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FRA FRANCESC MONER'S
PSYCHIC SPACE / SOULFUL
PLACE

INTRODUCTION

IN THE REALM OF THE *INFIERNOS*

The love-centered literature that, whether written in Castilian or in Catalan, prevailed in the Catalan domain during the fifteenth century may be recognized by the mournful, wretched lovers it portrays and by the palpable ambiance of gloom it evokes or, more often than not, actually depicts. Such specimens of this literature as *Glòria d'amor* by Bernat Hug de Rocabertí, besides *Lo somni*, the *Regoneixença*, and *La noche* by the three «Francescs» —respectively, Alegre, Carrós, and Moner—¹ pique our interest precisely because they constitute ingenious renditions of a type of composition that became prominent in the Iberian Peninsula during the waning Middle Ages. In his seminal book entitled *Mediaeval Spanish Allegory*, Chandler Rathfon Post classifies the type in question under the heading of «erotic Hell» (1915: 75-102). Post avowedly derives the term from *Infierno de los enamorados*, an influential poem by none other than the

1. The full title of Carrós's notable prose work is *Regoneixença i moral consideració contra les persuasions, vicis e forces d'amor*. For an essential orientation on three of the aforementioned compositions—namely *Glòria*, *Somni*, and *Regoneixença*— see Riquer (1964: 3), respectively, in the order in which they are listed here (pp. 152-160, 249-250, 246-249). A detailed commentary on Moner's *La noche* is found in Cocozzella 1979 and in the course of the present discussion. For the text of the individual works studied in this essay, see «Works Cited» below under the name of the respective authors.

illustrious Íñigo López de Menedoza, better known as Marqués de Santillana (1915: 75). Post offers an enlightening definition, precise and broad enough as to provide a convenient starting point for any further discussion on the *infiernos* and *infierno*-like compositions.² Thus, he blazes a trail of exploration, which he himself undertakes with consummate skill and accomplishment. He initiates, that is, and pursues a quest of not only sources but also salient motifs and variations invested upon those motifs by talented authors, the likes of the prototypal Santillana and of many others — Juan de Andújar, the Bachiller Jiménez, Diego de San Pedro, Guevara, Garcí Sánchez de Badajoz, Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, Pedro Manuel Jiménez de Urrea, and the list is far from complete— who exhibit impressive artistic flair and perform extraordinary feats of inventiveness. There are, of course, scholars who have followed in Post's footsteps and have made significant contributions of their own. Antonio Cortijo Ocaña and Roxana C. Recio, to adduce some specific names, have dedicated their investigative expertise to a thorough analysis of the complex intertextual dimensions of works that

2. These, Post (1915: 75) specifies,

may be subdivided into two classes according to their allegorical attitude. To the first belong those in which, as in Santillana's *Infierno de los enamorados* itself, the author ideates a real abyss of retribution for ill-starred lovers; to the second those in which, as in the *Desert d'Amours* of Eustache Deschamps and the *Prison d'Amours* of Baudouin de Condé, he conceives more fancifully the torment of the visionary world simply as a crystallization of the lover's woes in the actual world.

In his own noteworthy study of the *Infierno de amor* by Garcí Sánchez de Badajoz, another prominent Spanish poet of the fifteenth century, Patrick Gallagher, sheds light upon Post's definition by delineating a contrast between Santillana's prototype and Garcí Sánchez's rendition of the «erotic Hell» (Gallagher 1968: 188-233). According to Gallagher the two *infiernos* exemplify, respectively, distinct orientations, which he calls «objective» and «subjective». It is appropriate to quote directly from Gallagher's remarks. Referring to those particular «*cancionero* poets with their hells, purgatories and prisons of love», Gallagher (1968: 188) states:

The attempts of some were objective, while those of others were subjective: some dissociated themselves from and other identified themselves with, the torments of lovers whom they portrayed; some went to the places of punishment to observe, others to experience; both went to record what they saw, but some as detached investigators, others as lovers. Santillana belongs to the former group and Garcí Sánchez to the latter.

escape Post's attention, even though these texts fall unmistakably within the purview of his study.³

FORESHADOWING THE «LOCAL HABITATION» OF THE SELF

From Post's precise definition, amply illustrated by the examples adduced by Post himself and others, we may deduce that the typical *infierno de los enamorados* discloses its author's obsessive concern with the issues of placement and location. A number of more or less technical terms, ranging from the abstract «spatiality» to the distinctly metaphysical «circunstancia» and «morada vital», borrowed, respectively, from José Ortega y Gasset⁴ and Américo Castro,⁵ may be employed to substantiate the *infierno's* referentiality to a keen sense of what the bard calls «local habitation».⁶ One may even detect in the *infiernos* that interest us here the esthetic resonance, concomitant to a phenomenon that John R. Stilgoe calls «topophilia». Stilgoe coins the neologism in an effort to recapture Gaston Bachelard's suggestive insights into what that noted French thinker calls «poetics of space».⁷

3. Cortijo (1997) focuses on Alegre's *Somni*, while Recio delves into Rocaberti's *Glòria* (1996: 1-40) and sundry pieces by various other writers, including Carrós's *Regoneixença*, and a poem, also by Carrós, entitled *Consuelo de amor* (2000).

4. For a comprehensive definition of *yo* and *circunstancia*, the well-known mutually complementary principles in Ortega y Gasset's metaphysics, see Borel (1959: 37-76). Díez Taboada (1964: 17-18) provides an enlightening discussion of Ortega y Gasset's terminology together with Américo Castro's notion of *vivencia*.

5. For a definition of Castro's terms quoted here see the following observation by Araya Goubet (1976: 65):

Since 1954 Castro has called the particular structure of an historical agent its «dwelling place of life» (*morada vital* or *morada de la vida*). . . . The «dwelling place of life» is the entirety of dynamic «invariants» of a particular historical agent. It is the parabola drawn by everything encompassed by the consciousness of «selfhood» or the ethnic «we».

6. The expression occurs in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 5.1.17.

7. The phrase provides the title for one of Bachelard's landmark studies. See the bibliography below. Worthy of note for a definition of the key terms are the following remarks (1994: x) by Stilgoe:

This book opens its readers to the titanic importance of setting in so much art from painting to poetry to fiction to autobiography. In *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard reveals time after time that setting is more than scene in works of art, that it is often the armature around which the work revolves. He elevates setting to its rightful place alongside character and plot,

It takes but a cursory reading to make evident that, in the works mentioned above, the respective writers attest to their own penchant toward «topophilia», even as they formulate their own version of a «poetics of space». Doubtless, these writers would demonstrate that an inquiry into the issues of spatiality leads to discover the contours of selfhood within a broad area of the human psyche. Spatiality, then, is the key that unveils a creative writer's notion of the self. The foregoing statement expresses, in a nutshell, the general orientation and guiding principle of the present essay.

Here I explore an outstanding example illustrative of the way the principles of spatiality come to bear on a literary representation of the self. The example in question is that of Francesc Moner, one of the authors mentioned above. My choice of Moner has been determined by the extraordinary breadth of the author's vision reflected in a multifarious career, which encompasses worldly and religious pursuits. Indeed, after a stretch in the military, roughly from 1481 to 1485, during the last phase of the campaign that eventually precipitated the fall of Granada in 1492, Moner distinguished himself in the literary circles of Barcelona in the mid to late 1480's. Around 1491, scarcely a year before his untimely death at the age of twenty-nine, Moner embraced the life of a religious in the Franciscan convent in the city of Lleida.⁸ Thanks to political and historical circumstances that we cannot go into here, Moner inherited a rich cultural legacy from both the Catalan and Castilian tradition. Of no small consequence in determining Moner's comprehensive worldview is the fruit borne by that legacy in his proficient bilingualism —that is, the mastery he attained in the distinctive language of each of the two traditions.⁹

and offers readers a new angle of vision that reshapes any understanding of great paintings and novels, and folktales too. His is a work of genuine topophilia.

Without delving into the dizzying depths of Martin Heidegger's esoteric thought, we may observe that the referentiality of the terms discussed here approaches the precincts of that philosopher's notion of *Dasein*. For a general orientation on Heidegger's thought, see Collins (1952: 168-210).

8. For additional information on Moner's biography, see Cocozzella (1970: 9-28; 1991a: 3-38).

9. It is only fitting to recognize here two of the distinctive traits of Moner's genius: his precociousness and well-balanced bilingualism. The first refers to the author's ability to accomplish so much in so little time. By 1492, the year of his death, Moner had amassed a production, which, by a count of his extant works, reaches a total of seventy-four pieces, consisting of fifty-six poems and eighteen prose works of variable length. The distribution of poems and prose works is, respectively, two and fourteen in Catalan, fifty-four and four in Castilian. The aforementioned well-balanced bilingualism exemplifies Moner's talent for riding the cultural wave of the political diglossia that resulted from the ascendancy of Castilian in the Catalan domain during the

Needless to say, my present discussion concentrates on a number of Moner's representative poems and prose works. These yield compelling evidence of an overarching trajectory, which marks the transition from the realm of the natural to that of the supernatural. For the sake of our analytic task it is useful to bear in mind an existential perspective, from which Moner's *vivencia*—to employ the expressive Hispanic term—may be profiled as an evolution from human to divine love, from erotic union to mystical communion. There is evidence, also, that Moner derived from the «erotic Hell» the notion of a primordial locus of suffering, caused, in the main, by the lover's malady and, in particular, by the mistreatment the lover, allegedly, receives from his *amada*. Such a locus, we realize, becomes a point of departure for Moner's particular vision of love. In other words, there is a distinctive topography or spatial factor that, as we shall see, conditions the birth of Moner's allegory and its evolution through the transition from passion to enthusiasm, from sensuality to piety.

In the course of my analysis what I hope will become increasingly apparent in Moner's outstanding compositions is a process of allegorization, in which we may distinguish two main dimensions. These may be designated as, respectively, «space» and «place». I apply the former, a generic designation, to the dimension that Kenneth Burke identifies with the term of «innerness» (1961: 51-58). The locus of «innerness», a notion that Burke derives from St. Augustine, implies, by extension, the depiction of the dark night of the psyche or, to put it differently, the description of the cavernous recesses of the conscious and unconscious regions of the self.¹⁰ The following characteristics are inherent in Moner's space of «innerness», such as I see it: *a*) an outward projection of what takes place in the psyche of the auctorial persona; *b*) a psychic correlative of the text of solitude typical of the *infierno de los enamorados*; *c*) a mode of immanence or of the «here-and-now» associated with the inalterable or inescapable suffering of the lover. As for the other indication—that of «place»—I envisage a semiotic field that has to do with the intimate intensity of spiritual life and

age of Ferdinand and Isabella. Cognizant of the necessity of mastering both languages, Moner learned to use them both as finely tuned instruments of his creativity, and, in the bargain, developed a keen sensitivity as to the potential of one or the other for special artistic purpose and poetic effect.

10. The semiotic of «innerness» crystallizes into a written expression, which may be designated as a text of loneliness par excellence. By a thoughtful meditation on some Latin words taken from St. Augustine, Burke himself makes some telling references to this type of *écriture* steeped in the psyche. Referring to Augustine's *Confessions*, Burke observes, poignantly, that «there is no science of letters more inward (*interior*) than conscience put into writing (*conscientia scripta*)» (1961: 57).

religious experience. Among the various attributes of Moner's «place», the following readily come to mind: *a)* the primordial impulse of transcendence and liberation; *b)* the relief derived from the redemptive quality of suffering; *c)* the alluring prospect of attaining the *Summum Bonum* through a communion with the Divinity.

In sum, here I should like to propose two concepts —one of psychic space, the other of soulful place— as primary points of reference to the arduous journey of askesis that Moner's auctorial persona maps out for himself as a project of a lifetime. In the pages that follow these preliminary remarks one may find a master plan of Moner's eventful journey.

I. THE PSYCHIC SPACE OF IMMANENT SUFFERING

CONCRETE SETTING

In three of Moner's major compositions —namely, *Bendir de dones*, *L'ànima d'Oliver*, and *La noche*— the protagonist, who assumes the role of a first-person narrator, enhances and broadens the specificity of a concrete locale and, thus, provides within the everyday world the precise bearings for the fictionalized —that is, allegorized— action, which makes up the bulk of the narrative. A brief comparison will suffice to reveal key differences worthy being taken into consideration. In the short poem entitled *Cobles de les tisores*, specificity is reduced to a stark mention of the *posada* and the *cambra*. In sharp contrast, at the beginning of *Bendir de dones* —in the second stanza (vv. 11-20), to be precise— the same narrator situates, in no uncertain terms, the outlandish episode, in which he is about to participate, exactly in the Plaça del Rei, to this day one of the most recognizable sites in the city of Barcelona. As if to stress the veracity of his account, he adds references to his short walk in the vicinity of the *Plaça*, the zone, that is, which includes the royal palace and the cathedral.¹¹ Much the same effect of «local habitation» is produced, at the beginning of *L'ànima*

ii. The following three verses provide a good sample of Moner's concise diction:

Yo passava per la Seu,
de la porta del Palau
fins a la plassa del Rey... (Vv. 15-17; Oc 180)

d'Oliver, by the accurately-referenced description of the protagonist's evening stroll on the road stretching northward from the city gate (Porta de l'Àngel) to the area still called Vall d'Hebron. Similarly, the allegory proper of *La noche* is introduced by an episode recounted as an ordinary entry in the author's diary. The episode is unusual in Moner's life in that it takes place not in an urban but in a rural ambiance, specifically in the hinterlands of Catalonia, in the town of Torà (province of Lleida or, in accordance with traditional Catalan geography, *comarca* of Segarra). We gather that Moner is spending a few days as a guest in the castle of the Count of Cardona, his patron. The author feels the need to step out of the castle at dusk («poco antes que anochebiesse») in order to distract the loneliness that has overtaken him after the Count and the Countess have left on a trip the nearby village of Terroja. Recorded, painstakingly, in a minute-to-minute presentation, the walk he takes down to the valley and up the slope on the other side of the river, proves to be less than comfortable and downright frightening. Even without mentioning any landmarks, the «diary entry» includes sufficient evidence as to the perimeter of Moner's excursion. He starts from the castle, located at the highest spot of Torà, and roams far enough into the countryside for him to catch a glimpse of the fortress (the Torre de Vallferosa), the ruins of which are still standing some five kilometers north-east of the village.¹²

12. An outstanding example of a concrete space associated with a tormented state of mind is found in the cell of the prison, mentioned in the exordium of Bernat Metge's *Lo somni*, written in 1399 (Riquer 1964: 2, 406). According to the minute narrative, that «cambra» is witness to the auctorial person's «cogitacions» and restlessness: «adorm'm, no pas en la forma acostumada, mas en aquella que malalts o fameyants solen dormir» (Metge 1959: 166). For further discussion of Moner's characteristic framing of his allegories within an urban or rural setting familiar to him, see Cocozzella (1970: 47-49). It is instructive to put in perspective the salient technique whereby Moner, as we have seen, concretizes a locale barely outlined in *Cobles* and meticulously accounted for in the major works we have just reviewed. Bearing in mind the mainstream of the literary tradition in the Catalan realm, we find some antecedents worth taking into account. For instance, as Riquer points out, «[l]os versos iniciales y finales» of Metge's *Llibre de Fortuna y Prudencia* (1381) —that is, vv. 26-43 and 1167-1194, respectively— «constituyen una especie de marco que encierra lo maravilloso y alegórico y en el que lo real linda con lo fantástico y se confunde con él esfuminadamente» (Riquer 1959: *25). Another significant antecedent crops up within the production of Francesc de la Via, a Catalan writer who flourished in the city of Girona in the first half of the fifteenth century. By his aesthetic of concretization Moner establishes, it bears repeating, a solid frame of reference for his allegorical plot. A kindred aesthetic informs what Arseni Pacheco, apropos of Via's *Procés de Corona d'aur contra En Bertran Tudela* (Via 1997: 159-288), broadly describes as «realisme literari» (1997: 41) and defines as «prendre la realitat contingent i objectiva com a camp de referència de la ficció poètica» (1997: 39). In view of this fundamental «realisme literari» both Via and Moner share, any difference in tone —somewhat comedic in the former, quite somber in the latter— does not prove to be particularly relevant.

TRANSITION INTO THE ALLEGORICAL WORLD

In order to assess and appreciate Moner's distinctive version of the inner world, it pays to investigate the poetics by which the author, at the very inception of each of his most ambitious narratives, brings about the transformation of the aforementioned «concrete setting» into the domain of the allegory proper. The first phase in the evolution of said transformation involves considerable psychic turmoil, which in *Cobles de les tisores* and in *Bendir de dones* is described summarily, while in *L'ànima d'Oliver* and *La noche* it is the object of obsessive, slow exploration. In *Cobles*, for instance, the protagonist makes fleeting references to not only his perturbed state of mind —«tant fora de mi restí» (v. 4) and «vengut en extasis» (v. 15)— but also telltale symptoms of that state («descolorida la cara», in v. 20). In much the same fashion, both the lover's malaise and its symptoms are dispatched in three short verses of *Bendir*: «fatigat, pensant al clau / que m'à fet lo cor esclau / de congoxa, sens remey» (vv. 18-20, *Oc* 180).

Introspective meditations of a quite different nature are found, as we may surmise, in *L'ànima* and *La noche*. In both, morose analysis is complemented by lachrymose expressions of grief, such as the following pathetic remonstrance the lover addresses to the beloved as he finds himself at a crucial juncture in *Vall d'Hebron* (*Oc* 139):

¿Per què no-m responeu, amiga mia tan enemiga? ¿Per què m'aveu condempnat sens culpa y sens hoyr-me? ¿He-us pogut fallir yo, que per vostra servey só fet, yo que nunca sabí ni volguí ofendre-us? Si ara que m'aveu fet pessés vos adora, ¿en quin temps vos he pogut errar?

Akin to this passage is one in *La noche*, which also presents the protagonist in a precarious situation. During his somber walk we have referred to already in the vicinities of the town of Torà, he comes to the end of the downhill stretch, when he takes a dangerous, frightening fall to the bottom of a ravine. Here Moner depicts, within the shadowy precincts of the lover's psyche, a landscape of despair and desolation. The ambiance is, unmistakably, one of the *infernos de los enamorados*. Let us

As pertinent to this context we may adduce, also, in line with Pacheco's argumentation, Via's «breus descripcions topogràfiques per situar l'acció en llocs fàcils d'identificar o d'imaginar» (Pacheco 1997: 89). In bringing to a head the discussion of these coincidences —points of affinities— in both Via's and Moner's compositions, we should not lose sight of two pivotal notions —those pertaining to the «vivència personal» and «entorn vital»— which Pacheco intuitively reaches at the heart of Via's creativity. By this intuition Pacheco reaches a metaphysical level, which may be associated with the indissoluble bond between the «yo» (*vivència personal*) and the «circunstancia» (*entorn vital*) at the core of José Ortega y Gasset's existentialist thought.

hear firsthand the woes of a star-crossed lover if there ever lived one (*La noche*, ll. 39-53; *TMPW* 75-76):

Poco tardaron a moverse en mi alma los pensamientos tristes como enxambre en colmena. El corazón rompía de apretado. Yo m'esforçava por no llorar, teniendo malicia que mi dolor como los otros comunes se quexasse, mas no pudo ser que las amargas lágrimas no sobreveniessen por su camino vezado.

Quería la pasión dar voces, pues de justa querella tenía sobra; pero el callar para mí era más encaesser porque dava lugar al pensar y también porque cualquiera razón era falta, por lastimera que fuese. Es syerto que la palabra, liviana o de peso, me diera alyvio. Mas la pena del enmudesser se vengava de mí mesmo, my mayor enemigo, y esto me hazía querer bien a mi mal.

Now, if we step back and contemplate, in its proper perspective, the general plan of Moner's allegory, we come to the realization that phase 1, which, as we have seen, involves the lover's perturbed condition is, in essence, a preparation for phase 2, which is characterized by a special moment and concomitant phenomenon of absorbing interest. The moment in question truly may be described as magical for, far beyond any normal, expectable causality or plausible explanation, it suddenly opens up an amazing panorama of a visionary nature. We gather, then, that the lover's mental disturbance, perceived in the strict sense of a withdrawal from the physical world, paves the way for some wondrous episode of the kind emblematically set forth in the *Cobles* by the startling conversion of scissors into eyeglasses.¹³

We begin to see the far-reaching consequences of the magical moment we have referred to above. A close scrutiny of *L'ànima d'Oliver* makes us realize, also, that the pattern of radical transformation implicit in Moner's concept of allegory is anything but uniform. Whereas in *Cobles*, *Bendir*, and *La noche*, the evolution of the allegorical setting from the natural environment is a visual phenomenon, in *L'ànima* that evolution is strictly auditory. This means that the allegory in *L'ànima* lacks an imaginary pictorial landscape of its own. It evokes, instead, the overwhelming presence of a ghostly figure, the spirit, that is, of the Catalan Oliver, who, not unlike Macías, his soul mate from Galicia, committed suicide for reasons of love.¹⁴ The invisible spirit intervenes with the rapidity of a *deus ex machina* and his raucous, cavernous voice

13. From the narrator's account we gather that the scissors had been left hidden beneath a pair of gloves. Utter amazement struck him, when, as he puts it, «les trobí dins los guants, / que eren tornades ulleres» (vv. 17-18; *Oc* 168).

14. For the essential data on Oliver's turbulent love, which drove him to suicide, see Cocozzella (1970: 68-69).

interrupts the narrator's train of thought. «[U]na veu ronca y baxa m'entroncà lo pensament» (*Oc* 140), observes the author's persona upon relating the outlandish experience. Oliver, his deep-voiced spirit, his dubious reputation engender the aura of eeriness that envelops Vall d'Hebron, and that aura seems to emanate straight from the *infierno de los enamorados*. But appearances, as is often the case, are deceptive, and, in this case, Oliver hails, actually, from Purgatory. Indeed, God in His infinite mercy has allowed him to redeem himself. Of this he is quite certain, as he confesses in no uncertain terms (*Oc* 142):

a la misericòrdia de Déu plagué donar-me temps, y gran, ab què poguí penedir-me, y m perdonà la culpa; la justícia del qual ordenà en aquest lloch sia mon purgatori, fins arribè lo terme per què fuy creada.

Last but not least, the fourth of Moner's works worthy of analysis in terms of the magical moment and its wide-ranging effects is *La noche*. Let us go back to the critical episode we have already described above, in which Moner's persona is left, at the bottom of the gulch, in a precarious situation, indeed. After he manages to climb out, extricating himself from thorny bushes and fending off the assault of a flock of bats—no less frightening, we may be sure, than the «infame turba de nocturnas aves» that Luis de Góngora made memorable—the pitiful wretch regains control of his senses by making the sign of the Cross (*TMPW* 79-82). At this point, contrary to the analogous circumstance described in *L'ànima d'Oliver*, the narrative relies on the report not of the ears but of the eyes. Then, as in the other key works by Moner which we have studied, visual verisimilitude turns into allegorical vision. The aforementioned Torre de Vallferosa, the rudiments of which may still be seen today, turns into an enchanted castle, which the narrators depicts as follows (ll. 101-106; *TMPW* 82-85):

Estonces me vi delante una maravilosa fortaleza en una montaya muy alta, pero sin padrastro. Tenía barrera y cava ancha y honda a quatro anglos hecha, y a cada uno de ellos, un cubo. En cuerpo del castillo, en un lado, la torre d'omenage.

THE ALLEGORY OF PSYCHIC SPACE: TWO ASPECTS

Let us reflect on the plot of *La noche* and concentrate on the first episode, which consists of the encounter with not only the flirtatious damsel that identifies herself

as *Costumbre* ('Custom') but also the eleven allegorical passions stationed along the stairway of the castle. Aside from a full analysis, which would not be called for here, suffice it on this occasion to focus on two signal aspects of the dynamics of allegory exemplified in the aforementioned episode. These aspects have to do with, respectively, the concept of the self and the concomitant movement of rise and fall. As we follow, step by step, the altercation that the protagonist sustains with the eleven passions, it becomes apparent that Moner envisages at the core of the self two complementary factors —let us call them *A* and *B*— linked reciprocally in a symbiosis of alterity. *A* is the «other» with respect to *B*, and vice versa. Moner foreshadows the dialectic of the «split self» that, as Paul Ilie shows (1967: 28-47), distinguishes Miguel de Unamuno's existentialist perspective on the human psyche. There is, however, a marked difference. Whereas Unamuno sees no distinction between the two factors, Moner recognizes in each of them a discrete function: to *A* he attributes the primary level of consciousness; to *B* he ascribes the fragmentation of that consciousness into multiple manifestations. In its necessity to survive by remaining bound to the «other», *A*, by means of an existential dialogue, gradually reconciles itself with its own reflection and projection in *B* and, in this fashion, advances in the process of self-assertion, enhancing, all the while, its holistic presence, always directed toward an «omega point», which, in Scholastic terminology, constitutes the final cause of Moner and, for that matter, of any other lover.

What we have just seen is that, in Episode 1 of *La noche*, by means of the spirited confrontation of the protagonist with each of his passions, the allegory dramatizes Moner's insight into the metaphysics of the lover's selfhood. At the same time, it highlights the conflictive dialogue, the integration/disintegration interplay between two states of the ego, which we have represented as *A* and *B*. We have discovered that *A* is the ontological correlative of the author of flesh and blood —the integrating persona that is— which aspires to find reconciliation with *B*, its multifarious «other». *A* and *B*, thus perceived, are the existential co-determinants of the text of the self.

If we hark back to the complementary interplay, already indicated, between the movement of ascent and that of descent, we discover in Episode 1 of *La noche* a dimension of a semiotic of ambivalence. In this instance, concomitant with the ambivalence is a paradox, which works to the detriment of the witless lover, specifically Moner's persona. The latter imagines all along that he is moving upward: after all, he is walking up the castle's stairway. What the lover doesn't know is that such an

upward movement turns out to be specious. It is yet another symptom of the lover's faulty perception and lack of caution. In short, his rise is only apparent because it covers up his actual sinking lower and lower into a psychological and moral abyss of his own making.

To put it in general terms, the paradox in question is one of apparent rise and actual fall. The lover fervently desires his own fulfillment in coming to terms with the passions but ends his quest in dismal failure.¹⁵ And, irony of all ironies, the lover is not at all aware of his fall! The Moner who literally walks to the top of the stairway attains the impression that he is asserting his presence and well-being through an enhanced knowledge of himself. Meanwhile, that same self, of which Moner thinks he is gaining a deeper understanding, is undergoing a submersion to the lowest level of the psychological crisis. How grave the lover's situation can become may be easily surmised from his bout with *Desesperación*, when he loses track of the allegory and interprets much too literally the personage's injunction to jump off the ship into the stormy waves: «¡Echate en la mar, a los peçes, y muere antes del encuentro de la tierra escassa» (ll. 718-719; *TMPW* 136-137).¹⁶ It is disturbing, indeed, to find out from the

15. The paradoxical handling of the motifs of ascent and descent finds an emblematic expression in v. 153 of *Cobles de les tisores*, which reads: «y pensa volar, cahent». The verse is integrated into the description of an allegorical vision of a flock of birds in flight. The vision consists of a dove (representing the ladylove), engaged in carefree, if risky, dalliance with numerous predatory birds. These, mostly falcons of various kinds, portray the lady's suitors, among whom the author recognizes himself in the guise of a kestrel (*esmirla*). The small bird, overpowered by his rivals, turns out to be an apt portrait of the dejected lover, the very same that «pensa volar cahent» and, all the while, can harbor no hope of ever attaining the favors of the woman he lavishes his affections upon. Understandably, the poetic voice asks a pointed question: does such a disconsolate individual «merex la vida tant trista, / que isque for a de seny, / també que's pesca de vent» (vv. 154-156)? (For a full description of the flock of birds, see *Oc* 78, n. 3.) Intriguingly enough, the first-person narrator, protagonist of Carrós's *Consuelo de amor*, recurs to an epigrammatic expression of his own to designate a paradoxical notion much similar to the one embedded in Moner's verse we have been commenting upon. Carrós's protagonist tops an extensive list of love's paradoxical attributes (vv. 121-130) with the following statement: «un sobir que nos assuela» (v. 130). So much for a fitting reference to the disturbing phenomenon of apparent rise and actual fall!

16. The narrator's depiction of the ship tossed by the tempest glows with the vivacious effects of the ekphrasis: it is, in effect, a description of a miniature on a sheet of paper, the one that *Desesperación* hands over to the protagonist. The latter unfolds the paper and proceeds to translate the brushstrokes into word pictures (*TMPW* 133-135):

Yo le tomé y l'abrí. Stava de dentro pintado: una nave en el mar con muy gran tormenta,
el mastel y velas rompidas, y ella con furia para dar en una peña cortada, muy alta, sin reparo;
y por más desventura, muy gran fuego metido en la popa, por donde el viento venía. Eran ya

protagonist's own lips that *Desesperación's* advice mirrors faithfully what he already has in mind (Ll. 725-728; *TMPW* 137):

Pero lo que me consejava era lo mismo que tenía en la voluntad, en que me contentó tanto que me enmudessi bien que no me alegrasse.

IN THE MANNER OF A *MONODIÁLOGO*

To round out our discussion on the mode of immanence, which we have identified as one of the two main manifestations of Moner's art of allegory, a few comments are in order on yet another work that figures prominently on the list of Moner's major compositions. It is *Obra en metro*, a poem, written in Castilian, which consists of 700 verses of the type commonly called «arte mayor». The last word in the curious title refers to this type of verse, nothing extraordinary in Castilian literature of the fifteenth century. The term «metro» indicates the two distinguishing features of *arte mayor*: a pronounced—ponderous, some might say—caesura and hemistichs, which, according to the Spanish system of scansion, total six syllables each.¹⁷

Obra en metro, then, reflects a state of immanence, which is the condition that pertains to the psychic space of the erotic Hell. What is fascinating about this unusual poem is the paradoxical bond between the obvious emotionality of the lover's temper and his no less evident inclination toward the activities and processes of reason. The paradox stems from the curious mutual dependency of these otherwise contentious factors. Each of them relies upon the other for its very subsistence. One does not obliterate the other: on the contrary, it, actually, invigorates it.

tan encendidas las llamas qu'el humo escurecía ell aire, y las centellas subían al cielo. Mostrava ser la pintura de muy buena mano.

Yo la mirava tanto que me olvidé las letras hasta que él me lo dixo. Estonçes las lehí. Lo que dezían era esto:

¿Qué hará el que está dentro?

Ekphrasis is a trope, which Stephen G. Nichols, in accordance with the usage of the term by contemporary critics, succinctly defines as «the description of a visual art work» (1992: 134). For an extensive discussion on the nature of the trope, see Nichols (1992).

17. For an authoritative discussion on the *verso de arte mayor*, see Navarro (1966: 91-100).

Thus, *Obra en metro* becomes a bold statement of ratiocination articulated within a context of emotions ebbing and flowing. This ingenious interplay of sedate discursiveness and impassioned remonstrance is evinced in the three main sections, addressed respectively to Voluntad, Razón, and Fortuna. These sections reiterate a tripartite pattern, which begins with a vehement venting of emotions, shifts into digressions of a reflective or speculative nature, concludes with an expression of resignation and relative tranquility.

Demonstrably, the notion of the «monodílogo» borrowed from Miguel de Unamuno may be applied to the give-and-take *manqué* that Moner dramatizes between the lover and the three formidable ladies. In anticipating Unamuno's insights, Moner shows that the lover's anxiety or perturbed state jeopardizes the external projection of the psychological conflict and thus obstructs the normal channel of the catharsis achievable through a dialogue in the unfolding of an allegory. Yet another Unamunian factor perceptible *avant la lettre* in *Obra en metro* is the disquieting crisis of reason and the intellect. The author implores the aid of Lady Reason, who, in her office as a guide, should signal the way to sanity and salvation. The desperate tone of the lover's invocation is evident in speeches such as the following (Vv. 81-83; 2 *OC* 78):

Socorredme pues vos, Razón, que soys guía
y vía segura, regla sin yerro.
Sin vos no he poder sobre quien me desvía.

This impassioned appeal finds little satisfaction: floundering in dejection from one defeat to another, Razón is ultimately helpless when it comes to availing a human being in coming to grips with destiny. Not surprisingly, in an aside imbued with feelings of resentment and disappointment, Moner's lover undercuts the dialogue with these embittered words (Vv. 290-295; 2 *OC* 86):

¿Qué me fatigo sin consolación
a quien no aprovecha contar amarguras?
Do no está consejo ni ay elección
presumir de ajudarse con la razón
es querer hazer con seso locuras.

In sum, as we lean over what Unamuno calls «el brocal sin fondo de la conciencia humana»,¹⁸ we experience the effect of «De profundis clamavi ad te...» (Ps. 130.1). The resounding cry may come from Moner's persona or from any other denizen of the *infierno de los enamorados*. We may hear, also, the protestations from the likes of Pleberio (act XXI in the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*) or, for that matter, from any tragic hero in the company of a Hamlet as conceived by Shakespeare or a Segismundo as created by Calderón. All in all, Moner, in *Obra en metro* recaptures, if not the stage presence, the ambiance and mood of the tragic condition.

II. THE JOURNEY OF TRANSCENDENCE

THE POSSIBLE INFLUENCE OF THE *DEVOTIO MODERNA*

Symptomatic of the impulse of transcendence especially in Moner's *La noche* are numerous iconographic factors, such as the *scala* ('ladder' or 'stair'), the *casa* ('house'), the castle, in conjunction with a number of symbols, such as the eagle, the torch, the garb of the various personages. We need not deal with this extensive list in order to bring into focus the workings of Moner's creative mind. What we need, rather, is to concentrate on a series of terms —loaded words we may call them or, borrowing from Fernando de Rojas, «palabras preñadas».¹⁹ Items like *pathoi*, *affectus*, *affectio*, *furias*, obviously related one to the other, some by etymology and all by the semiotic field they denote or connote, readily stand out because of the cultural ambiance they reflect and the role they play in Moner's intellectual and artistic background. The

18. The statement is taken from Unamuno's «autocrítica» which prefaces the text of his play *El otro*. (Qtd. in Cocozzella 1986: 475.)

19. In the «Prólogo» proper to *La Celestina* (see n. 10 below), Rojas (1995: 77) makes the following comment about a famous dictum by Heraclitus:

Y como sea cierto que toda palabra del hombre sciente esté preñada, desta se puede dezir que de muy hinchada y llena quiere reventar ...

From this passage I borrow the terminology, which I adapt to my own purpose.

stellar words derive their signification and significance from an age-old tradition that harks back to the Stoics of Greek and Roman antiquity.²⁰

When envisaged strictly in relation to Moner's accomplishments, the aforementioned tradition reached its high point with the advent the influential movement that, in the history of Western theology and religion, attained great renown under the name of *devotio moderna*. The *devotio* started in the twelfth century with the famous masters of St. Victor, Hugh and Richard, and gained considerable strength throughout the fourteenth century, mainly in Flanders, thanks to the unflagging zeal and longstanding dedication of figures like Geert Grote, Gerhard Zerbolt, Jean Mombaer.²¹ Especially as far as Moner's career is concerned, it is well to bear in mind that this revolutionary approach to religious practice and spirituality gained access into the Iberian Peninsula through the efforts of two authors, outstanding in their own right, compelled by the spirit of reform and the love of God —namely, Antoni Canals, the Dominican friar from Valencia, and García Jiménez de Cisneros, abbot of Montserrat.²² Canals and Jiménez de Cisneros, then, are instrumental in the spread of the «*devotio*» in two distinctive phases, at the end, respectively, of the fourteenth and fifteenth century.²³

20. For the influence of the Stoic tradition on Moner, see Cocozzella (2006).

21. For a concise history of the movement in question, see Hauf (1990: 19-30), and Roig Gironella (1975: 4-29). For a list of the main representatives of the *devotio* in the fourteenth century, see Roig Gironella (1975: 4-5).

22. For a noteworthy definition of *devotio*, see the following, found in *Arca Noe Morali* by Hugh of St. of Victor: «*devotio est fervor bonae voluntatis, quam mens cohibere non valens, certis manifestat indiciiis*» (*Patrologia Latina* 176, col. 651; qtd. in Roig Gironella 1975: 19). In his thorough review of an impressive variety of documents, Hauf acknowledges as possible exponents of that religious movement not only Antoni Canals and García Jiménez de Cisneros, the two commonly recognized *devoti*, but also other notable literary figures, such as Bernat Oliver, Francesc Eiximenis, Isabel de Villena, and Hernando de Talavera. Moreover, Hauf argues that some salient leading characteristics often attributed to the *devotio* —the «*retorn a les essències del cristianisme primitiu*» (1990: 50), for example, and the «*evangelisme*» or «*crístocentrisme pràctic*» (1990: 50)— may well be manifestations of an autochthonous tradition of long standing. Hauf remains noncommittal as to the all-important issue of the influence of the *devotio* on Catalan writers of the fifteenth century: «*Si, strictu sensu, la influència de la "Devotio Moderna" en la nostra literatura religiosa medieval ja no era gens certa, ara resulta molt menys segura*» (1990: 51). Not surprisingly, Hauf's conclusion lays stress on the following point: «*Convindria que, sense deixar de mirar, quan calgui, més enllà de les nostres fronteres, comencéssim a estudiar seriosament la nostra pròpia tradició espiritual*» (1990: 51).

23. Roig Gironella (1975: 16) provides the chronological details, which it behoves us to review here:

Sería, pues, Canals casi un co-iniciador de la «*devotio moderna*» partiendo de los victorinos, adelantándose así de un siglo al movimiento que García de Cisneros, cuando ya la «*devotio moderna*» estaba ampliamente difundida, trajo a Montserrat; pues hallándose entre

There can be little doubt that Moner, by the time (around 1491) in which he joined the Franciscan order in the monastery of Lleida, had experienced the radical conversion to the piety, religious orientation, reform-minded lifestyle championed by the likes of Canals, García Jiménez, and a host of others.²⁴ Among the data that could be adduced to exemplify Moner's indebtedness to these venerable figures, there is one item of particularly impressive consequences. It concerns the ambiguous use of *affectio* one of the *palabras preñadas* we have referred to already. Such a usage strikes the reader of a passage taken from *De spiritualibus ascensionibus*, a seminal book by none other than the proto-devotus Gerhard Zerbolt. The passage (Ch. 22; qtd. in Roig Gironella 1975: 13, n. 34) reads as follows:

Quanto igitur descendis ad locum infra, tanto magis efficeris inquietus per concupiscentias, instabilis per varia desideria, impurus per immundas affectiones, et per mixtionem immundorum. Quanto vero supra ascendis per iugem meditationem, continuam affectionem, desiderium et spem et coelestium admixtionem, tanto magis eris quietus et stabilis.

Here Zerbolt proffers fundamental advice to those who would conform their spiritual lives to the principles and practices of *devotio moderna*. Interestingly enough, the advice hinges on the complex phenomenology attendant upon what is signified by *affectio*. The term is used ambiguously; and, it bears noting, the ambiguity is couched in a contrast clearly demarcated by spatial coordinates. Easily recognizable are the signs of descent («descendis ad locum infra») and ascent («supra ascendis»), while the *infra/supra* contraposition highlights the insight to be derived from Zerbolt's perspective. The disturbing confrontation with *cordis impuritas* and the consoling coming to terms with the depravity of human nature are concomitant functions of the aforementioned phenomenology. So, here we have outlined two contrary and, we may add, complementary trajectories of *affectio*: one pointing downward, the other, upward; one impelled by repulsion, the other by attraction; the first marked by sinful instinct, the other, by the longing for redemptive bliss. We may deduce that

1496 y 1498 cumpliendo en la capital de Francia una comisión real, conoció allí esta «devotio» y trajo libros de ella, hizo editar algunos en Montserrat y él por su parte intentó compendiarla en su *Ejercitatorio* de 1500. En cambio, la *Scala de contemplació* de Canals hace algo que es un intento parecido, pero entre 1398 y 1400.

24. For more information on Moner's residence in the monastic community at Lleida, see Cocozzella (2010: 142-146).

the dynamic of *affectio*, in accordance with Zerbolt's own explanation, is the primal impulse that can lead both ways: either to perdition or to salvation. Hence the ambiguous nature of that dynamic.

We need not belabor the issue in an effort to demonstrate that in Episode 1 of *La noche*, especially in the encounter with the passions personified, Moner echoes the very same motif of ascent and descent posited by the Flemish spiritual leader. Notably, Moner capitalizes, as does Zerbolt, upon the paradox inherent in the motif. Striking though they are, these similarities cannot be taken as proof positive that Zerbolt's *De spiritualibus ascensionibus* is one of Moner's direct sources. They do serve, all the same, as solid points of reference of unquestionable validity for purposes of comparison and contrast. A careful scrutiny of the pertinent points of reference reveals a significant contrast. For, even though, not unlike Zerbolt, Moner deals squarely with the paradoxical concurrence of inverted trajectories (descent/ascent), Moner accords to his dramatic presentation an orientation diametrically opposed to that found in Zerbolt's pertinent texts (especially the passage quoted above). In short, Zerbolt deals, as we have seen, with the overall effect of apparent descent (to a gloomy world much similar to that of the *infierno de los enamorados*) and actual ascent (to the level of salvific contemplation). Needless to say, the exact opposite is true of Moner's vision of the protagonist's journey in *La noche*.

What, we may ask, is the import of this divergence between Moner's plan of composition and that of his illustrious predecessor from Flanders? Naturally, the answer would be consistent with the exemplarity of Moner's *La noche* concerning the frustration of the protagonist's aspirations toward the Beatific Vision. So, while Zerbolt and cohorts point to the attainment of *Summum Bonum* by the prescription of the usual «three ways» (purgative, illuminative, unitive), Moner capitalizes on adapting to his own purpose the time-honored askesis of *devotio moderna*. In so doing, he manages to not only unfold his *psychomachia*—his struggle with the eleven passions—but also assert, as do many of his contemporaries, the Socratic imperative of «Nosce te ipsum» ('Know Thyself') within the ethical context provided by the Stoic tradition. The protagonist of *La noche* can honestly say that, thanks to the maturation he has experienced through the *psychomachia* and the invaluable instruction he has received from *Razón*, he has made considerable strides in the journey toward self-knowledge. This notwithstanding, the protagonist's rise to a high degree of «Nosce te ipsum» can only lead to a fall: ultimately, his success is rewarded with failure.

It is only natural to seek some explanation for this puzzling situation of counter-productive effort on the part of the protagonist in *La noche*. One explanation certainly worth advancing as a hypothesis is that Moner intuitively in his persona (the protagonist in question) a psychological factor much similar to the hamartia, the tragic flaw, that is, that characterizes the hero of the standard classical tragedy of old. Of course, the author provides no specific definition for his persona's hamartia. Such a definition, nevertheless, is not hard to come by since it may be formulated in conformity with the ideological context concomitant with either of the cultural traditions that come to bear upon Moner's creativity —namely: the *devotio moderna* or the current of Stoicism (known, more specifically, as *senequismo*). Within the context of the *devotio*, the notion of the tragic flaw would stem, in all probability, from an attitude of presumptuousness: witness, for instance, the mind-set of the man or woman, who, oblivious of the need for divine grace, would rely exclusively on rational or intellectual means to arrive at the contemplation of God.

I offer the foregoing remarks as a side note of sorts, which I hope will prove to be complementary to Albert G. Hauf's insightful study of the *devotio moderna* and its possible influence in the domain of Catalan and in the Spanish realm in general (Hauf 1990: 19-55). It is fair to say that, by exploring the dynamics of ascent and descent and the concomitant notion of space in Moner's allegorical visions, the discussion expounded in the present essay attests to a new approach to the all-important issue of the influence of the *devotio* on Catalan writers of the fifteenth century. As Hauf's well-documented study indicates, that issue is far from resolved (1990: 51). Be that as it may, the scholarship on the religious and spiritual ambiance that informed the lives of those writers will be enriched, no doubt, by the evidence yielded by the exploration of leading motifs, such as the ascent and descent analyzed here.

THE BOETHIAN PROTREPTIC: THE IMPULSE OF TRANSCENDENCE

A positive dimension of the impulse of transcendence evident in Moner's production is that special exhortatory drive that critics identify with the label of «protreptic» (Walsh 1999: xxxi; Crabbe 1981: 238). The work in which the transcendent dimension of the protreptic clearly comes to the fore is none other than *L'ànima d'Oliver*. Of particular interest is the suggestive notion of what we have called «soulful place»

—a notion that transpires from the theme and structure of *L'ànima*. It may be said that the distinguishing feature of this composition is the brand of ratiocination that Moner inherited, directly or indirectly, from Boethius's *De consolazione philosophiae*.²⁵ Accordingly, in *L'ànima*—aside from the aspects, such as the concrete setting and the magical or eerie ambiance, shared with other pieces— Moner adopts a topography, which may be called, in a broad sense, Boethian. Boethian, then, is a spatiality of an abstract nature, evidenced, primarily, in an airtight tripartite structure and in the ascending dynamic or movement, warranted by the protreptic and the authority of Oliver, who is not only a surrogate of Lady Philosophy but also an emissary from God.²⁶ The «local habitation» in *L'ànima* is the solid intellectual underpinning of a symmetrical design—that of a well-developed argument, consummately planned to privilege the love of God over the love of a creature, such as the *amada*. That very «habitation» in the abstract may be conceived as the ontological correlative of the figure of the ladder, that, as we read in bk. I, ch. I of Boethius's masterpiece, is embroidered on Philosophia's garment. As is well known, also depicted on that garment, one at the

25. For an extensive discussion of Boethius's influence on *L'ànima d'Oliver* and kindred pieces by Moner, see Cocozzella (2000: 42-51).

26. Following is a summary, which may help us appreciate the outstanding qualities of *L'ànima*:

The first part (*Ob. cat.* 137-143) consists of an embryonic statement of the leitmotif. The author's persona broaches the introspective analysis by making reference to his psychological turmoil. Oliver offers his help in guiding the youth on the road to perfection. In the second part (*Ob. cat.* 143-153) the themes and their arrangement remain the same: what changes is the depth and breadth of their exposition. Resuming his psychological probing, the lover touches upon the preoccupations that fuel his anxieties: the inner conflict, the steadfast intention to keep under wraps whatever pertains to his relationship with the lady of his dreams, the pangs of unrequited love, the consuming flame of passion, the death wish, the lack of common sense, the sin of idolatry. In response, the Ghost, in order to clarify the youth's understanding, goes into an explanation of the three types of lovers and gives him some practical advice on how to extricate himself from the snares of morbid love. In a climactic speech, Oliver exalts the excellence of the love for the Supreme Good. The third section of *L'ànima* (*Ob. cat.* 153-165) deals with a crucial theme: the function of free will in the lover's condition. The author's persona complains that he feels bereft of this very important faculty. Oliver explains to him the effects of the passions over the will and points out the main causes of sinful love—namely, the lover's presumptuous reliance on the beloved's chaste resistance and the devil's intrigues. Then, deviating somewhat from the pattern of the previous sections, Oliver launches into the criticism of women. These derogatory remarks come as an anticlimactic counterbalance and stand in diametric contrast to the aforementioned praise of the love of God.

lower and one at the upper end of said ladder, are, respectively, the Greek letters Π and Θ . From this we may extrapolate that, implicit in Moner's abstract, intellectual space, there is the Boethian contemplative impulse, which proceeds toward an ever higher level of being and awareness. It is, of course, the very impulse that Boethian scholars, while decoding the symbolism of the aforementioned letters, explicate in terms of the strenuous upward journey from the mundane realm of *praktikē* (πρακτική) to the lofty sphere of *theōrētikē* (θεωρητική). In the final analysis, Moner has transformed some crucial devices derived from Boethius into the locus of transition from the natural to the supernatural, from knowledge to wisdom, from domain of psyche to that of the soul—in short, from psychic space to soulful place.

There is—it bears noting—a substantial difference between the type of transcendence demonstrated in *L'ànima d'Oliver* and the one illustrated both in some key episodes of *La noche*. In the latter composition the author capitalizes on the imagery that underscores a frustrated attempt to attain the mystical union. The point to be made, then, is that, contrary to the exemplarity to be drawn from *La noche*, the protagonist of *L'ànima*, even while not achieving a positive outcome, the actual enjoyment of the *Summum Bonum*, certainly is heading in the right direction under the guidance of a mentor hailing from the other world. In the light of pertinent circumstances it is evident, also, that in the transcendence by virtue of the protreptic sponsored by that mentor—that is to say, Oliver in the epiphany of a ghost empowered to see *sub specie aeternitatis*—a way toward perfection is set into perspective as well as the road of piety implicit in that way. There is much to be said, in effect, about the method of piety Moner envisages far beyond the regions of psyche, mind, and soul, explored and charted in *L'ànima d'Oliver*.

Once again, Moner confronts us with a significant factor of spatiality. The author begins to map out the topography of the soul, specifically the area of a conversion in the religious sense of the term. What is at issue is the metaphysics of a radical transformation: a human life—the protagonist's own—perceived as a text, is sacralized by virtue of a supernatural power in an operation little short of sacramental.

CONCLUSION

The works of Fra Francesc Moner, one of the masters of Catalan and Castilian letters that flourished in Barcelona in the second half of the fifteenth century, call attention to some important issues of spatiality. It is instructive to analyze those issues especially as they relate to Moner's ingenious use of allegory. Apropos of Moner's typical allegory exemplified in *La noche*, his longest composition, it is useful to draw a distinction between two semiotic fields, each identified by the respective term of «space» and «place». The contrast and correlation between the former and the latter may be construed as the differentiation between two stages in the phenomenology of love: the psychic and the spiritual, the natural and the supernatural, the human and the divine. What a study of *La noche* demonstrates is that the author, by meditating on the plight of his auctorial persona, is wont to delve into an ambiance of immanent suffering. Thus, he comes up with intriguing insights into not only a process of disintegration, which may be called the splitting or fragmenting of the self, but also a paradoxical dynamic of apparent rise and actual fall.

It is fair to say that Moner's meditation gravitates toward «psychic space» of the type evoked in the *infierno de los enamorados*, perceptively studied by Chandler Rathfon Post and other scholars. This does not mean, however, that Moner does not feel a strong attraction toward the «soulful place» —the «local habitation», that is, where the *Summum Bonum* is attained in the Communion with the Creator. Indeed, traces of the influence from such sources as the Stoics (especially Seneca), Boethius, and the champions of the *devotion moderna*, show that Moner was well instructed in the ways of rising far above the sinkhole of the *infierno de los enamorados*. The fact remains, all the same, that he did not feel ready to surrender himself to the lofty flight of the mystical experience. The tension, then, between the miseries of lovesickness and the ecstasy of the Beatific Vision fully dramatizes Moner's outstanding contribution to the literary developments that shaped the culture of his time and *circunstancia*.

PETER COCOZZELLA

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