beautiful composer and concert pianist who is also homosexual. With profound shock, Armonía recognizes his face as one from a recurrent dream where, in an underwater grotto, she encountered her masculine alter ego reflected in a mirror:

seguía estando sola y, con seguridad absoluta, seguía siendo la misma. Y en cambio... el espejo reflejaba otra forma, iba desvelando otra figura humana distinta a la suya y al propio tiempo idéntica. Opuesta y semejante. A trazos ... se dibujaba la copia exacta de lo que Armonía no era ni llegaría a ser nunca. Se revelaba un hombre, bello como ella, igual a Armonía en todo, sólo que destacando en varonil la naturaleza femenina de Armonía. (38)

In Armonía's recurring dream, love between herself and the beautiful stranger was instantaneous and absolute. Narciso is Armonía's opposite, her "negative reflection", for she is likewise narcissistic. For her, the Mediterranean is, among other things, "gigantesco espejo"(48). And Armonía's beauty is comparably extraordinary, of mythical proportions: "El problema de Armonía residía en su extrema belleza" (48).

Narciso, unquestionably modeled in accord with the mythic archetype, flirts with Armonía from their first meeting at her seaside home, and despite his succession of male companions, the strong mutual attraction between him and the female protagonist grows progressively more intense. A large number of their encounters involve swimming on the beach, with all of the Freudian connotations of water implicitly present. Two-thirds of the novel chronicles their mutual seduction, consummated after prolonged delays and dalliance when Armonía accepts Narciso's invitation to visit his island home in Formentor, attending the premier of his new composition. Overcoming some hesitation, she journeys across the Mediterranean from Barcelona to the Balearic Islands (so tracing in reverse the planned trajectory of *En Falaguer*). Abundant and specific erotic details in Amat's work move sections of the narrative dangerously close to the realm of soft-core pornography, although the focal interest resides in the "conversion" of the lovers to at least temporary acceptance of the notion of commitment and possibly marriage — and in Narciso's case, to heterosexuality, while Armonía also briefly contemplates a possibly homosexual relationship for herself.

Armonía's visit to Narciso's home, planned down to the smallest detail, is intended to be gastronomically, aesthetically, artistically and erotically superb. Unexpectedly, however, once she has conquered him, Armonía finds herself dismayed at Narciso's dependence, frightened by his loss of joy

and liberty. Mirror imagery at this juncture communicates the submersion of his ego in hers: "Narciso, entonces, ¿ más que espejo de sí mismo es reflejo de la persona que ama?" (269). As a mere passive shadow of herself, Narciso no longer interests Armonía, who returns him to the waiting arms of his former lover, Alfonso. As was true of their early encounters, the scenes of their definitive separation likewise feature a seaside setting with walks along the dunes backed by the waters of the Mediterranean. While the sea's role remains largely passive ("gigantesco espejo"), it is the object of Armonía's abiding devotion, to which she returns with the ambivalence and fading of her brief, tempestuous passion for Narciso. Repetitive mirror images throughout the novel underscore the narcissism of both protagonists, tying in the mythological intertexts. Development of the mythological dimension occurs somewhat at the expense of the characters' "humanity", but the device conveys their passions with special clarity and intensity.

Certainly, one major thrust of Amat's novel must be deemed aesthetic. Another, however, clearly involves subversion of sexual stereotypes, archetypal gender roles, and stereotypical erotic relationships. Both protagonists' androgynous characteristics and behavior include transgression of gender roles and types, most flagrantly in Narciso's openly-flaunted homosexuality, but also in Armonía's rejection of the traditional passive, chaste, dependent, domestic and/or maternal feminine model promulgated by the Franco regime. Armonía dares to play the sexual aggressor, and Narciso (having presumably renounced his homosexuality during the passionate commitment to Armonía) nevertheless feels secure enough to garb himself as a transvestite to entertain his guest:

Una mujer bellísima .... (sí, Armonía, atrévete a decirlo), de una mujer fastuosa, impresionante...No podía dar crédito a sus ojos. Sencillamente, la misma inefable visión no se lo permitía .... No podía creerlo. Estaba sobreexcitada, caliente, como diría un hombre. Abrumada .... Armonía quería tocar a esa maravilla. Hombre o mujer; lo que fuera. (233)

Armonía's previously secure sexual identity may not be permanently threatened, but despite doubting that the beauty before her is, in fact, Narciso, she experiences a strong erotic attraction: "No era un travestí. No, no lo era en modo alguno. Era una

mujer, una mujer exótica, y al propio tiempo era Narciso. ¿O el pecado? Sí; el pecado mismo disfrazado de maravilla" (234). Amat further subverts the Victorian gender models for women in postwar Spain when Armonía's passion overcomes her socialization and she throws herself upon the apparition, still unsure whether the other is male or female: "Se echaron sobre el suelo, rodaron y dispusieron sus cuerpos de tal forma que fueran ellos quienes se cuidaran de descubrir la verdad debajo de tanta ropa" (238). Later, although now sure that the lover was Narciso, Armonía dreams that he is not male, but "la misma Lauren Bacall disfrazada de hombre. Fue un sueño divertido" (239). Obviously, Amat's work is not only more erotic and subversive than Oliver's, but less likely to be proffering a positive feminine role model. Despite her beauty and her having achieved some evident sexual liberation, Armonía is not an entirely sympathetic character: she too is narcissistic, sometimes egotistical and not a little spoiled, self-indulgent and slightly frivolous. Hedonism and aesthetics are the dominants in her personal philosophy, and while probably in part the consequence of a general rejection of "committed" art and literature in the generation before, Armonía possesses much greater potential to alienate. The fact that her lifestyle apparently does not succeed in making her happy, and that her self-love compels her to break with Narciso ("su amor de toda la vida" 279) because she intuits that she might lose control of the relationship, increases the probability that she is not intended as a positive feminine role model.

As a logical extrapolation of the Narcissus myth, Amat's prevalent mirror imagery serves several purposes, aiding characterization, serving as alternative or indirect description, and advancing the action. Several contemporary Spanish women writers who employ such imagery make it a metaphor of the feminine condition as they focus upon pregnancy, aging and decadence, alienation, frustration and despair, and forms of evasion ranging from madness to death, drugs and alcoholism. Reworking traditional associations of the mirror with feminine vanity, some women writers adapt it subversively to depict masculine vanity, effeminacy or other weaknesses, and aspects of the foregoing appear in *Narciso y Armonía*. Mirror images also serve to reflect the process of gender formation, to provoke self-encounter or provide a vehicle to epiphany, and insofar as the sea is a mirror, it fulfills several of these functions for



Amat. Contrast between dreams and reality, whether across time or at a specific moment, is also facilitated by mirrors, which also function as a device to juxtapose past and present or as a mechanism of temporal transition. Inseparability of the mirror image from the Narcissus myth gives this device enhanced visibility in *Narciso y Armonía*. Oliver makes extensive use of mirror images, although they do not play a significant role in *El vaixell d'iràs i no tornaràs* (see, for example, her *Muller qui cerca espill* [Woman in Search of a Mirror; 1978-79], a screenplay published together with another feminist drama by Oliver, *Vegetal*). Oliver and Amat coincide in using the mirror with specific reference to narcissism, although narcissistic characteristics are much more fully developed by Amat (in what is also a much more extensive narrative). Both authors recognize the presence of self-love in both sexes, and neither portrays the woman simply as passive reflector or victim.

Although they write in different languages, Oliver and Amat belong to the same generation of women writers and display many characteristics of what might be termed a "second wave" of feminists, no longer primarily concerned with basic legal rights for women and children, women's access to education and the workplace, enclosure and certain social legislation, but now preoccupied with feminine self-realization, a deeper, personal equality in intimate relationships, and subtler aspects of psychological as opposed to legal liberation. Their writings also differ—in quantity and quality, stylistically and ideologically—but the novels examined coincide in the special roles accorded the Mediterranean, the heightened visibility of myth, and the subversive manipulation by both of sex and gender stereotypes. And in that particular aspect, they give new meaning to the Spanish phrase, *descubrir el Mediterráneo*.

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## ARTURO PÉREZ-REVERTE AND THE HISTORICAL NOVEL

Although the historical novel had been highly esteemed by Spanish writers from the XIX century through to those groups or generations of writers formed in the post-war period, from 1939 onwards, it remains true to say that it was not essentially until the early nineteen eighties, that the desire to recount past events and to search for latent run-on signs of identity, which had been prevalent for some time in the French and English literary traditions, began to emerge in Spanish narrative writing.

In December 1982 a work appeared in Spain which was to prove decisive for the immediate development of Spanish literature. At that precise moment in time *The Name of the Rose*, by the Italian writer Umberto Eco, was translated into Spanish. Its success, among readers and critics alike, was immediate. Before this, no-one, not even the publishers themselves, would have believed that such an expensively priced book, of over six hundred pages of dense and at times difficult prose, could have reached its tenth edition by 1985. We should also point out here that only months prior to the presence in Spain of *The Name of the Rose*, the publishers Edhasa, no doubt influenced by what had already been said and written in Italy about Eco's novel, had put into circulation the well-known novel by Marguerite Yourcenar *Adrian's Memoires*. Yourcenar's novel was, in a sense, re-discovered for Spanish readers, since an earlier version of the novel had originally been translated by Julio Cortázar in 1955. It was to this original version, almost thirty years later, that Edhasa was to return. It is no coincidence, therefore, that during the decade of the eighties many novels, of a markedly historical character, were published: *Mansura* (1984), by Félix de Azúa; *No digas que fue un sueño* (1986) and *El sueño de Ale-*

*jandría* (1988), by Terenci Moix; *La ciudad de los prodigios* (1986), by Eduardo Mendoza; *El bobo ilustrado* (1986), by José Antonio Gabriel y Galán; and, among many others, *El húsar* (1986) and *El maestro de esgrima* (1988), by Arturo Pérez-Reverte, the subject of this present study.

From this moment onwards, certain publishers, at times with little regard for even the minimum requirements of quality, became interested in including in their catalogues, the type of novel to which the reading public had become accustomed and for which there was a surprising demand. It is sufficient to point out, in this sense, that from the year 1983 onwards, the well-known, although, for non-literary reasons, not particularly prestigious Planeta book award, was given to works of a historical nature whose contents ranged from ancient times to the recent Spanish Civil War. These works included titles such as *La guerra del general Escobar*, by José Luis Olaizola; *Yo, el rey*, by the late Juan Antonio Vallejo-Nájera; *En busca del unicornio*, by Juan Eslava Galán; and finally, to cut short what would otherwise be an excessively long list, *El manuscrito carmesí*, by Antonio Gala. Recently, Javier García Sánchez, commenting on the Madrid Book Fair, referred to a wide "range of best sellers which create history and are of considerable help in understanding it".<sup>1</sup> Also included in this collection were the Spanish translations of the novels of Patrick O'Brian, Noah Gordon, Steven Saylor, Elizabeth George and Robert James Walker, among others.

However, the type of historical novel that has emerged in the latter part of this century corresponds to certain parameters which have to be taken into consideration in order to fully understand it. In a work entitled "La Edad Media y la novela actual", Francisco Javier Díez de Revenga points out that *El nombre de la rosa*, *El maestro de esgrima* and *En busca del unicornio* are, above all, "generic hybrids of historical, suspense or detective novels" (78). Today's writers, it would seem, with few exceptions, are not interested in History as such. The narrator at the end of the twentieth century tries to make the story he tells relevant to today's society, even though it is actually set several centuries ago. It would seem that what the author ultimately believes is that life, in spite of the passing of time, has

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<sup>1</sup> *El mundo*, 3rd June 1995.

changed very little, and that our worries and preoccupations, in spite of everything, remain the same.

The first novel by Arturo Pérez-Reverte, published in 1986, responds to this need to recreate History, selecting from it what the author feels might interest and stimulate his readers. For Pérez-Reverte one of the greatest errors of modern society is our lack of historical knowledge. It is precisely this lack of knowledge which has led us into certain military conflicts which might well have been avoided had we achieved a fuller understanding of their precedents. *El húsar*, Pérez-Reverte's first novel, constantly tries to draw a parallel between the narrative content of the novel and the lessons to be learnt from History. Such is the case that in the early editions of the novel, in the last two pages, we find a curious "Author's note" in which Pérez-Reverte almost apologizes for certain anachronisms present in the work: "It is possible — we read at the beginning of the note — that meticulous specialists may find certain discrepancies in the story I have just recounted. This would not be surprising given that in 1808 no such battle at least of the characteristics described in this novel took place in Andalusia, unless we take into account the battle of Bailén which was fought under very different circumstances" (171). Further on the author includes such an extensive bibliography on the subject that we are given to believe that he actually consulted these works while preparing the text. This bibliography includes books written in English, French and Spanish, in which we even find details referring to the characters' attire.

What was Pérez-Reverte aiming at with the publication of such a work? In our view the quotation from Louis-Ferdinand Céline's *Viaje al fin de la noche*, which serves as an epigraph. *El Husar* is vital in revealing Pérez-Reverte's intentions in this novel. In this quotation we read the following: "I have never liked the countryside. I have always thought of it as rather sad, with its endless muddy banks, its empty houses and its paths which lead nowhere. But if to this we add the war it then becomes unbearable" (77). War can be glorious if contemplated on a small scale tableau, however it ceases to be a noble cause when on the battle field one comes face to face with human beings of flesh and blood; men like ourselves who do not always follow ideals, and who, on occasions, barely understand what is going on before their very eyes. They only know that

they have to obey orders, at whatever cost, because their lives depend on it.

*El husár* is the story of a revelation similar to that experienced by Saint Paul on the road to Damascus. In Pérez-Reverte's work we witness a gradual change of attitude in the two main characters: Michel de Bourmont and Frederic Glüntz, the hussars of Napoleon's fourth regiment posted in Spain. The latter of the two, suffering the anxiety of defeat, kneeling on the ground, his uniform torn and with a sword in his hand which is not even his manages to exclaim: "To hell with heroes and the Emperor's light brigade. None of this was of any importance in the light of that darkness, among the bushes and near the glow of the fire closeby (...) . Mud, blood and shit. That was war for you, that was it, good God. That was it" (158).

One of the main achievements of Pérez-Reverte's work, apart from the development of the main characters, is the analysis it makes of the Spanish as they try to defend themselves against the French usurpers. Commander Berret, contemplating the gutted corpse of one of his men, hanging from a tree, defines the Spanish as animals and swears to hunt them down "for what they are, vermin lying in ambush, without showing any mercy" (26). Even Frederic, in the face of such open hostility on the part of the Spanish, concludes that "it was all a question of more hanging, more gunning down of those illiterate, fanatical scoundrels, to finish off once and for all the subjugation of Spain in order to continue devoting themselves to more glorious enterprises" (28). Pérez-Reverte spares the reader no details about the atrocities committed by both parties, but avoids siding with one or the other. Perhaps the most telling and vividly described of all these passages is the portrayal of the hanging of a priest:

They brought the priest, a middle-aged man, in his early fifties, small and stocky, his tonsure enlarged by encroaching baldness, unshaven, and wearing a shrunken cassock splashed with stains which Frederic, a Lutherite, thought, for some reason, must have been of cheap wine. There was no interrogation, no words uttered among them; an order from Letac automatically became a sentence. They laced a hemp rope through the iron bars of the balcony of the Town Hall. The priest watched them, small and scowling, flanked by two hussars who towered over him, his forehead soaked in sweat and his feverish eyes fixed on the

rope which was destined for his neck. The village seemed deserted; there was not a soul in the street, but behind the closed shutters the priest was aware of the silent, terrified presence of the local people.

When they placed the noose around his neck, only moments before the two corpulent hussars pulled the other end of the rope, the priest muttered through clenched teeth a "sons of the devil" which was clearly audible although his lips had hardly moved. Then he spat at Letac, who was mounting a new horse, and allowed himself to be hanged without further comment. When the last soldiers left the village (...) some old women dressed in black slowly crossed the square to kneel and pray beneath the priest's feet (27).

This description is best appreciated if we consider it as a sketch half way between Goya's well-known paintings, inspired by similar events, and those other pictures, painted a century later by José Gutiérrez Solana, in his own inimitable and incisive style, portraying *la España negra*, a country of pain and of silence.

In one of the flashbacks in *El húsar* we are told of the meeting which takes place between Frederic and the Spanish nobleman don Álvaro de Vigal in the latter's residence in Aranjuez. Pérez-Reverte takes advantage of this meeting to state and analyse the case of the so-called pro-French during the war. We should remember that given the circumstances of the time, to be pro-French was to be a traitor. The attitude of the pro-French was barely understood and largely misinterpreted by their contemporaries. However, as Miguel Artola indicates in his work of the same title, the pro-French took very little, intellectually speaking, from France:

Their outlook was determined mainly by English philosophy and Prussian political theory which they had acquired from France and Italy (...). The French sympathisers — whose ideological origins date back to the time of Charles III — do not see the traditionally absolute French regime as a model to follow. They find the Revolution anarchic and dangerous for the well-being of the state, for the excessive influence it grants to the bulk of the nation in the government (31).

A completely different case is that of the collaborators, whom Artola defines as "people who for various reasons consider it as



their duty to join the invader, to save what they can of the nation and even in some cases to prosper personally" (32). Their loyalty, therefore, was not directed at France or Napoleon, nor even at King Joseph, but solely at everything that represented the possibility of obtaining an effective government. In this sense, don Álvaro de Vigal was one of those who "expressed out loud liberal ideas and did not hide their admiration for the process of renovation that the French intellectuals had unleashed in Europe" (100). Don Álvaro, in his long conversation with Frederic and Juniac, does hide his reservations about Napoleon's complete lack of skill in the handling of Spanish affairs.

Those of us who defend the need for progress — señor Vigal adds further on —, saw in the revolution which overthrew the Borbons in France a sign that the times had at last begun to change. The growing political impact of Bonaparte in Europe and the influence which, as a consequence, France managed to exert on her geographical surroundings, were a glimmering of hope... However, and it is here where the problem arises, the ignorance of this country and the lack of skill shown by their consuls here, destroyed what could have been a promising beginning.... The Spanish are not people who allow themselves to be saved forcibly. We like to save ourselves little by little, without having to renounce those principles which, whether good or bad, we have been brought up to believe in (106).

In the last few lines of the conversation between the two husbands and the Spanish nobleman, the destiny of don Álvaro, his eventual condemnation at the hands of his own compatriots, is hinted at. It is a destiny which he has no intention of resisting and which he fully understands from his intellectual standpoint.

In *El bobo ilustrado*, a novel by Gabriel y Galán published in the same year as *El húsar*, we meet Pedro de Vergara, an assiduous collaborator in the *Gazeta*, "the most perverse of the pro-French mechanisms" (43). Pedro de Vergara, like don Álvaro, is also in favour of progress and enlightenment. His curiosity leads him to the conclusion that it is essential to verify what a monarch, even one accepted by the Borbons, would be capable of doing. However, as with don Álvaro, he is not willing to become an accomplice to the atrocities perpetuated by the French generals. His non-committal attitude, his eclecticism, be-

come, at the end of the novel, the weapon by which he is judged. The ordinary people, whose only aspiration is that of killing one of the French sympathisers, fail to understand the position of these cold patriots. In Gabriel y Galán's novel mention is also made of the work carried out by the priests and friars "carried away by fanaticism who believed in the name of their faith that everything was acceptable, not only killing but also uttering fibs to all and sundry, poisoning the people by spreading false messages" (33).

In *Los afrancesados* Miguel Artola reminds us of the severity with which anyone showing sympathy for the invading country was punished: "The repression has two different aspects, both extraordinarily severe: the legal aspect (...) and the popular one, an uncontrollable movement of rejection and punishment, which caused great harm, often without distinguishing between the guilty and the innocent" (234). The pro-French, in short, would be — as indicated by García de Cortázar and González Vesga —, "the propitiatory victims of the civil war who hid under the cover of the patriotic movement for independence" (419).

Frequent allusions are made throughout Pérez-Reverte's work to the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte. This constant presence in the text has a personal explanation which the author openly recognizes. As pointed out in the work *Arturo Pérez-Reverte: los héroes cansados*, "Jean Gall — a knight of the order of Saint Helen — grandfather of the great grandmother of Pérez-Reverte, Adele Replinger Gall, took part in Waterloo at the early age of seventeen. He stood out in the battle of Quatre Brass and as a result was mentioned in the order of the day as having displayed outstanding bravery" (25). An ancestor who, in an almost novelesque tradition, was later to become a pirate throughout the Mediterranean, eventually settling in the city of Cartagena where he would found a family.

Claude, to whom this author from Cartagena dedicates *El húsar*, is also associated, although less directly, with the Napoleonic era. Pérez-Reverte himself has stated that the surname of the character Frederic is taken precisely from this French war photographer, who, like Pérez-Reverte, also has ancestral links with the battle of Waterloo. In *El maestro de esgrima*, Pérez-Reverte's second novel, which will be later referred to in greater detail, the reference to don Jaime de Astarola's father, whose portrait hangs in the great hall of his house,

leads don Jaime to remind his interlocutor, Adela de Otero, that his father died at the age of thirty-one fighting against Napoleon's troops:

He was — don Jaime adds — an Aragonese nobleman, one of those proud men who always became exceedingly irritated when told to do something... He took to the mountains with a group from Jaca and spent his time killing the French until he himself was killed (...) They say that he died alone, hunted like a dog, insulting those soldiers who cornered him with their bayonets in excellent French" (54).

He may well be, like don Álvaro de Vigal, one of the French followers, capable of accepting the culture of the neighbouring country — thus he dies "insultando un excelente francés" — but incapable of accepting the impositions and the barbaric and repressive methods of the Napoleonic army in Spain

Similarly, Luis Corso in *El club Dumas*, a novel published in 1993 by Pérez-Reverte, turns out to be not only a mercenary for bibliophiles, but also, "a hired book thief" (15), a consummate and able reader of the Memorial de Santa Helena, by Les Cases, and an early Bonapartist, in previous times, "an avid reader of books illustrated with sketches of glorious campaigns, names which sounded doubly important: Wagram, Jena, Smolenko, Marengo" (178). Corso even manages to feel indignation "the miserable end that the victors gave their fallen Titan, stuck to his rock in the middle of the Atlantic" (178).

Several years after the publication of *El húsar*, Pérez-Reverte once more turns his attention to the military affairs of the French emperor. In *La sombra del águila*, the tone and language used are very different to those found in the 1986 novel. However, the initial intention remains the same in that he once again focuses our attention on the negative consequences that any military confrontation inevitably brings. In *La sombra del águila* the author highlights the historical role played by those anonymous soldiers who never receive the acclaim they so rightly deserve. Previously, in *El húsar*, Frederic, as a result of many hours of reflection in which he is able to think over certain aspects of his life which until then had passed unnoticed, realizes that he knows nothing about his troops, not even the twelve soldiers directly under his command: "Those twelve mostly anonymous soldiers, were his colleagues in battle, in life

itself and perhaps even in death. And he wondered, angry with himself, why it had never occurred to him to think about them until that night" (52) In *La sombra del águila* it is Napoleon himself who, while inspecting the French troops, tells one of his generals that they are "dark, anonymous heroes, who with their bayonets forge the rack on which my glory is hung" (20). This novel, first published in serial form in the summer of 1993, narrates one of the most curious and striking periods in Spanish History.<sup>2</sup> The second chapter of the book, entitled "El 326 de Línea" provides us with the historic antecedents: even in Denmark, where there was a population of fifteen thousand Spanish, the order was received to swear loyalty to Joseph Bonaparte. But, after the events of the second of May, the French allies began to become suspicious. The Marquis of la Romana, on the other hand, managed to persuade those men loyal to Ferdinand VII to swear allegiance, whilst these troops with the help of the English, were on their way back to Spain. However, not all of them managed to escape disaster. Only 9,190 Spaniards made it to Langeland to embark on English boats. The remainder became the first prisoners to inaugurate the prisoner of war camp in Hamburg. These were the events of four years. In 1812 Napoleon decided to invade Russia, "so we veterans of the Northern division who had survived the cold, typhus and tuberculosis, had our chance: to continue rotting there or to fight with a Frenchie's uniform" (35). Little else on the subject is said in the History books. However, if we stick to what happens in Pérez-Reverte's novel, it would seem that the intention of this group of Spaniards, enlisted more from necessity than from dedication to the Napoleonic cause, was to go over to the enemy's side, something which was not to occur as the latter did not fully understand this strange manoeuvre. In the end, the emperor himself, completely unaware of the circumstances, decorated these same Spanish soldiers for their courage and bravery. Although it seems comical to say so, they became heroes by virtue of a mistake. Around three hundred Spaniards survived. Most of them lost their lives on the journey home. "A year and a half after the fire in Moscow — we read in the epilogue to *La sombra del águila* — the afternoon of the last day of April of 1814, eleven men with a guitar crossed the

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<sup>2</sup> Supplement, *El país*.

border between France and Spain. Some were carrying their possessions on their backs and in spite of their torn clothes you could still make out the traces of the French blue uniform" (150)

In this latest novel, in which unlike *El húsar*, we find an almost cynical, grotesque and almost always surrealist humour, the author makes a brief although profound analysis of particular aspects of Spanish society, politics and culture. From Sbdonovo hill Napoleon dictates a letter to his brother Joseph in which he reproaches the latter's frequent complaints about the Spanish and warns him to set about governing a country which Napoleon himself assures will have a great future, in spite of Joseph's indications that, "No two people drink their coffee in the same way, either black, with a spot of milk, weak, extra weak, strong, extra strong, milky, a mint tea for me" (79).

In *El maestro de esgrima* Arturo Pérez-Reverte takes up once more his familiar stance of returning to the past — a past which, as we can see, is not so distant — perhaps in an attempt to find there the roots of our current problems. Although it is also true that the type of heroes found in his work, those tired, stoical quixotic heroes, are difficult to come across in today's society. In this novel, published in 1988, María Josefa Díez de Revenga has recently pointed out that, "the historical setting is a fitting framework in which the characters move" (147). The action of the novel takes place in Madrid during the summer of 1866, "with her Catholic majesty Queen Isabel II, the reigning Monarch in Spain" (15).

From what the reader can deduce, given the events of the following two years, the atmosphere is tense and laden with plots and conspiracies. Some of Pérez-Reverte's passages — perhaps in honour of one of the great masters — recall the well-known novels of Galdós, also set in Madrid. Those places of such obvious Galdosian flavour, the Paseo del Prado, the Carrera de San Jerónimo, the Huertas, Arenal, and Princesa streets cannot be avoided by Pérez-Reverte, although the principle aim of the novel is not to reflect the atmosphere of the capital in which don Jaime Astarola, the strange, anachronistic and modest fencing master lives. The ordinary people live in a world which is completely unaware of the intrigues of the Court. Don Jaime, out on one of his strolls, greets his acquaintances whilst at the same time observing the chorus of uniformed nursemaids, ladies in open-air carriages, water sellers peddling their re-

freshing wares and greengrocers who swat "mechanically the swarm of flies which were buzzing around" (30). In the same way, in this typical atmosphere of the Madrid of the second half of the nineteenth century, the author refers to the meetings which took place preferably in the coffee bars, and occasionally in the pharmacies. The *Café del Progreso* is Astarola's habitual meeting place. Agapito Cárceles, Don Lucas Rioseco, Marcelino Romero and the modest store merchant Antonio Carreño also meet there. It is no accident that these particular characters have been chosen to participate in the meetings. In doing so the author is attempting to convey, through their lively discussions, the very pulse of the nation. Among the members of the coffee set there are those who write radical speeches for minority newspapers; gentlemen from once wealthy families whose only concern is to maintain appearances, and those who, detached from the events which seem to concern the others, mask with their silence an impossible and secret love affair.

When Arturo Pérez-Reverte first embarks on his literary career the historical novel in Spain is at the height of its splendour. The influence of this particular genre on many of the writers of the time may perhaps explain why this author from Cartagena makes his literary debut with *El húsar*, a novel with a distinctly historical flavour. However, it is also undoubtedly true that Pérez-Reverte possesses certain narrative qualities which are essential to grasp for a fuller understanding of his work .

His strong sense of honour, inherited no doubt from ancestors who, as we have seen, date back to Napoleonic times, his vision of war, acquired from the experience of over twenty years as a war correspondent, and his childhood reading of authors such as Dumas, Conrad, Stevenson, Sabatini etc, lead us to believe that, regardless of the trends of the time, the author was destined to become a historical novelist. It is along these lines, without renouncing other narrative styles or approaches, that most of Pérez-Reverte's written and published works have followed.

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Brian J. Dendle

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## THE MEDITERRANEAN CULTURE OF MAURICIO WACQUEZ: CLASSICAL ALLUSIONS IN *FRENTE A UN HOMBRE ARMADO*

Mauricio Wacquez is the most "French" of Spanish authors. Born in 1939 in Colchagua, Chile, of a French father and a Chilean mother, Mauricio Wacquez — who has French, Spanish, and Chilean nationalities — made frequent visits in his youth to his French cousins in the Bordeaux region. He taught philosophy at the Sorbonne (1967-1969), obtained the Diplôme d'Études Supérieures from the Sorbonne in 1966 with a thesis on the language of St. Anselm, and in 1977 presented to the Sorbonne his doctoral thesis *La preuve de Dieu chez Saint Anselme*. His study of Sartre, *Conocer Sartre y su obra*, appeared in Spain in three editions (1977, 1979, 1981). The short stories of *Excesos* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1976) were written in France. The experimental novel *Paréntesis* (Barcelona: Barral, 1975) is set in France. *Ella o el sueño de nadie* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1983) contains untranslated passages in French. From 1972, Mauricio Wacquez has lived in Spain, devoting himself to literary translations of French authors (Jean Cocteau, Gustave Flaubert, Julien Green, Michel Leiris, Prosper Mérimée, Raymond Queneau, Stendhal, *et al.*). He is a devotee of the work of Marguerite Yourcenar.

In an interview with Elsa Arana Freire, Mauricio Wacquez declared his nationality to be "Mediterranean":

Podría decir que viviendo en Chile, en una región que repite espléndidamente el clima del Mediterráneo europeo, adquirí eso que Anthony Burgess llama la "nacionalidad mediterránea," algo que participa a la vez de la geografía, de la meteorología y de la historia.



Para bien o para mal, como te digo, la única nacionalidad que reconozco es esa mediterránea. Porque hay razones de tipo cultural que lo apoyan. El Mediterráneo y sus orillas han propiciado las únicas culturas que pueden ser tomadas en cuenta como realmente humanas. Yo tengo una formación humanista, en el peor sentido de la palabra. De la que no voy a renegar nunca. En esas culturas existe una anchura, una capacidad de respiración que no se compadece con los países y nacionalidades modernos. Eran regiones y conceptos del hombre internacionales...<sup>1</sup>

I could say that, living in Chile, in a region which splendidly repeats the climate of the European Mediterranean, I acquired what Anthony Burgess calls "Mediterranean nationality," something which has in common geography, meteorology, and history.

For good or ill, as I say, the only nationality that I recognize is that of the Mediterranean. Because there are reasons of a cultural nature to support it. The Mediterranean and its shores have provided the only cultures that can be considered as really human. My formation is humanistic, in the worst sense of the word. This I shall never repudiate. In these cultures there exist a breadth, a capacity to breathe, which is incompatible with modern countries and nationalities. They were international regions and concepts of man...

The French background, both literary and physical, to Mauricio Wacquez's most ambitious novel, *Frente a un hombre armado* (1981), is marked. The novel's subtitle ("Cacerías de 1848") echoes that of Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* ("Chronique de 1830"); the novel begins with an epigraph from Apollinaire ("Hommes de l'avenir, souvenez-vous de moi, / Je vivais à l'époque où finissaient les rois"); the protagonist Juan de Warni claims to be "El Aventurero" (The Adventurer) described by Pierre Loti; the narrator offers the novel as a pastiche of the nineteenth-century French novel of adventures or *folletín*; Leon de Warni and his class represent the iniquities of the society portrayed by Balzac (115, 246); the numerous philosophical reflections of the narrator are those of a generation raised on Pascal and the thinkers of the Enlightenment (246). Central to the novel is the Proustian recreation of the *château*

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<sup>1</sup> Elsa Arana Freire, "¿La impostura de un escritor?", 98.

Perier, which dominates the thoughts of Juan de Warni. The action takes place in the France of the 1840s. However, as Juan de Warni dies, strangled by his lover Alexandre, he has a "flash-forward" (an oneiric vision of the life he would not live to lead) to the Revolution of 1848, to the Franco-Prussian War, and to his return to Perier in 1946.

*Frente a un hombre armado* is one of the most complex of late-twentieth-century novels, breaking as it does conventional limits of time and of character to explore through the "adventures" / homosexually-obsessed dreams / death-agony visions (the narrator suggests all possibilities) of the adolescent Juan de Warni the dialectics of power. Juan de Warni strives to achieve a total reality ("Visión y reflejo, el ser que mira y es mirado, sugieren el consuelo de la totalidad," 220) (Vision and reflection, the being who watches and is watched, suggest the consolation of totality) by becoming the Other, whether through the playing of games (sexual, literary), the wearing of masks, the acting of roles in the *musaraña*, temporal and geographical confusion, reversal of sexual roles, and defiance of all sexual taboos. Throughout the novel a lucid narrator ("no hay ficción inocente," 241) (no fiction is innocent) controls and plays with both reader and narrative.

Reviewers, both in France and Spain, stressed the French background to *Frente a un hombre armado*.<sup>2</sup> A further dimension to the novel, not noted by critics, is provided by references to the classical universe of ancient Greece and Rome. In a novel where all essay roles, and where the "essence" of a person is hidden and mysterious, there are frequent allusions to the masks worn by the actors of Greek theater. Juan de Warni (who had "died" a century previously) is presented in 1946 as an "adolescente," "como los actores del antiguo teatro eran a veces la máscara de la juventud" (19) (as the actors of classical theater were at times the mask of youth). From the studies of Greek, Latin, and philosophy imposed by Monsieur Albert, the young and passionate Juan de Warni retains as relevant to his truth only "algún poema, o la tragedia griega o Shakespeare" (39) (an occasional poem or Greek tragedy or Shakespeare). The

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<sup>2</sup> For a summary of critical opinions on *Frente a un hombre armado*, see Brian J. Dendle, "Mauricio Wacquez (1939- ): A Preliminary Bibliography."

removal of masks, exposure to the light of the sun, threatens annihilation: "el encuentro con un nuevo orden moral, la desaparición de una máscara que me dejaba el rostro a plena luz, amenazando con calcinarlo" (48) (the encounter with a new moral order, the removal of a mask which left my face exposed to full light, threatening it with calcination). All wear masks: "todos llevan consigo su juego de máscaras" (63) (all bear with them their set of masks). The imprecise contours of the typhus-ridden Juan de Warni's surroundings recall "los cuadros de moda en los que la corte se regodea imitando tragedias griegas" (107) (the fashionable paintings in which the court takes pleasure in imitating Greek tragedies). Juan realizes that our parts in life are assigned "con la equidad de los roles en el teatro" (135) (with the impartiality of roles in the theater). With this realization, Juan allots himself the role of tyrant in a Greek tragedy, whose destiny (and meaning in life) is to be killed and supplanted (in this case by his conqueror, the fair Alexandre): "Pensé en Alexandre como en el verdadero destinatario de mi puesto, sentí una inexplicable dulzura al imaginarlo cuajado de luces y de oros, hiriéndome en el corazón con un dardo o una espada, como en las tragedias antiguas, donde el déspota encuentra en el derrocamiento y la muerte el verdadero sentido de su gloria" (135) (I thought of Alexandre as the true heir to my position; I felt an inexplicable sweetness as I imagined him adorned with lights and gold, stabbing me in the heart with an arrow or a sword, as in the ancient tragedies, where the despot finds in his overthrow and death the true meaning of his glory). Juan explains the dialectic of power to His Highness the Prince; true victory produces what the "ancients" termed "catharsis," to be found in the acceptance of death, that is, in submission to the penetration of the stronger: "Es lo que los antiguos llamaban catarsis y que yo he vivido y buscado más de una vez en mi vida" (145) (It's what the ancients called catharsis and what I have lived and sought more than once in my life).

Masks permit concealment and also facilitate metamorphosis, as in the game of the *musaraña*. A related classical theme is that of the hunt and of the reversal of roles of the hunter and the hunted. Hunting is power ("la caza, como ejercicio del poder," 97), power over the animal kingdom, over the Indians whom Warni slaughters as a mercenary, and potentially over oneself and one's lovers in the struggle for domination. During a

hunt, Juan de Warni's universe is shattered, as he falls prey to the charms of the young peasant Alexandre: "ese aminoramiento de mi ser mediante el cual pasaba de ser el cazador a ser la presa" (49) (this diminishing of my being by which I passed from being the hunter to being the prey). The hunt allows the union of opposites: "la ambigüedad de la adolescencia me permitía ser el cazador y la caza, mi contrario y mi doble" (188) (the ambiguity of adolescence allowed me to be the hunter and the prey, my adversary and my double). In its essence, however, the hunt in *Frente a un hombre armado* assimilates the events of the novel to an archetypal, mythical universe. In front of Perier stands the statue of Diana (the goddess of the hunt, of chastity, and of adolescence, the goddess whose priest must first slay his predecessor) with her quiver of arrows. References to Diana pervade the novel (19, 65, 107, 184, 251). Only the statue of Diana remains unchanged after the destruction of World War II (19); the final sentence of the novel returns us to "la mirada de Diana, que desde su pedestal proseguía acechando a su presa" (251) (Diana's gaze, which from her pedestal continued to await her prey).<sup>3</sup>

There are further references to the classical world. Juan de Warni (the hunter and the hunted, sodomizer and sodomite) adapts as his own Monsieur Albert's phrase "extrema se tangunt" (21). Juan de Warni's meditation on death refers us to an ancient world: the burnt offering of myrtle and laurel, the inscription on the sarcophagus, "el bálsamo corrupto de los gestos antiguos" (the corrupt balsam of ancient gestures), the coin placed between the corpse's lips (70). The pain of the act of sodomy is related to Apollo (Diana's brother): "es el desgarro que divide las aguas y eleva la frente de Apolo en un espasmo cósmico" (98) (it's the rent which divides the waters and lifts Apollo's brow in a cosmic spasm); "el relajamiento apolíneo de la espera, la ansiedad desnuda de la belleza" (98) (the Apollonian relaxation of expectation, the naked desire for beauty); "En ese momento todo se halla dispuesto y ambos necesitan el coraje divino de Orfeo violentando a Apolo, ese Apolo

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<sup>3</sup> In Mauricio Wacquez's unpublished outline of a screenplay for *Frente a un hombre armado* two of the fifty sequences — the second and the fourteenth — give prominence to the statue of Diana.

encabritado al sentirse desnudo bajo el calor de su mitad perdida" (99) (At this moment, everything is ready and both need the divine courage of Orpheus possessing Apollo, this Apollo reared up in his nakedness beneath the heat of his lost half). The sexual act takes place without the caresses which belong to the "dios del amor" (100). The withered but chaste breast of the Prince is that of "una vieja vestal" (138) (an old Vestal). The destroyed Perier of 1946 reminds Juan de Warni of "una catástrofe antigua como la de Pompeya" (214) (an ancient catastrophe such as that of Pompeii). Greek and Hebrew mythology coincide in the mysterious Eugenio, who never appears in the novel, and is identified only by the "sonidos griegos" (Greek sounds) of his name; Eugenio is, the narrator conjectures, possibly confused by the Chevalier with Juan, whose name has Hebraic roots (244).

In a novel in which conventional concepts of time and "reality" are relentlessly undermined, dreams reveal an underlying truth, which is related to that of classical myth. Dreams, with their apparent irresponsibility, are imposed on us by an obscure and strange god: "al pensar en la irresponsabilidad que se deriva de los sueños, sobre los que no tenemos que justificarnos, puesto que nos son impuestos por un dios oscuro y peregrino contra el que sólo cabe la perplejidad" (55) (thinking of the irresponsibility which comes from dream, for which we don't have to justify ourselves, since they are imposed on us by an obscure and strange god before whom the only attitude possible is wonder). Dreams also evoke an ancestral memory, perhaps that of "aquel tribuno germano que rindió pleitesía a Roma a cambio de su vida" (101) (that German tribune who rendered homage to Rome in exchange for his life).

The sight of a naked boy and his horse refers Juan de Warni to his nightly "sueño mítico" (mythic dream) of a centaur: "Mirándolo desde atrás, descubrí de dónde venía el sombrío sueño mítico que me asaltaba cada noche: un centauro entraba en el agua y buscaba a su dios, un dios ancho y profundo como el río, un objetivo lejano y complicado que sólo la clarividencia de un efebo podía entrever" (217) (Looking at him from behind, I discovered the source of the dark, mythic dream which nightly assaulted me: a centaur entered the water and sought its god, a god as broad and deep as the river, a distant and complicated object which only the clairvoyance of an ephebus could imperfectly perceive). The dream takes on "reality" as the unnamed

lad ("el otro Juan"?) possesses in a centaur's embrace Juan who is sprawled across the horse's neck: "Clavado en mí, se quedó quieto, el caballo y él dentro de mí, el caballo, él y yo mezclados por la sangre y el valor del centauro" (218) (Pierced in me, he remained still, the horse and he inside me, the horse, he and I mingled by the blood and the courage of the centaur). The "centaur" is killed the same night; Juan places a coin between his lips, recalling "el golpe de su fuerza, mis manos y mi cuerpo ocupados por la sangre y la semilla del dios" (219) (the thrust of his strength, my hands and my body filled by the blood and the seed of the god). The confusion of classical and Hebraic mythology is reflected in Alexandre's mixture of "inocencia" and "abismo" (abyss), for which "más de un dios fue arrojado del paraíso" (232) (more than one god was cast from paradise).

Mauricio Wacquez provides little guidance to the reader in the complex and deceitful universe of *Frente a un hombre armado*, with its anachronisms, metamorphoses, and elusive protagonist. Juan de Warni escapes the superficial and corrupt civilization of nineteenth-century France, ruled by the fluctuations of the Stock Exchange (245), to enter an archetypal and violent universe, that of Mediterranean classical antiquity. The huntress goddess Diana's dominion over Perier, the numerous references to masks and Greek tragedy, the emphasis on homosexuality and incest (cf. 104-05), the role of myth and dream, the savage mutual killing of Juan and Alexandre (which mirrors, in myth, the violent deaths of the priests of Diana), the ritualistic placing of a coin in the mouth of the dead, Juan de Warni's "Apollonian" gift of foreseeing the future, the intervention of obscurely-intentioned deities to control man's destiny, refer us — at a level far deeper than that of the pastiche of a Balzacian or Stendhalian novel — to sacred mysteries. The references to the classical world not only illuminate regions of Juan de Warni's unconscious; they also, by adding a further layer of reference, heighten the mythical, oneiric quality of this most multi-dimensional of novels.

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## INFORMATIONS

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