



## RONALD PUPPO

Universitat de Vic

### HOW MARAGALL'S NOTION OF PUBLIC-SPIRITED LOVE RESONATES IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Resum:

La noció d'un amor d'esperit cívic arrelat en l'ètica cristiana, que rau al cor de la resposta de Maragall davant de la Setmana Tràgica, troba el seu remarcable correlat expressiu en els discursos i escrits del reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., i del president Lyndon B. Johnson en el context del moviment dels drets civils als Estats Units durant els anys 1950 i 1960. Donar veu als textos de Maragall sobre la Setmana Tràgica en llengua anglesa produeix una ressonància amb textos de King i de Johnson, i obre via a un encontre intercultural que enriqueix el sistema literari receptor i, alhora, dóna ocasió a un gir envers l'altri.

*Paraules clau:* Joan Maragall — Martin Luther King — Lyndon B. Johnson — Setmana Tràgica — moviment dels drets civils als EUA — amor

Abstract:

The notion of a public-spirited love rooted in Christian ethics that lies at the core of Maragall's response to the Setmana Tràgica finds a striking expressive correlate in the speeches and writings of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and President Lyndon B. Johnson in the context of the civil rights movement in the United States during the nineteen fifties and sixties. Giving voice to Maragall's Setmana Tràgica texts in English results in their resonating with King's and Johnson's texts, opening up a window to intercultural encounter that enriches the receptor literary system and, at the same time, brings about the occasion for an otherly turn.

*Key words:* Joan Maragall — Martin Luther King — Lyndon B. Johnson — Setmana Tràgica — civil rights movement in the U.S. — love

At the very core of Joan Maragall's bold and controversial writings in the face of the troubling events that would come to be known as Barcelona's Setmana Tràgica there lies the notion of a public-spirited love. This love is the foundation of his response to those disturbing events, and the equally disturbing sequel to those events, which prompted him to write the three outstanding articles that live on as the literary legacy of those events—"Ah! Barcelona...", "La ciutat del perdó" ["City of Pardon"] and "L'església cremada" ["The Church After Burning"]—along with his one-hundred-line poem titled "New Ode to Barcelona", all of which would challenge his fellow citizens to look squarely and earnestly at themselves and their city's grim predicament.

#### On intercultural encounter through translation

To undertake the translation of these texts, however, is to uproot them—linguistically, culturally and historically—from the time and place of their birth. This contextual uprooting has been described by Lawrence Venuti as the "violence" of translation.

Perhaps the most difficult problem confronting the translator is how to compensate for the violence of translating: the sheer loss of the multiple contexts in which the foreign work originated and which always inform the foreign reader's experience of it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence VENUTI, Introduction to *Ernest Farrés: Edward Hopper Poems*, translated by Lawrence Venuti,

Of course, with a view to elucidating the circumstances that gave rise to the writings, we attempt to bridge the contextual gap with paratextual elements such as explanatory introductions, footnotes or endnotes, bibliographical references, and so on. The bridging of the gap, however, will never be entirely complete:

Because translation displaces these contexts, the notion that it can enable an equivalent effect is a hoax. A reader of a translation can never appreciate it with quite the same breadth and depth of reference that figure in the foreign reader's appreciation of the foreign work.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, George Steiner remarks: "How, asks Borges, can meaning ever be separated from singular and specific embodiment when the latter is grounded, inevitably, in the unrepeatable specificity of one time and of one place?"<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, Nabokov, in his categorical response to this inevitable uprooting and violence of translation, has ruled out the possibility of "poetic" translation altogether, arguing in favor of ultra-literality in translation accompanied by "footnotes reaching up like skyscrapers":

I want translations with copious footnotes, footnotes reaching up like skyscrapers to the top of this or that page so as to leave only the gleam of one textual line between commentary and eternity. I want such footnotes and the absolutely literal sense, with no emasculation and no padding – I want such sense and such notes for all the poetry in other tongues that still languishes in "poetical" versions, begrimed and beslimed by rhyme.<sup>4</sup>

If, however, we hold to the view (pace Nabokov) that poetic and lyrical translation are not only possible but also desirable, it is because there is something to be gained—despite unavoidable linguistic and cultural loss—in re-creating the form-content synthesis<sup>5</sup> of the original work, albeit in a new and different way, for the new readership in the translating language and culture. In re-creating the uprooted text outside the symbolic universe from which it sprang, the translator endows the translation with a new form-content synthesis tailored specially to the target literary system. The resulting text-in-translation stands in the new literary system as a re-created and re-contextualized literary product that now enjoys new breadth and depth, a richer tenor of voice and statement, illustrating Walter Benjamin's notion of a work's afterlife as transformation and renewal through translation:

[...] no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original. For in its afterlife – which could not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living – the original undergoes a change. Even words with fixed meaning can undergo a maturing process.<sup>6</sup>

But, one might object, shouldn't a translation be, as far as possible, "the same" as the original, or at

---

Minneapolis, Graywolf Press, 2009, p. XVII-XVIII.

2 *Ibid.*, p. XVIII.

3 George STEINER, "An Exact Art", in *ID.*, *No Passion Spent*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1996 [1982], p. 194.

4 Vladimir NABOKOV, "Oegin in English" [1955], in *The Translation Studies Reader*, edited by Lawrence Venuti, New York, Routledge 2004 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), p. 127.

5 On form-content synthesis in poetry see Paul FUSSELL *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form* (revised), New York, McGraw-Hill, 1979.

6 Walter BENJAMIN, "The Task of the Translator" [1923], translated by Harry Zohn, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, *op. cit.*, p. 77.



least subservient to it? This somewhat intuitive response is tantamount to a *representational* view of translation, where the derivative or subordinate nature of a translation is seen to outweigh its character as a text in its own right. A richer perspective is in order here, one that seeks, as Cees Koster has done, to strike a balance between subservience to the original text and independence from it:

[...] a translation is a representation of another text and *at the same time* a text in its own right. Translation is not primarily a representation, and secondarily also a text of its own. Nor is it in the first place a text of its own and in the second place also a representation.<sup>7</sup>

As *representation*, the derivative nature of translation runs deeper, of course, than the mere decoding of text. As Spivak reminds us: “it is not bodies of meaning that are transferred in translation”, but rather it is an *other* that is transferred.<sup>8</sup> The translator, in decoding text, must come to grips with the broader significance of the text vis-à-vis its original-language readership. As a *text of its own*, on the other hand, the literary translation surpasses the limits of its “otherly” origins and, as noted by Venuti, gives way in its reconstruction and recontextualization to “the recreation of textual effects that go far beyond the establishment of a lexicographical equivalence to signify primarily in the terms of the translating language and culture”.<sup>9</sup>

Translation, then, while opening up a window to encountering a cultural *other*, enriches at the same time the importing culture: “No language”, writes Steiner, “no traditional symbolic set or cultural ensemble imports without risk of being transformed”.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, André Lefevere writes:

It is through translations combined with critical refractions (introductions, notes, commentary accompanying the translation, articles on it) that a work of literature produced outside a given system takes its place in that “new” system.<sup>11</sup>

Steiner underscores, in this regard, the role of the translator as caretaker or custodian, drawing from Virgil’s notion of *sirva*: “The original text has begot the translation and must preserve its generating presence within the translation”, so the translator’s task is one of “service” or “custodianship”.<sup>12</sup> Care must be taken so that the *value* of the imported product might be preserved at an optimal rate of exchange in its new cultural and literary currency. “A translator may do violence to the original”, Steiner warns, “by exploiting it for [one’s] own ends, by appropriating it for an alien purpose”.<sup>13</sup> Consider how, in R. K. Narayan’s short story “A Horse and Two Goats”, a red-faced American tourist, taken with an equestrian statue beside the road, negotiates its purchase from Mani (a Tamil villager who misunderstands their entire exchange), then drives off with only the horse, which, dispossessed of its rider and former meaning, is now off to its new home in New York where at parties, as the vacationer has explained to the clueless

7 Cees KOSTER, “The Translator in Between Texts: On the Textual Presence of the Translator as an Issue in the Methodology of Comparative Translation Description”, in *Translation Studies: Perspectives on an Emerging Discipline*, edited by Alessandra Riccardi, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 26, original emphasis.

8 Gayatri Chakravorty SPIVAK, “The Politics of Translation”, in EAD., *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, New York: Routledge, 1993, p. 179.

9 L. VENUTI, “The Difference that Translation Makes: The Translator’s Unconscious”, in *Translation Studies: Perspectives...*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

10 G. STEINER, “The Hermeneutic Motion” [1975], in *The Translation Studies Reader*, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

11 André LEFEVERE, “Mother Courage’s Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature” [1982], in *The Translation Studies Reader*, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

12 G. STEINER, “An Exact Art”, *op. cit.*, p. 189-190.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 201.

man, “we’ll stand around him and have our drinks”.<sup>14</sup> In Narayan’s story, the communicative failure of the encounter precedes the wholesale devaluation and trivialization of the foreign import, once a historical icon in its native land, now reduced to a conversation piece. With a view to safeguarding foreign texts from analogous domestic travesty, the more effectively historical, social, and literary meanings are brought to light, the greater the value of intercultural transfer through translation.

Translation enjoys, moreover, the unique privilege of coming full circle, of turning the receptor readership toward the “otherly”, insofar as the translator has succeeded in uncovering, to quote Spivak again, “the trace of the other in the self”. Perhaps it is the very uniqueness of linguistic and cultural specificity that exerts a pull toward intercultural encounter, an “otherly” turn, through translation. There is loss, but there is gain: “Translation is the donation of being across space and time”, suggests Steiner.<sup>15</sup> This culturally specific, lower-case *being* becomes, in textual and contextual transformation, a catalyst for an encounter beyond, and yet with, the self. As both *representation* and *text of its own*, the text in translation stands as a medium of encounter, making for a turn that is both foreign and familiar, both “otherly” and “selfly”.

### The notion of love in the Setmana Tràgica texts

Through Maragall’s texts dealing with the Setmana Tràgica<sup>16</sup> we encounter not only a cultural other in the broad sense (Barcelona’s people amid the conflict in question) but also Maragall himself and the moral imperative compelling him to challenge an entrenched state of affairs, reactions to which ranged from highhanded self-righteousness to nothing-to-be-done-about-it complacency.

Delving into Maragall’s texts and the events to which he is responding, we are struck by the central role of moral principles and discursive elements that, in significant ways, correspond remarkably to moral principles and discursive elements that arose in the context of the civil rights movement in the United States during the nineteen fifties and sixties. Particularly striking is the prominence of discursive place given to the notion of *love*, which in Maragall constitutes the moral core of his appeal to his countrymen, and which half a century later, and half a world away, would emerge no less strikingly in the theoretical and practical discourse not only of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968), but also, astonishingly, in the discursive swordsmanship of Lyndon B. Johnson (1908-1973; pres. 1963-1969) in his political bid to carry out fully the Kennedy Administration’s design to put an end to institutionalized racism throughout the south of the United States.

This striking parallel emergence of the notion of love across time and space in the midst of such troubling and divisive social upheaval is doubly relevant here. First, the high-profile utilization of the notion of love by King and Johnson in the context of the struggle for civil rights dispels any initial impression we may have about Maragall’s texts being somehow archaic, outdated, or churchy in tone or tenor. Second, the intercultural encounter through translation is enriched as readers of Maragall in translation catch sight of the cultural self in the cultural other: the import has become the vehicle for encountering the

14 R. K. NARAYAN, *A Horse and Two Goats: Stories*, New York, Viking Press, 1970, p. 20.

15 G. STEINER, “An Exact Art”, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

16 Name given to the widespread general strike and popular protest against the conscription of reservists to feed Spanish military escalation in Morocco that degenerated into scores of fatal assaults and the burning of churches and convents throughout the city during the last week of July 1909, followed by sweeping police repression and summary executions. See below, n. 21.



other in a way that both self and other are seen as complementary parts of a commonly shared humanity with commonly shared struggles and ideals.

Maragall's first article, "Ah! Barcelona...!",<sup>17</sup> did not appear until two months after the events, and only after encouragement from Bishop Josep Torras i Bages (1846-1916), whose own pastoral on the source of the troubles prompted Maragall—unconvinced by the bishop's good-versus-evil reading of the facts—to write a letter to the bishop in which he stated that although there was surely more to it than that, Maragall would write nothing about it for fear it might displease the bishop.<sup>18</sup> Torras i Bages replied with a long letter, saying that Maragall "should not remain silent, since [he had] a gift for writing, and we are in a time when even the stones ought to speak".<sup>19</sup> In this article Maragall reviews and rejects as insufficient several explanations of the tragic events that had gained currency in various quarters. His conclusion was the following:

Can no one see that what's lacking is love? A horrible lacking, but true nonetheless. Where there is dissatisfaction with life, it comes out as hate, and satisfaction comes out as egoism: all one and the same thing—a lack of love. Love is the primary social "reason," the regenerator of organisms, and sole source of potency. Without it, all is futile. But how can it be gotten? I'll tell you: in the grief that is to come.

Catalonia, Barcelona, your suffering will be great if you wish to save yourself. You'll have to suffer bombings, mourning, pillaging and burning: war poverty, tears—many tears—until from the depths of your sobbing there leaps the spark that will light up your heart with a kind of love—I can't say what kind exactly, but it's all the same. All love is courage, potency, creation, and social virtue; it alone is the mettle of peoples; and only in suffering can it be found. Whoever has not suffered cannot claim to have loved—and sorry are those who suffer without love. Seek out love in your grief, ah! Barcelona—and those who want no part of it, let them leave. And if in the end everyone has gone, the traveler gazing out at Barcelona and Catalonia, deserted and desolate, might say: *Here there may have been a great population, but there certainly never was a people.*<sup>20</sup>

The eight occurrences of the word "love" in the article's concluding paragraphs correspond to the seven occurrences of the Catalan noun "*amor*" ["love"] and one of the past participle of the verb "*estimar*" ["to love"]. It is by foregrounding and weaving the notion of love prominently into the fabric of his argument that Maragall builds and brings his text to its climax—challenging the citizenry to embrace a Christian—inspired public-spirited love. Examining the text more closely, we find four salient points in connection with love. First, there is a "horrible lacking" of love, which ends up polarizing Maragall's fellow citizens into two camps: that of hate on the part of the dissatisfied, and egoism on the part of the satisfied. Second, there come Maragall's several definitions of "love", defined first and foremost as "the primary social 'reason', the regenerator of organisms, and the sole source of potency". We notice here how the lack of love suggests not only a lack of Christian purpose but also a lack of *social* purpose, where the sociological, biological, and psychological aspects of love are underscored. Third, there is the connection between love and suffering, where it is the latter that makes the former possible at all. Finally, love is the "mettle of peoples"—the catalyst that converts a mere "population" into a *people*.

17 Published in the moderately conservative Catalan daily *La Veu de Catalunya* ["The Voice of Catalonia"], 1 October 1909.

18 See J. MARAGALL, *Obres Completes*, Barcelona, Editorial Selecta, 1981, vol. I, p. 1156-1157.

19 See Josep BENET, *Maragall i la Setmana Tràgica*, Barcelona, Edicions 62, 2006 [1963], p. 79 (this and all subsequent translations from the Catalan are mine).

20 J. MARAGALL, "Ah! Barcelona...", in J. BENET, *op. cit.*, p. 104-105.

In “La ciutat del perdó” Maragall delves deeper into the question. His fellow citizens were quick to pin the blame for the deaths and destruction during the Setmana Tràgica on scapegoats—the city’s underclass and their unwelcome champions, including renowned educator Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia (1854-1909), who, having taken no part in the revolt, was sentenced to death by a military tribunal in view of his anarchist leanings and executed on 13 October 1909 (the international campaign on Ferrer’s behalf led to the fall, that same month, of Spain’s prime minister Antoni Maura).<sup>21</sup> Submitted on 10 October—three days before the execution of Ferrer—to his friend Enric Prat de la Riba (1870-1917), Catalan statesman and editor-in-chief of *La Veu de Catalunya*, the article was quietly ignored. In it he appealed for clemency on behalf of Ferrer and others facing the death sentence. Echoing the ending of his first article, Maragall, reminding his would-be readers that Barcelona was at that time widely known as the “city of bombs”, urged his fellow citizens to act in the interest of all so that Barcelona might now be known as the “city of pardon”: “and from that moment on [Barcelona] would begin to be a city”.<sup>22</sup> Maragall did not learn of the decision to blue-pencil the article until after Ferrer’s execution. Nor did he mention it to anyone. Not until two years later, when friend and critic Carles Rahola (1881-1939) admonished him at a public lecture for having remained silent about the executions, would Maragall write to Rahola to set the record straight. As it turns out, Maragall had received a letter of explanation from Prat de la Riba on 16 October, three days after the execution; a pardon, the editor argued, was unwise as it might feed a political backlash undermining King Alfonso XIII and Prime Minister Maura”.<sup>23</sup>

“La ciutat del perdó” begins:

Some fine voices that have risen here, and others that I’ve heard elsewhere, have convinced me that in Barcelona there is a willingness to love. Still, in all these voices, and in others less willing, half-ironic, there stirs or stands out the following question: *Toward whom this love that would redeem our city? My answer: What your heart tells you at every moment.* Yet I shudder to think how more than one might reply: *It’s just that right now my heart tells me nothing.*<sup>24</sup>

Throughout the article, with its eleven occurrences of “love” and four of “heart” (the latter used in the sense of capacity for love), Maragall maps out an expository path from an optimistic declaration of a “willingness to love” in search of an object toward which his Barcelona readers might direct that love:

[...] And still you ask what the object of that love might be, right here and now? What else could it be? How could you possibly think of anything else in the world right now? And how could you have let precious time slip away, while three men have already met their deaths, and how many more to come?<sup>25</sup>

Maragall’s appeal for clemency takes carefully into account the circumstances of the executions, to wit, the coldly punitive logic of the ultimate retributive justice, and how—ironically—this punitive act serves only to stifle the one course of action that might truly redeem the city:

21 All in all, one hundred twelve buildings had been destroyed, the death count was one hundred six, and three hundred fifty-five civilians and soldiers had suffered injuries; non-religious schools, unions, and left-leaning newspapers were banned and shut down; and finally, there were two thousand arrests and seven hundred thirty-nine indictments by military tribunals resulting in more than two hundred deportations, forty-seven sentences of life imprisonment and seventeen death sentences, five of which were carried out; see Jordi MATA, “Visions de la Setmana Tràgica: juliol de 1909, els dies de la rauxa”, *Serra d’Or*, no. 593, May 2009, p. 17-19.

22 J. MARAGALL, “La ciutat del perdó”, in J. BENET, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 155-159.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 148.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 149.



[...] I'm not saying he should be set scot-free to indulge in his hatred and commit more crimes. No: he, and all the rest of us, we all need to be confined in one way or another, and set straight, even if it means hammering and reshaping from scratch everyone for the love of the new city to come—even if it comes at the cost of great suffering, his and ours—as long as we all suffer together. But kill him? Kill him cold-bloodedly as part of a procedure, at a fixed hour, as if human justice were something certain and infallible, as definitive as the death now being dished out? Is that how it should be?

If you had confronted and killed this man in lethal combat at a barricade in the streets, or at the entrance to a church, I wouldn't blame you. Engaged in such combat, you would have given proof of your love for something, risking your life for an ideal: for the courageous love of an ideal many wrongs may be absolved. But who may absolve you now? Where is your ideal, your love, your sacrifice? Where have you shown courage? Do not fall into cowardliness a second time. If you failed to show your courage in combat during the struggle, then it's high time you showed it now, in pardoning.<sup>26</sup>

The object toward which Barcelona's citizens must direct their love is precisely that before which they have thrown up a wall of indifference. With the realization that they, too, have somehow played a part in failing to keep the peace, the complacent are nudged toward reconciliation—both with themselves and the city's wrongdoers and scapegoats. Maragall's appeal ends climactically with a challenge to those who have shown themselves to be most intransigent: "Pardon for Barcelona's condemned to death! Charity for one and all! And what a sight it would be to see those most offended the first to begin".<sup>27</sup> Once again, central to Maragall's appeal is the notion that—as in "Ah! Barcelona..."—there is no redemption for the city without love, and there is no love without the pain and suffering of reconciliation.

Two months later, on 18 December, Maragall's third and longest article dealing with the Setmana Tràgica appeared: "L'església cremada" ["The Church After Burning"]. This bold and moving article is both a decial against the anticlerical violence of that week in July and a throwing down of the gauntlet before the hypocrisy of the city's more sanctimonious churchgoers. Maragall begins:

I'd never heard a Mass like that one—the arching roof of the church gashed, its walls blackened and broken, its altars destroyed, gone, especially the great dark emptiness where the main altar once presided, the rafters invisible behind the dust from the rubble, no pews to sit on, and everyone standing or kneeling before a wooden table displaying the Holy Christ, and a stream of sunlight coming in through the gash in the roof, along with an army of flies dancing in the stark daylight flooding the church and making it seem like we were hearing Mass out in the streets. The sun poured down on the wooden table where the priest officiated in threadbare vestments, while in the choir, devoid of banister, others sang pressed close to the walls to keep from falling forward.

[...]

Then it hit me—the thought, the feeling, that this is how Mass should always be heard [...]<sup>28</sup>

Pere Lluís Font has argued that, in standing with the poor, Maragall "anticipates liberation theology":<sup>29</sup>

By destroying the church you have restored the Church because this is the true and living Church, the one that as founded for you, the poor, the oppressed, the desperate.<sup>30</sup>

26 *Ibid.*, p. 149.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 150.

28 J. MARAGALL, "L'església cremada", in J. BENET, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

29 PERE LLUÍS FONT, "Maragall davant la Setmana Tràgica", *Serra d'Or*, no. 593, May 2009, p. 25-28.

30 J. MARAGALL, quoted in P. LLUÍS FONT, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

Maragall also recognizes, as Lluís Font points out, the fault of the Church in alienating the poor, and does not balk at calling into question the spiritual virtue of the city's wealthy:

If Christ were to walk again among men, surely those to count themselves among His followers would be they, not you.<sup>31</sup>

Again, as with the city itself, a lack of love has taken hold among the congregation. Love is, for Maragall, dynamic and vital, a force that activates and energizes. This force was present in the Early Church, which thrived:

by dint of persecution—because that is how she was born; and her greatest peril is to be at peace. For this reason, when they see her highhanded, the people instinctively persecute her to restore her to her essential state. So spoke Christ to his ever-persecuted disciples: when not hunted by the powerful, they will be hunted by the wretched, who without realizing it, would return the Church to her natural state.

It is the law of love. Suffering to avoid slumbering, adversity to spark action, oppression to touch off an eruption. The multitude feels more instinctively this law, like all natural laws, and obeys without realizing it—blindly, and their atrocities are none other than this desire gone wild over a thousand paths in darkness, seeking the opening to the light.<sup>32</sup>

So in contrast to those who would go to church “to put their hearts to sleep in the peace of its shadows”, observes Maragall, “you, with your poverty and your rebellion and your desperation and your hatred, have assailed the doors and opened a breach in her walls, and have won her back again”.<sup>33</sup>

We see here how Maragall's notion of love as a dynamic and vital social force comes into play in what he formulated as the “law of love”: should the practice of Christian faith degenerate into static or class-inscribed ritual—symptom that love is lacking—then suffering, adversity and oppression will trigger an implosion that forces the faithful to reexamine the meaning of their faith. Maragall is unequivocal in his accusation, calling to account the city's more complacent churchgoers: “This is what is wrong with you: you seek peace and tranquility in Christ's church, you enter without love, you slumber, and you are putting faith to death!”<sup>34</sup> Only a “living faith”<sup>35</sup> can arrest the effects of a slumbering faith: a living faith fueled by a vital and dynamic love, which in turn, as we have seen, is the product of suffering. Recall from “Ah! Barcelona...”: “Whoever has not suffered cannot claim to have loved” and “Seek out love in your grief;”<sup>36</sup> and from “La ciutat del perdó”: “[...] for the love of the new city to come—even if it comes at the cost of great suffering [...] as long as we all suffer together”.<sup>37</sup>

Equating in “L'església cremada” this public-spirited love with the Christian virtue of charity—and Christian faith's central act of love/charity: Christ's sacrifice<sup>38</sup>—Maragall directs the energy of Christian love toward the here-and-now; and although Maragall does not turn against the idea of a Christian hereafter—“he never stopped being simply a good practicing Catholic, respectful towards the [Church]

31 J. MARAGALL, “L'església cremada”, in J. BENET, *op. cit.*, p.191.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 189-190.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 189.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 192.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 190.

36 J. MARAGALL, “Ah! Barcelona...”, in J. BENET, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

37 J. MARAGALL, “La ciutat del perdó”, in J. BENET, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

38 J. MARAGALL, “L'església cremada”, in J. BENET, *ibid.*, p. 191, 194.



hierarchy”<sup>39</sup>—it is in the worldly arena that love must act. It is, moreover, a love which, like Christ’s, must be forgiving (“La ciutat del perdó” calls on the city’s middle and upper echelons to forgive the brutal and incendiary excesses of the “mobs in the streets”) and which must, in addition, show that the city’s comfortably self-righteous have taken responsibility for their own part in the debacle by having remained passive during the course of the tragic events. Ignasi Moreta points out how Maragall identifies and differentiates between Barcelona’s two “mobs”:

[...] in Barcelona the mobs in the streets set fire to convents, but “the conservative [...] mobs”<sup>40</sup> offered no resistance, and afterwards demanded the harshest of repressions. This attitude outraged Maragall, prompting him to write [in “Ah! Barcelona...”] that “greater is the infamy in standing by and doing nothing to stop the evil than in doing the evil”.<sup>41</sup>

Moreta elaborates further on this in connection with Maragall’s analysis of the ideological clash dividing the city:

Maragall identifies once again the sins of the two *mobs*: the revolutionary, acting out of hate; the conservative, failing to act out of egoism. Of the two wrongs, Maragall regards the latter as the worse (“you may well be more guilty than they are”)<sup>42</sup> because, as he had written in “In Praise of the People”, “hate, at least, is a stirring of the heart, it is life; and while there is life there is hope for redemption. Hate can turn into love, somehow; but false piety puts the conscience to sleep, false love paralyzes the heart and kills the soul”.<sup>43</sup>

Enric Bou has also underscored Maragall’s critically Christian analysis of the ideological divide that beset the city, and which runs poignantly through all three articles: “the hatred of the revolutionary crowd versus the egoism of the bourgeois crowd”.<sup>44</sup> It is, Maragall insists, up to the latter to act now where they failed to act before.

Finally, in his climactic *coup de grâce* crowning this third and most painfully Christian article of the triad, Maragall makes a reconciliatory concession—though essentially a semantic one—to the most recalcitrant among his readers. Moreta comments on this:

[Maragall] is willing to admit the label “*dolents*” [“wrongdoers”] for the incendiaries only so long as it is kept in mind that this word is also the present participle of the verb *doldre* [“to hurt” or “to grieve”], and that, as such, it is akin to *dolor* [“suffering” or “sorrow”]. Whoever is *dolent* acts, lives, and therefore experiences *dolor*. And for Maragall, life without suffering is, quite simply, not life.<sup>45</sup>

The semantic convergence of “*dolents*” (“wrongdoers”) and “*dolor*” (“suffering” or “sorrow”) that stems from the common root “*do*” will inevitably be lost in English translation. Analogous convergence might be found, however, in the English lexeme “sorry”: designating those who are seen as “wretched” or “pitiful”—the “wrongdoers”—while at the same time designating also “those who suffer from grief and sor-

39 Pere MARAGALL MIRA, “El ‘Cant Espiritual’: ¿Summa final o llindar d’un nou camí?”, in Josep-Maria TERRICABRAS (ed.), *Joan Maragall, paraula i pensament*, Girona, Documenta Universitaria, 2011, p. 15-27 (quoted, p. 25).

40 J. MARAGALL, from a letter to Francesc Cambó, 9 October 1909.

41 Ignasi MORETA, *No et facis posar cendra: Pensament i religió en Joan Maragall*, Barcelona, Fragmenta Editorial, 2010, p. 390-391.

42 J. MARAGALL, “La ciutat del perdó”, in J. BENET, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

43 I. MORETA, *op. cit.*, p. 393.

44 Enric BOU, “‘Amor redemptor’? Visions urbanes de Joan Maragall”, in J.-M. TERRICABRAS (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 237-257 (quoted, p. 242).

45 I. MORETA, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

row". Again, in refusing to lay the entire blame on Barcelona's underclass, Maragall calls to account the city's self-righteous and well-to-do: if the desperate have acted brutally out of hatred, then the well-to-do and complacent have acted no less brutally out of indifference and egoism.

### The notion of love in the discourse of American civil rights

Martin Luther King, Jr., in his 1957 sermon "Loving Your Enemies,"<sup>46</sup> in which he examines the Evangelical maxim "Love your enemies", parallels Maragall in his assessment of a Christian-inspired public-spirited love: "Far from being the pious injunction of a utopian dreamer, this command is an absolute necessity for the survival of our civilization. Yes, it is love that will save our world and our civilization, love even for our enemies".<sup>47</sup>

Just as Maragall posited love as "the primary social 'reason', the regenerator of organisms, and the sole source of potency",<sup>48</sup> King also identifies love as the crucial element of social change: it is the force that will "save our world and our civilization." However, whereas Maragall launches his appeal to his middle-class contemporaries confronted with a rebellious underclass, King speaks here to the racial underclass, urging them to begin by loving their middle-class oppressors. In either case, it is the putting into practice of the doctrine of love that holds out hope for social regeneration and conviviality. Furthermore, King parallels Maragall in calling not only for critical self-analysis—"In order to love your enemies", says King, "you must begin by analyzing self"—but also by seeking out the humanity in one's enemy/oppressors:

So we begin to love our enemies and love those persons that hate us whether in collective life or individual life by looking at ourselves. A second thing that an individual must do in seeking to love his enemy is to discover the element of good in his enemy, and every time you begin to hate that person and think of hating that person, realize that there is some good there and look at those good points which will overbalance the bad points.<sup>49</sup>

King's refusal to target his oppressors as objects of reproach recalls Maragall's refusal to target Barcelona's underclass and its defenders as scapegoats. King's well-known differentiation between "liking" and "loving" comes into play here:

And this is what Jesus means, I think, in this very passage [Matthew 5:44] when he says, "Love your enemy". And it's significant that he does not say, "Like your enemy". *Like* is a sentimental something, an affectionate something. There are a lot of people that I find it difficult to like. I don't like what they do to me. [...] I don't like them. But Jesus says love them. And love everybody, because God loves them. [...] And here you come to the point that you love the individual who does the evil deed, while hating the deed that the person does.<sup>50</sup>

King underscores the nature of the love that he advocates here. It is neither *eros* nor *philia*, but rather it is *agape*: "something of the understanding, creative, redemptive goodwill for all [...] that seeks nothing in

46 Martin Luther KING, "Loving Your Enemies", sermon delivered at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, on 17 November 1957: [http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc\\_loving\\_your\\_enemies/](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc_loving_your_enemies/)

47 *Ibid.*

48 See above, n. 20 and text.

49 M. L. KING, "Loving Your Enemies", *op. cit.*

50 *Ibid.*



return”.<sup>51</sup> It is akin to Maragall’s notion of love as “courage, potency, creation, and social virtue”.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, in his enumeration of the reasons for loving one’s enemy that gives shape to the 1957 sermon, King includes the following: “because hate distorts the personality of the hater”.<sup>53</sup> Maragall, in his depiction of the rebellious mob as one driven by hate, offers a striking contrast between the slumbering faith of the complacent churchgoers and the *living* faith of the incendiary mob: “Their faith, though it lacks light, is a living faith, while yours, for all the centuries its light has poured from the skies is a dead one”.<sup>54</sup> The gap dividing ecclesiastical decorum and the underclass resulted in the latter seeking new and sometimes desperate outlets for a faith no longer recognizable as Christian. To put it in King’s words: the personality of the haters has been distorted. Maragall subverts, Moreta reminds us, the “us-and-them” syndrome that would demonize the underclass:

In “L’església cremada”, as in the other two articles motivated by the Setmana Tràgica, we find a veritable subversion of the roles played by “rightdoers and wrongdoers”. Maragall addresses those who are supposedly rightdoers—he knows his newspaper and who its readers are—and shows them how the opposition between the two is erroneous: the “rightdoers” are not right and the “wrongdoers” are not wrong. Rather, the “rightdoers” are dead or sleeping, while the “wrongdoers” are alive and active.<sup>55</sup>

It is up to Maragall’s middle-class readers to jump-start their own faith, supposedly Christian, and put the Evangelical maxim into practice by taking the crucial step toward reconciliation.

The final reason King gives for loving one’s enemies is love’s “redemptive power”, which “eventually transforms individuals”.<sup>56</sup> Of course, in the context of the long non-violent struggle for civil rights, the aim of putting love into practice was also the transformation of society: to put an end to racial discrimination and segregation. As late as 1967, even after numerous civil rights victories had been won, King sees that there is still much to be done: “America, you must be born again!”<sup>57</sup> The transformation was still incomplete.

In Barcelona, the transformation had not yet begun. In “La ciutat del perdó” Maragall argues that the object of many a reader’s hate—the underclass and its defenders—must henceforth be the object of their love. Similarly, in “L’església cremada”, the wrongdoers (*dolents*) must be seen as persons who are also victims of suffering (*dolor*). Only then, argues Maragall, will the redemptive power of this public-spirited love (akin to King’s *agape*) begin to transform a mere *population* into a *people*.<sup>58</sup> The alternative—to stand by and do nothing—finds a correlate in King’s 1963 “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, in which he admonishes white moderates for having remained silent in the face of non-violent protest against racial injustice:

I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro’s great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen’s Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted

51 *Ibid.*

52 J. MARAGALL, “Ah! Barcelona...”, in J. BENET, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

53 M. L. KING, *op. cit.*

54 J. MARAGALL, “L’església cremada”, in J. BENET, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

55 I. MORETA, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

56 M. L. KING, *op. cit.*

57 M. L. KING, “Where Do We Go from Here?” speech at the 11<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, 16 August 1967, in Howard ZINN and Anthony ARNOVE, *Voices of a People’s History of the United States*, New York, Seven Stories Press, 2004, p. 417-420 (*quoted*, p. 419).

58 As Maragall writes in the final lines of “Ah! Barcelona...”.

to “order” than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: “I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action”; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man’s freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a “more convenient season”. Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.<sup>59</sup>

Here King addresses not the oppressed (whom he had urged to “love the individual who does the evil deed, while hating the deed that the person does”),<sup>60</sup> but the slumbering, good-willed accomplice of the oppressor—the white moderate. As was the case with Maragall’s middle-class readers, it is also up to King’s white-moderate readers to jump-start their Christian faith and take also a crucial step toward transforming the American landscape into one inhabited not by a mere *population*, but also by a *people*. The tension that King evokes here is the one advocated by Socrates:

Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for non-violent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood.<sup>61</sup>

Of course, the non-violent protests of the civil rights movement, informed as they were by the Christian principles of brotherhood and love, are entirely antithetical to the actions of the incendiary mobs of Barcelona’s Setmana Tràgica; and although these non-violent protests triggered brutality on the part of local law enforcement agents, King is adamant in his defense of direct action in the form of non-violent protest. In response to the condemnation of his peers, who condemned the protests because they perpetrated violence, King wrote:

Isn’t this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery? Isn’t this like condemning Socrates because his unswerving commitment to truth and his philosophical inquiries precipitated the act by the misguided populace in which they made him drink hemlock? Isn’t this like condemning Jesus because his unique God-consciousness and never-ceasing devotion to God’s will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion?<sup>62</sup>

King’s bold words drive a critical wedge between a living, active faith informed by Christian principles of brotherhood and love, on the one hand, and the slumbering faith of the moderate clergymen whom King addressed in his letter on the other. Maragall’s words serve up a correlate in contrasting the living, active-but-derailed faith of the incendiary mob with the slumbering faith of his middle-class peers.

President Lyndon B. Johnson, in his landmark speech before Congress on 15 March 1965, urged legislators to pass the Voting Rights Act, which would put an end to racial discrimination that barred countless African Americans from exercising their right to the franchise. Racism was still rampant and resistance to the proposed legislation fierce. For Johnson, the dignity of the American people stands or falls with passage of the legislation:

59 M. L. KING, “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, 16 April 1963: [http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/annotated\\_letter\\_from\\_birmingham/](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/annotated_letter_from_birmingham/)

60 M. L. KING, “Loving Your Enemies”, *op. cit.*

61 M. L. KING, “Letter”, *op. cit.*

62 *Ibid.*



Rarely are we met with a challenge, not to our growth or abundance, our welfare or our security, but rather to the values and the purposes and the meaning of our beloved Nation. The issue of equal rights for American Negroes is such an issue. And should we defeat every enemy, should we double our wealth and conquer the stars, and still be unequal to this issue, then we will have *failed as a people* and as a nation. For with a country as with a person, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"<sup>63</sup>

Unless African Americans are guaranteed the right to exercise the franchise as fully-fledged citizens, America, according to Johnson, "will have *failed as a people*". Drawing the relevant analogy here, we might say, paraphrasing Maragall's final line of "Ah! Barcelona...", that *America may certainly be a great population, but it will never have been a great people*. Notice also how Johnson quotes Saint Matthew here, bolstering his moral argument with the authority of the New Testament (and paralleling, by the way, King's quoting of Saint Matthew in his "Loving Your Enemies" speech;<sup>64</sup> King would be present at the presidential signing of the Voting Rights Act on 6 August 1965). Note, furthermore, how the need for the passage of the law is formulated in terms of Christian redemption: failure of the law's passage would be akin to losing one's soul.

Even more astonishing, however, is Johnson's no-mincing-of-words praise for those who took part in the non-violent struggle for civil rights, in particular, African Americans themselves:

The real hero of this struggle is the American Negro. His actions and protests, his courage to risk safety and even to risk his life, have awakened the conscience of this Nation. His demonstrations have been designed to call attention to injustice, designed to provoke change, designed to stir reform.<sup>65</sup>

This is precisely the idea set forth by King in his "Letter from Birmingham Jail": to call attention to racial injustice by means of non-violent protest, and thereby awaken the conscience of the people. Again, the correlate in Maragall is the need to put into practice a *living* faith in order to awaken the slumbering faith of the majority.

Moreover, at the very core of Johnson's political praxis there lay, where the issue of civil rights was concerned, the Christian doctrine of brotherhood and love. Near the end of his speech, Johnson underscores the importance of this:

I want to be the president who helped to end hatred among his fellow men and who promoted love among the people of all races and all regions and all parties.

The hope that Johnson holds in the power of love is conveyed elsewhere in this speech by his use of the word "hearts":

[...] I pledge you tonight that we intend to fight this battle where it should be fought: in the courts, and in the Congress, and in the hearts of men.

63 Lyndon Baines JOHNSON, Speech before Congress on Voting Rights, 15 March 1965 (emphasis added); in the final line of this excerpt Johnson quotes from Matthew 16: 26; <http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3386>

64 M. L. KING, "Loving Your Enemies", *op. cit.*

65 L. B. JOHNSON, *op. cit.*

[...]

Beyond this great chamber, out yonder in fifty states, are the people that we serve. Who can tell what deep and unspoken hopes are in their hearts tonight as they sit there and listen.<sup>66</sup>

The remarkable occurrences of the words “love” and “hearts” here, in the sense of a creative power capable of regenerating a society in decline, parallels Maragall’s use of these words in his appeal to his own fellow citizens in the *Setmana Tràgica* writings.

## Conclusion

Despite the fact that—as Borges and Steiner<sup>67</sup> remind us—textual and contextual meanings can never be separated from the singular and specific time and place that gave rise to them, translation opens up a window to intercultural encounter; and despite the inevitable linguistic and cultural loss concomitant to the uprooting of texts through translation—what Venuti<sup>68</sup> has called the “violence” of translation—the text-in-translation stands in the new literary system as a re-created and re-contextualized literary product of new breadth and depth, endowing the original work, as Benjamin put it, with an afterlife.<sup>69</sup> New meanings and new correspondences will arise within the new literary system in which the work now stands as a work in translation; nevertheless, the translator takes care to ensure that the translation preserves “its generating presence within the translation”, so the translator’s task is one of “service” or “custodianship”, as Steiner has put it.<sup>70</sup> The text-in-translation is both a *representation* of the original and, at the same time, a *text in its own right*, sustaining a bidirectional tension that spans (albeit imperfectly) linguistic, cultural, and historical distances and differences. Finally, intercultural encounter through translation might also be said to be bidirectional, nudging the receptor readership *outward* toward the “other”, while at the same time prompting *inward* expansion of the “self” with the emergence of new meanings and correspondences within the receptor readership’s literary system.

The notion of a public-spirited love rooted in Christian ethics that lies at the core of Maragall’s response to the *Setmana Tràgica* finds a striking expressive correlate in the speeches and writings of both Martin Luther King, Jr., and Lyndon B. Johnson in their respective assessments and calls to action in their struggle against institutionalized racial discrimination and segregation in the United States during the nineteen fifties and sixties. Maragall’s resounding assertion that “what’s lacking is love [...] the primary social ‘reason’, the regenerator of organisms, and the sole source of potency”,<sup>71</sup> repeatedly underscored and meticulously developed throughout his *Setmana Tràgica* writings, resonates for English-language readers in tandem with King’s “Loving Your Enemies” speech, in which the putting into practice of the doctrine of love holds out hope for social regeneration and conviviality; and King’s refusal to target his oppressors recalls Maragall’s refusal to scapegoat Barcelona’s underclass.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, where Maragall depicts a striking contrast between the slumbering faith of Barcelona’s complacent churchgoers and the *living* faith of the incendiary mob—subverting, as Moreta<sup>73</sup> has noted, the demonization of the un-

---

66 *Ibid.*  
67 See above, n. 3 and text.  
68 See above, n. 1 and text.  
69 See above, n. 6 and text.  
70 See above, n. 12 and text.  
71 See above, n. 20 and text.  
72 See above, n. 50 and text.  
73 See above, n. 55 and text.



derclass—King, in his “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, voices his disappointment with the inaction of the white moderate who has become the slumbering, good-willed accomplice of the segregationist oppressor. Both men call on their peers to jump-start their Christian faith and take action toward regenerating society. President Lyndon B. Johnson, in his landmark Voting Rights speech before Congress in 1965, echoes the final lines of Maragall’s “Ah! Barcelona...”<sup>74</sup> in asserting that so long as African Americans are barred from the right to exercise the franchise, America “will have failed as a people”;<sup>75</sup> furthermore, Johnson is unequivocal in his praise for those who took an active part in the non-violent struggle for civil rights, in particular, African Americans themselves.<sup>76</sup> Johnson’s words effectively link together the direct action in the streets (non-violent protests) with the legislative action (the Voting Rights Act) that he is struggling to achieve; and Johnson leaves no room for doubt that the motivating force behind both these actions is Christian-inspired love: “the hearts of men”.<sup>77</sup>

Giving new voice, through translation, to bold voices that have risen in troubled times, so that they might rise once more and resonate in consonance with like-minded voices across time and space, is certainly no small part of what translating is all about.

Rebut el 28 de maig de 2012  
Acceptat el 15 de setembre de 2012

---

74 See above, n. 20 and text.  
75 See above, n. 63 and text.  
76 See above, n. 65 and text.  
77 See above, n. 66 and text.