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JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURE // 2010

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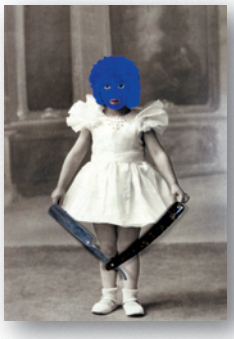

Honte, Carmen Calvo (1999)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 45 x 32 cm

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Carles Torner

The internationalisation of literature and essay. A decalogue

Some news about translations has arrived: the *New York Review of Books-Classics* is translating *El quadern gris* (The grey notebook) by Josep Pla. *El violí d'Auschwitz* (The Auschwitz violin), by Maria Àngels Anglada, was published in Greek at the end of 2009. The presence of Quim Monzó and Ernest Farrés at the World Voices Festival in New York this year was a success thanks to the wonderful English translations of *Benzina* (Gasoline) and *Edward Hopper*. Thus the level of projection of Catalan literature abroad, which is beginning to be considerable, is becoming consolidated.

But in the field of essay and research, a more difficult area, several interesting titles have also been published recently in different languages: *Filosofia d'estar per casa* (Informal Philosophy) by Xavier Rubert de Ventós in Castilian (by a Mexican publishing house), an anthology of texts about grammar by Pompeu Fabra in English and *Tres assaigs sobre Sartre* (Three Essays on Sartre) by Mercè Rius in French. Besides, *Encara no som humans* (We are not Human Yet) by Eudald Carbonell and Robert Sala, has been translated into German and *El llibre dels fets del Rei en Jaume* (Book of the Deeds of King James) a classic of the rich medieval Catalan tradition, into Japanese.

After its seven years' existence, the Institut Ramon Llull's persistent policy of supporting translation has begun to change the internationalisation scenario of Catalan literature and authors. It may be the moment to express our method in the form of a decalogue. And why not?

1. It is necessary to identify the counterparts in Europe of institutions supporting Catalan literature. No doubt the keystone of our performance has been that foreign editors have dealt with Catalan representatives of the IRL in the same way as similar institutions from Finland, Holland or Portugal.

2. It is necessary to participate in the construction of a European set of policies supporting translation as a contribution to the European Union. Participation in the network Literature Across Frontiers has provided the image of European ambition that associates us with sixteen or more similar institutions on the continent. Europe should be a network of networks, within which Catalan culture can play an important role on the basis of its belief in a Europe of translations.

3. It is necessary to appear in the international context and tackle the challenge of translation into English

together with all European literatures. The seminar *Standing in the Shadows* held in November 2009, coordinated by Lawrence Venuti and intended for critics, culture journalists, editors and other agents from the literary world, is the latest example of a project that started with the report *To be translated or not to be*.

4. It is necessary to offer foreign editors and translators tools to facilitate the translation and promotion of books that put Catalan authors on the same footing as their colleagues from other countries, following the logic of the publishing market.

5. It is necessary to take special care of those genres and authors that are not the chief focus of the publishing market: all literary genres must be promoted at the same time. Within these, narrative, poetry, theatre and essay require specific approaches.

6. It is necessary to promote authors from all the territories where Catalan is spoken and make sure that the unity of Catalan language and literature be clear in all cases.

7. Subsidies for translation, for authors' travel expenses and all subsidies for furthering the internationalisation of Catalan literature must be universal: at the service of the work of all writers without exception.

8. It is necessary to ensure a non-interventionist policy that will leave foreign publishers free to choose the work they want to include in their catalogue, the translator, the methods for promoting the book in the area they know best. On the other hand, it is necessary to ensure that publishers will guarantee the employment conditions of the translators as authors of the translations.

9. The policy of supporting translations is at the service of Catalan publishers, literary agencies and writers and must be coordinated with the respective groups and associations.

10. The universality of linguistic rights and the universality of translation must be a target, so all languages into which Catalan authors are translated must be treated equally.

Transfer, the journal of contemporary culture that the Institut Ramon Llull brings out thanks to an agreement with Valencia University, is a clear example of many of these principles of action, to begin with by grouping journals from Valencia, Catalonia and Majorca in a common project. The magazine identifies the European counterparts of journals of culture and thought as *agents provocateurs* in the international debate, and attempts to integrate them in the European network of networks. This year *Transfer* has been made a partner of *Eurozine*, the netmagazine that comprises over a hundred cultural journals from all over the continent (and, through *Transfer*, all the journals in which the articles we translate into English are included).

The journal also sees the need to promote the essays and research written in Catalan on an international scale with specific tools. In the issue the readers have in their hands, the monograph contains fervent contemporary debates about translation. It is one of the major challenges facing civilisation at the present time, which requires an ambitious and politically articulated response. Albeit in a modest manner, *Transfer* forms part of these translation policies II

Carles Torner, a writer and poet, is head of the Humanities and Science Department of the Institut Ramon Llull.

Translating Catalan literature and non-fiction works

The Institut Ramon Llull (IRL) is the institution in charge of the promotion of Catalan language and culture abroad. These are its grants and services to promote Catalan literature and non-fiction works.

Translations of works in Catalan. Grants intended for publishing companies for the translation into other languages of Catalan literary works (poetry, drama and fiction) and scholarly works in the fields of the Humanities and the Social Sciences, during the grant-award year. The grant is intended solely to cover, or partly cover, the translation costs.

Promotion of Catalan literature. Publishing companies, literary agencies, private non-profit organisations and literary and/or cultural magazines may request grants for activities to promote Catalan literature that are organised outside the Catalan-speaking regions: participation in festivals, dissemination of new titles in translation, articles in magazines, etc.

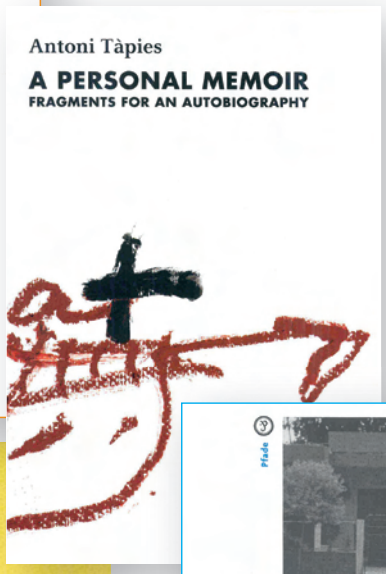
Travel grants for authors. Writers of literary and non-fiction works in Catalan who are invited to take part in literary or academic activities outside Catalan-speaking regions may request assistance to cover travel expenses.

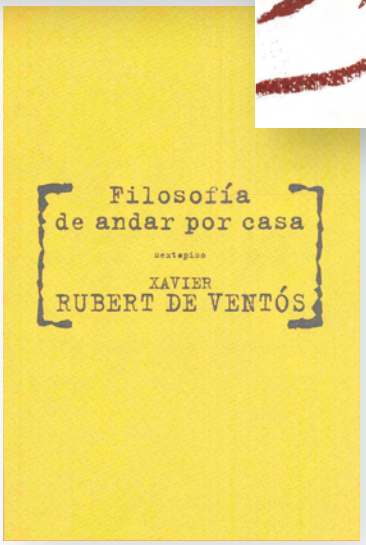
Residency grants for translators. This grant is addressed to translators presently translating a Catalan literary work who wish to spend between two and six weeks in Catalonia while working on the translation.

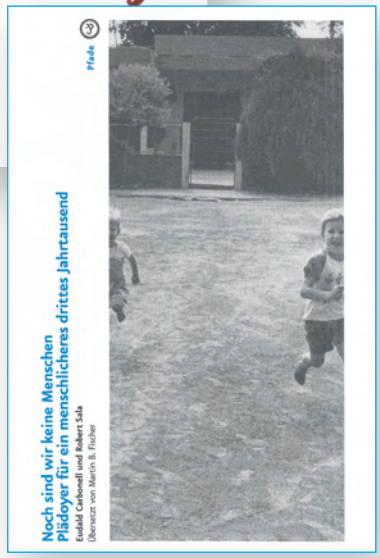
The IRL also provides information about Catalan literature: if you would like to know which works of Catalan literature have been translated into other languages you are welcome to visit the database TRAC in our website (www.llull.cat/trac).

If you need information about who handles the rights of the work you wish to publish, or if you need to contact Catalan publishers or literary agents, please do not hesitate to contact us.

The IRL is present at the following book fairs: Frankfurt, London and Paris, where information about its services is available.







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essays

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Antoni Furió

God did not create the nations

There are those who believe that on the first day God created the Heaven and the Earth, on the second, the firmament, and on the third, Spain. For Spain read France, Germany or any other nation with ancient origins, with a great deal of history and literature behind it. The nations, we all ought to know by now, predate man and their history is older than the history of humankind.

Anyone who doubts this can consult the books by Fernando García de Cortázar, the latest "national history prize-winner" (a prize awarded by the Ministry of Culture of a supposedly progressive government), among which there is one with a quite explicit subtitle: *Historia de España. De Atapuerca al euro* (A History of Spain. From Atapuerca to the Euro). From Atapuerca, more than a million years ago that is, when the hominids that inhabited that mountain range in the heart of Castile had not as yet taken the biological step that would turn them into humans. In the important things, the Spanish have no doubts. Nor the French, nor the Germans. Nor the Serbs, the Croats or the Israelis. Many of the wars of the 20th century and the 21st so far have been and are wars of history, religion and nation: namely, of sacred history. In the name of sacred national history, the Germans and the French kept hating each other and killing each other on and off for exactly three-quarters of a century, between 1870 and 1945, to fix the border between them on one side or the other of the Rhine, and to retain in the respective part the ancient regions of Alsace and Lorraine, French since the 17th century, but German-speaking from the Middle Ages to the present day. In a particularly dark moment of recent European history, the rise of fascism and the triumph of barbarity and irrationality, the Spanish generals who rose up against the Republic, in the name, among other things, of the sacred unity of the fatherland, called themselves "nationals" and denied this same condition to their enemies, above all if they were standing up for a different nation. Serbs and Croats have been annihilating each other and exterminating Albanians and Bosnian Muslims, in a frenzy of blood and death on all sides, over questions of faith, liturgy, alphabet and, above all, the most ancient settlement in the territory under dispute. The Balkans are an immense palimpsest, a superimposition of histories and cultures, in which each side supports its own layer of scripture —the one corresponding to the most brilliant and expansive moment in the respective national history: that of Greater Serbia, Greater Croatia, Greater Albania...— as the only legitimate one, while refuting the others. And some Israelis invoke the Old Testament, a mixture of religion, history and literature, to justify their right to the Promised Land and to evict the Palestinians from it, or massacre them if they resist and revolt.

> Many of the wars of the 20th century and the 21st so far have been and are wars of history, religions and nation: namely, of sacred history

There are those, then, who date nations back to the third day of the Creation, and put the rule of some over others down to the ways of an exclusive god, who makes them timeless, eternal, with no beginning or end. There are also those who, conversely, consider them a recent invention, a product of modernity, with no more than two hundred years' history. For contemporary historians, the most credulous of historians, for they believe everything the documents say, starting with what the newspapers say, which at times are the only documents they use, and because they believe that everything begins in the 19th century, the nation only appears after 1800 and, as a result, we can only properly talk of nations after that date. Not the modern nation, the contemporary nation or the bourgeois nation. The nation, full stop. A new political figure that replaces the monarchy as the possessor and repository

Había desaparecido (He had disappeared), Carmen Calvo (2006)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 48 x 30 cm

of sovereignty, of supreme power. In the *ancien régime*, the devotion and fidelity of the subjects was automatically channelled towards the monarch, in whom were embodied the country and the political institutions and in whom were concentrated all the powers. The nation, on the other hand, grouped together all the citizens and was at the same time their political expression, a product invented and defended by free men, who felt themselves to be invested with popular representation. Developing these arguments, Manuel Martí and Ferran Archilés have concluded that the Catalans' first nation, like it or not, has been the Spanish nation, or that one may not speak of a process of "denationalisation" of Valencian society in the 19th century, because "this would imply the existence of a previous Valencian 'nation', already established, something difficult to justify historically". Nations, everyone knows, are a creation of the 19th century. The fact that there is an abundance of historical literature to the contrary is beside the point, that mediaevalists, modernists and historical sociologists speak naturally of nations and of national feeling for the respective periods they study or that examples of the use of the term "nation" in a modern sense, difficult to reduce to the place or the region of birth or to subordinate it to identification with the figure of the monarch, may be multiplied. In the 15th century, the Generalitat de Catalunya did not hesitate to dispossess the natural king, John II, of the crown and offer it successively to Henry IV of Castile, Constable Peter of Portugal and René d'Anjou. Two centuries later, the war cry of the reapers was none other than "Long live the land", with the king nowhere to be seen, as the revolt was directed precisely against his bad governance. An irate cry that the labourer Joan Pey made even more explicit in 1653, after the revolt had been put down militarily: "Neither France nor Spain, long live the land and death to bad governance". The non-existent nation, or historically difficult to justify, as the critics would say, was here, in between France and Spain, in the cry of the labourer and his defence of the land. There are also more elaborate conceptions, in the considerable political literature of the time, in Catalonia and in Europe (in Holland and England for a start) that it would be a good idea to read before merrily claiming that national identities are a product of the 19th century, and leaving it at that.

Of course, another matter entirely is nationalism, a recent historical product, which has dominated political life in the last two centuries and has also been the reason for a few wars, the most horrific known to mankind. And which has also impregnated other expressions of political and cultural life, literature and music at school, the media and governments and parliaments. There have been, and there are, forms of nationalism oppressed, peripheral, resistant, and forms of nationalism oppressive, dominant, even though they may not want to recognise themselves as such, because the term —not the content, which is still more alive than ever— is increasingly discredited. But, I say, nationalism —a modern product— is one thing and nations are another. Let us not place everything in the same bag. There have been, and there are, nations without nationalism.

With regard to this business of nations and national identities, collective identities in general, I am more and more convinced that not only can categorical and decisive formulations, which may be based on supposedly objective facts, not be made, but that it rather falls wholly within the formless and shifting sphere of representations and subjective identifications. And in these representations, in these identifications, the historical narratives that create them and reproduce them have played a crucial role, much more than the linguistic, cultural and ethnographical materials that nourish them. Spain is Spain thanks above all to the history of Spain, to the historical discourse of Spain. To a narrative —to a script, says Miquel

Barceló— that establishes an essential continuity from ancient times to the present, *from Atapuerca to the euro*, and which has its points of anchorage and identification in the great figures and the great events: Viriato, Don Pelayo, Covadonga, El Cid Campeador, Las Navas de Tolosa, the Catholic Monarchs, the taking of Granada, the discovery of America, the Gran Capitán, the *Tercios* of Flanders, Lepanto, Don Juan of Austria, Agustina de Aragón, Bailén...

In times of greater critical exigency and intellectual rigour, some of the names, above all at the two ends of the chronology, have dropped out of the list (Tubal, grandson of Noah, for being imaginary and barely credible, and Franco, for being ruthless), but the narrative script has remained firm, resisting all attempts at erosion.

More than by any other way —the Church, military service or the press, which also contribute to it— Spain enters the minds and hearts of the Spanish, in Castile and Catalonia, in Andalusia and the Valencian Country, through the schools and the school textbooks. Through the map of Spain on the classroom walls that acts as the background to the photographs of uniformed pupils, often the first photograph of many generations of Spaniards. Through poems and songs, drawings of monarchs and battles, categorical phrases destined to stay in the memory. Such as "Rome does not pay traitors", "What Spain gave to Rome: emperors, like Trajan, Hadrian and Theodosius; philosophers, like Seneca and Quintilian...", "It makes no difference", "Our Lady of the Pillar says/that she doesn't want to be French...". Images, verses, ardent sentiments are the material from which nations are made. Here and in France and Germany. The nationalisation of the masses, as it is called, is a relatively late phenomenon, beginning at the end of the 19th century, which is when the masses burst onto the political stage. Before that, the state did not even bother with them, for politics was the stuff of dignitaries, cliques and court intrigues, and education in schools was far from being widespread and having as its prime objective instilling the national values. A late phenomenon, but solid and effective, for it managed to stamp these values, stated and interiorised as supreme, on the chests of many of the schoolchildren and future citizens, who would later be able to die for the fatherland on the battlefields of Europe and Africa or during the bloody Spanish Civil War.

> Nationalism, a modern product, is one thing and nations are another. Let us not place everything in the same bag

Francoism exacerbated and exploited these passions, and the Transition missed an excellent opportunity to deactivate them, to dismantle the old-fashioned and jingoistic narrative that impregnated and was reproduced through the school syllabuses. The institutions and political customs were modernised, but the ingredients of the old traditional national discourse were left intact, or slightly retouched. They did not dare to touch them. They did not dare to dismantle them, despite the criticisms of the educators and the critical historians. They were more afraid of the reproaches, opposed to it, of the old-school professors, alarmed at even the slightest attempt at renewal, at any timid attempt to replace the history of names and events, of great figures and great events, with a more critical and rational, more scientific, explanation of the past. Julio Valdeón, an old torchbearer of Marxist historiography and now a member of the Real Academia de la Historia (Royal Academy

of History), was and is right when he claimed that the abandonment of national history in primary and secondary schools, the replacement of the history of kings and battles with that of structures and history without names and passions, would be detrimental to the very notion of Spain and would result in the patriotic, national disarmament of the Spaniards. The drift towards nationalism of Valdeón and other progressive historians and intellectuals is in itself evidence of how strongly rooted, internalised, are the traditional ingredients of the national discourse of Spain, the narrative of Spain, which they are reluctant to dismantle. Nationalist convictions carry more weight than critical reflections, and in this the differences between the right and left wing are not always clear.

In the face of this powerful national narrative of Spain, which has historically demonstrated its effectiveness and ability to survive, the alternative has to be a critical, radical discourse and not another national narrative, completely the opposite, a narrative in which the same content would be reflected inversely. The alternative to the history of the Pelayos and the Alfonsos, of El Cid and El Gran Capitán, cannot be that of the Jaumes and the Borrells, of the Almogàvers and Roger de Flor. This could not be achieved by the *Renaixença* —either the Catalan or the Valencian— due to its own limitations, due to its social and ideological conditioners, or by the stale regionalism of then and now. The Valencianists of the 1930s were the first to try it, that promising generation of young university students, progressives and republicans, suddenly cut short by the war and, above all, by the repression: death, exile, prison, purges... In the difficult years of Francoism, Joan Fuster tried it again, the heir to that progressive Valencianist tradition of the Republic, which he managed to revitalise with the new interpretative keys of the past and present offered by Vicens Vives and Marxist analysis. *Nosaltres els valencians* (We the Valencians) is a new reading of the country, of the history of the country, in the light of the social, cultural and political concerns of the present, of that present of the early 1960s and, also, of the most innovative historiographical proposals of the period, at a time when the university was becoming one of the most dynamic agents of the struggle against the regime. The book caused a furore and achieved the adherence of many young university students, not only from Valencianist circles, which were and would continue to be tiny for a long time, but from all the progressive sectors in general, because it offered another discourse, another view of the past and, with it, another proposal for the future, closer also to their own concerns. The most iconoclastic and subversive thing, however, was not so much the analysis of the past (the Catalan origins of the Valencians, resulting from the conquest and the settlement of the 13th century, the common language and culture

> The drift toward nationalism of progressive intellectuals is in itself evidence of how strongly rooted is the national discourse of Spain

A pesar de todo (In spite of everything), Carmen Calvo (2007)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 57 x 46,5 cm

shared with Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, a unity that was neither challenged nor placed in doubt in the Valencia of the 1950s), as the future project, which for the Valencians —and not just the Valencians— as a people, as a people subordinate and nebulous, in danger of dissolution, could only help to strengthen the links with the Principality (of Catalonia) and the Balearic Islands within the communal framework of the Catalan-speaking countries. Fuster also surprised and connected with broader sectors than Valencianism proper because his discourse was modern and deliberately gave a wide berth to all the traditional stereotypes of regionalism, in particular, that utterly smug complacency that went so well with conformism and subordination. Some years before, Vicens Vives had written for the future captains of industry and commerce that would one day lead Catalonia —Fuster did so for the university students that would one day transform and reinvent the Valencian Country.

The recent past has not turned out this way. But I do not think that either the failures of political Valencianism or the disappointments or frustrations that this has generated may be laid at Fuster's door, as he neither stood for any public post nor designed any electoral strategy. Nor can they be wholly laid at the door of political Valencianism. Alfons Cucó and other authors have recalled not only the formidable offensive launched by the right wing —a right wing wild and yet to be established, in which the more moderate sectors of the regime coincided with the bunker holding out against losing the positions of power that it still controlled— in order to neutralise the electoral hegemony of the left, but also the doubts, the hesitations and the final capitulation of this same left wing, completely subordinated to Madrid. The Spanish state could not afford another Catalonia or Basque Country, not even another Navarre. And in this offensive, the most primitive anti-Catalanism was an effective weapon, because anti-Catalanism, let's be honest, is an essential ingredient of the Spanish identity and, properly stirred up, an ingredient also of Valencian victimhood, of Valencian Spanish-supporting regionalism. The battle, in which no resources were spared, was not so much fought on the field of ideas as on that of symbolism, which excites the most easily aroused, most irrational feelings, and that of institutional politics (the 5% level that hindered the parliamentary expression of a still incipient nationalism).

The Spanish state could not afford another Catalonia or Basque Country, and in this offensive the most primitive anti-Catalanism was an effective weapon

All this is too well known, but it is useful to keep harking back to it time and again because the fact that it was not a particularly heated confrontation of ideas or a battle that was only played out on the field of symbolism is often overlooked. We cannot forget the interests at stake or make an abstraction of the social, economic, political and cultural context in which it took place. The right wing was able to domesticate the left and both right and left, for electoral, party reasons, were able to block political Valencianism's path to parliament. And not just the parliamentary path —its media presence too and, therefore, the limited capacity to influence public opinion. The left, and the country in general, was to suffer this later. It is still suffering it. The PSOE gave up on politics —and the ideas that make politics

worthwhile— for party and intra-party strife, for institutional power or organic power. It does not seem to want to return. It feels more comfortable on the playing field and with the rules of play —the symbols, the language, the water, the construction— set by the right, which will always have the upper hand, because the electorate will always prefer the original to the copy. The words of the new secretary general of the Valencian socialists do not exactly invite us to be optimistic: not only does he accept and fully defend the current framework of the charter of autonomy, but he sends the conflicting standpoints that his party may have had on the matter of symbols and names back to the scrapheap of history.

The saddest thing about all this controversy over the official symbols of the Valencians, over the cancellation of Fusterianism as a critical revision of the past and above all as a viable proposal for the future, over the defence of Valencianist autochthonism as opposed to so-called Catalan imperialism or uniformism, is the stinginess of its objectives and thinking. And, what is even worse, it seems like *déjà vu*.

Let me make it clear that I have nothing against the revision of Fusterianism, the revision of the history of the Valencians from a regionalist or neo-Llorentinist standpoint. Everyone is free to concoct the narrative that suits them best and make propaganda of it wherever they wish, to adapt to the reality. A reality, however, that is not merely the official symbolism of self-government, but also that of a country devastated by corruption and property speculation, by the collusion between public business and private interests, by the close connivance between politicians, developers, wheeler-dealers and fortune hunters of all kinds; that of a country where the society has changed enormously, with the transformation of its productive foundations, in a breakneck transition from agriculture to services, and the sedimentation of the successive migratory waves, since the 1960s; that of a country where *Valencià* (the Valencian language) is spoken less every day, when the language has until recently been one of the chief factors of social integration and cultural identity; where the institutions neither defend nor promote the use of *Valencià*, but pour scorn on it and discourage it, marginalise it or eliminate it from public forums and the media; where the real problems are those imposed by job insecurity and the economic crisis, the dismantling of the welfare state, the feeling of insecurity and the loss of confidence in the future, as well as the racist and xenophobic reactions that are occurring, or the inadequate democratic culture that could make it possible to condemn and rectify these and other instances of selfish or simply anti-democratic behaviour.

In this context of moral ruin and social decay, the quarrelling over the images, the symbols, does not cease to be, now like thirty years ago, a joke in bad taste. An expedient to divert the attention somewhere else: deliberately, as the right does every time elections are near or it has to cover up its dirty business, or naively, as the good souls of accommodating Valencianism propose to us, who do not seem to be too sure of which country they are living in. Indeed, although Fuster is accused of being essentialist and ethnicistic (Oh, goodness gracious me!), his discourse does not abandon this terrain. Reality is seen merely in symbolic terms, and the great remedy for Valencianism to obtain popular support is none other than the acceptance of the official symbols. On the other hand, the critical analysis of the social reality, the denunciation of the corruption and the depredation that is devastating the country, of the control and the manipulation of the media, of the retreat in the social use and prestige of *Valencià*, of the poor democratic quality of political life in general, does not count or is not so interesting. At least it is missing from the criticisms of those spirited

neo-Llorentinists, who only have Catalanism in their sights or, as they usually say, Fusterian nationalism or cultural nationalism. Moreover, his ideas are not all that original as they reproduce the postulates of the regionalist Valencianism of the last hundred and fifty years, whose history they stand for and from whose ideas they take inspiration. Dwarf-like, plain Valencianism, lacking dignity and ambition, capable of coexisting with and fitting perfectly in the political and ideological machinery of the Bourbon Restoration, the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, Francoism, *blaverisme* and the neo-foralism practised by the current occupant of the Palau de la Generalitat. An innocuous regionalism that in no way disturbs or questions the hegemony of the Spanish nationalist discourse, which because of this not only did not persecute it, but tolerated it and made use of it in the dark days of Francoism.

At heart, all these protests over their own space, set apart, strictly Valencian, similar to the anti-Catalan movement in Majorca, the anti-Basque movement in Navarre and the folkloric and complacent Valencianism against which Fuster rebelled, have as their basic framework of reference the Spanish national discourse, the narrative of Spain.

This nationalism is not alternative or transformative, but accommodating. It hides its inner emptiness behind its emphasis on the modernisation of the Valencian economy and society, the policies of major public works and road infrastructures and major media events.

> Fuster's main achievement is his contribution to rethinking the country, to constructing an alternative national discourse

The real groundbreaking, modernising discourse was, fifty years ago, Fuster's. Not just because it distanced itself from the conservative, archaic Valencianism of the post-war period but because it broke unequivocally with the narrative of Spain, the Francoist one and the one before Franco, in which Don Teodor Llorente and his continuers had so comfortably installed themselves. Also, because of its wish to escape from the agrarian reflections of a still rural country only just then plunging itself into a process of industrialisation that would transform it completely within a decade. With his determined commitment to modernity and rationality, to a barely "nationalistic" Valencianism and Catalanism, barely based on the festive celebration of its own glories or on the essentialist ingredients of the national identity, Fuster broadened his audience far beyond the traditional, even reactionary, circles in which post-war Valencianism had been enclosed, and the alternative and progressive groups that were beginning to appear in the late 1950s and early 1960s, to connect also with a broader social and political spectrum, going from the representatives of a civilised and modernised right wing to the left-wing parties and organisations, opposed to Francoism. Needless to say, all of them were still very much in the minority and disorganised.

Fuster's main achievement, in those years of desolation and absolute intellectual poverty, is that of having contributed to rethinking the country and, above all, to rethinking it outside the narrative of Spain, to constructing an alternative narrative, another national discourse, which did not begin at the dawn of time or in the cave of Parpalló, but with James I's

conquest and the creation of the kingdom of Valencia; a discourse that gave pride of place to the common language, culture and history of Catalans, Majorcans and Valencians and proposed, as a political project, a similarly shared future. A political project in the broadest sense of the term, as any proposal for the future, the collective future, is necessarily political, and which has not always made itself understood, especially when one insists on the failure of Fuster's postulates, in their defeat at the polls or in the face of reality. Fuster's diagnosis, so criticised in recent years, but which still seems valid to me, is quite simple: if the future is not shared, there is no future. Not for the common language, culture or history. Nor for that thing, so ethereal, they call the nation, the shared nation, and which he called the *Països Catalans* (Catalan-speaking countries).

Nor for Catalonia proper, increasingly uncomfortable with what is going on south of the river Sènia. The Principality has never known what to do with the Valencians, so peculiar that they do not even get on with each other, and in recent years Catalan nationalism has stepped up its regionalist and isolationist reflexes, convinced that from the Valencian Country only problems and headaches can come.

Some think that now is the time to take different paths, to distinguish between the "Catalan nation" and the "Valencian nation". But isolation, withdrawal, is just suicidal, and the Catalan nationalists would do well to realise that what is happening to the language in the Valencian Country, what is happening to the Valencian Country itself, will sooner or later happen to Catalonia as well. Furthermore, the "Valencian nation" is fine as an empty gesture or if the basic framework of reference is Spain: it does not promise anything, and in the end Spain will continue to be the *nation of nations*. It is purely a question of terminology —purely a question of names— for internal consumption. Seen from outside, from Europe or from a world increasingly globalised, nations are something else and the future project of the Valencians —of the Valencians as a people, of course, and not just as residents in the territory— and also of the Catalans, lies in the Catalan-speaking countries, in a shared future.

I am not so sure that all this has failed, as those who now advocate its liquidation tell us and try to convince us, nor that all in all the balance is negative. After almost fifteen years of right-wing government, a right wing that preys on the country, socially unsupportive and hostile to the language and culture, there is still life in the country of the Valencians. There is not a single town or city from the north to the south of the country where there is not one, minimal though it may be, restless and resistant civil network, active, militant, made up of the young and the not so young, of cultured and aware people (this is a country, and I shall never tire of repeating it, that has been created by the teachers and the people of culture, musicians, singers, writers, painters, school and university teachers, who are also the basis of the hopes for the future), by people who, despite the disappointments, do not resign themselves and keep on doing things. The capacity for resistance and protest, the desire for change, has not completely vanished. The political realism so called for by those who propose to do away with Fuster's legacy —a legacy more critical and political than ideological— and radically change the Valencian way of thinking is not at odds with the utopian wish to change reality. In the end, utopian objectives —fair, possible, achievable— are the only ones worth fighting for. Capitulation, on the other hand, leads to conformity and demobilisation, plunging us into that state of the perpetual after-dinner nap, from which Valencian society never seems to wake up II

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Jordi Riba

The invisible (a-)frontier

Paths of thought

The question about the frontier
would be answered by the paths that cross it.

The frontier is the manifestation of a conflict. This, as Georg Simmel points out in his work Le Conflit[1], must be seen as the element that gets the social domain moving. Frontiers, like conflicts, are intrinsic to human reality. They cannot be denied but they can be crossed.

In the 19th century, a time in which territorial borders were most clearly manifested, Catalonia as a transfrontier space was a privileged zone of exchanges. Networks between people, conceptual transfers and forms of reception paradoxically constitute this period that shaped the writing of thought without proprietorship. It was a tradition that took on a nomadic form, woven of a thousand encounters and highly fecund. It was thought that did not set frontiers but crossed them.

The conceptual mesh to which it gave rise still remains quite unknown. To this unawareness, disorientation mingled with the ongoing dismissal of 19th century philosophical thought has had a great influence, along with the absence of a theoretical model for studying it. The words pronounced by Pere Coromines in the Ateneu Barcelonès (Athenaeum of Barcelona)[2], even though they were published in 1930, are quite revealing in this regard.

[1] Simmel, Georg, *Le Conflit*. Circé, Belval, 2003 [published in English as *Conflict / The Web of Group Affiliations*, The Free Press, New York, 1955-translator].

[2] Pere Coromines, then president of the Ateneu Barcelonès, pronounced these words at the presentation of a cycle of philosophical lectures given in this institution over the period 1928-1929.

> The barrenness of our philosophy in the 19th century is principally due to the fact that each generation was going back to the start. Instead of delving into our philosophical tradition, we went on as a foreign school, without realising that if this tradition had reached its present universal expression, it was by dint of extracting all the possibilities of its own national thinking[3].

In speaking about the barrenness of 19th century Catalan thought, Coromines does not take into consideration the accentuated process of acclimation that, fruit of the crisis of thought in the 19th century[4], occurred in all the countries of Europe and of which Germany and France are paradigmatic examples[5]. Neither does he bear in mind the development of different social movements, of clear philosophical background, that were appearing at the time, giving rise to a significant written production, the study of which is indispensable for knowledge of this period of the history of thought.

Neither should one forget, however, that all this is despite the heuristic interest that goes with the study of cultural transfers from the standpoint of historical research and despite abundant material, as Werner and Espagne have very aptly pointed out:

> [...] *les bibliothèques et les dépôts d'archives français disposent d'une masse imposante de documents à peine répertories et souvent d'importance majeure sur la culture allemande. Il peut s'agir de lletres, de notes de cours, de fragments de journaux, de brouillons d'œuvres, voire documents administratifs.*

This is a result of "*l'absence de modèle théorique pour les appéhender, ces pièces sont toujours restées inexploitées*[6]". Werner and Espagne have themselves worked on major research projects on the *transferts* between France and Germany, a methodology that, applied to the Catalan context, would show the way out of the constriction, not only by inquiring more deeply into the above-mentioned networks but also by laying to rest many prejudices and doubts that still hover over the existence of 19th century Catalan thought.

TRANSFERTS

Knowledge of *transferts* (transfers) between different traditions makes it possible to grasp thinking as something that is rather more dynamic. In order to carry out this work, the more recent studies, along with fields belonging to the classical historical domain, for example conjunctural research and the study of institutions, inquire into the genesis of discourse[7]. Genetic study of this reference would open up the way for an innovative manner of perusing this period of thought seen, perhaps, by the classic studies

[3] Coromines, Pere. *Conferències filosòfiques* (Philosophical lectures), Edició de l'Ateneu Barcelonés, Barcelona 1930.
[4] See, in particular, Leo Freuler, *La crise de la philosophie au XIXe siècle*, Vrin, Paris, in which mention is made of those texts of the time that harbour the sense of the end of philosophy.
[5] See the numerous works by Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, published in both France and Germany.
[6] Werner, Michael and Michel Espagne, *Les transferts entre la France et l'Allemagne*, PUF, Paris 1999, p. 987.
[7] See Contat, Michel and Ferrer, Daniel (eds.). *Pourquoi la critique génetique? Méthodes, théories*, CNRS, Paris, 1998; and also Espagne, Michel. *De l'archive au texte. Recherches d'histoire génetique*, PUF, Paris 1998.

as a uniquely static body. In this domain, we must not overlook the highly significant studies being carried out by 19th century specialists on the cultural *transferts* between France and Germany over the last centuries, and that hark back to the works of Madame de Stäel and Heinrich Heine[8]. Different angles of approximation to the study of the *transferts* are sketched out, then, going beyond the strictly philosophical terrain and that of the history of ideas in order to approach cultural history[9].

> A cultural *transfert* corresponds to an attempt at reinterpretation. It is a twofold process of change and adaptation of a new culture

A cultural *transfert* corresponds, in brief, to an attempt at reinterpretation. In this case, it is a twofold process of hermeneutics and acculturation, which is to say a process of cultural change and adaptation of a new culture. This hermeneutics is situated on two levels. On the one hand, the aim is to show its veracity on the basis of foreign works known by hearsay before experiencing them oneself. Joan Maragall wrote a first article on Nietzsche on the basis of another article without having seen the original texts, although, as Josep Calsamiglia points out, even if his sources were particularly inaccurate, the result turned out to be quite faithful to Nietzschean thinking[10].

On the other hand, thanks to these works from abroad, one can consider the truth of a national tradition that is constituted by successive efforts to interpret the other tradition that is the object of the transfer. For example, Martí d'Eixalà and Llorens i Barba, members of the Catalan common-sense school, knew about the Scottish School[11], through the translations into French by Royer-Collard.

One must point out that the hermeneutics perspective fits quite well with the notion of progress, which transforms it into an indefinite task in the endless process of theoretical curiosity that is never fully or successfully satisfied[12]. The work *Literaturas malsanas* (Unhealthy Literatures) by Pompeu Gener[13] was a vehicle for disseminating

[8] De Stäel, Madame. *De l'Allemagne*, Garnier-Flammarion, Paris 1994; and Heine, Henrich. *De l'Allemagne*. Presses d'aujourdhui, Paris 1979.

[9] A theoretical introduction to this theme may be found in Yvette Conry, *L'introducction du darwinisme en France au xixème siècle*, Vrin, Paris 1974.

[10] Calsamiglia, Josep. *Assaigs i conferències* (Essays and Lectures), Ariel, Barcelona 1986, p. 140.

[11] See Anglès, Misericòrdia. *El pensament de F. Xavier Llorens i Barba i la filosofia escocesa* (The Thought of F. Xavier Llorens i Barba and Scottish Philosophy), IES, Barcelona 1998.

[12] See Blumenberg, Hans, *Der Prozess der theoretischen Neugierde*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt 1973.

[13] Pompeu Gener resided in Paris, where he published *Le Mort et le Diable* with a prologue by Émile Littré and came into contact with the modern ideological tendencies (thanks to Ernest Renan). He was, moreover, a translator of Nietzsche and a regular contributor to the periodical publications *L'Avenç*, *La Revista Contemporània*, *L'Esquella de la Torratxa* and *Joventut*.

¿Era pues esto? (Was this it then?), Carmen Calvo (2006)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 40 x 30 cm

—even while negatively assessing them— the new European schools. Yet neither should one overlook his statement, "We are fervent naturalists by temperament and conviction[14]". Gener in his work *Amigos y maestros* (Friends and Masters)[15] sided with Guyau, Taine and Renan, who proclaimed the supremacy of life.

Cultural paradigms as stable facts constitute a sort of general space of cultural *transferts*, but do not permit us to be aware of the multiplicity of specific exchanges. *Transferts*, in contrast, are broadly determined by linked junctures. The appropriation of a foreign culture constitutes an objective that is not only outward-looking, in which sense it needs an affirmation of cultural identity, but also inward-looking: the possession of elements that come from a foreign culture may secure some kind of power. In times of crisis, exchanges of humanist culture expand[16]. The reception of Kant in the French and Catalan contexts is an example of the sway of the political and ideological situation over the very context of cultural transfer. This juncture determines the interpretation that is made of it. Kant's philosophy is, as one can see, even if only schematically, the agglutinating element that has ensured it would become, in a project of studying European philosophy, the backbone of many national traditions[17].

PATHS OF THE "TRANSFERTS"

To this point, students of the problems of cultural *transferts*[18] had employed schemata pertaining to the field of history of influences —such-and-such a culture has been submitted to the influence of another culture through intermediaries and translators— and in the belief that the receiving culture is normally in a more or less clear position of inferiority. In keeping with this scheme, one speaks of dominant and dominated cultures.

This way of studying different problems suffers from the defect that it does not make explicit the circumstances that make these *transferts* possible and overlooks, on the one hand, everything that we might be able to group under the heading of a receptive juncture and, on the other, the endurance of cultural traditions that hinder such *transferts*.

The reception of a work of philosophy differs in its function depending on whether it has been transmitted in one place or in another. We know that *transferts* do not have the sole aim of expanding learning and knowledge but also, and quite the contrary, they come to perform a precise function within the system of reception. Thus, a first idea would be the necessary description of the phenomena of reception, not so much in themselves as in relationship with the recipient culture.

This perspective entails a tacit definition of culture that is situated somewhere between reduction to being the distinctive sign of a social class and its extension to everything that is not nature. M. Werner and M. Espagne[19], who have studied the matter, take up a provisional position and adopt the definition offered by Edgar Morin.

[14] See Gener, Pompeu. *Literaturas malsanas*. Joan Llordachs, Barcelona 1900, p. 75.
[15] Gener, Pompeu, *Amigos y maestros*, Maucci, Barcelona 1914.
[16] Digeon, Claude. *La crise allemande de la pensée francaise*, PUF (2nd edition), Paris 1992.
[17] See, *inter alia*, Quillien, Jean (ed.). *La réception de la philosophie allemand en France au xixe et xxe siècles*, Presses Universitaires de Lille, Lille 1994.
[18] See Werner, Michael and Espagne, Michel. *Les transferts...*

> Culture would be a metabolic circuit that, bringing together infrastructure and superstructure to the point of touching, ensures exchanges between individuals and favours communication of existential experiences and established knowledge[20].

From this standpoint, one must draw attention to the notion of memory, in which are stored the models of cultural communication that can most easily be delimited, both from the practical point of view (certain archives, libraries, and so on)... and from that of the national perspective. It should be borne in mind that, with all of this, as Bruckhardt has pointed out, culture has to be understood as a complex phenomenon followed by global relations that cannot be fractionated.

There exists within every national unit a plurality of subsets that reproduce religious, social and political differences. Beneath the base of religious or political groups one can also conceive of transnational cultural units (for example, Judaism, Catholicism). Nonetheless, national frontiers represented in the 19th century a deeper cultural separation than other forms of fracture, especially when it came to the more abstract forms of culture.

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The dominant 19th century cultures, for example French and German, were little given to opening up towards the outside world, precisely because they were hegemonic. Culture, to the extent that it is defined as a structured whole that obeys its own rules, has no need of an "other": culture finds itself in itself, in a state of intellectual autarchy, and it tends to reproduce its own system indefinitely. However, at the same time, culture is a process that is subject to internal and external historic dynamics. Not only is it permanently absorbing outside elements but it is also constantly fixing its own frontiers *vis-à-vis* the other, that which is different. These are phenomena of identity and protection that, both in the individual sphere and in collective social practice, are at the basis of this need to establish a limit. Werner and Espagne suggest, in keeping with this line of argument, that:

> [...] *on conçoit que les problèmes de transfert interculturel, c'est-à-dire de transgression des délimitations instaurées, sont d'un caractère fondamental pour le fonctionnement des systèmes culturels. Une culture nationale se définit également par ses limites, et ce qui est échangé au-delà des frontières du système entre en conflit avec la hiérarchie des valeurs établies, ou même est conditionné par les antagonismes*

[19] See Werner, Michael, and Espagne, Michel, "La construction d'une référence culturelle allemande en France. Genèse et histoire (1750-1914)", *Annales ESC*, July-August, 1987, 4, pp. 969-992

[20] Morin, Edgar. *Sociologie*, Fayard, Paris, p. 341.

> *propres du système. Il en résulte que les échanges ne peuvent être interprétés sans référence constante à ces antagonismes et à la fonction qu'ils y exercent*[21].

The question becomes more complicated with regard to the pluricultural character of each culture. It is evident that we must be concerned, first of all, with the problem of national cultures, a factor that involves complex interactions between political systems and cultural systems. Yet, since this also and concomitantly concerns philosophy, we need to bear in mind the international humanist culture, that of the intellectual elites, the tradition of which precedes the awakening of national ideas and that, at the beginning of the 19th century, found itself in antagonistic symbiosis with the respective national cultures. This is why, at this time, some of the thrusts of cultural *transferts* sought out this humanist tradition which, from the very start, had always existed above national frontiers and which continued to survive at least until the middle of the 19th century. In contrast, insofar as they are ideological constructions, national cultures are socially based on the same intellectual elites who ensure, especially through the educational system, the cultural socialisation of individuals.

Study of *transferts* between national cultural spaces also raises the hierarchical problem of different cultural values and traditions in the bosom of a social space and that of the external delimitation of these selfsame cultures. A temporal dimension is added: during the period under consideration, humanist culture which is founded in particular, it must be said, on the Latin language, was undergoing a process of disintegration and it was at this very time that national cultures were sustained by the bourgeoisie's access to power. Perhaps the most evident institutional vehicle of *transfert* in Catalonia is that of French language teaching and, again, when our university was reformed, the French university was taken as the model.

Needless to say, however, the main problem arising from studying a *transfert* is that of the authenticity of a received influence. The importation of a philosophy is manifested, at times, from a sort of clandestinity, as a result of the fact that no reference is made to it in the works of people whom it supposedly interests. We might ask how they went about the reception of Kant or Hegel in France, or how Proudhon was received in Catalonia by Pi i Maragall, et cetera. Yet from the methodological viewpoint it is more fitting to shift from the question of the object to the one of how this reception came about. This type of functioning is also of the discursive order and the social order, and it is in these senses that it needs to be interpreted.

The first manifestations of a transfer are never the works, which are frequently diffuse and belatedly translated, but the individuals who exchange information or the representations that are progressively constituted into a network. The notion of network merits special attention when it comes to understanding the construction of a cultural reference. A network is a system of collective elaboration of an ideology and, more specifically, of an intercultural reference. It designates a set of people among whom there functions a circuit of epistolary or oral exchanges justified, for example, by the desire to bring out a publication. Unlike the notion

[21] Werner, Michael, and Espagne, Michel. *Les transferts ...*, p. 971.

of a circle, that of the network implies no closing or no pre-eminence of a centre. The interest of the notion of network lies in the fact that it demonstrates that any series of ideological productions we might describe has a collective genesis.

Thus, in the case that concerns us here, the goal is to bring together data on people who, because of their linguistic skills, their intellectual interests or their geographic situation, have acted as possible intermediaries. Accordingly, in the more general case, one must track both sociological and personal itineraries of intermediaries who, in the Catalan case, were political exiles in the majority of cases. One must know the motives, duration and setting of the journey. One example of these Catalans is Jaume Brossa, who, in 1897, went into exile in Paris, where he came into contact with the vitalist philosophies. His lectures at the Ateneu Barcelonès were controversial. After 1898 he published articles in *Catalònia* and *La Revista Blanca* and, as of 1906, in *El Poble Català*. He returned to Barcelona in 1914, whereupon he published *La crisi del règim i el nou dever republicà* (The Crisis of the Regime and the New Republican Duty). He was co-director of the newspaper *El Diluvio*. In 1918 he published *Ecos de la tragedia* (Echoes of the Tragedy). Another rather significant and paradigmatic example was that of Ferrer i Guardià, who lived in Paris for fifteen years before setting up the Escola Moderna (Modern School) in Barcelona.

> The first manifestations of a transfer are never the works, but the individuals who exchange information or the representations constituted into a network

In the 19th century, these networks materialised almost wholly thanks to correspondence. They are prior to any particular cultural product although they tend to go beyond epistolary or oral exchanges in being given the form of texts. Thus one can speak of a review or magazine as the natural culmination of a network. There are several examples in Catalonia and study of them should to lead to better knowledge of the period. Take Ernest Vendrell, for example, author of the article "La influència moral de les minories intel·ligents" (The Moral Influence of Intelligent Minorities)[22], of the book *L'acció moral moderna* (Modern Moral Action)[23] and of the collection of articles *Escrits* (Writings)[24], besides his pieces for the review *Catalònia*. Carles Rahola points out that Vendrell held the French philosopher Jean-Marie Guyau in high esteem although he omitted his name from his texts "[...] I know of an ill-starred friend who greatly loved Guyau: I refer to Ernest Vendrell[25]", he writes. The place that best demonstrates the repercussion that Guyau's work had in the case of

[22] Vendrell, Ernest. "La influència moral de les minories intel·ligents", *Pel & Ploma*, Barcelona 1901.
[23] Vendrell, Ernest. "L'acció moral moderna", *L'Avenç*, Barcelona 1906.
[24] Vendrell, Ernest. "Escrits", *L'Avenç*, Barcelona 1911.
[25] See Rahola, Carles. *Guyau, el filòsof de la solidaritat humana* (Guyau, Philosopher of Human Solidarity), Palé and Co., Palafrugell 1909, p. 7.

Maragall is his correspondence with Rahola. "Guyau will be very good for you[26]", Maragall writes to him. Indeed, Rahola wrote a small book on the French thinker.

In this same context, we also have the study of translators. The absence of a Catalan translation of Guyau is especially significant when the same writers who were praising him, as was the case of Maragall, were busying themselves with translations of Nietzsche. Together, it was they who contributed towards the transmitting of a certain image of French culture in general and philosophy in particular. Needless to say, in this regard, any type of exchange, no matter what kind, can offer us an explanation of some unknown circumstance.

> Where there is a frontier, there are also quite a number of paths crossing it

This sociology of intermediaries should be rounded off with a better understanding of cultural *transferts*, with a sociology of the system within which rudimentary kinds of information are exchanged while simultaneously producing the beginnings of the social and political exegesis of this information. Institutions, understood as forms of organisation of a human group, whether they are integrated or not into the cogs of state machinery, are also characterised by both laws and customs and, for the study of *transferts*, it is irrelevant whether the vehicles through which the transfer is carried out establish their own model of organisation or whether they are to be found within some existing local organism.

IN SHORT...

The more frontiers there are, the more exchanges occur. Where there is a frontier, there are also quite a number of paths crossing it. This (a-)frontier cultural space permits the setting up of the exchanges, the networks, the writing and the publications that constitute the shaping element of a particular moment of our cultural history during which, paradoxically, with the progressive disappearance of the political frontier, these paths, instead of expanding, have dwindled. A twofold function is accomplished with their study: first, these documents, in their capacity as the cultural memory of a country, are reintegrated into collective knowledge; second, they make up the deep strata of the French reference in Catalan discourse. Genetic study of this reference opens up the way for consideration of its overall importance with a view to subsequent studies II

[26] Letter from Joan Maragall to Carles Rahola, 17 November, 1906.

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Jordi Casassas

In the beginning was memory

IN MORE HISTORIC DENSITY, MORE INTERVENTION OF MEMORY

Let me begin with an anecdote and verification. Between 1975 and 1986 numerous seminars, congresses and symposiums were held in order to commemorate the Second Republic and the Civil War. Then-young historians made the most of these opportunities to present their first research pieces on a subject that had previously been prohibited for them, one way or another. Their work, moreover, was in response to a generational demand, one coming from society as a whole, a society that was emerging from the Franco dictatorship with a need to know everything that had been snatched away from it, and to recover its origins so as not to lose its identity.

I very well recall how the *vellets* (the *oldies* —the name given by the historians to the "witnesses" of these times— who were then still the "oral sources" that were most active and committed to their memory) started appearing in every session after one of the first big congresses, for example that held in Tarragona in April 1981 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the inception of the Republic (as a result of which four volumes had to be published because of the avalanche of papers). Their statements in the open-floor sessions were met with evident distaste because of the permanent tension they represented and because they constituted the way into the present for a number of hyper-politicised, individualist ruckuses of meticulous and extemporaneous detail, and were thereby tantamount to a vexing intrusion for the choral explanations that almost all claimed to be heirs of a previously unquestioned hegemony of historiographic structuralism. For their part, the *oldies*

seemed to have a yen for (intimate satisfaction in) revising matters for the young historians, adducing their direct participation in the events and, progressively, denouncing the "professional" historians for misinforming, or simply because it seemed that they wanted to conceal some events that the *oldies* deemed essential.

The verification to which I referred above is fruit of simple observation of what has subsequently been happening: the witnesses have been disappearing for natural reasons and, for their part, some of the young historians of those days have, in the last few years, turned into determined agents for the sacralisation of that "historic memory" they had within their grasp for a time; a small group, moreover, they have also become agents for the politicisation of memory, of this declared duty of "remembering" imposed by the Catalan powers-that-be and materialised in the so-called Memorial Democràtic[1].

Second, a paradox. Catalan society of the decade from 1975 to 1986 (although it began to demobilise and fragment after March 1980 for reasons pertaining to the politics of autonomous status) was one that was steeped in history through and through and that consisted of individuals and groups that were historically shaped: family, school, unions and a good part of the subsequently dubbed "civil society" at this stage had already incorporated the national dimension into their cultural, political and life horizons, while the national debate completed and forcefully re-impelled a historicity that some decades earlier seemed to have a prevailing structural component. Courses and seminars on the history of Catalonia, conferences, study grants (the case of the pioneering Fundació Bofill [Bofill Foundation] is paradigmatic), congresses, et cetera, were frequent events and any self-respecting function or panel discussion had to have its historian. Moreover, we historians of this historicist Catalonia were in continuous professional contact with our economist, geographer and literati colleagues, along with others from the domain of law since we shared a political-cultural space with the historic dimension as its backbone.

In all this, however, professional and academic (university, in fact) history generally kept a distance from the witnesses of the time and the associations that these witnesses kept forming, while joining them was not as much as considered. In academic history, moreover, "oral history" occupied a very marginal position and, in many cases, rather scant prestige until quite some time later[2]. In the 1970s, working in historical biography was even frowned upon since the individual case was not considered to be methodologically significant or of sufficient explanatory value[3].

[1] This organism is described on a Generalitat (Catalan Government) website (http://www10.gencat.net/drep/AppJava/cat/ambits/Memorial/index.jsp) as "an instrument designed to implement public policies for the recovery of democratic memory". The website of Memorial Democràtic is http://www10.gencat.net/drep/AppJava/cat/ambits/Memorial/index.jsp [translator].

[2] In France, however, it was not until much later that people were talking of the priority of "testimony" in the recounting of history. See Annette Wieviorka, *L'ere du témoin*, Paris 1998.

[3] A pioneering example of academic history in which archive sources are contrasted with numerous "oral sources" and fused in telling the story of a local space is the study by Joan Villarroya, *Revolució i Guerra Civil a Badalona, 1936-1939* (Revolution and Civil War in Badalona, 1936-1939), which was published in 1985.

AN AMNESIAC TRANSITION?

All in all, the assertion that the Spanish transition shelved the Civil War due to the requirements of the "political script", in order to head off any critical judgement of the past that might bring about the failure of the way to transition and encourage the dangerous path of rupture, is only partly true. In those years, the inflated importance of works on the times of the Republic and the Civil War monopolised the field, to the point that foreign historiography, which had previously been the inescapable reference, almost dropped into the background. Again, the methodological problem of oblivion, of the need for oblivion in human cultural processes, as Nietzsche described it very well in his time, went far beyond the requirements of any specific "political script".

> The need for oblivion in human cultural processes went far beyond the requirements of any specific "political script"

Still more, this historicist wave of the transition entailed the first real territorial extension of the practice of history, along with the overwhelmingly powerful irruption of the memorialist strand. In the former case, one must refer to the appearance of the section "Plecs d'Història Local" (Local History Papers) in the review *L'Avenç* (in 1986, the year of the big explosion of historiographic commemoration on the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Civil War) and, in the 1990s the creation of the Coordinator of Catalan Language Study Centres: local studies forcefully incorporated the detail, the anthropological dimension, the anonymous voices and, along with all that, consideration of testimonies of the time, of individualised memory.

As for testimonies expressed in books of memoirs, we might say that this came out of quite an impoverished panorama: however, the outstanding cases of Claudi Ametlla or Amadeu Hurtado were soon overtaken by a veritable avalanche. J. Termes was able to highlight this in his reflections on the Civil War (1986) and, around the same time, Albert Manent began to do something similar in the field of literary history. Likewise, we must not overlook the creation and subsequent getting underway (operative since 1985) of Josep Benet's Centre d'Història Contemporània de Catalunya (Centre of Contemporary History of Catalonia) and the systematic task of collecting testimonies from the time that was carried out there. Neither must we forget (though it would be punishable in speaking of the matter of historic memory) the phenomenal waves of criticism coming from academic history against the work of this centre (and that of such specialists as Joan Villarroya or J. M. Solé) since it was claimed that their only concern was to "count the dead": the dead that are now about to be honoured with the highly expensive operations of their exhumation from mass graves and identification through DNA testing[4].

[4] The two aforementioned historians had jointly published a pioneer study, "Les victims dels fets de maig" (The Victims of the Events of May) in *Recerques*, 13, 1982, apart from other pieces such as "Les víctimes del 19 de juliol" (The Victims of 19 July) and "Víctimes de la repressió durant la guerra i la postguerra al Maresme" (Victims of Repression during the War and Post-war Years in the Maresme). Then again, there is J. M. Solé's doctoral thesis, *La repressió franquista, 1939-1953* (Francoist Repression, 1939-1953), which was published in 1985.

HISTORIC MEMORY AS A CULTURAL FACTOR

With all this, not yet twenty years after this lengthy dimension of the transition, so fruitful and sensitive to history and memory, the changes had taken on truly staggering dimensions[5]. The paradigm of this so-called historical memory was being imposed everywhere until it became a phenomenon that was breaking free from, and even going beyond, the limits of history itself, at least the ones of what is known as academic or professional history[6]. This coincided with the converging processes of the fragmentation of historic discourse, the crisis of security in old scientific paradigms (Marxism, the French Annales School, Anglo-Saxon-style relativism) and, above all, with the general de-historicisation of society[7].

> The crisis of tradition, the breaking of traditional bonds between parents and children, is a great historical theme

None other than E. J. Hobsbawm began his explanation of the framework that led him to speak of the 20th century as the "brief century" (1994) by alluding to the destruction of the past that was appreciable at the end of the century: the disappearance of mechanisms that had linked the experience of contemporary people with those of previous generations; a great rupture in the history of western civilisation when young people are forced to live in a kind of permanent present, in a present that is already future. In fact, the great profusion of literature that attempts to explain the present rise of historic memory and the difficult relations that appear between historic memory and history almost always starts from this very place.

In any case, the crisis of tradition, the breaking of traditional bonds between parents and children is a great historical theme and it has its chronology and its characteristic spaces: urban space and the great rupture that the Great War represented when millions of peasant-soldiers saw, all of a sudden and with all the violence of which technology was capable, their traditional references being smashed. In this regard one must always refer to Maurice Halbwachs (who died in Buchenwald concentration camp in 1945) and his pioneering approach to the matter in the 1920s.

Let us give another example now, one that is also linked with this initial phase: the lecture given in 1935 by the great Dutch historian Johan Huizinga —who died in 1945 in captivity imposed by the Nazis in 1942— and that was later to become the book *In de schaduwen van morgen* (In the Shadow of Tomorrow). His present was determined, he said, by a cultural crisis of unprecedented scope, by a "presentiment of the decadence" that affected him in the form of his present since, given the prevailing scientificism,

[5] Of unquestionable interest here is the book by Enzo Traverso, *Le passé, modes d'emploi. Histoire, memóire, politique*, Paris 2005.
[6] Notable here is Paul Ricoeur's book *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, Paris 2000. Ricoeur, following ideas advanced, *inter alia*, by H. Hutton (1993), came to formulate the idea that history attempts to respond to questions formulated by memory in such a way that it turns into yet another of the dimensions of memory.
[7] See Walter Benjamin *Iluminaciones* (2 vols.), Taurus, Madrid 1971-1972 [published in English as *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, Schocken, 1969, translator].

the feeling of an irreversible social process was being imposed and generalised, where the "peaceful" concept of development was set against the violence of revolutionary change, and where the possibility of looking back to the past in order to come out of the crisis was denied: a tremendous rejection of defining oneself through the past.

MEMORY AND HISTORY

We are therefore faced with a double dilemma in relation with this theme of historic memory, of its cultural ascent and its implications in present-day post-traditional societies. On the one hand is understanding the cultural phenomenon it represents (a phenomenon that, as we have seen, has quite distant roots, however) and, on the other are the methodological implications it has entailed for historical science itself and in the way of working of academic historians[8].

In a complementary fashion, with regard both to historic memory as a cultural phenomenon and to the historiographic evolution it entails, it would seem logical to think that, equally as important as philosophical reflections and method should be study of the matter as a significant cultural phenomenon of contemporaneity, and, as such, one that cannot be extricated from considering the specific spaces where it becomes evident, the range of dynamics in relation with which it materialises, and the different chronological rhythms in which it makes its presence felt[9].

We know, for example, that this phenomenon was tardy in reaching Spain (and the absolute majority of the Partido Popular did a great deal for its definitive emergence)[10]. And we know that, in Catalonia, it has had its own, distinct way of materialising and becoming evident (through to the parliamentary and legal order), even with regard to Spain, although, as is evident, state legislation on the matter also affects it.

Here I wish to make a brief comment on the methodological journey that has led historians to incorporating this so-called historic memory into their intellectual horizons and historiographic practice. The first impression is that there was very little prior theoretical debate on the matter. The irruption of the subject of Methodology of Social Sciences in our universities was of very little use in this regard precisely because it involved the "criminalisation" of all the currents that have ended up leading to the incorporation of historic memory as a central element of historic discourse. However little memory we may have, we shall remember how the great majority of those who now talk about memory and history clearly took sides in the debate between Lawrence

[8] These questions have also been studied from other fields and for some time now. Thus, from psychology it is said that, for the human mind, "the present is the past", and also the "rememorative context of the present" that acts at the instant in which the memory is produced. See Joan Coderch, "La dialèctica passat present en la ment humana" (The Past-Present Dialectic in the Human Mind), *Lletres* 32 (April-May, 2008), pp. 28-31.

[9] See Henri Rousso (ed.), *Stalinisme et nazisme*, Brussels, 2002, a work in which he offers an overview from comparative history [published in English as *Stalinism and Marxism; History and Memory Compared*, University of Nebraska Press, 1999, translator].

[10] A work like that of Paloma Aguilar —*Memoria y olvido de la guerra civil española* (Memory and Forgetting of the Spanish Civil War, Alianza Editorial, Madrid 1996)— would not have a successor for many years. On the subject of Spain, see the excellent piece by Pedro Ruiz Torres, "Los discursos de la memoria histórica en España" (The Discourses of Historic Memory in Spain), *Hispania Nova*, 7, 2007.

Stone and E. J. Hobsbawm in 1979 over whether or not the old scientificist paradigms and their pretension of all-comprehensiveness had had their day or not, and about the need or not for a return of traditional narrative forms as a richer way of explaining reality[11].

The majority of academic historians at the time, needless to say, took up positions that were clearly opposed to the critique of the possibilities of traditional structuralism and in favour of the Marxist postulates championed by Hobsbawm. Simultaneously, the immense majority was declaredly against interdisciplinary contact with anthropology, not to mention social psychology, or the thematic inclinations of the third or fourth generation of the Annales School historians[12]. It is possible that one of the only cracks through which, paradoxically, neo-romantic historiographic subjectivity might have filtered was that of the popularisation of the work of the Cuban writer Manuel Moreno Fraginals and his premise of "history as a weapon" (1984). But this proposal was sold here as a revolutionary mandate with which Marxism was revived through contact with the struggle against imperialism, without thereby losing its essence. Nevertheless, the end of the social emergencies of the Spanish industrial reconversion (determinant in the general climate of the transition) and the rapid decline of real socialism in the East brought about the disintegration of such euphoria (which never had a decisive influence in the academic milieu), and it quickly crumbled into dust when the charismatic Cuban sought political asylum in Miami[13].

[11] In any case, Hobsbawm himself was not long ago calling for a restructuring of the "modernising coalition" or the "front of reason" (which he identifies with Marxist historiography), protecting himself from the onslaughts of postmodern subjectivity and of those who deny the cognitive, objective and universalist capacity of History. See E. J. Hobsbawm, "History a New Age of Reason", concluding speech to the British Academy at the Conference *Marxist Historiography: Alive, Dead or Moribund?* (November 2004).

[12] At the time, the pioneering work of Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de la mémoire* (Paris 1984-1986), did not generate excessive expectation or followers (and neither, as far as one can tell, does it seem to have been translated into either Spanish or Catalan [though it appeared in English as *Realms of Memory*, Columbia University Press, 1997, translator]). Equally, one of the works that Nora cites as one of his main founts of inspiration, that of G. L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich*, Howard Fertig, 2001 (first edition in English, 1974) did not appear in Spanish until 2005 (thirty years after the Italian translation!) and it has not been much cited in our historiography, in contrast with what happens with the historiography of our neighbours. In Italy, the response to Nora's book might be that edited by M. Isnenghi, *I luoghi della memoria. Simboli e miti dell'Italia unita*, Rome-Bari 1998.

[13] In any case, it is always surprising how the bases of the great assertions that at a certain point take on a great power of suggestion have been formulated in the past. In relation with the chain that, for Marxists, joins past and future through our present struggle, one should note the work of Edward Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, when he states that the present has to retain the past and announce the future because mental acts are always in relation with the external world, moved by an intention. See Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* (three volumes: *General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology* (Nijhof, The Hague 1982); *Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*; and *Phenomenology and the Foundations of the Sciences* (Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1989 and 1980 respectively). The work was published in Spanish as *Ideas relativas a una Fenomenología Pura y una filosofia Fenomenológica* in 1949.

La perversión de la mirada (The perversion of the gaze), Carmen Calvo (2004)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 170 x 114 cm

We could expand on these historiographic memories but it seems they would have little new to offer. Not even, for example, when women's history (as it was then called) left off simple theorisation and methodology and went deeper into closer realities did the structuralist paradigms modify themselves to the slightest degree. Subsequently, the importation of the concept of gender (well into the 1990s) represented a change of paradigm, but it was imposed as a rupture without any chance of taxonomic continuity with the earlier phase. In our country, the history of the subaltern, of the "small voices", of the Foucault-style approach, or even that of an E. P. Thompson or a Carlo Ginzburg (approaches that date back to 1963 and 1976!) had inappreciable practical repercussions in the real exercise of contemporary history[14].

MEMORY AND POLITICS

All in all, we might conclude, along with the Bulgarian-born French critic Tzvetan Todorov (Sofia, 1939), that recovery of the past is one thing and its subsequent use is quite another. It is here that the other dimension to which I referred earlier intervenes: the cultural dimension of the rise of historic memory and the role it plays in today's post-traditional western societies[15].

To continue with this Bulgarian-French writer, recuperation of the past involves three actions or phases that we can distinguish, at least in the methodological framework: systematisation of the facts (where truly democratic history that is respectful of the reader's competence should end); the construction of a sense: a task that cannot elude the historian's labour in all that it means to interpret, hierarchise, establish causes and consequences of events and interrelate them; and, finally, a last phase of instrumentalisation of the past: a use that responds to present-day needs, the mere mention of which very often revolts the sensibility of many historians as they prefer to think that only a few colleagues have let themselves be dragged into this, and that, when they do, they get mixed up with the great horde of discourse-producing agents that have proliferated in this present phase of definitive rupture in the relations between historical and political discourse (so peculiar to the crisis phase of powerful ideologies)[16].

Present discourse on memory takes us back to this phase of instrumentalisation of the past but, concomitantly, to a stage of a change in cultural sensibilities and public use of history: a reflection on the traces left by the past on a society "without a past", on an omnipresent and all-understanding present that has had to rework the place it had to leave to this past, while also rethinking the mechanisms it granted itself in order to recover it.

[14] In any case, it is always surprising how the bases of the great assertions that at a certain point take on a great power of suggestion have been formulated in the past. In relation with the chain that, for Marxists, joins past and future through our present struggle, one should note the work of Edward Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, when he states that the present has to retain the past and announce the future because mental acts are always in relation with the external world, moved by an intention. See Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* (three volumes: *General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology* (Nijhof, The Hague 1982); *Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*; and *Phenomenology and the Foundations of the Sciences* (Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1989 and 1980 respectively). The work was published in Spanish as *Ideas relativas a una Fenomenología Pura y una filosofía Fenomenológica* in 1949.

[15] Tzvetan Todorov, *Les abus de la mémoire*, Paris, 1995.

THE PARADOXES OF HISTORIC MEMORY

Besides any evaluation we might make, we cannot but confirm the coincidence of this presentist crisis of the western civil consciousness along with a veritable expansion of the public use of history: academia has lost its former well-nigh monopoly to a host of communicators, producers, and mass media practitioners, politicians and, in short, all the people who are well-situated *vis-à-vis* the new demands of the market. No matter that this excessive use of historical products is in inverse relation with the diminished number of hours devoted to systematic history teaching in secondary schools. What is in step is the practice of a "new" teaching with students who are made to "play" interactively with the material and who are not to be bothered with knowledge that is deemed too arid (in France, they even speak of the "ignorant teacher" who does not impose knowledge and encourages the students to learn by adducing his or her own nescience).

The history that is imposed, once these students have become consumerist citizens, is shaped by fragmentary and almost always decontextualised content, which is moved most of the time by what we might call the "sensationalism of the retrospective" (Nazism and the extermination of the Jews furnishes an endless supply of material in this regard). Some have gone so far as to call it "topolatry" or simply "Disney history" (the tendency to turn everything into a theme park)[17].

> We may conclude, along with Tzvetan Todorov, that recovery of the past is one thing and its subsequent use is quite another

Coherence becomes total. It is as a result of this situation that present-day democratic politics can go back to trotting out and rediscovering practices we thought were banished after the defeat of the dictatorships (no power can prohibit or command the memory of the people since it is a natural attribute of individuals and collectives): the conversion of history into a value judgement, into civic pedagogy (including "democratic" anti-historic judicialisation of the past, as Henry Rousso has denounced)[18], that not only avails itself of memory but turns it into the substitute of history[19].

With due use of the techniques of communication and apposite language (even museographic language or that pertaining to tourism of memory), this great supplanting of history by memory has had the virtue of communicating to the public the idea

[16] Tzvetan Todorov, *Mémoire du mal. Tentation du bien*, Paris, 2000.

[17] This cultural adaptability was explained by the British neo-evolutionist ethologist Richard Dawkins in *The Selfish Gene* (1976), which he later generalised from the individual to the setting as a whole in *The Extended Phenotype: the Gene as the Unit of Selection* (1982). According to Dawkins the "memes" (he speaks of memetics), or basic units of memory, are the great vectors of cultural transmission and survival that act in a way that is similar to the functioning of genes in the survival of the genetic characteristics of the individual.

[18] The growing tendency of "schlerotisation of memory" was denounced in the jointly written work of E. Conan and H. Rousso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas*, Paris 1994 [*Vichy: an Ever-Present Past*, Dartmouth, 1998].

[19] Coinciding with these great changes, the theme of memory has become a preferential field for disciplines like neuroscience and also child psychology. One of their conclusions (already advanced by sociology more than eighty years ago) indicates that human expectations turn out to be fundamental in perceptions and in determining social behaviour and, here, perception of the past comes to be essential in the establishment of these social relations.

that it is real democracy that has permitted it to come truly and definitively into direct contact with history, which had hitherto been wrested away by too-abstruse professionals. Everyone should be warned that myth-making, induced amnesia or aberrant manipulation by the powers-that-be or victors affects both history and memory.

In sum, it is probable that these new situations will not be satisfied with a simple following of foreign fashions or mere subordination to the laws of the market (as one can see with a glance at the shelves in bookshops and the big department stores) and that they will end up entailing a taxonomic debate within academic history itself, which, in the long term, will bear fruit when the methodological discussion moves on to specific work and a revision of the great traditional schemata. However, for the moment, practically all we have at our disposal, in fact, are the great methodological assertions or those of "memorial-style" collections superimposed on "traditional" writings done on the basis of archival proofs (which are still deemed the most reliable).

Among mortals, only J. L. Borges' *Memorioso Funes* (Funes the Memorious) was condemned to remember absolutely everything. The rest of us are faced with the events of the past through the trace it leaves in the spirit of individuals and in (through?) material facts (including documents). But we are all aware that we do not remember everything and neither do we remember the totality of facets that make up the facts we do remember. When memory makes its presence felt and wishes to irrupt into the mechanisms of recovering the past, we should not forget that one essential part of this recuperation is constituted, as I have noted, by the same oblivion that equally affects history and memory: as I said, the sacralisations and desacralisations are valid for both.

A REFLECTION ALMOST BY WAY OF CONCLUDING

We can accept that the use of memory in the contemporary western world is the reflex of nostalgia for a past that inexorably moves away. We might say that at the root of this commemorative obsession induced a relatively short time ago by the powers-that-be one finds the crisis of tradition that, as we have seen, affects contemporary societies through and through. History has become swifter than the generational changeover and society defends itself from the frenetic change with this resort to the memory of individuals. Again, we must confirm that this great reconsideration of the value of memory has started out from the shock of the tremendous contained forms of violence of the civilised world in the 20th century and from the shock, too, of subsequent ideological concealings, "freezings" and obfuscations (the case of the word *Shoah*, or catastrophe in Hebrew, being used to refer to the Holocaust is paradigmatic). Thus it is logical that history should admit (for example with Paul Ricoeur or Jacques Le Goff) that, even while it is the ordered and systematic narration of the past, what must be done is to try to respond to questions formulated by memory; hence, memory can become one of history's terrains of preferential research. Nonetheless, we cannot forget either that the democracies themselves contributed to the "freezing" of memory, especially in the tough years of the Cold War, but before that as well.

The only thing that remains to discuss is what is happening with this dynamic relationship between history and memory when we leave the field of immediate history,

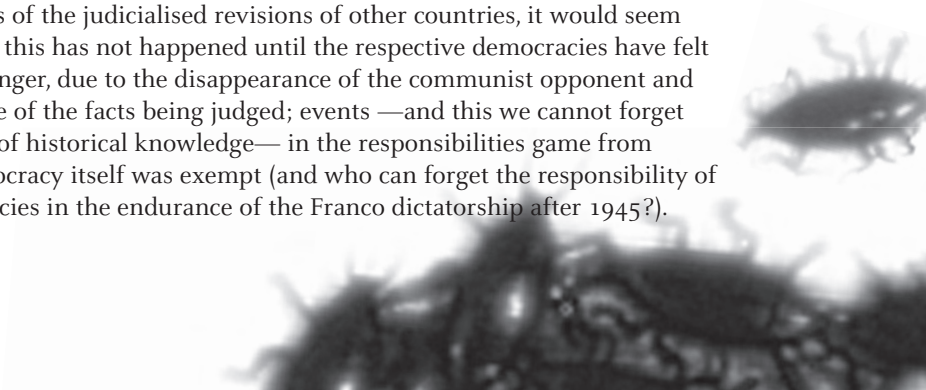
of present, actual time or whatever one might want to call this space where historian and witness can share experiences that are almost personal (at most with one or two generations of difference). At this point, we would be leaving, however, our field of central interest to probe into the causes that have led to the growing importance of the approaches of cultural history, its apparently good connection with the laws of the market and its ability to dilute by feeble thinking the most resilient and, until relatively recently, untouchable essences of structuralist historiography.

There is one last consideration that pertains to the express political use of this historic memory. The historian has the obligation of asking about the whys and wherefores of the appearance of a sweeping cultural-political phenomenon like historic memory at any particular time. In this regard, one cannot fail to note that there has appeared in both Western Europe and in Spain-Catalonia an impetus working in favour of "historic memory" and observing a dual chronological rhythm: one is long-term and related with the progressive incorporation of the memory of the Shoah into philosophical, historiographic and, finally, political sensibility (this had zero repercussion in Spanish historiography until the end of the 1960s and early 1970s); the other is more short-term, and is the application of this sensibility to the key moment of the past in which it is possible to question the foundations of coexistence of present-day democracy in each of the countries we are talking about (Vichy and the Resistance in the French case, the Saló Republic and the partisans in the Italian case, the Civil War and immediate post-war period in the Spanish case, and the different situations brought about in the East under Bolshevik rule, et cetera).

> There is a coincidence of this presentist crisis of the Western civil consciousness along with a real expansion of the public use of history

In the case of recovering the memory of the martyrdom of the Jewish people something happened which is similar to what occurred with the revision of the "guilt" of the German people in the terrible barbarism of the two world wars put together. Almost two decades had to go by before it was possible to speak of it again: at the crossroads of history and political ethics, with writings such as those of J. Habermas and in the phenomenal new novelistic vehicle which, in the 20th century, translated (alongside sociology) general conceptions of society with contributions by people like G. Grass.

However, in the cases of the judicialised revisions of other countries, it would seem to be fairly clear that this has not happened until the respective democracies have felt sufficiently out of danger, due to the disappearance of the communist opponent and the temporal distance of the facts being judged; events —and this we cannot forget from the standpoint of historical knowledge— in the responsibilities game from which not even democracy itself was exempt (and who can forget the responsibility of the western democracies in the endurance of the Franco dictatorship after 1945?).



The present memorialist agitation has been founded on a resort to universal moral values and a major decontextualisation of the past

The present memorialist agitation has been founded on a resort to universal moral values and a major decontextualisation of the past. At the bottom of this huge cultural and political operation we must look for the desire to re-create democratic values in the phase posterior to the "end of history", to transform this into a timeless endorsement of the individual rights that were trampled on by the clash of western countries in the great crisis of the 20th century, into a sort of security-assuring device (which, as historians very well know, has never appeared in history) so that this past will not be repeated, in a collective morality where the new civilised coexistence of individuals must be guaranteed. One of the keys that make it possible to take on the moralising political value of historic memory lies in the desire of the powers-that-be to endow it with legal capacity and thereby to communicate to the citizenry that Judicial Power and the Constitution constitute the great guarantee, through a move whereby the "past" and the present become inextricably linked.

In this formidable memorialist operation it has been possible to inter the previous and historic phases of the now-censured "national reconciliation", these presently being amply overtaken by modern democratic consensus with which it has been possible to leave behind, it is said, the old empire of fear and its paralysing amnesias. In this supposed historical purging of civilisation, the Spanish and Catalan cases are equally exemplary. In the period of transition, which I have been using as a chronological reference, we saw how the story began: in the coronation speech of Juan Carlos I (November 1975), the Crown wished to present itself as the institutional chance of reconciliation for all Spanish people, a process that culminated with what is known as the law of "national reconciliation" of October 1977. The time of democratic satisfaction (evidently "assisted" by the almost reactionary arrogance of the absolute majority of the Partido Popular) has been that of judicialised memory: in July 2006 the socialist party, PSOE, was finally able to present to Parliament the law of so-called historic memory, a law of "rehabilitation of victims" (Spanish), extending to all victims of antidemocratic barbarism in the 20th century[20].

[20] Something similar has happened in Italy. The State has instituted a Day of Memory (27 January), a Day of Recall (10 February) and a Day of Freedom (9 November) and there, like everywhere else, recall of the victims ends up blurring recall of the specific circumstances in which they suffered difficulties, persecution or death.

[21] The Law of Democratic Memory is dated 31 October 2007 (DO 12 November) and, in it is contemplated the establishment of a Directorate General of Democratic Memorial of the Generalitat (Government) of Catalonia. Regarded as affiliate entities are the Baix Llobregat Association of Democratic and Historical Memory, the Hospitalet Anti-Francoist Bridge of Freedom Association, the SEAT Workers' Association for Democratic Memorial, the Enrique Lister Association, CJC-Communist Youth, Women of 36, the New Horizons Foundation, the Forum for the Defence of the Aged, the Pere Ardiaca Foundation and Historaula.

THE CASE OF CATALONIA

In Catalonia, the passing of the "Memorial Democràtic" bill (once the deadlock of the first "tripartite" Government was negotiated) specified somewhat more and gave the limelight to the victims of reactionary oppression in the exercise of ensuring and/or permitting the survival of democracy in our country[21]. Here the scope of designation has been much wider and it is said that Catalonia "shares with other countries the historic duty to remember the victims of the Holocaust" and also promoted are memory policies that centre on the new identity of democratic states, their democratic transition and the moral and social recognition of all citizens who gave their best in order to preserve these essential values. In the law it is stated that "the preservation of the historical memory of a country is, then, an expression of freedom". Cited among the functions of the Democratic Memorial are expansion of knowledge, commemorations and the fostering of democratic memory (without specifying which organism is to determine the democratic degree of the different memories) and knowledge of the period of the Second Republic, of the Republican Generalitat (Catalan Government), of the Civil War, of the victims of ideologically-, conscience-, socially- or religion-based conflicts, of the repression of the Franco dictatorship, of exile and deportations, and of the attempt to annihilate Catalan language and culture, as well as anti-Francoist values and actions along with all the traditions of democratic culture. Again, it states that scientific and objective knowledge of the recent past will stimulate understanding of present times[22].

Besides these considerations over who might keep being interested in the historical decontextualisation of the emotive recycling of these memories, the factor that is being imposed in Catalonia refers to the identification that has been made of this policy of memory with political postulates and strategies of left-wing progressive stances (and still of one particular current)[23]. This discourse, at bottom, so full of dogma, is reminiscent of what was formulated in the years immediately after 1945; and it has caused some commonsense voices to be raised in favour of preserving the past from party-biased political commitments[24]. Within the great western process in which the different strands of the left are committed to finding an ideological discourse that would enable them to recover their lost identity, it would not seem that the most appropriate thing is to subscribe to the ahistorical and normativised confusion between memory and history, a confusion that sooner or later can turn historically against itself[25]. It would not seem that the argument according to which the right is the great opponent of the recovery of memory can last very long as the prime justification II

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[22] The Law affirms that it is inspired in Article 54 of the Autonomy Statute of Catalonia of 18 December 1979, in which it is stated that the Generalitat and other Catalan public powers have the obligation to "watch over the knowledge and maintenance of the historical memory of Catalonia as a collective heritage that bears witness to the resistance and the struggle for democratic rights and freedoms".

[23] In France it has been said that it is the generation of '68 that, with the fear of being forgotten, has turned its former militancy of prophetic action into a "retroactive inquisition".

[24] For example, Barbara Spinelli, *Il sonno de la memoria. L'Europa dei totalitarismi*, Milan 2001.

[25] There is no need to expand on this to any great extent; suffice it to read the Prologue to the intellectual testimony represented by the book of Josep Benet, *Memòries I. De l'esperança a la desfeta (1920-1939)* (Memoirs I: From Hope to Defeat [1920-1939]), Barcelona 2008.

Josep Gifreu

Media and elections in Catalonia:

a split scenario?

Catalonia presents a particularly rich and complex political and media scenario for studying the political communication and behaviour of the leading actors in electoral processes. On the basis of systematic study of the last four electoral campaigns for the Parliament of Catalonia (1995, 1999, 2003 and 2006), this article raises a question about the appropriateness of the present scenario of intermediation between parties and citizens in Catalonia, an intermediation that the mass-based democracy entrusts to the media system in particular.

In the wake of the Transition, the new Catalan political culture has been taking shape over the years of democratic government and Catalonia's status as an autonomous region, above all through the mechanisms of political interaction between the three main actors that are presently recognised in all comparative research: political parties, the public mass media and citizens. This article, which sets out to be an exploratory essay on the basis of the aforementioned studies, will focus on an analysis of the mass media —one vertex of the triangle of political communication formed along with parties and citizens— which is to say, on the structural and structuring functions of the media's discursive and news-supplying intermediation in the electoral campaign.

THE IMPERTINENT QUESTION

The question of interest that gives rise to the main argument and reflection here has a preliminary formulation that can be put very simply: what importance do the most influential branches of the media attribute to elections to the Catalan Parliament?

Someone, some day, had to pose this "impertinent" question about the media scenario that legitimates the unfolding of the objectively most important electoral process in Catalonia. I refer to the process that leads in each legislature to renewing the trust of Catalan electors in the one hundred and thirty-five members of Parliament and, accordingly, in the formation of a ruling majority in the Generalitat (Government) of Catalonia.

From the calling of elections through to voting day, the three main actors in the campaign —political parties, mass media and citizens— activate the resources they have available so as to participate with a view to their own benefit in the electoral contest. The official calling of elections, which, in Catalonia, is the personal prerogative of the President of the Generalitat, sets off the totality of activities of the

| **¡Fuera de mis tierras! (Get off my land!),** Carmen Calvo (1999). Mixed media, collage, photography, 160 x 110 cm

three actors I have mentioned, although starting out from the basic initiative of the parties. Within a highly competitive framework, the parties and coalitions present their candidates and programmes to the public for the consideration and deliberation of electors. The nature of the publicity and public deliberation on candidatures and programmes is nowadays mainly —but not uniquely— what is exercised by the mass media and especially those of recognised influence within the electoral corpus.

The question that I am interested to formulate for the Catalan context of electoral campaigns in general and the autonomous campaigns for election to the Parliament of Catalonia in particular is this: are not the electoral results for the Parliament of Catalonia in good part conditioned by the singular media system that has been present and hegemonic in Catalonia since the Transition? In other words, might not a different correlation of cover and influence of the media in Catalonia have brought about another political culture and possibly an evolution that would differ from the present constellation of political forces in the Parliament and the Generalitat?

The establishment of a quasi-causal relationship between the structuring of the mass media —property, cover, audiences, language, regulation, and so on— and the conditioning of a particular political culture is postulated for the different groups in the milieu of political communication. To the extent that the media are attributed with basic functions in the intermediation between candidates and electors and, more generally, in the essential circulation of electoral messages in campaigns, a certain kind of organisation and regulation of the public activity of the media would have an effect on the very characteristics of the intermediation. And if this is true for the activities of political communication between elections it is even more so in the pre-campaign period and especially during the election campaign itself. In Catalonia, as is known, the campaign only lasts two weeks, since it comes under Spanish electoral law, which determines its duration. Thus the degree of "condensation" or "intensity" of electoral messages in the fortnight of the campaign would seem to be determinant to a high degree in such key results as index of participation and voting decision.

THE MEDIA AND "CATALAN OBEDIENCE"

The formation of the Catalan party system derives from the Transition and the evolution of the correlation of political forces over the early years of democracy and political autonomy. With few substantial changes, political representation in the Parliament of Catalonia, which affects the formation of majorities in the Generalitat as well as political representation at other levels, in particular in the Cortes Generales (the legislature of Spain in the form of a bicameral parliament) of Madrid, has consolidated into five parties or coalitions.

■ This set of studies refers to the past four campaigns for election to the Parliament of Catalonia, which took place respectively on 19 November 1995 (19-N-95), 17 October 1999 (17-O-99), 16 November 2003 (16-N-03) and 1 November 2006 (1-N-06). The studies are carried out at the initiative of the UNICA research group of the Pompeu Fabra University, with the collaboration of researchers in different universities, while also receiving financial support from a number of institutions, in particular the Bofill Foundation (see bibliographical references at the end).

As happens in other autonomous communities of the Spanish State, in Catalonia, the positioning of the different parties in their competition for the vote has historically gravitated around two key axes: the national axis (Catalonia-Spain relations) and the social axis (right-left relations). In the political jargon of the Transition, people spoke in Catalonia of parties of "Catalan obedience" and parties of "Spanish obedience". The former were defined by having their ultimate decision-making organs in Catalonia itself and the latter by their relations of dependence *vis-à-vis* the party leadership in the Spanish sphere (whether it was a centralised party like the Partido Popular [PP] or one of federal structure like the Partido Socialista Obrero Español [PSOE]). According to the electoral studies I have mentioned above, the axis of Catalonia-Spain relations becomes the preponderant one, the focus of attention and interest in all electoral contests.

> The hegemonic system of media contributes to uphold the ascendancy of the Spanish outlook and favours a subsidiary view of Catalan political culture

I shall not discuss at this point whether the high degree of multipartism in the Parliament of Catalonia (a sixth party grouping has joined the present legislature) is "richness" or an "anomaly". I am only interested in setting the question mark squarely over the front of media intermediation. The generally overlooked —or consciously ignored— question can be summed up thus: does not the hegemonic system of media in Catalonia contribute substantially to upholding the ascendancy of the national Spanish axis in the campaigns and favouring a subsidiary view of Catalan political culture with respect to Spanish political culture?

Responding to this question entails bearing well in mind what the structuring of political mediation shaped by the big branches of the media in Catalonia consists of. If we apply here the final decision-making model to the activities of the media as an instrument of political communication, we confirm that a very considerable part of the media with massive influence in the Catalan electoral body is of "Spanish obedience" (and the language of the majority is Spanish). It is true that the media with more limited scope of cover and influence (for example, some local branches of the media, specialist reviews, blogs by certain personalities, et cetera) can have substantial influence among particular groups. Nevertheless, when we speak of media intermediation in the campaigns, we must focus the analytic attention on the language of the big names that, as far as communication is concerned, necessarily refer to the "public at large" or to relevant groupings of individuals with the capacity to vote and/or influence the vote of others.

If we ask how many sections of the media fulfil this requisite in Catalonia, we would hesitate over where to locate the strip of separation between the media of recognised influence in this matter and those that are not deemed to be of relevant influence. What would not be in doubt would be those branches of the media situated above this strip,

the position occupied by the big media entities that specialise in printed, audiovisual and digital material. Some conventionally accepted indicators —basically those derived from audience studies— offer an objective basis for assessing the degree of impact and presumably social and political influence that part of the media can achieve among citizens. To be more precise, analysis of the big branches of the media present in Catalonia over the past twenty years leads us to consider, in general terms, an evolution that, at least as a working hypothesis, makes one think of a progressively increasing presence of media of "Spanish obedience" over the media of "Catalan obedience".

During the Transition, for example, the dailies distributed in Catalonia were almost all published in Catalonia itself. Nowadays the paid press of Spanish origin accounts for about 10 per cent. If we count the free newspapers, the proportion greatly favours "Spanish obedience". In any case, and as a whole, the "big press" has resisted the irruption of Spanish communication groups. Until when? With the radio, if we pay attention not to the number of generalist channels but to audience figures, the result is a draw between the two types of stations. On the Internet, evaluation of this dynamic is a tricky matter because of the novelty of the medium and lack of knowledge as to the practices of electors, at least in relation with the processes of political intermediation.

I shall leave until the end my scrutiny of the medium-of-all-media, television, which is still predominant in political campaigning. Television has been, and will be for some years, the preferred medium of parties and citizens as the central scenario of mass political mediation. The polls keep repeating, over and over again, that electors are mainly informed through television. For example, in the 2003 campaign for election to the Parliament of Catalonia, three out of four citizens declared that they had followed the campaign "every day or almost", or "quite often", on television (Vox Publica). The obvious question is: if some 80 per cent of Catalan electors follow the campaign on television, why not undertake a thoroughgoing examination of the structure that determines which TV channels have the most influence, what cover they give of the campaigns and what political orientations they adopt with regard to the different political options?

This line of research and reflection is yet to be carried out. Not only with television but also with other kinds of media —daily paid press and free press, kiosk publications in general, radio— and, in particular, with the recent field of new practices that has been opened up by the Internet.

CATALAN ELECTIONS AND RELEVANCE

My first question raised the matter of the relevance attributed by the big branches of the media to elections to the Parliament of Catalonia. I shall now inquire into the characteristics and cover of the campaigns in the big branches of the media. The index of cover of an electoral campaign by one section of the media would give the measure of attribution of public relevance in a specific campaign. This index still has to be defined. However, from the standpoint of political journalism and electoral communication, I am in no doubt that an index of this type would be very helpful in evaluating what overall role is exercised by the media in relation with a political community and its processes of shaping the vote.

Table 1. News Coverage in the leading newspapers of the two weeks of electoral campaigning for the Parliament of Catalonia (1995-2006)

Elections	*Avui*			*El País*			*El Periódico*			*El Punt*			*La Vanguardia*		
	U	P	E	U	P	E	U	P	E	U	P	E	U	P	E
1995	182		11	160		2	178		2	117		2	163		1
1999	325		8	240		1	351		4	537		4	305		1
2003	328	6	3	224	11	3	256	11	9	253	6	2	346	9	2
2006	265	24		190	17		275	26		230	19		294	18	

Key: U = units of information and opinion related with the campaign; P = units of front-page information on the campaign; E = editorial articles related with the campaign

When it comes to calling elections, all the media involved in the political process have their resources (human, economic, technical, programming, and so on) for the best news coverage of the campaign. What kind of news coverage of campaigns (and pre-campaigns) for the Parliament of Catalonia have the most influential branches of the public media offered in Catalonia?

Table 1 quantifies and compares the principal data on attention (in units of information) given to each of the four campaigns in the five newspapers of biggest circulation in Catalonia. We can see that the maximum attention so far was concentrated in the 1999 elections —and we aptly titled the corresponding report *La campanya més disputada* (The Most Contested Campaign)— when Pasqual Maragall stood for the presidency of the Generalitat against Jordi Pujol. In the 2003 elections, when the substitution of Pujol as President of the Generalitat was at stake, the media cover was again very notable, although slightly less than the previous elections. This attention dropped considerably in the last elections of 2006, with the significant exception of *El Periódico*, and there was a notable increase in the work of reinforcement or priming in the front-page news of all the newspapers. Noteworthy here is the fact that the newspaper that comes in last is *El País*, the only one of the five of "Spanish" scope and with its decision-making headquarters in Madrid. Again, it is significant that *La Vanguardia* is the newspaper that devoted fewest articles to the Catalan electoral contest.

> Televisions are the main source of mass information that affects the social, political and motivational processes of the voting decisions

If we focus on the big-audience television channels in Catalonia, the coverage of campaigns for the Catalan Parliament presents a number of characteristics that require a more complex and nuanced diagnostic effort. Table 2 shows the comparative results of the quantification of units of information present in the television news of greatest audience in Catalonia. In the last week of October 2003, the totality of these news

Table 2. News coverage by the leading TV channels during the month leading up to elections for the Catalan Parliament (1995-2006)
(Number of news units in the evening news programmes on television)*

	Pre-campaign				Campaign				Total			
	1995	1999	2003	2006	1995	1999	2003	2006	1995	1999	2003	2006
Antena 3	4	3	2	10	24	65	38	61	28	68	40	71
Tele 5	10	6	1	4	25	40	14	12	35	46	15	16
TVE1	9	14	1	7	32	104	74	72	41	118	75	79
TVE-Cat	20	52	39	53	60	89	80	77	80	141	119	130
TV3	39	52	55	38	78	95	78	88	117	147	133	116

* The TVE-Catalunya news programme is the one broadcast at midday since this was the only one of the Catalan Circuit of TVE (Spanish Television) that was comparable with the evening news programmes of the other channels.

broadcasts reached an average audience of almost two million viewers. This overall figure is in keeping with the surveys done on the main source of political information declared by the Catalan electorate, which was television for more than 70 per cent.

Thus, there can be no doubt that television is the main source of mass information that affects the different social, political and motivational processes with regard to electoral behaviour and voting decisions. How, then, are the coverage and follow-up of electoral campaigns for the Parliament of Catalonia structured by the leading television channels in Catalonia?

Table 2 clearly shows a two-way split or separation, one between the channels in the Catalan domain and those in the Spanish domain and the other between the public and private channels. The Catalan channels broadcasting in Catalan (TV3 and TVE-Catalunya) are the ones with the widest and most complete coverage of the four election campaigns under study. The contrast with the two private Spanish channels (Antena 3 and Tele 5) is very considerable, especially in some cases (for example, 88 units of TV3 for 12 of Tele 5 for 2006; 80 of TVE-Catalunya for 38 of Antena 3 for 2003). Channel 1 of TVE, a public entity with Spanish coverage, is situated in an intermediate position (while in 1999 it notched up 104 units, in 1995 the figure was only 32). However, the most eloquent contrast becomes patent in the two weeks prior to the campaign, which is to say the latter fortnight of the pre-campaign (opened at the time of calling elections): the Spanish state channels practically ignored the Catalan electoral process. For example, in 2003, the three Spanish state channels together and over a period of two weeks only devoted four units of news to the Catalan electoral process, while the figures for TV3 and TVE-Catalunya are 55 and 39 news units respectively.

"CATALAN OBEDIENCE" A FACTOR OF BALANCE

It has been possible to keep confirming this contrast or split under different headings and with a range of nuances throughout the four campaigns studied here. For example, in that of 1995, of the five heads of the lists (Pujol, Nadal, Colom, Ribó and Vidal-Quadras), only Pujol managed to attain a marked presence throughout the month prior to the elections (including the campaign) on Antena 3 (8 appearances) and on Tele 5 (11 appearances); the rest only managed one appearance or none at all.

In other words, for the 24 per cent of Antena 3 viewers and the 17.9 per cent that Tele 5 had at the time in Catalonia, apart from Pujol, there were no other Catalan leaders... As for the campaign of 2006, there was very little change in this situation.

Another important indicator that should be borne in mind is the distribution of time and attention given by each channel to the different options and candidates. In general and in view of the experience of these years, it is only thanks to the electoral obligations of the public service (in accordance with the Electoral Law) that all the parliamentary groupings now have proportional amounts of time (the "electoral blocs" regulated by the Electoral Board and discussed by professionals in recent years) in the news programmes of the public channels.

Longitudinal research across the four campaigns confirms the conclusions, in this regard, of the first study of the 1995 campaign. We confirmed then that the maximum intensity of electoral coverage corresponded to the television channels that shared the dual characteristic of being public and under the autonomous jurisdiction of the Generalitat, which is to say TV3 and TVE-Catalunya. The daily average of electoral information on these two channels during the campaign tends to coincide with the number of political groups in parliament. In contrast, the intensity is much less in the private stations and they still tend to focus their scant attention on only some candidates, the best-known ones (as was the case of Jordi Pujol until the campaign of 1999), and on the political formations most likely to interest the Spanish public. The case of TVE1 would merit a special study because of its double condition as a (Spanish) state and public channel, frequently subject to directives of governments in Madrid (PSOE government until 1996, PP government until 2004 and, again, PSOE as of 2004).

In the case of generalist and highly influential radio stations, everything leads one to suppose that a model of election coverage resembling that of generalist television would apply, although with some variation. The only systematic study of the radio in electoral campaigns that could uphold this hypothesis is the one we carried out for the 1999 elections. The sample included morning news programmes of the four most influential generalist stations: Catalunya Ràdio, COM Ràdio, SER and COPE. The conclusions on the kinds of radio coverage of the campaign highlighted the fact that only the Catalan public channels, which is to say Catalunya Ràdio and COM Ràdio, offered constant reporting of the pre-campaign and the campaign and that, while these two stations maintained a certain balance between the different political formations, the two private channels exacerbated the confrontation between CiU and PSC-CpC*.

TWO MODELS OF INTERMEDIATION

In this exploratory essay, I have focused only on the operations and characteristics of the coverage of Catalan electoral campaigns by the most influential branches of the media. However, there is a whole diverse series of indicators to be explored, both

* The former reference is Convergència i Unió (Convergence and Union), which consists of two parties, the centrist/conservative Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya and the smaller Unió Democràtica de Catalunya (along Christian Democratic lines); the latter is the Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (Socialists' Party of Catalonia) and Ciutadans pel Canvi (Citizens for Change) [translator].

quantitative and qualitative. By way of a first inventory I should like to mention some of these indicators that have been examined in studies dealing with, for example, the big issues of the electoral and pre-electoral agenda; the appearance of the heads of the election lists in television news; the prioritisation (priming function) of some candidates and parties in news summaries and front pages of the newspapers; the more or less camouflaged party bias of newspapers as expressed in editorials and opinion columns, et cetera. I believe that it is highly likely that a comparative study of these indicators would reinforce, with resounding proof, the basic hypothesis argued here respecting the biased structure in Catalonia of the media system of political and electoral intermediation.

In brief, the media scenario of political intermediation present in Catalonia since the Transition presents a structure of media facilities that may favour biased intervention in the processes of intermediation. Independently of the use of language —also a determinant matter in mediation, but not directly dealt with in electoral studies— it would seem that two models of media intermediation are profiled: on the one hand is that represented by the daily newspapers, with decision-making structures (business and professional) mainly located in Catalonia itself and, on the other hand is the hegemonic model of television with decision-making centres (public and private) in Madrid, with Spanish coverage and tending to consider that the elections to the Catalan Parliament are of a secondary nature and only worthy of attention if they might affect the formation of majorities in Madrid (the high rate of abstentionism in the Catalan elections might be deemed to be a direct effect of such media coverage). An intermediate model between these two poles could be what I have described in the case of radio. We are yet to learn in greater depth how the incipient model of political and electoral mediation emerging with the Internet is evolving and therefore how to define it.

> The media scenario of political intermediation in Catalonia presents a structure of media facilities that may favour biased intervention

To sum up, the branches of the media with significant social influence in Catalonia are not neutral, indifferent or innocent actors in the electoral contests over forming the government of the Generalitat but, as I have attempted to show, they adopt a role not just of intermediaries but also of interested parties, frequently with concerns that are external to the governance of Catalonia. This is why the political parties and the men and women who are citizens of Catalonia should be aware of the price —both electoral and political— that they may have to pay for the deficiencies of the scenario that pertains to the intermediation of the influential branches of the mass media II

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Antonio Ramírez

Between raw and cooked

The book without mediators

Is there a future for bookshops? The author, an independent bookseller, answers the question starting out from the supposed but unsubstantiated preference of readers for the digital book while also championing the role of mediator played by the bookseller in the book's path from author to reader. Availing himself of the metaphor of the raw text, which is to say that born to flow immediately through the Web, as opposed to the cooked text, which is the result of a publishing process, the author challenges several of the clichés about the digital future.

Some weeks ago, during the last Frankfurt Book Fair, a survey carried out among a thousand professionals in the sector pinpointed 2018 as the year in which the digital book would definitively prevail over the paper book.

The significance of this hypothesis on the immediate future of the book is not so much whether the date is right or not as the fact that within the publishing world this is taken as something incontrovertible. Many managers in the big book business no longer see this is as a more or less credible forecast but rather accept it as a true diagnosis and a strategic line of work, one of those vanishing points that enable them to mark out their plan of action for the coming years. Hence, we're no longer talking of the future but of the present; not of something that might happen but something for which many people, within the trade, are already working. This means that they are investing

| **Hace mucho (A long time ago),** Carmen Calvo (2008). Mixed media, collage, photography, 100 x 80 cm

Many observers assume that, just as we have become used to reading blogs, web pages and e-mails, we shall soon be preferring to read books on the screen rather than on paper

and adapting their businesses along these lines while at once reducing or dismantling any leftovers that are still linked to the traditional system.

Nevertheless, it cannot be asserted that this strategic change is in response to a confirmed preference among readers for the digital book. On the contrary, it has got ahead of them and is trying to drag them along, which is what I shall endeavour to show.

There is no doubt that a new way of reading electronic texts has consolidated: a good part, or the majority, of our readings only exist in our computers. Many observers assume that, just as we have become used to reading blogs, web pages and e-mails, we shall soon be preferring to read books on the screen rather than on paper; it's just a matter of time and sorting out a few technical details. From the standpoint of the authors, agents and publishers, the main concern lies in the need to perfect rigorous control over authors' rights, but nobody doubts that their reservations will eventually be overcome.

The burgeoning presence of electronic texts circulating on the Web, something unimaginable just three years ago, obliges us to rethink the book as one more element in a global ecosystem that is being transformed with the force of a mountain gale, and we must pay a lot of attention to the border between the new ways of reading and the reading of what we can keep calling a "book", whether digital or paper. Here, we might distinguish a great bifurcation, a fracture that determines two clearly differentiated spheres:

a) The circulation of immediate, *liquid* texts, those born to flow. These are texts that, the moment they emerge from the author's keyboard, are offered to a multitude of readers, are propagated while being transformed into new readings and rewritten *ad infinitum*, without recognised authorship, without stability, without our ever being able to be sure that what we have read today is the same as what others read yesterday, but without anyone giving a damn. I refer to e-mail, blogs, chats and discussion groups and the texts of more or less lasting, or totally ephemeral, websites. These are texts written to flow, to be propagated, texts that break with the classical sense of the concept of *publish*: make public. Nowadays, for these *liquid* texts, to publish means being thrust in draft form on to the Web and being open to manipulation, copying and perpetual reuse. We might call these born-to-flow pieces "raw texts". Rather than from an act of writing, they emerge from the circulation itself, not starting out from an emitter to go to a receiver but immediately partaking of a world of reading-writing that devours them and regurgitates them with no chance of continuity.

b) In contrast with the flow of *raw* texts, we could situate the circulation of *cooked* texts, which is to say those submitted to the procedures of publication in which many co-authors have taken part, from the literary agent and editor through to the layout and

> graphic designers, the illustrator and so on. In this regard, edit and publish would mean, more than anything else, fixing a form and establishing an "authorship", by virtue of which the text will be attributed to a creator, a beneficiary of any returns and also the person who is legally in charge, without whose consent the text cannot be subsequently modified. We can be sure that today we are reading the same thing that, for example, millions of people have read over one and a half centuries. Who would dare to change the end of *War and Peace* and, out of sympathy with Prince Andrei, spare him from death? Since the Renaissance, editing and publishing a book has been, above all, a collective task that brings together such basic functions as selecting the text, fixing it and giving it form. The idea of cooking could be a good metaphor for understanding the process of publishing. Strictly speaking, we could only keep saying "book" to refer to the completed results of a process of publishing thus understood: coherent textual unities, with their own identity, more or less stable and finite, of recognised and protected authorship, independently of the support material in which they circulate. It's saying something like "Book: set of cooked texts".

This is a metaphor that enables us to think that, apart from the support, the important thing in the ecosystem as a whole would be to distinguish the sphere of the *raw*, of the texts born to flow, from the other sphere in which prevail the *cooked* texts, those that are forged to remain stable. If we accept that the great bifurcation occurs between these two spheres, while we are in the *cooked* sphere, the difference between paper and digital formats would be a minor detail; here, the most important thing, whatever the case, would be discerning between the best publishers and the most vulgar ones, determining if the methods of preparation and temperature of cooking have been the most apposite.

Yet, what does it mean to accept this transition, without any continuity in sight, from paper to digital? Can we be sure, as many within the publishing industry have ventured, that the transformation of the classical format will not radically alter the conditions for creating and disseminating literature and the humanistic essay? Can we believe, as many within the world of the book do, that if we hold out in the sphere of the *cooked*, continuity is guaranteed? Will the publisher of the future be a simple "manager of dematerialised information" that bears no relation with physical objects?

We accept that what happens in the sphere of the *raw* is something else. Utterly diverse artistic expressions and activities, frequently a long way from tradition, emerge here: compositions where texts are joined with video images or soundtracks, many-voiced creations in continuous transformation, chains of messages, discussion forums, activists' blogs and protest pages that are able to mobilise thousands, change a certain policy, upset elections or threaten to bring down a government. These are hitherto unknown phenomena that are, in many aspects, a long way from literary creation and humanist reflection such as we have known them to date.

Let us leave the *raw* world for a moment and dwell on the circulation of *cooked* texts. There is at least one front in which the digital option has advanced almost without opposition: the specialised publication of books and reviews of a scientific and technical nature. In this domain, in just over five years, the publishing panorama has completely changed: a lot of specialist scientific reviews linked with universities or research centres

are no longer published on paper and are now only available in digital format. True, the traditional publishing model was totally unsustainable because of the high publishing costs along with the scant number of extremely costly subscriptions (most taken out by university libraries). However, more than anything else, what has really speeded up the change has been the existence of the three big companies that prevail in the world market of technical, legal and scientific publication (Thomson, Wolters Kluwer and Reed Elsevier). After hefty investments in technology, they have completely managed to take over this branch of publishing tending to digital format. Paper has not put up any kind of resistance here and the advances have been as spectacular as they are irreversible.

Many researchers (historians, sociologists and philologists) have taken the view that the model of digital scientific publishing could be an alternative to the deficiencies of traditional humanistic publishing, where it is increasingly difficult to publish monographs and doctoral theses. At the same time, projects like the enormous digital library of Google Book Search, in which thousands of millions of dollars have been invested in producing digitalised versions of the collections of the leading American and some European libraries, look like some kind of panacea. This project will not only make it possible to access almost any book but, moreover, thanks to the power of its search algorithms, it offers infinite possibilities for retrieving information. In its beginnings, the project was very enthusiastically received although, at the same time, a good number of publishers, especially in Europe, were looking askance at it since not only works in the public domain were being turned out in digital format but even works that were subject to payment of rights. The project was partially checked by this determined opposition which ended up in the courts; on 28th October 2008, the dispute was settled when agreement was reached in which Google undertook to pay 45 million dollars for the copyright of already-digitalised books as well as a proportional part of the sales of the new digital books. In fact, on second thoughts, this is a trifle. Now that stumbling block has been cleared away, the project forges ahead. With its development, the foundations of the great universal library, so often imagined by the poets, would have been fully laid. According to Google estimates, we are talking about between seven and ten million scanned books with strategically indexed and classified content: an immense part of humanity's cultural heritage accessible with an immediacy and a precision that no visionary could ever have imagined. However, all this is now in the hands of a single company, thanks to the computational power of its search engines, which give it an unbeatable advantage in comparison with other analogous projects of constructing digital libraries. Some competitors as powerful as Microsoft have abandoned the project.

> Since the Renaissance, editing and publishing a book has been a collective task that brings together basic functions: selecting the text, fixing it and giving it form

There is, perhaps, a hazy point in the digital whole that does not yet seem to have been cleared up: we are better at recovering and conserving a bibliographic heritage

that once existed as paper, but how will new values be added to this? How will future readers find the new books they'll want to read in this nearby, immense, infinite digital universe, in which locating whatever text from whatever place will always be possible and immediate? The usual answer is that people simply trust in the possibilities offered by the search engines themselves. This, however, is to lapse into a series of clichés that would seem worthy of reflection:

The first of these clichés we detect has a great deal to do with the way in which people and books find each other today: we tend to believe that, when choosing something new to read, readers know exactly what they are looking for.

This is a hypothesis derived from the scientific and technical model of reading, one that is also much favoured among university philologists and researchers. The specialist and student always know what they have to read because the selfsame texts they have read indicate and lead them on to the new reading they need to do. Moreover, in a digital setting, it is easier to locate and follow other researchers working in the same field so as to have a first-hand acquaintance with their work. Yet outside the university world hardly anyone reads in keeping with these specialist's guidelines. Ordinary readers rarely know with any exactitude what they are going to enjoy reading and only have at their disposal the changing indications and figurations of diffuse, nebulous expectations. Here it is the book that delimits and creates the *topos*. Only when the reading is finished will readers be able to formulate the motives that led to it. Readers will not be able to say, then, that they have set out to find such-and-such a book because of knowing that this was the one that best coincided with certain previously known needs. The contrary is closer to reality: it is the book that has invented its own need; already-read books are the ones that enable us to put a name to our expectations and not vice-versa.

Such appraisal is valid for a very wide-ranging set of "ordinary" readings, from novels read purely for entertainment, through self-exploration publications, through to high-quality works of literature and critical essays, readings in which the reader makes choices guided, more than anything else, by suggestions and intuitions and in which the book has not been located by means of some clear prescription. Book and reader meet in a free and diffuse wandering in which difficulties, limitations and opportunity also play a part. Here, finding is not locating. The logic of finding is not that of need. It is the logic of desire, which is impossible to lock into in some numerical algorithm.

The paper book comes equipped with a set of cogs with the function of enabling the orientation of the reader, offering indications for the choice of coming reading. They are effective in being invisible mechanisms, always there before us but barely noted and their functioning seems to be totally natural. A good part of these mechanisms are inscribed in the material form of the book and are inextricable from it. The peculiarities of the book's form —typography, formats, illustrations, colours, editorial symbols, collections, jacket bands, flap or back-cover blurbs— constitute a particular language with which publishers deploy their eloquence in an attempt to seduce the attentive reader. The meanings and rules pertaining to this language have been defined over centuries of history, shaping a meaningful landscape for readers wherein finding something new to read is more a game than anything else, a moment of pleasure. We then wonder what

price we shall have to pay if we forsake all this, not only because we shall be dispensing with a complex cultural heritage but also because its function in the free system overall, such as we know it today, is much more decisive that it might seem at first sight.

II Another cliché we should ponder is this idea that the closer the creator and receiver are, the more direct the relationship between author and reader will be, the purer and more diaphanous the reception of the work.

In the way people think about the literary opus, the author-cum-creator is generally the object of fascination. This comes from an old romantic idea but, in particular, it justifies the principle on which rests the economic crux of the modern book: how to transform creations of the imagination into objects of consumption. For literary agents, for politicians who are concerned to exalt the national culture, for the mass media in quest of memorable personalities, for public relations people in the publishing milieu and, above all, for the creators themselves, the author is everything. Only thus, the work, the brilliant product of his or her unique mind, can be turned into something of exchange value. From this almost mythical standpoint, it is thought that if between creator and receiver, between author and reader, there have been intermediaries —editors, distributors, critics, booksellers— this has only been a result of the inevitable and archaic exigencies of the paper book. It is therefore easy to postulate that everything would be richer and more fluid without them.

Yet perhaps it's not so simple. Things appear in another light if we contemplate the path from author to reader not as a flat trajectory in which the stages to be got through are exclusively of a practical nature but as a complex, open process in which many mediating agents intervene. By mediators, I mean agents that are capable of transforming the value of the mediated object by means of their intervention. In other words, the book that ends up in the reader's hands is never the same work that flowed from the "pen" of the author, and not just because it has undergone transformation with each stage of the publishing process: it appears alongside other works in the same collection, suddenly being presented in relation with a series of already-established works and authors, the cover illustration evoking this or that genre, the typography bringing to mind a certain tradition or, on the contrary, calling up the desire for renewal and change, while the blurb on the back cover or jacket band cite other writers known to the reader. Taken as a whole, they are gestures that transform the book: they are like layers of value added at each step, wrappings of symbols that distinguish one book from another, thanks to which readers finds the book they want.

It is precisely where the reader is confronted with new things to read, in the bookshop, that the book keeps undergoing new transmutations. The bookseller is that silent intermediary with the job —rarely recognised— of always being at the readers' side, trying to see the book with their eyes. Far from being a shaper of canons, the bookseller has the peculiarity of being able to associate readings, to suggest continuity between apparently distant texts, to create familiarities that could not be formulated any other way, to reveal hierarchies that can only be hinted at. The bookseller's is not a reading that wonders only about the stylistic properties of a text, the coherence of its plot, its aesthetic qualities; booksellers attempt to anticipate the eventual reading that is to be done by a set of people whose tastes and reading itineraries they are able to make out. Booksellers probe the prior requisites demanded by a text, the other readings it evokes, imagining it in different

reading situations, appraising possible "good-neighbour" relations, situating it within an immense set of pigeonholes that makes it possible to organise and classify this imaginary library shared with the community of readers with whom they are conversing. In this sense, the bookseller is not so much someone who prescribes as someone who propitiates, a kind of procurer who keeps weaving intrigues and setting traps, taking advantage not only of the texts but also, and very particularly, of everything that surrounds them. The particularities of the form of the book also constitute the bookseller's raw material.

III A third cliché that must also be challenged is that of taking for granted the notion that, if one book stands out from the rest, it is only due to its own qualities. I have noted that, in the system of classical publishing, the book passes through a number of portals that bring about its transformation. However, not all books do this with equal good fortune. The publishing system in itself is a mechanism of selection and hierarchisation, with all its defects and distortions: its essence is having a set of filters with which to detect and bring out, among an infinity of private (raw) texts, those that are worthy of being made public, refining them, fixing them and bestowing a form on them. In its beginnings, a book is just a material object but, once in circulation, on certain occasions it is transformed and it is "ordained", which is to say it becomes the receiver and bearer of symbolic values, values that are shared and recognised by a more or less extended group of readers. Again, on many other occasions —the majority— the book ends up as the dregs of paper pulp.

> Will the transformations of the classical format radically alter the conditions for creating and disseminating literature and the humanistic essay?

The devices of the modern system of book distribution make it possible to single out one book from among other candidates, conferring on it a certain recognised status that is acceptable to everyone without the need for any kind of imposition. Their efficacy is the bedrock on which the whole system rests. We have often said that this is unjust or blind, but in the way it has worked, when it has always stressed its open character, it has been the unpredictable and hitherto ungovernable result of the intervention of numerous unconnected agents without any one of them being sufficiently powerful to prevail over the rest. With all its failures and fissures, with all the tensions between the more commercial and the more exigent poles, the most audacious, creative and memorable literature of the 20th century was built on this. To a great extent, these mechanisms are inextricable from the paper book, from its possibilities, from the wealth and complexity its materiality allows or, in other words, from the place the book-as-object has always occupied in the memory and imagination of readers.

To sum up, the paper book is not so much an object as a system. We might see it as a three-dimensional universe: the first dimension would consist of the texts themselves, stable, finite, forged to stay and to endure. This is the dimension of imagination; the second is the dimension of memory: it is the moment of the form, of the materiality of the book as language, of the book-as-object as a recipient for evocation and memory; the third is the dimension of

culture (in the anthropological sense), of the book as a social bond, as a material good that is at once a shared social value, in agreement and in dispute. Here the book is a commodity that is bought and sold while yet simultaneously able to come to be the bearer of cultural signs and symbols, which we can use in order to speak with others from our place in the world.

Hence the book universe would constitute a landscape in relief, its valleys and hills representing hierarchies, zones of emphasis and shadows, crossed through by paths full of signs and warnings, delimited by boundaries beyond which stretches what has been discarded and forgotten. Over centuries of history, new readers have been shaped in becoming familiar with this landscape, slowly finding their bearings. Perhaps it might be possible to reduce it to a flat surface of only one dimension: an infinite and undifferentiated continuum of texts. But then it would be something very different. The mechanisms that make it possible to shape new readers, that are able to highlight certain works while overlooking others and that enable thousands of strangers to share the reading of the same stories would have to be reinvented through and through.

> The peculiarities of the book form constitute a particular language with which publishers deploy their eloquence in an attempt to seduce the attentive reader

It is not that I am trying to defend the system of marketing of the paper book in its present version. On the contrary, in its most recent evolution it is showing tendencies such as rampant overproduction, neglect of the bookseller's collector's item and submission to the chain and department stores, to which one cannot give support, perverse tendencies that look like an implicit recognition that this way of doing business is no longer sustainable. They make one suspect that they themselves will be the motor of self-destruction.

The truth is that neither the new ways of distributing the paper book nor the model of business that is proposed for the digital book seems very encouraging. In neither case can we be sure that the principles that have permitted freedom, risk and creativity will be able to survive. There are rather alarming symptoms that invite us to think the contrary: in particular the omnipresence of the two great global agents (Google, Amazon) that, annihilating everything with their computational (and financial) power, aspire to oligarchic control of the book chain.

In reality it is as if we had to accept that the critical exercise of writing, of reading and reflection in freedom will only be possible in the domain of the *raw*, among texts born to flow, to be ephemeral and volatile, in a kind of digital *samizdat* in which everything is yet to be invented, a possibility that strikes us, the "archaic" ones who were shaped in our readings of Plato and the classics, as an aporia. One wonders whether the sphere of *cooked* books (except perhaps the technical, scientific and academic ones) might not be heading for a cul-de-sac, towards inevitable strangulation: maybe on the point of blowing the old system sky high but without yet disposing of any alternative to the subtlety and complexity of a set of cogs that we have always ignored because it was so evident II

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focus

"Translation: beyond the dialogue between cultures"

Narcís Comadira

On translating and being translated

I know I will annoy many writers and readers if I say that being read and understood —communicating, as they say— is by no means the first aim of literature. The first aim of literature is the construction of the work. It is accomplishing the writer's obsession to create an artifact, in this case a literary one, that will function as well as possible. It is feeling the satisfaction of choosing and combining words, of tightening up syntax, of moulding a form: the fulfilment of constructing a work of art. Later, and only later, comes the reader. And this reader is, first of all, the writer.

The writer constructs for the pleasure of doing so and then, in part as a reader, to understand the world and understand him- or herself. The writer gives shape to deep experience and hence objectively possesses it. When all this is done, then, and only then, the reader who is other than the writer enters the scene, the invited reader, first of all in the author's own linguistic milieu. Next come growing numbers of invited readers and thus translation into other languages. Translating a text into other languages to increase the number of readers is important. But the role of translating in literature is much more important than increasing the number of readers.

In fact, translation comes into play earlier. It is there from the very start. Writing, for a writer, is to translate his own individual language, full of idiosyncratic idioms, family twists, semantic

deviations, slang —spur of the moment or baggage of education— into a language that, while still conserving the warmth and vitality of this personal language, is to be understood by all those who belong to the same linguistic milieu. Writing, then, is translating. And once the work is written, the reader from the same linguistic milieu must also translate it from the common language into his personal language so as to understand the text in a way that is alive, warm, moving —the things that really count. Reading is also translating, translating within the same language.

Next, so that the form in which we have written can be read and understood in other linguistic settings, the work must undergo the process that, strictly speaking, we call translation. The *form* in which we have written the work needs to be *transformed* by somebody so that it will function within another system of signs, and hence it needs somebody to transfer it into another language. But it isn't enough for the translator merely to know the language from which the work is being translated; what must also be known, as well as possible, is the personal language and idiosyncratic features of the author whose work is being translated, not only to offer the general sense of the common language in which the author has established the text, but also its more intimate sense. Then, evidently, the translators must know the language into which the translation is being done and be capable of offering in this language what they have deeply understood. Here too, a double translation must be made, into the common language of the translator's linguistic milieu of course, but also into the translator's own literary sensibility, for only through personal linguistic idiosyncrasy can the translator provide a faithful rendition of the first translation that the author has produced in the act of writing. All in all, it seems complicated. And is. It is difficult to translate successfully. However, the risk must be taken, and one must dare to wish to be translated because, without translation, one's works would be no more than a closed exercise within one's own system, which, in the long term, can be debilitating. And while it is well known that a language is revitalised by importing the forms of other languages through translation, I also think that when a language has to go into another language, it very often discovers its own intrinsic deficiencies and this awareness is useful for forcing the language to find forms of genuine enrichment, fertile flexibilities, transmittable constructions and idioms that confer nuances.

Translating and being translated are indispensable for the healthy development of a language and indispensable, too, for being able to fine-tune one's own language so as to acquire an ever more sensitive instrument for the first aim of writing I mentioned at the outset: the construction of a form. Translating and being translated mean that the mental, instrumental, sentimental and cognitive fields of a language can expand, and that, in the long term, the language that has been able to translate and to be translated is now better equipped to slip into increasingly subtle forms, into forms that read the world and that understand it in ever-greater depth. Translating and being translated mean advancing closer and closer to true global understanding, an understanding that does not eschew idiosyncrasies, an understanding that does not reduce the world to one single and thus impoverished language and to one single reductive and primary way of thinking. Such a reduction might seem useful for exploitation but only because it is founded on illiteracy. The language of the world has to be translation. Anything else would be simplification, impoverishment, intellectual abjection. Anything else would be to squander the immense richness of the world's personal and linguistic idiosyncrasies, and revert to utter barbarism II

Plaza en Venecia (A square in Venice), Carmen Calvo (2007)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 61,5 x 40 cm

Narcís Comadira, Catalan poet, translator and painter.

Arnau Pons

Filler words

L'une des merveilles du monde —et peut-être la merveille des merveilles—, c'est la faculté des hommes de dire ce qu'ils n'entendent pas, comme s'ils l'entendaient, de croire qu'ils le pensent cependant qu'ils ne font que se le dire.

Paul Valéry, *Cahiers* I, pp. 452-453

In the jargon of translation —understood in a certain way— the "filler" is something added to the poem as it is being translated, in the sense of its consisting of words without reference or equivalent in the original, in order to resolve some break in the rhyme or gap in the metrics. The intention, then, if not ironic or cynical, is to alter as little as possible the meaning of the text with an injection that, whatever the case, does affect its materiality. I now turn to this resort to designate another kind of filling that does not directly pad out texts being translated, but that is used instead to pump up the discourse about the problems of translation with philosophical, theological or extra-literary concern. The operation would not be disturbing if it did not obdurately oust authors from their works and if it did not set the content of texts a long way from the singular conditions in which they were conceived and constructed.

After the stunning success of the notion of *otherness* and the figure of the *Other*, especially after the 1980s and 1990s, interest in translation —in view of everything it poses and everything it arouses— has been growing considerably by virtue of its being the place *par excellence*, in the domain of language, in which the reception of this so-called otherness is put to the test. Even though it is fundamentally defined by a foreign language,

La poesía está en otro sitio (Poetry is somewhere else), Carmen Calvo (2008). Mixed media, collage, photography, 29 x 24 cm

> Translation is the place par excellence, in the domain of language, in which the reception of otherness is put to the test

the kind of language that this selfsame otherness is able to create, as a subject, tends to slip out of sight within the language that identifies it in the first place. In other words, often lost sight of, when people are talking about translation, it is not only the historicity of the work that a specific otherness is holding out to us, but also the sovereignty and particularity of the author, which is all otherness when organised in language and frequently counterposed against a range of different languages (not necessarily foreign ones but, certainly and perforce, strange). The question I should like to raise here is to what point is recognition of the hand of the artist who critically intervenes in the production of a work a matter of interest. Everything changes when one considers the stance taken or the point of view of a subject who is writing in the face of the ideologies of his times.

To offer examples of what I mean, I shall focus on two short books that were translated into Catalan quite recently and that are quite significant in the different ways in which they approach the need for translation. The first is *La llengua nòmada* (The Nomad Text) by Norman Manea, which was published by Arcàdia and translated by Coral Romà i García from the Italian translation, as the author stipulated. The other work, *Sobre la traducció*[1], brings together three lectures given by Paul Ricoeur and was published by Publicacions de la Universitat de València in the translation of Guillem Calaforra, who has also written an introduction.

EXILES WOUNDED AND TRANSFERRED

Norman Manea was deported at the age of five. Like most of Bucovina's Jews, he was held in Trans-Dniester concentration camp during the Second World War. He was there for four years, from 1941 to 1945, until being liberated by the Red Army. Although his mother tongue is Romanian, this experience and the fact of being born in Bucovina links him —and it is Manea himself who expresses this throughout his book— to the figure of Paul Celan, whose parents died in Trans-Dniester as a result of the same deportation. Manea's reflections in *La llengua nòmada* on his relationship with Romanian in his writer's exile and the sensibility with which he does so reveal, however, everything that separates him from Celan. Suffice it to read one of the paragraphs devoted to him.

> After the flight to the West, Paul Celan renounced the free market of the versatile values of post-war cultural consumption to find the discredited, obscure language of the inexpressible, the language that trauma had turned intransitive. He dwelled in the wound of perplexity that would never heal, emitting only lonely, discontinuous signals in a deaf-mute code

[1] Published in English, in the translation of Eileen Brennan, as *On Translation* by Routledge, 2006. Any quotes in English that follow in this text are from this edition [translator].

> of suffering. This rejection of rhetoric and rationality (and hence of "rationalisation", of resolution as well) was, in fact, the silenced language of cataclysm, which shortly afterwards was to be labelled in the contest[2] of the commemorations, as the Holocaust. [pp. 20-21]

If anything defines Celan's poetic endeavour at the outset, it is precisely his firm resolve to confront the event through a virtuous struggle against the inexpressible and the unspeakable and through a compulsion of writing that achieves exactness and appropriateness through a language of art that is not in the least discreditable since it make it possible to analyse everything, including the kinds of discourse that haunt the ineffable.

As a reader and translator of Paul Celan, I find, then, that the above-cited words of Manea raise a whole string of questions, while I am also assailed by the fundamental question of whether it is possible, today, to take up any kind of position before the declarations and texts of the camp survivors, in view of the treatment they are given in the intellectual domain. Indeed, this question can be strung out still more since it also pertains to the relationship between poetry and extermination. As for Celan and what Manea has said about him, we might wonder to what extent it is possible to disclose the sense of such a horrifying poem as "Einem, der vor der Tür stand" (To one who stood before the door), from *Die Niemandsrose* (To no-one's rose)[3].

The fact that Norman Manea hugely values Celan's autonomy and critical conscience encourages me to express my thoughts with the utmost frankness. So, shouldn't the poet Celan legitimately be situated along the lines of a Heine and thus be considered as an heir of the *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment), against the gloomy Germanic darkness and mists and always in favour of the emancipation and critical spirit of the artist? To what end, then, is he presented as an enemy of "rationality"? Throughout his work, muteness, rather than a pathological effect, becomes expressive power —and hence writeable: language is emitted here and is adapted, because this mutism is contributed by those who no longer have a voice— read, for example the poem "Unten" (Below) in *Sprachgitter* (Speech-Grille).

> When talking about translation, people tends to lost sight of the historicity of the work and the particularity of the author

Again, is not all his writing perfectly interwoven within the pages of one single work, like Mallarmé's unfinished project? Why, then, does Manea define his poems as "lonely, discontinuous signals in a deaf-mute code of suffering"? Is not poetry that determination that is expressed in continuity? And is not the caesura at the service of this selfsame continuity?

There is no code in Celan that cannot be deciphered and read, just as there is no syllable that he does not have vibrating in audible tonality. The sobriety and nakedness of his language are poles apart from the pathographic, autistic and unintelligible literary project

[2] Pons has added "[sic]" in his citing of the text, which reads, "[...] en la lliça [sic] de les commemoracions [...]" – translator.

[3] See *Poesía contra poesía. Celan y la literatura*, Jean Bollack (Trotta, Madrid 2005). The original title is *Poésie contre poésie* (Presses Universitaires de France, 2001) [translator].

that Manea describes. It would have been much more just to situate that German tongue of Bucovina in its historical and social reality at the outset. Is it that the Jews who used it did not consequently defend a colossal cultural legacy that was viewed with hostility and animadversion by Romanian nationalism? Did not this same Germanic legacy endorse nihilisation? It is therefore more the a-critical basis of many of these texts than the language of the executioners that Celan relentlessly challenges. And this thoroughly affects his poetry and even that of his contemporaries[4]. In this regard, there can be no doubt that Manea shares with Celan the courage of denunciation and the firmness of dissidence, which are no longer merely political, or perhaps they are so much so that they have become an essential part of the writer's engagement. A good example of this is Manea's text "Felix Culpa" on the anti-Semitic fascism of Mircea Eliade, along with his critique of the Ceausescu's communist regime in *On Clowns: the Dictator and the Artist* (1994; published in Spanish in 2006), a book that the reader would do well to contrast with the essay by Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine, *Cioran, Eliade, Ionesco: l'oubli du fascisme* (2002). All in all, the way in which Manea speaks of Celan's poetry clearly reveals a rejection of the effort of reading that, in some way, shifts him closer to the position of a John Felstiner or a George Steiner (like them he signals trauma and suffering as cause of a deterioration of a poetry that is characterised by impotence and pointlessness, by utter isolation, instead of pondering the reflective and critical aspect of highly-elaborated art), or even an Imre Kertész (with a very similar treatment of the essay and of literature, and with his experience of communism and his training under this regime, so I can't help seeing a certain connection between Kertész's declarations on Jean Améry in his brief essays which were published in Spanish as *Un instante de silencio en el paredón. El Holocausto como cultura*[5] and Manea's comments concerning Celan).

The reader of Celan's work is thus obliged to wonder if such judgements do not perhaps respond to a feeling of unease before the "Celan effect" —as Henri Meschonnic calls it— in the milieu of contemporary Western letters. The international resonance of his poetry and the extraordinary veneration it awakens —long after his death— should be counterposed with the spurning of a true reading, from which one might suppose that access to his work is hampered, and the guilty party is a "deaf-mute code" through which he expresses, in spite of everything, its rending apart. (In other words: the fathomless versus art.) This might also justify the option Manea takes as a writer: his publishing of a brief essay concerned with the Romanian language in the context of his exile in the United States and using all the resorts of public confession, with which he solicits the complicity of the reader through feelings (a little like Kertész) when faced with the need for literary recognition in the host country (Manea lives in Manhattan and teaches at Bard College). In such a situation, translation would be experienced as the path that leads to legitimation and, at once, to uncertainty:

> With translation, the writer can better legitimate himself in linguistic terms than in everyday conversations; possibilities of deeper communication, even if indirect and

[4] Celan's relations with Enzensberger and Group 47 have been analysed by Werner Wögerbauer in his article "L'engagement de Celan" (2000), which may be consulted on-line in Spanish at:http://www.revue-texto.net/1996-2007/Lettre/Wogerbauer_Celan-es.html, and also in French: http://www.revue-texto.net/1996-2007/Lettre/Wogerbauer_Celan.html. One may also consult the chapter "Nelly Sachs" in Jean Bollack's *Poesía contra poesía*, op. cit. f.n. 3.

[5] This work was published in Hungarian as, *A gondolatnyi csend, amíg a kivégzDosztag újratölt* (1998, Moments of Silence while the Execution Squad Reloads) [translator].

[6] "The Exiled Language / *Limba exilata*".

> imperfect, with new fellow citizens but also, and above all, with potential writing colleagues, are opened up to him. / Nonetheless, the sense of "virtuality" continues to prevail. To be a writer in translation who writes, in exile, in his mother tongue? This is a frustrating hypothesis, one that increases uncertainty. [pp. 34-35]

The author of *La llengua nòmada* seems reluctantly to be conjuring up the threat posed by the "reductionist criteria of evaluation that are in vogue today, when reading time has been drastically reduced and the 'excrescences' of other literary traditions are rejected in favour of a perfectly articulated, simplified and accessible product, like any other product that is offered in the market, one that would be sold and consumed without great difficulties" (p. 42). Like *La llengua nòmada*. Why, if not, this imperative need suddenly to write with the translator in mind?

> Sometimes I have sought an antidote to this threat by trying to write, not for a virtual writer (who has become still more virtual and vague in exile) as I used to do, or for myself, as I had always done, but for... the translator. [pp. 42-43]

Even though I don't know about the private matters of Norman Manea's life —or about the snags and pitfalls in the milieu of Romanian literature— I wonder, on the basis of the paragraph I have just cited, if nowadays a Romanian writer, survivor of the camps, critical of the old communist regime and living as a university teacher in the United States, has any difficulties in publishing in Romania a text about his particular relationship with the Romanian language. Does he perhaps lose readers as a result of living outside the country and being well known and the recipient of international prizes? Is Manea today a rather undesirable, and maybe suspect writer, or one that is surreptitiously avoided in Romania so that he is obliged to write *La llengua nòmada* in Romanian (*Limba nomada*) and bring out the text in German with a different title (*Anmerkungen zur exilierten Sprache*), a text that has, however, been translated into a number of European languages (Catalan, Italian, German)? Does *La llengua nòmada* coincide with a lecture ("La lengua exiliada / Limba exilata")[6], given by Manea in April 2007 and jointly organised by the Cervantes Institute in Madrid and the Romanian Cultural Institute of Madrid? What is the difference between a nomad language and an exiled language? These are insidious, impertinent questions that I cannot help but ask if I decide to think consistently about everything that Manea conveys in this book. There can be no doubt that a writer's beatings around the bush can frequently transmit tension, dissent or unease. Who, then, is the virtual reader that Manea would most like to have: the German, the English or the Romanian person? Or would it be any of the three or all at once? What sort of poetry would Celan have written if he'd had in his head the translator who would have to translate him? Where does the fact of Manea's sharing with

> Everything changes when one considers the stance taken by a subject who is writing in the face of the ideologies of his times

Celan some biographical origins and persecution under "Nazi-Fascism" lead us if not to a demonstration of some irreducible artistic singularities, since everything starts out from the orientation the writer has decided to take with his work? Doesn't Manea go so far as to say in *La llengua nòmada* that his texts, except for a few biographical data, have nothing remotely to do with Paul Celan's *torn and deaf and dumb* project? Was not the poet of Cernauti (or Czernowitz) well aware of the effort of reading that his poems demanded once they were published? The hope in that reader who is capable of opening the bottle cast into the sea and finding the message inside, is that not very frail in Celan's case?

> A poem, being an instance of language, hence essentially dialogue, may be a letter in a bottle thrown out to sea with the —surely not always strong— hope that it may somehow wash up somewhere, perhaps on a shoreline of the heart. [Paul Celan, *Bremen Prize Speech* ,1958][7]

It is worth making clear in passing and, contrary to what Manea asserts, that Celan did not use German in Paris, not even at home with his family. It was a language that he reserved for his poetry and reading, as well as for the few visitors he received and fortuitous or concerted encounters (with Ingeborg Bachmann, Nelly Sachs, Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem). His friend Jean Bollack never managed to have a conversation with him in German in Paris, and he didn't even hear him speak German when they were both with Peter Szondi (who, in Paris, always insisted on being called Pierre). Part of *La llengua nòmada* seems to be aimed at erasing this difference of attitude regarding the mother tongue:

> In New York, I have kept living in the Romanian language,
> just as Paul Celan lived in German in Paris. [p. 41]

"Living"? He must have meant to say "writing". If that is so, what kind of life —or vitalism— oozes in Celan's German? When speaking of another link he has with Celan, the *calembour*, based on the evident asymmetry between the two languages of artistic expression that separate them, Manea has the following to say:

> With the feeling of lightheartedness and unconcern to which youth is prone, [Celan] defined that brief stay in Bucharest as "the period of *calembour*" since he often felt that he had an unjust advantage over his writer friends in Romania because of his language. [...] For me, neither my Romanian language, nor my Romanian biography was a juvenile episode. My *calembour* has continued spinning, through all my ages, with its meanings, moving from tragedy to happiness, from danger to rebirth, from apathy to creation and once again to drama, humiliation and uprooting. [p. 38]

The —rather truncated— anecdote to which he refers here, without giving the source, comes from Petre Solomon —Romanian poet and translator and friend of Celan in Bucharest from 1946 to 1947— in his book *Paul Celan. Dimensiunea românească*

■ [7] The translation into English is by Rosemarie Waldrop [translator].

Bolsito (Bag), Carmen Calvo (1999)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 190 x 122 cm

(Kriterion, 1987). Solomon presents the facts, but very differently. Celan had not spoken lightly or unconcernedly or even youthfully of that period of his early manhood in Bucharest in which word plays and frays ruled the day. As one might deduce from this paragraph, the word *calembour* does not indicate artistic frivolity (perhaps specifically Romanian and thus pertaining to a supposedly "minor" and "not very serious" culture) but it signals the agitated years of the spread of surrealism, which is to say the discovery of linguistic effervescence and the frenetic practice of an edifying juggling act. Celan's tone —it is worth pointing out— is quite another since, as Solomon tells it, he used to evoke, years later, that Romanian "season" with nostalgia and affection, expressing it in French as "*Cette belle saison des calembours*". Manea's page takes on a whole new dimension in the light of these facts.

Celan's relationship with the Romanian language is not limited to the *calembour*. Neither can it be passed off as a "juvenile episode". It is quite well known that his poem "Todesfuge" (Deathfugue) was first published in Romanian and that the translation of "Tangoul Mortii" (Death Tango) was done jointly with Petre Solomon. The word "tango" was to be replaced by "fugue" in the German version (and the implications of the change are quite significant).

The historical event is very close to the centre of this poetic irruption in Romanian. Was one to expect that he would definitively change his language, once he had decided to write some poems in Romanian, during that stay in Bucharest, even though he came from the German-speaking zone of Cernauti (Czernowitz)? Does not his book *Mohn und Gedächnis* (1952; *Poppy and Memory*, 2000) convey the particularity of the Romanian poetry of those years? Suffice it to read his versions of Gellu Naum, Virgil Teodorescu and Tudor Arghezi[8] to intuit this whole expressive backdrop. Anyone would say that the words, "Aus Asche ist dein Haar das keinen Schlaf fand" (Ashen is your hair that cannot find sleep) from a poem by Teodorescu ("Castelana înecata", 1945) were transferred, with the same headiness, to the Shulamith of the "Todesfuge".

To say that the writer is "an exile *par excellence*" and at the same time to see "exile as a human destiny" is all very beautiful —so beautiful that it has been repeated a host of times until becoming a literary commonplace that always makes a good impression. Beyond all this, the expression contributes towards neutralising the effects of history and annulling the diversity and the contradictions between the different kinds of exile (I cite a few names of writers who have had to undergo this experience to make myself clear: Osip Mandelstam, Carles Riba, María Zambrano, Aharon Appelfeld, Mahmud Darwix, Gao Xingjian). If, as Norman Manea sustains, everyone lives in exile, then the internal exile of the writer who holds out, despite everything, against the abuses of power (and here I'm thinking of Mikhail Bulgakov) becomes imperceptible— and even ineffectual. With this, the contribution and the significance of such resistance is lost and also blurred, at the same time, are the oppositions between these different singularities.

Indeed, Manea is not the only writer who believes that man always lives in exile wherever he might be. Roberto Bolaño came out with something similar, with regard to the writer, using an equally beautiful and, at once, somewhat artful formulation: literature is the writer's motherland, which can be turned on its head by saying that the true writer always lives in exile:

[8] Paul Celan, GW V, 544-577.

> Literature and exile are, I believe, two sides of the same coin,
> our destiny placed in the hands of chance."
> (*Literatura y exilio* [Literature and Exile] in *Entre paréntesis* [2004, Between Parentheses], p. 43).

I hasten to say that this is true, as I see it, if "exile" equals "autonomy", every time the writer can exercise sovereignty in writing by means of a critical consciousness that steadfastly confronts different kinds of political aggression, literary violence or collective delirium, wherever he goes and wherever he lives. However, Bolaño's declarations take on the dimension that rightly pertains to them when we bear in mind that he writes and expresses himself in a language with 400 million speakers, so that one can move from Chile to Mexico to Barcelona without having to change language when speaking, or having to be translated when writing. He himself describes it thus:

> Sometimes exile boils down to the fact that Chileans tell me I speak
> like a Spaniard, Mexicans tell me I speak like a Chilean and Spaniards
> tell me I speak like an Argentine: a matter of accent
> (*Exilios* [Exiles], ibid. p. 53).

Bolaño can brag that, for him, exile is reduced to a mere "matter of accent" because in his head he had a linguistic region that almost covers more than half the Americas and a piece of Europe. And this enables him to go still further to assert that exile, taking its nostalgic dimension into account, is wholly suspect because it turns out to be nothing but a variation on nationalism. Bolaño's arguments in this collection frequently jump around as unpredictably as a flea.

> Exile, in most cases, is a voluntary decision. Nobody obliged Thomas Mann to go into exile. Surely, the SS would have preferred Thomas Mann not to go into exile. [...] In the best of cases, exile is a literary option. Not unlike the option of writing. Nobody obliges you to write. The writer voluntarily goes into this labyrinth, for multiple reasons of course, because he doesn't want to die, or wants to be loved, etc., but he doesn't enter it because of being forced [...].
> (*Exilios* [Exiles], ibid. p. 53).

Surely Thomas Mann wouldn't have wanted to lose his German citizenship in 1936, or maybe he didn't care, since a passport doesn't count when we're talking about literature. Surely, in 1933, he'd settled in Switzerland by chance. Or to be able to write more calmly, without any headaches. At bottom, the reasons that took him out of Germany at such a significant time are not very important because writing, in being a free and voluntary act, surely doesn't compel anything and still less having to flee from a country. Surely Mann's exile in the United States was not forced but craved: a mere option among so many others. Maybe he was, in fact, just following the impulses of his errant pen. Bolaño urges us to give wing to all these speculations. In the end, though, he only covers over the facts with his vivacious and supposedly liberating discourse, one that behoves the truly "enlightened" man. I can't help comparing these articles of Bolaño on exile, which contain lines such as the following,

> The same old story intoned by Latin Americans and also by writers of other pauperised or traumatised zones insists on nostalgia or returning to their birthplace, and to me this has always sounded like a lie. For the real writer, his only homeland is his library, a library that can be in the form of shelves or in his memory. ("Literatura y exilio" [Exiles], ibid. p. 43)

with the interview by the Israeli poet Helit Yeshurun in 1996 of the Palestinian poet Mahmud Darwix (and I have this in mind because right now I'm working on the publication of *Palestina com a metàfora* [Palestine as a Metaphor]) since the same issues frequently appear, although treated with a very different sensibility. Even the words they say, which are apparently the same, only turn out to be the opposite. At most, these are nothing but artificial equivalences. Darwix is struggling all the time to be recognised as a poet and not just as a poet of the Palestinian cause:

> The personal price of exile is nostalgia and a feeling of marginality. Yet compensation comes with the creation of a world that is parallel to reality. And this also makes distance possible. Geographic distance also creates the tempo of the poem, which has no need of an immediate reaction.
> (*No torno: vinc* [I'm Not Coming Back: I'm Coming], *La Palestina com a metàfora*, translated by Eulàlia Sariola).

However, at times he dives into some ideological wildernesses that, for me, are terribly problematic:

> After the land has been taken from me and I've gone into exile, it has been transformed into the origin and objective of my spirit and my dreams. These are the causes that are external to the place that the land occupies in my work. The symbol of the homeland. This land is all nostalgia and the dreams of return. But it shouldn't be seen only as a place. It is also the land of the world and that, too, is basic in my poetry. Land is a synthesis: it is the fount of poetry, matter and also language. Land is the physical existence of poetry. [Ibid]

The closing pages of *La llengua nòmada* insist, over and over again, on the "apprenticeship of exile, which is life itself", as a "preparation" for death, which is seen as the "last exile". These are ponderings, which leave a teleological, almost gnostic wake behind them or, better said, they are directly inspired in the 12th century monastic attitude of Hugues de Saint-Victor:

> The adventure of being uprooted and of expropriation acquires new modulations. / The discovery and assimilation of the novelty ameliorates the crisis and confers on the neophyte always changing portions of the happiness of being alive, of surviving but also simultaneously brings him a more dramatic awareness of his condition prior and subsequent to the particular exile: the original one. In this basic premise of precariousness, the exile again finds himself with, without finding himself, all those who are like him, however different they are. / The neophyte takes possession of the different fragments of the offer [sic][9] with which he assaults the surrounding milieu. It is an invasion that is not only phonetic but also of mental provocations and stimuli that are surprising in their novelty: the shock of the unknown that envelops him. The linguistic endowment

> is enriched in a slow, sinuous process of hybridisation, as the sense [sic][10] of the new accumulations keeps revealing the surprises it conceals and which are being assimilated. / The lightened burden of the present is replaced, however, by the deep, internalised burden: acceptance of the condition of the man exiled in the world, which has no other sense than that of being the prelude to the ultramundane exile. [pp. 49-50]

Constantly speaking of God —a God that is very much the poet's— Darwix never loses sight of the specific:

> And the fact is that we are all exiles. I and the occupier both suffer exile. He is exiled in me and I am the victim of his exile. In this pleasant planet we are all neighbours, all exiles, all heading for the same human destiny, and what unites us is the need to tell this story of exile.

SQUEEZING FOREIGNNESS

The three lectures Paul Ricoeur gave on translation (the first two between 1977 and 1998, while the third, undated, one is dedicated to Jean Greisch —the Heideggerian Catholic philosopher— as an example of true ecumenical dialogue between Protestantism and Catholicism, since both Greisch and Ricoeur were interested in hermeneutics, phenomenology and translation and the close ties of all three with religion) could surely have been edited into one single text instead of being published separately in one little book in 2004. Rewriting would have condensed them and, to begin with, avoided many repetitions. Moreover, there are moments when the reader feels caught up in a spiraloid movement as if he is hardly advancing at all thanks to the disjunctives Ricoeur repeatedly raises while barely resolving anything. Is there perhaps no intention of resolving anything where Chouraki [sic][11] and Meschonnic are both cited without any kind of conflict, under the same biblical and Hebrew cover? Is it possible that such a deployment only has the aim of sinking the reader into a well of existential mystery, which only religion will manage to illuminate? In fact, Ricoeur's book presents a whole series of blind alleys in the realm of translation, as a result of the separation between languages, in order to construct, underneath it all, a kind of allegory of religions. It is as if we are wondering whether the different forms of faith are condemned to not understanding each other or if, on the contrary, there is a common denominator that might bring them together, for example belief in just one god, and within this notion the biblical one. And if this one god unites them, with what kind of ideal text should it be? What sense should be given to the comparison that formulates a "eucharistic hospitality" when speaking of translation (p. 24)? Is this not the way that a "Christian philosopher" —as Ricoeur wanted to describe himself— would perforce have to take when he is consistent with his faith? The little book *Sobre la traducció* must be

[9] Pons has added "[sic]" in his citing of the text, which reads, "El neòfit pren possession de fragments diferents de l'oferta [sic] amb què [...]" [translator].
[10] Pons has added "[sic]" in his citing of the text, which reads, "La dotació llingüística s'enriqueix, en un procés d'hibridació lent i sinuós, a mesura que el sentit [sic] de les noves acumulacions revela les sorpreses que amaga [...]" [translator].
[11] Pons has added this "[sic]". The name appears in both English and French as both "Chouraki" and "Chouraqui" [translator].

read in the context that befits it, even in the Valencian translation of this work[12]. It is thus worth recalling that one of these lectures was given at the Faculty of Protestant Theology of Paris and that Ricoeur's friend Jean Greisch teaches at the Catholic Institute of Paris, two rather conservative academic and religious training centres.

Raising the possibility of an *ideal* text —of "a third text" (p. 34)— as Ricoeur does when he speaks of translation, resorting to Plato's *Parmenides*, only to discard it, while elsewhere accepting the existence of the "pure language" (Adamic) of which Walter Benjamin speaks in his essay "The Task of the Translator" —a "magnificent text" (p. 9)[13]— is to get off on the wrong foot, even if it is to think about the paradox of translation by way of oppositions, alternatives and hypotheses without ever settling anything. One thing is that Humboldt, for example, should consider that grammatical categories and thinking of linguistic relations, in addition to the abysmal differences between languages, were universal —and thence that there should be a common functional base— and quite another is the elaboration of a discourse or of a language of art by an author subject.

The translator, too, must have these things as a writer subject, with an author subject, but not with a pure or a collective language. Or with a text in the context of a culture. Practice tells us that translation is much more complex than all that. Neither is a dictionary sufficient. Not even a rhyming dictionary.

I insist on this: there cannot be, in fact, "a third text", as Ricoeur would have it, just as there cannot be a "pure language" (Adamic) that would be "redeemed" in translation, when one is dealing with the fatal singularity of language (as is the case of poetry), for the simple reason that this singularity is organically and historically —which is to say artistically— inscribed in the continuity of a rhythm and also in a resemantisation of words. And all these operations are related with the "intention" of an author "toward the language"[14]. I mean to say that, in translating, we do not messianically aspire to a common celestial linguistic origin (which would have been lost) but we address a person (a subject and his history).

What I am talking about goes way beyond the fact that the word "silence" —as I have said on other occasions— does not say the same thing in Celan, in Riba or in Char, since this can often be conserved in translation, although at times the translator is not fully aware of it. I'm talking about the matter of sense in the sense that Jean Bollack

[12] I very concisely took into account the French original, *Sur la traduction* (Paris, Bayard, 2004) in a lecture I gave, "La reescriptura poètica?" (Poetic Rewriting?), which was published in *Reduccions* 81-82 (March 2005).

[13] Suffice to cite the following words of Benjamin: "[...] the growth of religions ripens into a higher language the seed hidden in languages" and, "To set free in his own language the pure language spellbound in the foreign language, to liberate the language imprisoned in the work by rewriting it, is the translator's task." [Both these quotes, and those that follow, are taken from Steve Rendall's translation which may be found on-line at http://www.erudit.org/revue/ttr/1997/v10/n2/037302ar.pdf last accessed 11 February 2010 - translator], while the version cited by Arnau Pons is the translation of Antoni Pous, *Art i literatura*, Vic, Eumo / Edipoies, 1984, translator]. See my critique of Benjamin's text and, on the rebound, Derrida's ideas on translation: "Hélène Cixous en mis manos: un alma arrojadiza. (Traducir a una lengua para volverla contra sí misma)" (Hélène Cixous in My Hands: a Projectile Soul. [Translating a Language to Turn It against Itself]) in the jointly-authored volume *Ver con Hélène Cixous* (Seeing with Hélène Cixous) ed. Marta Segarra. Icaria, Barcelona 2006.

[14] Szondi borrowed this concept of *Intention auf die Sprache* from Benjamin (see "The Translator's Task") after stripping it of its theological sheath, so as to analyse Celan's intent as the translator of Shakespeare's Sonnet 105. See my translation into Spanish of Peter Szondi's *Celan-Studien* (*Celan Studies*, Stanford University Press 2003): *Estudios sobre Celan* (Trotta, Madrid 2005).

De las sucias moscas (Of dirty flies), Carmen Calvo (2006)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 100 x 61 cm

approaches it. I shall offer an example that I think is quite representative. When Karen Andrea Müller presented in Barcelona the translations that she and Andreu Vidal had jointly done of Celan, she commented that they had not translated "the Shoah poems". She was saying that her anthology (Paul Celan, *Poemes*, Edicions 62, 2000) shied away from *that*. This declaration (and one must bear in mind that it is made by a German woman who did not directly experience Nazism) doesn't require much in the way of comment. Nevertheless, it is surprising that there was no reaction. The scandal is the assent. Müller is of the opinion that there are poems in which the thematisation of the camps is evident and others that deal with something else that is surely more interesting than the greatest tragedy of the European Jews in the 20th century. What is, however, the sense of the poems in this anthology? And what is the centre of gravity, once we understand that Celan never spoke of anything without at once speaking of Auschwitz?

Has Karen Müller ever been aware of what she was dealing with? That a German speaker (I mean "native" speaker) doesn't understand a good part of what she's translating shows that the matter is, at bottom, much more complicated. And, moreover, neither the unutterable nor the intensity of the versions (whatever Enric Sòria and Bartomeu Fiol may think) resolves anything.

Ricoeur never speaks of the historic or artistic subject that the author is, or of his particular language, made up of distancings. In these lectures, the *person* is absent all the time. Ricoeur is much more bothered by every language's "struggle with the secret, the hidden, the mystery, the inexpressible" since, in fact, the inexpressible initially represents "the most entrenched incommunicable, initial untranslatable" (p. 33). I cite him once more[15]: "Translators know it perfectly well: it is texts, not sentences, not words, that our texts try to translate" (p. 31). And he cannot resist, hot on the heels of this, an explicit borrowing from Humboldt with a refined reference to "visions of the world" when, for Humboldt, the expression describes, from the outset, national or collective languages. Ricoeur never gives —I repeat— as much as a single example of the *épreuve* that represents an author with his irreducible singularity. Better said, when he makes some vague reference to an author, such as Celan (by means of "the Celan effect") it is, for the umpteenth time, to blame him for the death of the "inexpressible", of the "unspeakable" (p. 29), which is a polite way of fulminating against the critical content of his texts. Like the Müller-Vidal versions (reconciling Carl Gustav Jung and Paul Celan).

The fact is that Ricoeur only has eyes for the "stranger", this radical abstract otherness. While starting out from this figure that so fascinates him, he only sees "segments" and "glossaries", which is to say general problems: "In the end the construction of the comparable expresses itself in the construction of a glossary" (p. 32). He says this, not speaking of a discipline but of François Jullien and his work as a translator from the Chinese. Yet the sinologist Jean François Billeter has conclusively shown in *Contre François Jullien* (2006) what political effects are derived from an attentive reading of both Jullien's essays and his translations.

Just as the word *tao* cannot be translated univocally (in contrast with Ricoeur's views, there are no glossaries of any use and one has to ponder the valency of the word every time), neither can Carles Riba, Miquel Bauçà or Salvador Espriu be translated with the idea that all three wrote "texts" in the same "language" during the Franco dictatorship[16].

However, what must be discussed above all is the sense of Ricoeur's strange notion when he is trying to define translation (because what he has in his head is always poetic translation, and the Bible and philosophical translation as well). Is this always an

"equivalence without identity" (p. 22) in the sense of a non-identical equivalence to the original? What is Ricoeur trying to say when, elsewhere, he describes it as "equivalence without adequacy" (p. 7)? Is the Luther Bible (what is understood as the "Old Testament") equivalent to the Hebrew Bible? How could there ever have been any equivalence if the text translated —and also the author who originally wrote it— will be maintaining in any case the status of "foreigner" (I'm no longer saying "stranger"; I'm saying "foreigner") in the target language? Or is it that the translations of Karen Andrea Müller come to be equivalents, with regard to the message they contain, of the original texts of Paul Celan? And if we believe that, like Ricoeur, one must resort to the psychoanalytic "work of mourning" —because of the fact of not achieving the "perfect translation" (p. 5)— then what would a psychoanalytic analysis have to say about Karen Andrea Müller's declaration, "We haven't translated the Shoah poems"? Do these words, spoken at the launch of the book, come to be part of the "work of mourning" perchance? What mourning?

What Ricoeur should have retained of Benjamin's essay —as Szondi did— is the concept of "intention toward the language", which inevitably entails consideration of the subject. Were perhaps Müller and Vidal aware of Celan's intention toward the German language? Was it necessary for Karen Andrea Müller surreptitiously to invoke the fact of her knowing German as a "native" at the launch of her translation? Of what German are we speaking? Hers? Did not Celan write against such mentalities and against the obscuration derived therefrom?

If we are aware that, in translating, we find ourselves face to face with an author and with a discourse, or with a language of art – and hence with a text that is, from the start, an interpretation involving historicisation – the notion of "perfect translation" expressed by Ricoeur ("give up the idea of the perfect translation", p. 8) ceases to pertain since translation will always be, perforce, the result of the asymmetrical encounter of two subjects in time. This means that, beyond the need of constantly having to re-translate the classic texts, a specific translation, for example Nerval's translation of Goethe's *Faust*, is unique and never loses its validity or its historicity either. As Meschonnic says (with the truth of a rhyme) "*pas un transport, mais un rapport*". Rather than speaking about perfection, it is better to speak about pertinence and responsibility. Neither evacuates criticism but rather they call for it II

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[15] Here, Pons notes that he is citing from the original text ("El torno a citar a partir de l'original [...] [cf. p. 60]") [translator].

[16] An inescapable datum: I was prevented from publishing some translations I did —with Nicole d'Amonville— of Bauçà into Spanish, the pretext being that there was no way he wanted to be translated into that language. At the same time, the people who imposed the prohibition contributed towards paying for and circulating a translation into Spanish of some of his poems in an anthology edited by Bernat Puigtobella, which was published on the occasion of the Guadalajara International Book Fair in 2004, at which Catalan culture was Guest of Honour. The translation policy here follows the illogical logic of Miquel Bauçà with regard to French culture: he railed against it while yet scattering his texts with Gallicisms because, apart from Spanish, French was the only language he was able to read in literary terms but, in truth, he didn't read it when he was reading it. This not reading a language when one thinks one is reading it is an irrepressible fount of poetry, as many people understand it: a strange mixture of incomprehension and intensity. I analyse the whole affair in my text "*Amb aquestes mans*: la vocació de poeta en l'obra tardana i novella de Miquel Bauçà" (With These Hands: The Poet's Vocation in the Later Works and Novel of Miquel Bauçà) in the jointly-authored work *Poesia és el discurs. Miquel Bauçà* (Poetry is Discourse: Miquel Bauçà) edited by Antoni Artigues, and published by Lleonard Muntaner Editor in 2009. This volume brings together the papers given at the meeting: "Miquel Bauçà. Poesia és el discurs" (Palma, 3 and 4 November 2005).

Simona Škrabec

The weak point

A curious physiological phenomenon conditions the human eye. A smudge, the punctum caecum obscures the retina, making a total view impossible. In scientific terminology, this is the blind spot, but if we translate literally the expression used by Sigmund Freud, we should be talking about the weak point (der schwache Punkt). It is a good idea to bring out this difference at the start because, from Freud onwards, the concept is no longer a concern of scientists but a metaphor that helps us to think about all those things that the gaze overlooks for reasons that are inherent to our way of looking. In the golden age of Vienna, the obscure zone was equated to woman. The weak gender was taken to be a continent apart. One good example of this is the representation of a vagina dentata that upset Salvador Dalí in one of the corridors of his school – it was a fountain with a waterspout in the form of a lion's mouth just at the height of a girl's hips that distressed him and, only with the tools of Freudian analysis was he able to find an explanation for this childhood terror.

However, the Paranoic-Critical Method still has its uses for delving into the obscurity of poetic images. Marc Romera in "Acalasia" (Achalasia), one of the stories in the collection *La intimitat* (Intimacy-Empúries, Barcelona 2008), sends his main character to Miami. The young man realises that the city is full of dead birds and run-over cats but, even so, "half an hour later he's lapping at a cunt with all the desire in the world, or he's sitting at a restaurant table eating a hamburger with cheese and onion". The simile that brings together the dead pigeon, the mincemeat and female genitals works because it bears the terrible revelation that, in a few minutes, a body full of vitality can become inert meat. Rembrandt and Francis Bacon were fascinated at the sight of a slaughtered bull because of this *memento mori*. Yet the solitary traveller created by the Catalan writer

is not very impressed by distant landscapes, is itching to get out of an America that's full of man-eating crocodiles and female neighbours who are ready for anything and, at long last, tuck into some of the "donuts we make at home". The Dalí-style paranoia here is not fear before the female Other but before something that is culturally different. The only way out of the uneasiness brought on by an unknown world is the happy homecoming.

Another literary being burdened with the dead weight of difference that excludes in two ways —being of another sex and being of another culture— may be found in *La pell freda* (Cold Skin, translated by Cheryl Leah Morgan; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005) by Albert Sánchez Piñol. If we have the courage to read this work metaphorically we start to wonder. Who is the amphibian chained up in the lighthouse and what does that woman represent? And again, what separates the powerful literary imagery showing the invasion by some infrahuman beings from the rats that crept out of all the corners in Nazi propaganda films? The anthropologist has developed in his laboratory an image that had to work of necessity. The commercial success of the novel is surely due to the possibility of a double reading. For one thing, the more ingenuous readers find therein facile identification with a deep unease that, once again, was precisely defined by Sigmund Freud. Fear of castration is not at all a literal concept and the terror is not caused by the presence of any knife. Terror is born of the mere possibility of the threat that someone might come and take what is ours. Batis Caffo in his multiple reincarnations —we see only one episode but it seems clear that the lighthouse can never be without a keeper— is a hero who struggles to preserve the limits of the island, a metaphorical island that stretches pretty well to the limits of the world. In a postmodern society, which shows that it has lost all desire for rootedness, such a ferocious battler turns out to be comforting. This figure is the incarnation of the desire for the power to be what we are not. The melancholy of postmodern times that has lost its world of yesteryear is cured with a new epic of imaginary heroes. An epic of cartoon heroes, capable of absolutely amazing conquests.

> The weak point it is a metaphor that helps us to think about all those things that the gaze overlooks for reasons that are inherent to our way of looking

Another reading offered by *La pell freda* is a pedagogical reinterpretation of the critique of colonialism that shows how bad the imperialists are. From this point of view, too, the reader is spared any self-criticism and surveys the world from a safe observation point. The conflicts are a mere theoretical problem because dramatic information from far distant places always comes filtered through a screen. Accordingly, we have the Citauca frog-monsters to identify with, and we can approve of their desperate struggle to conserve their atavistic way of life. And it becomes evident that, behind the story of these frog-monsters, there is the desire to denounce the fact that everything that defends its own land will always be seen as a monster.

The winner in this clash of identities is violence. Brutal subjugation or fierce resistance are the only two possibilities in a world that has come to a standstill in cyclic time. Everything is

always the same and there is no chance of progress or change. It is not surprising that the biblical gesture of trying to cross the sea by walking on its waters, at which point the novel ends, should be frustrated by the main character's own wish.

Postcolonial literature has produced quite a number of works of impeccable political correctness but, lurking beneath the surface of feigned optimism, these novels reproduce the models of good-guy and bad-guy, the powerful and the weak, thereby updating the structures that yet again underpin clichés and prejudices. Stereotypes do their job almost imperceptibly in a work of literature. One only has to recall what Joan Capri used to say in his monologues. "Enter good guy, glass of milk. Enter bad guy, double whisky".

> One's view of a literary work can't be complete. What we are able to see is always conditioned by acquired blind spots, things we prefer not to see

A good example of this stance would be Najat El Hachmi's novel *L'últim patriarca* (Planeta, Barcelona, 2008)[1]. This would be worthy of detailed study, both because of the enthusiastic critical reception of a *foreigner* who writes in *our* language and because of the manifest rejection the author shows for the culture she comes from. The public, in fact, applauded the transmutation of Maghrebi society into the despotic father figure who confirms all pre-existing prejudices. The testimony of a writer who knows the society from within gives readers the placid sensation that they can stay with their traditional contempt for immigrant bricklayers since it confirms that these people are really like that. The last patriarch is the image that contains all the attributes of the hated father, so origin —the father, as metaphor for origin, for lineage— is the only thing that can be blamed for the narrator's exclusion. Yet this father who beats, rapes and coerces to the point of asphyxiation is, at the same time, the only one who is capable of breaking through the frontiers of impoverishment. The eros of violence is overwhelmingly imposed. The father, who makes straighter and straighter walls, is capable of integration while the mother in her victim's headscarf remains walled into sterile tradition and, towards the end of the novel, her character fades away almost to the point of disappearing. Reading Víctor Català's *Solitud*[2] and Mercè Rodoreda's *La plaça del diamant*[3] has been of no use to the writer, not even for sketching the way to emancipation. The narrator, nevertheless, does get out after several failed attempts and finally attains satisfaction in a sexual relationship with her father's brother. Her uncle is a well-educated, well-read, cultured man. This replacement of the real father by the possible father makes it more than clear that, in order to become integrated, you have to deny what you are. To become integrated into the new society, you have to trample on your origins and the rejection has to be as unequivocal as the ridiculous

[1] Forthcoming in English as *The Last Patriarch*, Serpent's Tail, London, April 2010 [translator].

[2] Published in English, in the translation of David H. Rosenthal, as *Solitude* by Readers International, 1992 [translator].

[3] Published in English, in the translation of David H. Rosenthal, as *The Time of the Doves* by Taplinger Publishing Company, 1980 [translator].

nightdress that the narrator put on when she said her prayers in her stage of religious blindness. Is this the attitude we want to promote as a society? Do we want to be so intransigent in order to accept newcomers?

One's view of a literary work can hardly be neutral or complete. What we are able to see is always conditioned by acquired blind spots, by the things we prefer not to see. The gaze can gobble up whole regions thanks to the *weak point* principle, and the more metaphorical the smudge in the eye, the more effective is the distortion of the image.

From the standpoint of the canon of Catalan literature, the map drawn in over a hundred translations in the past ten years is still —despite undeniable efforts and successes— quite full of omissions of major works and writers. However, the precariousness of less-than-sporadic translations is now a thing of the past.

It will be more difficult, though, to eliminate the blind spot that fogs up the image of Catalan literature as a whole. When Catalan culture was guest of honour at the 2007 Frankfurt Book Fair, some —very few, it should be stressed— reviews that appeared in the German newspapers were nothing less than head-on, offensive and prevaricating attacks (for example, the first reports on Catalonia as guest culture published in *Der Spiegel*). Nevertheless, these are not the most damaging pieces in the long run. It is relatively easy to combat someone who fights out in the open. It is much more difficult to combat the arguments of Merten Worthmann, who lauds the prose of Josep Pla in a series of articles but, at the same time, does not fail to remind his readers that Pla only wrote diaries,

articles, brief prose pieces, and that not even the greatest of Catalan writers has written a novel in the strict sense of the word... This intentional put-down is serious because a people without a novel can never be considered a nation. It is this bourgeois genre *par excellence* that has to confirm that a people has gone beyond the stage of folktales and doggerel. In brief, for Worthmann, Pla is and "will remain a chronicler —a hunter and gatherer of observations worthy of noting down and of travel stories that (usually) never go outside his homeland".

In Germany it was surprising to see the punctiliousness of the descriptions of the plot of a novel, giving away points that have stimulated curiosity and showing how the text was understood and interpreted. Yet these attentive readings are not always without feistiness. Edgar Schütz is at pains to demonstrate in his review of Jaume Cabré's novel *Les veus del Pamano* (Voices from the River, Proa, Barcelona 2004) that the action takes place in the Pyrenees just as it might happen in any other part of Spain. He wields a comparison with Jorge Semprún to assert that in Cabré's contribution there is nothing that one might not find in the works of "other Spanish, Catalan, Basque and Galician writers". The most worrying words, however, are to be found at the start of the review where he says that Spanish literature —missing no chance to stress yet again that all the literatures in Spain form a single whole— "has begun, after a long, concentrated silence, to dig up the past". Schütz talks about exhumation while Worthmann titles his long text in *Literaturen* "The Dance around the Wounds". Although Germans have somehow taken on and confronted their past, there are times when they still get extraordinarily worked up if people probe into chapters related with the Second World War, as if it has not been possible to add any new point of view.

> Translation is also a political act. The blindness can sometimes come to be so great that the blind spot completely engulfs the original

Translation is a constant battle against the fading away of the object that is there in front of the eye. The universe created by letters is the challenge posed to the translator, as are the understanding and emotion arising from an original text because the task of the translator is to show the image clearly in another context. What is lost in translation, then? Sofia Coppola's film *Lost in Translation* (2003) deals very directly with this matter. But, unless I am mistaken, we have no consolidated translation of this title in Catalan. It is the first thing lost in this specific case. Since the film has not been screened in Catalan, we also lack, among many other references, this *topos* of American industry in order to be able to repeat, with a new formula, the old truth of *traduttore traditore*.

Popular wisdom says titles cannot be translated before the whole work has been translated. With equal submissiveness we also accept cleaning products or foodstuffs that have, one notes, names that are totally untranslatable. Going from "Mr. Proper" to "Don Limpio" seems to be unaffected by any philological scruple, but if the label of this or any other product were translated into a language of little influence, it is taken for

granted that the registered trademark would be unrecognisable and sales would plummet, and if the packaging is too well done people might even think it is a pirate copy.

Translation is also a political act. The blindness can sometimes come to be so great that the blind spot completely engulfs the original. Advertisements, dubbed films and interviews in newspapers where people from all over the world speak our language without the source ever being featured alongside it, and still less the translator, make one imagine that there has never been any translation, that the world is created, narrated and described in just one language. In a world enclosed in a bubble, nothing wobbles and everything is controllable and within one's grasp. Hence the fear inspired by the amphibians that live equally well in water or on land.

What is lost in a translation is nowhere near as easy to define as the way in which Sofia Coppola goes about it in one scene of her film in which a Japanese interpreter reduces the avalanche of words of her energetic compatriot, the director of photography, to just one sentence in English. The leading man, who is about to be photographed, simply opts to adopt the most appropriate expression for the circumstances and ignore the interpreter's instructions and the photographer's gestures.

For Bill Murray, veteran of the screen, it is much more shocking to turn on the television and come face-to-face with himself in a film that once made him famous. It is him but younger and, moreover, dubbed into Japanese. Is that still him, this double trapped in the past and speaking an incomprehensible language? Translation produces doubles that seem identical but they are not that at all. This encounter with one's own image has nothing to do with the scene before the mirror in which each creature again discovers and fixes its identity. Translation is more like the reflection in the glass in which one's own face is confused with the face of a passer-by. Yet the shock of having to recognise in a stranger the features of one's own face is as necessary for constructing a personality as the still surface of the water is for the Narcissuses to grow. It is not enough only to see one's face reflected in a mirror to know what one is like, but one must also know what it is that one shares with strangers. And this too is clear; one's ears must be open to hear how others see one. Identity requires porous skin.

What is foreign and what is one's own are not divided into black and white packages. With others we share, rather, a diffuse mirror in which are reflected the analogies that make us see things we could see no other way, but that also have us imagining some that perhaps are not there.

Translation shows us that things do not remain fixed in a single and irreplaceable object but that they have the power of reproduction. The relationship between the idea and its copies is a recurrent theme in literature. There are authors who, obsessed with their quest for the absolute, have rejected the possibility of imperfect variants that multiply the world and make it incommensurable. We surely find one of the greatest literary monuments to this angst in the stories of Jorge Luis Borges, and especially in his chimera of "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote" (Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote) in the collection *Ficciones* (1944)[4], where the translator manages to equal the original by copying it out again in an absolutely identical version.

The genuine article, the only original, vanishes in the chain of reproductions. "But this same thing, this identical meaning is not given anywhere in the manner of a third text, whose

status would be that of the third man in Plato's *Parmenides*, a third party between the idea of man and the human examples that are thought to participate in the real and true idea," says Paul Ricoeur in *Sur la traduction* (Fayard, Paris, 2004)[5]. The only remedy for overcoming this distressing situation is being aware of the insurmountable abyss, of a primordial division.

Ricoeur asks us to live with the "mind the gap" of the New York subway always in mind. There is an immobile platform and there are trains in movement, but at this station there are no stops because the abyss is insurmountable. There are only possible vertiginous leaps from one train to another, but one can never achieve the peace of a platform made of eternal and fixed things.

> Translation shows us that things do not remain fixed in a single and irreplaceable object but that they have the power of reproduction

The problem posed by Paul Ricoeur is connected with Plato's confirmation in *The Republic* that nothing human can ever attain repose, everything is transformed and keeps changing so it is not possible to show in art an absolute that would hold for all cases and for all times. The philosopher is not able to admit this truth, which is so simple, so evident. And if transformation is the characteristic of all the palpable things that surround us, the chief characteristic of language cannot be otherwise either. Language describes and captures the world of its time and is deeply impregnated by the individual thoughts that have used it at very specific moments. Language as a philosophical problem cannot, then, be pondered from immobility. And the practice of translation is possibly the clearest demonstration that language exists only as utterance. Only at one time and in one place do words take on their sense.

The most problematic issue in this philosophical review of translation is the place of retranslations. In Ricoeur's words, "Talking about retranslation by the reader, I am broaching the more general problem of the ceaseless retranslation of the main works, the great classics of global culture, the Bible, Shakespeare, Dante, Cervantes, Molière. It should perhaps even be said that it is in retranslation that we most clearly observe the urge to translate, stimulated by the dissatisfaction with regard to existing translations." Hans Christian Andersen showed very clearly, in his story about the Snow Queen, the consequences of this desire for immobility. A bit of ice, infinitely tiny, invisible, falls into the eye of a boy and, thenceforth, he is no longer able to want anything other than the icy desert where the Queen dwells. Living in her crystalline palace, he escapes from time and all mutation but, fortunately, his friend Gerda has sufficient resources to go all

[4] Published in English, in the translation of Andrew Hurley, as *Collected Fictions* by Penguin (Non Classics), 1999 [translator].
[5] Published in English, in the translation of Eileen Brennan, as *On Translation* by Routledge, 2006. All quotes in the text are taken from this book [translator].

Realmente, yo he llorado demasiado (I've really wept too much), Carmen Calvo (2006)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 40 x 24 cm

the way to Lapland to find him and give him back his sense of the seasons, and the boy once again starts feeling the time that flows and that transforms everything. The great classics are not translated to "improve" the already existing translation. Each new translation of Shakespeare or of Dante is a new aesthetic proposal that might entail adaptation of a metric form, or the wish to establish a new interpretation of a concept. The "dissatisfaction" is nothing other than the desire to imprint a trace of one's own existence in the bosom of the language. Treating the translated work as an always-imperfect copy of an inaccessible original means, more than anything else, erasing the subject. Thus it seems that language might exist without the individuals that speak it. If "language speaks us" as Heidegger says, man is mere raw material, reduced to a cog in a machine. Was it not precisely this that was the driving force of Nazism?

Francis Bacon's triptych *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* was painted in 1944. The violence of his biomorphic beings is concentrated in the gaping mouths of the three figures under the cross. The horrendous orifice of the Delphic oracle burbling its inarticulate sounds presents itself in the bestiality of a tongueless mouth full of teeth. This is why we must hope that poems are not an oracle that churns out massages that are indecipherable for humans. Bacon, Jean Claire tells us, had on the wall of his studio photographs of Himmler and Goebbels, his face transfigured by the grimace of words become screaming. This pictorial document of the "brownest years", as Gabriel Ferrater put it, is quite appalling enough and will remind us forevermore where the loss of the human name and face leads. Man, a number, man an animal before being shot down.

Ricoeur is conscious that the desire to create a universal thinking would rob the world of the beauty of diversity. But he is too rigid in his distinction between the I and the Other and makes it impossible to fit hybrid identities into his theory.

Even today, psychoanalysis is still a useful tool as a checking measure when it comes to explaining apparently unconscious twists in writing, although it is no axiom that functions like a mathematical formula which, with the same variables, always produces the same result. Paul Ricoeur's notion of the "translating impulse" has its *tertium comparationis* with sex in the impossibility of attaining complete satisfaction. It is now two generations since the Rolling Stones capitalised on the energy of *I Can't Get No Satisfaction*. But it is strange to think that translators translate blinded by the desire for failure, just as lovers seem to be guided by the blindness that has moths flying up to the light to die consumed by the fire of their passion.

Another connection that Ricoeur sets up, somewhat too breezily, is the conviction shared by religion and psychoanalysis that confession has a cathartic effect —and the use of the Greek term *katharsis*, which tends to be understood as purging (abreaction) by Freud, is no accident. One only has to read Paul Celan's poem "Frankfurt, September" and the eloquent commentary on it by Arnau Pons in his book *Celan, lector de Freud* (Celan, Reader of Freud) to understand that this "memory work" is insufficient. No confession, lay or religious, can substitute the arduous endeavour of consciously eliminating the blind spots that protect the past. More than philosophers or doctors, poets are the ones who have the strength to dare to put into words what the veils of convenience conceal. Hence, in theoretical works, Celan's accusatory poetry is always blunted yet

again and defined, as Ricoeur also describes it, as "bordering on the untranslatable, bordering at first on the unspeakable, the loathsome, at the heart of his own language".

Art is upsetting because it dares to say things. Jeff Koons offends with the strident colours of his objects of desire, enormous porcelain sculptures that ridicule the display window of any wedding list shop. The anthropomorphic vacuum cleaner, locked up in a glass case without ever having been used, is a kind of virgin, while Cicciolina is the star of an excessively real Manet-style *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*. However, the critics almost always consider that such kitsch has no other aim than that of bringing high culture closer to the masses so that the unschooled spectator can finally recognise its references in works exhibited in museums. Yet the belly of Koon's Playboy bunny, "Rabbit", with a silvery carrot in its paw, has been turned into a mirror and, with these two weapons, it destroys, deforms and shatters even the most troublesome desires. Everything will be taken from you, it says with a mocking smirk from its factory of the ready-made. The child's floater in the form of an amusing tortoise has the foot-holes covered over, while the inflatable boat is almost identical to the one in the shop except Koons' boat is made of rusty iron and will never float.

> No confession, lay or religious, can substitute the arduous endeavour of consciously eliminating the blind spots that protect the past

Another very different example of how too-painful truth makes us close our eyes may be found in Maria Barbal's novel *Pedra de tartera* (Mountain Scree), which I have just translated. Conxa's monologue in which she gathers up the steps of her life comes to a standstill for a few moments on a forest track. By then her children are grown up, her husband is dead but life goes on, and she sums up these thoughts in just a few words: "[...] I thought, on the way home, that they didn't need me any more. It was a new idea, like a ray of sunlight that had filtered down through the branches and blinded my eyes." It is hard to see the truth, not because the light of revelation is too bright, but because it hurts. Conxa's pain is the sudden disclosure that her life has reached a point of no return. Her old age in her children's flat in Barcelona, exiled from her ancestral home in Pallars, is sad. Yet, in this final transformation of her character, Barbal manages to describe the wretchedness that most batters so many other displaced people. The grannies seated in their chairs without speaking, incapable of any communication with their new setting, constitute the furniture that is almost never lacking in the flats of exiles. Without having left local landscapes at all, Barbal manages to bestow dignity on the condition of those who are forced to live within the blind spot. Forgotten lives, lives on the fringe that recover a voice. In contrast, El Hachmi's *L'últim patriarca*, however much it talks of wider horizons, does not manage to shed light on this corner of the house and, in this novel, anything weak disappears into the blind spot.

A lack of "hospitable literature" does not only affect the Catalan language, which becomes impoverished. Perception of others, the way of thinking about difference and otherness,

seems to have been affected by this blind spot that accentuates the weakness of a culture that is too self-sufficient. The problem is not reduction of references to the local level. It is not enough to situate the works of Albert Sánchez Piñol within the genealogy of the fantastic novel alone, but one should ask very clearly how his novels are related with the Catalan situation, with the setting in which his literature has been written. And, only thus does this reflection on the IRA terrorist who ends up in the southern seas turn out to be a simple utopian tale in comparison with the treatment given to the same issue in Jaume Cabré's *L'ombra de l'eunuc* (The Shadow of the Eunuch).

Sánchez Piñol and Cabré are among the most translated Catalan-language authors but it becomes difficult to compare the way their literature acts and the focus from which each one deals with the issues of his country. El Hachmi and Barbal, too, could soon become a similar pair. Africa reduced to an "acceptable" portrait, acceptable because it fits with the preconceived image we have of its inhabitants and, on the other hand, a deep-running Catalonia that, with some memory work, makes one feel beneath one's feet the sharp edges of scree, even where there is none.

> To pry into dark corners where the most uncomfortable truths slumber we need the help of those literary works that have grown out of weakness

It is worrying to see that, in the literature of some young Catalan authors, xenophobic sentiments have found a niche and that an inexplicable paranoia *vis-à-vis* foreigners is growing therein, this in a world full of travels in which the only frontiers are administrative. The Berlin Wall no longer exists and the Great Wall of China is a tourist attraction. Yet the barriers of transparent glass in airports with an official behind the little window, who has to put the stamp in your passport, are equally effective. This is the world of which we speak. Literary translation does not exist in places where there are no roads, or schools, or codified language or enough money to buy the rights of written stories. The literary exchange is an implacable analysis of the injustices of the global world. In Europe today, it is practically impossible to convince a publisher to bring out a translation unless it is financed in the country of origin. Do you imagine that the Chinese State would fund a dissident author? How can we make the arrival of information about cases of repression dependent on official money? Catalonia needs to think much more consciously of itself as a country of reception that has mechanisms for leaving the door open, and also for knowing about everything that is smaller and weaker.

A translation that is produced outside the dictates of the market is a thread so fine, so desperately imperceptible and frail that at times it seems that it does not even exist. Yet the living weave of universal literature is nourished by this sap, by the individual capacity of people to stick their necks out and look over the frontier that has been imposed. At the end of September 2008, there was a meeting of Jesús Moncada's translators in Mequinensa. Igor Marojevíc, the Serbian translator and writer, spoke there of his experience of translating *Camí de sirga*[6] and the response of readers in his country.

> I fear that there is an underlying reason that explains the fact that none of the major novels translated from Catalan —not even Josep Pla's *El quadern gris* [The grey notebook] or Mercè Rodoreda's *La plaça del diamant*— have merited as much as a single review. From the start, of course, it's again being repeated that a small literature can't find any value in any other equally small literature. But another deeper reason lies with the aesthetic tendencies resulting from the Balkan Wars in the 1990s. Public discourse has been markedly oriented to the past and many literary authors have attempted to offer some kind of catharsis on the national level because politics has failed. This has meant that most critics have settled for the myth instead of seeking historical truth, which also means that they prefer the model of the nineteenth-century novel to postmodern or twenty-first-century narrative. There is not a single critical piece that has yet been able to come to terms with the incredible fact that, in Serbia today, more fiction of the nineteenth-century realist style is being written than works of neorealism, and that there is more narrative dressed up as the historical novel than works that consciously work with metafiction.

Marojevíc has translated Moncada because of the irony exuded by every line of his text and because he admires Moncada's ability to reconstruct the past through the small stories of ordinary people. Although the translation has not awoken professional critics from the spell cast over them, Moncada has found complicity among Serbian readers who have read his book about the flooding of the town of Mequinensa and seen it as being akin to *The Bridge on the Drina*, the novel of the Bosnian Nobel Prize laureate Ivo Andríc. Two novels about a river that impassively flows past human constructions have thus found readers who are able to weigh up their content. With this, the epic that prevails in present-day Serbian fiction has fitted in a small loophole. One cannot measure the effect a translation might have by the number of copies sold. And that's that. In order to pry into dark corners where the most uncomfortable truths slumber we need the help of those literary works that have been able to grow out of weakness II

■ [6] Published in English, in the translation of Judith Willis, as *The Towpath* by Harpercollins, 1995 [translator].

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Carme Arenas

Literary translation
Influence and legacy

Culture's importance lies not only in the creation of new works but also in its ability to absorb and turn external influences into new cultural phenomena that attract outsiders. This two-way trip is of a circular nature and it has to be made if a culture is not to lose vigour and be written off as second- or third-rate.

Minority cultures are often good at bridging the gaps between bigger and more dynamic cultures at any given point in time. In the case of literature, this bridging role is played through translation, which often means the work not only reaches natives in the target tongue but also foreigners who can read in that language.

TRANSLATION. A BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURES

Catalonia and all the Catalan-speaking countries have at one point or another in history played this bridging role. Catalan acted as a sounding board for great cultural movements, which were not only incorporated in its own literature but were also passed on to major cultures. Furthermore, the trends and influences exhibited in these works helped revitalise Catalan culture and provided useful insights for others.

In the mid 11th century, Ripoll Monastery had 245 volumes that had been hand-copied by the monks. Many of these were a legacy of Arab culture and the knowledge these works contained flowed from Ripoll to Europe. The first translation of *The Divine Comedy* was made by a Catalan, Andreu Febrer, in 1429. It was the same year an anonymous translation of *The Decameron* was made by the monks of Sant Cugat monastery. In the

royal chancellery, Bernat Metge and Antoni Canals not only introduced the Latin classics but also echoed humanism by translating Petrarch to Catalan.

The last decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th were marked by burgeoning literary translation in Catalan. This was driven by the urge to modernise Catalan culture. The result was a spate of translations of books by major authors, first of works published in France and, later on, of those published in Britain. They featured rising stars in the European literary firmament. Collections such as *Biblioteca Universal de l'Avenç*, which contained important works, *La novel·la d'ara* (The Novel Today), *Novel·la Catalana* (Catalan Novels), *Biblioteca dels grans mestres* (Library of the Great Masters) and *Editorial catalana* as well as those by short-lived firms all published translations by the best writers of the time. Translation and the press helped professionalise the writer's craft. Having a corpus of translated —although the translations were often not from the original tongue but rather through a third language— French, English and to a lesser extent German authors, greatly enriched Catalan by introducing new themes and styles. The modernisation and opening up of Catalan literature was also aided by the publication of works drawing on the classical Greek and Latin traditions. The publishing house Editorial Barcino was founded in 1924 and its collection *Els nostres clàssics* (Our Classics) brought reading and contemporary writers within the reach of the common man. Another publishing house, Edicions Proa, sprang up four years later and not only added a large number of translations of works by popular writers of the time but also offered authors and works hitherto unknown to Catalan readers.

Having a corpus of translated authors from other literatures greatly enriched Catalan by introducing new themes and styles

The first books included works by Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Balzac, Dickens, Hardy, Wilde, Verga and Turgenev. These were later followed by Proust, Zola, Stendhal, Zweig, Chekhov, Moravia, Strindberg and Walter Scott, together with contemporary Catalan authors such as Joan Puig i Ferreter (who ran the publishing house), Prudenci Bertrana, and Teresa Vernet. A later wave of Catalan writers in the Proa collection included Mercè Rodoreda, Francesc Trabal and Xavier Benguerel. In just one decade —1928-1938— the collection added over forty foreign works, some of them translated directly from the original language. This was the case of the Russian classics, which were translated by two writers —Andreu Nin and Francesc Payarols— who were both steeped in the language. The latter was also a great friend of Marcel·lí Antich, one of Proa's founders. Works by over twenty Catalan authors were also published. This output was cut short by the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship that followed it. Proa did not resurface until the 1950s and then in association with Editorial Aymà. No effort was made to translate the main contemporary writers again until the 1960s with the founding of Edicions 62, which published the *El Balancí* collection in 1965 and the *El Cangur* collection ten

years later. The jewel in the crown was *Les millors obres de la literatura universal* (The finest works of world literature). *El Balancí* included authors such as Pratolini, Faulkner, Calvino, Green, Pavese, Brecht, Pasolini, and Duras translated by Manuel de Pedrolo, Maria Aurèlia Capmany and Carme Serrallonga. The works in *Les millors obres de la literatura universal* were co-published with La Caixa savings bank. Begun in 1981, it was the first collection dedicated solely to translation. It was just at that time that the market for books in Catalan began to find its feet. The first translators with academic training (particularly in philology) began to graduate from universities, helping to meet the needs of the growing industry. Publishing houses continued to add the great writers of world literature to their catalogues. In many ways, they were making up lost ground, given that the Franco dictatorship had prevented them from publishing in Catalan in the previous four decades. The new generation of translators were generally well prepared for the task. While heirs to literary Catalan, it also fell to them to render acceptable spoken Catalan, no easy task given that the language was banned and stigmatised under the dictatorship and had become debased with Spanish vocabulary and syntax. This was a gap the translators had to fill because it would take at least a generation for schools to remedy the impact of an education imparted solely in Spanish. This is why some of the translations of the time lack the range of registers found in European or American novels. This situation continued throughout the 1980s and part of the 90s. A sea change occurred at the end of the 20th century in the publishing business. The big publishing houses began to show much less interest in the classics and became the willing slaves of market forces. This was reflected in their translation of foreign best-sellers. The result was that publishers shunned the idea of producing a catalogue of untranslated world classics. Publishers chose books with a view to making a quick buck rather for their literary merit. This turn of events coincided with a steady stream of professional translators. These had been trained in the translation faculties that sprang up in the 1990s. The newcomers had sound theoretical training and swelled the supply of translators. As a result many publishers started cutting corners, paying translators slave wages, imposing absurdly tight deadlines and splitting up books between four or more translators. The deadlines and sweatshop methods meant there was no time to review and edit translations. Quality plummeted as a result. As André Shiffrin put it, the problem was of "publishing without publishers"[1]. It seemed that publishing houses were no longer interested in producing a sound catalogue and adopting an editorial

> It is vital that the past effort and skill put into translation is not frittered away because of the dictates of today's market

[1] *L'Édition sans éditeur,* Éditions La Fabrique, 1999

Y por fin el otoño menguaba (And at last autumn waned) Carmen Calvo (2005)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 25 x 19,5 cm

line. The relationship between publisher and translator had changed for the worse and the old pride of adding something of cultural value no longer counted for much.

These developments have led us to the current pass. The fickle market rules supreme and there is no longer any cultural continuity. Matters are decided not in the publishers' and reviewers' offices but in the haggling at book fairs. Moreover, because the market for Catalan books is a small one, the translated works that are published are often full of mistakes of both a linguistic and a cultural nature. This is a pity because it often means a unique opportunity is lost. In such a tight market, there is often no space for new translations.

TRANSLATION AND THE MARCH OF TIME. MODERNISATION, RETRANSLATION OR TINKERING?

Translations, like everything else, are also affected by the march of time. Mainstream cultures produce new translations of key works to attract a new generation of readers and to spark wider debate on the works themselves. Retranslations thus reveal changing perspectives on a work over time. As things now stand, the big Catalan publishing houses prefer to reprint old translations every now and again than to furnish new translations meeting the needs of today's readers. No doubt they do so for economic reasons but that hardly helps literature. Another bad practice is to "modernise" historic translations, failing to see that the old version is a linguistic document that helps us chart the course of Catalan. They are part of a cultural legacy that should be left intact for readers. We should remember that every translation contains implicit cultural features, which in turn influence and meld with the culture represented by the target language. These influences cover eating habits, lifestyles, ways of dressing and so on. We could not grasp these behaviour patterns were it not for translated literature. The same could be said of our concept of time and space. Translation helps pin down the past and in so doing, helps explain the present. It also helps Catalan grow by finding solutions stemming from other languages. Many of these translations were made by our best writers. Who, in their right mind, would dare give them a modern gloss? Only a knave or a fool would "modernise" Josep Carner's superb translation of Dickens, Gabriel Ferrater's translation of Kafka's *The Trial* or Andreu Nin's translation of Pushkin, to give but three examples.

> Any culture worth its name is not simply one that preserves what it has but is rather one capable of exercising new influence through new translations

It is vital that the past effort and skill put into translation is not frittered away because of the dictates of today's market. Many of the translations made in the 1980s and 90s cannot be found in bookshops, let alone those from further back. An example springs to mind and it is far from unique. The effort made in

just three years (1985-87) to recover the main writings of Italo Svevo was quite possibly wasted. His works have vanished without a trace from bookshops.

Any culture worth its name is not simply one that preserves what it has but is rather one capable of exercising new influence and fascination through new translations. Initiatives such as the *Pompeu Fabra* collection —now sadly vanished— was the only attempt to systematically put the modern versions of the great works of literature at the disposal of Catalan readers. Some small publishing houses still buck the industry trend and publish old translations or contribute new ones. However, that is no excuse for the Catalan publishing industry and cultural institutions shirking their duty. They ought to fill the gap, furnish historic translations and make an effort to keep catalogue items stocked. If that is too much to ask, they could at least consider building a translation bank so that this literary and cultural legacy is not lost forever II

Carme Arenas Noguera is a philologist, translator and editor. Her translations include works by Boccaccio, Machiavelli, Svevo, Sciascia, Calvino, Bontempelli and Eco.

Anna Casassas

From the journal of a translator

Tuesday 19th

Today I have started on another book. How often have I turned the cover and looked at the first page to get an inkling of the climb ahead? I have mixed feelings. On the one hand, there is the excitement of starting something new and the hope of stumbling across a hidden treasure. On the other, there is sloth and a natural reluctance to chain myself to the desk yet again. I sigh deeply and count the number of pages I will have to battle through before reaching the end. The path looks a long one and I am tired even before translating the first word. However, I know that I will feel happier once I have a feel for the book so I grit my teeth and tackle the first words, which are always the most difficult.

The reason they are the hardest is because it takes time to "tune in" to the author. In this case, his name does not ring a bell and I have no idea what his writings are like. If the photo on the flyleaf is any guide, he looks dull and scruffy. Maybe he is just not photogenic. I am not exactly eager to make his acquaintance through the written word. A translator strikes up a kind of friendship with an author who hits the right chord. When that happens, it makes translation easier or, at the very least, pleasanter.

I once translated a book that I didn't like and which happened to be written by a woman. On another occasion, I did a book by another authoress and the work was a joy to read and translate. This kind of platonic friendship may seem a bit odd but when it happens it helps

El mundo es una cárcel (The world is a prison), Carmen Calvo (2004)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 22,5 x 17 cm

> The first words of a novel are always the most difficult to translate, it takes time to "tune in" to the author

me no end. It not only makes for a better translation but it also means I have more fun right from the first page. It was hard to stop working on that book and the hours just flew by (not that the translation was easy, mind). Perhaps the fact that she was a woman and a lawyer (like myself) helped, even though we had nothing else in common. She played with the story and words and spoke of her memories of country life in a way that enthralled me. I did not dawdle. I simply made sure I accurately conveyed her vivid imagery. Her lively style won me over and time whizzed by.

Today's book is a different kettle of fish. I have made a start but the author still leaves me cold. I have a sinking feeling that I will have no such luck this time round.

Monday 25th

The brain is a mysterious thing. Maybe that is why the first few pages I translate are easier than what comes next. Whatever the reason, I get a lot more done if I start early in the morning – in fact I do almost half a whole day's translation by late morning. I looked at the clock just a short while back and it was quarter past ten and I already had four pages under my belt. If I could keep this up for the rest of the day, I would have the job done in three weeks. That would be wonderful but it is no good trying to kid myself. From now until the evening, each word will have to be painfully dragged into place. Everything suddenly becomes harder. I get the feeling I am being choked by ambiguous wording, weird phrasing and rare expressions. I have to spend more time pondering over meaning and each paragraph takes an eternity.

It will take even longer if I spend time gazing out of the window but the day is fresh and sunny and I am dying go out and play with the dogs, who are chewing a stick out on the grass.

In any case, I will not stop until I have hit my target number of pages for the day. Each day I note down which page in the book I have reached and how many I still have to translate. It is a dull task but I need to do it if I am to earn my crust.

Tuesday 26th

I am beginning to get the measure of this author and his taste for endlessly long sentences full of detail. He seems to take a perverse delight in finding somewhere to stuff all his favourite words. I cannot say it is unpleasant or boring but the author's mind-bending obsession with detail means the book does not move on. It gives me the feeling that I am always stuck in the same place and that is very demoralising.

The author must be bonkers! His endless sentences are beyond a joke, I found some that are twenty lines long! It would be some consolation if they were beautifully written but they are not.

Just a while back he wrote the same sentence in six different ways, trying every combination and verb form imaginable in an attempt to tie things down. In the end, I did not know whether I had translated all the bits or left some out. I spent half an hour over this one sentence trying to hack through the verbiage. This chap is perfectly capable of rattling on for the next five pages without hitting a full stop. Just try explaining all this to a publisher to see whether he takes this into account when paying you. The fact is, I am worn out by today's work and I can no longer think straight. I will switch the computer off shortly and go to the cinema to give my brain a rest.

Wednesday 27th

I went to a book presentation yesterday. Maybe it sounds daft but I always look forward to these affairs because it is a kind of celebration of all the work that goes into a book that will be seen on the streets, read and spoken about.

Of course, they talk about the book, not about the translation (or perhaps I should say translations, because the work —like yesterday's one— is often translated into both Catalan and Spanish). Be that as it may, I am pleased they invited me. All too often, one hands in a translation never to hear any news of the book. Most publishers are pretty thick-skulled when it comes to dealing with translators.

I like to hear what they have to say about a book that I have spent so much time translating. It does not necessarily mean that I will agree. After all, it is one thing to skim through a book for a presentation and quite another to spend a couple of months combing through it word by word to render it elegant and meaningful in another tongue. Such radically different approaches must necessarily throw up very different visions of the book. That is not to say mine is necessarily better. Personally speaking, I need an overview because otherwise I risk missing the wood for the trees.

The presenter has a difficult task. His job is to speak well of the book and that makes an audience sceptical. Making personal comments about the author or translator is also risky (although the latter rarely gets even a mention).

Most publishers are pretty thick-skulled when it comes to dealing with translators

Reading a bit of the Spanish translation set me wondering and I was chafing at the bit to run home and check it against the original.

The long and the short of it is they presented the book and I was pleased that I had translated it and liked the way it had turned out. It was hard to resist the temptation to buttonhole people and tell them to read the book and that the presenter had undersold it. However, the thrill of seeing a book published after all one's work soon wears off. I am once again in the thick of it and am dog-tired too. Burning the candle at both ends is no fun.

Sunday 1st

I will not switch the computer on today because Sunday is a holiday and it is impossible to concentrate on work with other people wandering around the house and asking for things. Some friends are coming to lunch. One of them is fond of words so I will take the opportunity to go through my little list of questions on stock expressions that I am unfamiliar with and that crop up in the bit I have translated. I still have a few questions to answer for the previous book. We shall see if any changes are needed when they send me the galley proofs.

I suppose other translators have a circle of friends they can ask these kinds of things. I have not spoken to any but no doubt they take the same approach. That is because it is one thing to write one's own stuff as one pleases and quite another to translate what someone else has written. In any event, I distinguish between friends who are that and nothing more and those who are good at thinking hard about a sentence before coming up with suggestions.

> I would be happy translating Victor Hugo, or authors like him. A perfect original tends to flatter a translation

In the past, others would help me to find the solution, I'd put it into the translation and that was that. But now I often find myself dealing with the same problem over and over again, I've started drawing up various lists. The problem is how to come up with a system to make all this information easy to consult. So far, I haven't found any friends who can help with this.

I have several of these lists but my favourite one covers expressions. It may seem silly but you have no idea how much time one can waste trying to remember things like "to go as red as a beetroot", or "to cry like a baby" or "as blind as..." what? The fact is, translator don't get paid for thinking, only per line. So, after my Sunday dessert, I am going to see if I can sort a few things out.

Wednesday 4th

The other day I said it was easier to work in the morning but that is not so right now. I am surrounded by dictionaries. Anyone would think I was making a collection. However, there are words that are like wraiths, one never knows whether they really exist or are just the product of the author's fertile imagination. Even if I had another three stools piled high with dictionaries, there are words that just cannot be found. There is always the Internet but that is like looking for a needle in a haystack. There are many sources one can consult but there is no way of finding this damned word.

I began the day chatting on the telephone. I got butterflies in my stomach when I finally glanced at the clock. It is depressing to think that office workers get paid whether they are on the phone, at their desks or just sitting around for their computers to boot up. Unlike pen-pushers, translators are paid on a piecework basis.

Looking through the dictionaries made me see red because some of the definitions are really crappy and do not tell me what I need to know. Even so, I have had some fun because the old encyclopaedia that I picked up from my mother-in-law's home is full of amusing illustrations and definitions. There are days one just has to write off.

Thursday 5th

This book is a swine. I have just translated a page whose pointless, labyrinthine description makes me think the author wrote it with the aim of inflicting unnecessary suffering on the translator.

It is tempting to play censor and just cut the words out. To be honest, it would make no difference because the passage is meaningless.

Would that I could always translate good books. I would be happy translating Victor Hugo (or authors like him). His works might be difficult and take a long time to translate but the other side of the coin is that a perfect original tends to flatter a translation. With a book like that, I would make no alterations but rather tiptoe through the work as if walking through a cathedral.

What I am working on at the moment is more like eating tough beef fillet. I am fed up with chewing on winding, long-winded sentences. The author starts off talking about the hotel he stayed in and a few lines later he is describing the leaves of a tree in the garden of the house in which he spent his childhood. Obviously we do not share the same sensibilities. Even so, there is no denying the weird and wonderful things one learns along the way.

Monday 9th

I have been reading the pages to check that I understand everything and to tidy up some of the loose ends. I stare at the screen to make sure I have not overlooked anything and suddenly my eyes start smarting. My mind reels from so much concentration and from trying to rush things. I have no idea whether doctors have studied this syndrome but it is real enough. I have gone downstairs three times to take a break from the beast. The first was to do the dishes, the second was to hang out the washing and the third was to bring the washing in because it had started to rain. Hanging out the washing helped because I at last found the word I had been looking for. That is all well and good but I just want to finish this confounded book! Maybe I will like the next one better II

Ana Casassas is a translator.

Revistes Catalanes amb Accés Obert

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- It encourages the electronic publication of Catalan journals using the open source program Open Journal Systems (OJS) developed by Public Knowledge Project (PKP) and provide the tools needed to request permission from the authors to enter them in RACO.
- It provides the instruments for the preservation of the journals already stored in RACO. Since 2005 we have followed a plan of retrospective digitization, allowing us to digitize more than 450,000 pages from 110 journals.

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notes & comments

Joan Nogué

Border landscapes

City limits

New land use dynamics, particularly urban sprawl, are blurring the distinction between town and country. New landscapes are springing up whose bounds are hard to define. The article reveals this new phenomenon, its causes and its undesirable consequences for regional planning, the environment and the landscape. The author also suggests ways in which the problem might be solved.

Geography has always asked why places are the way they are, why regions vary so much, what combination of nature and culture historically gave rise to the landscapes we see today. This question has led to another, namely what are the bounds of these landscapes? How can one define regions exhibiting a certain functional homogeneity and internal consistency? To what extent can one take a regional approach to geography? Geographers have spent a great deal of energy on defining regions and even more in setting their bounds.

The effort that has been put into this work is laudable and has led to some remarkable intellectual achievements over the years. Today we still try to catalogue the special features of each portion of the world and assign these a regional identity. However, modern land use dynamics are blurring borders. This article looks at the new landscapes springing up along these fuzzy frontiers; their features and the radical changes that are taking place in them.

From clarity to fragmentation

The morphology of Spain's landscape has changed dramatically over the last fifty years. In the 1950s, land uses were sharply defined in geographical terms. It was easy to see where the city ended and the countryside began. Villages were compact. There were farms on the fertile plains around their edges and on nearby hillsides (where dry stone walls were often used to make terraces that could be tilled). Settlements were sited on

flood plains and farming was carried out on these rich lands. Wooded areas were confined to the highest areas and were surrounded by areas given over to crops. Rural zoning was clear-cut and produced compact settlements that followed an almost concentric pattern, with the village and farmhouses at its core, followed by an irrigated area for vegetables, an area for cereals, one for vines and olives, then pastures before reaching the woodland.

By contrast, today's landscape is highly fragmented. The zoning found in traditional landscapes has undergone radical transformation and land uses are now greatly dispersed. The old zoning scheme has dissipated and the dividing line between rural and urban spheres has become blurred at best. The result is a hybrid, a frontier landscape that is transitional, complex and jarring. It has become so hard to divine the nature of this landscape that one wonders whether there is any longer any *genius loci,* the enduring idiosyncrasies that lend places their precious identity, as David Lowenthal put it in his book *The Past is a Foreign Country.* The Spain that emerges from the USAAF aerial photographic survey of 1956 is indeed a foreign country, so great have been the changes over the last half century.

These hybrid landscapes mark transition zones between urban and rural areas. They are both chaotic and disquieting; leaving a landscape that is bereft of imagination and planning discourse. Both the speed and intensity of these changes render these areas very different from those that we are used to. The driving forces behind these new landscapes are urban, even though there are also rural elements (especially in the areas furthest away from towns and cities). Such areas combine urban uses (the majority) with increasingly marginalised rural ones. The regional dynamics and their interactions are clearly urban and often metropolitan in character.

The causes

What we are seeing is the explosive growth of cities and their diffusion through broad swathes of territory as urban fallout reaches distant settlements, economic activities and services. Various terms and concepts have been used to describe this phenomenon. Although they are not synonyms, they nevertheless all point in the same direction. The terms include: the diffuse city; the dispersed city; the non-city; the meltdown city; the hyper city; urbanised countryside; rural-urban landscape.

Whatever terms are used, these new landscapes are a reality in which sprawling residential developments predominate, driven by various factors such as a change in the economic model; a crisis affecting public areas; the weight given to tertiary activities; new technologies; big differences in land prices in adjoining areas; new roads; a crisis affecting some elements of traditional cities. Although many of these driving forces are metropolitan in nature, one should note they affect much smaller settlements too.

Francesco Indovina makes an interesting observation, namely that we have entered a second stage in which land uses are being "metroplitanised" in a way that is regrouping settlements and diffusing urbanised areas. This complex integration not only affects economic life but also

Pudo ser un repentino brillo de los ojos (It could have been a sudden glint of the eye), Carmen Calvo (2006)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 170 x 106 cm

social relations, daily life and culture. Indovina argues that in these new regional mosaics, metropolitan areas tend to create a *soft* rather than a *hard* hierarchy and that this leads to different kinds of links being forged between one or more centres with the rest of the region. Here, population movements are not one-way (i. e. from the periphery to the centre) but multi-directional. The trend is no longer towards concentration at a sole point (the central city) but rather towards distribution throughout a wide region and with various points of specialisation. These new metropolitan regions have multiple centres, some of which may have a lower profile than others but nevertheless play an important role in the greater whole. If it is hard to delimit these new metropolitan areas and their poles of attraction, it is practically impossible to pin down land uses in the new landscapes to which they give rise.

Development metastasis

There can be no doubt that along with large-scale infrastructure projects, the construction and property development sector bears much of the blame for creating frontier landscapes to the detriment of agricultural land uses. High-rise developments in seaside areas and on the outskirts of cities in the 1960s and 70s have been replaced by urban sprawl on a regional scale that affects not only metropolitan areas but also mountain beauty spots such as Cerdenya and Vall d'Aran in the Pyrenees.

Quite apart from the land swallowed up by such urban development, there is the totally anarchic siting of activities and settlements lacking any vestige of rational planning or link with compact urban settlements. This phenomenon has been called artificial development or semi-development among other names and can be found on the outskirts of most major cities. Spain's Valencia province provides a shocking example of this kind of development. In any case, the end result is regional fragmentation, and blighted look-alike landscapes in which banality holds sway.

The growth of urban land use (mainly for residential development) has been remarkable. By way of example, the built-up area in the Barcelona metropolitan region rose from 21,000 hectares in 1972 to 45,000 hectares in 1992. Put another way, as much land was gobbled up for building purposes in those twenty years as in all the preceding centuries. This runaway development is even worse along parts of the Mediterranean coastline, where housing developments have sprung up in the middle of nowhere. As the geographer Francesc Muñoz recently demonstrated, in Barcelona province's 311 municipalities, no less than 75% of the dwellings built between 1987 and 2008 are either detached or semi-detached houses. Over 120,000 of the 368,708 dwellings built in the province between 1987 and 2001 are of these kinds. Quite apart from the way such developments blight the landscape, low-density housing spells total dependence on the automobile. The new housing estates have few services and constitute closed, uniform societies. It is symptomatic that 90% of the demand for burglar alarms in Spain comes from these new urban areas.

A landscape that is hard to interpret

It is much harder to interpret these new frontier landscapes than it is to grasp the nature of compact urban

landscapes. In his now classic work on the image of the city, Kevin Lynch (1960) highlighted the five categories needed to read a conventional urban landscape: paths; edges; districts; nodes; landmarks. What categories or keys allow one to read modern sprawlscapes? There must be some that can be read from the car rather than on foot but they are no doubt more fleeting and elusive than those proposed by Lynch.

The semiotic reading of contemporary rapidly-changing landscapes is a complex task. It is hard to come up with a clear, logical discourse for these chaotic frontier landscapes in which everything is the same. They are spiritually impoverishing and make one feel that anything goes. The landscapes were reflected in the music and poetry show *PaísViatge,* performed by the Valencian group VerdCel led by Alfons Olmo Boronat. The Catalan writer, Toni Sala, uses the same setting for his novel *Rodalies* (The Suburbs). Other writers from the Catalan-speaking lands also set their novels in these depressing landscapes we see every day —a bewildering succession of row houses, wastelands, industrial estates, jerry-built constructions, detached houses dotted here and there, waste tips, car dumps, ramshackle storage areas, squalid plant nurseries, half-built houses, ugly unfinished side walls, electricity pylons, cell phone aerials, advertising hoardings or their rusting skeletons, piles of rubble and what have you. The last few years have seen landscapes change suddenly in character, losing all of their old charm in the process.

These areas are full of empty spaces that resemble nothing so much as a no-man's-land. Their physical limits are fuzzy and they are an uneasy mixture of what they once were and what they might conceivably become. They are soulless, enigmatic places that have been banished from the channels of manufacture and consumption to which some but not all will one day return. Many of these areas and landscapes are the by-product of the modern industrial city, which is a law unto itself and unconcerned about its image. These wastelands between motorways have often served as bleak settings for action films and thriller novels. James Graham Ballard (2000, 2002) makes clever use of them in his novels and, as mentioned earlier, they are also a source of inspiration for new Catalan writers. Novels like *Crash* and *L'illa del cement* (The Concrete Island) are full of eroticism and violence and the car is used as a sexual metaphor and a symbol of the life led by the individual in contemporary society. They ruthlessly depict the most desolate and inhospitable parts of our metropolitan areas.

The complexity and spread of these frontier landscapes makes us realise that existing limits are not fixed as in the past but should rather be considered as hybrid points in the interplay of space and time. Perhaps it is time to make new proposals for organising this diffuse city full of wastelands. I believe it is high time these empty areas were given a key role in regional planning instead of simply being ignored.

We have to get to grips with the fragmentation produced by senseless urban development and return to clear boundaries. This is the only way of recouping the spirit if not the flesh of the landscapes that have been lost II

Joan Nogué, professor of Human Geography, Girona University. Director of the Landscape Observatory of Catalonia.

Manel Porcar

Views on transgenics

Genetically modified crops, reality and fiction

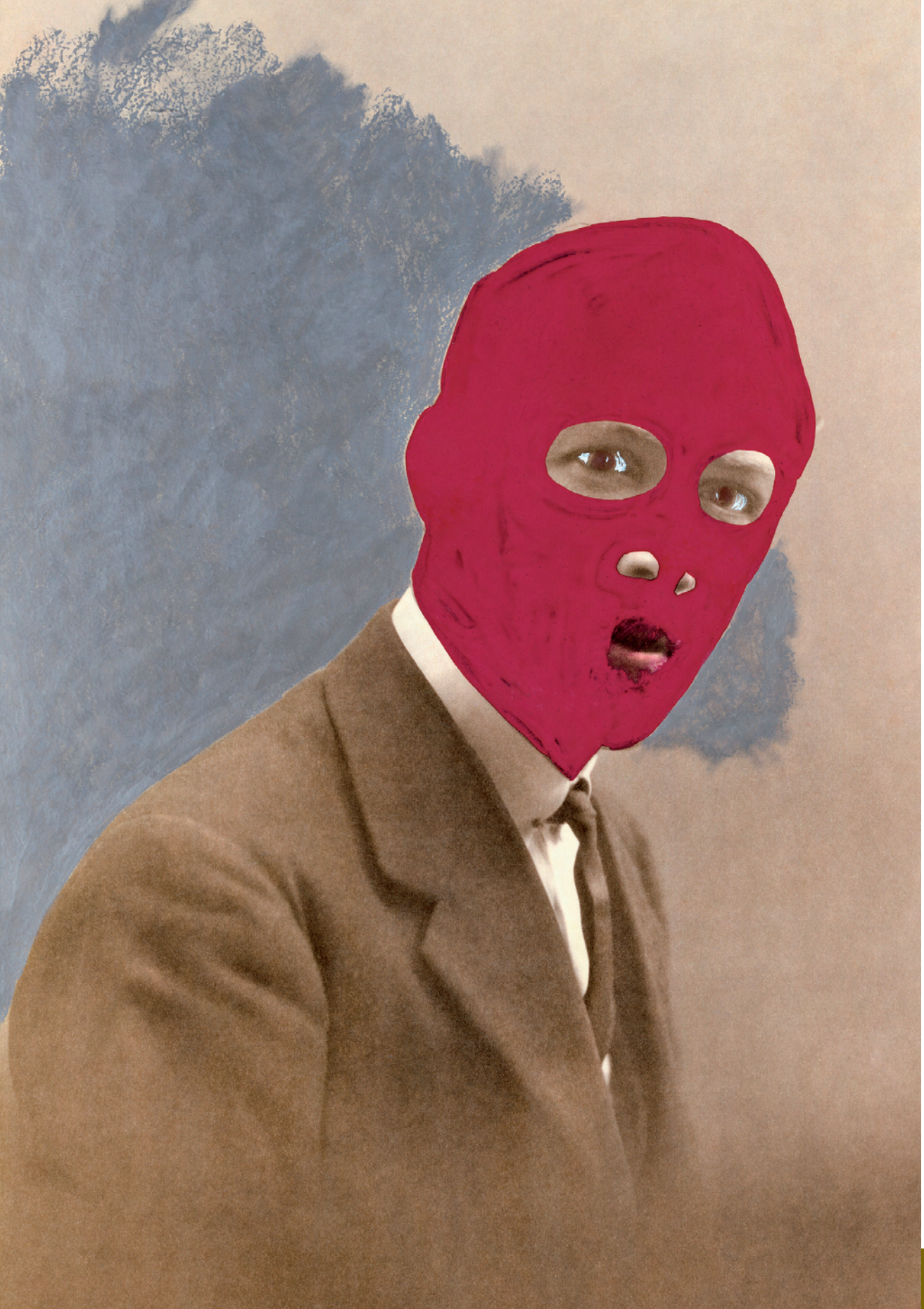
In 1985, the Belgian company Plant Genetic System —also known by its acronym, PGS— surprised the international scientific community by publishing an article in *Nature* titled "Transgenic plants protected against insect attack". The article described the first transgenic plant in history —tobacco— into which the gene of the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* had been introduced to provide insecticide properties and protect the plant from butterfly larvae, which eat tobacco leaves and cause major losses.

The first transgenic varieties were sold around the world in 1996. Twelve years later, genetically modified crops cover one hundred million hectares in twenty-three countries. Almost a quarter of the maize grown in the world is transgenic. Furthermore, most rapeseed grown (64%) is genetically modified.

The area given over to GM crops is growing at lightning speed all over the world, showing just how successful they are. No agricultural technique has ever been adopted so fast. While part of the explanation for this growth lies in globalisation, the main reason is farmers' acceptance of the new varieties, which give greater yields and keep insects and plant diseases at bay.

THE CONTROVERSY

The success of GM crops contrasts with their bad image. It is pretty clear that



people do not like transgenics. Ecological groups warn us of the seemingly unacceptable risks of biotechnology. However, it is not a matter of imagining all kinds of dire consequences but rather of establishing how likely they are.

We therefore have to focus on each of the risks in the light of what we know and only raise the alarm if there is a real and present danger. In other words, are transgenics really dangerous? Let us see what science has to say on the subject.

A great deal has been said about the effects of transgenics on human health but no rigorous scientific study has established negative side effects from eating authorised genetically modified foods. Despite the production and consumption of millions of tons of GM cereals around the world, they have poisoned no one. It is much more dangerous to breakfast on an omelette in summer than to tuck in to a bowl of muesli.

There has also been a lot of talk about the impact of GM crops on non-targeted insects – for example, bees and certain kinds of butterflies. A study that found GM maize to be toxic to the Monarch Butterfly is now unanimously considered as gravely flawed because of serious mistakes in the design of the experiment and the interpretation of the results. There are few studies indicating that GM crops adversely affect beneficial insects and there are doubts about the findings in many cases. One should recall that conventional insecticides affect many non-targeted species.

Another concern is the frightening possibility that GM crop genes resistant to antibiotics could be passed on to human bacteria. While this is known to be possible, it is highly unlikely. Furthermore, as doctors well know, many antibiotic-resistant genes are already present in bacteria. While this is a serious problem, it is not biotechnology that is to blame but rather the excessive use of antibiotics. In any event, the latest GM crops do not use antibiotic-resistant genes.

When crops are genetically modified to produce *B. thuringiensis*, the plants poison the insects that feed upon them. One might ask whether the target insects acquire resistance to the toxin through repeated contact and natural selection. This is a real risk and a complex strategy has been formulated to minimise it, to wit, combining a strong dose of the toxin with crop areas seeded with the non-GM variety. If any insects survive in the GM-planted areas, their resistant genes will be diluted by crossing with insects in the non-GM crop areas. The efficacy of this strategy is debatable and the risk of GM-resistant insects and plant diseases appearing in the future is a real one. However, it would be a mistake to think this risk is limited to GM crops. There are insect populations that are resistant to virtually all chemical insecticides. The problem has not yet arisen with GM crops and to that extent we have an edge on insects.

A similar risk concerns GM crops that are resistant to herbicides. If the resistant genes are passed on to weeds through cross-pollination, the result could be "super weeds" that run riot because they too would survive the herbicides. As we noted earlier in connection with insecticides, the risk of selection for

Con el temor que da el conocimiento (With the fear that comes from knowing), Carmen Calvo (2001)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 150 x 107 cm

resistance is not confined to GM crops. Any farmer will tell you that there are weeds that are resistant to herbicides. Here, it is not GM crops that are to blame but rather the excessive use of chemical herbicides in conventional farming.

Another consequence of using GM crops may be a drop in biodiversity. This is a real risk but is not linked to the use transgenics. Farmers have always planted the best-yielding varieties (GM or not) and have discarded the rest. This practice is as old as agriculture itself.

Lastly, it has been said that GM crops are in the hands of a few multinational companies with the resources to engineer them and that this constitutes a dangerous monopoly of basic foodstuffs. However, once again, the problem of monopolies is not confined to GM crops (just consider the computing industry, for example). The risk lies not in the technology but in the use made of it. Dealing with monopolies is a legal problem, not a scientific one.

To sum up, the supposed risks of GM crops are very low and are shared with conventional farming methods and there are no sound reasons for rejecting these products. Why is it then that GM crops are so unpopular with the general public? The following example may help provide an answer.

When biotechnology shines

In 2000, two European research groups (a German one and a Swiss one, directed by Ingo Potrykus) created Golden Rice, a genetically modified variety containing a high concentration of beta-carotene, a precursor of Vitamin A. The beta-carotene accumulated in the endosperm, which is the part of rice that people eat. Golden Rice was a remarkable achievement, it was the first time a GM crop was engineered for purely humanitarian ends, namely to fight Vitamin A Deficiency (VAD). The condition afflicts many of the world's poor and is caused by a diet based almost solely on rice as a source of carbohydrates. It is estimated that 124 million people around the world suffer grave health problems for lack of green vegetables in their diet. It is thought that some 500,000 people with VAD suffer irreversible blindness and that between one and two million a year die from the condition.

When anti-GM groups learnt of Golden Rice's existence, they initially sat on the fence. A GM crop that saves lives in poor countries, especially those of children, is hard to fault. Benedikt Haerlin, co-ordinator of the Greenpeace campaign in Europe at that moment, consulted various experts at the World Health Organisation (WHO) and travelled to Zurich to talk to Ingo Potrykus. The latter desperately tried to persuade Haerlin of the merits of Golden Rice as a weapon against VAD but to no avail.

Golden Rice was strongly criticised by ecologists as containing insufficient beta-carotene to treat VAD. Greenpeace used a photo of an Asian child looking with surprise at a pile of boiled rice. Greenpeace noted that one would have to eat over three kilos of Golden Rice a day for the body to synthesise the recommended daily dose of Vitamin A. The claim was true but just two years later, scientists came up with Golden Rice 2. This second GM variety employed a maize gene instead of a daffodil gene to synthesise beta-carotene in the plant. The result was a much higher concentration of the vitamin precursor. Eating a little over 70 g. of the new variety was enough to ensure a baby would receive the

recommended daily dose of Vitamin A. However, Greenpeace stuck to its guns and that meant Golden Rice had to meet a rising tide of legal requirements before it could be sold. The red tape for approving field trials proved endless. Now, almost ten years after its announcement, Golden Rice is still stuck in the lab.

Caught between knowledge and fear

One of the most oft-repeated arguments against GM crops is that the plant varieties are lab experiments created by big multinationals in order to make money at the expense of Third World farmers. This is true but the vociferous campaign against Golden Rice is hard to understand when the beneficial properties of the plant variety are beyond all reasonable doubt. It reveals that the opposition to GM crops largely stems from fear. There are three strands, fear of the unknown, fear of the artificial, and fear of something that is new or different. The artificial nature of GM crops is what frightens people most. Let us delve into this a little deeper.

Think about the connotations of "artificial". If one says something tastes "artificial" it is tantamount to saying it is inedible and light years away from granny's home cooking. Someone who is "artificial" is simply false and puts on a mask to the world. Perhaps this is why we tend to think anything that is artificial is bad. However, this is a mistake. "Artificial" merely means wrought by man. Thus a car, a microscope, granny's stew pot, a love poem are all artificial. So too are prehistoric man's flint tools and, by extension, crop plants. Maize is a prime example of Man's craft.

Maize was brought to Europe by the Spanish conquistadors. It had been farmed for thousands of years in the Americas but the maize grown by the Aztecs was no longer a natural jungle species but rather the product of deliberate selection. The plants yielding the most cereal were the ones sown over the years. The crop that surprised Europeans in the 16th century was the result of the labours of Indians over generations and looks nothing like its wild cousin, which can still be found along the country lanes of Mexico. The plant we know today is thus just as artificial a product as cow's milk. Maize, with its spectacular corn cobs, is an artificial plant *par excellence*. Strictly speaking, a genetically modified plant is really no more artificial than a cultivated variety for both are the product of Man's actions. Indeed, there is a much bigger difference between ordinary crop maize and wild maize than between the GM and non-GM crop varieties.

Take carrots: this vegetable we grate for our salads and use as dressing has been eaten since ancient times. However, the carrots eaten a few centuries ago looked nothing like the ones we eat today. They were white or brown but never orange. They only acquired the colour we think so natural in the 18th century when a Dutch farmer selected some mutant carrots because their colour was that of the Royal House of Orange-Nassau. Every time we bite a carrot, we are eating a mutant chosen for its colour and political connotations. It is hard to think of a more artificial foodstuff but, as everyone knows, carrots are good for you.

What now?

The controversy surrounding GM crops is useful because it fosters greater knowledge on the advantages and

drawbacks of this powerful technology. However, a consensus needs to be reached on removing arguments from the debate that merely seek an emotional response rather than taking a rational approach to the challenges posed by biotechnology. These subliminal messages aimed at the heart rather than the head are the stock-in-trade of anti-GM campaigns. Take the poster used by the French Green Party which cunningly asks "Who really knows what effects genetically modified organisms might have?" The answer is self-evident, nobody. One could say just the same about solar power yet that does not mean the technology is harmful. There is a world of difference between science and crystal ball gazing.

Let us look at another anti-GM campaign slogan: "Ask for clear information so that you can say no". Why bother asking for information in the first place if the answer is a foregone conclusion? This kind of pseudo information has more to do with prejudices than scientific proof but it is what shapes public opinion. The latest surveys reveal that around 75% of Europeans either distrust or totally reject GM foods, a big majority by any reckoning. However, these surveys should be compared with an astounding questionnaire that reveals 60% of Europeans believe that tomatoes (and by extension, all plants) do not contain DNA. The debate on GM crops needs to be rational and far-reaching II

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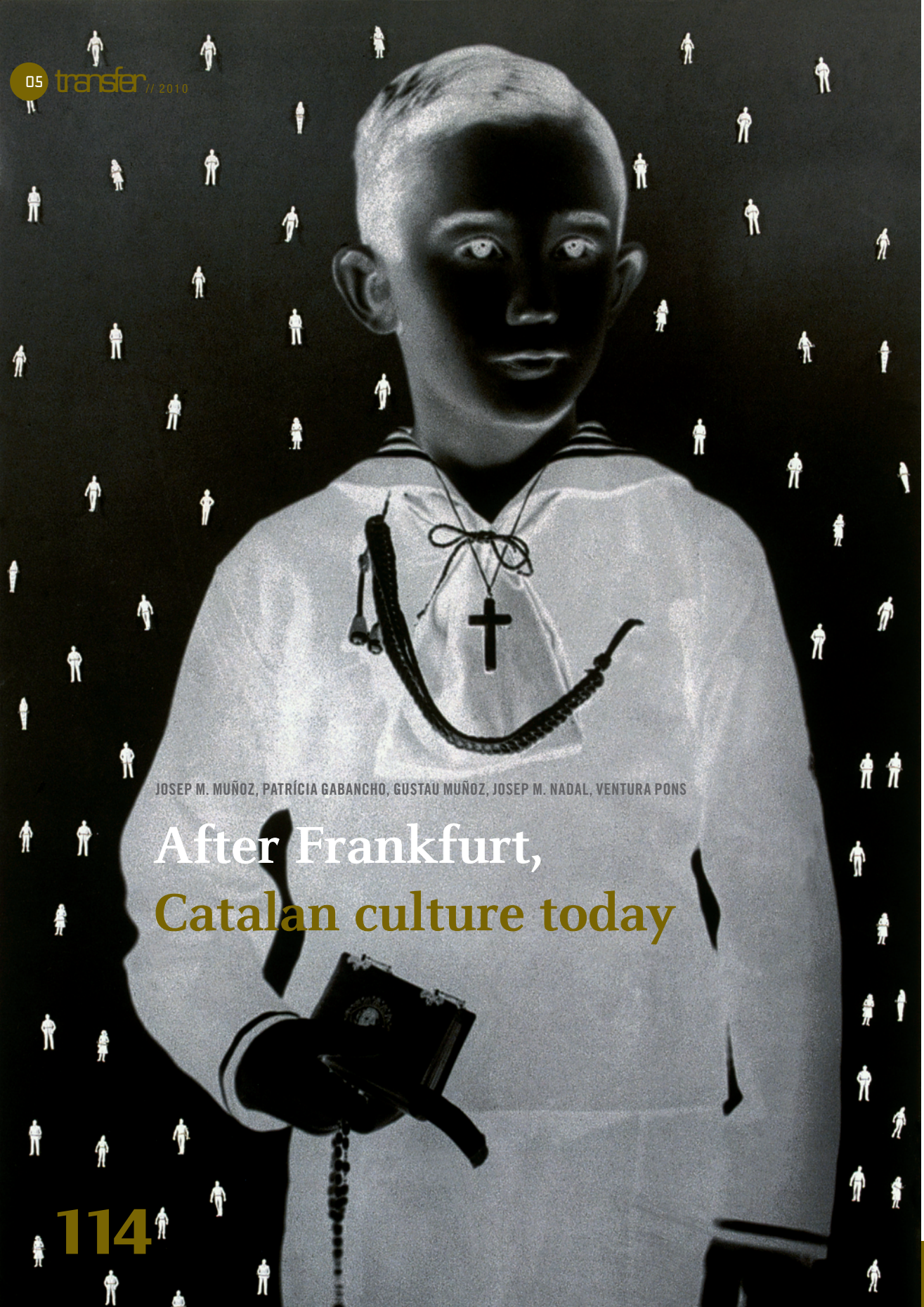

JOSEP M. MUÑOZ, PATRÍCIA GABANCHO, GUSTAU MUÑOZ, JOSEP M. NADAL, VENTURA PONS

After Frankfurt, Catalan culture today

PATRÍCIA GABANCHO (Buenos Aires, 1952): She has lived in Catalonia for many years. She is a journalist. In 1980 she published *Cultura rima amb confitura*, a book proposing a debate on the state of Catalan culture at the time self-government was getting underway. Twenty-seven years later she has touched once more on the subject with *El preu de ser catalans*. A book with a provocative subtitle: "A Thousand-Year-Old Culture in Danger of Extinction".

GUSTAU MUÑOZ (Valencia, 1951): An economist, essayist and translator, and one of the driving forces behind the Publications Department of Valencia University, he is editor-in-chief of *L'Espill*, the journal founded by Joan Fuster, a member of the team coordinating the journal *Caràcters*, and correspondent of *L'Avenç* in the Valencian Country.

JOSEP M. NADAL (Girona, 1949): Professor of Catalan Philology at Girona University, of which he was also the first vice-chancellor from 1991 to 2002, he has published, with Modest Prats, a *Història de la Llengua Catalana* (Edicions 62) and numerous theoretical papers on linguistics and the history of the language. His latest book is *La llengua sobre el paper* (2005).

VENTURA PONS (Barcelona, 1945): A film director, for years his work has been characterised by adaptations of the work of writers of Catalan literature: Quim Monzó, Josep M. Benet i Jornet, Sergi Belbel, Lluís-Anton Baulenas, Jordi Puntí and Ferran Torrent. His latest film is *Barcelona (un mapa)*, based on a play by Lluïsa Cunillé.

The presence of Catalan culture at the Frankfurt Book Fair as guest of honour constituted a magnificent shop window for the international projection of our literature. However, over and above Frankfurt and the need to continue presenting our "singular and universal" culture to the world, we have felt it right to resume the internal debate about the current state of Catalan culture. A debate not unrelated to the controversies generated by the Catalan presence at Frankfurt, but which we have above all wished to focus on questions like the structuring of a national culture or the situation of the Catalan language. The round table was held at the Ateneu in Barcelona.

- Josep M. Muñoz: After the controversy about which authors ought to go to Frankfurt, and in light of the fact that Patrícia Gabancho upholds in her latest book that in Catalonia there is a clear, clean division between the two cultures, the Catalan and the Spanish, I would like to ask her if she thought it possible to overcome this division by making a commitment, as some sectors have, to a conception that could possibly include the writers in Catalan and Spanish in a single "Catalan letters".

- Patrícia Gabancho: The reply has to be two-fold. Firstly, I uphold that Catalonia, as it is a bilingual country, is also a bi-cultural country (leaving to one side for the moment the phenomenon of immigration, which has brought us many other cultures). There are two hegemonic cultures, Catalan and Spanish. Catalan creators may be part of one of the cultures, or they can work alternatively in both, but they are always two separate cultures. Therefore, one thing is the cultural reality, which is bilingual and includes everyone who creates culture in this country (whatever their origins,

Mi aislamiento no es una búsqueda de felicidad (My isolation is not a pursuit of happiness), Carmen Calvo (2003)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 170 x 110 cm

language and preference), and another thing is the cultural product, to which of the two cultures it belongs. So I do not believe in a catch-all "Catalan letters".

Having said that, I feel that the question is aimed in another direction. Because in fact this division between two cultures is not useful for the cultural user, but for the analyst. The people consume, enjoy the two cultures, without asking themselves which culture a particular product belongs to. But when you make an analysis, you can't say that Catalan music works fantastically well because Estopa sell a lot of records, because Estopa are not Catalan music.

I also think that the question was aiming to see the link between these two worlds. There used to be a great deal of complicity between the worlds of writers in Castilian and writers in Catalan, especially in the 1970s (a little less so in the 1980s, because there were some controversies), but in general many spaces were shared and there was a certain degree of mutual respect. They all read each other and were friends.

It is now no longer an attitude of indifference, it is aggressive

PATRÍCIA GABANCHO

And this complicity has been broken. We are now separated by a virtual wall, virtual but existing, and this is an awkward situation that is not good for the country. This virtual wall has become very evident in the case of Frankfurt, because, if you look closely, not one positive comment has come from the Castilian side —in Catalonia, not Spain— in relation to the Catalan presence at Frankfurt. No praise at all for how things have been done. No satisfaction over the opportunity that was offered to Catalan culture. Quite the contrary. As Catalan culture was able to increase its prestige, both external and internal, Spanish culture in Catalonia has devoted itself to torpedoing this operation in order for Catalan culture to reap no rewards from it at all. In other words, it is now no longer an attitude of indifference, it is aggressive. To give one example: in many newspaper columns Félix de Azúa has written against the Catalan presence at Frankfurt, against the politicians who went there, saying that the writers were servile, the politicians were manipulators, etc. Beatriz de Moura, the publisher, wrote a column in the same paper making fun of the Catalan presence at Frankfurt, and saying that the Catalans would almost certainly not find hotel rooms there because the hotels had to be booked a year in advance and that nobody would have thought of it. In other words, insulting. When Spain was invited to Frankfurt no one said it was an expensive, pointless operation. A few years before, Catalan culture was invited to the Guadalajara Book Fair, the Latin-American Frankfurt, when the fondly remembered Catalina Mieras was minister; everyone went there, Spaniards and Catalans together, and the result was that there was no criticism of the Catalan presence by Spanish culture, and that no one realised that Catalan culture was the guest culture. Neither the Mexicans, nor the Catalans. It went completely unnoticed, because, as you might expect, the Mexican press, which knew Juan Goytisolo, Vázquez Montalbán or Marsé, devoted itself to following them around and interviewing them, and the Catalans there were pushed into the background, when we were the guests.

This attitude is now belligerent. For example, Esther Tusquets was asked not long ago in an interview if she read books in Catalan and she said no. Full stop. No shame

whatsoever for a cultural attitude that looks down upon another of the country's cultures. Therefore, the battle that is currently being waged between the two cultural —not national— communities is for prestige. Spanish culture in Catalonia is totally prepared to dispute the prestige with us centimetre by centimetre: they won't let our prestige grow, because one of the things that Catalan culture needs in order to survive is prestige. The battle we are fighting is ideological, and for prestige, and moreover I think that the battle is being won by them.

- Josep M. Muñoz: The Frankfurt Book Fair controversy has shown up, once again, the Fusterian "names issue". Namely, when we talk of Catalan culture, are we talking about the culture produced in Catalonia or the culture produced in the Catalan-speaking Countries? With regard to this, I would also like to ask Gustau Muñoz how he thinks a national culture can be organised on top of the various autonomous community borders, especially bearing in mind the opposition that the unitary concept of Catalan culture meets in significant areas of Valencian society.

- Gustau Muñoz: The question is basically one of premise, because it affects the definition of the cultural framework. And the answer is quite clear. Catalan culture is that of the Catalan-speaking Countries, despite all the obstacles there may be. A restrictive, limiting view would be impoverishing and directly suicidal. Because, can Catalan culture be understood without the Valencian contribution or the Balearic contribution? Can we really speak of Catalan culture and leave out Ausiàs March, *Tirant lo Blanc*, Jaume Roig, Jordi de Sant Jordi, the entire history of the Valencian *Renaixença* or, in more recent times, without considering Joan Fuster, Vicent Andrés Estellés, the work of Joan Francesc Mira, Josep Piera, Ferran Torrent, Enric Sòria, Martí Domínguez, Vicent Alonso, or the journal *L'Espill*? Catalan culture is an interrelated whole, its foundations are the common language, and it cannot be compartmented or broken up without adding to it yet another, very serious, element of weakness. It would be a veritable attack against its integrity and its possibilities. Moreover, the name says it all, and it is beyond doubt, it is Catalan culture, the culture of the territories to which the shared language, Catalan, belongs. We might also call it *bacavesa* culture, but then the Germans wouldn't understand anything and there would be no Frankfurt Book Fair or anything.

You asked me also how the national culture could be organised with this division of the territory into autonomous communities and with the visceral opposition of some sectors of Valencian society and the institutional authorities to the unitary concept of Catalan culture. We Valencians, unfortunately, always have to talk about the Valencian conflict, so tedious and long lasting. I understand this and, in a disciplined way, I will. We have a very serious problem. One part of Valencian society does not accept the unitary concept of Catalan culture; it does not identify itself with it. One part of indigenous Valencian society, because it has to be said that Valencian society has evolved rapidly in recent years and is far more complex than the fixed images we have of it. It has grown by a million inhabitants in the last ten years and there are now five million inhabitants. A million immigrants from outside the community, you might say, with whom there have been absolutely no mechanisms of integration, and

who have been added to the earlier immigration. It is a society with a serious internal identity conflict. So, one part of Valencian society does not accept the unitary concept of Catalan culture. The more they have given up the language, the more they have become Castilianised, the more Spanish-supporting right wing they are, ideologically speaking, the less they accept Catalan culture. And there are even cores of organised fascist activism, specialising in attacking the expressions of Catalan culture in the Valencian Country with low-intensity terrorist methods, and who have important connections because up to now these attacks have been carried out with impunity. And it's a fact that in Valencia the Partido Popular government and the right-wing press (the three Spanish right-wing newspapers based in Madrid have offices and editions in Valencia: *La Razón*, *El Mundo* and *ABC*; notice that no Catalan newspaper has a Valencia edition) follow this line and act on a daily basis creating opinion, and also in politics and in administrative decisions, acting emphatically and ruthlessly, in a spiral of radicalisation that rises or falls according to the circumstances. And at the moment it is rising. However, this is only one part of the story; taking a stroll around Valencia and seeing how it has been Castilianised you might think that the battle is lost already. But there is another part of Valencian society, very important, that has no problem with the unitary concept of Catalan culture. The three town councils, Morella, Sueca and Gandía, that signed an agreement with the Institut Ramon Llull to attend the Frankfurt Book Fair have saved the institutional honour of the Valencians. There could have been many more, but the idea was to make a symbolic list, not a very long one. And I know for a fact that more than one council in the *comarques* (shires) run by the Partido Popular would have signed up but were quickly called to order. The situation is therefore very complicated.

Then there is the university, and a dense civil network, quantitatively considerable and qualitatively important. There is the *Escola Valenciana* (Valencian School) movement, and moreover I should add that at a difficult moment, right at the start, the unity of the language and the unity of the rules were saved, albeit in complicated, baroque ways and with a certain degree of ambiguity. A cascade of court sentences endorses the unity of the Catalan language in its application in the university, academically and for all administrative purposes.

The Valencian problem is internal. It is not a conflict between Valencians and Catalans, it is a conflict between Valencians, relative to the place and possibilities they wish to give the indigenous language and culture. Those who opt for death throes and extinction in favour of Castilian are certain about it:

anti-Catalan phobia as a compensatory myth and zero social use of the language, zero concern for their own culture in the hope that time will finish off this awkward nuisance that is *Valencià* (Catalan in the Valencian Country). Something that, moreover, they are careful not to mention in public. On the other hand, those who choose their own language and culture, through being handed down in the family or because they have consciously accepted them, are quite clear that only a shared cultural framework, that of Catalan culture, offers possibilities for projection, development, and is a guarantee for the future, besides being true to the history and expression of a reality consolidated over the decades. A situation experienced by today's generations, those of the *Nova Cançó*, those of the resumption of the 1960s and 70s, those who have been schooled in *Valencià*, those who have been watching TV3 for over twenty years, etc. This is also a reality that has to be borne in mind.

It is a case of organising the shared culture from below, increasing the exchanges, and operating on all levels of culture, seeking fertile ground

GUSTAU MUÑOZ

What can be done in these conditions? It will be necessary to follow quite a qualified strategy, without allowing ourselves to be affected by the conflict or the obstacles. It won't be easy; we will have to be able to deal with the conflict, live with the conflict. I think that a good dose of pragmatism, of different ideas according to the situations and the contexts, is totally inescapable. We have to overcome a complicated situation, that of the government of a party that is adverse, and at times deeply adverse. A situation of hostility emanating from the institutions of self-government that could last for years, and I say years because the current situation is strife-torn, and complex, but it seems to be lasting, although I hope it is not definitive. I mean that the current situation is not an interlude; Valencian society is heading for a serious conflict, for a rethink that will have to result in a change and a collective maturing. Sooner or later this will change. Meanwhile, it will be necessary to seek institutional approaches wherever possible, patiently and with a capacity for dialogue, and make headway through actions, as has been done with the Frankfurt episode, with three town councils giving minimum institutional support to the Valencian presence. It is a case of organising culture from below, increasing the two-way exchanges, ensuring the circulation and the regular presence of writers and creators all over the territory, of music and theatre groups, and of looking into all the digital and audiovisual possibilities. And operating on all levels of culture, from the academic, where things are easier, to the more popular, searching for fertile ground. The future will have to be a raft of institutional agreements in cultural matters, whenever possible, of the Catalan-speaking territories, which would top off the organisation of national culture. In a world of growing dimensions and markets, in which things are tough for minority cultures —let's be honest— breaking up the Catalan cultural arena would be a barbarous thing to do.

- Josep M. Muñoz: Let's turn now, if we may, to the Catalan language. Since the *Renaixença* Catalan has existed side by side with Spanish, but it seems obvious that, due to the migratory and social changes of recent years, Catalan society has entered another paradigm. I would like to ask Josep M. Nadal, a historian of the language concerned not only about its past, but also its present and future, for his thoughts on the current situation.

- Josep M. Nadal: In Europe there are really only a few languages. Linguistic density in Europe is relatively low, especially if we compare it to Africa, for example. The construction of Europe from a language point of view has been carried out by concentrating the linguistic diversity into just a few languages. In the Europe of the few languages there is, moreover, a permanent tendency to reduce the diversity of languages, most clearly seen in the creation of the nation states and therefore in the attempt to make one language, and one only, correspond to each nation state. The formula "one state, one nation", above all from the 19th century onwards, is the predominant one in all areas and the one that, in part, generates conflicts. However, aside from this tendency to linguistic reduction, there has been some, only a little, resistance to this process. There have been languages that have proposed an alternative to the construction of the state language, trying to make another language within the same state possible.

Catalan would be case in point, a language that offers resistance to the universalisation of the state language. Not all the languages there have been in Europe have gone through the same process: for example, Occitan has virtually not done so. I always say, as a joke, that Catalan has sat and passed a series of examinations. When they start writing, not all the languages write, and therefore some fail. When they begin to have a coded language in the 15th century, some of those that had passed now fail. And Catalan passes, it makes its mark, etc. When the creation of states takes place, many languages fail; so does Catalan, but with a mark of four and a half out of ten and it therefore has the right to re-sit. Therefore, the case of Catalan is quite different from what has occurred in many parts of Europe, where the language of the state has been imposed all over the territory. This is the situation up to the late 20th century. The basic linguistic struggle was between the language of the state and the resistance that some communities offered to this attempt by the state. But things are very different now, because most languages have ceased to exist isolated in their territory. And therefore the "language-territory" pairing has to be reconsidered. I know that we are conditioned by the proximity of the previous paradigm in which the fight was between the language of the state, trying to impose itself, and the language of the territory, trying not to disappear under the pressure of the state language. But today Europe has experienced a radical change in the states

> **Not all languages are equal, which does not mean that they do not have the same rights. But the different size is part of the problem**
>
> **JOSEP M. NADAL**

themselves and in relation to other countries. The linguistic complexity is radically different now from that of fifteen years ago.

This linguistic complexity, how do we deal with it? I believe starting with a basic element that we do not usually take into account, because it makes us feel awkward, but if we do not start from this fact, we will not be able to resolve anything. The fact is that languages are not equal. Catalan is not like Castilian. And I do not mean that it does not have the same rights, but for Catalan to have the same rights we have to be aware that they are not languages equal in size and that this difference is part of the problem. We find it hard to accept that languages are not the same, especially those of us who speak small languages, but it is evident. It is said that about 6,000 languages are spoken in the world, and of these 319 (only 5%) have more than one million speakers. Catalan is one of the 319, in 91st place. Catalan, a small language, is 91st out of the 6,000 languages in the world with regard to the number of people who speak it. On the other hand, there are 5,770 languages with fewer than one million speakers (95%) and of these there are 4,945 that do not reach 100,000 speakers.

The problem is the nation-state, because the concept of the state that we live with today is by definition incompatible with linguistic diversity

JOSEP M. NADAL

Therefore, if we wish to try to make linguistic diversity sustainable and make policies to ensure it is maintained, we have to know that there are 5,000 languages with less than 100,000 speakers and that next to them there are 8 languages with over one million speakers, and that there is one with more than 900 million speakers, Mandarin Chinese. And this fact cannot be ignored. A language with 100,000 speakers is absolutely powerless against one with 900 million. Languages, then, are not equal. The result of this linguistic inequality in the world is that a very small percentage of speakers in the world (4%) live in territories where there are many languages and they are forced to practise multilingualism.

4% share 96% of all languages. All these speakers, moreover, are forced to acquire one of the major languages and, if they live within a state, the language of that state. So all speakers of small languages are bilingual, while the speakers of major languages are usually monolingual. And everyone, speakers of languages great and small, takes it for granted that by using one of these major languages they will be understood.
In this respect, the small languages have ceased to be part of the group of things we take for granted, of the guidelines of behaviour in situations governed by anonymity. The linguistic consequences of this fact are easy to imagine. The small languages have ceased to be safe. And this is the fundamental change in the paradigm in the Catalan-speaking Countries. Up to fifteen or twenty years ago, although we knew it wasn't true, we could take it for granted that anyone we met in the street, and did not know, spoke Catalan. Today, we all take it for granted that, if we do not know the person we meet in the street, they probably do not speak Catalan. Therefore, with people we do not

know we speak in the language we think is safer, which is Castilian. This is the fundamental thing about the linguistic change that has occurred in recent years. The mass of people that has come here no longer makes it possible to take it for granted that everybody knows the Catalan language. And, therefore, as, contrary to this, we take it for granted that everyone does know Castilian, Castilian becomes the language of personal dealings.

We ought to admit that in the world of the future there are linguistic functions that small languages do not perform. For example, Catalan will never be an international language when making a European treaty, or discussing a world problem at the UN. Therefore, fighting to enter the ecological niche of an international language is a pointless struggle for Catalan. Nor will Catalan easily be admitted, at least in organised politics, to issues of private ecology. In other words, at home, with their partner, children, friends, when they pray, people will speak the language they want to. Those who speak Berber will continue to speak Berber, and then we shall see what happens in 30 or 40 years' time, with their children or grandchildren. There is therefore no possibility of making linguistic policies either outside state level, where the fundamental functions are reserved for major languages (and major languages means no more than 7 or 8), nor in more local spheres, more closed, where the people have the right to speak the language they wish. The linguistic policy that should be made is in the sphere of the language of personal dealings, the lingua franca. That is, that we may take for granted that we can go out onto the street and use the language we wish, without thinking, "Let's see, what language shall I use? Castilian, because otherwise I might not be understood". People don't want to live with problems; they need behavioural guidelines that allow them to function without problems. I go out and speak in the language that I know will not cause me problems. So we have to make Catalan the language that does not cause problems. How? There is a condition *sine qua non*: Catalan must be known —otherwise, it's a lost cause— by the whole population living in Catalonia. This famous rule established by the *Estatut* that Catalan is obligatory for everyone with Catalan citizenship is the conditioning element (insufficient, but necessary), so that Catalan may become everyone's supposed language. Everyone has to learn Catalan. If we all know that everyone knows Catalan, I know that I can go out and speak in Catalan, because everyone will surely understand me, and then the other person can answer me in the language he/she likes. The problem is not whether there are Spanish-speakers in Catalonia, but that we Catalans cannot use Catalan freely because we know that there is a part of the population that does not know Catalan. And moreover

we do not know who these people are, people do not wear a sign saying "I don't know Catalan", so what you do is talk to them in Castilian.

What I am calling for, which is essential, is that Catalan ought to be usable in the Catalan linguistic territory without any problems. This is the battle that has to be fought, not a battle against Castilian, which is completely senseless. Today the problem is not so much a struggle against the language of the state or to achieve functions that do not correspond to us, but a struggle to make Catalan usable in Catalonia. What's the problem? The problem is the nation-state, because the concept of the state that we live with today is by definition incompatible with linguistic diversity. Because the nation-state is a state that is not a nation and which is trying to become a nation. That is why states are nationalistic, although they may wish to hide it and say that the others are the nationalists. The nationalists are the states, wanting to turn the hegemonic nation into a state. And we have to make the states plural, make them admit that they are not a nation, but compound states and that, moreover, they have several languages. Only this way will we be able to think that the survival of a language like Catalan is possible.

- Josep M. Muñoz: Everybody agrees in considering that any culture needs prestige to survive, but also an active presence in mass culture. In this respect, the cinema is or ought to be a basic element. How far can Catalan cinema perform this function?

- Ventura Pons: I feel very proud to have been to Frankfurt to give support to the film season, even though my films are already habitually present at film festivals. I would like to take the opportunity to say that we made a good impression at Frankfurt. Catalonia, for its demographic size, has a level of creativity —in different disciplines— of the first order at this moment in time in the context of Europe. Obviously, in theatre, in literature, in architecture, in dance, in film... I don't know why our friends (those who used to be our friends, as Patrícia said) are so upset about something they should have accepted as their own, the fact that things are going well for the people who make culture in this city. They ought to see someone about it. I mean them, because we have enough on our plate doing them. If things go well, we take them round the world, and if not, we stay at home, like all cultures do.

Having said that, to begin talking about film we have to talk about the linguistic issue, and before we talk about the linguistic issue we have to talk about the subject of dubbing first, and then film production in Catalan. There are only four countries in the world, Italy, France, Germany and Spain, that see films dubbed.

The normalisation of films in Catalan has been greatly conditioned by the fact that, in the main, films, basically American films, are seen dubbed. Why are they seen dubbed into Castilian? It's not the Americans' fault, but because at some time in this country, when attempts could have been made to normalise or at least balance the situation, between films dubbed into one language or another, there were some Catalan exhibitors that were the first to place all the obstacles in the world in the way. It was the companies in this country that said no. Later, a series of mistakes, one after another, by all the Catalan administrations there have been (CiU, the *tripartit*) have done nothing to help. Things reached a point at which they were releasing a dubbed film and giving it 10,000 seats in Castilian and 100 in Catalan, so that they could

say, "Can you see that no one goes to see the film in Catalan?" If there is no equality of opportunities between Catalan and Castilian, it's impossible! And this has really affected things a lot: the people making films, and the spectators who have not had the right to see things in their language. You can go and buy and read a newspaper in Castilian or Catalan, but you can't see a film in your language. People are being denied a right, but this has not been the fault of people coming from outside, but the people here and the governments we have had (who we have warned many times) have done things just about as badly as it is possible to do things.

As to Catalan cinema, Catalonia traditionally looked northwards and everything was fine, we grew up looking to France, England... but now that the new generations have begun to look to the west, this has finished. In recent years, the film industry has changed a lot. 20 or 30 years ago, the Americans, who control the cinema at world level, decided (if it can be said in this simple, common way) to expel intelligence from their cinemas and leave them for just a certain type of consumption, of popcorn and hamburgers, and for copies of the copy of the copy, when up to then American cinema, which we had grown up with, was marvellous. This means that here, and in any other country around us, locally made films have been restricted to certain ghettos, and the cinema as entertainment, as mass culture, has ended up in that sector of films for a very young audience, from fourteen to twenty-something years old. We don't know where the audience that might like a kind of more restrained film, not just Catalan, but European, is. At times when you make the films, you wonder: "where is the audience?" You put on a play or a concert, or an opera, and you know where the audience is; in the case of films, you don't know who you are doing it for. However, this is not just a Catalan phenomenon, it's the same in other countries around us.

Catalonia has, despite its size, a level of cultural creativity of the first order, in different disciplines, within the context of Europe

VENTURA PONS

In the last fifteen years, at the most important film festivals (Cannes, Berlin, Venice) there have always been productions from Barcelona, in Catalan or in Castilian. Very often, there are absolutely no Spanish ones. We have a certain kind of cinema that makes a greater commitment to quality, due to the situation we have been forced into by the American cinema and due to the competition —very strong— from the Spanish cinema, because they have all the media, and devote themselves to promoting their stuff. This is why in Catalonia we make films that are committed to products outside the market, quality, experimental, documentaries, et cetera, made in Catalan or in Castilian, that we have taken to many festivals and places in the world, but which have given the work of Catalan filmmakers continuity. It has also been the case that, because the profession has been unable to explain itself, and because of certain Catalan media, not all of this reaches people. At times I am asked, "um, what films are being made?" Oh yes! Last year I think 70 films were made here industrially. So there really is a cinema with a less industrial and

more artistic bent that has achieved its aims. The films that have been developed more industrially, and which have been made in Spanish, have not been successful either, because the others already do it and why should people go to see the copy when they already have the original?

What we have to do, just like any other European country, is what we were saying in Frankfurt: be unusual, because that's the way to be universal.

Catalan culture has kept the quality part for itself. The problem is that the education system is not producing new users of culture

PATRÍCIA GABANCHO

And perhaps the big problem with part of the Catalan film industry is that it has not been unusual enough to be universal. But the only way to be successful, for those of us who are not inside the American majors, is our truth. And our truth is given to us by our singularity. And singularity means not imitating Castilian products, because among other things Castilian (a marvellous language) is not much use from a film point of view. When you cross the Atlantic, Castilian is no use for the Hispanic market, due to the grammar, the phonetics... Just the opposite in fact: when they buy your films they are continually asking if they can dub them. If Castilian was that much use in the cinema, these Spanish films that so many millions are spent on would be doing the rounds all over South America. So in the cinema, all this business about Castilian is also a myth.

We have to make a commitment to quality because quality travels, and films that are no good and don't have something special aren't successful. The commitment the majority of European countries are making, and us with them, is more or less the same. To make products that are real. The only difference is that they really believe it, in their countries. What I liked most about Frankfurt is that we introduced ourselves to the world very well, but the fact is we don't believe it. We have a frankly good level. In the 1980s, when we got democracy back, there were Catalan films doing very well at the box office (I'm talking about a million and a half spectators!): those by Antoni Ribas, the comedies of Francesc Bellmunt... Now we also get these spectator numbers on television, so things are not that bad. The thing is that we have had, on the one hand, American competition that has ousted us from the cinemas with a certain kind of film and, on the other, the growth of the Spanish industry, which has managed to sell itself very well. We don't have to compete with them at all, but we do have to have a discourse of our own, because only that way will we get anywhere. And in that respect we are no different from any other country; perhaps the only thing that makes us different from other European countries is that they love their things more. The problem is that we don't love ourselves.

- Josep M. Muñoz: I would like to look at the issue of the current perception of the lack of vitality of Catalan culture. Why, 30 years after recovering democracy and self-government, should we be talking, as some are, in terms of "extinction"? What's gone wrong, in all these years?

- Patrícia Gabancho: I would like to refer to the matter of prestige. Obviously, there was a campaign in the 1990s against the nationalisms and identifying nationalism with culture. Therefore, the user of culture has believed that if you went to certain events (like a Catalan rock concert), you also had to wear the nationalist badge. This was a deliberate campaign aimed precisely at undermining the prestige. It has been said of Catalan culture that it is a culture bound up with identity. All cultures are. Lluís Llach singing in Catalan is no more bound up with identity than Sabina singing in Castilian.

But saying it was bound up with identity was a way of reducing its audience. At the same time another phenomenon has arisen, and this is the most serious, the sharp fall in the prestige of culture. Catalan culture is a *highbrow* culture, precisely because it has not developed the culture or leisure industry. This industry uses Castilian as its vehicle or comes from the Spanish industry. And Catalan culture has kept the quality part for itself. The problem is that the education system is not creating new users of culture for us; it is bringing uncultured young people to the market, incapable of enjoying culture because they are not given any at school. If they are not given any in their daily lives or in the family, these young people are no good at consuming culture. Catalan culture's audience is not being reproduced in the new generations. And this really is serious for Catalan culture, which is a culture of excellence, which demands a minimum of intellectual effort to enjoy it. Going to see a film by Ventura Pons is not the same as seeing a Hollywood movie. And the schools are producing consumers of Hollywood movies, because culture creates critical citizens and the system is not interested in organised critical citizens, capable of asking questions. It wants citizens who consume and therefore it points them towards the leisure industry. Therefore, we have a problem of prestige and also of too much quality. Culture doesn't have to dumb down, the level of the public has to rise.

- Gustau Muñoz: I totally agree with Josep M. Nadal that the universalisation of the language is necessary to make chance encounters safe, and for there to be no temptation to change languages. Here in Catalonia this is in the *Estatut*, on paper, and we shall see if it happens in practice. In the Valencian Country and the Balearic Islands it is not so, and it would be a demand horizon. The problem this poses is that passive knowledge is not enough, because with that you do not make consumers of culture, you do not create a culture market. Today, coming from Valencia, I have read an interview with Quim Monzó, absolutely apocalyptic, in which he said that in 20 years' time Catalan literature will be finished because there'll be no readers. The problem with predictions is like that of utopias, they may come true... I think it is excessively apocalyptic, but in any case it reflects a mood of very serious concern for the future of Catalan culture. The Frankfurt Book Fair was really a great success for Catalan culture, and this has to be shouted from the rooftops because it's true and because it has been heavily criticised. Despite the massive campaign that was mounted and which was reflected in the German press (it would be necessary, in this respect, for someone to make an analysis of how the criticisms were received), despite that, a large part of the German public and the appropriate authorities have seen that Catalan

culture is incredibly dignified for a culture without a state. And a presence in Germany is very important, because it is a place of dissemination over Central and Eastern Europe and other parts of the world. This ought to be borne in mind with regard to assessments and predictions.

I would like to refer briefly to the question of what has happened in the last two or three decades. There are serious problems in the peripheral areas of Catalan culture, but now also in the core area. I shall refer to Catalonia as the central core of Catalan culture. I think there were two moments in the past in which, from Catalonia, a great commitment was made, a great endeavour, a great initiative in favour of a modern culture, viable and useful on all levels. The first is during the first third of the 20th century, with *Noucentisme*, up to the Republican Generalitat, with various comings and goings. It is the age of the modern institutionalisation of Catalan culture (the definitive establishment of the rules of the language, the creation of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans, the appearance of publishing houses, magazines, the creation of a modern intelligentsia, et cetera). All this was halted by the Civil War and a really harsh post-war period. Then, in the 1960s and 70s there was once again a spirit of resumption, of starting from scratch, of creating lasting, solid, strong institutions, and of bringing Catalan culture up to date in relation to universal culture. This is our current situation. We are the children of these two attempts. The first one, which marks us and makes us viable as a culture, and the second, whose denouement we are currently witnessing. The situation is highly ambiguous. Unimaginable things have been achieved, very valuable, of a very high cultural level, but we have a social problem, the creation of a cultural market to make so many things viable that, if they are not supported socially through the market, through consumption, cannot be done in Catalan.

The current situation is highly ambiguous. The cultural impetus of the 1960s and 70s produced results, but it is beginning to run out of gas

GUSTAU MUÑOZ

In the 1960s and 70s, and up to the 80s, a great effort was made (Enciclopèdia Catalana, the publication of such important collections as "Textos filosòfics" or "Clàssics del pensament modern", the creation of institutions, schools, TV3, and so on). All this absorbed a great deal of energy, and was extremely positive. But after a certain moment this impetus began to fade. It produced results but it began to run out of gas. What had happened in the meantime? Two very important social and cultural things had happened. One, the consolidation of a highbrow culture in Castilian in the Barcelona area (it goes without saying in the Valencian Country, where this has been the case for ages), the centre of publishing in Castilian, the home of the companies publishing in Castilian for a much larger market, previously unheard of in the 20th century. And obviously the massive arrival of immigrants, who have been gradually integrating socially but not culturally, who may achieve a passive knowledge of the language, but not enough to integrate on a large scale. This is an issue that has not been given enough

consideration, because the question is what part has insertion in the Spanish state as an autonomous community played to make feasible an enlarged reproduction of a situation in which Catalan culture is losing ground. In some ways, the explicit non-recognition of the multi-nationality and the inertias of the state, with its autonomous communities, help to sanction, at most, the mere passive knowledge, but not the in-depth cultural insertion of the new populations, which are to all intents and purposes part of Catalan society.

Immigration forces us to consider what integration will be like. In Catalonia, Spanish is learnt out of necessity, Catalan, because you want to

JOSEP M. NADAL

In short, I feel that from a given moment the creative energy of the second modernising wave of Catalan culture became exhausted. And we see how some endeavours begin to be sidelined, and problems start to appear: from the shortage of translations of contemporary thinking to the state of ideas and cultural magazines at the end of the 1990s (I think it's different now), the rather anaemic state of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans, and so on. I think that there is an evident loss of energy. And also a lack of consideration of the effects of subordinate insertion in the political framework of the Spanish state, with no explicit acknowledgement of the multi-nationality and therefore of the plurality of cultures, with all that implies. In other words, giant steps have been taken, yes, but we are in a situation that requires critical reflection.

- Josep M. Nadal: I would like to stress that when I spoke of the widespread knowledge of the Catalan language included in the *Estatut*, I said that this is a necessary condition, but not enough. Without this we can do nothing, and with it we can begin to do things, but things must be done. I am not as pessimistic as Quim Monzó. It's not that I don't see problems out there, it's that I react positively to them, otherwise I wouldn't be here. But I understand the apocalyptic attitudes when the language or culture is mentioned, because it's the only thing that gives us meaning. If we were merely speaking of the economy or the roads, I don't care if I belong to a state or not. What concerns us is the language and the culture, because the language acts as a vehicle, in all senses. Faced with the problem and the uncertainties, of which there are many, some react apocalyptically and I understand it, although I would uphold not doing so. It is true that in the early 20th century there was a boost and that in the 1960s there was another boost, but next to that, in both those moments, we had a state with a culture promoted by the very feeble state itself. Spanish culture in the 1930s, 40s and 50s was a feeble culture; I'm not saying that there weren't extraordinary things, but that the transmission of culture through the state was relatively feeble and even negative. On the other hand, whether we like it or not, since the 1960s, 70s and 80s the improvement made by Spanish culture has been spectacular, and the promotion of Spanish culture too. They've done it well, what can I say. The Cervantes Institute is carrying out a splendid policy of expansion, something that has never been done

for Spanish before. The French language, for example, has fallen behind considerably in the face of the expression of the Spanish language. And this puts us in a difficult position.

At the same time, alongside this spectacular improvement of Spanish culture, there has been an enormous rise in immigration to Catalonia, which we should be glad of for various reasons, but from a cultural and linguistic point of view we cannot ignore the fact that it represents a new situation that could either go well or badly. That in the 1950s and 60s nearly a million migrants arrived in Catalonia from the rest of the state, that now a million (and perhaps another million in a few years' time) foreign immigrants have arrived is fine by me, but it forces us to think about how to get the new population to integrate in the country and in which culture: Spanish, Catalan, or both. I have had a cleaning lady from Senegal at home for six months, who arrived speaking English, French, Arabic and I don't know what other languages. The first thing she said to me was that she wanted to learn Catalan. I sent her to classes and after three months she said: "ja parlo espanyol" (I speak Spanish now). Spanish is learnt in Catalonia out of necessity, and Catalan has to be learnt because you want to. This cannot be resolved if the state does not help. There has to be a clear willingness by the state to promote Catalan. The state has to have a positive attitude towards the languages and cultures within it. This forces us to consider two options: if the state continues to be a nation-state which, by definition, practises ethnic cleansing, as all states do, eliminating the cultures and the languages that are not the dominant one. All states are like that: they come out of a plural situation, they were once compound states, and they want to turn the plural state into a national state, promote one and only one nation, and that's why they need to eliminate the others. Today this is beginning to be questioned in all parts, but in the Spanish state the reaction in the face of this questioning produces a worry: this is why there is a spectacular Spanish national recovery. The debate about the *Estatut* has appeared just at the time when the nation-state could be changed for a plural state. And then there is the reaction of certain sectors, opposed to it. If this is not achieved, there is only one possible solution —and I am radically opposed to it, because I believe it will take us nowhere— but without a state guaranteeing the existence of all cultures, the Catalan included, we shall have to seek our own state. And for this reason we have to fight to change the state, because independence is quite difficult. Do real possibilities of changing the state exist? I think so. It must be achieved.

- Josep M. Muñoz: We have not talked much about the role of the public authorities to reverse this situation. This brings us to the relationship between culture and politics, which has also been one of the other subjects for reflection based on the experience of Frankfurt.

- Patrícia Gabancho: The activism of the 1930s has been mentioned and I believe that without that process Catalan culture would now be dead. It was what provided the moral strength to get through the post-war period. At that time, with all the problems and the political decay, there was a coming together of the economic, political and cultural forces. There was a project shared by what we could call the powers-that-be. Admittedly, this project was very conservative to begin with, but it gradually spread to other parts of society and ended up being a project encompassing 70% of the social, economic and cultural spectrum of the entire country. Obviously, it was a very unfair society, with huge social tensions, and it finished up that way. Apart from that, the problem now and during these 30 years of democracy (which is the same length of time: Catalan culture was re-founded in 30 years, and in 30 years we have dismantled it) is that this coming together has not taken place. Politics has not done its job, culture has not had enough impetus to impose its project, and above all the economic forces have tended to consolidate their market, which they took to be the Spanish one, because up until globalisation it really was. Therefore, these three factors have been adverse and Catalan politics has been very weak. None of the governments has given culture the structuring role that it had always had in this country. Catalonia has always been constructed from and through culture. Conversely, democracy decided to build the country through the economy, and culture has been pushed into the background, by both the right and the left.

> **It is necessary to get involved in mass culture, but also in higher-level culture. Otherwise, Catalan is left with a mid-brow, and that is very limited socially speaking**
>
> **GUSTAU MUÑOZ**

- Gustau Muñoz: I would qualify this because, as I see it, the second resumption tried to do the same as the first, but with instruments from the first third of the 20th century, and in the meantime society had changed radically. It was now a society of the masses, penetrated completely by the impact of the media, with a dizzying development whose pace has been lost. And finally, we are facing a digital revolution that is also slipping out of our grasp in some important ways. We could also make a positive balance, above all in the context of where I come from. Observing it from a certain distance, and taking into account the shortcomings, you find some terrible criticism of TV3, when for us TV3 is very good. And they are unfair criticisms, often, because of the ordinary language, the lowering of the level, etc. The small concessions to popular

mass culture, with the aim of broadening TV3's scope of action, are often criticised, and I think this is unfair. On the contrary, there ought to be more ordinary things on. Catalan culture will be ordinary or it will not be at all.

- Josep M. Nadal: I don't think that culture is overly promoted by Catalan television, either the popular or the elitist.

- Gustau Muñoz: I meant that it is necessary to get involved far more in mass culture, with the dangers that this entails, without denying for a moment the consideration that one of Catalan culture's assets is its high creative level. I agree entirely with the analysis of the cinema made by Ventura Pons. But don't think that on the level of highbrow culture, more elevated, everything is just fine. There are also some very serious shortcomings in Catalan culture, at the more discursive, more intellectual level, even in the universities, which are also subjected to linguistic pressure. For example, the master's degree industry is forcing Catalan to retreat. The pressure comes from English and Castilian. Also with regard to the lecturers, because when they apply for jobs at state level they are criticised if they only publish in Catalan, because "you're too local", an so on. You go to a bookshop and the production at a certain level is overwhelmingly not in Catalan. In this area of higher-level culture the guard has also been dropped, and in the end we are left with a "mid-brow", a middle-class culture, and that is very limited socially speaking.

- Ventura Pons: I think that, at least in my case, the competition does not come from Castilian but English. The relationship that countries have with English will influence the future on many levels. And in this aspect we are missing the boat. You go to Sweden and you don't know if they're Swedish or English. You go to Slovenia and the taxi-drivers speak English. And here we are still worrying about whether Spanish culture should be taking us around the world. It will only take us within the borders of the Spanish state. You go to Biarritz and it's no use to you. For our own sake, we ought to be changing our ideas. Because the same thing happens with French and Italian too. The only difference is that there are more of them. The language that matters in the world is English, there's no other. We are wasting time pathetically over an issue that's getting us nowhere. In Spain, in fact, the problem is much worse for them, because we, by having two languages in our heads, find it easier to learn a third. Let's advance a little. All is not lost; it's just that more specific steps have to be taken. The Cervantes is all very well with regard to the international projection of Castilian, but... By the way, the Cervantes has helped Catalan cinema a lot, and if we have not taken advantage of it from here it is not the fault of the Spanish laws. There is positive discrimination, in fact. The problem has been within, we Catalans do not believe in ourselves and our potential. And if we believe in it, we'll make progress II

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Reviews

On the role of literature

Joaquim Molas

Margarida Casacuberta, Marina Gustà (eds.), *Narratives urbanes. La construcció literaria de Barcelona* (Urban narratives. The literary construction of Barcelona). Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2008, 298 pp.

All the signs are that literature is not now as important to people as it used to be or, at least, not as important as it has been since, say, the 18th century. And not only in exceptional cases like, for example, that of the French resistance to the Nazi occupation. Or in that of the Catalans to the Franco dictatorship. Of these signs, I would point out, firstly, the disappearance of specific journals, with all they mean for the training of operational groups, the proposal and defence of specific programmes and of direct links between writers and readers; secondly, the fact that literature has been barely present or has virtually disappeared from the written press and has been unable to find a stable place in the audiovisual media, and lastly, that it appears obliquely in the school syllabuses, half devoured by those of language, and that the number of university students has fallen, at times to rock bottom. Years ago, the editor, whose name I shall not reveal, of a leading Barcelona newspaper, whose name I shall not disclose either out of respect, told me that, according to the acting editor, writers only existed when they died. Or when they won first prize in the awards lottery.

Last year, if my memory serves me well, Flammarion in Paris published an impassioned essay by Todorov on *La littérature en péril* (Literature in Danger). And, for his reflection, full of autobiographical tremolos, he followed two avenues of analysis: the objectives and methods of teaching and the evolution of the theory of art, and, more specifically, of literature from classical times to the modern era of the avant-garde. And in both avenues he noticed the same phenomenon: man's gradual distancing from the reality that surrounds him and, indirectly, his gradual retreat. In general terms, I agree with Todorov's dissection, although while I am about it I would qualify a few points. For example, the one about the avant-garde. Or that of the abyss which, from a given moment, opens up "between mass literature, popular production in direct contact with the everyday lives of its readers, and elitist literature, read by the professionals —critics, teachers and writers— who are only interested in the technical intricacies of its creators" (in fact, there has always been a deep abyss between the two, between the readers of Góngora or the "accursed" Baudelaire and those of pamphlets and chivalresque novels, like *Palmerín de Oliva*, or of the sensationalist press and melodramatic novels, e.g. Paul Féval or Ponson du Terrail).

The book I am presenting here proves the role that literature plays, or could play, at least, in two ways: 1) as a simple historical or social document; 2) as the construction of an identifying image —in other words, a mythical image. In fact, the novel, as the theorists of the 19th century pointed out in their day, occupies in the modern world the place that, in

the ancient one, the epic poem occupied. Balzac and Dickens, in the 19th, or Joyce and Faulkner, in the 20th, are the Homers and Virgils of our time. I have said on more than one occasion that for cities to make their own mark on the map they have to be constructed intellectually. Indeed, like the men and women who fill them, they are a great amorphous mass of projects and deeds, often contradictory and by definition fragmentary, which follow on from one another. Or which simply coexist. And, moreover, of a series of small individual or collective exploits, very often verging on the irrelevant anecdote and which in any case are independent. Until the day comes when someone searches for the internal mechanisms that link the projects with the deeds, and these with exploits. And with the results obtained they "construct" the city. More to the point, they "construct" an image of the city. And if they invest the necessary moral and cultural wherewithal in the operation, they construct a myth that identifies it inside and beyond its boundaries that eventually becomes a stereotype. This is the case with Balzac's Paris and Joyce's Dublin. Or the case with Josep Pla's Palafrugell, Gaziel's Sant Feliu, Espriu's Arenys de Mar, and Juan Arbó's river Ebro countryside.

By definition, the different "images" of Barcelona studied in this volume complement each other. Some are merely simple historical or social documents. Others are authentic mythical constructs, at times, as in the case of Emili Vilanova, the result of a movement yearning for a lost world. Or like those of Santiago Rusiñol and Josep M. de Sagarra. Or as in that of Mercè Rodoreda, from the bottomless pits of exile, mixing yearning with dreams. And, conversely, the result, as in that of Narcís Oller, of its identification with a highly ambitious socio-political project. And even, as in that of Carles Soldevila, of a detailed cultural programme. All of them, though, both the documentary and the mythical, are interesting. And not just for their own consciousness of being, but also, and above all, for exportation. It is worth reading: it is a lesson. Priceless II

II A fresh Sartrean reading

Sílvia Gómez Soler

Mercè Rius, *Tres assaigs sobre Sartre i una conferència de més* (Three Essays About Sartre and a Lecture as Well), Traus/6, Lleonard Muntaner, Palma, 2008, 232 pp.

There are those who may think that Sartre is one of those writers that have gone out of fashion, that the existentialism of the European post-war period has become obsolete. Sartre's philosophy may be, though, and indeed this is what Mercè Rius shows us, a good instrument of analysis and interpretation with regard to human behaviour. Without doubt, a Sartrean reading of our lives can be absolutely eye-opening. The excess of rationalisation and the difficulty we have supporting our own decisions lead us to deceive, to search for *excuses* that disguise freedom: we try to avoid the responsibility that comes with acting. Sartre is still valid and he attracts us because he reveals precisely that.

Tres assaigs sobre Sartre i una conferència de més is not a work aimed at laymen and -women but at those who have the terminology of existentialism fresh in their minds: the whole book is imbued with the purest existentialist universe. The author published a selection of texts from *L'Être et le néant* (Being and Nothingness) in Catalan in 1999, and in 2005 she published *Returning to Sartre*. Now, with these essays, she once again offers us interesting ideas and thoughts on Sartre's work, in this way contributing to increasing the number of writings in Catalan on philosophers that, due to their complexity, require complementary studies. We already know how important this is for our cultural normalisation.

The title of the book cannot go unnoticed: the first part begins by giving a possible response to the famous lecture by Sartre, originally expressed in interrogative form —the author reminds us— but published and disseminated without the genuine initial question mark. A lecture that Mercè Rius contextualises in Sartre's work as a whole in order not to lead us to misinterpret his discourse. Sartre, even though he warned the audience that existentialist doctrine was aimed exclusively at *specialists*, wanted to make himself understood... Mercè Rius gives us in detail the interpretations made of the pessimistic tone of the lecture and dissents from those who have seen in it an approach to traditional morality.

It is a book full of suggestions: the author suggests more than she passes judgement or sentences. And it has to be said that she chooses the extracts from Sartre's work very well: none of the quotes are gratuitous or sterile, nor do they lack aesthetic value. The voice of Sartre/Roquentin appears constantly in order not to lose sight of *the philosopher*. Mercè Rius is very familiar with the writer's entire opus: the novels and plays, the essays, the autobiography and the war diary, apart from having, equally, a thorough knowledge of his biography. The study does not lack philosophical rigour: it reviews Heidegger's criticisms of Sartre about permanence in subjectivism and the oblivion of the historical nature of being; she dissociates Sartre, boldly, with good arguments, from all possible adherence to modern formal ethics, because accepting values *a priori* or categorical imperatives in keeping with the criterion of universality may turn out to be a good *excuse* disguising a singular interested action, or a way of avoiding the responsibility that choice entails; she examines some of the stereotypes thrown at the philosophy of Sartre and on many occasions she brings Sartre close to Spinoza for us.

In "The Perpetual Disintegration of Being", the first of the three essays —also the densest— that follow the lecture, she develops the debate about a classic in the philosophy of the mind, Cartesian dualism, and she enters the trap of Sartre's *cogito*: "consciousness exists its body", says Sartre, and Mercè Rius explains to us the transitive nature that the author gives the verb in order to guess what the relationship between body and consciousness is.

In the second essay, "Fantasies of the Lonely...", the reflection centres on the relationship between Sartre, Kierkegaard and Rousseau, three authors in which loneliness performs a philosophical function. This essay, like the last one, maintains a more "literary" tone and is far more fluid than previous ones. Mercè Rius makes a study of it, making use at the beginning of some of the classical philosophers like Heraclitus, Parmenides and Plato, in order to show how loneliness has been the companion of the figure of the wise man, whenever he devoted himself to searching for the truth —to finding the essence of things— or simply, whenever he scorned certain human abstractions, social conventions. Issues like "public opinion", "the intellectual elite" or "the power of the rational will" are

treated with critical lucidity from different perspectives. Mercè Rius has the three authors appearing, talking about the subject of freedom, linked in Sartre to the concept of *non-reaction*, denial of the facts, of the social conditioners, of being-for-others. *La Nausée, The Private Diary*, *The Reveries of a Solitary Walker* and *Emile* are the texts referred to in this essay. The quotes, I say once again, are the result of a magnificent selection.

The last of the essays is an analysis of the autobiography of Sarah Kofman, written the same year that the writer committed suicide (1994). This philosopher had produced many of her works within the keys of deconstructionism and under the influence of the philosophy of Nietzsche and Freud. This circumstance, Mercè Rius warns us, may make the reader, familiar with Kofman's work, interpret the autobiography with the parameters of psychoanalysis. "A Sartrean Reading of Sarah Kofman" shows, however, that this autobiography wishes to be, in actual fact, the "exposition of a consciousness".

All in all, it is a reflection on the most basic reality of all: existence. *Nausea*, a way in. Sartre did not produce what is called the literature of ideas; he filled his literary works with philosophical reflections. Simone de Beauvoir said so and Mercè Rius reminds us of it in these four essays II

II Understanding the Basque conflict

Xavier Filella

Antoni Segura i Mas, *Euskadi. Crònica d'una desesperança* (Euskadi. A Chronicle of Despair) L'Avenç, Barcelona, 2009, 320 pp.

The Spanish political Transition, exemplary in so many ways, left two issues outstanding that remain that way to this day. After three decades of democracy, the territorial organisation of the State and the violence of ETA have not been resolved. Not only has the Basque conflict, in particular, divided Basque society between Spanish and Basque nationalists, it has moreover split the democratic parties into two opposing sides all too often irreconcilable. At the same time, the violence of ETA has been the excuse to criminalise democratic Basque nationalism —and Catalan too— for those who, going by the name of constitutionalists, have tried to undermine any attempt to deepen the autonomous legal framework currently in force.

Antoni Segura, professor of Contemporary History and director of the Centre of International History Studies at the University of Barcelona, looks at this perspective in *Euskadi. Crònica d'una desesperança* (Euskadi. A Chronicle of Despair), an analysis of the Basque conflict that goes from the origins of ETA to shortly before the recent Basque autonomous elections. The author begins his account in the 1950s, when ETA emerged, and with the aid of exhaustive research he presents its ideological and organisational development. The multiple splits between the supporters of the armed struggle and of political participation, the break with the nationalism of the PNB, the successive terrorist

attacks and the grief of the victims, the dirty war when the anti-terrorist struggle overstepped the mark of the Rule of Law, and the different negotiation processes, often with international mediation, between ETA and the Spanish government are the questions that the exquisitely ordered account written by Antoni Segura focuses on.

Going beyond the bounds of a mere account, though, the work offers an excellent analysis of the Basque conflict that examines the different political initiatives that have determined Basque politics in recent years, from the Ajuria Enea Pact (1988) to the Lizarra Agreement (1998) and the Ibarretxe Plan (2004), defined by the author as a "road to nowhere". Segura also reviews the different processes that have explored a negotiated end to the Basque conflict, especially the proposal by Miguel Herrero and Ernest Lluch based around the first additional stipulation of the Constitution and, more recently, the books published by Jesús Eguiguren, president of the Basque Socialist Party, who, despite recognising the difficulty of harmonising contrasting interests and feelings, has upheld the possibility of pragmatic compromises between both sides.

Indeed, Segura explains, the process for a negotiated end to the violence undertaken by the socialist government of Rodríguez Zapatero was a moment of hope that, however, after ETA's return to the armed struggle, led to confusion, astonishment and disappointment. The Spanish government's lack of determination, Batasuna's inability to distance itself from the strategy of ETA and the terrorist gang's difficulty with understanding the limits that the Constitution sets for the executive are the chief reasons that Segura mentions to explain the failure of the peace process. None the less, the author stresses, the absence of headway in the policy of moving prisoners closer to home, the inopportune judicial harassment of ETA and the pressure of the Spanish right wing and the victims' associations controlled by the PP also contributed to hindering the dialogue. Finally, Antoni Segura rightly points out, the *abertzale* left did not understand that the Catalan *Estatut* (autonomous charter), despite Zapatero's promise to accept a reform backed by 90% of the Catalan parliament, was modified in Congress "to unforeseen extremes", even though in matters of finance it differed greatly from what was already envisaged in the Gernika Charter. The difficulties in the process to reform the Catalan Charter made the willingness of Zapatero's government to lead any reform of the model of the State that might recognise its national plurality less credible.

The communiqué by ETA on June 5th 2007 announcing the end of the ceasefire put an end to the peace process. Probably, Segura says, the ideas of all sides were too different to reach an agreement. While the Spanish government was hoping for a negotiated end to the violence and the political normalisation of the *abertzale* left, ETA was banking on a process that would lead to the independence of Euskadi. Probably, the author concludes, Zapatero's biggest mistake was to enter a negotiation process thinking that that he would not have to pay any political price. ETA, on the other hand, has been incapable of understanding that its armed actions are no threat to a clearly consolidated Spanish political system and it has most likely entered its final phase, that of implosion, now that it seems to have lost the ability to set the Basque and Spanish political agendas. The government, Antoni Segura stresses, must maintain the effectiveness of the struggle against the violence, but it should not forget either that beyond the violence there is a political issue outstanding II

Sombrea mis venas (It shadows my veins), Carmen Calvo (2006)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 46 x 38,5 cm

Thought capsules

Sergi Rosell

Tobies Grimaltos, *Idees i paraules. Una filosofia de la vida quotidiana* (Ideas and Words. A Philosophy of Everyday Life), PUV, Valencia 2008, 149 pp.

With *Idees i paraules. Una filosofia de la vida quotidiana*, Tobies Grimaltos places at the disposal of the reader a series of interesting thoughts of a philosophical, linguistic, social and political nature. It should be said that the title is perhaps a touch pretentious; the subtitle particularly, which suggests that the book contains a *philosophy* (even though it is of *everyday life*), when in actual fact it is formed of a series of thoughts or opinions ("thought capsules") on a range of different subjects, which correspond, and the author stresses this in the introduction, to a "personal perspective" or constitute a "partial view" of the matter in question. The work's goal, then, is not to preach, but to give the reader the possibility of thinking about or reconsidering important issues with lucid reasoning and natural linguistic expression. Despite everything, even though the book is presented as fragmentary, the texts composing it unquestionably share *a family air*, as a scholar of Wittgenstein would say, that will have to be explained.

The book is in four parts. The first is called "Primum vivere..." and in it we find texts that deal with ideas imprisoned in closed books; the olfactory memory; missed opportunities; life lived; egomania, the complementary nature of hobbies *(ora et labora)*; reflection as opposed to passion; the need for social recognition, and the justification for writing. The second part, entitled "O tempora!", includes thought capsules on "personal ethics" (for the author, a sort of oxymoron); the excessive mercantilisation of culture; linguistic, national, social and gender oppression; the complementary nature of ethical and dianoethical virtues; the wretchedness of attacking bookshops, and the farce of the caste of the *intellectuals*. In the third part, called "O mores!", we find texts on the contemporary shortage of lexical creation; arrogant ideologies and the need for prudent scepticism; people's attitudes towards their own ignorance; (intellectual) egocentricity; rationality in the distribution of time; the *rightness* of the group; the combination of intelligence and ethics, once again, or, finally, the headaches caused by the "but" in the expression "poor but honest". Lastly, the fourth part, "... deinde philosophari", includes a noteworthy story inspired by Borges; a critique of the concepts of Nietzsche's language and texts on the (in)appropriateness of being inquisitive; the difficult relationship between quantity and quality; the pointlessness of arguing about words; the connotations of names, and also conceptual questions on the difference between lies and deceit and virtue and responsibility. The book ends with a list of original refrains by the author, representative of his standpoint on the various issues dealt with, and which he uses to show a good command of the art of thinking up proverbs.

For the great variety of the issues tackled, we might say that for the author, "nothing human is alien to him". In any case, it is obvious that there are a few issues that concern him particularly. One of them is unquestionably the *national matter*: not for nothing do

we find various thoughts on the Catalan language and its mistreatment. I especially liked the opinion that "linguistic normalisation has to consist in the fact of speaking being normal, for those speaking and those listening, without embarrassment". Nevertheless, the matter does not become omnipresent, fortunately, as tends to be so habitual in our literature of ideas; neither does the question of Catalan literary culture and intellectuality (if I may make use of a concept that the author scorns). Other matters that clearly concern Grimaltos are unthinking sectarianism, the lack of respect for others or personal conceit.

At this juncture, I would like to take some time to discuss the fundamental philosophical standpoint that exudes all through the book. I dare to call it *moralistic rationalism*: a combination of rationalism —moderately sceptic, but rationalism— and moralism —though enlightened, which I shall try to be more precise about.

Let's begin with the *rationalist* aspect. The author points out the importance of what we may call the virtue of being prepared to change one's mind, which in order to do correctly one has to lose the fear of acknowledging one's own ignorance, and adopt a sceptical attitude towards one's own ideology. Obviously, this is not the anti-dogmatic aspect of Grimaltos's rationalism that I wish to discuss; nor is his banishment of obscure and petulant language (see "Deep Thought and Stupidity"). What worries me is the possibly narrow or limited nature of this rationalism. On the one hand, some of the texts in the book suggest that passions cannot constitute reasons, or at least that reason, through reflection, is and must be the guard dog of the passions. Specifically, in "Mediocre Passions" the author professes stoicism when stating, "Reflection: protection against extreme, inexpressible and unbearable passions". On the other hand, Grimaltos seems to have an unfairly narrow idea of reasons. Thus, in "Why Do We Go to Cemeteries?" he comes out with, "It is difficult to find *(rational)* [objective?] reasons, but deep down, perhaps, it does not matter all that much. If we find it comforting to go there, we are right to look for a meaning, a reason in it". But, is finding comfort in it not an (objective) reason? Just what kinds of reasons is Grimaltos thinking of? I can't help commenting on something else in this text. The author says that those "who pray ought to know (and believe) that their loved ones are not there". It's not true, they are there. If they are anywhere, it is there, in our memories too, of course, but in another way. Perhaps the need to go there is a response to a materialistic instinct that the age-old social command of spiritualism has been unable to suppress.

The other part of the book's fundamental philosophy was *moralism*, which, again, has aspects that cannot be waived. Apart from some elements that we have already found in the rationalism, and which might constitute an *ethics of knowledge*, we should also point out, along these lines, the defence of the unity of the ethical and intellectual virtues: "When the dianoethical (intellectual) virtues are not assessed the ethics cannot be assessed either". And conversely: "I find it particularly sad that people who excel intellectually do not live up to their excellence morally". Moreover, it is not clear whether for the author the complementary nature of both kinds of virtues is an ideal, an aspiration, or rather a necessity, i.e., whether through (truly) possessing some of them it is also necessary to possess the others, or not. I am inclined more to the first option. Otherwise, no matter how inevitable it seems in many cases that an author's moral consideration should *contaminate* the understanding of the work, separation is often indispensable, against that, it is simply necessary to state

that this thesis ("It does not convince me; possibly because I don't want it to") seems rather thin, apart from the fact that the expression violates the doxastic involuntarism so beloved by the author (see page 36 and, in general, "You Ought to Believe").

I consider my disagreement with his interpretation of the recreation of the story of the painter Paul Gauguin, made by the philosopher Bernard Williams, more fundamental. I concur with Grimaltos that many great artists, thinkers and scientists have not morally lived up to their intellectual merits. Who could deny that? Moreover, nor does the achievement of these merits justify (as a certain romantic idea of genius would like to) anything they may have done or which was necessary for this achievement. In this respect, it is true that Williams appeals to the gratitude we feel for Gauguin and his work to justify his decision to leave the family. But this does not seem to me the crucial point of the argument. The question is, rather, that on the occasions that morality wishes to impose an excessive sacrifice on us, which would even make us renounce our vocation or life's work, we are justified in paying no heed to moral obligation. In other words, occasionally the moral aspect may find itself surpassed by another kind of aspect; and, according to Williams, this is what is appropriate in Gauguin's case. I believe the conclusion is right, although I do not know if the example actually demonstrates it (or does so clearly).

There are other themes in the book that should also be commented upon. I shall refer only to the one that, for many, is the great philosophical question: the meaning of life. A critic has said that the text entitled "The Best Jujube Climber " contains the exposition of the meaning of life. Put this way, it seems a little exaggerated, though the critic may have expressed it in a more qualified way. In any case, I would like to point out, in this same sense, the text "A Day Like Any Other". I have to say that from a literary point of view I found it a really beautiful story, as were "The Eighth Night" and "Writing and Riding a Bicycle". If "The Best Jujube Climber " demonstrates the meaning of life, or, more moderately, it describes for us the tranquil satisfaction of a life fulfilled, "A Day Like Any Other" shows the diversity of meanings of the different private lives and the contrast between the meaning and the absurdity of life.

When all is said and done, it is only fair to say that with *Idees i paraules* Tobies Grimaltos has achieved a notable maturity as a writer of the literary essay. I must stress that the author has found his own style of writing, which goes perfectly well with the reasoned and reasonable lucidity of his standpoints. It is obvious that Grimaltos's prose has been greatly influenced by both the clear, direct style typical of analytical philosophy, and by the Fusterian essay-writing tradition, which, more or less, the great majority (if not all) of our authors are party to. Particularly noteworthy, reminiscent of the great man from Sueca, is his moderate and intelligent use of irony (see especially "Intellectuals"), but above all the pragmatism or common sense of his "thought capsules".

To sum up, this is a good book that is well worth reading, for the author's intriguing and well-reasoned ideas and his concise efficient prose

Una comedia ligera (A Light Comedy), Carmen Calvo (2006)
Mixed media, collage, photography, 25 x 19,5 cm

When I compare, then I see clearly

Juan de Sola Llovet

Carrers de frontera. Passatges de la cultura alemanya a la cultura catalana (Frontier Streets. Passages from German Culture to Catalan Culture, vol. I). Edited by Arnau Pons and Simona Škrabec, Institut Ramon Llull, Barcelona, 2007, pp. 466

It is certainly surprising that, of the flood of new publications that the culture industry pours onto the desks of spirited booksellers every day, of the host of books, studies and more or less literary pieces that fill the arts pages of newspapers, blogs or other more volatile supports —like rumour or gossip, it's all the same: license becomes the norm— it is certainly surprising, I repeat, that it should be a so-called institutional book that provokes in readers that Nabokovian feeling of a shudder down their spine, an unequivocal bodily reflex that the book they are holding is an important book.

After reading this marvellous first volume of *Carrers de frontera*, edited by Arnau Pons and Simona Škrabec, from cover to cover, one is overcome by two feelings. On one hand, the impression of having witnessed the development of a culture and a literature, the Catalan, that quite justly and correctly demand that which before 17th July 1936 was theirs by right: insertion in the fabric (the context) of European literature after Goethe; on the other, one's memory recalls the reading of another book that, without the two curators perhaps being aware of its existence, could be the reflection or the initial seed of this biographical proposal.

Let's take it step by step. In 1940, with the Second World War under way and the foundations laid of a barbarity never before witnessed by humanity, Samuel Fischer's publishing house, at the time still based in Berlin, published an anthology of German literature in two volumes edited by Oskar Loerke: *Deutscher Geist. Ein Lesebuch aus zwei Jahrhunderten* (The German Spirit. An Anthology of Two Centuries), which included presentations and texts by, among others, Winckelmann, Lessing, Kant, Matthias Claudius, Hegel, Schiller, Goethe, Jean Paul, Schleiermacher, Novalis, Kleist, Runge, Eichendorff, Bismarck, Hebbel, Nietzsche, Max Weber and Paul Ernst. Although the times were not exactly kind to either the spirit or the letter, the book by Loerke, an expressionist poet and critic who like so many others earned his daily bread by publishing other people's work, was a spectacular success: just when civilization was being annihilated, people ran to the bookshops to buy a copy (it is quite true that literature remedies virtually all ills, apart from death). It goes without saying that the people's response was the result of word of mouth rather than glowing reviews, as in 1933 Loerke, like so many independent souls, *Einzelgänger* of culture, had been expelled from the Prussian Academy of the Arts for political reasons. After the Nazi regime prohibited his writings, Loerke withdrew to Frohnau, a neighbourhood north of Berlin, where he died in 1941 at the age of 56, one of the most conspicuous representatives of what was known as the "internal emigration".

Although the Ministry of Propaganda considered it a "book of opposition", the anthology produced by Loerke, whose first edition stretched to a total of 1,743 pages, was

republished in 1942, and in 1953 a young Peter Suhrkamp took it upon himself to extend the list of authors, added an epilogue and reached the landmark of 2,000 pages. Since then, the book has never been out of print, and in Germany there is not a single library belonging to a man or woman of letters that does not have it to hand in a prominent place.

But let us return to Catalonia. Although it is true that the initial idea of *Carrers de frontera* was another —"to show the various influences that German culture had on Catalan culture during the 19th and 20th centuries in all areas of literature", Pons and Škrabec write at the beginning of the book— it is equally true that, by showing us how one culture is reflected or mirrored in the other, the paths that have marked the literature and the currents of thought in Catalonia since, to mention two dates, Maragall read and translated Goethe and Pi i Margall studied and disseminated the fundamental principles of Hegel's philosophy, adapted to the necessities of the Catalan social reality, become (even more) visible.

Whatever the case —René Wellek said that dating, like the delimitation of literary movements, was purely an epistemological necessity— the first volume of *Carrers de frontera* (the second volume, more focused on the reception in Germany of Catalan-speaking authors and their culture, will see the light after summer) is a major publishing event. The list of contributors is overwhelming, as are also the reasons for the different texts: a complete, exhaustive X-ray of German-influenced Catalan culture in the last two centuries, from poetry to the novel, from drama to architecture, via science, music, the plastic arts, film and the union movements. It is hard to find a book of this kind, an encyclopaedia so complete and succinct, so well conceived and edited, moreover generously illustrated and balanced, with photographs from the time, book covers, press cuttings, graphic work and portraits of different figures; a book that is a joy to have in one's hands, that encourages one to continue learning, reading, studying, and which —something rare, most unusual in works of this type— invites one to re-read it as if it were one of those complete pieces that, from time to time, literary criticism gives us.

(Were it not for the fact that the book is limited to the links —to the passages— between the German- and Catalan-speaking worlds through the most representative and emblematic figures, we might well claim, without fear of exaggeration, that it is the most modern, expansive and clear-sighted history of Catalan literature and culture to have been written in the last twenty years, which is no mean feat).

To pick out, from nearly four hundred and seventy pages, any contribution in particular would be an injustice, because it would mean not mentioning many inestimable essays and therefore falling into a sort of review of the review or, if you will, an anthology of the anthology, a fantastic exercise, without doubt, and also maieutic, but one that, taken to extremes, would end up dissipated in a reduction to the absurd. Let us rather go about it another way: if, not long ago, a German reviewer wrote of the novel by a Barcelona author that it was a "remarkable book, because rarely does one come across a book 395 pages long that is 395 pages too long", we could say precisely the opposite about *Carrers de frontera*: that it is quite difficult to find a book 466 pages long that is not a comma too long.

What makes this book an enormously interesting proposition is the exercise of comparative literature and cultural criticism that it contains in each section. The approaches are very varied, all currents are represented in them: one moment there

are texts that tackle Catalan literature synchronically and others that do so diachronically, and the next we find an exercise in classical philology, or a reflection on the need for really, truly critical criticism: real criticism. Because here is, basically, the chief breath of air that seems to blow through this volume: the literary creation of a country can have its ups and downs —literary excellence through the centuries seems, from today's perspective, exclusive only to France and the English-speaking countries; not even in Germany has every century been fruitful— but what a literature can never ever pretend is not to have rigorous, perceptive, knowledgeable and fair criticism: in short, criticism of the first order. (If we consider the quality of the contributions to this collective volume, we need not worry; Catalan criticism in the 21st century has an iron constitution, like Catalan literature in the 19th and 20th centuries.)

The second element that *Carrers de frontera* establishes is that, when you think about it, there is no such thing as national literature. When on January 31st 1827 Goethe told Eckermann, "I like taking a look at what foreign literature is doing, and I encourage everyone to do the same. These days the concept of national literature does not make much sense. The age of universal literature is upon us, and all of us must act to quicken its coming. But in our assessment of the foreign we must not make anything that seems strange to us the exclusive reason for our admiration and hold it up as a single model," he meant not only that things had to change: deep down, perhaps in a not too conscious way, Goethe was touching one of the nerves of literary history. He was pointing out a fact that, no matter how much he might believe that it could be directed, and even though it was eclipsed by the boom in Romantically-rooted nationalism, was advancing *motu proprio* and coming from a long way back: literature was (and is) a self-governing entity made up of different elements, a sort of universe that expands and contracts according to the ages, which makes itself and which if it knows any bounds it is only to cross them, where the distance that separates ten centuries —or two cities like Hamburg and Barcelona— is at times smaller than the abyss between, let's say, Gelida and Sanaüja.

That literary traditions are closely linked to one another, that the imbrication of a text in the general fabric of literature is not just the result of a theoretical and ambitious conception of the literary fact, but also a necessary condition for understanding and integrating this text in the whole that we call literature, is shown to us, for example, by the universal nature of the works of William of Aquitaine, Pero Meogo or Walther von der Vogelweide, or the dialectical relationship established between a poem by Guillem de Berguedà, some verses by Cavalcanti, a sonnet by Petrarch, the verses of Ausiàs March and the famous sonnets numbers xviii and cxxx by Shakespeare. Or, as this book shows us, between Goethe and Maragall. Or Hölderlin and Riba. Or Rilke and Vinyoli. Or Ferrater and Goethe and Hölderlin and Rilke and Kafka.

This relationship established between two different traditions or periods, this intercultural dialogue, would be completely impossible without translators, the people who, after all, pave the way for Goethe to be able to speak of a *Weltliteratur*. These men and women who strive —often in the shadows and almost in secret— to make the written word understandable in another language or another age are the true messengers of culture, the authentic paladins of universality, those who make the *Duino Elegies*, the *Divine Comedy* or the poems of Cavafy belong, today, also, in their own way, to Catalan literature. If in the beginning there was the word, later there must have been the translated word.

In the same way that Loerke's anthology, which I was talking about at the beginning, is an inescapable point of reference for the history of German literature and culture, this *Carrers de frontera* is destined to be a work of required reading and consultation for all those who are interested in Catalan letters. While we await the appearance of the second volume and the translation into German of this first one, we can only hope for one thing: that the Institut Ramon Llull is kind enough to do the same with the English-speaking, French and Italian (and even the Russian!) cultures, so that, by having to look at our literature through another's magnifying glass, we may for once conceive of the magnitude or, rather, the vastness of our literary tradition.

Today, when almost two years ago some were wondering from their ivory towers what the point was of so many efforts to promote Catalan language and culture at the Frankfurt Book Fair of 2007; when more than one pundit were tearing their hair out and asking impatiently what the results of it would be, it seems to be time to answer that, aside from the contracts for the translation of contemporary Catalan works and authors — which, when you think about it, is more of a mercantile than a strictly literary matter, more to do with the industry than with the canon— we have managed, in some ways, to put back on the map of Europe one of the most singular and universal cultures, and, indirectly, to make much of the planet aware of a literary tradition that, despite its crises and the centuries of darkness, has for the moment reached the last third of the 20th century in admirable spirits.

As Walter Benjamin said, "only dialectic images are truly historical images, that is, not archaic". These *Frontier Streets* are a good example of this II

Foto: Jesús Ciscar

Carmen Calvo: from darkness to light

Victoria Combalia

Carmen Calvo's work stands out in the panorama of Spanish art today for the originality and coherence it has shown since she started in the seventies. In those years, instead of the conceptual art that prevailed in Catalonia and the new figuration in vogue in Madrid, Valencia tended to re-examine artistic disciplines in its art practice. Carmen Calvo recuperated the tradition of pottery, and turned it around 180º by using clay as though it were paint.

Later Carmen Calvo explored like no one else in our country the metaphorical possibilities of the object. Fascinated by the showcases in archaeological museums, she arranged her plaster moulds, found in the market or in shapes she herself invented, like new chambers of marvels. Or she laid out plaits, eyes, knives, dolls, buckets and corsets on blackboards or golden surfaces. Tied to the support with wires or hanging from a thread fixed by little nails, those works were rather like poetic votive offerings and individual symbols waiting to become universal.

At times, like in surrealism, the object condensed the wonders concealed in everyday life, revealed the poetry in the banal and above all "associated what could not be associated". She also expressed with a single object a whole life or a character or a deed: a chamber pot with a trickle of blood, a suitcase and a watch, a crop of grey hair hanging from a dull old mirror. These synecdoches were reminiscent of cubism, which used to choose a part instead of the whole: the letters JOU for "journal", the waxed paper of a wickerwork chair instead of the whole chair.

Later Carmen Calvo began to manipulate old photographs, a sort of work very well represented by the images that appear in this issue of *Transfer*. They are photographs of the forties, fifties and sixties, that is, from the postwar years in Spain, characterised by the lack of political freedoms and, of course, individual freedoms. Morals were narrow-minded; a woman was expected to form a family; a man was expected to be a "real man", to be the breadwinner and give the Fatherland many children. The State and the Church controlled our lives. Citizens were anonymous, obedient beings, without any ideas of their own: that is why Carmen Calvo covers their faces in these found photographs (which she sometimes rummaged for in street

markets or *marchés aux puces*). But above all women were the victims of this strict code that involved denying one's own personality and sensual pleasure.

Thus we see how one of them has turned her face into a tambour frame for embroidery, one of the occupations of the traditional housewife, or the poor girls who became old maids, a social stigma at the time. A couple of lovers hide their faces behind masks or have only one eye between them: with wives condemned to follow their husbands everywhere and confined to their household chores, their personalities were often annihilated and it was often said that married couples who had spent many years living together ended up looking like each other (even to the point of sharing a single eye between them). Let us take a look at the dentures too; placed upside down they are not only surrealistic but express disgust and old age: an echo of Bataille's "shapelessness" and a sort of presaged vanitas.

Carmen Calvo is scathing towards the rites imposed by the official religion; the little girl taking her First Communion has no face, but a mass of pins or a shell (her sex); great metaphors for the sexuality that was attempting to emerge and for which she was punished. The nuns, for their part, have long beards: their lack of sexual life has made them masculine and their metamorphosis comes straight from Buñuel, surrealism and popular art.

Carmen Calvo is one of the Spanish plastic artists, or should we say intellectuals, who best describe the effects of Francoist repression: one was Tàpies, in a subtle way, with his blank walls and his walls riddled with bullet holes; others could be Genovés or the early Canogar, but no one gives us a critical vision from a woman's point of view as she does. A gaze full of black humour and with a precise selection of images that pierces our spirit as efficiently as a sharp dagger.

But Carmen does not stop there; she explains to us the impossibility of love, the stories hidden behind the official history (there are drawings where we can surmise paedophilia or gender violence), the emptiness concealed behind uniforms, behind military decorations and handsome young men. Strong young soldiers have beetles on their faces and, like in a story by Kafka, the beetles end up covering their smiling faces completely: the heroes are not so heroic after all… A rope traverses the image of an uncouth man, a metaphor for his slavery, for his submission to a tough job, or does it forebode a whip that he will use on his wife in a scene of jealousy or an attack of anger? In any case, nothing is what it seems to be and thus was this double-faced world, which is beginning to see transparency only little by little

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