

Poetic Image and Tradition in Western European Modernism

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**Volume 1 Issue 2 (June 1999) Article 1****José Manuel Losada Goya,****"Poetic Image and Tradition in Western European Modernism: Pound, Lorca, Claudel"**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol1/iss2/1>>

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**Abstract:** José Manuel Losada's article, "Poetic Image and Tradition in Western European Modernism: Pound, Lorca, Claudel," investigates aspects of poetic imagery in modernism. The analysis of the changes brought about by modern poetry involves just as much the study of content as it does of form. In the very beginning of modernity, the poet feels the necessity to invent another tradition, distinct in spatial-temporal parameters and in rhetorical procedures. In the article, attention is paid to both the re-modification of the phonological figures (especially in rhyme and rhythm) and the restructuring of lexical levels (especially in metaphor and metonymy). A discussion of Pound's, Lorca's, and Claudel's texts allows for the evaluation of the way in which tradition is assimilated by modernist currents.

**José Manuel LOSADA GOYA**

**Poetic Image and Tradition in Western European Modernism: Pound, Lorca, Claudel**

The history of Western European literature until approximately the end of the eighteenth century could be described as a succession of phenomena which were generally linked to classical models. In other words, writers consciously or subconsciously, in a relative or absolute way, respected and followed the content and forms of a classical canon. The content does not undergo extensive modification. At the most, each author adapts his/her heritage to the particular circumstances of his/her own time and place. The same thing can be said with respect to classical forms: the arrangement of literary categories tends to remain loyal to schemes used by their predecessors. Certainly, relevant changes can be shown in the proliferation of sub-categories which literary scholars classify according to their formal structure, length, purpose, origin, etc. Yet, these are not the only relevant changes. Others are of even greater interest since they are evidence of an innate resistance to innovation. Frequently, the boldness of such writers has been the target of every imaginable criticism. It may be sufficient to remember the tirades put forth by Voltaire against Spanish or English works (particularly against Guillén de Castro and Shakespeare). While it can be argued that such attacks come from an overuse of classical forms and themes by Voltaire, the history of literature reveals that such criticism has been common in Europe until the age of Romanticism.

At the beginning of Romanticism, we bear witness to a very uncommon transformation in the literary world, that is, with regard to themes, Romanticism entails a genuine revolution. Following the battle of *Hernani*, everything has had the right to citizenship in the literary canon (Hugo), and thus writing has developed vastly. Throughout the nineteenth century, writers tackle with impunity fields which were until then unimaginable. Romanticism, whose objective was to unmask any intimate connection to reality, had begun with Swedenborg, Constant, and Baudelaire, and it finds its full expression in the movements of symbolism, aestheticism, decadence and, in a special way, in surrealism. However, it is important to point out that this Romantic revolution does not at all imply the suppression of themes: the progressive expansion of innovation does not convey any reduction in content. The same occurs with respect to form: the abundance of brief minor genres -- for example essays -- do not result in the rejection of usual categories. Conversely, it reaffirms the syncretic character of modernity. What does change in the very beginning of modernity is the attitude of the writer towards the world. Romantic individualism, surrealist explorations of the subconscious world, and serious political, social, and religious crises in Europe explain, to a large extent, the character of modernity and its manifestations in modernist movements. Perhaps the main characteristic to note in all this is the conscious break or rupture regarding every aspect of the person: that is to say, with respect to the individual, family, society, and the world. This rupture is an epiphenomenological consequence of another break which is even more profound: the schism with the past. This schism is perceived as an axiom where existence has more importance than essence and the axiological a-priority takes the place of logical judgement, in the strict sense of the word. However, this break with tradition simultaneously involves a paradoxical foundation and that is the tradition of rupture. To continually break off from the recent past becomes a premise which in itself entails a new tradition. Thus, modern aesthetics creates a new tradition against its very own tradition.

It is not difficult to imagine the immense change that the aforesaid process implies in a purely literary world. History shows that the axiomatic negation of artistic heritage leads to a dead end and rupture. Disconcerted, the poet then feels the necessity to invent another tradition, distinct in spatial-temporal parameters, and in rhetorical procedures. Consequently, the phenomenon of this "new tradition" constitutes a good example of the modern artist's anxiety and worries. Firstly, tradition is distinct in so far as the parameters are different: it will be situated in another setting -- for example, in an Oriental, exotic, inter-continental, or "primitive" environment. Secondly, it is distinct with respect to procedures: this new mode of communication has just as much an effect upon figures as it does upon levels of language. The re-modification of the phonological figures (especially in rhyme and rhythm) is surprising either because of their complexity, or because of their simplicity or even, in some cases, because of their abandonment. The same occurs in the restructuring of lexical levels (especially in metaphor and metonymy) where tradition and the unconscious world firmly come

together for the first time in the history of Western literature. As I suggested, the rejection of tradition has produced here an influx of new traditions and in this sense, anxiety has given rise to a dilemma which is immediately resolved by means of paradox which is the ultimate explanation of literature. Only in this manner manages modern poetry to be comfortable in its own time and without the negation its own poetic status.

The changes which various schools of modernism have contributed to the history of literature is expansive. Themes and forms change, but not in the same way in which they would occur in the passing from one movement to another -- as it might have happened in the change from baroque to classicism. The reason lies in the conscious and premeditated decision to do something totally new (Pound). It is something which can be verified in each of the previously mentioned fields. An analysis of the changes brought about by modern poetry involves just as much the study of content as it does of form. I argue that the separation of artistic content and form is a dangerous step which more than one modern theory has taken, for example Taine in his *Philosophie de l'art* or Schopenhauer in his *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (see Lehmann 58). However, an analytical approach imposed as a prior step leads to a synthetic understanding of the problematic. An analytical approach refers to the modifications which have been carried out in modernism: themes suffer an alteration of different spatial and temporal parameters and forms undergo an upheaval of various rhetorical procedures. In the following, I will present categories of analysis in the context of the said analytical approach:

Alterations of spatial parameters: the boundaries of literature no longer pertain to the common environment of nineteenth-century bourgeois literature, owing to the postulates of expressionism and aestheticism. In situations involving space, modern writers often assume a relative bi-locational position. Imaginary voyages of previous centuries are put into practice by modern writers: Pound and Eliot travel in Continental Europe, García Lorca and Juan Ramón Jiménez visit and settle in the United States and others such as Claudel embark on voyages to the Far East. Implicitly, Europeans no longer assume that they can continue to be indifferent to the rest of the world. In 1915 Pound translates poems belonging to the Chinese poet Rihaku (701-762 AD) and utilizes pictograms in an effort to reproduce certain ideas with greater precision in order to demonstrate that there only exists one race on Earth, the Tribe of Man (see 1994, 97). Hence, any language may be enriched by the contributions of other languages (Eliot 1957, 28). Lorca, in a surprising antithetical combination, wrote in 1926 a "Chinese Song in Europe" (*Canciones*) and Claudel first mixed the haï kaï ritual into his poems, then resorted to Nô in order to obtain his hero's purification (see *Cent Phrases pour éventails* 1927 and *Le Soulier de satin*, 1924; see also Dethurens 18).

Alterations of temporal parameters: by belittling the temporal succession proper to tradition, the modern writer succeeds in attaining a duplicity with regard to time. This duplicity is indeed relative since the poet communicates his/her ideas through mythical and human history, but only in a vertical fashion. A good illustration of this is found in the Romantics' desire to bring back medieval lore and legacy. For example, it served to provoke interest in the Arab invasion and Christian recapture of Spain. Continuing along the same path taken by German scholars in the first half of the nineteenth century, England contributed considerably to the recovery of Spanish ballads. The contributions of Robert Southey, Walter Scott, Byron, and many others helped to stress the necessity of getting in touch with the past. Similarly on the other side of the Atlantic, Irving and Longfellow for example participated in this recovery of the past. This interest in the past finds a good response in modernists' works. Again Pound, whose first trip to Spain occurred in 1906, includes in his *Cantos* the Cid's exile and the death of Inés de Castro in Portugal (*Canto* III). Similarly, Lorca dedicated more than one work to the traditional Gypsy world (*Poema del cante jondo* and *Primer Romancero gitano*) and Claudel, in metaphorical constructs, exposed how the king's wife (i.e., Spain) could not satisfy him anymore than a slave could (i.e., South America (*The Soulier de satin*; see also Weber-Cafilisch 35). However, it is of great importance to point out that the identity of modernism is found in combining horizontal and vertical changes in spatial and temporal parameters with regard to tradition. The implementation and subsequent alterations of traditional themes do not explain the complete mechanism of modernism, however. What needs to be considered are the modifications found in rhetorical devices.

Alterations in Rhetorical Devices: Some important figures which operate on the phonological level of language and which are related to prosody affected modernist literary forms. Here, it is important to note an often occurring misunderstanding: it has been thought that trends in modern poetry

necessarily forged ahead by the destruction of preceding forms. in my opinion, this is a wrong assumption since "the poem comes before the form, in the sense that a form grows out of the attempt of somebody to say something; just as a system of prosody is only a formulation of the identities in the rhythms of a succession of poets influenced by each other" (Eliot 1957, 37). This implies that the indiscriminate use of "new" forms, such as free verse and unusual rhythms, does not necessarily suppose the creation of good poetry. However, it is correct to say that the utilisation of free verse was in principle "a revolt against dead form, and a preparation for a new form or for the renewal of the old" (Eliot). In other words, any such new forms are the result of a unique rebellion; but it is not because of this that a text is "good" or "bad": modernism does not confer quality upon a literary text, only character.

Among rhetorical devices, rhyme is one of which experiences the first impact of modern poetry. The main reason resides for this in the fact that rhyme operates primarily on the phonic and secondarily on the morphological level. Yet, it also occurs on the syntactical level, thus provoking a coercion not very well accepted by the postulates of modernism. Continuing along the same path taken by Verlaine in his *Art poétique*, Claudel forcefully attacks this coercion in his *Réflexions et propositions sur le vers français* where he argues that rhyme is thus relegated to a category of purely linguistic phenomena. Therefore, he argues, it generally provokes at the same time a bothersome and ambiguous feeling of necessity and banality. Rhyme can serve as a point of reference which guides the reader, yet its abuse has a damaging effect upon drama and lyric poetry. Thus, modernist poetry will not tolerate the leading role rhyme used to play in poetry and the poet does not allow for the constrictions of scrupulous traditions which disrupt the ideal situation of the elements of poetry and destroy the delightful effects of surprise (see Claudel 1965, 38-41). Claudel's reference to Verlaine's intentions is quite clear: in 1935, ten years after writing his *Réflexions*, Claudel once again evokes Verlaine's advice: "Préfère, poète, préfère, préfère, préfère l'impair!" (1965, 488; Verlaine 1962, 326). At the most, the modern poet sometimes uses rhyme but always after freeing it from scholastic tyranny (Claudel 1965, 1409, note 51).

Clearly, such notions and ideas are not unique to modernism: in the seventeenth century Quevedo and his translator La Geneste had already touched upon similar ideas, for example. In the first few decades of the nineteenth century, Fabre d'Olivet formulated similar critiques against the suppression of rhyme and later, authors such as Antonio Machado and León Felipe developed them further. But the apparently general rejection of rhyme does not involve renouncing another essential rhetorical device: rhythm. Modernism does not accept traditional rhythm which is based on tonic stress or syllabic measurement according to each case. In modern poetics rhythm is conceived as time, either as a sequence of the musical phrase (see Pound 1954, 3) or as a spiritual metronome (Claudel 1957, 136-38). This modern tempo is not perceived as successive but as universal time with all its past, present, and future possibilities: that is to say, time is viewed as having duration. Successive time is more proper to traditional poetics while in the modernist conception of time -- extensively developed by Proust in *A la Recherche du temps perdu*, for example -- all possible temporal succession is dismissed in order to focus on personal events occurring in the immediate present. In other words, all past, present, and future occurrences enter into a simultaneous relationship centred in the present conscious of the poet. Something similar takes place in the reader's mind whose conscience keeps on recharging like a battery as he/she ponders the words of each verse: "Le passé est une incantation de la chose à venir, sa nécessaire différence génératrice, la somme sans cesse croissante des conditions du futur. Il détermine le *sens*, et, sous ce jour, il ne cesse pas d'exister, pas plus que les premiers mots de la phrase quand l'?il atteint les derniers" (Claudel 1957, 140). The result is a state of restless sleep in which we have an extension of "the moment of contemplation, the moment when we are both asleep and awake, which is the one moment of creation, by hushing us with an alluring monotony, while it holds us waking by variety, to keep us in that state of perhaps real trance, in which the mind liberated from the pressure of the will is unfolded in symbols" (Yeats 1961, 159). From here arises an unexpected tension between the words of poetic phrases. Considered as such, endowed with time and tension, they have the role of shocking the reader (Claudel 1957, 138). Rhythm, then, is something spiritual, but not because it is less material. It is audible, thus having a material form of movement producing an obsessive impact upon the reader's soul: "une espèce de danse poétique qui implique l'enlacement à une certaine combinaison numérique au moins approximative" (Claudel 1965, 40).

Claudel's reference to dance brings to mind the tribute which Claudel paid to Nijinsky during a full dance recital: "grande créature humaine à l'état lyrique" (1965, 386). The result of the exciting rhythm, repetition, careful recitative, and balance of verbal tones place the verse in an intimate correspondence with nature, where all the elements find their most complete and perfect form. In this way, without rhyme and with a totally absorbing rhythm, it seems to recover a sense of newness which Pound so deeply grieved for (see Claudel, 1965, 63).

These above selected references offer us a glimpse into the importance of music in modernism, for instance. It is, of course, an area which has been studied by the greatest critics and poets and here are some examples: Yeats' "Speaking to the Psaltery," Claudel's "Sur la musique," Eliot's "The Music of Poetry," and Lorca's attempt at an overture, *Impresiones y Paisajes*. Some poetic devices which occur on the lexical level of language and which are related to the imagination, express with even greater force the modern upheaval of literature. Before I proceed to their description, it is important to bear in mind the role played by the main proponents of the aforementioned subversion and the way in which they brought it to full fruition. Here we cannot count on the reference to Claudel's theory. If on one hand his modernism entails a virulent rejection of the tyranny of formal rhetoric, on the other hand his conception of the world leads him along different paths of European modernism. With regard to these modernist movements, the diverse avant-gardes are especially interesting since for them unconscious reality acquires a level of importance which until now has not been suspected. This is an area which Nerval, Lautréamont, and Rimbaud had explored. It is appropriate to make the objection that Claudel always felt a special predilection towards the author of *Illuminations* (see Brunel 1991, 3-8). However, his reading of *La Vogue* provoked only a literary conversion, not a gnoseological one. Without any doubt in my mind, the great revolution of modernism has been surrealism. However, the distance which separates theories of surrealism from their practical realization and application is considerable. Their literary ideas are, for the most part, more relevant than their creative work and their aesthetic conscience is very much ahead of their actual fulfilment. Adrian Marino is correct in saying that the whole of avant-garde has been "plus intéressantes et plus créatrices du pont de vue théorique (manifestes, programmes, polémiques, etc.), que sous le rapport purement littéraire" (1977, 36; see also Horia 1976, 110). Most of the French surrealists in this period -- except in very few cases, as with Éluard -- yielded very little and not very long lasting fruit. Rather, what they had left behind was wide ranging criticism that permitted an even better understanding of the great poetic revolution in various European schools of modernism. Evidently, modern literature continues using similar traditional unconscious images which have been widely studied by scholars of psycho-analysis, particularly with respect to displacement and the condensation of meaning. If indeed they formed part of the cultural and pedagogical heritage a few centuries before our era, Kruszewski and Jakobson were those who first introduced them under the classifications of metonymy and metaphor in structuralism. There are many other figures of speech found in our diction, such synecdoche, allegory, comparison, etc. However, it is obvious that those which are most utilized in modern literature are derived from the two aforesaid subconscious processes. The result is that the leading roles of metaphor and metonymy cause other figures, such as allegory and comparison, to be dismissed. The final reason for the relegation of allegory and comparison is the poets' reluctance in the face of any form of didacticism (Poe, Baudelaire). Thus, the reader in modern times is confronted with innumerable varieties of metaphor, very often accompanied by metonymy. Also, metaphor has an inseparable correlation with analogy which, in fact, was frequently used by surrealists (see Balakian 125-47). Other than metaphor and metonymy, another category, intertextuality, appears quite often.

To illustrate my notions and suggestions above, I will next present some examples in Pound's and Lorca's work. In the case of Pound, with the boldness that he was always known for, he was one of the staunchest advocates of a new type of poetry, more extreme and incisive because of his unusual treatment of language and image. With respect to image, here is his famous definition of 1913: "An 'image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (1954, 4). Understood in this way, image does not seem to be distinguished in any special way from a traditional understanding of it. Something very similar was stated by Poe in his explanation of poetic character found in writing: "A poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating, the soul" (1984, 15) and elsewhere he states, "A poem deserves its title only inasmuch as it excites, by elevating the soul" (1984, 71). To a large extent, this is so since the poetic character of human beings is universal

and their poetic works seek, above all, to excite our emotions: "If we are moved by a poem, it has meant something, perhaps something important, to us; if we are not moved, then it is, as poetry, meaningless" (Eliot 1957, 30).

It is necessary to understand Pound's statement within its appropriate context. Upon speaking about his conception of "Imaginism," he brings to our attention that it is essential that we use no superfluous word, (nor any) adjective which does not reveal something. Poetry demands that every word has an "exactness of presentation," something which Pound admired in Dante's writings. More specifically, it is defined by a "definiteness" or a preciseness through which the poet distances himself/herself from symbolists' models. In this way the poet draws nearer to a form of medieval simplicity. This close association with former times is characteristic of a much earlier enterprise. It "appears to be largely shaped by derivative modes, steeped as it is in the thematic and rhetorical conventions of the turn of the century, and falling in with a peculiarly nineteenth-century medievalism" (Hermans 85). Medievalism, which to a large degree, means appreciating the clarity of early, "primitive," Europeans. In a parallel manner, this primitivism also involves the rebirth of Greco-Roman tradition and this can be clearly verified in Pound's *Cantos*. The third *Canto* illustrates the renewal of early European traditions in an obvious manner. The first stanza is a description of Venice. In the nineteen verses the poet uses a decadent style and intelligently joins together themes and forms. "Gondolas," "peacocks in Koré's house," and the faint "first light" in the morning -- which reveals the sparkling water and its "green veins in the turquoise" -- are harmoniously blended together with the mythical and wonderful Venetian setting. Yet the imagery does not end up being any less strong by remaining implicit. This stanza wonderfully condenses the sadness of the poet that morning, primarily thanks to a series of meaningful verses and secondarily by means of several intertextual references. In the more "pragmatic" verses, we discover the poet's poverty ("the gondolas cost too much"), the presence of male objectification ("there were not 'those girls'"), different mythological figures related to trees ("panisks," "dryas," "mælid"), and darkness which is intimately connected to Confucius' life ("the grey steps lead up under the cedars") (for a full-scale analysis, see, e.g., Terrell).

More important are the intertextual references in Pound's text. They are divided into allusions and transcriptions about the legend of the betrothal between the city of Venice and the Adriatic Sea. He also alludes to the music of *La spagnuola*, to the description of Koré's home and garden, to this woman's abduction by Hades, and to the humanist Poggio, etc. These allusions are intimately linked to tradition; in fact, in 1908 Pound heard traditional Venetian songs at the "Buccentoro" boat club. Furthermore, Vincenzo de Chiara's *La spagnuola* was, in those days, already made into a popular song. On the other hand, Koré's home and garden -- Koré was a nickname which D'Annunzio gave to the marchioness Luisa Casati -- are described by the author in the "Terza offerta" of his *Notturmo*: "é abitata dai pavoni bianchi." According to Pound, the aforesaid peacocks "may have been" in Koré's house. This suggestion is not made without a slight reinterpretation of the original Italian. A passer-by is barely able to tell what there is in the Koré's villa: "Non vedo se non la vasta base di pietra e gli alberi del giardino nascosto e una striscia d'acqua luminosa" (1995, 187 and 220). In addition, Pound substitutes the "C" for a "K" in the nickname D'Annunzio used for the marchioness. Thus, a subversion of Greek mythology emerges: Koré is the daughter of Zeus and Demeter before being kidnaped by Hades (Pound 1994, 145). Lastly, the allusion to Poggio is a reference to a famous letter which this Italian humanist (1380-1459) wrote to his friend Niccolò de Niccoli. Pound's imitation of this letter appeared under the title "Aux étuves de Wiesbaden, A.D. 1451" in the *Little Review* in July of 1917. Yet here we bear witness to yet another subversion of Greek mythology, here originating in a poem by Catullus ("viderunt luce marinas / mortales oculis nudato corpores Nymphas / nutricum tenus exstantes e gurgite cano" [LXIV, 16-18]). Just like in Koré's situation, here the overlapping of two literary scenes - Italian and Greek and Roman mythological -- permits the complete comprehension of the verses in the text. Next, Pound copies three scenes from the *Poema de Mío Cid* and he utilizes the scenes which best illustrate the sadness of the Castilian hero during his exile. Specifically, he refers to three scenes: when the Cid enters his own city where no one offers him lodgings, when he sees his home abandoned, and when his own poverty eventually forces him to borrow money from Jews (1983, 45-54, v. 1-200). The adaptation of these excerpts, the literal transcription of one verse ("A nine-year-old girl") and two words from Catullus ("voce ... tinnula" [LXI, 13]) are perfectly joined together

in the poem since they summarize the nostalgia felt by the Cid while at the same time it is also reminiscent of the poet's own situation in the year he wrote the poem.

It is appropriate now to bring to our attention the difference in tone between Pound's poem and that of Catullus. The text of the Roman poet can be read as invitation to celebrate. Yet, the *Canto* totally attains its desired objective, while superimposing the ringing voice of the little girl during the Cid's exile. Pound had often talked about the necessity of using texts and words of other languages because in them any state of mind had already been expressed in an unparalleled manner. In this sense, the use of medieval texts serves well in revealing the importance which Pound concedes to tradition. We can see this at the end of *Canto* III where he once again makes use of an age-old medieval story about Inés de Castro (murdered in 1355). The king ordered that her remains be exhumed so that the royal court could pay their respects. This is a new reference to the purest popular and learned tradition. Pound utilizes a story which was recreated in Spanish ballads and preserved in Camões' *Os Lusíadas* (1973, *Canto* III, st. 118-36). After this reference to history and converted into legendary tradition, the poet finds himself faced with a vacuum. The splendor of the past has disappeared, and now only the "drear waste" of the present remains, a syntagma which evokes Eliot's "The Waste Land." Thus, all of *Canto* III can be summed up by a series of decadent motives, connotative phrases, allusions, and intertextual references where tradition occupies an irreplaceable position.

We are reminded of the difference between this type of lyricism with respect to that of preceding generations. This is so since the author indubitably has alluded to his own self. More concretely, in the first verse he states, "I sat down on Dogana's steps." This can be explained. Numerous modernist writers have repeated the importance of making literature impersonal. Eliot, Keats, and Whitman, to name a few, maintain that poetry can no longer be an autobiography nor a mere confession of a state of mind (see Pound 1994, 17). The poet ought to express his/her emotions, but in a way that they may be applicable to people in general. Pound's images are of great impact precisely because, going back to tradition, they involve a perfect symbiosis in which each image continues to acquire new elements. Thus, in a progressive manner, the idea of pain which afflicts the poet keeps on acquiring intertextual and contextual nuances with regard to his sorrow. Owing to the combination of several images filled with sadness, the whole work ends up being profoundly nostalgic and deeply melancholic. Here we have an example to underline my proposition that modernism does not cast aside tradition. Rather, it simply subjectivizes it according to its character. Hence a kind of poetry appears which is very cryptic and surprising in nature, more in tune with a new style of lyrical poetry which demands greater power and universality.

In the case of Lorca we find a similar strength in tone and depth of context, particularly in *Romancero gitano* where he combines, in a most unusual fashion, themes and forms. Christian de Paepe maintains that this collection of poems adds new thematic resonance to metrical-aesthetical character (García Lorca 1991, 96). This is mostly true, although it merits a more detailed study, with the object being a better understanding of Lorca's modernism. His themes are traditional with respect to spatial parameters, but when considering his temporal ones they are new. His figures are traditional with respect to his rhetorical-phonological methods, but when considering his rhetorical-semantical ones they are new. In this way a parallel can be drawn between Lorca and other poets of European modernism. Lorca indicated in his "Recital-Lecture on the *Romancero gitano*" that it was his desire to touch upon a new theme not treated by the vast array of ballads. There already existed many forms of Spanish ballads: Castilian, Catalan, Portuguese, Moorish, Judeo-Spanish, American (in its multiple versions), etc. However, there were not ballads dealing with the Gypsy world per se. In this sense, it is very important to point out the adjective "First" which precedes the title of the collection after the third edition: it was the "first collection of ballads written about the Gypsy's world" (García Lorca 1991, 97). Hence I would argue that the *Romancero gitano* should not be considered as a "minor genre" of ballads. Something similar occurs with Antonio Machado, although he did indeed wish to continue the *Romancero General* (see Jiménez 1981, 260). Throughout his writings Lorca respects the spatial parameters of many preceding ballads, for example he uses the setting of Andalusia in his poems. The same does not happen with respect to his temporal parameters however. His book is not a collection of poems situated in a precise time since his "images are used for a background over the span of a thousand years" (García Lorca 1991, 307). In sum, his character is not any particular Gypsy,



nor does he even pertain his images to the Gypsy world. Such an identification would suppose continuity, the succession that is negated by modernity. This explains the many negative pre-fixes used by the poet. His very own book is anti-picturesque, anti-folkloric, and anti-flamenco, and here lies Lorca's great originality: in making use of a pre-existing theme and articulating it in such a way that the result may become more impersonal and universal.

The aforementioned devices of spatial parameters and modification of the temporal axis obtain something completely new in Lorca's text and this is the creation of a new theme within Spanish ballads: "There is no more than one character who is in Pain -- and it has nothing to do with a state of melancholy, nor with nostalgia, nor with any other affliction or disease of the soul. It is a feeling more heavenly than earthly. Andalusian pain is a struggle between a loving intellect and the surrounding mystery which it cannot understand" (García Lorca 1991, 307). Thus, in ballads about Gypsies a plethora of themes were treated, such as honor, fatherland, love, and pain. Yet, according to Lorquian modernism, it acquires a mysterious and magical character, until then uncommon in Spanish literature. This magical force can also be observed in the "Sleepwalker Ballad" of the *Romancero gitano* (1924). The ballad permits us to see the thematic changes and to understand until what point Lorca respects formal procedures and only modifies those which pertain to the imagination. The ballad represents all essential features of traditional ballads in a loose series of octosyllabic verses and with an assonant rhyme in even numbered verses. In addition, but in a surprising way, Lorca reconciles the rhythm of the verses with the sequence of the musical phrase (Pound's postulate) and with that of time (Claudel's postulate) throughout his text. Furthermore, the peculiar use of rhythm in the "Sleepwalker Ballad" deserves our attention because of how it applies to the theme. Of the ballad's theme, there were two common interpretations by contemporary critics: "Grenada's yearning for the sea" and "a city which is anxious to hear the sound of waves." Lorca responded saying such critiques were true since the "Sleepwalker Ballad" contained that "painful dramatic environment," but that his poem "was also something else," something which even he himself was ignorant of (García Lorca 1991, 308 and 310). I do not necessarily agree with this thematic explanation, but here I rather discuss Lorca's method of writing. The technique in the "Sleepwalker Ballad" is new in so far as it unites two common genres of ballads, namely the narration of a story and musical lyrics. In consequence, Lorca manages to create a narrative ballad with lyrics without which neither loses its idiosyncrasy or quality. This is really innovative, at least in the mind of the poet, since it is no less certain that some former ballads also succeeded in obtaining such a happy combination.

More important is the role played by the imagination. Lorca affirms that the "Sleepwalker Ballad" gives off "a *great anecdotal sensation*" (my italics). Yet, he immediately adds that no one knows what is happening, not even he himself, since "poetic mystery is also a mystery to the poet who conveys it, even if he is ignorant of it" (1991, 308). Furthermore, he states that "if you ask me why I say, 'A thousand glass tambourines wounded the dawn,' I might tell you that I have seen them in hands of angels and in trees, yet I will not be able to say anything else, and even less so, be able to explain its meaning" (1991, 310). As we can see, his text gather together all the necessary ingredients of surrealistic imagery. The same thing happens with Lorca's obsessive reference to the color green. It is around this color that the poem revolves, as Lorca refers to it both anaphorically and epiphorically. He writes: "Green how much I want you green. / Green wind. Green branches. / ? / Green flesh, green hair, / and eyes of cold silver. / Green how much I want you green." In the use of images, such as these, it is most important to comprehend the balance between the new poetic trends of the time as well as poetic tradition. The color green already appeared in the earliest of Lorca's works.

Nevertheless, he only touched upon certain areas of nature (plants, trees, and the sea, especially in his *Libro de poemas*). In "The Death of Ophelia" (1918; unedited until 1988), a young lady is described as lying down "on green water" (1988, 64; 1994, 420). Later, beginning in the *Poema del cante jondo* and *Romancero gitano*, other objects appear colored green, even until the point that color borders metaphorical abstraction ("greenness"). Thus, the whole poem is based upon the young lady's green physique. "Green is the girl. She has / green eyes, green hair," just like Lorca's Gypsy woman (see Jiménez 1978, 285). The same occurs in a manuscript where Lorca relates his chromatic ideas about water to those found in the "Sleepwalker Ballad." In this hand-written composition there is one scene in which we find that "the dead boy is swung over the greenish plain" reminding the reader of another one from the "Sleepwalker Ballad" where we read that "above the tank's surface, / the Gypsy

woman was swaying" and that she had "Green flesh, green hair, / and eyes of cold silver." In all these scenes the character is already dead and enveloped in a green, watery environment (see Paepe 1986, 17-18). It is evident that this strong and disturbing image produces an effect and that this places the text in a context of modernist poetry.

It will help, however, to burrow into the meaning of such poetic imagery, where everything points to the careful interweaving of traditional and modern elements. Lorca is using popular and realistic resources, as are those found in the green countryside or in the stagnant water. However, modernism, in the way postulated by Pound, demands that intellectual and emotionally complex images be constructed at the spur of the moment (Pound 1954, 4). It is what the poet of the "Sleepwalker Ballad" is searching for. By means of a hypallage (or in this case through an adjectival enallage), he transfers the greenness from the landscape and tank to the young lover. The first results in an interesting use of the color green to describe a part of the body and even to the whole person. The reader is shocked, owing to the ambiguity and semantical impertinence caused by this metaphor. Yet, in Lorca's imaginary world the color green has the connotation of death as well. This color is associated with the tragic symbols of water and the moon and, in turn, its symbolism is related to love. It is well known that in Lorca's work pain is "a deep love for nothing, since one is convinced that death (the perennial preoccupation in Andalusia) is breathing behind the door" (1991, 208). And it is this that explains why the Gypsy's flesh and hair turn green. Finally, all acquires a complete meaning as the dead woman causes everything which surrounds her to turn the same color. The "high railings" become "green railings" where the young lover desperately awaits the arrival of her beloved; everything ends up being surrounded by green, that is to say, by an atmosphere of death heralded by justice. With the arrival of the state police, death puts an end to everything and order is once again established, and the color green returns to tree branches, just as the ship returns to the sea, and the horse to the mountains.

In this poem Lorca achieves something which, until then, was very unusual in Spanish poetry or elsewhere. Parting with traditional imagery, he alters them as he mingles conscious and subconscious images. In the same way, he uses a traditional theme, yet he modifies it at the same time. The modern poet is, thereby, getting more in touch with his/her own generation and at the same time keeping his/her distance from tradition. In other words, the poet is fighting a battle against tradition, but with tradition's own supply of armaments. Here is exactly where its strength can be found, "in form and purpose" as Lorca himself stated in his "Lecture-Recital": "From the very first verses it is noticeable that myth is mixed in with something which could be called realistic. ... However, it is not realistic since, upon making contact with the magical sphere, it becomes even more mysterious and indescribable" (1991, 309 and 315). Here is where Lorca's modernism breaks with tradition. In the same manner as Pound, Lorca makes pre-existing realistic images his own by subjectivizing and imposing upon them a human character. The result of such a fusion is a creation in which the poet's personality is not identifiable in his work. Instead, a sense of mystery abounds, covering and depersonalising his own pain until it becomes a universal Pain.

With respect to the above discussed, it can be concluded that modernism does not involve, by any means, a complete split with tradition. On the contrary, tradition holds a high value, but in a completely different way from which it used to be esteemed. The liberation of forms (Claudel) is enriched by the strength of imagery (Pound and Lorca). The latter arises from an absolutely new use of metaphorical and intertextual procedures. If, indeed, these have existed in literature previously, in modernism they seem to be affected by the sudden appearance of the unconscious world which paradoxically has a tendency to depersonalize poetry. More precisely, it leads to the formation of a new phenomenology of the person. The poet's individuality progressively disappears in order to place more emphasis on the universality of the surrounding world.

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