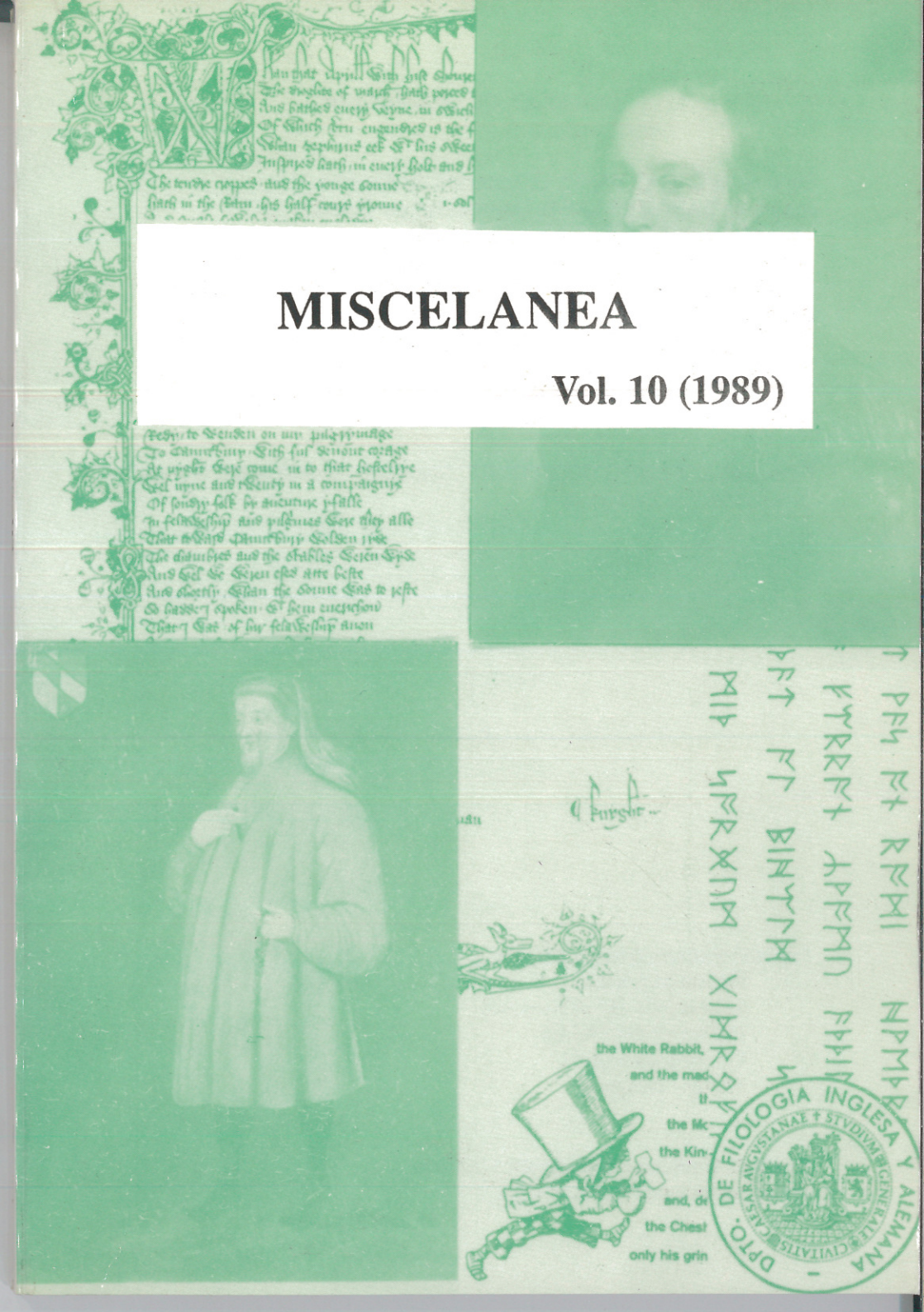

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10

collision between two sectors in society that Disraeli and Carlyle's writings made their impact.

Having said this, Benjamin Disraeli and Thomas Carlyle can now be presented as two of the writers who responded creatively to the "Other Nation," for they both played an important part in publicizing the Condition-of-England question by reacting to the challenge of Chartism. *Sybil,* "Chartism," and *Past and Present* each reveal, on the other hand, the general fear of the more dominant classes faced with the brewing discontent of the masses and, on the other, the fantasies and sympathies of two individuals who genuinely tried to find some kind of solution for the regeneration of society.

At the time, Disraeli seemed the most unlikely man to become the leader of the land-owning party in the House of Commons. His outlandish Jewish name, his dark, foreign looks and his taste for bright and showy clothes (Maurois 1967: 224) did not augur the brilliant political career that was to be his. In the forties, Disraeli was still trying to forge a place for himself both in the Commons and in the literary field. It was his Trilogy*æConingsby, Sybil,* and *Tancred*—that finally put him on the front rank of authors. The novel *Sybil* is of particular interest, since from it stems the core of the author's whole colourful and romantic aspirations for the future, and because it describes quite accurately the most striking consequence of the industrial revolution and the root-cause of the chartist movement, that is, the split into the two nations, the division of society into rich and poor—"have" and "have nots."

Even though the "haves" (the industrialists and the landowners) often seemed disunited, their common interests were usually far stronger that their rivalry. In times of trouble, the wealthy classes therefore clung together as one body and held on tight to their positions and mutual privileges. The only institution which had the potential wealth and strength to be a powerful ally of the poor—the Established Church—also sided against them. The Church as an institution was deeply committed to the "haves." An example of this commitment could be Bishop Blomfield's declaration to a committee set up in 1832 to promote the better observation of the Sabbath. The bishop believed that it would prove difficult to attract the poor as well as the rich to the churches:

> on account of the objections which were made by the richer classes to too great an intermixture of the poor among them; objections which it was absolutely necessary to attend to because the whole income of the minister depends on the pew rent, accruing exclusively from the richer classes. (Inglis 1971: 404)

In other words, even the Church was forgetting its traditional Christian duty to the poor.

Although a few lawyers had given their services to the poor, particularly in connection with trade union cases, the Law, as an institution, was as biased as the Church in favour of the rich—and for the same reason: only from the rich could solicitors and barristers earn their living. Therefore in ordinary circumstances, the law afforded little protection to the lower classes since the poor lacked the means to resort to lawyers in case of litigation.

With the Government, the Church and the Law all ranged against them, discrimination against the poor became easy. It manifested itself in a great variety of ways: high rents, taxes on malt, on windows, on corn, game laws, mantraps, sentences of transportation and even Sunday observance regulations. The rich could use their carriages and their servants to get out into the country or visit friends on Sundays, while all recreation grounds, parks and gardens were closed for the workers. On top of that, all the shops were closed—except for the sale of gin. This, in broad lines was the gulf that separated the two nations.

Although the phrase "the Two Nations" was actually coined by Disraeli, discussion of the idea that the British nation was split into two by increasingly obvious and manifest poverty and discrimination had been a "sign of the times" for some years. Carlyle had already analysed the ills of English society by having his fictitious professor Teufelsdroeckh divide the community into Dandies and Poor Slaves (Carlyle 1975: 204-206; 210-214) and evidently, Carlyle was conscious of the ominous problem when he invited his readers in *Past and Present* to:

> Descend where you will into the lower class, in Town or Country, by what avenue you will, by opening your eyes and looking, the same sorrowful result discloses itself: you have to admit that the working body of the rich English Nation has sunk or is fast sinking into a state, to which, there was literally never any parallel. (1976:3)

By means of the novel *Sybil,* Disraeli likewise invites his readers to accompany his main character Egremont—a typical representative of the "haves"—into the world of pauperism, labour and chartist leaders with the hope that the enforced acquaintance with the other nation would "give a new aspect to much that was known" and "ultimately reveal much that was utterly obscure" (1980: 169). In other words, that the experience would induce his audience, as it did Egremont, to "view public questions in a tone very different to that of a few weeks back" (1980: 170).

The story opens with the death of William IV and the accesion of Victoria. The action covers the period from the first chartist petition of 1839 to the riots that followed the rejection of the second petition in 1842. Around these

events, the author weaves in the story of a love affair between his young aristocrat and Sybil Gerard, the daughter of the chartist Walter Gerard, who turns out to be the true heir to Mowbray Castle and an aristocrat in his own right. However, this Cinderella-type fairy tale does not blot out the more sinister theme in the novel. Disraeli uses Egremont as a sort of go-between from one nation to the other. As we follow him, we are taken from the elegant circles in London to Mr Digg's tommy shop in Wodgate; from his brother's estate at Marney Abbey to Sybil's humble home, from the political conspiracies of his mother's salons to the secret intrigues of chartist organizers. This is how the author manages to present a series of parallels between the two worlds and to bring out into the open what, he believed, were the major deficiencies or shortcomings of each faction. For instance, Disraeli intermingles scenes of violence and misery among the destitute with lengthy descriptions of the upper class busying itself with trivial issues like the bedchamber plot and the Jamaica bill[3]. In this way, the author consistently exposes the darker side of England's nineteenth-century prosperity and the ruling class's unhealthy complacency and shallowness. It says much for Disraeli that he should feel constrained to produce such a picture of his own world and it gives some indication of the author's political attitude. But his proper analysis of the strife must be seen in the development of the love affair between Egremont, the young aristocrat, and Sybil, the daughter of the people.

When Egremont's real identity is finally disclosed to Sybil, her immediate reaction is to shrink away from him in disgust:

> "The brother of Lord Marney!" repeated Sybil, with an air almost of stupor.
> "Yes," said Egremont: "a member of those oppressors of the people, whom you have denounced to me with such withering scorn."
> "I am sorry for my words, sorry indeed for all that has past; and that my father has lost a pleasant friend."
> "And why should he be lost?" said Egremont mournfully, and yet with tenderness. "Why should we not still be friends?"
> "Oh, sir!" said Sybil haughtily; "I am one of those who believe that the gulf is impassable. Yes, utterly impassable!" (1980: 299-300)

By means of Sybil, the author clearly shows that the chartists' simple and narrow-minded division of society into oppressors and oppressed, or miserable and innocent people on the one side and luxurious tyrants on the other, was erroneous and contributed just as much as the despotism of a few to the widening of the existing social gulf.

We may now ask ourselves what solution Disraeli proposed to remedy this sharp disconnection between social classes, for no clear-cut prescription is

anywhere laid out in the book. It seems, as mentioned beforehand, that the author's motive in writing the novel was simply to invite his readers to enter the experience of his hero in the novel. But now that a certain relationship has been established between Egremont and Sybil, it may be said that the reader finds himself "hooked" into following the fortunes of both the young people. In other words, as the story advances, Disraeli's political philosophy will slowly unravel itself if we consider his characters as "sociological case studies rather than individuals" (Blake 1966: 218).

What Sybil and Morley show to Egremont of the horrors in manufacturing towns and agricultural districts is terrible enough, but the reader soon learns that even more terrible is the previous unawareness of the young man that such things did exist and that his class was responsible for them. On the other hand, Sybil (and through her, the reader) is made aware of the fact that the rich did not invariably tyrannize the poor with that mingled sentiment of hatred and scorn.

In raising this double issue Disraeli showed himself quite lucid as to the failings of his own class and very sympathetic to the sufferings of the working class. However, the author was condescending to both nations' political aims. Whereas he portrayed the upper class's politics as entirely manipulative and self-seeking, he saw the chartists' claims as an innocent but totally mistaken attempt to cure deep-rooted evils by means of democracy. This is made evident when he has Egremont warn Sybil, who is full of exultation at the prospect of a People's Parliament, that "your convention is in its bloom, or rather its bud; all is fresh and pure now; but a little while and it will find the fate of all popular assemblies. You will have factions" (1980: 286).

These factions are then personified in the character of Morley—a leader of the People, but one, like many others, who wished to shape the movement to his own ends. Infuriated by the discovery of Sybil's feelings for Egremont, he cruelly tells her that Gerard, her father, stands alone in the purety of his ideals and is surrounded by "emulous and intriguing rivals" (1980: 305). He concludes his vicious rendering of the state of affairs by saying: "Our career (the Chartist Movement) will be a vulgar caricature of the bad passions and the low intrigues, the factions and the failures, of our oppressors" (1980: 305).

This explains why, further on in the novel, Disraeli labels the whole episode of Chartist agitations as "a mean and selfish Revolution" (1980: 497). In his opinion, the vote for the working class would not reconcile or mediate the gulf between the two worlds. Morley, in his anger, is convinced that "the spirit that will cure our ills must be of a deeper and finer mood" (1980: 304). In other words, what was needed was a revolution of a different kind. The cold and factual relationship between employer and employee, or exploiter and exploited, should be replaced by a nation-wide alliance and bond of loyalty and mutual

t between the people and a regenerated aristocracy. We therefore find in
ımatic final chapters of the novel not only a rather sobering moral for any
ɔf the cause but also a clear indication of Disraeli's long-term solution to
fe. The violent and uncontrolled attack of the chartists on Mowbray Castle
heavily the sort of horrors that dominated the English image of the French
ıion. On the other hand, the eventual marriage of the heroine Sybil—Dis-
variation of Cinderella—with Egremont—"the prince"—is not simply a
ıg finale to a fairy tale. Rather, if we look upon the heroes as representa-
f each nation, then, their union becomes a symbol of the author's romantic
tions for the future.

It was a very conservative ideal. Disraeli never contemplated either
bution of wealth or wider franchise. His idealized future relied entirely
onsible and benignant leadership by the aristocracy, as the natural leaders
:ty, and a faithful dependance and collaboration from the people with their
ɔcially-conscious rulers. In this way, both factions, instead of colliding
ignoring each other, would work together for the general happiness of all.
r words, the novel Sy*bil* can be looked upon as a romantic appeal for
ıible leadership and, as such, it recalls heavily Carlyle's best piece of
riticism "Chartism," and anticipates the major theme of the thinker's later
Past and Present.

In "Chartism," published in 1839, Thomas Carlyle coined two other
: "The Condition of England Question" and "The Cash-Nexus," both of
oon became household words in social debates throughout the nineteenth

In spite of its title, the Chartist movement is not the major theme of the
et. It is only, according to Carlyle, the latest and most alarming
ıtation of the "deep-lying struggle in the whole fabric of society" (1964:
for had Carlyle any sympathy with the Chartist remedy of universal man
:. Carlyle considered that suffering on this scale was the fault of the ruling
the society that permitted it. And it is in connection with the appaling
of Ireland under English rule that the writer makes his strongest
ent: English misgovernment had brought starvation in Ireland. The
ıence was the arrival in England in the 1830s and 1840s of a flood of
Irish labourers whose competition lowered wages in the mainland and
more unemployment, in turn leading to the rise of mass popular
:nt in the form of Chartism (1964: 186-87).
Hence, the importance of the Chartist movement to Carlyle was the self-

not the more emphatically mean, 'See what guidance you have given us! What delirium we are brought to talk and project, guided by nobody!'" (1964: 222-23).

Consequently, the author's fiercest denunciations are reserved for the laissez-faire theorists who did nothing to relieve suffering—an attitude which he stigmatizes as "Paralytic Radicalism" (1964: 227). In his opinion, the leading class of society is responsible for the physical and moral well-being of the people over whom it rules, but is representative FOR the people rather than TO them. In other words, the duty of the ruling class is not to carry out the WILL of the people but to guide and direct them.

Having reached this point, it seems that both Disraeli and Carlyle agree entirely on the necessary remedy for the times. In other words, only one solution has so far been forwarded for the regeneration of society. This almost mystical vision of rulers and ruled, bound by a relationship of mutual dependence, evidently took shape in "Chartism" and was then taken up and fictionalized by Disraeli in his novel. However, a basic difference in the prescriptions forwarded emerged in *Past and Present.*

In the first chapters of this book, which could be described as a fuller and more carefully worked out version of "Chartism," Carlyle very effectively shows up the great anomaly of the times: the contrast between the gigantic productive possibilities unleashed by the Industrial Revolution and the massive unemployment that resulted from it. His most vivid picture is that of heaps of unsellable factory-made shirts on the one hand and, on the other, thousands of "bare backs" willing and anxious to work but unable to acquire the bare necessities of life (1976: 165). But, according to Carlyle, the physical hardship of the working classes was only a secondary problem. What they stood in dire need of was a sense of purpose and direction. Above all, he insisted, the suffering mass clamoured for leadership, for heroes to rule them. The writer does not mince his words and and his message or warning to the public can be summarized in the following way: if the existing ruling class did not mend its ways and show itself capable of responsible leadership, Britain would follow France, and find its heroes through revolution. However, the novelty to be found in *Past and Present* is Carlyle's sharp categorization of the upper classes into "Dilettantes" and "Mammonists." By "Dilettantes" he referred to the privileged landowning aristocracy, who, like the aristocracy in France before 1789, had abandoned the duties of governing and retained only its privileges. In other words, they had become a class of idle and unproductive parasites (1976: 144-147). The "Mammonists" represented the industrial middle class. Carlyle much preferred

they worked blindly, with no aim but hte accumulation of wealth and with total disregard for the well-being of their employees (1976: 139-144).

England could be saved, but only by the emergence of a new, morally responsible, working aristocracy, a phenomenon which Carlyle saw as much more likely to arise form the new middle class than from the old aristocracy. This is basically the thinker's message to his readers and the point on which he fundamentally differs from Disraeli. For, it must be noted that never at any moment in *Sybil* does Disraeli contemplate any member of this class as a feasible ruler or rescuer of society. As the reader is shuttled form the top to the bottom of the social ladder, he only gets a glimpse of the industrialist in the person of Hatton at Wodgate. The fact that this captain of industry is portrayed as a down-and-out villain and perverse tyrant indirectly reveals the old exclusive spirit of aristocracy or the inherent Toryism of the author-cum-politician.

This could probably explain the treemendous impact on the public of Carlyle's works in comparison with Disraeli's novel. At the time, people viewed with terror the mere thoughty of extending the vote to this mass of uneducated brutes. Hence, although both authors rejected any purely political solution—including Chartism—to the problem of the two nations, although neither of them advocated any economic remedy which could affect in any way the public's property, it cannot be forgotten that these works owed part of their success precisely to their appeal to middle class readership. Carlyle's upholding of the middle class potential was bound to cause sensation whereas Disraeli seemed more concerned to demonstrate the continuing relevance of aristocracy. For this reason, his proposed remedy surely constituted, in the eyes of the great public, a sort of watering-down of the more radical elements of Carlyle's thinking.

However, Disraeli must not be thought of as a standard-bearer of traditional toryism. The whole purpose of his novel *Sybil* was to propound the political programme of Young England which could be described as a radical fraction whithin the old Tory party (Blake 1966: 194). Disraeli and a group of young élites from eton and Cambridge had developed a common viewpoint: they opposed utilitarianism and therefore disliked the middle classes for their self-benefitting attitude and greed but they were equally impatient of the general inaction of Toryism in power. Instead they wished to restore monarchy to its ancient authority and to see their new Toryism revive a harmonious relationship between the throne, the peers and the people.

So basically, it seems that in spite of the different election of potential rulers, the two solutions forwarded for the regeneration of society are at bottom one and the same. And yet, it is in the pictures of past times that dimly emerge in *Sybil* and "Chartism," and which are more fully delineated in *Past and Present*, that the one divergence between them arises. Once and again Disraeli

has his characters Gerard and Sybil compare present times to an idealized past under William the Conqueror, with its closely integrated hierarchical society, its religious faith, its natural leaders and its contented peasants: "I deny that the condition of the main body is better now than at any other period in history; I say, for instance, the people were better clothed, better lodged and better fed just before the War of the Roses than they are at this moment" (1981: 214). Disraeli used this very personal image of early medieval times as a striking contrast to the new order that was pushing it aside and, as a romantic dreamer, he upheld feudal society as an ideal which could still be revived. This is why his aristocratic character Egremont is endowed with all the qualities of a knight, and, yet again, why the hero of the story acquires the status of a political symbol.

Carlyle also looked upon medieval times as a model of healthy society. Book II of *Past and Present* is a description of life in the Abbey of Bury St. Edmund's in the late twelfth century. By means of his chronicle, the thinker portrays a society not yet infected by individualism, in which "cash nexus" is not the only bond between men, and, most important of all, where men had a natural instinct for recognizing their natural leaders. However, with respect to leadership, the important point is that Carlyle did not have a whole class in mind, but only one single leader. At the beginning of the story, the Abbey is in a sad state of debt under the control of an incompetent Abbot. After his death, because men were still guided by a healthy instinct, the apparently illogical and confused process of election (1976: 74-80) produces the right man, the reforming Abbot Samson. Carlyle depicts this ideal leader as a hard-headed realist, a harsh disciplinarian and a sharp man of business, that is, a man possessing all the qualities of the nineteenth-century captain of industry. But implied througout the story is also the thinker's call for an absolute ruler or, to put it more bluntly, for a Führer. In other words, Carlyle's ideal solution or recipe for the crisis of the times had a very fascist tinge to it. The writer's cult of the hero and passionate rejection of democracy can strike readers nowadays as rather unsympathetic; but seen against the background of his time, it is possible to understand his ideas. In a period of radical transition and vast problems, men felt lost in a maze of ideas. Utilitarianism, Feudalism, Fascism, Chartism, Socialism—which was the road to salvation? The choice was so baffling and the need for guidance so imperative that many confused Victorians earnestly wished for the appearance of some dynamic hero or saviour that would lead them out of the general havoc of the time. Hence Carlyle, who so memorably expressed the anxieties and aspirations of his contemporaries, presents Oliver Cromwell as a romantic archetypal "loner," who made his own the essentially solitary role of the prophet:

> Oliver Cromwell . . . remains to me by far the remarkablest governor we have had here for the last five centuries or so. For the last five centuries, there has been no governor among us with anything like similar talent; Oliver, no volunteer in Public Life, but plainly a balloted soldier strictly ordered thither, enters upon Public Life; comports himself there like a man who carried his own life in his hand; like a man whose Great Commander's eye was always with him. Not without results. In senate-house and battle-field, in counsel and in action, in private and in public, this man has proved himself a man. (1976: 214)

It now seems that instead of reaching a logical conclusion, this survey has developed into a paradox: both Disraeli and Carlyle look back to past times in order to find a solution for the present. In other words, according to these two authors, future progress depends on the reassertion of old values—feudalism, the alliance of peers and people or a Cromwell type of dictatorship. Both Disraeli and Carlyle disregard the political importance of the Chartist movement because the concept of the lower classes organizing themselves to press their own claims clashes wiht traditional values of loyalty and respect for the regeneration of society rely on the attitude which each "Nation" should adopt towards the other.

However, this apparently earnest, benevolent and idealized vision of society also encloses specific arguments that were particularly appealing to the public the authors were trying to reach. It seems that, in an age dominated by utilitarianism, when the only valid sanction was self-interest, both the authors' defense of the aristocracy really bore testimony to a feeling entertained by many people in the nineteenth century: that is, the feeling that all the rich heritage of one nation must have, or must have had, a justification. This feeling of necessity is what generated that myth of the aristocracy, present in the works of Disraeli and Carlyle, together with the pictures of a golden age when the existence of such a class was fully justifiable. On the other hand, this need for reassurance was also met by the more desperate expediency present in Carlyle's *Past and Present*, of the justification for dictatorship.

In short, for both Disraeli and Carlyle the point is that the existing ruling classes had better awaken to the impending threat, and do something about the ominous problem of th Two Nations before it was too late.

NOTES

1. Lord Althorp's factory bill was a real advance in comparison with former attempts at factory legislation since it appointed paid inspectors, whose duty it was to see that the law was carried out. However, although the important principle of state interference between masters and employees had been established, the act represented a very diluted answer to the demands of the people who had long been campaigning for the Ten Hour Bill. The working people's dissatisfaction mounted still more with the incident of the Todpuddle Martyrs in 1834. These were a group of farm workers who met in Todpuddle in Dorset, to form a farm-workers' Trade Union branch. To join the branch the members were made to swear an oath of loyalty to their fellow-members. Even though Unions were legal since 1824, the leaders of the Todpuddle labourers were prosecuted and condemned under an old law of 1797—The Unlawful Oaths Act. This incident increased the widespread feeling that the newly reformed government was just as much the People's enemy as the old Tory parliament. One of the first measures passed by the 1832 parliament was the New Poor Law which aimed at forcing the poorer members of the community into the market of labour by removing the relief that had traditionally been given to labourers in support of low wages. (See Thompson 1981: 104-107; Carter and Mears 1960: 806; 821; 810-11; Hopkins 1979: 58-59; 42-43; 88-91, 146-148).

2. The origin of the movement lies in the setting up of the London Working Men's Association in 1836 by a group of London radicals of whom William Lovett was the most prominent. In 1837 Lovett drafted the famous charter which summed up the major demands of the Association. These demands were widely publicized in popular pamphlets, one of which was in the form of a dialogue between Mr Doubtful and a Radical. Mr Doubtful asks the meaning of "Chartist":

> Radical: "It is one who is an advocate for the People's Charter."
> Mr Doubtful: "The People's Charter, pray what is that?"
> Radical: "It is an outline of an Act of Parliament, drawn up by a committee of the London Working Men's Association, and six members of parliament; and embraces six cardinal points of radical Reform."
> Mr Doubtful: "What are these points?"
> Radical: "They are as follows: 1. Universal suffrage 2. Annual parliaments 3. Vote by Ballot 4. Equal Representation 5. Payment of members 6. No property qualifications." (Hopkins, 1979: 44)

The most serious attempts at an armed rising in the Chartist period occured in 1839, after the first National Petition had been rejected by the House of Commons. The petition was presented with over a million signatures and the House of Commons was asked to consider the six points but only 46 members voted in favour while 235 voted against. In 1842 a second National Petition was drawn up. It contained the same six points and some three million signatures were attached to it. This time 49 M.Ps voted for it and 287 against. The Third Chartist petition was presented to Parliament in 1848, and its acceptance was moved by Feargus O'Connor, leader of the chartist movement recently elected as M. P. for Nottingham. But there were fewer signatures than in 1842, and even less support among the members of the House of Commons. (Hopkins 1979: 45-48; Thompson 1981: 113-119).

3. In 1839, Lord Melbourne resigned as Prime Minister, making way for Sir Robert Peel. The first thing the incoming minister demanded of the Queen as proof of ther entire support and confidence was that the Whig ladies in waiting (of the Bedchamber) should be removed from the royal household. The Queen refused point blank. The whole

incident caused a certain flurry in the upper circles of society and ended in Peel's refusal to form a ministry. The Jamaica Bill was a Whig proposal to suspend the Jamaican constitution as a punishment or retaliation to the Jamaican assembly who insisted on managing their own affairs without interference from the mother country. The point at hand is the fact that such an insignificant matter concerning a small and distant colony could fill the minds of the ruling class and blot out the much more pressing problems at home.

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LEAR'S "YOU HAVE SOME CAUSE": A STUDY OF *KING LEAR*

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In act IV, scene VII, line 75 Cordelia claims that there is "no cause, no cause"[1] to her father's "you have some cause," referring to the fact that she has some reason to be angry with him. The existence of a cause in this paper is taken to be the determinate concept that governs the development of Lear's tragedy. This arises from his enormous egotism, from his supposition that he has the right to manipulate the destiny of Cordelia, an idea that leads him unreasonably to desire to preserve both life and comfort at the expense of Cordelia's unnatural renunciation of her rights as a woman. Lear's desire, originating in his need to keep her with him is the cause of his tragedy. Cordelia is capable of saying to Lear that there is no cause because Cordelia's inmense love for her father prompts her to forgive him, regardless of the nature of his offense. To acknowledge the existence of a cause, and to determine the nature of the cause, is indispensable for the understanding of the tragic finale of the play. The perception of the nature of the cause clarifies and verfies the validity of Lear's lucid statement when he claims that nothing comes out of nothing. Since nothing can come out of nothing and much happens to both Lear and Cordelia, there has to be something, a cause supported by poetical justice, that vindicates the tragedy.

The idea that there is a *cause*, and a serious one, came to us when comparing the scene of the reconciliation between father and daughter with that of the murder of Desdemona in *Othello*. Othello feels he has to kill Desdemona because there is a *cause*, her infidelity; and he is wrong—Desdemona's death is the product of insane jealousy. Cordelia, who is as mild and innocent as Desdemona, speaks to her father in terms of having no *cause* to be annoyed with him so there is nothing to exculpate; yet there is a *cause*. In both cases the problem with the existence or non-existence of a cause arises from the same emotion, that of jealousy.

The reverberation of Othello's words arouses uneasy feelings in the case of an accurate evaluation of Cordelia's words, and so of her act of mercy. When comparing the context in which both sentences have been articulated, one becomes conscious that there is a significant inversion of meaning deriving from a single cause, rivalry. For Othello there is a *cause*, when there is none, and for Cordelia there is no cause, when there is a *cause* that has generated pain, rejection and exile.

Lily B. Campbell (1988) sees *King Lear* as a tragedy arising out of Lear's wrathful nature, aggravated by old age. Bucknill, already in 1867, in his work *The Mad Folk of Shakespeare*, considers Lear's sufferings as the natural consequence of a mind that is a unbalanced, so that his madness should not be viewed as the product of his misery and even less as the outcome of his exposure to the storm, because the seeds of insanity are already present in him form the very beginning of the play.

We believe that Campbell and Bucknill are right. However, the seeds of insanity are to be sought in the *cause* of Lear's tragedy. Lear is not only too easily moved to outbursts of wrath, but from the opening of the play his mind exhibits the characteristic traits of a pathological disorder. The *cause* of this pathological disturbance has to be sought in some inner tension that *causes* emotional incipient derangement as arising from a new situation, his youngest daughter's imminent rite of passage. She is about to pass from childhood into womanhood through matrimony. The possibility in King Lear that we have a person whose mind is diseased by some passion does not mean we are trying to say he is not aware of what he is doing. We are not going to dismiss the *cause* of his tragedy as the simple result of insanity produced by senility as Campbell and Bucknill do. During the opening scene Lear is impatient and irrational: however, when it comes to self-preservation, Cordelia's love and physical comfort, he is foolish but cunning. There is nothing in Lear that speaks of the mildness and tolerance that should characterize old age, since he is anything but a patient old king. He does not accept defeat; everybody must act in agreement with his personal needs, otherwise he rejects the person that has contravened his wishes.

For many critics, the opening scene is a very unhappy one; its commencement is too abrupt and the movement of the events presented in it too rapid, so that the reader[2] is caught by the sense of uneasiness which arises from its surprising finale, enhanced by the fact that what is taking place in Lear's mind may not seem sufficently clear. However this is really not the case. If we look carefully at the thematic development of the scene and at Lear's words as fitting within that of the drama, this rapid movement is necessary. Shakespeare has given a tremendous twist to the original source or sources. The twist stems precisely from the abruptness and deliberate omission of information relating to Lear's determination to banish Cordelia and thus to the cause of his resolution: a *cause* that cannot be found in the original sources.

The play opens with a Lear who seems to have prepared a very specific and absurd situation at his daughters' expense with the idea of cornering Cordelia for his own ends. He has devised a trap with cunning care, and what is even worse, with the acceptance and compliance of his two counsellors, Kent and Gloucester. There is something devious as well as bizarre in his desire to know who loves him most at this moment. The importance of the issue at hand,—the division of the kingdom and Lear's irresponsible attitude in this matter—makes the reader feel he is watching a performance rather than a true event. By keeping in mind the theatrical quality of the scene, transformed into a parody of a competition of verbal skill, we can begin to apprehend the nature of the love-quest as far as Lear's expectations are concerned, and so the underlying *cause* of his expectations.

Wilson Knight (1977: 161) pointed out the effect of being presented with an interlude whose main actor happens to be Lear. However, Wilson Knight did not consider to problem inherent in an "interlude" of this nature[3]. The problem lies not in Lear as an actor but in the other players. Lear wants to be everything, the actor, the director and the designer of his own performance and so runs the risk of a bad performance for not having rehearsed the other actors of the play in the roles that he has already assigned to them in his mind.

The germinal cause of Lear's tragedy lies in the fact that Cordelia is no longer a child but a woman ready to enter into a relationship with a man she will love[4]. Here Shakespeare is touching upon a problem that is not only very human but real: the reaction of a man who is about to lose the only child that he has left: a child that he loves beyond the bounds of common sense. The problem is aggravated by Lear's age and the fact that he became a father late in life. So, Lear has the mind more of a doting grandfather than of a parent, and thus he is in greater need of love and reassurance than a younger father with a wife[5]. With such a prospect ahead of him, one can understand Lear's obsession with no longer being the only object of Cordelia's attention. Shakespeare is depicting a

rather familiar situation that many have to confront. The perplexing magnitude of the type of drama that Shakespeare explores derives from the fact that Lear does not belong to the many: he is a king and he does not love his daughter in a traditional way. In the calibre of his love lies the *cause* of his approaching tragedy, because it is in the quality of his love for Cordelia that his dilemma begins.

Mindless both of his duties and his title he tries to solve a personal difficulty to his liking. There is more to it than mere inclination: he is driven by a forceful emotional craving that produces both anxiety and tension. For Lear at this point there is only one thing that is real—the presence in his court of two men who want his daughter's hand. These two men are Burgundy and France and one of them will take Cordelia away with him and will have her love:

> The Princes, France and Burgundy,
> Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
> Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
> And here are to be answer'd.
> (I,i,44-7)

What Lear says in this speech is of great consequence. There are several items that must be appraised because they reveal much about Lear's attitude to Cordelia's suitors. Lear qualifies France and Burgundy as contenders. He sees both men as fighters contesting for his daughter's hand. For Lear it is not sufficient that they are rivals, but they have to be "great rivals." What Lear does not want to acknowledge is that there are not two rivals but three, he being the adversary of the two[6]. Lear's rivalry for his daughter's love transforms him into a fiercer fighter than France and Burgundy, who fight with cleaner weapons than those of Lear.

Another thing worth noting is the fact that the question of Cordelia's engagement is not an event that has occurred suddenly, but something that has been discussed for sometime and needs to be answered now. It is difficult to know if they have been long at court. Lear claims that they have; however, for Lear it might seem like a long time, because time is conditioned by the cause of their staying, Cordelia. Whatever the waiting period might have been, Lear has to face them now with a direct answer. If we consider the possibility that they have not been long at court, Lear's words will imply that he cannot tolerate their presence. If we accept Lear's statement as the truth, we will deduce that there has been some procrastination in taking a decision concerning Cordelia's betrothal. Independently of which interpretation is convincing, both point to the same thing: Lear is uneasy about the present situation. The discomfort originates

in a cause that either makes Lear feel that they have been there long or that has prompted him to postpone his answer as much as possible. Be it what it may, the contrast between "long in our court" and "here are to be answer'd" is provocative. Lear calls his proceedings a "darker purpose" so that it cannot be the product of an irrational whim devised in the last five minutes. What Lear is about to do is something that has been well calculated.

Lear's secret intention derives form a primary *cause* that is too private and personal to be discussed openly with either his daughters of Cordelia's suitors. Kent may know about it, and perhaps Gloucester, but nobody else knows about his motives. Lear is counting on the element of surprise. To make his trick operative, he must have an ample advantage over the other players in order to be the winner, thus bringing his game to a satisfactory conclusion. Lear does not think that he is playing a game of chance, but a game of skill. He is sure to win his game because he believes that he has planned a strategy perfect for pushing Cordelia into a trap to catch her. But Lear is wrong. There is an element of chance that he has not calculated arising from Cordelia's reaction. Lear was unable to anticipate this event because he does not really know Cordelia.

The problem with Lear is that what he feels is one thing and what he is capable of understanding about his emotions is another. To become a person capable of knowing himself and thus able to perceive the quality of his sentiments is not an easy task for Lear. He has been surrounded by sycophants and he has believed them because it was easiest. By accepting whatever he has been told, which was what he wanted to hear, he has not been faced with the choice of discriminating right from wrong. He has not had the opportunity to look at himself introspectively. Lear's shortcomings—his irrational disposition, hubris, and his inclination to have whatever is advantageous for him—has not helped him solve his problems in a more rational and logical manner. Lear does not know the meaning of disagreement, so he feels unimpeachable.

Because of their blind submission, Lear knows very little about either his own family or his counsellors. Lear's plan would not make sense if this were not the case. Obviously he took for granted that his plan was going to work because he took it for granted that his two daughters, Goneril and Regan, would praise him excessively. He also took for granted that Cordelia would try to eclipse them both. In the same way that Lear does not know himself, he does not know other: so the Lear who plans and schemes here cannot be all that dissimilar from the Lear he must have been in the past, though now more irascible and violent because of age and his pressing circumstances.

There is something wrong with Lear's world[7]. Knowing little about oneself is the rule rather than the exception in his domain. Gloucester, Lear's foil, acts and behaves in a manner that is similar to Lear's. He can be as

irresponsible as Lear when talking about his children and to his children[8]. While Lear is plotting to have Cordelia as his kind nurse, Gloucester stands in the background talking to Kent as if he were the backcloth that gives a pictorial dimension to Lear's demands about love. Gloucester talks about his children as anaesthetized creatures that must accept their parent's errors and affronts as if they were no more than trifling and fleeting whims of no consequence[9].

At first it takes a while to see the moral implications inherent in Lear's behaviour towards his daughters. The reader is too shocked or preoccupied with the question of the division of the kingdom. As Ribner has pointed out, Lear's proposal would not have been all that welcome to a Jacobean audience (Ribner 1971: 118-9), and their initial attention would be focused on the resolving of the difficulty caused by the approaching division of the kingdom rather than on the moral relevance of Lear's conduct[10]. We cannot enjoy the feeling of an initial impression because one of the problems with reading *King Lear* —or any of Shakespeare's plays—is that we know in advance how the events are going to unfold. Most people, even if they have not read the play, identify Goneril and Regan with two diabolical creatures. However, in the opening scene we do not know anything about them: all that we are allowed to perceive is an old man who is about to commit a very foolish act. To understand the exact nature of the transgression of Lear we must forget several things: what Lear is, how his daughters behave towards him, and Cordelia's matchless disposition. This is not easy; however, it must be done: it is a decisive predicament. We tend to read or re-read the play based on what must be qualified as received reading, and this should not be the case at all.

As soon as the king takes his place on the throne and delivers his first speech, the reader knows he is about to face something already preordained by Lear[11]. This sensation has been intensified by the conspicuous fact that the kingdom has already been divided into three portions. When the first daughter begins to speak, what comes to the reader's mind, surely as surely it must, is Gloucester's treatment of his son Edmund. Lear's tone does not help the reader to dissociate Lear's attitude from that of Gloucester. Both seem to be alike, not a reassuring thought. The spectacle that has been staged by Lear is a lamentable one. His cunning is boundless and he is cruel, for whether we like it or not, to be Goneril or Regan at this point must be very discomfiting[12]. To be pushed into such mockery is not only offensive but painful. Even the way in which he addresses his daughters is marked by both anxiety and tension. What Lear does is to violate his daughters' most elementary human rights and their sense of dignity.

> Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
> That we our largest bounty may extend
> Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,
> Our eldest-born, speak first.
>
> (I, i, 50-53)

What Lear says is pivotal. However, the enormity of his demand tends to be neglected by critics because what they see now is not a cruel and callous father but the tragic old man on the heath.

To grasp the dramatic texture of this scene requires the reader to forget all about Lear's affliction and to appraise his words within the context of the scene rather than within the framework of approaching events. What will happen, whether we care to admit it or not, assuages and even deletes all that is amoral, irrational and pitiless in the old king. One does not need much sagacity to see that Lear's daughters have been tranformed into a public spectacle in which the main issue at hand is a protestation of love. This phenomenon is sufficient to make a sesible human being feel that Lear, for one reason or other, is manipulating his daughters[13]. For Lear the manœuvring is both acceptable and legitimate because he has a reason or cause that is of fundamental importance for him.

To challenge his daughters to acquiesce to a love quest and to encourage them to dispute for a piece of land is hardly acceptable. To force them to strive publicly with declarations of love is unethical. To hear his daughters, at this moment, making frantic, insane and hollow protestations of love should shock us. But, his two daughters do exactly what Lear wants: obey him. The reader should note the direct, dry and urgent tone of Lear when he commands Goneril to speak. At first we think in terms of a father who is curt, authoritative and unwilling to waste words. However, this impression vanishes when the reader begins to contrast the manner in which he speaks to his other two daughters.

The way in which Lear speaks to Goneril is hardly acceptable even if the underlying cause were no more than Lear's anxiety to secure Cordelia with the biggest portion. It is sufficient to be the eldest-born and to have to compete with her other two sisters for a portion of the kingdom. Not a single endearing term has been used by Lear but a plain "Goneril." To be acknowledged in public as the one her father loves least must be a mortifying and unbearable experience and surely can do nothing but awake hostile feelings towards the favourite.

There is urgency in Lear's tone. His tension is manifest and the sensation of exigency is very marked. Lear is not capable of controlling his sentiments. What he wants of Cordelia transforms him in a relentless and unjust father. The

cause that promotes his designs overpowers him to such a point that the reader cannot fail to perceive that there is something very wrong with the demeanour of this old king. Lear does not waste much time in ordering Goneril to speak. Five words constitute his address to her.

As soon as Lear summons her to speak, Goneril surrenders to his will. She knows that the parody must go on, and so she recites in gradiose terms her feelings about her father. However, her words are sufficiently caustic. Goneril claims that Lear is to her "dearer than eye-sight, space and liberty." Her statement needs to be evaluated with much care. The first thing she does is to allude to blindness as opposed to sight, that is to say, to his incapacity to see things as they are because his unsound mind can blind him Blindness will achieve, as the action of the play undofolds itself, a horrifying dimension that will prompt the reader to question the nature and degree of his feelings towards his youngest daughter Cordelia. Goneril affirms that she would rather be blind than be without her father's love. By saying this Goneril is placing herself on her father's level. She obliquely claims that she is willing to become blind like Lear as long as she receives the larger portion of his kingdom: for her anything is valid to achieve her purpose. Her suggestion can be associated with both physical and spiritual blindness, and so is pertinent to Lear's spiritual blindness as opposed to Gloucester's physical blindness. Goneril's allusion, at this point, to the necessity of being blind in Lear's world, her world, seems to be trivial and irrelevant, no more than a commonplace topos involving the preferment of love to anything else. However, this is not so.

Goneril alludes to another theme, that of disinheritance. The connection and significance of this theme in relation to both Cordelia and her father, Lear, will soon be revealed with Cordelia's banishment. Goneril speaks of spacelessness as opposed to "space" or room or area to be in[14]. The last part of her speech is equally prophetic as far as Lear's fate and that of Cordelia is concerned. The old king is blind, his irrational desire has blinded him. In consequence he is about to be the one who becomes "disinherited" because he is going to "disinherit" the person he loves best, Cordelia. The resulting step is the expected one: lack of freedom. Goneril claims that she is willing to be a prisoner for the sake of her father's love. When considering the correlatives inherent in the word freedom, we have to admit that Goneril, in a rather crafty and indirect manner, is saying much to Lear. He does not give them the chance to be free. He wants certain words to be uttered and thus Lear is denying his daughters the right to confine their sentiments toward their father within the boundaries of a private and moral world. What he does goes against the most basic and elementary concept of freedom.

We cannot know with certainty how Goneril feels about her father's game or whether she has guessed Lear's intentions. Probably not, otherwise she would not have tried so hard to win the game. Goneril is no fool and, although she knows that Cordelia is the favourite, she must have hoped to get the larger portion by outdoing her two sisters.

In order to grasp fully the meaning of "liberty" and "space" the reader must wait for the thematic development of the play. Lear, and Cordelia at the end of the play, become prisoners, so that the one who truly loses her freedom and even her life for the sake of her father's love is Cordelia. She is capable of accepting her father's blindness, because the love she feels for him in a way blinds her to other realities.

Goneril's speech is rather mechanical but it pleases Lear: she has said what he wanted to hear, and that is all that matters. The quality of her tone, the unreality of her words, are of little consequence to Lear. What he wants is an exaggerated demonstration of love, verbal love, no more. We do not know, at this point, her true nature, but as soon as Cordelia speaks and Lear breaks into an irrational outburst of blind passion, in retrospect, we surely know that nothing coming from Goneril could please Lear. He is not really interested in the feelings of Goneril but in the verbal qualification of these feelings to be matched with those of Cordelia. Goneril could have said almost anything exaggerated enough as to make it difficult to find words to outmatch hers in quantity and in quality.

For Goneril to satisfy Lear is a futile quest. To a certain deree we can understand her behaviour: she knows that her father does not like her. However, she has hopes. Perhaps she was not fully aware of the implications inherent in her own words. The situation is so ridiculous as to make it difficult to understand Goneril's attitude towards Lear. If she fears that Lear, regardless of what she says, is not going to give her the larger portion, there is no reason to make such a tremendous verbal effort to demonstrate that she loves her father best. Possibly, hoping to secure the larger portion she selects three subjects that can hardly be matched, sight, space, and liberty, so that unawares she is setting the tone of the competition that Lear has anticipated.

Bearing in mind that Lear has said "that we our largest bounty may extend" and hearing Lear address himself to Cordelia, the reader cannot fail to see that Lear has been playing a foul game with his daughters. He has deceived them, for he has already decided to grant Cordelia the larger portion. Let us not forget that he does not wait to grant the portions after the three of them have spoken. To wait till the three were finished, at least, would have given his quest the facade of an ethical game. He gives the portion as soon as the person in question has spoken, thus leaving some hope for the next speaker to outdo the preceding one, because the larger portion has not yet been granted.

From Lear's stance it is evident that there is no real and honest communication between father and daughters. Lear is beguiling Goneril with the supposition that if she claims to love him best she will receive the larger portion; and Goneril is deceiving her father with her hollow protestations of love. Lear's quest is the product of ulterior motives and so are Goneril's words. The problem is that the reader cannot perceive Lear's falsity with sufficient clarity till he addresses himself to Cordelia, hoping that she will manage to surpass her two sisters. What Lear expects of her, as we shall see, is much, too much: her renunciation of her rights as a woman in order to become his loving companion; the nurse of an old father who wants both her reassurance and the independence to enjoy old age without responsibilities or preoccupations.

By the time Goneril finishes her deceptive speech Cordelia is already aware that there is a problem and very serious one to be faced and so she asks herself sadly and plaintively, "What shall Cordelia speak?" (I, i, 61). It is very difficult to answer her question. Perhaps the problem is that there is no way of answering it without falling into Lear's trap. Goneril, impelled by her desire to secure the larger share, has articulated, according to Lear, the desired words. All is going well for Lear and so when he speaks to his second daughter he is less tense, more relaxed and his tone has not only become warmer but his address has been increased from five words to eleven, "What says our second daughter / Our dearest Regan, wife of Cornwall?" (I, i, 66-67). Regan does not stand, like Goneril, as a person dismissed, as if she were no more than the "first-born" in Lear's mind. Regan's name has been qualified by "our dearest" and her social standing has been specified as that of "wife of Cornwall." Some human entity has been granted to Regan that Lear, with his urgency and anxiety, has deprived his first daughter of.

The commencement of the request with the pronoun "what" used interogatively is already a challenge that Regan must accept. His demand implies that there is still a larger portion so that she may get it if she says the correct thing. As Lear had assumed, she tries to outdo Goneril and by doing so she speaks of her affections in a manner difficult for the unhappy Cordelia to improve on. The theme of blindness, space and liberty has been enlarged to that of her condition as a wedded lady. Perhaps she has picked up Lear's hint when he spoke of her as a married lady who loves a man other than himself. It there is a clue in Lear's address, it is difficult to know. However what is plain is that Regan sees it as such and grabs at the opportunity of exceeding her sister in the love contest.

Regan's words must be analyzed with care because what she says leaves Cordelia no option other than to submit to Lear's "darker purpose" or cause that has constrained him to devise this love competition. According to Regan her affection for Lear must be measured by what she can exclude from her life as inimical to her feelings for her father:

> I am made of that self metal as my sister,
> And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
> I find she names my very deed of love;
> Only she comes too short: that I profess
> Myself an enemy to all other joys
> Which the most precious square of sense possesses,
> And find I am alone felicitate
> In your dear highness' love.
>
> (I, i, 68-74)

The first line states that she, like Goneril, is his daughter. The choice of the word "metal" gives to Regan's speech several corollaries that we must take into consideration. These associations according to *Shakespeare-Lexicon* are as follows: "Metal or mettle (no distinction made in O.E.D. between the two words). 1) Heavy, hard and shining substance, not combustible but fusible by heat. 2) The substance or material of which a thing is composed. 3) Constitutional disposition, character, temper. 4) A fiery temper, ardour, spirit of enterprise, high courage.

Apart from indicating that she is his daughter she names a quality derived from her father and relating to the fact that "metal" is very hard and shines. Lear has been hard on his daughters but he shines as king, so that he is gold-metal, and she is entitled to the crown of the larger part. Another aspect to bear in mind is that although metal implies hardness, metal is fusible by heat. The image is appropiate because it links Lear to his eventual awareness during his meeting with Cordelia at Dover that he is "bound / Upon a wheel of fire," (IV, vii, 46). The second meaning implicit in the imperative tone used by Regan, is that he must bear in mind that they are both like him: that they are made of the same substance, that they can be demanding, hard and ready to act like him. The third related meaning of "metal" refers to their "temper" which, again, has to be in line with his. Regan's implied intimation achieves full force with the last related meaning of "metal": both have a fiery disposition; both are passionate and have courage, and thus are capable of anything to further their desires.

When trying to outdo her sister, Regan is not a dunce. First, as her fierce temper dictates, she commands Lear to price her "at her [sister's] worth." Next she emphasizes that there is something in her love for him that entitles her to be exalted to a higher worth, and thus to be the deserving winner of the larger portion. She is capable of asserting, apart from preferring her father's love to

sight, space and liberty, that she wants nothing of life which is not his love. Regan's words comprise almost the utmost that a woman can deny hersfelf for the sake of her father's love.

With Regan's speech the reader wonders what Cordelia can say to prove to Lear that she loves him best. An astute mind knows that there is only one thing left and what has been left unsaid cannot be uttered as a profession of love by Goneril or Regan because they are already married. What they have not mentioned is what Lear expects Cordelia to say. To renounce her suitors by stating that to marry a man is hateful to her because she is happy only loving her father.

Most critics tend to see Cordelia as a most faultless young maiden. Owing to this very general attitutde, Bradley's evaluation of Cordelia's behaviour has been and still is a cause of dispute[15]. Critics tend to defend Cordelia with so much zeal that one has the feeling that they are vindicating more the poetic merits of the playwright than the moral fabric of the story and with it Cordelia's attitude towards her father. This obsession to exonerate both Cordelia and Lear tends to produce a distorted picture of Lear's world. They must be perfect in their imperfection. Lear must be an ethical man even if his needs and desires cannot be classified as bering truly moral. Unless we are capable of seeing Lear's world for what it is, harsh, amoral and irrational, the finale of the play will be questioned as an atrocity. However, this is not the case. Shakespeare knew what he was doing and it is called poetic justice.

Probably the obstacle to seeing the cause of Lear's tragedy in its true light derives not so much from the incapacity to see Lear for what he is, an old man too fond of his youngest daughter, unwilling to have her married, and thus obsessed with her status as maiden. This may be easily accepted. The problem lies surely not in Lear but in the inconvenience of accepting Cordelia as the person who is wanted by her father on different terms to those which natrue imposes on her. To concede this does not mean that we are questioning her moral constitution or that we are accusing her of any impropriety. She is not the only character in the literature of this period who is the victim of a relative who wants her and is not aware of it. A good example of this problem is the unhappy Duchess of Malfi, whose tragedy, as most critics accept nowdays, originates in her brother's fixation, an obsession of which he is not fully conscious.

The evaluation of Cordelia, at this crucial moment, will depend entirely upon the moral make-up of the reader. Also the idea of what is practical and what is not will influence him[16]. Perhaps the only thing that can be easily recognized is that Lear has so manipulated the situation as to place Cordelia in very difficult position. He has managed to evince from his two elder daughters the exact words, the words he wanted to hear, to trap her. Whether we like it or not, the

main object of Lear's love-game is that of catching or trapping Cordelia, as if she where an object with no rights that he can disposed of at his convenience. The point is fully confirmed, as we shall see, towards the end of the play. The idea of catching is constantly in the air, and the reasons for the hunt or catching of Cordelia can be explained only in terms of Lear's personal needs, egotism, and infatuation; a feeling that cannot be confined within the bounds of normal love for a daughter.

Lear's address to Cordelia brings discomfort and even embarrassment. The other two sisters are there to compare the manner in wich Lear speaks to Cordelia with the way that he spoke to them a few moments earlier. Lear's language has changed and his speech is much longer:

> Now, our joy,
> Although our last, and least; to whose young love
> The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
> Strive to be interess'd; what can you say to draw
> A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.
> (I, i, 81-85)

This comes as a shock. The emphasis placed on a "third more opulent" reveals how deceitful Lear has been to his other two daughters.

To study the meaning of this parliament we have to do two things; one, compare the manner in which he speaks to Cordelia with the way in which he spoke to his other daughters. Two, consider the main elements that have been cvontemplated by Lear in his speech. We shall begin by reiterating the fact that in Goneril's case Lear asks her to speak. When it comes to Regan's turn Lear does not demand her to speak but he wants to know what she has to say. When Cordelia has to speak, Lear challenges her with what she can say, and what she can say is conditioned by what has been said previously. To ask somebody to speak is not quite the same as to ask a person what he or she has to say and even less what he or she can say. Once more we must emphasize the differences in tone, grammar and structure. From a curt and unfeeling "speak", Lear changes to "what says" and from this manner of speech to "what can you say."

Happy as he is when speaking to Cordelia, not only does his tone change but he commends her for being his joy and also for being innocent because she has not yet granted her "young love" to any man. Now it is not a question of speaking but of what she can say to prove that she loves him more than her sisters, so as to win the larger portion. He mentions, again, the fact that two men are contending for her love, implying that the larger portion will be given to one of them. But this may not be so. If Lear has been capable of dissembling as far as

the granting of the larger portion to Goneril and Regan is concerned, he might be pretending now. Lear may have in mind to grant them nothing, since he hopes to keep Cordelia with him. Lear is playing a dark game, for there is nothing left for Cordelia to say other than to renounce marriage because she loves her father above all. Of course Cordelia is not willing to do so and therefore she has nothing to say. Once Cordelia says nothing a very direct and violent confrontation between two strong wills takes place. Lear's plan has proved futile; the quest has led him nowhere and thus he feels like a man bereft of what he wants most in life, his daughter.

Much has been written about Cordelia's failure to express her authentic feelings and about Lear's incapacity to understand her; but a close scrutiny of her words proves that she is not as tongue-tied as she claims to be. There is novelty in this observation for as Bradley wrote, "Cordelia is not, indeed always tongue-tied, as several passages in the drama, and even in this scene, clearly show" (Bradley 1964: 265). When Cordelia is hard pressed by Lear she is cold, clear-headed and very precise; nothing is superfluous in what she articulates and with few words she manages to state exactly what she presumes must be clarified. What Cordelia says is that she will love her husband and consequently that she cannot declare that she will love Lear most. She wants to get married, she has a right to love a man and because of this right she cannot pledge herself to love only her father.

Cordelia feels that she is tongue-tied. Her beliefs about her incapacity to express what she thinks beg some questioning. She has been hard on her father, direct, cold, and stern. Something prompts Cordelia to feel she is tongue-tied; she has not said what she feels must be said. What she is not going to convey openly is that she is not going to accept Lear's implicit proposal of self-denial. To say this unveiled is impossible because it would render Lear as a worthless liar, as a man who has deceived all of them for the sake of a personal need. What is obvious to Cordelia is that to take a husband on Lear's stipulation is impossible. Regan has stated that she prefers Lear to the marital embrace, and Lear expects of Cordelia something to prove that she is more devoted to him than her two sisters. Thus, Cordelia can do only one thing, reject her suitors. It is possible to see this as what Lear expects. After all to give for example to France his larger portion, solves nothing while causing many problems. What Lear wants is implicit in the way in which he has conducted the love-quest. What he wants is grounded in a cause, in his feelings that disturb him to the point of mental disequilibrium.

Cordelia knows how to argue her case. The method that she employs to defend herself is admirable when appraised on moral grounds and natural rights. Very clearly, she specifies that she loves him according the natural "bond" that

must exist between a father and a daughter; hence, she cannot move beyond the boundaries imposed by the laws of nature. What she says is very alarming. Cordelia is no fool and she knows exactly what she is saying. Her declaration about the type of bond that must unite a daughter to her father has to relate to Lear's purpose and so to the cause of the love competition. Her words are loaded and some of the implied meanings are associated with Lear's bearing during this scene. One of the suggested connotations is that she, unlike her sisters, is going to abide in both deed and words within the limits imposed by the bond that she is talking about. In her opinion her sisters have moved beyond the decency allowed by this bond, not of course in deed but in words, and she is right.

Cordelia is very conscious of this transgression and of the consequences. Her perception is well revealed by the way she treats her sisters when she is about to leave the court. Her argument about the bond and its limits is reinforced when to defend her point she uses words deriving from the marriage service, "I / Return those duties back as are right fit, / Obey you, love you, and most honour you" (I, i, 95-97). With these words, what she is saying is that she cannot see a reason why she cannot have a husband like her sisters. She asserts that in spite of having a husband to love she can love her father in a similar manner, but not in a identical way which does not mean that she cannot love him. With these words Cordelia is trying to achieve something else: to show that her sisters are false because they cannot love Lear more than their husbands. To do so signifies desecrating the bond of matrimony. In addition she is implying that if they are married ladies Lear must know that they love their husbands or at least that they ought love them. However, Lear accepts as natural such a monstrous statement without considering their duties as wives. Lear's acceptance of their words, in view of Cordelia's understanding of marriage, is a sham, a pretence. "Sure I shall never marry like my sisters, / To love my father all" (I, i, 102-3). Cordelia is right but Lear's counterfeit places her in a very difficult situation. Thus she is angry with them for claiming they love their father more than anything else in this world.

What Cordelia says is correct but the way she says it is rather distressing. There is tremendous finality in her words, "I love your Majesty / According to my bond: no more nor less" (I, i, 91). The key word is "bond" Cordelia loves him according to the bond imposed by nature. She is unwilling to love him more than the bond licenses her. Had Cordelia said, "according to my bond," without adding the disturbing possibility that Lear wants to be loved more than the bond allows, the words would not be so shocking and perturbing. There is bitterness in her words, but also a firmness of character that can surprise the reader, considering her age and her love for her father. Her words reflect an acute sense of discomfort, the natural mortification that any sensitive person might feel when

discovering that he or she has been treated as a quarry: that Lear has managed, using, or abusing the falseness of her two sisters, to corner her in a way she is not going to accept.

Cordelia is not willing to be purchased by Lear to become his kind nurse. She wants more, she wants to be treated like anybody else. It is not a question of Cordelia's unwillingness to care for Lear, but of reluctance considering the conditions imposed by Lear. In this confrontation Cordelia proves to be Lear's equal in many respects; she will not bend her will regardless of the price she has to pay for her liberty, her capacity to see what her father wants of her.

Lear becomes mad beyond reason. Lear gives the impression of being a man bent on having his will since he has never weathered a real and direct resistance even from the ones who seem to love him well. Lear must have been a strong-headed man; otherwise we cannot understand why, up to this point, everybody seems to have been engaged in his will without forcing him to question his acts or his needs. The Lear that we see during the first scene is a man who in no way is prepared to meet the challenge of someone trying to resist his resolution and more so when such a hindrance comes from the person he loves best. The supposition that so far everybody has been most obedient to his wishes is confirmed by his violent reaction towards Cordelia and Kent when they stand up to him as if they were strangers, because this is new to him.

If he expected to assert his will over Cordelia he finds himself defeated by his own game. His emotional world has been destroyed and thus there is little left for him other than to rage like a wounded animal; and wounded as he feels he tries to inflict upon the "cause" of his pain as much pain as possbile, because in his mind it would have been better never to have had such a child than to go through the ordeal of rejection.

For Lear the existence of Cordelia becomes a disaster. Thus it is comprehensible that owing to his grief and anxiety, he prefers never to set eyes upon her than to suffer this type of hell. An appalling bottomless pit if we bear in mind that, at the end, he has to cut his emotional bond by severing the rope from which Cordelia hangs dead. He is not willing to cut the umbilical cord now and thus he will have to go through a far worse tribulation. For Lear, the ordeal of the cord, implicit in Cordelia's name—Cord [i] deal, becomes his last horror. Cordelia is not willing to maintain her child-like attachment to Lear. He fails and so he takes the opposite road, that of boundless hatred, precisely because he cannot cut the cord. The abrupt change from inmense love and joy to a inexhaustible hatred can be explained only in terms of what Lear expected of Cordelia. His love must be very intense to change in less than few minutes to such a violent abhorrence. At this point nothing can bring relief to Lear's mad

anger, and so when Kent tries to help him he turns and commits his final mistake, that of confering his revenue and the execution of his kingly duties on both Goncril and Regan.

During this unhappy scene Gloucester cannot be present and so Kent, all alone, has to contend with Lear. He offers himself as his "physician" but all he receives in exchange is banishment, because Lear, instead of trying to see and understand the cause that prompts him to act in the way he does, chooses his sword. The words that Lear utters, interrupting Kent with so much violence when he tries to say something, are worth considering, for they serve to add more data relating to the existence of a dark *cause* and hence to the nature of that *cause* :

> Come not between the Dragon and his wrath.
> I Lov'd heer most, and thought to set my rest
> On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!
> So be my grave my peace, as here I give
> Her father's heart from her!
> (I, i, 121-25)

Lear identifies himself with a dragon and he is right in doing so. To the natural instinct of this monster, wrath, we have to add those of fire and desolation. Lear is destroyed by his own substance, the fire ot the dragon. Fire as a symbol of Lear's crisis is used on several occasions throughout the play, and fire can have associations with desires that consume. The transition from love to fire and from fire to boundless wrath is provocative. Once Cordelia refuses to pronounce the expected words, love, fire and wrath become the same thing in Lear's mind.

To the element of fire we have to add the symbol of the sword. Lear opts for the sword, thus rejecting Kent's offer to become his physician: "Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow / Upon the foul disease" (I, i, 162). The meaning of Lear's choice is sufficiently clear: nothing can cure his disease[17]. Once Kent becomes fully aware that there is no solution to Lear's problem he can do nothing other than take Lear's role as father, for Cordelia does not have a father in a moral and a physical sense. Kent does not only bless Cordelia, as father, but thinks that she has acted correctly, even if her act entails his banishment from the court: "The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid, / That justly think'st and hast most rightly said!" (I, i, 181-82).

Once Kent leaves the court, Burgundy and France appear on the scene. At this point the reader should note that Lear addresses himself first to Burgundy, "My Lord of Burgundy, / We first address toward you, who with this king / Hath rivall'd for our daughter" (I, i, 188-90), and not to France, France being a king.

Lear may have done this for two reasons: one, because he knows Burgundy sufficiently well to suspect that he will refuse Cordelia. And, that he hopes that France will reject Cordelia if Burgundy rejects her first since he is a king and the other of a lesser rank. The idea of rivalry is emphasized once more by Lear, who cannot see France and Burgundy in any other light than that of two rivals contending for his daughter's love. Lear does not do much to bring about Burgundy's rejection, so that Cordelia discovers that he does not love her greatly. This is not quite the case with France, who up to this point waits wondering at Lear's anger.

France, watching Lear's change, wonders about the cause ("This is most strange"; I, i, 212) and about Cordelia's offense: "Sure, her offence / Must be of such unnatural degree / That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection / Fall into taint" (I, i, 217-20). France, unlike Burgundy, is not governed by interest, so that he can look at the issue in a different manner. For France the event of Cordelia's disgrace is too peculiar to be accepted as such. Hence, in spite of Lear's efforts to discredit his daughter in the eyes of her suitors, he fails. For France Lear's words exhibit an ill desire towards his daughter: "therefore beseech you / T'avert your liking a more worthier way / Than on a wretch whom Nature is asham'd / Almost t'acknowledge hers." (I, i, 210-11). Lear's words constitute a diseased yearning based on his desire to see Cordelia forsaken by everybody and thus in need begging his protection. This would mean taking her back but on his own terms.

Cordelia reacts well and defends her case. At this point we must pay attention to Cordelia's words for two different reasons which are obliquely linked to the cause of Lear's tragedy. The reader can hardly qualify her words as lacking eloquence; in fact, when she addresses Lear, and indirectly France, we have been presented with her longest parliament throughout the play. There is energy in her tone and so much so that it is not difficult to deduce where her affection is placed and thus why she does not want to be forsaken by Frnce. Cordelia's speech is effective, for France, in spite of Lear's efforts to discredit his daughter, becomes aware of her worth so that his love for her increases. He knows that she has taken "No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step" (I,i, 227). Cordelia, with her speech, manages to destroy Lear's last hope, thus invalidating the expected result of the love-trial[18].

As the tragedy unfolds, the plot changes from Lear's desire to inflict pain on Cordelia to a desire of inflicting pain upon himself. Once Lear is left alone in the hands of his two daughters blindness and old age become his theme. Sex and sight take a predominant place in Lear's talk, mixed with that of adultery which haunts him like a devil, and eventually incest. Lear begins to see himself as both a fond old man and a blind one, speaking at times as if he has no eyes.

"Does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes?" (I, iv, 224). Lear sees himself as a blind man because he has not been able properly to estimate the worth of his daughters. Yet, the real blindness of Lear, his moral blindness as to the cause which prompted him to misapprehend Cordelia's words when she tried to make him see things as they really were, is there. Lear never reaches the necessary anagnorisis; his is incomplete, so that he is one of the most tragic characters ever devised in the history of drama.

From asking, Lear moves to expressiang a marked desire of inflicting physical violence upon himself, and the type of savagery he is talking about fits in again with the fact that he is still morally blind.

> Old fond eyes,
> Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck ye out,
> And cast you, with the waters that you loose,
> To temper clay.
>
> (I, iv, 299-302)

Here he talks about plucking out his eyes. When he is about to depart from Goneril he speaks of drakness and of the devil, unaware yet of the fact that the devil is in him and darkness no more than a manifestation of the sickness spoken of by Kent.

Lear's sin, that is to say, the *cause* that has placed him in such a tremendous situation, has to be exorcised. Such a tremendous situation has to be exorcised, thoretically speaking, through the violent act of plucking out his own eyes. The image of darkness combined with that of the eyes is not a very comfortable one because, even with the best will, the reader cannot avoid the classical image of Orestes, driven to madness and Oedipus's blind wanderings. Yet we have to accept that the image of blindness is an apt one; it fits pefectly well with the cause of his tragedy, his unreasonable jealousy and his desire to deny Cordelia the natural embrace of matrimony.

Lear's anxiety and mental disequilibrium, caused by the tension of his feelings towards his young daughter explodes with the storm. This chaotic event is no more than nature's reflection on Lear's feelings and of his mental state. The storm, as Lear sees it, like him raves with "eyeless rage." With the storm we have to return to scene one, that is to say to several elements related to the germinal cause of the tragedy.

Goneril spoke in terms of his being to her dearer than eye-sight. In Lear's world all has become now dearer than eye-sight. He is the one who hopes to loose his sight. He is the one who has no "space" to be in and he is the one who looses

his liberty and thus he has to face nature's chaos. However, he cannot understand why all this has come about. Thus the feeling that he evokes is that even if Lear plucks out his eyes, he will be as blind as he was during the opening scene. Lear can appreciate the external in others but never his own inner world: he cannot do it because he cannot understand the nature of his sentiment.

Lear calls on the tempest in the hope of having an allied power destroy his two daughters, unaware of the fact that the storm is operating upon him. The storm is a violent and eyeless reflection of the inner storm caused by his feelings, egotism, irrationality and deceitfulness. Regardless of how much the storm rages within and without, Lear remains impotent to see because his mind is clouded by wrath and by his incapacity to accept himself for what he is, a doting father who expected too much of a daughter without considering, as Cordelia says, the natural "bond" that must unite them.

We may here compare *Othello* with *King Lear*. Othello's tragedy is based in his blindness, caused by his insane jealousy. In this play there is a tremendous moment in which Othello, after realizing that he has killed an innocent creature, calls for an storm which, from a linguistic point of view, has been described in similar terms by Lear. Yet, in Othello's case, the storm never takes place because he is no longer governed by feelings of blind jealousy and he can see that he has perpetrated a crime without "cause" (*Othello* V, ii, 279-81). Othello, unlike Lear, discovers that there was no cause so that he does not ecome involved in a real storm. Lear, unlike Othello, does not know himself. After he banishes both Kent and Cordelia, Regan attriburtes his behaviour to "the infirmity of his age; yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself" (I, ji, 292-93). Goneril and Regan seem to know Lear much better than Cordelia. Perhaps the reason lies in the fact that both are evil and thus they can see in Lear flaws unrecognized by others. Regan and Goneril, unlike Cordelia, speak of being made of the "same metal," possibly refering to Lear's fibre. In many respects his two daughters are, unlike Cordelia, made of Lear's "metal."

Many of Lear's imperfections have been transformed into vivid images of chaos and disorder; and it can hardly be a coincidence that Shakespeare, in *Othello* and in *King Lear*, has chosen images composed of the elements of air and fire. Lear is the dragon that dares the elements, while the wind blows with eyeless rage. During this episode Lear's attention is focused on lust, and on incest, that is to say, on demonic images[19]. R. M. Frye comments that "Shakespeare could have placed him in a Dantesque or Miltonic hell, but he did not so, and neither should we."[20] However, Lear is in hell enveloped by both darkness and a raging wind. Canto V of the *Divine Comedy* serves to explain why Shakespeare has combined both elements: and the type of sin that is punished in Hell with a wind that blows with "eyeless rage" is lust.

Othello invokes a hellish tempest because he has sinned against Desdemona in thought and deed, and his sin derives from his jealousy. The similarities between Desdemona, accused of a fault she has not committed, and Cordelia claiming that there is no *cause* are suggestive. Both men cannot see that the *cause* of their tragedies lies within themselves. The analogies can be taken further. In the same way that Lear, when Cordelia is about to depart with France, tells her that it would have been better for him if she had never been born, Othello says the same thing to Desdemona. The phrasing used by Lear and Othello is almost identical: "Would thou hadst ne'er been born!" (*Othello*, IV, ii, 71) and "Better thou / Hadst not been born than not t'have pleased me better" (*King Lear*, I, i, 23).

In Lear's mind Cordelia has been unfaithful to him because she loves another man, hence he cannot see France capable of loving her without lust. After perceiving that her shortcoming is a minor one he is still distressed by the idea of lust in the person of France and thus by his sexual possession of Cordelia: "Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took / Our youngest born," (II, iv, 210-11). Lear's immorality derives from what his possessive feelings induce him to see, and what he sees is all wrong. When Lear rages like a wounded animal, forgetting the nature of his two daughters Goneril and Regan he directs his choler against their husbands: "And when I have stol'n upon these son-in-laws, / Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!" (IV, vi, 184-85). Possibly he is refering to France too. Thus it would be appropriate for him to become physically blind since he cannot separte right from wrong, but this does not happen.

Owing to Lear's errors Gloucester has to suffer the ordeal of being blinded by Lear's daughters who, by now, have become the living picture of the "foul fiend." They have become two irrational furies bent on destroying Lear's world. Lear does not suffer physical blindness. However we must understand Gloucester's blindness as a physical displacement of the moral blindness that characterizes Lear. Lear speaks of wanting to pluck out his eyes but for the wrong reason, so that his eyes are never plucked. The symbolic act of Lear's blindness takes place in the person of Gloucester, who becomes his surrogate, suffering the punsihment in the king's stead. The point has been well clarified by Gloucester when he explains why he has done what he has done; "because I would not see / Thy cruel nails pluck out his poor old eyes" (II, vii, 54-55).

The punishment has to fall on Gloucester. Lear is insane and thus he is not answerable for his acts. Gloucester, the sane man, sends Lear to Dover, thus making the reunion with Cordelia possible. That reunion does not help Lear to reach the necessary anagnorisis. On the contrary, it becomes the occasion to fulfil his wild dream, that of being alone with Cordelia. The cause is of no consequence for Lear: the chance to be alone with his daughter, even if it is in

a prison is what matters. Hence the structure of the play achieves a circular motion, we have returned to the first scene. What has changed in Lear's mind is little as far as his feelings towards his daughter are concerned.

What differentiates Gloucester from Lear is that the first, by being immersed permanently in darkness, reaches an enduring anagnorisis, while the latter's is temporal. By watching Lear escaping physical blindness we can evaluate the weight of his ordeal and the imperfection of his purgation. The point has been brought to the surface by means of Lear's attitude and apprehension of Gloucester's blindness, for, before he can recognize him, he equates his blindness with Cupid's and thus with the general workings of love, not to say lust, as something to be avoided (IV, vi, 135-36). However, Lear did not want ot avoid it. After all, he has invoked the gods for blindness, he has wanted to be the agent of his own blindness. The point is important because the insane Lear cannot see beyond the boundaries of lust and eros when it comes to Gloucester, the living image of blindness. The problem is that in his madness he cannot grasp why he has wanted to pluck out his own eyes, and even less that, at this moment, he is watching a portrait of himself in the person of Gloucester.

The scene is unbearable but it is a necesssary one in consideration to the germinal cause of Lear's tragedy. The scene prepares the reader to confront Lear's imperfection. The image of a blind man and Lear talking about Cupid as the cause of his blindness paves the way for the meeting between daughter and father and also for the unavoidable aftermath of the encounter[21]. Much has been written about the redeeming quality of the rendezvous, forgetting that Cordelia is alone so that in Lear's mind she has become the perfect being, the creature untouched by the power of the "foul fiend". She is there but on Lear's terms: as his child, not as the wife of France[22]. She has become his kind nurse. This is the consummation of Lear's dream at the opening of the play so that we must expect another disaster since Lear's aspiration has been realized.

Cosidering Lear's nature and the cause of his tragedy, on moral grounds the meeting must to be no more than an evanescent relief to bring to life Lear's dream[23]. The battle is lost and both are taken prisoner. For Lear, at this point, Cordelia becomes dearer than space and liberty, dearer than sight, for he does not want to see anybody other than his dearest daughter. Lear at this point, instead of being angry, feeling the humilation of the defeat, seems to be happy; too happy, indeed, to be considered as normal. His words when they are taken to prison are strange and out of context (V, iii, 8-14). Nothing seems to bother him now, on the contrary, he gives the impression of being elated by the circumstances, so that his egotism is revealed in a line that can bring nothing but horror and pity in the reader's mind.

Both are sent to prison and this is a return to the initial point of Lear's quest at the opening of the play. Lear is happy for he has Cordelia all to himself. Cordelia becomes silent; as in the love quest there is nothing for her to say, she cries but not a sound can be heard. The one who talks and talks is Lear. He feels like talking because the topic of his discourse gladdens him. He gives immense consideration to the certainty that now, finally, they are going to be alone. Lear's urgency and excitement is very conspicuous. When Cordelia questions him as to whether they are going to see Goneril and Regan before going to prison, Lear vehemently says "no!, no, no, no!." His negative is followed by a command, "Come, let's away to prison" (V, iii, 8).

For Lear, prison becomes his haven. The sense of alarm at Lear's reaction grows when he, as the irresponsible and egocentric man he is, asks Cordelia, "have I caught thee?" (V, iii, 21). This is a loaded verb. The point achieves full force when looking at the implications inherent in "caught." Lear has been able to catch her and this transforms Cordelia unawares into what she has been, Lear's game. Even the simile, "like foxes!" is appropriate to Lear because he has been the fox of he parody of the love quest. A deceptive fox contriving an forbidden trap for Cordelia by means of the love contest. Here we have the lethal fulfilment of Lear's quest in the opening scene of the play, to catch her: also, the germinal *cause* of the tragedy, for catching her was the "darker purpose" of the love competition. He has achieved his end but both will have to pay a very high price for his offense.

Given the nature of Lear's obsession, his joy cannot last long. Soon a desperate and broken old man emerges on stage bearing the body of her whom he loves best, Cordelia. For Shakespeare it has to be so: Lear, unlike Gloucester, is still ruled by irrational feelings and is thus morally blind. In addition, there is not a fitting way out for Cordelia, since in all probability, had she returned to France Lear would have been as crazed by her absence and the idea that she loved another man as he was when she left him. Thus her death fulfils a moral purpose.

Lear cuts the cord and with it he liberates Cordelia from a condition that is too binding owing to her good nature and filial love. She has been unable to forsake a father in need and thus she has been true to her statement at the opening of the play loving Lear according to the natural "bond" that must unite them. Bearing in mind Cordelia's predicament and Lear's agony we have to do what Edward asks the reader to do, "Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say" (V, iii,323)[24]. What our reason forces us to declare is one thing and what our emotions prompt us to feel about Lear's sufferings is another. The last image is that of a man who is punished for loving much but in a foolish way: what he has to pay in retribution is sufficient to forgive him for wanting to secure his daughter's love.

In the last scene Lear's final punishment becomes a penalty that goes beyond the horror of physical blindness or extinction. Cordelia's death is necessary, for had she lived, Lear would have been in perpetual darkness. Both are released from a prison: "space and liberty" are granted to them when Lear cuts the cord. By severing the cord there is no more cause so that Lear is loosed from the sorrows innate in human needs.

NOTES

1. *King Lear*, ed. Kenneth Muir (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1973). The Arden Shakespeare. Note: all quotations from this edition.

2. This may sound like a digression but it is not. We wish to explain why we use the term reader rather than audience. We are very aware of the differences between reader and audience and precisely because we are very aware of the dissimilarity we feel we have to use the term reader rather than audience. A critic has to be a reader because he is not evaluating the play as a whole, starting from a general dramatic impression of the performance, but from one aspect of the play as it relates to the dramatic fabric of the play. To do this we have to read the play a considerable number of times. It is realistic to accept that we do not always have the chance to see the performance sufficiently often for this type of criticism based on the real thing, the actual performance of the play. Also, we are sufficiently pragmatic to accept the inevitable fact that when teaching drama in a classroom we cannot make use of the dramatic visual effect of the play: we do not have the possibility of appreciating the effects on the stage, and all we have to work with is the written text. The observation may sound futile and irrelevant but it is not and needs to be stated.

3. As in *Hamlet*, because there is a cause the director of the play expects something of great importance from the performance. However, Hamlet, unlike Lear, gives instructions to the players. For Hamlet, behind the performance lies the discovery of the existence of a cause to avenge. The verification of the existence of a cause, owing to Hamlet's attitude, will affect the lives of the innocent and the guilty an equal degree. In Lear's case, the affirmation of Cordelia's unconditional love is the *cause* of Lear's staging an absurd performance.

4. For Ribner (1971: 120) the problem derives from the fact that Lear's fault "was a deliberate moral choice made before the love-contest." This is fine, but unless we understand the nature of this choice we shall not be able to grasp the seriousness of the fault.

5. Iris Murdoch uses the Lear theme in her novel *The Philosopher's Pupil*. The interesting point is that she has transformed the old father into a gradfather whose

preoccupation is with his grand-daughter's marriage. We would like to indicate that Iris Murdoch's novel has in no way influenced the thesis of this paper. In fact, we wrote this paper in 1977. Two years later we used this paper to stage *King Lear* following the methods of Grotowski. The production of *King Lear* was presented as an exercise at Studio Theatre, 4 Glen Morris St. of the Toronto Drama Centre of the University of Toronto. The reason we mention Murdoch's work lies in the fact that we were both surprised and pleased with her treatment of Lear. In addition, her approach to Lear helped reaffirm us in the validity of our thesis. For years we had felt that our analysis of Lear's problem was a little daring. Yet, at present, writers are beginning to see Lear's dilemma in a different light from the traditional one. For example, Adrian Pool (1987: 232-3) considers that Lear has a fixation with the mother figure and he is right. In this paper, as in 1977, we take this point much further. We understand that Lear's fixation is grounded on both concepts, that of the mother figure and that of the wife, combined in the person of Cordelia.

6. According to L.C. Knights, Lear "is a symbol of something not uncommon—the attempt to manipulate affection which can only freely be given" (1983: 334). This is quite right, but the problem lies in knowing why he feels he must manipulate Cordelia's affection when he already knows that she loves him.

7. As far as we are aware, a detailed analysis of the curious fact that in one way or other all the characters act as a mirror of the others has not been done. However, the fact that Kent emulates Lear has been mentioned by F. A. Shirley (1979: 129). Danby writes that if Kent emulates Lear, the Fool is as callous as he. See John F. Danby (1982: 104, 113). According to Goldsmith we might even question the Fool's loyalty. See H. Goldsmith (1963: 65). S. L. Goldberg (1980) avoids judgements based on total pefection and evil. He tries to see Cordelia in the light of possible error rather than of total flawlessness.

8. N. Frye sees Gloucester as a fool. The way he speaks about Edmund makes his treachery "at any rate credibly motivated" (1986: 103).

9. So far we have mentioned Lear's incapacity to understand and to see things in their proper perspective. The type of counsellors that Lear has chosen prove to be inefficient. Perhaps Lear has chosen Gloucester precisely because he is like himself, irrational, careless and unfeeling when it comes to his children. Lear can feel comfortable with him. We have to accept that Gloucester's lack of knowledge concerning his children does not make him the ideal counsellor, for, if he is not capable of seeing through the crude wiles of Edmund, how can we expect him to see the tricks of those who are not so close to him as his own children?

10. At the beginning the initial consideration may have been that the problem becomes even more unacceptable owing to the fact that the division of the kingdom is not an unavoidable political situation but rather the result of a personal need. The point is fully clarified as the action unfolds itself and the audience can see that Albany is a man of good nature and honourable intentions. We do not know this now, but, since we do not know anything about the nature of his daughters, we have no guideline as to why he has to divide his kingdom in such an unreasonable manner.

11. The first image is that of a map that is about to be torn in three portions. The second is that of a king who feels tired and aware of the existence of death. As Wolfgang Clemen pointed out, "crawl awakens a definite notion. Taken from the realm of animal life, crawling suggests a wounded, tired, perhaps, hunted animal dragging itself nearer to death" (1977: 138). What Clemen writes is correct. However, the animal-like instinct of preservation is there but caused by both the awareness of life in Cordelia and his desire to hold on to life, crawling like a baby, while all the work is done for him. The image of the wounded animal is adequate. Yet it has to be understood within the pattern of Cordelia's death as part of a wounded Lear cutting the umbilical cord when he takes down the body of Cordelia. The symbol of the rope and the prison must be analyzed in this context. Owing to the limitations imposed by the length of this paper we cannot touch upon this subject here, but it is relevant to the theme of incest.

12. "Lear at the opening is arrogant, rash and willful; it is clear that Cordelia has been his favourite, but he banishes her. How, then, has he treated Goneril and Regan all these years? Can their dislike for him be extenuated?" (Marilyn French 1981: 238).

13. We may go so far as to smile when watching the performance if we do not know the tragic consequences of this act. The grin may be provoked by our first impression of Lear who owing to his old age has become indiscreet and inane. When Goneril's speech is finished, we may entertain the possibility that his daughter is trying to humour him, and this is the correct thing considering his age. However, to do this is difficult because the play has been read a considerable number of times and our value judgment has been already prejudiced since we are too familiar with the characters of the play. This knowledge is a dangerous tool if we try to see the play as a living organism, arising from the dramatic development of events as a sequence depending on a form of cause and effect.

14. We have taken space to mean room, rather than the idea of "freedom from confinement" suggested by the editor of *King Lear* Kenneth Muir. See Alexander Schmidt (1971), vol. 2. The repetition of the concept of freedom makes little sense when there is the concept of room or space used as a geographical area as in *Macbeth* (IV, iii, 36).

15. See A. C. Bradley (1964: Lecture VII, 198-230 and Lecture VIII, 231-76).

16. When considering the problem of Cordelia from a moral point of view Cordelia's detractors are right. There is nothing for her to do but reject her father with all its consequences. However, when looling at it from a practical angle Bradley's evaluation is equally correct.

17. The significance of the sword has to be that of the rapier in *The Duchess of Malfi*, a phallic symbol. For some critics, among other things, *King Lear* is a play about sex. Kermode writes, "King Lear is his twenty-sixth play, or thereabouts; and it is the fifteenth in which he concerns himself with such problems, with the right of the ruler, and with the justice as dispensed by a poor forked thing. Nor is this by any means the only obsession we can confidently attribute to Shakespeare; it may be said, for example, that he was more than usually interested in vicious sexuality and madness" (1971: 178). We

believe that sex and madness go hand in hand. Perverted sexuality characterizes both old age and madness. These two aspects surely are the theme of *King Lear*. The idea of madness associated with sex, but not with incest, has been considered by Kenneth Muir. He remarks that "J. C. Bucknill in *Shakespeare* (1860) and H. Somerville in *Madness in Shakespearian Tragedy* (1929) illustrate the fact that our increasing knowledge of madness during the past century has served only to justify Shakespeare's intuitions." K. Muir sees the problem in terms of revulsion towards sex but deriving from the obsession that perhaps his wife had been faithless to him (1979: 31). We would like to direct the reader's attention to the fact that for Freud, *Hamlet* and *Timon of Athens* are the product of some emotional impact, not altogether unrelated to the drama inherent in *Oedipus Rex* (Freud 1970: 298-9). Freud is interested in Shakesperare and we are in his plays. Thus we do not need to attribute to Shakespeare Hamlet's problems or Lear's. To become interested in this aspect of human nature is natural in a man so preoccupied with the workings of the mind. We accept that Lear is suspicious about his paternity. Perhaps Lear's anger at Kent's intercession could be understood in terms of Lear's distrustful thoughts regarding his paternity. What Lear screams at Kent, "avoid my sight," is provocative. This possibility reinforces the thesis of incest. Perhaps Lear has been brooding too long about his blood-ties with Cordelia.

18. We must point out that this is a variation of the original sources. Leir does not behave in such a way, and although he is very angry with her, he is quite willing to get rid of her, giving her to Aganippus. Furthermore, Leir does not banish Cordelia, but waits till Aganippus can take her with him. *The History of the Kings of Britain* (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 83.

19. For demonic images, see N. Frye (1973: 156).

20. Roland Mushat Frye (1967: 255). According to Wilson Knight, Lear is not in Purgatory; however, he claims that the play's "philosophy is continually purgatorial" (1977: 179).

21. "Both Lear and Gloucester are the victims of filial ingratitude; the blinding of Gloucester is the physical equivalent to the madness of Lear." This is fine, but why blindness? In what T. Spencer is right is in seeing the play based on "one violation [that] leads to another." Thus we are concerned with the primary violation and its relation to blindness (Spencer 1974: 136, 143). Jan Kott (1967) sees Lear's world as an absurd one. He has compared *Waiting for Godot* with *King Lear*. Mark Taylor studies the theme of incest in Shakespeare's works in *Shakespeare's Darker Purpose: A question of Incest*. However, in spite of the title, he does not include *King Lear* in his study.

22. An interesting comment realted to Cordelia can be found in the criticism of the 19th century so much rejected nowadays. Charles Lamb indicates we never see Cordelia as the wife or lover, but only in terms of the daughter (1919: 112).

23. For David Sundelson there is restoration of the father figure: "King Lear contains Shakespeare's most terrible destruction of fathers, but it also contains the impulse to restore them" (1946: 2). We do not think that there is restoration till Cordelia's death. In fact we wonder about the value of such a restoration when France becomes wifeless.

24. The idea of fear as being, in part, the cause of Lear's mistake—wanting to buy Cordelia's love—has been pointed out by Caroline F. E. Spurgeon when she wrote that "love is a binding or knitting together, a strong cement, fear is disintegrating, annihilating" (1977: 155). Fear is at the core of the tragedy, but fear caused by the prospect of losing his daughter. The possibility that Lear wanted to keep Cordelia for ever has been pointed out by many critics. A. C. Bradley was the first to consider this probability (1964: 204). However, the cause is seldom touched by the critics. N. Frye (1986: 115) comments on the ambivalence inherent in Edmund's speech. for him "The second line, incidentally, seems very curious. If it's a vindication of the conduct of Cordelia and Kent in the opening scene, it's a bit late in the day; and as a general principle it covers too much ground". This statement we take as the evaluation of the "bond" between Lear and Cordelia, as far as Lear is concerned, but without passing a moral judgment.

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LANDSCAPE AND BODY IN THOMAS HARDY'S *TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES*

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To enter Hardy's Wessex, and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* in particular, by way of Spain may seem a roundabout route but it helps to establish a relationship between terrain and people and so underpins the pattern of human geography in what follows. In 1846 the English traveller and writer Richard Ford[1] opened his *Gatherings from Spain* with an overview of the peninsula:

> The kingdom of Spain, which looks so compact on the map, is composed of many distinct provinces, each of which in earlier times formed a separate and independent kingdom; and although all are now united under one crown by marriage, inheritance, conquest, and other circumstances, the original distinctions, geographical as well as social, remain almost unaltered. The language, costume, habits, and local character of the natives, vary no less than the climate and productions of the soil. The chains of mountains which intersect the whole peninsula, and the deep rivers which separate portions of it, have, for many years, operated as so many walls and moats, by cutting off intercommunication, and by fostering that tendency to isolation which must exist in all hilly countries, where good roads and bridges do not abound. (1906: 9)

Such a description, all differences of scale, history and nationality allowed for, might well characterize the Wessex of Hardy's imagination, a Wessex deeply founded in physical and social reality, a region of hills and valleys, within which communications are often laborious (the railways skirt rather than penetrate this

landscape) and where the terrain separates groups of people who, while geographically close together, are yet distinct in the cultivation of the varying soils that give their livelihood and distinct in their natures, attitudes and customs. At the opening of Phase the Second of the novel, Tess, returning home from her disastrous stay at Tantridge, ascends the rise towards the Vale of Blackmoor: as she does so Hardy makes clear the differences of soil and scenery, of character and kinship, of the two lands and the two peoples that respectively live around Tantridge and live in the Vale of Blackmoor. At Marlott, Tess's native village, the field-folk "shut in there traded northward and westward; those on [the Tantridge] side mainly directed their energies and attention to the east and south" (123)[2].

Geographical and social differences such as this are used by Hardy with accuracy and intensity in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, underscoring the different phases of Tess's life. The terrain is given to us with great specificity, with an awareness of the differences of soil, whether the cretaceous nature of Flitcomb Ash or the richness of the heavy clay of the Vale of Blackmoor that can be detected, even unseen, as Tess walks at night, by tread and smell (427). And not only is there this technical acuteness, underlying the abounding richness of description, there is also a constant utilising of the relationship between the land and the individual, so that the hills and the fields are not merely background but are integral to the activities and experiences of the human beings that work and live and love and die. If it is sometimes felt that Hardy's landscapes are indifferent to mankind (the permanence of Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native*, against the feeble and transitory people that crawl like ephemeral insects over its surface), in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* at least there is a crucial interrelationship between landscape and mankind, between geography and the body, so that the terrain in all its variety and difference underpins the drama, while the human is integrated into this material world.

This geographical distinctiveness of Wessex, its small compass split into sharp divisions by its geology, the various communities in each vale with a distinct way of life arising form an underlying composition of rock and soil, some ways easy, some harsh, is vital to the nature of the novel and is vital in a way that is more than the usual tribute paid to Hardy for his scene-painting and his descriptive powers in picturing nature. We need to be aware of how finely discriminated are the different physical areas of the novel's action and how these differences at each stage of Tess's experience are underscored, and how the intertwining of the geographical and the social is not part of a homogeneous view of processes in Wessex, but the representation of subtle and local distinctions between one valley and another, between one kind of soil and another, the distinctions between dairy and arable farming, between a cow and a turnip.

I stress this link between people and landscape, and the varied nature of it within a single, apparently uniform geographical region, as projected by Hardy in his novel, since I came to consider that link by rejecting the influential yet essentially wrong-headed account of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*[3] by Arnold Kettle in the second volume of his *Introduction to the English Novel* (1953). Kettle's thesis, frequently reprinted and much used by students, has the direct appeal of simplicity and of a key to the novel that promises coherence. Kettle notes, only to reject, what Hardy himself declares is the subject of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* : "the fate of a 'pure woman'" (Kettle, ii, 45). In fact, Kettle declares, with an assurance that seems authoritative, the novel's subject "is the destruction of the English peasantry" (ibid.). Now Kettle is a Marxist, hence his concern with certain historical processes, and of course since his book, many people have written with subtlety and delicacy on *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. To look at the novel is quickly to be convinced how little Kettle's "destruction of the English peasantry" is what occupies its bulk. There is singularly little detail of that process. The only substantial passage comes as late as chapter 51, when, John Durbeyfield having died, the Durbeyfield family must leave their cottage, wanted by the owner for a labourer and so dispossessing a family that has been independent of employers. Certainly, Hardy, at this point, discourses upon a process of decline, yet it comes remarkably late in the book and bears little relationship to what has gone before. Other references mitght be seized upon: Chaseborough, where the dance takes place on the night of Tess's seduction, is a "decayed" market town (105), but no hint is offered as to the cause or even the period of its decline; at Flintcomb Ash there is talk of a past when threshing was done with hand flails rather than machinery (406)[4]. But this change is not part of a destruction of the peasantry. If we look at John Durbeyfield, who must therefore be the chief peasant, we are made aware not of a class representative who is being destroyed, but of a drunken, inefficient individual, already weak before he takes on the glory of his D'Urberville ancestors (and if he is a D'Urberville who has declined, in what sense is he an independent peasant rather than a decayed gentleman?)[5]. It is his character, not his circumstances or role in history, that account for his muddling on, even to the family eating the seed potatoes—"that last lapse of the improvident" (429), and his death is from fatty degeneration of the heart, not social or economic pressures. If John is individual rather than typical, then how much the more is Tess exceptional rather than typical, in her person and in her fate. What concerns Hardy in larger historical terms (despite what he himself may say, as indeed he does in chapter 51) is not the destruction of a class but a pattern of flux and reflux (a point he emphasised at the end of chapter 50), which means decay, but also means growth. The D'Urbervilles have gone down, as also has Retty's family, but others have come

up. Certain things persist—the need for sustenance, as the flour mill works still even though the abbey that it belonged to is now in ruins: "food [is] a perennial necessity," while "creeds [are] transient" (303-304). Indeed, as in the novel's flux and reflux Tess dies, so its final moment gives hope of new life as Angel Clare and Liza Lu (who, Tess has declared, has all her goodness without her faults) depart hand in hand, an image charged with Milton's ending of *Paradise Lost*, a poem both directly and indirectly invoked in the novel. As Adam and Eve in Milton leave Paradise, with wandering steps and slow, some natural tears they shed, yet still, the world lay all before them where to choose. Angel and Liza Lu are to make a new start, however charged with the sorrow of Tess's destruction. Angel and Liza Lu go forward not into a social union (even if they underwent a ceremony, they could not be legally married in England at this time, as Angel has already pointed out to Tess) but into a natural union.

Now Arnold Kettle is concerned with the coherence of the novel and coherent his thesis is. But if the novel is not itself coherent, then how can a thesis help? In fact, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is coherent enough, but it does have contradictory elements, things that Hardy never resolved and which no single theory can tidy up. If Hardy is concerned about the decay or destruction of the independent peasantry (as his lengthy but sudden analysis in chapter 51 certainly might suggest—and it is a topic Hardy treats elsewhere and not only in the fiction), then why is this destruction introduced so late and why does it seem to contradict Hardy's own idea of flux and reflux? The idea of historical circularity rather than decline is especially clear in his ironies, where Hardy wants to bring out the contrast between the influence of the D'Urbervilles and the conditions of the Durbeyfields, setting against this decline how others have risen, whether the Duke of Wessex or the Stoke-D'Urbervilles. Again, in this matter of things unresolved and irresoluble in the novel, that defeat all coherence, Hardy is inconsistent in his references to Nature, which, particularly near the beginning, seems not a beneficial force. Hardy scorns Wordsworth's reference to "nature's holy plan," setting against this the six helpless Durbeyfield children, who, like captives, are compelled to sail in the ship of the Durbeyfield household (61-62), yet this very nature is later set against and preferred to society, while Nature seems accepted in Angel and Liza Lu, even if (again, how do we reconcile it?) nature seems to tell Tess that she is Alec's "natural" wife.

Again, in the use of imagery, Hardy's delight in an effective comparison often outweighs for him its jarring or ineffective tone. At the dance in the peat house in Chaseborough, where in the "mist of yellow radiance" the dancers and audience are like "satyrs clasping nymphs—a multiplicity of Pans whirling a multiplicity of Syrinxes" (107), an abandon of Pagan sensuality that points on to Tess's seduction, even while her standing apart underlines her separateness of

feeling at this point, Hardy wonderfully but incongruously describes "a young man . . . his straw hat so far back upon his head that the brim encircled it like the nimbus of a saint" (108). What, we might legitimately ask, has the association of holiness to do with such a moment as this? And in asking, the atmosphere of the scene is, at least momentarily, lost. This point raises the larger critical question about whether we can, in some sense or another, "rely" upon Hardy's imagery, as we rely upon Shakespeare's, for example, in coherence of interpretation. Not always, must be the answer. Though, and especially since I will be drawing upon imagery in my argument, accumulatively and with the text as a whole, I think we can place a reasonable degree of reliance on it.

We must, however, recognize that in some respects *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is incoherent and that no one thesis or key can be found to make it totally self-consistent. Yet if like Tess's own appearance and nature, the novel is not perfect, it is the more attractive for the imperfection. Nor do I pretend, having tilted at Kettle, to have myself *the* critical solution to the coherence of the novel. But what seems to me most obvious about the novel (and has been obvious to many other readers and not a few critics) is the central presence of Tess and the central presence of landscape, between them virtually overwhelming all other considerations. There is detail here of processes (not of the destruction, but of the activity, of the peasantry) and of work, meticulous and accurate. At Talbothays, the milkers, if women, lean their cheek on the cow; if men, their foreheads. The difficult cows are stalled for milking; the cows have preferences amongst the milkers, though practical considerations of milkers leaving must break this up. All this we learn and so are drawn into the rhythm and actuality of dairy farming. The landscape offers us a variety of perspectives, some of which overwhelm the human figures, even Tess, who as she enters the Var Valley, where lies Talbothays, is reduced to a fly on a billiard table, and again is pictured as a fly when she and Marian toil at Flitcomb Ash. Other critics have considered the novel by way of Tess in herself and in the landscape. The picturing of Tess is part of the argument that Tony Tanner, for example, makes for a structural coherence[6].

What, though, I want more particularly here to think about is the relationship of the landscape and the body in the novel. It is an approach that rejects the strait-jacket of theses like Kettle's, yet which will, I hope, reinforce aspects of the novel's power. Tess moves from place to place, each place, however local to the other, being distinctive in its nature, just as Tess's experience at each stage is distinctive and integral to that place; and Tess's own body intermeshes with the earth which she inhabits. There is a picturing of both terrain and body, but I am concerned more with geography than with scenery in a pictorial sense, concerned with what I might call metaphorically the map of

Tess's story. This is geography used as narrative. The localities exist physically, of course, and exist simultaneously over one hill from another; they exist as "realities," vividly and wonderfully so, within the world of the novel; and they exist as landscapes in Tess's being. Hence their effectiveness in enforcing Tess as the central figure and in enforcing their meaning in her progress. The novel again and again links the physical conformation, the nature, of the landscape's structure with the physical conformation, the nature, of the human body's structure, in ways that are not casual but morphological. Each, landscape and body, has a structure and the structure of each is related to that of the other. The landscape offers itself as geological formations, hills and valleys, soil, stones, crops, weather, perspectives; the body too has its skeletal formation, its flesh, its sowing, fullness and harvest, its moods, its aridity, and perspectives. So one is linked structurally and not just metaphorically to the other in nature.

In considering more closely this fusion of place and person in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles,* I want to begin by enforcing the link by a hint (and it is more than a hint) from the novel itself. As Tess at Flitcomb Ash unties the sheaves so that they can be fed into the steam thresher, evening comes on, and "as the evening light in the direction of the Giant's Hill by Abbot's-Cernel dissolved away, the white-faced moon of the season arose" (414). Abbot's-Cernel is Hardy's Wessex name for Cerne Abbas and the Giant's Hill is where the Cerne Abbas Giant is displayed. Like other such figures in England—the Great White Horse of Uffingham, the modern Lion near Whipsnade—the Giant (possibly prehistoric, possibly Romano-Briton), 180 feet high (57 metres), is a figure outlined on a hillside by cutting away the grass from the underlying chalk. The Cerne Abbas Giant is a man, holding a long staff or club and with an erect phallus: presumably a fertility figure[7]. It bears witness quite literally to the human body in the landscape. Other, less direct references, enforce this continuity between land formation and the body, as when Tess, approaching Flintcomb Ash, comes to the "irregular chalk table-land ... bosomed with semi-globular tumuli (small smooth round hills, often grave-mounds)—as if Cybele the Many-breasted were supinely extended there" (355), like those pictorial phantasies that show a landscape which can simultaneously be viewed as a recumbent human figure; while later, amongst the myriad flints that give Flintcomb Ash its name there are "bulbous, cusped, and phallic shapes" (360). These references help perhaps to give a new meaning to the "human geography": which is, in its more academic sense, the study of human activity on the land but which, as here, might be thought of also as the study of the human body as a geographer might undertake it. The images of the breast-like tumuli of a supine goddess; of stones like the phallus; and the reference to a hill with a giant form erect upon it help to suggest how entangled by likeness man and land are.

In a very ordinary sense, Hardy offers us human geography. The land is inhabited and worked by human beings, who are themselves responsive to and conditioned by the nature of the land. Talbothays yields rich milk, while the Vale of Blackmoor's milk is less rank, and Flitcomb Ash has wheat and turnips. At the same time, as I have already begun to suggest, the particular human body, *the* human figure in this land, is Tess's, which is treated (by Hardy himself and within the narrative by some of the characters) as part of this landscape, not the spirit of the place or its goddess, virtually nothing by symbol or metaphor, but rather by an analogy of structure which claims an identity rather than parallel between the woman and the earth. She is ploughed and crops, her tissue is bare to assault, she is penetrated as the farm tools penetrate the soil. Yet not only is she subject to these activities, she is also centrally placed in the narrative. We see her constantly and constantly see how she is made distinct, made unique. At the clubbing dance of the novel's opening she is famously made distinctive by her peony mouth and by the red ribbon in her hair, a decoration exclusive to Tess. At the Chaseborough dance in the peat house, she stands apart, watching; in the Chase, she is foregrounded, so that though we move in the narrative away from her with Alec into the mist and back to her with him, we are still made aware of Tess first and foremost, and, as as sleeping figure and as an object of narratorial commentary (119), she is as prominent for the reader as the traveller in these landscapes would find the breast-like tumuli or the Giant on his hill-side.

The novel's human patterning, a geography that takes in the land and Tess, as well as settlements, houses and farms and churches and tumuli, as my opening quotation from Richard Ford tried to suggest, is very much conditioned by and responsive to the physical conformation. To move from one area to another means going up one hill and down another: every such journey in the novel is marked by these inclines and declivities, notably though not exclusively when Angel gallops the horse downhill to make Tess cling tight to him or when Angel, looking back as he leaves Sandbourne, notes "a moving spot intruded on the white vacuity of its perspective" (473), which proves to be Tess running after him from the lodgings where Alec lies slain. Such heights offer too the chance to change perspectives. They can become markers in the narrative, Hardy using the landscape's structure to mark the structure of the narrative, as a character (Tess in especial) makes the transition from one stage or phase to another. The need to pause *after* climbing a hill naturally allows one to look ahead; the need to pause *when* climbing a hill naturally allows one to look back. Yet since each such journey implies a positive decision or crisis, some phase of life, it is also invariably the occasion of thinking back in time or forward in prospect, in remembering or envisaging, with the associated emotions. The landscape patterns the experience and perspectives shift. The Vale of Blackmoor viewed

from the cresting hill is almost miniature, as though the land of Swift's midget Lilliputians in *Gulliver's Travels*, in the command that height gives and its small fields: here "the world seems to be constructed upon a smaller and more delicate scale" (48). By contrast, the Var Valley, where Talbothays is situated, is an expansive tract, with its great dairies, as though we had moved to Swift's Brobdingnag, the land of giants. If these prospects are literal and physical, they are also metaphorical and human once viewed in time and memory. The Vale of Blackmoor, for instance, is a world of innocence, where every "contour of the surrounding hills was as personal to [Tess] as that of her relatives' face" (75); and when she returns from Tantridge, a maid no more, Hardy draws on the possibility of the physical scene to hold Tess for us, to make her pause in her journey, and so explore what has happened since that night in The Chase and how she views her lost innocence. She now moves up the same slope down which she had gone with Alec, and at the top the "familiar green world beyond" is "now half-veiled in mist" (123)—a detail which may carry some suggestion of a veil drawn between its innocent purity and Tess's own state, though in that case a veil imposed by Tess's sense of pollution, not by any true separateness from the natural world.

Blackmoor is fertile and sheltered, with grasslands, hedgerows, and a few surviving traces of the ancient woodlands. The Vale of the Var, though also dairy rather than arable, has the larger fields already mentioned, and everything seems on a richer fuller scale, so that in spring, rays "from the sun-rise drew forth the buds and stretched them into long stalks, lifted up sap in noiseless streams, opened petals, and sucked out scents in invisible jets and breathings" (185). This may not be the language of the geography text book, but the interaction of soil and water and heat are here, as in the "oozing fatness and warm ferments... when the rush of juices could almost be heard below the hiss of fertilization" (207). By contrast Flintcomb Ash is on the higher and drier uplands (350), a cretaceous tableland (371), chalky and with those myriad flints. It would be possible, with more detailed examination, to trace the geographical details more precisely, indeed to set them against geographical studies and maps. I hope I have touched sufficiently on details, though, to show that just as a painter should know the anatomy of the human form to paint it well, so Hardy knows the anatomy of the characters he presents, and represents their geography in a way few other English novelists have: D. H. Lawrence comes to mind, in *The Rainbow*, and there is Dickens's account of the storm in *David Copperfield* (chapter 55), but few others can match or even approach Hardy in this. And we should not, again I stress it, simply see these successive landscapes in which she is placed as symbolic stages in Tess's life. That they are analogies, even with symbolic value, is true, but they are also regions coexisting physically and temporally, not some series that

represents the social or agricultural process of decline or of the peasantry's destruction. There are significant differences from place to place: at Tess's native village of Marlott the harvest is facilitated by the horse-drawn reaper; at Flintcomb Ash, threshing is by steam-power. Marlott is behind the times, as any one area, particularly if isolated by geographical factors, may be behind another. The railway brings people from London in four hours; yet it skirts round the whole region, to cross which slower forms of transport, determined by availability and purse, are needed. The places appear successively in the novel not through some theory of historical process, but through Tess's progress, which is matched to this series of locales, so that she is driven to Flintcomb Ash not by historical or economic determinism, but by the wish to avoid any place where she might be known, whether the Vale of Blackmoor or the Vale of Var, and in Flintcomb Ash the steam-thresher is part, not of some vague generelization about machinery and agricultural change, but of a process of Tess's will being undermined, by grinding work and by Farmer Groby's persecution (founded in Tess's past) and by Alec's persistence.

I compared earlier Hardy's knowledge of the anatomy of the physical structures of Wessex to a painter's knowledge of anatomy and (without suggesting any necessary direct connection)[8], it is to those artists that show most an anatomical interest—Michelangelo, Signorelli, and in England, George Stubbs—that Hardy might be compared. Just as their interest is shown in their depiction of the body's structure, so with Hardy's places in *Tess* we have geology, meteorology, the seasons, soil, crops, human activity, and set within them, by virtue of that labour, and become the setting for the human beings as they grow familiarly into them. At Talbothays, Angel sees something new in life and humanity by associating with Dairyman Crick and the farm-folk, while he also "made close acquaintance with phenomena which he had before known but darkly—the seasons in their moods, morning and evening, night and noon, winds in their different tempers, trees, waters and mists, shades and silences, and the voices of inanimate things" (174). This is more than impressionism: it is *knowing*. And we notice too how the ambience is coloured with the human—moods, tempers, voices. And by these presences we may cross over to Tess herself and see how Hardy handles her body as landscape in that other sense of human geography that infuses the novel.

Tess's body is well known. It is laid out with loving care by Hardy in the novel, and readers and critics have, with some exceptions, seen it and responded to it. The success of the character's psychology is disputed, of course, as is the relationship of Tess's behaviour to Hardy's idea of a blighted star and also Hardy's concept, however ironically qualified, of tragedy. But the presence, physical and emotional, of Tess is not in doubt and Tony Tanner makes much and

of the thematic uses of red (red mouth, red lips, red ribbon, red blood) in esentation. What we may also notice is that as the landscape has its nd perspectives, so too has Tess's body. She is by turn Lilliputian, a fly Var Valley or the Flintcomb upland, and Brobdingnagian, a giantess: ie sets about baptizing her child Sorrow, she looks "singularly tall and g," and to her brothers and sisters she appears "a being large, towering ul—a divine personage with whom they had nothing in common" (144, ven more like Brobdingnag (though here the perspective is not upon when on the wedding night the tear that rolls down Angel's cheek is so at it magnifies the pores of the skin (300). Such shifting perspective hat we look at and realize Tess afresh again and again. Tess's body is nly one detailed in the novel: yet it receives attention out of all proportion f Car the Queen of Spades' or Angel's or of the other milkmaids'. I need very bodily reference: indeed, it would be tedious to do so, but we are vare of Tess's mass of black hair, hanging down or coiled up or falling f her lips, her mouth, her legs, her fingers, her bosom, her chin, her feet, s, her cheeks, the vein of her inside arm, her eyes even to the fibrils of the see. e.g. 51, 52, 76, 81, 84, 123, 126, 231, 232, 321, 239). As well as this f her "fleshly tabernacle" (388), that stresses a "luxuriance of aspect, a of growth" (82), there is a sense of the phases or layers of Tess—rather ugh the terminology is mine) geological strata; as Hardy says, in the girl ars can be sometimes seen aspects of her twelfth year, of her ninth, and her fifth. Late in the story it is Tess herself who feels her brow and its nd the edge of her eye sockets, thinking as she does so of when the he anatomical structure that underlies the flesh, as the rocks underlie the ill be bare (351).

Nor is Hardy content with details, however many or varied. He extends sense of Tess's body, already suggested by the "luxuriance of aspect," he holds the corn in an embrace like that of a lover (138). Clare knows s him because "every curve of her form showed that" (279). Under the f loving Angel yet seeking to repulse him as husband, Tess flings herself on the spear grass, the moment combining the body's impulses with the tory agony of an animal caught by a steel trap: "every wave of her blood, ulse singing in her ears, was a voice that joined with nature in revolt her scrupulousness [in refusing Angel]. Reckless, inconsiderate accep- him [was what love counselled] . . . to snatch ripe pleasure before the iron pain could have time to shut upon her" (241). The image here identifies

her another landscape or an integral part of the landscape. At the Marlott harvest Hardy makes the general remark that a field woman is a portion of the field (137), and, more specific to Tess, that as she journeys towards the Var Valley, she feels a kinship to the landscape, though she had "never before visited this part of the country" (156). Indeed, as she stands looking down into the lushness of the Valley of the Great Dairies, she is moved to chant a psalm, "O ye Sun and Moon . . . ye Green Things upon the Earth," as a half-conscious rhapsody at the way this place enters into her (158). Again, while travelling towards Flintcomb Ash, in a moment foregrounded by shifting into the present tense, Hardy insists: "Thus Tess walks on; a figure which is part of the landscape" (355).

As Tess is by these incidental but significant comments drawn into the landscape, so in the larger narrative structure there is an interweaving that asserts that process of integration of landscape and body, of physical geography and "human geography," with Tess, moving across this region, responsive to places that seem each in its own particularity to respond to her. In the Chase, just before Alec seduces her, she seems to be absorbed into the scene, nestled amidst the dry leaves, the mist enveloping her, the darkness as the moon goes down ending all distinctiveness between her and her surroundings. The Chase is enveloped in "webs of vapour which . . . formed veils between the treees," while Tess is clad in a white muslin dress, and her substance of "beautiful feminine tissue" is "sensitive as gossamer" (117-119), so that weather conditions, dress material, and the body itself are linked in one world of sensory experience, while Tess's nature is "practically blank as snow" (119). Tony Tanner links the snow to colour suggestions of purity, but it also clinches the idea of landscape, with Tess's body about to receive the impress literally of Alec's body and of the shaping of her fate. Yet like the landscape, even when the snow has been besmirched by human activity and is gone, she remains and is later (in some sense) continued in Liza Lu.

This scene in The Chase is not only crucial for Tess's subsequent story, but also for its importance in the argument about Hardy's attitude to nature and to society in the book. The natural seems predominant, with the birds and the hares and the rabbits, yet the social law blames Tess for a "natural" act committed on her by Alec, which is unnatural in that it is undesired (we believe) by Tess. Yet if the issue is raised whether Tess can ever be part of Nature, since by being human she is different from the birds and the hares and the rabbits, and if Hardy seems to reject the traditional view of nature's beneficience, there is an increasing sense as the novel progresses that nature, with all its faults, is

en"—the presence of the same creatures as in The Chase is both biologically ct and an imagistic reminder of the earlier place and event—"she looked herself as a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence"; yet she narrator insists) is in harmony with the "actual world," she has broken "no nown to the environment into which she fancied herself such an anomaly").

This point about the rejection of the social order, of Tess's harmony with atural scene, is reinforced in the strange, grotesque description (another of ifting perspectives that reorder and challenge our understanding) when, at thays, Tess creeps unseen the better to hear Angel playing his harp:

> The outskirt of the garden in which Tess found herself had been left uncultivated for some years, and was now damp and rank with juicy grass which sent up mists of pollen at a touch; and with tall blooming weeds emitting offensive smells—weeds whose red and yellow and purple hues formed a polychrome as dazzling as that of cultivated flowers. She went stealthily as a cat through this profusion of growth, gathering cuckoo-spittle on her skirts, cracking snails that were underfoot, staining her hands with thistle-milk and slug-slime, and rubbing off upon her naked arms sticky blights which, though snow-white on the apple-tree trunks, made madder stains on her skin . . . (178-179).

re here is repugnant or disgusting: offensive smells, weeds, cuckoo-spittle, s, sticky blights; yet I don't think this is so much threatening—not moral it or moral stain (though that might be argued)—as rather a morally neutral ess of nature, which seeks to possess or draw Tess into itself, and indeed is exulted, taken out of herself by the music of Angel's harp so that the k-smelling weed-flowers glowed" and "the waves of colours mixed with the s of sound" (179). This fullness even to rankness (as the dairy production e Var Valley, its butter, its cheeses, is full even to rankness as against the delicate production of the Vale of Blackmoor) is but an aspect of the ness of Talbothays, a lushness shared by Tess, neither good nor evil, because not directed by social or religious laws. And it is here, as Tess and Angel y their love that nature and the human seem the most lovingly and most sely intertwined, both by the elements of the story and by the novelist elf. In particular, chapter 20 is a summation of this human geography, e Hardy's acute power of observation and description combine with the ising power in the human presence of emotion and absorption. It opens in

> The gray half-tones of daybreak are not the gray half-tones of the day's close, though the degree of their shade might be the same. In the twilight of the morning light seems active, darkness passive; in the twilight of the evening it is the darkness which is active and crescent, and the light which is the drowsy reverse. Being so often—possibly not always by chance—the first two persons to get up at the dairy-house, they seemed to themselves the first persons up of all the world. In these early days of ther residence here Tess did not skim, but went out of doors at once after rising, where he was generally awaiting her. The spectral, half-compounded, aqueous light which pervaded the open mead, impressed them with a feeling of isolation, as if they were Adam and Eve. At this dim inceptive stage of the day Tess seemed to Clare to exhibit a dignified largeness both of disposition and physique, an almost regnant power, possibly because he knew that at that preternatural time hardly any woman so well endowed in person as she was likely to be walking in the open air within the boundaries of his horizon; very few in all England. Fair women are usually asleep at midsummer dawns. She was close at hand, and the rest were nowhere.
>
> . . . .
>
> It was then, as has been said, that she impressed him most deeply. She was no longer the milkmaid, but a visionary essence of woman—a whole sex condensed into one typical form. He called her Artemis, Demeter, and other fanciful names half teasingly, which she did not like because she did not understand them.
> "Call me Tess," she would say askance; and he did.
> Then it would grow lighter, and her features would become simply feminine; they had changed from those of a divinity who could confer bliss to those of a being who craved it.
> At these non-human hours they could get quite close to the waterfowl. Herons came, with a great fold noise as of opening doors and shutters, out of the boughs of a plantation which they frequented at the side of the mead; or, if already on the spot, hardily maintained their standing in the water as the pair walked by, watching them by moving their heads round in a slow, horizontal, passionless wheel, like the turn of puppets by clockwork. (186-187)

This life does not last: these are the "non-human hours" of a suspended, intense idyll and such fatness of soil is not found in every valley or upland of the region. At chalky arid Flintcomb Ash there is another face that looks on Tess, yet her she too in her weariness is also drawn into the land's physical conformation. She and Marian are set to dig up turnips (or swedes):

> The swede-field in which she and her companion were set hacking was a stretch of a hundred odd acres, in one patch, on the highest ground of the farm, rising

and it was the business of the two women to grub up the lower or earthy half of the root with a hooked fork called a hacker, that it might be eaten also. Each leaf of the vegetable having already been consumed, the whole field was in colour a desolate drab; it was a complexion without features, as if a face, from chin to brow, should be only an expanse of skin. The sky wore, in another colour, the same likeness; a white vacuity of countenance with the lineaments gone. So these two upper and nether visages confronted each other all day long, the white face looking down on the brown face, and the brown face looking up at the white face, without anything standing between them but the two girls crawling over the surface of the former like flies. (360)

Tess is reduced in the perspective of this landscape, as she expanded to ɔnary essence of woman" at Talbothays. Part of that landscape, though, ınd if there is an ambiguity when Angel's mother calls Tess "a mere child ɔil," because, as Angel reminds her, "we are all children of the soil" (455), ırth to return to earth, this landscape is no mere painted back-drop. Angel [, in a telling metaphor, stands harshly against Tess after her wedding-ɔvelation, like the upland of Flintcomb Ash, because there "lay hidden [in hard logical deposit, like a vein of metal in a soft loam, which turned the [everything that attempted to traverse it" (311). And what determines o return to Tess is the advice of his chance companion in Brazil, who sees than this scroff of social laws; true, he rises above the pettiness of locality, ; image is still geographical, since "to his cosmopolitan mind such ons from the social norm, so immense to domesticity, were no more than irregularities of vale and mountain-chain to the whole terrestrial curve" A new perspective, and one that removes us from Wessex, but one which Angel to that region of valleys and hills, of soil and climate and ture, realized with particularity and sense of difference by Hardy.

I have tried to argue for an intense interlinking of landscape and body, of (and Tess, for a particular kind of human geography. I have said very ɔout character, important though it is and at the centre of much critical because I wanted to stress that Hardy makes Tess and the landscape parts ıtity. I hope I have suggested this as one way of approaching the novel, I do not claim to have offered the sole key to its understanding, because ɔvel singularly rich in possibility, far beyond the reductiveness of a single ce the "destruction of the peasantry." In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* Hardy with variety and particularity a region which is not merely where he grew ɔne which he knew intimately, like a human being, and where he depicts

NOTES

1. Richard Ford (1786-1858), traveller and writer; author of the *Handbook for Trevellers in Spain,* 2 vols., 1845: the *Gatherings from Spain,* 1846, is a rearrangement of parts of the *Handbook,* with new material. The opening reference seemed particularly appropriate, since this paper was first given as a lecture at the University of Zaragoza; my warmest thanks to Susana Onega, who invited me, and to her and all her colleagues who made my visit so delightful.

2. All references to *Tess* are given by page number in the text to the Penguin edition of the novel.

3. A useful gathering and consideration of various accounts of the novel (including Kettle's) can be found in Wright 1987.

4. The hardship of Flitcomb Ash is sometimes pointed to as part of the historical shift in master / man relationships; and hence Tess's progress from Talbothays to Flintcomb as symbolic of social decay (Kettle [ii, 48] says Tess becomes "fully proletarianized"). But Tess's personal circumstances are mirrored in *and* determine her geographical situation. Nowhere is it suggested that Talbothays has perished; Flintcomb is not the historical successor of Talbothays but its contemporary. Tess goes where her story will not be known and the two farms are affective scenery of her psychodrama. See further below.

5. The relationship of the Durbeyfields to the D'Urbervilles is another of the novel's ambiguities, despite the rich opportunities it provides for irony. Even as the family are dispossessed, Hardy cannot resist stressing that their fate is that meted out in the past by D'Urbervilles upon the peasants, thereby further confusing the "decay of the peasantry" issue. And when did the Durbeyfields cease to be gentlefolk? As recently as the eighteenth century, it is hinted (44: they were still being knighted under Charles II); but the point is not clarified: indeed, it is stated that the male line died out, so how does John come to be called Durbeyfield or how can Tringham suggest (even jokingly) that Durbeyfield would have been "Sir John" if knighthoods were hereditary? Such questions, through curious, are not to be answered by the text.

6. Tanner 1968. See also Irwin 1979, both for general discussion of the use of the physical world an in particular for Hardy's in *Tess.*

7. For some account of the Cerne Abbass giant see Grinsell (1958: 227-228, 306 and Plate XII).

8. The connections between Hardy and particular painters are discussed by Grundy (1979: ch. 2).

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READING RACISM: THE ASSUMPTION OF AUTHORIAL INTENTIONS IN STEPHEN CRANE'S "THE MONSTER"

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There is a core of meaning in a text which is linked both to the issues central to the historical circumstances of its writing and to those of its reading at one given moment. Readers may adapt the text to their own interests to a certain point, but they cannot ignore its intended meaning without producing a deviant reading, one that stresses certain elements in the work while it ignores others which are equally central and perceptible to other contemporary readers. I will focus on the interpretation of the authorial intention[1] in Stephen Crane's story "The Monster," and more specifically on the role of racial difference. One of the heroes of the story, Henry Johnson, "the monster," is a black man. The question is, to what extent is this fact relevant to the work? What difference would it make if Henry were white? Up to 1950, the answer seems to be: none. Most critics make nothing of Henry's race; they simply mention in their description of the story that Henry is black. Of course, the significant thing is that they do mention it.But les ut start *ab ovo*.

The first reader of a work is the author himself. Stephen Crane's pride in his work is the first critical appraisal of "The Monster." Once, Crane went as far as to say that "The Monster" was the best thing he had ever written (Harriman 1900). The next readers usually are the author's friends who read the unpublished manuscript or listen to the author reading it aloud, as Crane did in the presence of Harold Frederic and Sanford Bennett[2]. Here "The Monster" met its

first critics. Frederic advised him to discard the manuscript, because of its disgusting subject matter. Crane defended his work passionately, with the polite assentment of Bennett; Crane held that fear was an irrelevant response to a story "with some sense in it" (Beer 1923: 328-330). There is no direct evidence that Crane saw the question of race as an important issue in his work.

The editors follow, and they are possibly the most influential readers: "When Paul Reynolds offered it to T*he Century* it was refused with speed, an editor explaining to the puzzled agent: 'We couldn't publish that thing with half the expectant mothers in America on our subscription list.'"[3] M. Solomon (1956b: 39) interprets this rejection as a sign that "The Monster" was felt to voice up a complaint against the situation of American blacks; he notes that The Century was one of the publications most inclined to the diffusion of racially derogatory stereotypes. However, none of the early critics seems to interpret the story in this militant sense.

Finally the story was published in a single issue of *Harper's Magazine*.[4] From the first review on we can see that "The Monster" was not read in Crane's time merely as a horror story[5], at least not by all readers. One reviewer (*Book Buyer* 1900) does see "The Monster" as a potentially fine horror story spoiled by a realistic treatment; and Hughes praises the vividness of "The Monster" and sees in it a realistic incursion into the horrible: "its sickening qualities are mitigated by the indirectness of their suggestion, its trivialities are redeemed by the psychological dignity of the physician's problem" (1900: 252). Another reviewer (*Critic* 1900) sees "social odium" against the doctor as the main subject; a fourth one (*Academy* 1901) sees in "The Monster" "an amazing story" and a worthwhile one, with deeper interest than "The Blue Hotel" , which he praises for its "knowledge of human nature." A further anonymous reviewer considers the story somewhat unreal, "a study in abstract emotions" (*Athenaeum* 1901: 263). Its very first reviewer, Robert Bridges (1898) sees in it a psychological story, with the psychology coming of dramatization and montage rather than of rendering of thoughts. "The comedy of the Dutch barber shop and of the negro dandy's call upon his sweetheart is irresistible" for Bridges. No other reader seems to have found these scenes funny enough to call attention to them; perhaps they are not considered funny at all. According to Bridges, "There is also unexpected elevation in the motive of the story . . . . The quiet heroism of the Doctor is admirably indicated. He is the central figure of the drama, and yet he says least and seldom appears." Of course it is mo*ral* heroism that Bridges is referring to. Most later readers seem to agree with him and see in Trescott's moral conflict the center of the drama. A connection with Hawthorne's story "The Minister's Black Veil" seems to be hovering about in Bridges's mind, when

he praises Crane's "admirable Hawthornesque plan" of suggesting fear by showing its effects and hiding the object of horror itself under a veil.

Crane's style may be Hawthornesque, but Hawthorne's son Julian did not appreciate it. His review is often quoted as an indictment of "The Monster": "I call this an outrage on art and humanity," etc.,[6] and it is indeed a rather superficial reading of the story. But the outrage is not the situation, or Crane's condemnation of the town's veneer of morals and manners (which Hawthorne finds only facile); the outrage is that Crane provides no *deus ex machina* : "And if you believe it, Crane leaves the matter in that condition, without the faintest pretense of doing anything whatever to relieve it!." That is, Hawthorne is complaining that the subject of the story, a moral dilemma, is inadequately dealt with, or shirked.

None of these early readers seems to have seen the question of race as significant: at most, they are in tune with (what I take to be) the authorial attitude and they accept the comic role assigned to the blacks. The more scholarly estimates that follow around 1920 see the story mainly as social critique. Curiously enough, they do not stress Trescott's role as a moral hero. Edith Wyatt sees in the story "a chronicle of the cruelty of the people" in the town, a moral condemnation of "mob-meanness" (1915: 149); Vincent Starrett also places the theme of social morality foremost: "the ignorance, prejudice and cruelty of an entire community are sharply focussed. The realism is painful: one blushes for mankind" (1920: 313). For Carl Van Doren the effect of "The Monster" is to"expose the stupidity of public opinion in a cramped province" (1924: 330); for Thomas Beer, "'The Monster' is a study of popular stupidity" (1941: 329). Wilson Follett sees in it "a piece of social irony, a miniature anticipation of *Main Street* " (1926: x).

The story is apparently forgotten for twenty years: it has been twice rediscovered, after the world wars (Kahn 1963: 35). From the fifties on, the story is seen (together with *Maggie*) as Crane's attempt at portraying a whole community, with a variety of distinct groups[7]. The interpretation of the story as social criticism is of course maintained and developed[8], but we may see the influence of the New Critics in the analysis of Crane's treatment of the subject. An increasing attention is devoted to questions of structure, language and imagery, and there is a variety of new approaches to the story even if the interpretive core is still Crane's moral attitude[9]. But for most critics the emphasis is on Trescott's heroism and his role as a protagonist, rather than on the meanness of Whilomville. The condemnation of moral meanness remains, but most critics would say that the story's main subject is something like "the nature and fate of heroism" (Cady 1980: 158). Many readers, even contemporary readers, do not mention racism as an issue in "The Monster." But from the fifties on, this aspect

of the story becomes more and more prominent. In the age of the Civil Rights movement the racial attitude of the story is emphasized by Marxist critics (M. Solomon, O. V. Vasil'evskaia) as well as by black critics (Ralph Ellison, Donald Gibson).

Maxwell Geismar[10] characterizes Crane's attitude towards blacks as one of condescending sympathy; Crane considered them childlike beings. John Berryman, on the other hand, sees in black men "the object of Crane's own (fantasied) horror, envy, fascination and inquiry" (1950: 307). At twelve, Crane had seen a white girl stabbed by her black lover (Berryman 1950: 306); Berryman shows how in other stories[11] Crane used black men "as a symbol—a natural one—for darkness, sex and sin" (!?! 306). He sees an association of blacks with sex in the title of *The Black Riders* and in the name of a "sinner" in *Active Service* , Nora Black. These are helpful hints to interpret the unconscious authorial attitude towards the blacks in "The Monster," although this is evidently not in the least the image of black men that we get in the surface of this tale; nor does Berryman refer to "The Monster" in this respect[12].

The first reading which stresses the significance of the racial element in "The Monster" is M. Solomon's. This Marxist critic is not satisfied with the interpretation of "The Monster" as a social satire against bourgeois provincialism. "Nor can we merely discuss it in terms of the ethic of loyalty .... Central to 'The Monster' is its appeal for brotherhood between all races" (M. Solomon 1956b: 39). Although M. Solomon points out some limitations of Crane's racial consciousness, his conclusion is that "we cannot fail to admire this young writer who was intuitively far in advance of his contemporaries" (1956b: 40).

Ralph Ellison also mentions the importance of the racial element in "The Monster"; he seems to read the divided attitudes of the town on the subject of Henry Johnson as symbolically suggestive of the attitudes towards black Americans after the Civil War, but he is ready to recognize "that the issues go much deeper than the question of race" (1960: 75). He locates Crane (presumably with respect to the literary handling of racism) somewhere between Mark Twain and Faulkner.

Eric Solomon sees Crane's handling of the black society in Watermelon Alley as a parody and analogy of white society (much as the children in the Whilomville Stories reflect the attitudes of the adults). He remarks that we see the fire scene in chapter VII through Henry Johnson's consciousness. E. Solomon praises the narrator's commentary that the desperate Johnson was submitting to the fire "because of his fathers, bending his mind in a most perfect slavery to the conflagration" (TM 28) as containing "a measure of psychological (and political) insight" (1966: 187). M. Solomon had also quoted the passage for its psychological credibility (1956b: 40). However, E. Solomon complains

against the naturalistic image of Johnson being reduced to a bellowing animal or to a Negro in the swamp (1966: 188; TM 30)[13]. He sees an element of racism (condemned by Crane) in the townspeople's attitude towards the 'resurrected' Johnson: "The only good saint is a dead saint; the same holds true for a Negro" (1966: 192). E. Solomon sees Crane's handling of the town's reactions to Johnson as a social panorama which moves from the lower to the higher social classes in both black and white societies. Alek Williams, who as a rural black man is at the bottom of the social scale, is a "ridiculous Uncle Tom figure."[14] But his situation becomes pathetic when the judge dismisses as irrelevant his claims to having a normal social life. E. Solomon sees here an element of paternalism in Trescott's attitude toward Alek, and an ironic prefiguration of Trescott's own isolation at the end of the story. Ostracization, E. Solomon implies, is not considered a serious problem if the victim is a black man, but becomes a tragedy if the victim is a respectable white doctor (1966: 193-194). However, we may well wonder if this is not an instance of reading in. The parallel between Williams and Trescott is no doubt a part of Crane's intentions. But it is difficult to deny that they are set to a very different key. Williams's plight is seen ironically throughout; Trescott's is not. There is some difficulty in pinning down the authorial attitude here because there is another issue which, together with the question of race, overdetermines our reaction: Trescott's attitude toward Henry Johnson is more adequate than Williams', and we tend, like Crane, to lump Williams together with the townspeople into the bag of provincial ignoramuses. Is it only people with a heroic moral stance who deserve our sympathy, or is it white men? Are blacks intrinsically comic?

Few critics have followed M. Solomon in stressing Crane's attitude to racism as the main theme of the story. Vasil'evskaia's reading seems to derive directly from Solomon's. According to her, "The story 'The Monster' is a sincere and profound condemnation of racism"; "Crane steps out to defend the blacks and boldly speaks his sympathy."[15] Vasil'evskaia's reading of "The Monster" as a *roman à thèse* about a good black persecuted by a town of racist hypocrites raises obvious problems. However, there may be something in her claim that the horror and hate which Johnson inspires is the expression of "that gregarious racist instinct which has long been so assiduously inculcated on the American citizen" (1967: 218). Gibson makes a similar point: Henry incarnates the community's deepest fears, because he seems to them "a monster created by his condition as a Negro in America" (1968: 138). There is a suggestion of this idea, too, in John Cooley, when he observes that Henry's facelessness brings into focus "that virtual facelessness he quietly tolerated in the white community before the fire" (1975: 12)[16]. Gibson sees a racial element in the community's insistence on driving Henry out; it is the desire to feel no

responsibility for him and for blacks as a whole: only Trescott recognizes his responsibility. However, Gibson does not wish to stress the question of race overmuch: "despite the racial theme, which may strike us as especially significant today, 'The Monster' is finally a story about human responsibility" (1968: 138).

Malcolm Foster's reading differs from these (and from all others) in that he takes Crane's condemnation of racism and hypocrisy to extend to Trescott and the whole of white America, not just the petty bourgeois mentality. "The Monster" is "an allegory of the black man in America in the nineteenth century, and an angry condemnation of white America—Whilomville—including such weak-willed and compromising meliorists such as Trescott" (1976: 87). Henry's isolation after his accident is the real evil, and is an allegory of the ambiguous status of blacks after 1866: neither slaves nor treated as humans (1976: 88). However, there is a survivor in Foster's sweeping condemnation: the author.

I find it difficult to read The Monster as a straightforward instance of civil rights literature. M. Solomon's interpretation of the story is problematic: his view of it as a plea for racial fraternity is not easily reconciled with his acknowledgement that elsewhere in his life or his writings Crane does not show any special concern for the oppression of the blacks, and he is not known to have had any black person among his friends or acquaintances. "In Crane's newspaper account of 'The Wreck of the Commodore' he shows a callous lack of regard for the lives of the Negro seamen who perished. There are only single, stereotyped references to Negroes in *The Red Badge* , *Maggie* and *The Third Violet*, and none of consequence in *Active Service* , *George's Mother* or any of the major short stories" (M. Solomon 1956b: 40). Lawrence Gross, too, observes that generally speaking Crane noted without comment the servile position of blacks[17], but he makes the best of it: Crane was "free enough of the Jim Crow attitude which dominated the Nineties to make a black his hero for a purpose" (1975: 108). He also notes in "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" the presence of a sophisticated Negro waiter who bullies the naive Jack Potter without his noticing. Gross assumes that here and in "The Monster" blacks are elevated "for the purpose of comparison" (?)[18]. In short, Gross holds that Crane, while not a racist, is not in the least concerned with political writing, with a literature of engagement in favour of the blacks. M. Solomon takes Crane's destruction of his supposedly racist story "Vashti in the Dark" to be significant of his attitude towards the problem (1956b: 40). Cooley considers that Crane usually draws on what he calls the "savage" mode in which white literature often presents blacks. The assumption behind this mode is that "blacks are innately savage people" (1982: 39). Anyway, he considers Henry Johnson to be "a far cry from the blatantly racist portraits of writers such as Thomas Dixon and Charles Carroll" (1982: 39).

Cooley sees in "The Monster" the contrast between the savagery of the "civilized" whites and the unsavage and unmonsterlike reality. It is Crane's most critical portrait of society. He sees a suggestion of racism in the town's reaction to the news of Henry's "death": if the townspeople accept him as a hero it is not only because he is dead, (as other critics have argued) but because whites like the idea of blacks willingly sacrificing themselves for them (1975: 12). He assumes, however, that Crane's authorial attitude is free from this prejudice; this seems more questionable to me.

Let us organize a critical forum on some issues relevant to racial attitude. The critics I do not mention do not challenge the adequacy of the "unmarked," or literally stated, authorial attitude. I comment mainly on the deviant critics.

- The narrator approves of Jimmie and Henry being pals. This fact has not been debated, and its adequacy has rarely been contested. M. Solomon describes chapter II as an "idyll" with "more than one touch of condescension" (1956b: 39); specifically, he objects to Crane's comment that "[i]n regard to almost everything in life they seemed to have minds exactly alike" (TM 6). Vasil'evskaia (1967: 214) does not object to this scene, nor does Cooley; he points out similarities between chapter II of "The Monster" and works such as Uncle Tom's Cabin and Huckleberry Finn, where white children also retire from white society to find companionship in a black character.
- Henry's loyalty to the Trescotts seems to be approved of by the author, and this is not contested by the critics. M. Solomon stresses that Henry's devotion to Jimmie is not "in the servile, stereotyped manner which the Plantation Tradition novelists insist upon" (1956b: 40). Vasil'evskaia (1967: 214) also notes it without reproach.
- The fact that the blacks reject Henry prevents us from seeing in him a simple allegory of black people in general. It is significant that Vasil'evskaia completely ignores the Alek Williams scenes, and sees in the "Miss Fa'gut" scene only a particular instance of a girl's "spiritual poverty" (1967: 219). Cooley is angered by this scene, and he does not consider that it is effective at all: "Instead of suffering from shock we see that Henry has been reduced by Crane to something approaching the comic stereotype of Sambo" (1975: 13). None of these readings is adequate. Vasil'evskaia ignores that the scene not only tells us about Bella's limitations, but also about Henry's own. Cooley seems to read this scene as if it were Henry's first visit in chapter III, where he is indeed presented as Sambo (though Cooley chooses not to see this). In the meantime, he has lost his face, and this makes the previous scene acquire a new significance. Cooley himself has noted that Henry's injury is the injury of black Americans as a whole. There is something in this scene of the collective, unconscious pain of a people who have no other choice than to accept integration in the society which

destroyed their identity. The first scene was comic from Crane's point of view: this one is pathetically absurd. Of course Bella and her mother are terrified because of Henry's appearance; but at another level of interpretation they are terrified because they are now facing their inescapable condition as American blacks: Henry's second visit brings out the hidden pathos of the first. This is a possible reading in 1989. Yet I think that Crane's overall handling of black stereotypes prevents us from seeing this as an intended effect. As in many other cases, here the work is greater than the author.

• Crane's attitude to Henry's dandyism has been more debated. M. Solomon sees here one of the weak points of "The Monster" . He compares Henry's portrait to the racial caricatures of other Crane stories like "The Knife": "Crane unwittingly helped perpetuate" the literary stereotypes of blacks (1956b: 39). Foster agrees: "Crane initially makes Johnson fit two stereotypes: the benign and almost childlike Nigger Jim or Uncle Remus, and the cake-walking minstrel-show comic dandy" (1976: 88). Moreover, these stereotypes are juxtaposed rather than integrated: Henry sheds his servant's garments and actually becomes a "different" person when he dresses as a dandy.

The narrator's attitude is only one of "friendly irony" for Vasil'evskaia, who systematically ignores M. Solomon's reservations on the adequacy of Crane's racial attitudes. For her narrator, Henry may be vain, but he is a hero (1967: 214-215); her Crane is so at home with blacks that he can afford not to idealize them, and have a little non-racist laugh now and then. But we can hardly ignore the fact that in writing about a black character Crane has chosen to present him from the start as falling squarely in the facile cliché which was sure to be recognized and positively responded to by his (white) readers[19]. Cooley deplores this fact but only in the most evident instances: "It is regrettable that Crane mixes these racial generalizations ('the elasticity of his race') with a portrait which, in its totality, skirts the easy generalizations of black character to create the individualized portrait we see of Henry before he is maimed in the fire" (1975: 10). Surprisingly enough, Cooley does not find that such scenes as the Jimmie-Henry *tête-à-tête* in chapter II or Henry's dressing up and cake-walking in chapter III are instances of such racial generalizations. According to Cooley, Crane's literary dealing with racism presents "the savagism of a white society and, in ironic contrast, the more enlightened perspective of a narrative voice, or the first-hand experience of a black character" (1982: 38). He quotes Crane's narrator on the companionship between Henry and Jimmie: "In regard to almost everything in life they seemed to have minds precisely alike" (TM 6). "The insertion of 'seemed,'" Cooley argues, "saves the description from racist assumptions" (1982: 40). We may concede this, but still it was a close call; there is no observer at hand, other than the narrator, to justify the workings of this verb.

Cooley takes Crane's satire to fall on the whites who laugh at him, while Henry good-humouredly is already appearing to the reader as being morally superior (1975: 11). But Henry Johnson does get a good share of the authorial irony, to the extent that he is characterized as a comic figure, the black who tries to dress as a white man but only succeeds in being ridiculous. There follows the scene of Henry and the Farraguts going through the motions of a highbred visit; this is of course an indirect satire of the sham manners of Whilomville, but only through a direct satire of black people trying to act like whites. For instance, the attitudes in the following passage are expected to be contemplated ironically: "The change was somewhere far in the interior of Henry. But there was no cake-walk hyperbole in it. He was simply a quiet, well-bred gentleman of position, wealth, and other necesary achievements out for an evening stroll, and he had never washed a wagon in his life" (TM 10). Cooley reads this passage as follows: "To his author, Henry is not a comic or ludicrous figure. Forced by society to an inferior position, he can at best imitate white society and pretend he is a gentleman" (Cooley 1982: 40); Johnson is like an actor who shifts roles to make the best of his situation in every moment. That is, Cooley does not find that this passage is making fun of Johnson's false idea of what he can pass for. Johnson is only acting as a gentleman of position and wealth without acknowledging to himself that it will necessarily show, because blacks are not gentlemen of position and wealth; and there is a "cake-walk hyperbole" in Johnson's manners which soon has all the town gaping at him:

> "Ain't he smooth?"
> "Why, you've got that cake right in your pocket, Henry!"
> "Throw out your chest a little more!"
> Henry was not ruffled in any way by these quiet admonitions and compliments. In reply he laughed a supremely good-natured, chuckling laugh, which nevertheless expressed and underground complacency of superior metal. (TM 12)

Cooley finds that the authorial attitude in this passage does not become clear until Crane satirizes the citizens later on (1982: 41). But their condemnation does not necessarily imply a retrospective plea for Johnson. Morace (1981: 68) apparently sees in this scene only an instance of Crane's objectivity: his satire falls on blacks and whites alike. He seems to read in the narrator's attitude toward Henry a note of admiration beneath the mockery, reflected on the comment on Henry's "superior metal." But in the context Crane is using Henry's own idea of himself, and presenting it to the reader's olympian irony. I take the passage to be completely ironic, and even doubly ironic. The citizens address Henry ironically, but in turn they reveal themselves to the reader as oppressively

provincial. The first phrase by the narrator is also ironic in the use of "quiet admonitions and compliments" to describe the crowd's jeering at Henry. But Henry is not ruffled for two reasons: first, because of his good nature (not unrelated to his position of inferiority); second, because he interprets the violently mocking reactions of the white men as a sign that he is sufficiently convincing as a gentleman of position to disturb their sense of propriety and excite their reaction. That is why he can laugh with a secret feeling of superiority. The words of the white men are complimentary for Johnson, though not in the way in which they believe he takes them to be. But this secret contentment of Johnson's is at the same time the prey of the narrator's irony: for the narrator, Henry is being ridiculous not (only) because he is the standard comic figure the citizens recognize, but because of his snobbery and his self-conscious ignorance of his false position. However, we may now feel that the narrator's irony is too close to the crowd's; people like Henry have had to ignore their false positions constantly in order to make them true. In a situation of inequality the notion of an "impartial satire" is a con*tradictio in adjecto* . In short, Crane's attack on snobbery is misplaced insofar as he picks on the blacks. Or, Crane's character knew better than his author.

It seems clear to me that Crane saw in the unacknowledged self-consciousness of the blacks in chapter III a rich matter for comedy. Cooley deplores this fact but he insists that Henry Johnson is an exception at least before he is "debased." Despite his good intentions, Crane gives proof of a sadly limited racial consciousness (Cooley 1975: 14). I agree; indeed, I would argue that Johnson is not at all that exceptional: he is a thoroughly formulaic type, who becomes a hero because the story needs one. Crane is interested above all in Trescott's moral dilemma, and his decision to cast a black rather than a white servant is subordinated to the theme of Trescott's heroism. A black was more adequate than a white due to a complex of reasons, all of them springing from the servile position of American blacks. The tragedy requires that Johnson should be to some extent an appendage of Trescott: his fate must hang on Trescott's will. A slave makes the issues neater than a servant would. The household slave is often presented as a part of the family; he is linked to it by an admiring fidelity. Crane held that after the war things were " 'bout the same" for black servants[20]. Because of his subhuman status the black slave is forced into the role of a grown child. Henry must be both an adult and Jimmie's pal, in order to make the more poignant the latter's attitude towards him in chapter XX. This kind of emotional fidelity suits Crane best for the purposes of his story, as a parallel to Trescott's own feeling of personal obligation. But his scheme does not aim at making a statement on the matter of racism. Rather, he makes it unconsciously, because of the explosive nature of the material he was dealing

with. Crane could only handle a black character as a type, but he needed a hero, and presto, Henry Johnson runs to the rescue in his red trousers and straw hat. The narrator's ironic view of Henry stops at the moment when he rushes into the house to save Jimmie (Cooley 1975: 11).

• Henry's role as a hero is an ambiguous one. For Cazemajou, Crane has, "by the very choice of his protagonist, indicated that true heroism is not the privilege of the white alone" (1967: 30). This does not strike me at all as being the substance of the book's racial attitude. But it may be the substance of Crane's consciously intended racial message, as far as there is one. Henry is a black hero, and he does perform a heroic action. M. Solomon notes that in the nineties the production of white writers which had championed black characters in one way or another in their early works (G.W. Cable, Mark Twain, William Dean Howells) did not respond adequately to a wave of lynchings of blacks unprecedented since the war, and that after Henry Johnson there are no more heroic blacks in white literature for some decades (1956b: 40). Gross (1975: 108) notes that there are no black protagonists for quite a few years. M. Solomon praises Crane's adequate handling of Johnson's heroism, showing his fear and his confused psychological reactions: "This is no knight-on-horseback portrayal" (1956b: 41). Vasil'evskaia (1967: 215) also points out that Henry is not idealized by Crane in a way that would isolate him from the black community as a whole. This is so much the case that other critics will be able to speak of Henry's "pathetic limitations" (Nagel 1980: 62). The story needs something more solid to hold on to. The fact that Henry becomes a hero is more than tempered by the fact that he also becomes an idiot and is safely out of the way; Henry Johnson may become a hero but not a hero of tragedy: that is a role for Trescott.

According to Cooley, the narrative point of view abandons Henry in the later part of the novel, indeed from the moment of his accident: "From this point on, even Crane begins referring to Henry as "it," as 'a thing' " (1975: 12). This is for him a defect of the story, the main defect. Crane develops his idea of brotherhood between white and black at the expense of the development and handling of black character (1975: 13). In the second part of the story, Crane abandons Henry and focuses on Trescott: Henry is an "invisible man" for his townsfolks, Cooley argues, but also for the reader, who cannot match with the actual Henry the image he receives from the distorted vision of the town, and he wonders whether this is a kind of trap for the reader, making him choose betwen two visions (1975: 13). The story requires that we side with Trescott and forget about Henry: Cooley would like to have the real Henry restored for the reader to identify with him. There is some truth in this, but it also sounds like the frustration of a reader who has had his happy ending snatched away from him. After all, Cooley does not consider the possibility of the reader's being unable

identify with Henry if he were presented to him: he believes that in fact Henry sane. What we do see of Henry after his accident is not especially attractive. nd to dispute Crane's right to destroy Henry as a potentially lovable character to ask him to write a different story altogether. The point of this story requires at Henry Johnson should be both a black, a hero and a pathetic, mindless onster. What does this combination bring about?

Henry's crude leap from comic stereotype to hero happens to be an teresting experiment in genre, but not an entirely deliberate one on Crane's rt. Crane's racial consciousness may be even more limited than Cooley is illing to admit, but his un-consciousness, his intuitive poetic ability, goes far yond these limits. Because the juxtaposition does produce something new. here is a suggestion in Katz that the stereotype is broken by Crane: Henry is esented as a comic figure but then breaks this image through his conscious roism (1969: xix). But the stereotype breaks twice: first, as Henry becomes hero, second, as he becomes a monster. Gibson's reading (1968: 38) seems to e to relate in an adequate way the breaking of the stereotype and Henry's formation: the townspeople fear Henry because they feel he is free from the gid system of manners which he established before through his complying in e social comedy. This is especially clear in the contrast between the two arragut scenes. If we accept this reading, it would seem that to present a mpliant and Uncle Tom-like Henry Johnson before his accident is almost a ructural requirement[21]. Crane's story can then be read as a powerful decons- uction of the white man's representation of black men in a post-slave society. ut if we had to relinquish what we recognize as the authorial intention in order achieve this reading its force would immediately be weakened in an obvious ay.

The only limit for this reading is the fact that elsewhere Crane used the ereotyped image of the black man without destroying it. In fact, in what I take be Crane's intentions, Henry's blackness and his deformation are related only cidentally; nothing is more accidental than Johnson's being burned by acid in e midst of a fire. But in what I take to be his unconscious motivations, Henry's ackness and his facelessness are divergent aspects of the same, rather than the oduct of an accidental convergence. Henry is a monster because he is a black an. This fact underlies the story and is only indicated in a paradoxical way. The tizens of Whilomville do not identify the element of racism in their fear of enry. But nor does Crane see it in his own fascination with the subject. In riting "The Monster" Crane wrote both his sympathy to blacks and his racist

ge this story as what it is historically : a monster in its peculiar mixture of blindness and insight. Crane was the product of his age and class in his superficial racial attitudes; but as an artist he created a work that delves far beneath that surface to the hard truths it concealed, and destroys itself in the process.

NOTES

1. It is evident that in spite of the popularity of anti-intentionalist theories since the fifties, the practical intepretation of texts has always relied heavily on the concept of authorial intention. Most critical writings show that the recognition of authorial intention is widely held to be relevant to the understanding of the text. Of course I am referring to the authorial intention assumed by the reader on the basis of the work and any other material available, not to the noumenon in the author's mind. This assumed authorial intention is not necessarily the same as the (present-day) meaning of the text, although many readers either do not distinguish between the two or prefer to think of them as perfectly coterminous.

2. In this case, however, the work had already been accepted for publication by the editors.

3. Beer (1941:329). Kahn notes the deepest irony of the whole thing: "Like Henry Johnson, the story had suffered rejection because of its surface horror" (1963: 45). And with much the same reasons being advanced: potential damage to women and children.

4. *Harper's Magazine* XCVII (August 1898) 343-376. Harper and Brothers reissued the story in book form the following year (together with "The Blue Hotel" and "His New Mittens") under the title *The Monster and Other Stories*. All page references are to this edition (abbreviated TM).

5. Several critics have assumed that it was: Follett (1926: ix), Åhnebrink (1950: 381), M. Solomon (1956b: 38), Vasil'evskaia (1967: 219), Cooley (1975: 14). This idea derives from a "seminal" comment of Beer's (1923: 329). However, Cora Crane herself commented that Henry Johnson "was a hero only as he was a horror" (Academy [March 2, 1901]; cited in R. W. Stallman, *Stephen Crane : A Biography* [New York : Braziller] 334-335).

6. Hawthorne (1900: 260); cf. Gross (1975: 109); Morace (1981: 65).

7. Hoffman (1957: 5), E. Solomon (1966: 30), Gibson (1968: 136), cf. Cady (1980: 157).

. Cf. Åhnebrink (1950: 378 ss), M. Solomon (1956b: 38 f.) Hafley (1959), Ellison (1960), Kahn(1963), G.W. Johnson (1963: 74), E. Solomon (1966), Bassan (1967: 7), Vasil'evskaia (1967: 217), Gibson (1968: 138), Katz (1969: xix), Gross (1975: 103 f.),

as a reaction against the "American neighbourhood" fiction (1966: 172 f.). There are also remarks on point of view and narrative voice, studies of various kinds of allusion, allegorical interpretations... and a revaluation of the question of race in the story.

10. *Rebels and Ancestors*, quoted in M. Solomon (1956b: 41).

11. "The Kings's Favour" and the lost "Vashti in the Dark."

12. M. Solomon (1956b: 42) rejects Berryman's sole reference, and what he describes as his general attempt (and Geismar's) to turn Crane into "a reviler of Negroes" using a Freudian "pseudo-science." Berryman suggests that Reifsnyder sympathizes with Johnson because he is a barber and uses a razor, and Crane unconsciously associates blacks with knives and stabbing. There is a suggestion in M. Solomon that Reifsnyder sympathizes with Henry because he is a foreigner (and thus a marginal character too).

13. I think that these critics are too generous with Crane in their interpretations of both passages, and fail to see that both rest on gross racial (even racist) stereotypes.

14. Cooley also dismisses the figure of Alek Williams as an inexcusable and unnecessary cliché (1975: 13).

15. Vasil'evskaia (1967: 214, 218); my translation.

16. Both Vasil'evskaia and Gibson assume that this is the product of Crane's authorial intention; I would not go that far myself. But, by the way, why cover Henry with a black veil (TM 83)? On one hand, it is an allusion to Hawthorne's story, The Minister's Black Veil (there is a suggestion of this in Katz [1969: xix]); on the other, it is a way of marking Henry: he has got no face, but he is still a black; in fact, he has become the quintessential blackness for the imagination of white Whilomville.

17. F. i. in "Stephen Crane in Minetta Lane" or "Seen at Hot Spring" (Gross 1975: 115).

18. But the Pullman car porter as a Negro dude is just another comic stereotype; cf. its use in Crane's story "The Knife" (in Crane 1963: 694), or its deflation in Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*.

19. Crane was not in the least above the use of facile ethnic generalizations. In another instance he makes a sweeping characterization of the Mediterraneans as "liars and men of delay" (cf. Gross 1975: 132-33). By the way, "Watermelon Alley" is still another folk stereotype Crane is using without challenging it. Cf. the blacks in "The Knife," who have an irrational passion for the watermelons in their neighbours' gardens.

20. See his story "The Ideal and the Real" (in Linder 1978).

21. Wolford (1983: 92) also seems to read the story in this way. The faceless Henry becomes a symbol of man stripped of civilized rationality, and the community can't allow such a reminder to walk its streets (1983: 93). Twenty years earlier, G.W. Johnson had already noted Henry Johnson's role as "the reference by which we see both the necessity and the duplicity of decorum" (1963: 74): he is accepted in the "dandy" scene, as a parody of white decorum, and when he is rejected later, the social decorum is revealed "not only as the restraint on blackness but as its agent" (1963: 74).

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MISTERIO E IRREALIDAD EN *THE MAGUS* DE JOHN FOWLES

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Independientemente de las ideas de tipo filosófico, sociológico, e incluso artístico y político que nos transmite Fowles en su novela *The Magus*, tales como la necesidad del ser humano de conocerse a sí mismo, la soledad y sufrimiento que eso conlleva, la vulgarización y automatismo predominantes en la sociedad del siglo XX, la autenticidad como algo esencial en el amor, etc., nos interesa aquí un elemento primordial de dicha novela: el mundo del misterio, todo el engranaje de irrealidad con el que Fowles ha construido su novela y con el cual, o quizás a pesar del cual, el lector consigue llegar al significado que se esconde tras el apasionante argumento y el polémico final de la obra. El mundo de la irrealidad cobra tal importancia en *The Magus*, no sólo por su recurrencia sino por su papel activo como móvil fundamental para el autoconocimiento del protagonista, que posiblemente sea lo que deje una huella más honda en el lector.

Nada más comenzar, nos encontramos con la multiplicidad de la ficción en las citas literarias que abren cada una de las tres partes del libro, todas ellas sacadas de la obra del Marqués de Sade *Les Infortunes de la Vertu*, y haciendo referencia a algo fundamental en la parte que introducen: la primera evoca la frivolidad, lo que nos hace pensar en la actitud de Nicholas en el amor al principio de la obra; la cita que abre la segunda parte nos habla de un sacrificio ritual, anunciándonos el juicio que tendrá lugar al final de la misma; y la tercera menciona la necesidad que tiene el hombre de ver una luz que le ayude a entender

los decretos de la diosa Fortuna. Nos anticipa así un leitmotiv importante en la obra, el del azar, a la vez que conecta con dos mensajes latentes en ella, el de la libertad y la necesidad de autoconocimiento del ser humano.

Las conexiones con el arte en general impregnan toda la obra: el colegio al que va a trabajar Nicholas en Phraxos se llama The Lord Byron School; el capítulo 4, que narra la relación de Nicholas con Alison, está formado por auténticos sketches cinematográficos; la literatura ayuda a describir situaciones: Nicholas habla de sus "Gide-like moments" no correspondidos (57)[1] en los primeros meses de su estancia en Phraxos, meses de hastío y soledad sin una mujer con la que siquiera conversar, y cuando las únicas caras atractivas que ve son las de sus alumnos—alude entonces a la confesada homosexualidad del gran escritor francés. También se llamará a sí mismo Robinson Crusoe. Otras veces la literatura describe a los personajes: el héroe de Demetriades, el compañero de Nicko que lleva a nuestro héroe a los burdeles de Atenas, es Casanova; o sirve para dar pistas: los poemas del libro que encuentra Nicko sobre la roca en Bourani—de Pound, T.S. Eliot, Auden—, aunque enigmáticos, anuncian el mundo de Conchis y, como veremos, alguno puede incluso ayudar a descifrar el final de *The Magus*. Hay numerosas referencias a Shakespeare: Conchis se presenta a sí mismo como Prospero, Nicko, tras el juicio, se compara con Yago y llama a Julie "Desdemona". El propio Nicholas está conectado con la literatura a través de un antepasado suyo, el escritor Honoré D'Urfé, autor de *L'Astrée*. Surge también un paralelismo entre otra obra mencionada, *The Three Hearts*, y la historia planeada por Conchis para Nicholas y las gemelas. Algunas referencias literarias llegan al extremo del misterio por su complejidad y la ausencia total de una explicación que las acompañe: en el capítulo 37, Nicko, hablando de la relación entre Julie y Conchis, menciona en una frase totalmente aislada a "Svengali and Trilby", refiriéndose a los personajes de *Trilby* de Du Maurier (ella era una modelo de artistas, a quien Svengali convierte, mediante la hipnotización, en una gran cantante; cuando Svengali muere, el encantamiento desaparece y Trilby pierde la voz). Otro ejemplo de complejidad sería el de "Astaroth the Unseen", el ser enigmático que se encuentra dentro de la caja vacía en el juicio, del cual sólo se nos dice, en palabras dirigidas a Nicholas por uno de los "psiquiatras": "Your training in literature will permit you, I am sure, to guess at her meaning" (505). Nicholas descubrirá que Astaroth equivalía a Astarté, pero nunca sabrá quién estaba en la caja. La ficción sirve incluso para practicar la tortura: así, una película pornográfica destruye todo el concepto de Nicholas sobre Julie-Lily, la esencia de la pureza. Cabe mencionar también las supuestas obras de arte que decoran la casa de Conchis, como el cuadro de Modigliani, las esculturas de Rodin y Giacometti y el valioso clavicémbalo de Conchis.

De todas esas manifestaciones artísticas, la que más contribuye a este ambiente misterioso y enigmático es el teatro: se sabe que tiempo atrás ya tenían lugar en Bourani sesiones de teatro. A partir de la llegada de Nicholas se suceden las representaciones, hasta el punto de que el protagonista llega a referirse a todos los acontecimientos que está viviendo en la isla como "la representación": "The masque, the masque: it fascinated and irritated me, like an obscure poem" (192). Con el teatro está relacionado el supuesto pasado de las gemelas, quienes, según la primera revelación que dan a Nicholas sobre su identidad, eran actrices contratadas por Conchis para hacer una película. Y las explicaciones que dan Conchis y las gemelas siempre se refieren al hecho de actuar: según Julie, el plan de Conchis es "Improvising realities more real than reality" (338). "Another parallel was a play, but without a writer or an audience. Only actors" (338).

Las referencias teatrales están conectadas con el hecho de que todos los personajes parecen tener dos vidas diferentes, incluso antes de que empiece la representación: el propio Nicholas dice "I led two lives" (16), refiriéndose a cierta época de su pasado en que se vio obligado a alistarse, e intentaba mantener su imagen de "hijo de general de brigada" en público, mientras procuraba satisfacer a escondidas su inclinación por la literatura. Conchis tiene otra vida en París; incluso Alison, a quién Nicholas identificará durante buena parte de la obra con el símbolo de la realidad, se nos describe ya al principio como alguien que tiene dos voces; y con una yuxtaposición de términos semánticamente opuestos, el propio Nicholas nos hace saber el carácter enigmático de esta joven ("innocent-corrupt, coarse-fine, an expert novice" [28]), anunciándo la posibilidad de que también en un futuro ella forme parte de ese mundo de misterio, como efectivamente ocurrirá. Todos los personajes actúan, incluso en su vida real, al no estar contentos con su identidad o no sentirse identificados con el lugar: en sus relaciones con las mujeres Nicholas "produced the solitary heart" (21), Alison se debate entre su origen australiano y su vinculación con Inglaterra, igual que Conchis sufre en su juventud por la mezcla de sangre inglesa y griega en sus venas.

Las representaciones, las conexiones de los personajes con el teatro, y esos disimulos, esas actuaciones de los personajes en la vida real que intentan hacer pasar por genuinas presentan al lector una ficción multiplicada, que alcanza un grado aún mayor con las historias introducidas en los relatos de Conchis, donde tendríamos entonces una estructura de "engaste": así, en el capítulo 44, sobre la estancia de Conchis en Noruega, se nos narra a su vez la historia de un personaje enigmático y demente, Henrik, que ha rechazado todo lo que le pueda ofrecer la sociedad para vivir como un ermitaño y buscar a Dios. Será una escena, presenciada por Conchis desde la oscuridad, en la que Henrik parece haber encontrado a Dios, la que hará comprender al griego la banalidad

de lo material y la existencia de un mundo más allá de toda lógica. Con una maravillosa paradoja, nos encontramos con que este capítulo, en el que los niveles de ficción se han multiplicado estructuralmente (especialmente cuando el lector, al igual que Nicholas, ni siquiera está seguro de que esos hechos hayan ocurido de verdad), termina con una exaltación de la realidad, la realidad auténtica que se rebela contra toda explicación científica, toda clasificación y reducción: el mundo real y exterior se convierte para el hombre en el medio de contacto con un mundo de misterio; en el caso de Henrik, los parajes solitarios, bellos y fríos de Noruega serán su intermediario con Dios.

Algo fundamental en el engranaje de misterio e irrealidad de la obra es el papel jugado por el simbolismo. Podemos mencionar en primer lugar el carácter simbólico que adquieren numerosos objetos: las esculturas, las fotos, los instrumentos musicales, ... el mundo del arte que puebla la casa de Conchis, cuyos ojos "seemed not quite human" (79), como esos objetos que le rodean. Por el contrario, los ojos grises de Alison, que impiden mentir, acentúan para Nicholas el carácter genuino de la joven; como los ojos de Alison, a veces los objetos son el lazo del protagonista con la realidad: así, la tiza que toca en su bolsillo al final del capítulo 18 en un intento de aferrarse al mundo real, cuando tras una larga conversación con Conchis, dicho mundo parece querer esfumarse. Otras veces, los objetos son enigmáticos y auténticos artífices del suspense: por ejemplo, el guante y la segunda taza de té que ve Nicholas en su primera visita a Bourani, que le hacen intuir la presencia de alguien más, probablemente femenino, especialmente después de haber apreciado el perfume de los libros dejados sobre la roca.

*El s*imbolismo aparece también en los seres vivos: en el capítulo 22, Nicholas es comparado a un pulpo que pesca Conchis con un simple trozo de tela blanca como cebo: "You notice reality is not necessary. Even the octopus prefers the ideal" (138). También las flores son simbólicas: serán unas florecillas blancas con hojas verdes las que convenzan a Nicholas de la complicidad de Alison con Conchis; dichas flores reciben el nombre de 'Sweet Alison" en inglés, y aparecen junto al lirio y la rosa, "the lily and the rose" (simbólicas a su vez de la complicidad de las gemelas, de la que Nicholas ya tenía entonces absoluta certeza), adornando la supuesta tumba de Conchis que Nicholas va a visitar en el capítulo 66.

Los objetos también pueden revestirse de un tono siniestro, como la muñeca negra y la calavera que ve Nicholas colgados de un árbol, después del "secuestro" de Julie, y que anuncian el juicio que se celebrará poco después; las caretas que cuben los rostros de los participantes en dicho juicio (diablo, cabra, vampiro, cocodrilo, pájaro...), si bien no son especialmente simbólicas (de hecho, Fowles ha negado cualquier significado astrológico), sí tienen un peso

significativo en la escena puesto que realzan la atmósfera siniestra y de ocultismo que la envuelve. La careta más importante y quizá la única con valor simbólico sería la de Conchis, quien aparece como mago, representando por primera vez su papel de forma externa y manifiesta. Los objetos que adquieren una significación más intensa, por el simbolismo trágico que contienen, son el látigo en la mano de Nicholas en el juicio, símbolo de libertad y frustración, y el plato que Alison había comprado con Mrs. de Seitas, objeto frágil que acabará rompiéndose en manos de Nicholas, de la misma manera que la Realidad ya se había resquebrajado para él al comprencer que también Alison había entrado en el "domaine".

El simbolismo no sólo se limita a los objetos. El silencio siempre es significativo y adquiere tal relevancia que casi se convierte en personaje. Siempre recibe calificativos, y por tanto distintos significados, contribuyendo así al ambiente enigmático: la noche anterior a que Nicholas se separe de Alison para marcharse a Grecia, la habitación de ambos "seemed full of unspoken words, unformulated guilts, a vicious silence, like the moments before a bridge collapses" (39). De gran intensidad significativa es el bellísimo silencio de Phraxos que percibe Nicholas en sus primeras excursiones por la isla, "the enormous landscape of silence "(77) que la envuelve en un manto de eternidad y aleja a uno del presente totalmente; otros serán el "heavy well of silence" (62) que sigue al disparo al aire que hace Nicholas tras su intento de suicidio, el silencio que todos los habitantes de la isla guardan acerca de Conchis, los silencios en las conversaciones con Conchis, los silencios, mezcla de erotismo y dulzura, en los encuentros con Julie-Lily, y el silencio de Leverrier, el antecesor de Nicholas en el experimento, que se ha enclaustrado en un monasterio de Italia y a quien Nicholas va a visitar en busca de alguna explicación: el suyo será un silencio decepcionante, pero mágico y poderoso.

Otra forma de silencio son las cosas dejadas sin explicación: las mentiras, los desmentidos que luego resultarán ser mentiras, aquello que tan sólo es sugerido, las explicaciones confusas y las explicaciones opuestas de un mismo hecho, las palabras y citas en griego, latín o francés sin traducir... todo ello acentúa el misterio que entreteje los acontecimientos y proporciona al lector una sensación de irrealidad sin límites.

También los gestos se ven revestidos de simbolismo: el más relevante y poderoso es la sonrisa, símbolo de poder enigmático. La sonrisa de Conchis era misteriosa, hierática, como la de todos sus discípulos: "That infuriating small smile that haunted all their faces... the same superior, enigmatic smiles" (597). Es el carácter especial que dicha sonrisa adquiere en Mrs. de Seitas lo que hace sospechar a Nicholas que esta dama tiene un poder similar al de Conchis y una gran capacidad de influir en los demás, incluso quizás en el mismo Conchis.

Por fin, la mitología[2] juega un papel muy importante en el campo del simbolismo: Grecia es Circe desde el principio, símbolo de amor y odio, pues Circe era una maga poderosísima que con sus encantamientos dominaba tanto a los hombres como a los elementos, y transformó a todos los compañeros de Ulises en cerdos. Para explicar su sensación de desarraigo, Nicholas se compara con Sciron, "a mid-air man"; hay referencias a Proserpina, a Hades, Orfeo... y en las escenas mitológicas representadas ante Nicholas aparecen Apolo, Artemisa, y un sátiro, que junto con el Príapo que vigila el jardín de Bourani, y que está caracterizado por su enorme falo, símbolo de la virilidad y el amor físico, podrían anunciar las tesis finales de los psiquiatras referentes al peso de la sexualidad en las relaciones de Nicholas con las mujeres. La estatua de Poseidón, dios de los mares, sobre la roca de Bourani, evocaría a Conchis y su poderoso dominio; Julie-Lily es Astarté o Artemisa, diosa griega, hermana de Apolo, que es representada llevando un carcaj, con cuyas flechas hiere implacablemente a quienes se atreven a insultarla: hermosa, pura, y virgen, es una divinidad cruel. Nicholas la ve en la escena mitológica, en la que la "diosa" mata al sátiro que persigue a la joven. Se corresponde con Astarté en Siria, y sin duda con la imagen que Nicholas tiene de Julie-Lily, también hermosa, pura y cruel. En el nombre de Hermes, "hombre de los recados" de Conchis, la simbología es deliberadamente confusa: al presentarlo, dice Nicholas: "His name was Hermes. I had become far too used to hearing not conspicuously brilliant boys called Socrates and Aristotle, and to addressing the ill-favoured woman who did my room out as Aphrodite, to smile" (74). De esta manera, tanto el narrador como el lector descartan un sentido oculto en el nombre del personaje. La sorpresa será por ello mayor cuando más adelante nos enteremos de que, efectivamente, existía en él una evocación a Hermes, dios del comercio y de los ladrones, que, tras ser arrojado del Olimpo por ladrón, fue perdonado y nombrado consejero de Zeus. Si bien el Hermes de Bourani no es el"consejero" de Conchis, sí le proporcionará información sobre Nicholas, y le ayudará en el experimento.

El simbolismo impregna a personas, cosas, acciones, y naturaleza a lo largo de toda la obra, pero especialmente a partir del comienzo del "experimento", lo que lleva al narrador a observar en su primer encuentro con Conchis: "Second meanings hung in the air, ambiguities, unexpectedness" (85). Esta cita nos presenta algo esencial: la ambigüedad, auténtica protagonista en este mundo enigmático e irreal.

Producida por el contraste entre realidad e irrealidad, la ambigüedad se convierte en motor de la novela. Aparece desde el principio, y se hará especialmente notable en la isla, incluso cuando lo real resulte ser igual a lo ideal, como en el caso de Grecia: la exactitud de este país con la imagen previa que se había formado Nicholas sobre él es tal que raya en lo increíble, en lo falso: "It was too exactly as imagined to be true" (50). Esto condicionará en gran manera la actitud de Nicholas, quien muy desde el principio, en su búsqueda de explicaciones a los extraños acontecimientos de Bourani, buscará la "apparent answer" (88), ya con conciencia de que en Bourani nada es definitivo o preciso.

La ambigüedad aparece en los contrastes que configuran la mayoría de las descripciones: la isla, aunque se va convirtiendo en una jaula para Nicko, recibe continuamente los calificativos de "beautiful", "a site for myths" (63). También se observa en los sentimientos del joven la presencia del contraste, que lo lleva a no confiar del todo en nadie: en el mismo capítulo experimenta sentimientos opuestos, como en el 51, donde la esperanza y la alegría que le embargan al recibir una carta de Julie tras varios días sin verla, se ven apagadas por la angustia y tristeza que siente al recibir la noticia del suicidio de Alison al final del capítulo. Ese contraste de sentimientos está lógicamente relacionado con el contraste estructural que conforma numerosos capítulos, como el 49, por ejemplo, cuya primera parte, la escena de amor de Nicholas y Julie, se opone notablemente a la crueldad y violencia de la segunda, el encuentro de Nicholas con los nazis. El contraste surge a veces por la proximidad de términos opuestos, como la que nos ofrece el narrador en la página 102: "...my wanting to see Alison again. I wanted to live again. The house was as quiet as death".

En todas las explicaciones domina la ambigüedad: hay algo ficticio en el recuento que Conchis nos hace de su pasado: "There was some fatal extradimension in his objectivity, which was much more that of a novelist before a character than of even the oldest, most changed man before his own real past self", observa Nicholas (133). Las explicaciones de las gemelas son opuestas a las de Conchis, y el hecho de que a veces sean dadas como verdaderas y otras como deliberadamente falsas todas ellas, por los mismos que las manifiestan, hace que nunca sean puntos de apoyo fiables. Asimismo las palabras que intenta recordar Nicholas constantemente para explicarse los hechos que le van ocurriendo, aunque puedan ser clarificadoras es algún momento, al final dejarán de ser válidas, cuando todo lo ocurrido en la isla haya resultado ser ficción. Paradójicamente, serán las cosas irreales las que parezcan a Nicholas las más plausibles, pues las explicaciones realistas son, cuando menos, absurdas: "Every truth in his world was a sort of lie; and every lie a sort of truth" (294). La desconfianza que la ambigüedad que le rodea provoca en él influirá en sus actos y en el ánimo del lector: por ejemplo, ese buscar la cicatriz en la muñeca de Julie cada vez que está ante una gemela. Julie es la que mejor explica el porqué de la importancia de este recurso en la obra: "A world where nothing is certain. That's what he's trying to create here" (339).

El peso del mundo real en la vida de Nicholas es tan enorme al principio, que se traduce en hastío, llevándole a exclamar: "I needed a new mistery" (19).

El misterio empieza a forjarse ya débilmente antes de partir a Grecia, con la sonrisa y el mensaje enigmático que dedica a Nicholas su antecesor en el cargo, Mitford, en la entrevista que mantienen acerca de Phraxos: "Beware of the waiting room" (45). Grecia será la vía de escape para el deseo de misterio que siente Nicholas, y pasará a ser lo opuesto a Alison en el corazón del joven.

Los primeros meses en la isla serán meses de soledad y aburrimiento, que culminarán con su intento de suicidio a finales de invierno. Pero al acabar la primavera, como el narrador nos anuncia con gran suspense, "the mysteries began" (63). Al comienzo de la "representación" ("the masque"), Nicholas busca explicaciones realistas a lo que pasa, como que Conchis está loco, por ejemplo. Siente que las cosas han sido ensayadas, que todo está envuelto en teatro. Cuando surge el tema del psiquismo en el capítulo 17, el protagonista empieza a adentrarse ya en el universo de misterio de Conchis, especialmente desde que el griego le dice: "You too are a psychic, Nicholas" (110). Ahora Alison porta ya definitivamente el estandarte de la realidad, y siempre que el peso del mundo de Conchis sea excesivo para Nicholas, ella será la salida de escape hacia la realidad en su mente.

Poco a poco van apareciendo imágenes de Bourani como un pozo, un universo de irrealidad que absorve al protagonista ("something was trying to slip between me and reality" [120]), hasta que anuncia: "I had entered the domaine", al final del capítulo 21. Ahora todo está teñido de irrealidad. "No hypothesis made sense" (134). La literatura se hace realidad (por ejemplo, el panfleto de Robert Foulkes). En cambio, la verdadera realidad es incongruente, y Nicholas ha de buscar la afirmación de su propia existencia en los objetos que le rodean: "And there stood the sun, the sea, the boat, so many unambiguous things, around us" (137). Como el lazo de los seres humanos con la realidad son los sentidos, Conchis intentará confundir los de Nicholas, haciéndole ver, oir, oler... cosas extrañas.

Hay que observar que a lo largo de la novela hay pequeños lapsos en medio del misterio, momentos de respiro en los que el protagonista se debate entre su ardiente deseo de volver al mundo de Conchis y la inclinación de su razón por buscar una explicación lógica a lo que allí ocurre. Por ahora, la representación es un intento de hacer que lo irreal adquiera manifestación real, pero ambos mundos todavía se distinguen—si bien ya muy débilmente—gracias al poder de introspección de Nicholas, quien empieza a asociar ya a Conchis con una especie de director de teatro omnipotente, capaz de manipular todo y a todos. Pero a pesar de que él mismo es consciente de que en "the masque" no hay límites ni norma social alguna, la parte imaginativa y misteriosa de su mundo se hace más atractiva que la realidad de su pasado y de parte de su presente. Esto va en detrimento de Alison, cuya invitación a que se vean en Atenas piensa rechazar.

Su relación con Julie se hace más estrecha, y su deseo de entrar en el "domaine" es ya definitivo. Hay dos grandes paradojas en el "domaine": Conchis ha quemado todas las novelas de su casa, y sin embargo él está creando ficción constantemente; por otro lado, lo irreal es presentado como tal por sus propios protagonistas, con lo cual es juzgado desde criterios "de realidad". La explicación la da el propio Conchis, quien a la observación de Nicholas, "I'm not quite sure what the difference is between what you're doing here and the thing you hate so much—fiction", responde: "I do not object to the principles of fiction. Simply that in print, in bools, they remain, mere principles" (231). Anteriormente había apuntado: "Words are for truth. For facts. Not fiction" (96).

Como momento crucial en este proceso de actualización de lo misterioso, llega la hipnosis a que Conchis somete a Nicholas, y que de nuevo ofrece cierta contradicción pues la sensación de Nicko en este momento es la de una fusión perfecta de sí mismo con la realidad exterior. A partir de ahora, la realidad es irrealidad, ambos mundos se funden, sus fronteras se borran. Nicholas va a reunirse con Alison en Atenas, y su actitud para con ella recuerda a la de Conchis hacia él. Su deseo de misterio influye en su relación con Alison, a quien ahora ve vulgar, precisamente, por su franqueza y transparencia, que se contraponen al carácter misterioso e imprevisible de Julie-Lily. Sólo llegará a amar a Alison cuando la vea desnuda, con una corona de flores, en un ambiente bucólico, poético, en la cima del Parnaso. Esta excursión será un momento clave en la relación de Nicholas con Alison, paralelo en cierto modo al papel de la hipnosis en la relación entre Nicholas y Conchis, lo cual establece una unión estructural muy sutil entre Conchis y Alison, que anticipa de manera encubierta la verdadera "complicidad" entre ambos, que se descubrirá después. La atracción que siente Nicholas ahora por Bourani es tal que lo importante para él es estar en el mito, no el entenderlo. "All the reality of the unreality...they were mine" (279), afirma el protagonista en esos momentos de felicidad en que Julie-Lily parece ser verdaderamente lo que dice ser y él se siente estrechamente unido a ella.

Pero algo siniestro se va delimitando: la falta de libertad para ver a Julie, la escena con los nazis, la prohibición de Conchis de que vuelva a Bourani, la dura conversación que mantiene con el griego sobre los distintos conceptos de libertad, la noticia del suicidio de Alison... todo ello hace que se vayan apoderando de él el pesimismo, el cansancio y la desolación. La sospecha recae sobre todo, incluso sobre su propia vida.

El juicio será la culminación del experimento; en él, el misterio de las máscaras que aparecen al principio deja paso a la verdad, al motivo de todo lo ocurrido: la necesidad de conocerse a sí mismo, lo que explicaría la elección de Grecia como escenario de los acontecimientos que han tenido lugar. Cuna del

pensamiento socrático, del "conócete a ti mismo" del maestro de Platón, Grecia era sin duda el lugar idóneo para el experimento de Conchis.

El universo irreal va afectando progresivamenmte a su mundo real: Nicko es expulsado del colegio. Pero el ejemplo más cruel de la intromisión del mundo de Conchis en el suyo será la complicidad de Alison con aquél, de la que tiene conciencia en una escena sorprendente en la que la ve por la ventana se su hotel, en Atenas. Este momento produce un auténtico shock en el protagonista, y sin duda en el lector, quien se ha ido identificado poco a poco con Nicholas, en su atracción por los misterios de Bourani, en sus turbaciones y ansiedades, y como no, en su búsqueda de pistas y explicaciones. Las noticias inesperadas de este tipo, al igual que las frases enigmáticas que cierran numerosos capítulos ("But then the mysteries began" en el capítulo 9; "It was Conchis" en el 12), intensifican la atmósfera de misterio, a la vez que son verdaderas artífices del suspense que acompaña al desarrollo de los acontecimientos.

El dominio de Conchis ha traspasado los límites de Bourani para ir absorbiendo la isla de Phraxos entera, luego Atenas (donde las azafatas del aeropuerto engañan también a Nicholas respecto a Alison), Italia (adonde se ha retirado Leverrier, que rehusa dar aclaración alguna a Nicholas), y finalmente Londres, donde el joven descubrirá todavía más "cómplices" de Conchis. De vuelta a Londres, Nicholas se tiene que enfrentar con la parte más negativa de la realidad: la soledad y el desarraigo. El misterio o suspense se mantiene ahora no con el viaje hacia lo irreal y enigmático, sino con la búsqueda de pistas para salir de ello. En los últimos capítulos, el protagonista se encuentra otra vez en una antesala de la que ha desaparecido toda sensación de irrealidad—pues el mundo de Conchis parece haberse esfumado—, pero en que permanece el misterio. Al final, Nicholas se convertirá en el antihéroe. Tras varios días de angustia y soledad llegará inesperadamente su reencuentro con Alison. La sospecha y desconfianza de Nicholas para con todo, fruto de sus experiencias anteriores y de su desamparo actual, se reflejan ya al principio de dicho encuentro, cuando dice de Alison: "She was cast as Reality" (647). La realidad se ha convertido para él en un papel a desempeñar; de ahí que Alison, anteriormente su lazo con el mundo real, le parezca ahora "mysterious, almost a new woman" (650).

El misterio permanece hasta el final y continuará después de él. Por esta razón, resulta improcedente discutir sobre el desenlace de la novela. El último párrafo es lo suficientemente sugerente de la intención del autor sobre este punto como para indagar más: "She is silent, she will never speak, never forgive, never reach a hand, never leave this frozen present tense. All waits, suspended. Suspend the autumn trees, the autumn sky, anonymous people. A blackbird, poor fool, sings out of season from the willows by the lake. A flight of pigeons over the houses; fragments of freedom, hazard, an anagram made flesh. And

somewhere the stinging smell of burning leaves. Cras amet qui numquam amavit / quique amavit cras amet."

La ausencia casi total de verbos, el uso del presente, las frases cortas, el simbolismo del vocabulario, el empleo de una cita en latín para el final, el contraste entre el valor positivo de dicha cita y el negativo del recurrente "never"... en fin, todos los recursos linguísticos y estilísticos, se funden magistralmente produciendo la ambigüedad necesaria para el final misterioso deseado por el autor. El optimismo que despierta la cita latina no se manifiesta en absoluto como un final certero y definitivo. El propio Fowles nos había anunciado en dos ocasiones "cuál" sería el desenlace de *The Magus:* primero, de una manera muy sutil, en el poema de T. S. Eliot, que lee Nicholas en el libro que encuentra sobre la roca de Bourani:

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time. (69)

Y más tarde, al principio del último capítulo: "...what happened in the following years shall be silence; another mystery" (645).

NOTAS

1. Las páginas indicadas en los ejemplos ilustrativos se remiten a la siguiente edición: John Fowles. *The Magus* (London: Triad / Panther Books, 1984 [1977]).

2. Para las aclaraciones sobre mitología me he referido a Robert Graves, *Greek Myths* (London: Penguin Books, 1985 [1981]).

THE AVIGNON QUINTET : CLUES FOR A READING

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> The weight of the silence when the bombardment ended —that was insupportable, for the shattered fragments of reality reassembled themselves and then one could estimate the result.
>
> (Lawrence Durrell, *Constance*)

When C.P. Snow was asked why he did not mention Lawrence Durrell in his lectures on contemporary English literature, he answered as follows: "Oh yes, he´s very talented, of course, but somehow we don´t think of him as quite British" (qtd. in Sykes 1964: 148). It is interesting to notice that, in spite of the general acknowledgement of Durrell´s work in the fields of poetry and the novel, his assignment to a concrete trend has been, at least, controversial. There are several characteristics which could help us to explain this lack of a unitary criterion among his critics.

Durrell, born in India of Anglo-Irish stock, is a writer who has spent most of his life out of Britain. His attraction to this country is only comparable to a deep dislike of its conventions, an attitude which he himself defines as a "love-hate complex" (in Young 1959: 61). Maybe for this reason,

and like many modernist authors, Durrell seems to need to escape from his country as a creative liberation. In this way, he joins a long tradition of authors who seek in the Mediterranean the vital inspiration which the bourgeois puritanism of the North refuses to give them. A clear reflection of this idea is the image of "the English Death," which recurs in his early works:

> *The Black Book* was truly an agon [sic] for me, a savage battle conducted in the interests of self-discovery. . . . The very quality of this despair drove me to try and break the mummy wrappings—the cultural swaddling clothes which I symbolized here as "the English Death." (*The Black Book,* Preface)

As regards Durrell´s works, his clear experimentalist bias does not clearly fit in with the post-war British fiction panorama and a "movement" (1950s) totally opposed to outstanding characteristics of his production, such as his cosmopolitanism, a certain grandiloquence both in the treatment of the subjects and in the treatment of his own style, and his rejection of a self-centered provincial Britain: "I think this is one of our cardinal errors, namely, to assume that art is a form of purely patriotic response to a given place. I think that is probably a reflection of our rather parochial attitude in refusing to admit we are part of Europe" (in Young 1959: 61).

On the other hand, it is clear that Lawrence Durrell adopts a fundamentally aesthetic approach in his works, giving to the political discourse in his novels a secondary importance[1]. It is not surprising, therefore, that F.R. Leavis, at the time when the socio-moral interpretation of the novel was in its prime, bracketed Durrell, together with Henry Miller and Djuna Barnes, under the label of "decadent authors" (qtd. in Green 1964: 129). All these characteristics have favoured very different, and not always logical, classifications of Durrell´s work. Some of them have underlined the European influence on his novels and his relationship with the "nouveau roman", or have even grouped him with such diverse novelists as Angus Wilson in a truly extraordinary list of interesting "autonomous" novelists (Phelps 1979: 525-9). These attitudes reflect the not long ago characteristic refusal of British criticism to accept as valid any trends outside the established one: "Souhaitons que les pères sévères et tout-puissants du "*reviewing establishment* " veuillent bien cesser de considérer, au pays de Laurence Sterne, qu´il y a deux sortes de romans, ceux qui sont faits comme it faut et les romans expérimentaux" (Bonnesot 1983: 136).

However, this experimental approach has become more and more important. It has succeeded in making the present critics revise previous classifications, accept its existence as a divergent movement from the official one, and include such important authors as Samuel Beckett, Malcolm Lowry, William Golding and Durrell himself in this alternative trend[2].

It could be thought that all these novelists differ in their attitude towards life and in their conception of what a literary work represents. However, their differences can be interpreted as individual answers to two basic and common preoccupations: the meaning of man and the aim of fiction. These classical subjects acquire new interest on the grounds of their systematic appearance and their peculiar combination in the works of each of these authors. To track their existence, two approaches are used which seem applicable to all of them and especially adequate for an illuminating interpretation of Durrell´s novels: myth and metafiction. First of all, it is convenient to explain in which sense each of these well-known concepts have been used:

1. Metafiction.- Although there are basic differences in the work of these novelists, their common concern for "the craft of fiction" can be easily accepted: they all write works which include in themselves commentaries on their linguistic or narrative identity (Hutcheon 1985: 1). Basically, they put forward an exploration of the different possibilities of the works with regard to form and meaning. Between these coordinates, Lawrence Durrell would be placed at one end in his quest for a plural meaning and an exuberant style which has become characteristic of his production.

When it comes to justifying this style full of periphrases, digressions and revisions, Durrell describes himself as a second-rate author unable to concentrate on a single subject (Karl 1975: 47). However, it must be noticed that this technique, described by G. Steiner as "accumulated nuance" (1964: 18), fits in perfectly with his creative method: the construction of a plot by means of small changes in the subject which provide a new overall vision. In this way, the work becomes a continuous process of creation and interpretation where the realist substratum adopts new possible readings and benefits from them. This attempt to achieve manifold interpretations without relinquishing the realist tone leads us directly to the only possible field where the union of parallel meanings can take place: the symbol.

The use of symbols allows Durrell to abandon the logic of the real world and to penetrate deep into that personal universe which he calls "heraldic," where reason and causality are meaningless: "The Heraldic Universe is that territory of experience in which the symbol exists" (qtd. in Stanford 1964: 40). It is a universe of poetic associations, of "illuminations" which, altogether, shape our perception of reality. For Durrell, in fact, the archetypal poem consists of the combination of a place—real universe—and the associations which it evokes—heraldic universe (Bode 1964: 215). This combination of real and fictitious levels as a single entity leads us invariably to a mythical plane to which relatively few critics of Durrell had referred to so far: "The mythopoetic reference underlies fact. . . . Though he [Durrell] employs realistic details with

authority, he is always looking beneath them for the archetypal beauty they conceal" (Sykes 1964: 153).

2. Myth.- It is clearly this search for the "archetypal beauty," for those clues of the past which shape and explain our present reality, what has made critics such as R. Scholes (1964: 411) speak about "primitivism" and its combination with formal experimentalism as Durrell´s main contribution to contemporary literature. Instead of this general termæwhich seems basically to point out the existence of a mythical level—the word "myth" is here explicitly stated. In any case, it can be easily applied to the rest of experimental novelists as a common trait in their works. Its literary representation must be defined by means of a concept which reveals the interplay of levels involved: the terms "symbol" or "image", as defined by M. Eliade[3], could serve for that purpose. In both cases the importance of a global interpretation should be pointed out since it is only the whole set of meanings which conveys its real value.

The characteristic appearance of a mythical level in these experimental novels, their search for a plural interpretation, turns them into the inheritors of a tradition which starts with the dawn of the 20th century:

> One reason that twentieth-century writers such as Lawrence and Joyce return to myths for their plots is that our lives seem more and more to lack the kind of coherent forward movement that plots require. As Eliot understood, the mythic dimension orders the futility and anarchy of contemporary history. But does not myth also introduce a level of metaphoricity that breathes new life and gives greater complexity to what may at first seem a rather pedestrian, lifeless or sterile reality? (Schwarz 1988: 1-18)

If modernist writers adopted myth to order reality and to free it from its sterile nature, it is only logical that —in an epoch where the new physics questions the existence of that single reality and the possibility of understanding it objectively—myth acquires, in the literature concerned with these ideas, unusual importance.

> We might well expect, however, some greater reliance upon the integrative function of symbols by those novelists of the future who undertake to incorporate within their fiction the metaphysics implied in the new physics simply because it is the only established literary device abundantly suited to that purpose. (Nadeau 1981: 195)

The "Durrellian" method of developing his novels around a general idea which, in turn, becomes a structural principle where different subplots are linked, benefits from this integrative nature of the symbol. Leaving aside the controversial "exactness" with which he captures these philosophical and scientific concepts, it can be ventured that in the same way *The Alexandria Quartet* is inspired by Einstein´s space-time continuum, so *The Avignon Quintet* represents what, at first sight, would seem a "return" to the oriental, eastern thought. However, Durrell views this as a logical development, since he considers these ideas adjacent to the latest scientific discoveries and relevant to our epoch: "Science is now beginning to pose really religious questions to itself . . . . It is maddening, though, to feel that Lao-tzu and Einstein are within hailing distance. What´s wrong with us? Why can´t we make the bridge?" (in Moore 1964: 167). *The Avignon Quintet* represents, thus, an attempt to "make the bridge", to reveal the affinities between present and past, between East and West, choosing as its central setting the city of the schism. Basically, then, the purpose is to show the original unity of what is apparently opposite or separated in time and in space.

The manifold nature of the symbol allows Durrell to play with this general idea and to create several levels of meaning:

1.- A metafictional level where the creative process of the work is analyzed.

2.- A mythical level where the creation of the "mandala" or "unitary being" is depicted.

3.- A narrative level where Durrell represents the fight of the characters for survival.

These three levels are closely interwoven by means of common images which can be interpreted simultaneously and have, altogether, the function of shaping the description of initiatory processes. Their purpose, the confluence in a unitary whole or union of the apparently opposite, represents the final stage of any process of initiation (Campbell 1968). It seems adequate now to focus on the materialization of these ideas in the five novels which make up *The Avignon Quintet* : *Monsieur*, *Livia*, *Constance*, *Sebastian* and *Quinx* .

There are numerous critics (Hutcheon 1984: 6; Waugh 1984: 2) who point out that metafictional works provide precise clues for their interpretation. Durrell meets this point of view and includes, also in the *Quintet*, illuminating "digressions" about the creative process. Thus, in *Livia*, the second of his novels, he puts forward his plan as regards the overall structure of the work: "I saw something like a quincunx of novels set out in a good classical order. Five Q novels written in a highly elliptical quincunxial style invented for the occasion" (11).

The shape of "quincunx," like a five on a die, not only represents the formal model sought by the writer but is constantly associated with objectives coveted by several characters (a quincunx-shaped garden reveals, for instance, the location of the templar treasure and conforms the structure of Angkor Vat,

the sacred place of pilgrimage). This spatial arrangement, which guides author and characters together, is easily comparable to a classical mandala structure—the central element inside a square—mentioned by Durrell in the work itself[4] and widely studied by C.G. Jung (1984: 240-51). The affinity between the quincunx and the mandala and its structure provides us too with clues for a global interpretation of the *Quintet* applicable to the three levels mentioned above: "Es, pues, la exposición plástica, visual, de la lucha suprema entre el orden, aun de lo vario, y el anhelo final de unidad y retorno a la condensación original de lo inespacial e intemporal (al 'centro' puro de todas las tradiciones)" (Cirlot 1982: 292-4). On the other hand, the perfect symmetry of this mandala reveals a new meaning related to its numerical interpretation: the Quinary, or group of five elements, is a well-known structure in the East as well as in the West for representing the human being as a reflection of the cosmic order[5]. Durrell clearly draws on this idea when in *Quinx*, the last of his five novels, he speaks about the "five-sided being" (15), the unitary product resulting from the processes described in the work.

Between these coordinates: man and his unity—composed of parts which, like the novels, have a proper name but only as a whole reach a superior order and name—a recurrent theme in the *Quintet*, the "sparagmos" or dismemberment, will be studied. The dismemberment represents a symbolic return to the chaos which precedes any ritual repetition of a cosmogony or creative process (Eliade 1986: 13). This physical and psychological "death" is a necessary requisite for the birth to a new life, the crossing into a superior level of existence. Each novel represents, thus, a member of that "five-sided being" which the work reconstructs till it arrives to the superior plane of existence, or unitary being. Its reconstruction is not merely physical but it also embraces the psychological plane through the progressive shaping of five "skandhas" or categories of knowledge which, according to the Buddhist doctrine, collaborate in defining the human personality (Govinda 1987: 70). In much the same way as the interpretation of a mandala, the lineal reading of the novel leads us to the chaos of meeting these dispersed elements whereas the final vision, its global reading, takes us back to the cosmos in which every part reaches its meaning in a superior level.

The mandalic structure represents in itself the ordering of the empty space, the passage from chaos into cosmos. The elements used by Durrell to represent this initial chaos are recurrent in his work: both *The Black Book* and *The Alexandria Quartet* start in a Winter associated with the death of nature and the end of a period in the narrator´s life[6]. On the other hand, perhaps as a reflection of Durrell´s life, the narrators in both works have chosen to leave the

places where their novels are set (London and Alexandria) so as to let their memories revive, more objectively, the events which took place there. However, *The Avignon Quintet* entails a meaningful turn in the interpretation of these images. The beginning of *Monsieur* reflects the slow departure of Bruce, the character-narrator, from that wintry death: "... crawling out of a northern winter into a nascent spring..." (3). In this case too, his original intention was to escape together with some other characters: "To wall ourselves up, in a way: to retire from the world completely" (5). However, the death of his best friend turns this escape into a journey to the centre of the story. The memories of a common past are intertwined with the projects for the future: Avignon will be, henceforth, the gathering point, the city whose "heraldic" echoes control its inhabitants. It will be, in short, the symbolic protagonist of the *Quintet*.

The journey of this character to Avignon entails a return to his own past. His future task as narrator lies in describing and giving sense to these moments he is recovering: "I am resetting the broken bones of the past" (13). The "resetting of bones" is a recurrent image, associated in the fourth novel, *Sebastian*, with the flux of the seasons and the slow creative process: "Everything will start again when spring melts into summer. We will prune our books and re-set all the broken bones." (201). Durrell points out in the *Quintet* (*Livia*, 11) that *Monsieur* —apparently a novel written by a character, Blanford, fictionalizing the "real" world of the story (Godshalk 1987: 537)—represents the first meeting with a series of themes which will be later developed or rearranged in the subsequent four novels. He adds that the relationship between these novels is "organic", like different stages which conform a unity: the names of the characters vary, the age in which they live, even their frame and fictional status. However, in spite of the apparent lack of order, there are always cues, common traits which relate them as something unitary. The situations and characters described, although they are different, are always "echoes" of his earlier novels. So, this continuous "resetting of bones," adapted to the flux of the seasons and the development of the novels, reflects the initial chaos on which three tasks are undertaken: in a mythic level, the rebuilding of this fragmented unitary being; in the narrative level, the physical and psychological reconstruction of the narrator, and, in a metafictional level, the author´s task of giving shape and meaning to what individually are no more than "*five-skandha: form, aggregates, parcels, lots, congeries* " (*Quinx*, 15). The attainment of these objectives involves the completion of the work and the real crossing into a superior level, where the spacial dispersion and the temporal flux lose their meaning: "The spring will seem endless once back in Avignon" (*Quinx*, 26).

Encompassed in this image of dismemberment and resetting, it is possible to find the meaning of the recurrent references to the oriental myth of Osiris—w-

hose members, scattered over the Mediterranean, were then reconstructed by Isis (*Livia*, 38)[7] and its subsequent projection in the West in the myth of the castration of Uranus and the birth of Aphrodite (*Livia*, 110). Both figures, symbols of cyclical death and the rebirth of nature, reflect, in the level of the story, the inner disintegration which the characters go through.

A constant image in the novel is the lack of love as a castration which prevents a real projection of feelings: "In my own case it seemed gradually to have worn me out emotionally—the word castration does not sound too exaggerated in the context. An affect dammed and frozen" (*Monsieur*, 16). This image is related to the wintery world of the beginning, waiting for renewal. The children of Avignon suffer and die in the war, some other young characters disappear or lock themselves within the silence of autism. Abortions follow one another in the first novels until they become a metaphor of sterility in the different levels: ". . . the sad marriage he carried about inside him like a dead foetus" (*Monsieur*, 196)

A projection of this state is the unproductiveness of the character-narrator. His notes are only fragments, potential novels searching for order within a unitary plan in which they can be developed. His creative capacity is described as an interior mass waiting for someone to give it shape: an external force which, like a revelation, guides him and makes him conscious of his reality as an artist. His amorous failure, the subsequent love affairs lacking in sincerity cause the vital and creative projects to equate in their sterility.

The myth of Osiris is also reflected in a series of mutilations which conform one of the leitmotifs in the work. These mutilations, as well as fitting the chaotic and "waste" world which the *Quintet* represents, reach their true meaning as small failures in the process of initiation of the characters towards a superior order and their physical and psychological unity. In this sense, they represent "the psychic price we must pay for tuition" (Bode 1964, 218), the overcoming of continuous trials. A world of injuries, illness, amputations and blindness arises which finds in Blanford and his shattered spine a meaningful model: "His spine was shivered, his organs splattered with thorns of shrapnel [...] Nothing could stop the flow of blood, our blood.... Rib-cage stove, thorax broken and bruised, ankles snapped like celery . . ." (*Constance*, 94). The psychological "re-education" of this character goes hand in hand with his progressive physical recovery. Several operations and orthopedic devices will eventually allow him to walk without help. However, this "mechanic" process of recomposition is preceded by his real salvation: the "meeting with the Goddess," which Joseph Campbell (1968) describes as the characteristic stage of any initiatory process where the hero is rescued from death, is represented here in his sexual meeting with Theodora, his nurse. Durrell, who considers

sexual intercouse as a type of knowledge capable of "awakening the psychic forces latent in the human being" (in Moore 1964: 161) limits himself to describing a sexual act. However, he makes the reader capable of perceiving how this new Isis rejects the chaos and sterility of the world and succeeds in restoring the inner unity and sexual and creative capacity of this dismembered being: "With her I rose from the dead" (*Constance*, 99).

The mythical level and the narrative one complete their meaning in a wider metafictional level: the chaos, the initial dismemberment is represented by the first novel, *Monsieur*, where the themes which will be later developed are first introduced. The subtitle of this first novel is *"Prince of Darkness."* The devil, symbol of "regresión, de estancamiento en lo fragmentado, inferior, diverso y discontinuo" (Cirlot 1982: 170) is, then, associated with winter and the death which precedes creation. Now the narrator himself is the one in charge of fighting this tendency towards dismemberment and resetting with his work the cosmos, the unitary five-sided being *Quinx*, which will give its name to the last novel: "I sit on the nursery floor of literature surrounded by the dismembered fragments of my juggernaut of a book, wondering how best to assemble this smashed telamon" (*Quinx*, 179).

However, it is logical that a work concerned with the balance of the human being and the creation also includes death as an obstacle against both processes. The psychological chaos in which some characters and the society in which they live are steeped does not lead to the regeneration symbolized by *Quinx*. The subtitle of this fifth novel, *The Ripper's Tale*, represents the dangerous, destructive but equally important face of the process. So, the references to war, executions, assassinations and suicides find their meaning.

The physical paralysis gives way now to the population's immobility when facing these threats, the acceptance of their fate which characterizes the different victims in the work. From this point of view the resigned attitude of the Jews facing their awful fate can be related, among others, to the extermination of templars and cathars and to the Buddhist determinism. Durrell equates some followers of all this historical movements in their belief in the regenerative power of submission. Submission involves the refusal to alter natural laws which, in spite of being apparently unfair, fit a superior and essentially good plan: "Even entropy, so apparently absolute in its operation, is capable, if left to itself, of conversion into a regenerative form. The phoenix is no myth!" (*Sebastian*, 154).

Artistic creation is not outside these apparently random laws. In *The Alexandria Quartet*, Durrell depicts the novelist's conformism as regards these alterations which life imposes on his work and which reflect the indifference of the real model on its imitation: "I have been looking through my papers tonight.

Some have been converted to kitchen uses, some the child has destroyed. This form of censorship pleases me for it has the indifference of the natural world to the constructions of art—an indifference I am beginning to share" (*Justine*, 19).

In *Quinx* a projection of this image can be seen when the novelist, Blanford, throws his manuscript out the window of the train, thus clearly opting for spontaneity (11-2). However, this spontaneity is limited to small creative details since the author keeps the global scheme in his head[8]. To underline his submission to that superior law, Blanford decides to reincorporate in his project some of these notes which have come back to him and which he now considers valuable because they have escaped destruction (152).

This absolute determinism, the submission to a superior force, equates the novelist with those characters who accept the fate imposed on them by the "creator." In the last novel, *Quinx*, it is Blanford himself who theorizes on this attitude: "All creation is arbitrary, capricious, spontaneus. [...] Yet somewhere I am sure the Great Plan exists" (*Quinx*, 53-4). The creator must make concrete decisions as regards his material: these precise decisions shape the novel—bringing life to some subjects and characters and sacrificing others. In the same way as in Life, and unfair as it may seem for the victims, the only reference is the "global project," that superior law which outlines only one of the multiple possibilities offered.

Several doubts about the validity of this Great Plan bring into the work the theme of suicide. In the narrative level, suicides are recurrent and are especially meaningful in the third novel, *Constance*, although due to different motivations. One of the most important is the ritual gnostic suicide—or, rather, self-sacrifice—in which some of the main characters are involved: the ritual entails accepting one´s death through another member of the sect. The victim does not know how he is going to die but he knows when, since he receives two warnings shortly before. Finally, the ritual tries to adapt itself to the natural process in that it forbids the victim to make an attempt on his own life. The theoretical basis for this "suicide" fits in with a gnostic idea according to which we live in a chaotic world which devours itself in continuous struggle. Therefore, this world cannot be the work of a righteous God but of an "evil demiurge," a "prince of darkness" who has usurped his place: "The refusal to conform to the laws of this inferior demon leads insensibly on towards death .... Yet to the pure gnostic soul the open gesture of refusal is necessary, is the only poetic act" (*Monsieur*, 140). Paradoxically, then, suicide means for these gnostics an act of individual affirmation, the rejection of the continuity of chaos. Regenerative submission has no sense when the Great Plan is ruled by Evil. Suicide is now the only possible act of rebellion against these superior laws. Their purpose is to reach, through the opposite way to submission, the same objective:"We are

setting up a chain-reaction which we believe could counter the laws of entropy -the irreversibility of process leading always to death, dispersal, disaggregation... " (*Sebastian*, 149)

This revolt is also reflected in the metafictional level. The "author" becomes for many characters a Prince of Darkness, a cruel being whose arbitrary decisions govern the world of the novel. There are, however, some characters who, instead of accepting submission, rebel against this imposed fate and, in the same way as Sutcliffe—Blanford´s creation and alter ego—question their creator´s power: "I am annoyed because my power is not absolute over him—he [Sutcliffe] is after all my creation; but he can sometimes break loose and show traces of free will." (*Constance*, 331). In much the same way as the members of the gnostic sect, Sutcliffe is conscious of this arbitrary manipulation but he cannot take his own life: "You [Sutcliffe] at least can´t do the whole thing. You are limited to a fiction´s dying" (*Sebastian*, 144).

Sutcliffe´s death depends on another character—Blanford, his "creator" in the first novel—whose submission to the superior law is, as we have seen, absolute. His only means of revenge, the supreme act of revolt against his alter ego, is a symbolic suicide through the mirror: "So the Sutcliffe he invented for his novel *Monsieur* shot himself through the mirror in the early version? 'I had to,' he explained, pointing to Blanford. 'It was him or me'" (*Livia*, 3). The attempt of this character to break free introduces a new approach to the creative work. At the beginning, the novel is a world of open possibilities which give the author unlimited power on its development. However, as the novel unfolds, the themes and characters acquire their own logic and a level of autonomy which allows them to disagree with the arbitrariness of the writer: the rules of the story itself are the ones in control of its final development, "I suddenly knew that this long-heralded book had nearly formed itself" (*Quinx*, 165). Now, it is the author who, like his creations, must submit or rebel against the laws of the novel, the end of his role and his forthcoming disappearance. Blanford´s submission, Sutcliffe´s revolt are intertwined in the eternal dilemma of their creator, Durrell, as regards which way the *Quintet* must follow: "Between the completely arbitrary and the completely determined perhaps there is a way?" (*Livia*, Prologue).

We see a similar dilemma to the attitudes towards Life which the *Quintet* puts forward. As J. Campbell has pointed out: "There [East] the ideal is the quenching, not development of the ego [West]" (1962: 23). The organic relationship between these novels, whose characters and situations are reflections of previous works, represents different stages (trials or karmas) of a process of development (West) or a process of dissolution (East), different reincarnations of a common theme. The cosmos—union of opposites or nirvana—entails

the arrival in a superior level of existence. In both cases—East and West—this superior level of existence represents the final objective. Resetting or dissolution, submission or revolt represent the eternal conflict between the two different conceptions of reality which the *Quintet* tries to unify.

At a metafictional level, the superior plane of existence is nothing more than that "reality prime" to which fiction, no matter how long its journey, must give way in the end: "It was at this precise moment that reality prime rushed to the aid of fiction and the totally unpredictable began to take place!" (*Quinx*, 201). In the novel, the warning that the suicide must take place is the arrival of a letter. At the end of *Monsieur*, it seems that Blanford, the narrator, receives one of these letters. Through this image, Durrell succeeds in identifying the process of life and the creative work of the novelist. Human will stands, thus, for a "permanent death" against which the dissolution of the ego seems to be the only answer[9]: "For the writer at any rate everything that one might call creatively wrought, brought off, completed aesthetically, comes to you, his reader and his Muse, from the other side of a curtain. From the other side of a hypothetical suicide" (*Livia*, 52). When the novel comes out, the death of the narrator as an active participant who can alter events occurs. Therefore, the reader´s task begins: he is now in charge of resetting these five parts.

NOTES

1. "If art preaches it isn´t in terms of ethics or taboos or behaviors" ("The Kneller Tape," in Moore 1964: 163).

2. Bradbury and Palmer 1980: 11.

3. "Por tanto, la Imagen en cuanto tal, en tanto que haz de significaciones, es lo que es verdad, y no una sola de sus significaciones o uno solo de sus numerosos planos de referencia" (M. Eliade 1987: 15).

4. "Like some mystical mandala-shape..." *Constance*, 24.

5. "Los cuatro miembros regidos por la cabeza como los cuatro dedos por el pulgar..." Cirlot 1982: 380.

6. "I knew all at one [sic] that we share that correspondence of death with the season..." (*The Black Book*, 21).

7. It is interesting to refer here to Sharon Spencer´s study on the nature of sibling incest (1987: 436-49).

8. In a recent interview, translated into Spanish, Durrell underlines the importance of this balance between a rigid plan and spontaneity: "Hay que empezar por tener una idea muy clara de lo que se pretende hacer, y después olvidarla enseguida. Después, se va tomando lo que vaya surgiendo" (*Quimera* 52 [1986]: 27).

9. See an explanation of this idea in L.W. Markert 1987: 559-62.

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TRADUCCION Y DESCONSTRUCCION

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> The writer who is content to destroy is on a plane with the writer who is content to translate. Both are parasites.
>
> Wallace Stevens
>
> Poetry is what's left out in translation.
>
> Robert Frost

En una era en que la rapidez y eficacia de los medios de comunicación nos hacen pasar de un lugar a otro del planeta en cuestión de segundos, nadie puede poner en duda la importancia del concepto de contexto, y se piensa en la traducción como una forma de comunicación y diálogo entre los pueblos. No obstante, la realidad es bastante distinta. Cualquiera que se haya enfrentado a una traducción será consciente de lo difícil que es esa tarea. De hecho, podría decirse que esa situación refleja la disolución de las relaciones humanas y la imposibilidad de comunicar a la que se han referido los filósofos, desde Gorgias hasta Wittgenstein. Como dice Lukács,

> The new drama has no confidantes, and this is a symptom that life has robbed man of his faith that he can understand another man... Men become simply incapable of expressing the truly essential in them and what truly directs their actions; even should they in rare moments find words to fit the inexpressible, these words will at any rate go unheard past the spirits of others, or reach them with meaning transformed. (Kennedy 1983: 200)

Esta falta de comunicación entre los pueblos y la consiguiente disolución de las relaciones interpersonales tiene que ver, según Kennedy, con el principio de incertidumbre de Heisenberg, que, como su nombre indica, afirma que nada es seguro en la naturaleza: el movimiento del electrón no se puede medir con exactitud, de donde la Física Cuántica deduce, en contra de la opinión de científicos como Einstein, que "Dios juega a los dados" con el universo.

Teniendo todo esto en cuenta, nos parece acertada la opinión de Lefevre cuando se niega a aceptar la posibilidad de que exista la *identidad* entre traducción y original. Sólo es posible la *adecuación*. Además, el concepto de adecuación nos interesa más que el de equivalencia, porque abre expectativas, y cuando tenemos que traducir frases muy coloquiales o características de una comunidad (es decir, que su significado depende del contexto—presuposición pragmática) se busca también la adecuación, no la equivalencia.

Según Derrida, la torre de Babel no significa únicamente la imposibilidad de reducir la multiplicidad de lenguas, sino que también demuestra incompleción, imposibilidad de llegar al todo, al sistema, a completar la construcción. La desconstrucción aporta así un matiz metafísico, o, mejor, anti-metafísico, a la traductología: "What the multiplicity of idioms actually limits is not only 'true' translation, a transparent and adequate interexpression, it is also a structural order, a coherence of construct" (Derrida en Graham, 1985:165-166).

Además, es importante destacar que "Babel" significa "confusión"; y, no sólo eso, sino que engloba a su vez dos sentidos que entre sí también se confunden (!), a saber, la confusión de las lenguas y el estado de confusión de los arquitectos al quedar interrumpida la construcción, "so that a certain confusion has already begun to affect the two meanings of the word 'confusion'" (Derrida en Graham, 1985:167). Babel representa, no sólo la confusión de las lenguas, sino también la destrucción de la armonía entre los hombres:

> Ahora, pues, descendamos, y confundamos allí su lengua, para que ninguno entienda el habla de su compañero.
> Así los esparció Jehová desde allí sobre la faz de toda la tierra, y dejaron de edificar la ciudad.
> Por eso fue llamado el nombre de ella Babel, porque allí confundió Jehová el lenguaje de toda la tierra, y desde allí los esparció sobre la faz de toda la tierra. (Génesis 11.7-9)

En su Diccionario Filosófico, Voltaire añade un significado que le será útil a Derrida. "Babel" también es el nombre de Dios Padre, que le da su propio nombre—"confusión"—a la ciudad en la que el entendimiento ya no es posible. El nombre propio ocupa un lugar central en las teorías desconstructivas de la traducción: la comprensión no es posible si sólo existen nombres propios, pero tampoco si éstos no existen.

"En el principio era el Verbo, y el Verbo era con Dios, y el Verbo era Dios". Estas palabras de San Juan se relacionan con el tema de la traducción y Babel. Dios, al dar su nombre a la ciudad en la que se disuelve el entendimiento entre los hombres, es el origen del lenguaje y de las lenguas. Pero también es Dios quien anula la unicidad del lenguaje y destruye así su regalo inicial a los hombres. Dios no permite que los hombres construyan la torre, que establezcan su imperio, que alcancen la universalidad, la estructura totalizadora. Los castiga por pretender tener un nombre, por desear la unicidad, una genealogía única y universal:

> Y dijeron: Vamos, edifiquémonos una ciudad y una torre, cuya cúspide llegue al cielo; y hagámonos un nombre, por si fuéramos esparcidos sobre la faz de toda la tierra... Y dijo Jehová: He aquí el pueblo es uno, y todos éstos tienen un solo lenguaje, y han comenzado la obra, y nada les hará desistir ahora de lo que han pensado hacer.
> Ahora, pues, descendamos, y confundamos allí su lengua... Así los esparció Jehová... (Génesis 11, 4-8).

De ese modo, la traducción se convierte en algo necesario y prohibido, necesario pero imposible. Es más, se trata de lo necesario por imposible. Babel, como nombre propio, es intraducible; pero Babel también acaba siendo un nombre común, de ahí que la confusión se convierta en nombre propio y común a la vez, como homónimos, como sinónimos, pero no como equivalentes. El nombre es síntesis expresiva, habla del "poder de las palabras" al que ya Poe hace referencia en uno de sus poemas. El nombre procede de las cualidades de la cosa nombrada, y presenta la acción del verbo sobre la pasividad.

La unidad, la posibilidad de comunicación, es, a un tiempo, imprescindible y deseo irrealizable. "Babel" significa ambigüedad, confusión, multiplicidad, polisemia, ambivalencia; y, desde este punto de vista, Derrida afirma que Dios es el primer desconstruccionalista(!).

El traductor tiene una misión, una tarea a realizar, la transmisión de una semilla, la transformación de un texto. No obstante, lo que ha de sobrevivir es la obra, no el autor; la deuda del traductor no es con un hombre, sino con un texto. El autor deja de ser importante en el acto de traducir, y este hecho se relaciona con las teorías post-estructuralistas, igual que la paradoja (imposibilidad / necesidad) antes mencionada. En el post-estructuralismo acaece la muerte del autor: "writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing" (Barthes 1977: 142).

También es importante destacar que, junto a la muerte del autor, se da la disolución del contenido. A la hora de traducir, la desconstrucción desdeña la importancia del significado, ensalzando únicamente la forma del texto. En este sentido, también Walter Benjamin, por ejemplo, afirma que "la traducción es forma" (*Iluminaciones*). El traductor ha de ser capaz de transmitir la música del texto original, que es, al fin y al cabo, su esencia.

En su conocido artículo "La labor del traductor", Benjamin insiste en que "igual que la tangente toca el círculo de una forma efímera, fugaz, y tan sólo en un punto . . . así también la traducción toca el original de un modo efímero y únicamente en un punto infinitamente pequeño en lo que al significado se refiere". Igual que los fragmentos de un ánfora son muy parecidos pero no idénticos, la traducción debe transmitir, dice Benjamin, en un acto de amor, la intención del original; como los fragmentos de la misma ánfora, el original y sus traducciones se convierten en fragmentos de un lenguaje más universal. Este acto de amor no restituye, no transmite, el significado del original, sino tan sólo el que capta en ese fugaz contacto. La traducción, como un niño, producto de su origen, pero con capacidad propia para desarrollarse y para hablar por sí mismo. Ese reducto intangible es lo que fascina y orienta al traductor. Se da así la paradoja; incompleción y consumación que Derrida expresa con una terminología impregnada de erotismo:

> The text will be even more virgin after the passage of the translator, and the hymen, sign of virginity, more jealous of itself after the other hymen, the contract signed and the marriage consummated. Symbolic completeness will not have taken place to its very end and yet the compromise of marriage will have come about—and this is the task of the translator, in what makes it very pointed as well as irreplaceable (Derrida en Graham, 1985: 192)

'Himen" señala la consumación, la identificación y la confusión, y gracias a él se crea una diferencia sin polos decidibles, diferencia sin presencia

que disloca el centro presente. Presencia percibida y no percibida, imagen y modelo, por lo tanto, imagen sin modelo; medio, entre, escritura del sueño, ficción sin imaginario, mímica sin imitación, apariencia sin realidad. Sólo huellas, recuerdos que ningún presente ha precedido ni perseguido y que no se puede ordenar en torno a un punto; huella que avanza y rememora en el pasado y en el futuro, como diría Mallarmé, bajo una apariencia falsa de presente:

> The hymen, the consummation of differends, the continuity and confusion of the coitus, merges with what it seems to be derived from: the humen as protective screen, the jewel box of virginity, the vaginal partition, the fine, invisible veil which, in front of the hustera, stands *between* desire and fulfillment. It is neither desire nor pleasure but in between the two. Neither future nor present, but between the two—. . . with all the undecidability of its meaning, the humen only takes place when it doesn't take place . . . (Derrida 1981: 195)

La intimidad de mundo y cosa reside en el entre-medio. La palabra "entre" lleva, pues, todo el peso de la operación. Hay que determinar el himen a partir del entre y no a la inversa. El himen en el texto (crimen, acto sexual, incesto, suicidio, simulacro) se inscribe en el límite de esa indecisión. Y lo que vale para "himen" vale, *mutatis mutandis*, para todos los signos que como *pharmakon*, *supplément*, *différance* y otros, tienen un valor doble, contradictorio, indecidible, incompatible. Ese vacío semántico significa la posibilidad de la sintaxis, el juego del significado. La traducción, el espejo nunca sobrepasado, el borde del ser. La dialéctica del límite, la no penetración, la suspensión eterna, el antro mallarmeano, la caverna platónica...

El post-estructuralismo considera el lenguaje como objeto de fascinación. Se olvida el placer de la descripción de la narración de una historia coherente y se intenta llegar al placer del propio lenguaje. Como diría Sontag, en lugar de una hermenéutica, lo que necesitamos es una erótica del arte (Sontag, 1984: 27). En una sociedad lúdica y hedonista, la traducción se convierte en una nueva forma de erotismo:

> This leads to pose (to propose) a final approach to the text, that of pleasure (Barthes 1977: 163)

El estilo queda definido como la equivalencia entre la intención literaria y la estructura carnal; el estilo es la relación totalmente libre entre el lenguaje y su doble carnal.

El significado se olvida en favor de la forma creadora del goce: "El texto que usted escribe debe probarme que me desea. Esa prueba existe: es la escritura. La escritura es esto: la ciencia de los goces del lenguaje" (Barthes, 1974: 12-13).

Barbara Johnson equipara la infidelidad matrimonial a la infidelidad del traductor (Graham 1985:142ss). El concepto de fidelidad se valora cada vez más en los medios audiovisuales y cada vez menos en el dominio de las costumbres maritales y de las teorías de la traducción. La fidelidad de reproducción parece hoy confinada al Betamax o a las fotocopiadoras Xerox... El traductor se convierte así en un ser bígamo, cuya fidelidad se reparte entre el texto original y la traducción; y lo que en realidad indica esa doble infidelidad es, más que la bigamia, el incesto. A medida que nos sumergimos en la lengua extranjera, renovamos nuestro sentimiento de amor-odio hacia la lengua madre, resintiéndonos porque no nos proporciona todas las palabras que necesitamos. Nos sentimos impotentes, castrados lingüísticamente.

La labor del traductor no es, según Derrida, llegar a crear una imagen fiel, una representación fidedigna del original, puesto que la traducción está a su vez en proceso de transformación, se está continuamente desconstruyendo, sobrevive gracias a la mutación. El lenguaje como ser vivo, en continuo cambio. Paralelamente, el texto origen se está transformando sin cesar, de ahí que la traducción no sea sino un complemento del original, porque ni siquiera en éste existe la unidad, la complitud. Además, el texto origen también está en deuda con la traducción. Dios, al dar su nombre, apela a la traducción, dice Derrida. Su nombre se traduce, según dijimos, como "confusión" si ha de ser entendido. De esa forma se destruye, se desconstruye, el centro, el origen. Lo único que queda es el lenguaje, de ahí que la deuda entre texto y traducción y viceversa no se dé entre los sujetos, sino entre sus nombres, la palabra que los representa, la huella de la relación entre sujeto y nombre, el límite del lenguaje, la disolución del "yo", la multiplicidad, el pluralismo, la ruptura del sistema, el desencanto. La finalidad última de la traducción consiste, pues, en expresar la relación íntima entre las lenguas, la presentación de la afinidad nunca presente. Anuncia el apocalipsis: "translation... announces the messianic end" (Graham 1985: 202).

Las propias traducciones de Derrida son reflejo de ese deseo de mantener la ambigüedad, de desconstruir el significado unívoco. En su obra, lejos de aclarar conceptos, presenta y subraya la contradicción entre los mismos. Buen ejemplo de esto es su tratamiento de la palabra *pharmakon*, empleada por Platón. Significa "remedio", pero también "veneno", así que, cada vez que aparece, el traductor había de decidirse por uno de los dos significados. Derrida, en cambio, decide mantener ambos sentidos con el fin de subrayar la indeterminación, la confusión, la indecidibilidad, puesto que al elegir un sentido y anular así la referencia virtual, dinámica, a los otros usos de la misma palabra en la lengua

griega, el traductor destruye lo que Derrida denomina la escritura "anagramática" de Platón, interrumpiendo las relaciones que en ella se tejen entre diferentes funciones de la misma palabra en diferentes lugares, relaciones que nuestro filósofo llama "citativas". Cuando una palabra se inscribe como la cita de otro sentido de esa misma palabra, cuando el proscenio textual de la palabra *pharmakon* da a leer en la misma palabra diversos sentidos, la elección de uno solo de ellos por parte del traductor tiene como primer efecto neturalizar el juego citativo, el "anagrama", y, finalmente, la textualidad del texto traducido, en tanto en cuanto la textualidad está constituida, según Derrida, de diferencias y de diferencias de diferencias, siendo por naturaleza absolutamente heterogénea.

Todas las traducciones a las lenguas herederas de la metafísica occidental tienen, pues, sobre el *pharmakon* un efecto de análisis que los destruye violentamente al reducirlo a uno de sus elementos más simples. Esa traducción interpretativa es, según Derrida, tan violenta como impotente: destruye el *pharmakon*, pero al mismo tiempo es incapaz de alcanzarlo. Su verdadera esencia cobija en sí misma la complicidad de valores contrarios; es decir, que su "esencia" es que no tiene esencia estable ni carácter propio. No posee identidad ideal, es aneidético, porque no es monocidético, en el sentido en el que en el *Fedón* habla Platón del *eidos* como de algo simple: *monoeides*.

Si el *pharmakon* es ambivalente es porque quiere constituir el medio en que se oponen los opuestos, el movimiento y el juego que los relacionan mutuamente. El *pharmakon* es el movimiento, el lugar y el juego de la *différance*. La diferencia de la *différance* y la *différance* de la diferencia. La dialéctica de una *coincidentia oppositorum*.

Desde este punto de vista, el texto original se convierte en una traducción imposible que da lugar a la imposibilidad de la traducción. Así, la traducción de un texto de Derrida es tarea casi impensable, lo cual a su vez demuestra una importante idea desconstructivista, cual es que, cuanto más se intente estudiar un texto para traducirlo, más imposible es su traducción. La filosofía de Derrida es en realidad el análisis (!) de esa imposibilidad. El estudio de la *différance* del significado. La traducción es un puente, pero como advierte Lautréamont, "Vous, qui passez sur ce pont, n'y allez pas".

Derrida une sus teorías sobre la traducción con sus ideas sobre la metafísica occidental, la cual, a su parecer, llega incluso a configurar la propia organización de la palabra. Para tener sentido, la palabra tiene que representar algo. Su naturaleza es arbitraria; desde la perspectiva saussureana, que, según Derrida, está ligada a la metafísica tradicional, se establece la distinción entre significado y significante, y es precisamente esta estructura la que hace posible la traducción, ya que, de otro modo, no se podrían alterar los significantes. Así, la metafísica ofrece una teoría de la traducción que se llega a generalizar y a

convertir, dice Derrida, en una gramática universal chomskiana, y, finalmente, en una matemática del significado.

Derrida, en cambio, considera que significado y significante mantienen entre sí una relación intrínseca que se rompe en el acto de traducir, porque se cambia el significante y se viola, por tanto el significado esencial del término. La traductología tradicional también es rechazada por Derrida, en tanto en cuanto intenta acabar, según dijimos, con la polisemia, intenta llegar a una estructura en la que todas las diferencias hayan quedado reducidas a una esencia que sea siempre la misma, al centro, al origen, todo lo cual es inherente a la metafísica del lenguaje.

El mantenimiento de la distinción entre *signans* y *signatum* deja abierta la posibilidad de pensar en un concepto de significado en sí mismo, en su independencia con relación al sistema de significantes. Dejando abierta esa posibilidad, Saussure hace posible la aparición de lo que Derrida llama el "significado trascendental", que no remite en sí mismo a ningún significante.

Al cuestionar la posibilidad de que exista ese significado trascendental en que se reconoce que todo significado está también en posición de significante, la distinción entre significado y significante se torna problemática, y, además, implica pasar por la desconstrucción de toda la historia de la metafísica, que ha impuesto a la ciencia semiológica ese significado trascendental.

Sin esa distinción entre significado y significiante, la traducción no sería posible, comenta Derrida en *Positions*. En efecto, es en el horizonte de una traductibilidad absolutamente pura, transparente y unívoca, donde se constituye el tema de un significado trascendental: la traducción practica, según Derrida, la diferencia entre significado y significante. Pero el filósofo francés señala que, puesto que esta diferencia nunca es pura, tampoco lo es la traducción, y por eso sugiere que se sustituya la noción de traducción por la de *transformación* : transformación regulada de una lengua por otra, de un texto por otro.

La *différance* hace referencia a la producción de lo que la metafísica llama signo (significado / significante). Lo que la *différance* pone de manifiesto en la traducción es la pérdida de la unidad originaria e indivisa de una posibilidad presente, pues el movimiento de la diferencia es la raíz común de todas las oposiciones de conceptos que pululan en nuestro lenguaje, tales como sensible / inteligible o intuición / significación. No obstante, la *différance* es también el elemento de lo mismo (de ahí que esté en la base del acto de traducir) en el que estas oposiciones se anuncian, las cuales acaban por subordinar el movimiento de la *différance* a la presencia de un sentido que sería anterior a la *différance*, un sentido que revela la creencia en ese significado "trascendental".

El autor de la *Gramatología* afirma que nunca nos habremos de enfrentar con ningún transporte de significados puros que el instrumento significante

dejará incólume de una lengua a otra. La eficacia de la gramatología, del pensamiento de la escritura como huella, consiste en desmontar el postulado logocéntrico del significado trascendental, separable de la cadena de significantes.

Desde el principio de la *différance*, se toma todo proceso de significación como un juego formal de diferencias, de trazas, lo cual supone para la traducción que ningún elemento pueda funcionar como signo sin remitir a otro elemento que, a su vez, tampoco está simplemente presente, sino que se constituye a través de las trazas que otros elementos han imprimido sobre él. Esa es la razón de que Derrida prefiera hablar de "transformación" de un texto en otro y no de "traducción". Según él, no hay nada, ni en los elementos ni en el sistema, que esté simplemente presente o ausente. No hay más que diferencias y trazas de trazas.

En la traducción, el sujeto se arriesga a no querer decir nada, y a entrar así en el juego de la *différance*, que impide que ningún concepto o palabra ordenen, desde la presencia teleológica de un centro, el espacio textual. Sin embargo, hay que tener en cuenta que ese no querer decir nada, desde la archiescritura, la diseminación, el suplemento o la diferencia, supone una actividad y un análisis concienzudo, no un ejercicio de reposo.

Desde el *Cratilo*, la filosofía había creído poder reducir la equivocidad de los nombres de las cosas mediante el postulado de su traducibilidad, que a su vez asegura el sentido, la verdad y la universalidad del *logos*. La estratagema de la desconstrucción será sembrar "seguramente la inseguridad". Es una práctica que desarticula el discurso para anular el lugar estable, seguro, de sentido pleno, de una verdad de un origen, de un *telos* ; una práctica que juega, a un tiempo y desde un lugar nulo, sobre las dos caras del signo, sobre un concepto indecidible y sobre un significante insostenible; sobre la destrucción del origen. Y será precisamente ese centro el que, en el acto de la traducción, haga imposible el significado, el mensaje sin el apoyo de su medio de transporte, como fin en sí mismo. Pero Derrida asegura que tal centro no existe, y que lo que en realidad se da es la dominación de un concepto sobre otro. La única forma de no llegar a esa situación es permitir la polisemia; que el traductor no elija—como ocurre en las traducciones tradicionales con la palabra *pharmakon* y otras, según vimos.

No se trata únicamente de que la traducción del sentido—y el sentido de la traducción— estén ausentes, sino que se hacen y se deshacen con ella, no pudiendo ésta más que habitar en la huella, en un surco vacío y múltiple. El resultado es que no dice nada, que destruye, que mezcla y confunde, que desplaza lo que dice hacia los márgenes y que se apropia de éstos para impedir que se diga allí nada. Es una escritura oscura que borra aquello que traza y dispersa lo que dice. La simiente centellea y se pierde.

Según él mismo destaca en *Positions*, toda la obra de Derrida es una operación textual única y diferenciada, cuyo movimiento inacabado no se asigna a ningún comienzo absoluto, y que, consumida en la lectura de otros textos, no remite más que a su propia escritura. Hay que leer sus libros en las trazas, en los márgenes, en las contradicciones y entre las líneas de un texto que es a la vez parecido y distinto, simulacro y realidad. El texto derridcano es, así como su traducción, permanece imperceptible, inaccesible en el presente a lo que pueda ser denominado percepción, a riesgo de diluirse para siempre, regenerando continuamente su tejido tras la huella de la traducción.

Zot es el hijo mayor del pájaro originario. Horus es el pensamiento que concibe; Zot el ejecutante, por medio del lenguaje, del proyecto creador de aquél. Al igual que su homólogo griego, Hermes, Zot representa al dios mensajero, al intermediario ingenioso y sutil que se oculta siempre. De ahí que Derrida afirme que Zot es el dios del significante. El mensaje no es, sino que únicamente representa el momento creador (Horus). Es el habla segunda que introduce la diferencia; y es precisamente a él a quien se atribuye el origen de la pluralidad de lenguas.

Como dios del lenguaje segundo y de la diferencia lingüística, Zot no puede convertirse, comenta Derrida, en dios de la palabra creadora más que por sustitución metonímica, por desplazamiento, y, en ocasiones, por subversión violenta. Esa sustitución tiene lugar como un puro juego de huellas y de suplementos en el orden del puro significante, en el infinito elemento de la permutación lingüística de sustitutos, y de sustitutos de sustitutos. Juegos de significantes imposibles, donde Zot participa en conspiraciones, operaciones pérfidas y maniobras de usurpación. Así, el dios de la segunda lengua es también el dios de la muerte, movimiento subversivo del reemplazo, significante disponible, indeterminación flotante que permite la sustitución; muerte como repetición de la vida, doble irónico, apropiación escatológica, ambivalencia inestable.

El suplemento hace, pues, a la muerte aceptable y nula. Aceptable por anulada. La posibilidad de la repetición en el segundo texto es el origen de la episteme: en este sentido, el *eidos* es lo que puede ser repetido siempre; la muerte abre así el *eidos* a la repetición (Derrida 1981; también Platón, *Timeo* y *Fedro*). La verdad desaparece como presencia; la no-presencia es la presencia. La diferencia como desaparición de la presencia originaria es a la vez condición de posibilidad y condición de imposibilidad del nacimiento del texto traducido, simulacro, fantasma, icono, del primero. Repetición desarrollada como suplemento.

Sólo el *eidos* puede dar lugar a la repetición como anámnesis o mayéutica, dialéctica o didáctica. La repetición como vida (o muerte) que no sale de sí más que para volver a entrar en sí, juntas en la *mneme*, en el *logos* y en la

fone. Además, en esa repetición la presencia del ser del texto origen se pierde, se dispersa, se multiplica mediante fantasmas, iconos o simulacros. Las dos caras se separan frente a frente; lo imitante y lo imitado al borde de un espacio no homogéneo, en el límite de la referencia desplazada en la operación de la sintaxis, escritura que se manifiesta con un trazo indecidible como dislocación. La distancia se distancia. La lejanía se aleja: *Entfernung* heideggeriano, separación, alejamiento de la lejanía, des-alejamiento, destrucción, enigma velado de la proximidad.

El imitado no tiene imitante, el significante no tiene significado, el signo carece de referente; pero la operación presente en el acto de traducir cuenta con la instancia de la metafísica como investigación del *telos*. Es un acontecimiento que Derrida describe como himen, crimen, suicidio, espasmo en que nada ocurre, en que el simulacro es una transgresión y la trasgresión un simulacro. Se trata de una operación que no manifiesta, no produce, no desvela ningua presencia; tampoco configura una conformidad de semajanza o de adecuación entre una presencia y una representación.

En *La dissémination*, Derrida recuerda que Platón condena la hypomnesis en favor de la mneme. El mecanicismo en contra de la vida, el sustituto frente al original. No a la elección o a la sustitución; sí a la ambigüedad, al himen como virginidad y consumación, al *pharmakon* como remedio y veneno, a la praxis que construye y descontruye a un tiempo. Nos sentimos atraídos hacia el texto por las paradojas de lo doble y la repetición, por la borradura de los límites entre imaginación y realidad, entre el símbolo y aquello que se simboliza.

La traducción es imposible, pero presente... La pirueta de una bailarina, comenta Derrida en *La dissémination*, jeroglífico que hay que hacer girar como movimiento del signo, movimiento del significante que remite, a través de la ficción de una visible pirueta danzante, a otro significante, también piruetante, a otra pirueta, siempre a punto de marcar con un signo la página, intimidad virginal de la vitela, consumación imposible de la necesidad presente. Cada pirueta no es más que la señal de otra pirueta, totalmente distinta y la misma, dos ocurrencias del significante que, de un texto a otro y primero en el blanco del entre-texto, se mueven como bailarinas negras recortadas sobre un fondo de seda blanca, perfiles sin rostro, esbozos que no se presentan nunca más que en un sesgo, girando alrededor de un eje invisible presente. Escritura muda como el canto de un pájaro a lo lejos. Mallarmé llama a la "Danza... ese tema virgen como las muselinas". La traducción... acrobacia espiritual de una intención visible inexistente.

CONCLUSIONES

Llegamos al medio para escapar al sentido. Dialéctica enterna de lo imposible, proliferación infinita de la esencia, finalidad inmanente, razón insensata. Nada impide obtener lo imposible. El universo condenado al antagonismo radical. No hemos logrado el himen, pero seguimos buscando lo más móvil que lo móvil: la metamorfosis. Buscaremos lo mas falso que lo falso: la ilusión y la apariencia. El modelo se acepta como algo tan verdadero como el origen, el deseo se inclina hacia formas inmorales. Es la muerte del centro, el triunfo del simulacro, del espejo de la inmanencia.

Hemos alcanzado la ex-centricidad, tratamos de olvidar. Lo real se borra en favor de lo imaginario. Se intenta el reflJo pero se llega a la eencia del vacío, que no tiene esencia. De repente, la traducción se convierte en curvatura maléfica que pone fin al horizonte del sentido, en expresión nihilista de la incoherencia general de los signos. Fascinación por el modelo, metástasis, anticipación de la muerte en el seno de la vida. Paradoja y contradicción, según la desconstrucción. Nada por nombrar. Sólo lo innombrable. Inmanencia de un fin. Signo del apocalipsis. Ilusión entregada a la traspararencia. Transformación de lo presente en invisible. Representación desorbitante de la verdad en el apogeo de la simulación. Apariencia sin profundidad. Movimiento imaginario de desafío a lo real. Anuncio wittgensteiniano: "El significado del mundo está fuera del mundo".

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INTERVIEW WITH DR. JACOB MEY, CO-EDITOR OF *JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS.*

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I. Vázquez.: You've come to Zaragoza to take part in the Seminar "Language and Power." In your lecture you argued for the view that language politics is a form of social control. Could you explain that a bit more?

J. Mey.: Language politics, in its most visible incarnation, is called language planning. Consider such activities as setting standards of pronunciation and orthography, promulgating guidelines for the elaboration of textbooks, dictionaries, readers and other educational material, promoting "correct" language use in the public domain; devising measures for language conservation, e.g., by controlling neologisms and loans, by setting standards for language teaching, and so on... All these enterprises in some way or other count as "language politics," that is, a form of social activity that aims at an authoritative manipulation of people's use of language by the use of prescriptive decrees and sanctioning measures.

I. V.: Apart from all those activities of social control mentioned, are there any other manipulative activities aiming at the same social control?

J.M.: Manipulation is a common freature of language use in our society. Those who are in power will do almost any thing to perpetuate their rule. But for some to be in power, others have to be out of it. By sheer power logic, the question of the former thus becomes to keep the latter out. Here, the single most important

requirement is to let the oppressed powerless stay unaware of their own oppression. Consequently, the oppressors want to keep their power under cover: they want to "veil" it, and this is where language comes in. Language, society's veil, serves this system-dominated state of mind in a most appropriate way.

J. M. Language is often associated with power: one is familiar with the expression "the power of words," as if there was some power resident in the words themselves. Of course this is pure magic. Power is based in society, and the societal relations determine who is in power, and who is not. So it would be better to speak of the language of power, instead of the power of language.

I. V.: Is the language of power the language of oppression?

J. M.: To be linguistically oppressed means not to be able to freely use one's words, not to be the master or mistress in one's house of language. The ultimate humiliation of the linguistically oppressed is to have to accept their oppressor's wording of the world, eating words out of the hand that keeps them down.

I.V.: Let's turn now to pragmatics. The subject of pragmatics is very familiar in linguistics today. Fifteen years ago it was mentioned by linguists rarely, if at all. In those days, pragmatics tended to be treated as a rag-bag into which recalcitrant data could be conveninently stuffed... and forgotten. How do you see pragmatics today?

J. M.: We cannot understand the nature of language unless we understand pragmatics: how language is used in communication. Pragmatics has meant a widening scope of linguistics, and it involves a change in the view of what language is, and how linguists should define its subject. In essence, the claim is that grammar (the abstract formal system of language) and pragmatics (the principles of language use) are complementary domains within linguistics. We cannot understand the nature of language without studying both these domains, and the interaction between them.

I. V.: In one of your papers you have argued for the view that "pragmatics is the *magister ludi* of the language game." What do you mean by that?

J. M.: Pragmatics builds the bridge between the system of language and the context in which language is used: it relates the pre-structured system with the "structurable," with what still can be structured in novel ways through the process of creating meaning, of semeiosis.

I. V.: The main task of semiotics has been described as accounting for the conditions that enable humans to produce meaning. Pragmatics, by contrast, examines the implicit, hidden conditions for any use of language.

J. M.: Historically, the rise of pragmatics within linguistics has had a lot to do with the failure of syntax to provide the ordering principle for any higher levels of description. What syntax has been able to do, and has done very well within its limited domain, was to bring a structure in the chaos at the lower levels of

linguistic structure. But any attempts by syntacticians to account for the whole of language have been terrible disasters. Pragmatics has been an upstart from the very beginning: the ugly duckling in the wastebasket.

I. V.: Does pragmatics introduce a new linguistic paradigm in Kuhn's sense?

J. M.: I should think so. We cannot consider language as an isolated collection of linguistic signs: pieces of substance, realizing a form in which a particular concept is wedded to a particular acoustic image, or viceversa. Language is not the simple union of sound and meaning that many North American linguists would have us believe in. What I am advocating is an altogether different concept of language, language used "on another scene," as Freud put it. Such a conception of language, of course, implies a revaluation of the classical framework of modern linguistics, in which the description of language phenomena is couched exclusively in terms of phonemes, morphemes and sentences. That framework has to be supplemented by a descriptive mode which also takes other considerations into account. In particular, I am thinking here of the intricate and often mysterious relationships between signifier and signified, such as have been pointed out to us by Freud and, more explicitly, by Lacan.

INDICE

La revista *Miscelánea* es una publicación anual del Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana de la Universidad de Zaragoza. Difunde artículos sobre lingüística inglesa y literaturas escritas en inglés.

Los originales, escritos en inglés o español, se presentarán por duplicado en hojas, tamaño DIN A-4. Estarán mecanografiados a doble espacio por una sola cara y no podrán superar las 30 páginas, incluyendo referencias bibliográficas, esquemas, etc. Se incluirá asimismo un resumen en inglés no superior a doscientas palabras.

En la primera página, en el borde superior izquierdo, figurará el nombre y la dirección del autor. A continuación, más abajo, el título en mayúsculas del artículo y, mediando el suficiente espacio, el texto ya del trabajo. Las páginas irán numeradas consecutivamente en el ángulo superior derecho. Las notas asimismo se numerarán consecutivamente y aparecerán al final del artículo pero antes de la sección de "Referencias Bibliográficas" ("References"). En cuanto a puntuación, disposición de las citas, subrayados, entrecomillados, etc., los trabajos deberán adaptarse a las normas de presentación de la *MLA Style Sheet.* No obstante, las referencias bibliográficas deberán atenerse a los siguientes puntos:

a) *En el texto y en la sección de Notas (Notes):* Se citará el nombre del autor y, a continuación, el año de publicación y el número de la/s página/s. Por ejemplo:

> It has often been questioned (Adams 1981a: 87-88) whether...
> Hymes distinguishes the following speech functions (1968: 17)

b) *En la sección final de Referencias Bibliográficas (References):* Esta sección, ordenada alfabéticamente y a doble espacio, se presentará de manera similar a la de los siguientes ejemplos:

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