Emblematics in Antonio Machado's Poetry

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Abstract
The pictorial quality of many of Antonio Machado's poems has been the object of extensive critical attention, and this quality reveals a perceptive eye for the visual image as well as a knowledge of the principles of composition and execution of contemporary painting. This was an interest fostered by his education at the ILE and by his frequent visits to El Prado. At the same time his fondness for the aphoristic genre became increasingly manifest in his poetry and his prose, as discussed by James Whiston and other critics. This essay explores the presence in his work of these two strands which are combined in the art of the emblem, and examines several instances of 'emblematic' poems in his work, in which the poetics of that tradition are conjured up in the visual nature of their central images. The analysis leads to some unexpected encounters with Shelley and Baudelaire.

Key words: Antonio Machado, emblems, Alciato, semiotics, poetic image, prosopopeia, simile, Shelley, Democritus and Heraclitus, Baudelaire.

Machado's partiality for parœmiology is manifest in the abundance of proverbs, as well as maxims and aphorisms, in his poetry and prose, but there are other forms related to this category which also captured the poet's imagination. Among those it is difficult to think of a form more attuned to Machado's poetics than the emblem, which combines the visual picture with gnomic expression and the epigram, allowing for the seamless integration of the learned and the demotic, often juxtaposing the popular wisdom of the proverb and the authority of classical adages. The pictorialism and collaborative basis, as well as the ethical vein which underlies the genre, are also factors which are close to Machado's poetic sensibility. Mario Praz has remarked on the emblematic mentality of the Middle Ages 'with their bestiaries, lapidaries, and allegories', but the emblem as such is the product of the Humanist Renaissance,[1] and Machado's predilection for poets such as Gonzalo de Berceo,

[1] Mario Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-century Imagery*, 2 vols (London: The Warburg Institute, 1939), I, p, 10. The influence of Egyptian hieroglyphics, interpreted as a purely ideographical form of writing after the discovery in 1419 of a Greek translation of Horapollo, *Hyeroglyfica*, is seen as one of the contributing factors in the emblematic vogue of the Renaissance; see John Manning, *The Emblem* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), p. 45.

Jorge Manrique and Fray Luis de Leon, which is well documented in his writings, would have given him ample opportunity to examine the emblematic frame of mind.[2] For instance, it is tempting to consider Machado's sequential poem 'Las encinas' (CIII)[3] in the light of the series of emblematic trees included in Andrea Alciato's *Emblemata Liber*, the first and most celebrated book of emblems, which was widely disseminated and imitated throughout Europe from the mid-sixteenth century. There was a copy of the Spanish translation by Daza Pinciano in Soria's public library where Machado could have come across it. The Golden Age scholar Aurora Egido has highlighted the similarity between the opening lines of Machado's poem 'A un olmo seco', and one of Alciato's emblems ('La amistad que dura aún después de la muerte') whose epigraph, in Daza's version, starts with the line: 'Al olmo viejo, seco y sin verdura'.[4]

Books of emblems proliferated in early modern Europe and became a dominant cultural form in the baroque, where the influence of emblematic language extended to other literary genres, and to the theatre and the visual arts. For one scholar 'the emblem and the baroque may be considered two names for the same phenomenon'.[5] By and large Machado judged Baroque aesthetics inimical to his own, and he expressed his dislike in his critical prose through the character of Mairena. The indictment against contemporary practitioners of a neo-baroque aesthetics was primarily directed at the artificiality in their use of the poetic image in the manner of their *Conceptist* precursors.[6]

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[2] *Los complementarios* contains a section with the title of 'Antología de Fray Luis de Leon para el uso particular de un aprendiz de poeta', with more than sixty fragments of his poetry, in *Antonio Machado: Poesía y Prosa*, ed. Oreste Macrì, 4 vols (Madrid: Espasa Calpe/ Fundación Antonio Machado, 1989), pp. 1258-46 [all references to Machado's work are to Macrì's edition]. See also his poem 'Mis poetas' (CL) dedicated to Berceo; and appreciative references to Jorge Manrique are scattered in his essays.

[3] First published in *El Porvenir Castellano* in 1914 and later included in the collection *Campos de Castilla* within the 1917 edition of his *Poesías Completas*.

[4] Aurora Egido 'Variaciones sobre la vid y el olmo en la poesía de Quevedo: Amor constante más allá de la muerte', in *Homenaje a Quevedo*, Academia Literaria Renacentista II, ed. Victor García de la Concha (Salamanca: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Salamanca, 1982), 213-28 (p. 227 and note 48).

[5] Bradley J. Nelson, *The Persistence of Presence: Emblem and Ritual in Baroque Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), p. 6.

[6] In Mairena's words: 'El poeta barroco emplea las imágenes para adornar y disfrazar conceptos, y confunde la metáfora esencialmente poética con el eufemismo de negro catedrático.' *Antonio Machado: Poesía y Prosa*, p. 704.

However, Machado admired the work of Lope de Vega whose use of the emblematic tradition is a distinctive trait of his poetics. In any case, one of Machado's most emblematic poems is included in the first edition of *Campos de Castilla* (1912), with the title 'Consejo'(LVII). The title already alludes to the exhortative tone and moral and didactic character of this tradition, and formally the poem is constructed in the manner of an emblem, replicating its threefold pattern—*inscriptio*, picture and *subscriptio*. Here the motto, conveyed in the prosopopoeia of the short initial phrase: 'Sabe esperar', is followed by the device or symbolic image of the ship, which stands out from the body of the poem by parenthetical dashes, ending with the epigram or commentary in rhymed verse, which contains the interpretation or application of the visual image in this particular instance.[7]

> Sabe esperar, aguarda que la marea fluya
> —así en la costa un barco— sin que al partir te inquiete.
> Todo el que aguarda sabe que la victoria es suya;
> porque la vida es larga y el arte es un juguete.
> Y si la vida es corta
> y no llega la mar a tu galera,
> aguarda sin partir y siempre espera,
> que el arte es largo y, además, no importa. (CXXXVII: iv)

The poem builds upon the conventional metaphor of human life as a sea journey, with the image of a ship stranded on the coast waiting for the tide to turn. The simile is followed by a reflection on self-transcendence around the aphorism 'ars longa, vita brevis'. While in the first quatrain the certitude of the tides, predicated on time, is applied to human life, in the second quatrain the expectation of transcendence through art is slightly more tentative, the metre moving from the assured alexandrine rhythm to hendecasyllabics, starting with a shorter, heptasyllabic line. There is a wordplay based on the verb 'esperar' which in Spanish signifies expectation and hope as well as waiting. The poem has a chiasmic design which

[7] For the poetics of emblems see Peter M. Daly *Literature in the Light of the Emblem: Structural Parallels between the Emblem and Literature in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 2nd edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979).

reinforces the sense of deadlock or impasse. The chiasmus is present both in terms of structure, with the reversed parallelism of the verbs *esperar* and *aguardar*, in lines 1 and 7 respectively, and conceptually with the inversion of the Hippocratic sentence. The train of thought is dismissed at the end as unimportant, leaving any judgement suspended. The final self-conscious authorial remark is a form of Romantic irony which not only undermines any moralizing intent, but also draws attention to form over content.

One key for the emblematic reading of Machado's poem lies in the use of the archaic word *galera*, galley, a type of vessel associated with sixteenth-century trade and naval warfare, particularly with the battle of Lepanto in 1571. The galley is closely related to the galleon which is a repeated motif among the iconographic formulae used in emblem books. It appears in several examples of the seminal *Emblematum Liber* by Andrea Alciato of 1531, translated by Bernardino Daza as *Los emblemas de Alciato en rhimas españolas* (1549), pictured most famously in the emblem 'Spes Proxima' (XLIII) in which a a ship buffeted by storms becomes an allegory for the government of the republic.[8] In the French *Emblems latins* (1588) by Jean Jacques Boissard, the ship reappears under the inscription 'Humane vita conditio' (Emblem 18) following the use of the topos in Classical tradition. The galley also figures in several *empresas* of Juan de Borja *Empresas morales* (1581) under different inscriptions. In a similar design to that of Alciato, one of Sebastian de Covarrubias *Emblemas morales* (1610) includes the word 'galera' in the octave (n. 32). An almost identical image, this time used as a symbol of constancy in the service of higher, immutable values (n.20), is included among the *Empresas espirituales y morales* by Juan Francisco de Villava (1613) printed in Baeza. The boat of course also has a Petrarchan provenance, as in his sonnet 'Passa la nave mia colma d'oblio', whose prestige was a contributing factor in the vogue for the emblematic.[9]

In 'Consejos' it is not only the motif of the *galera* that signals the poem's affiliation, but at the level of diction the chiasmus and the hyperbaton, both prominent in Machado's

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[8] See Fernando Rodríguez de la Flor and Jacobo Sanz Hermida, '"Alciato Flotante". Simbólica de estado en una galera española del siglo XVII', *Los días del Alción: Emblemas, Literatura y Arte del Siglo de Oro*, ed. José J. de Olañeta (Barcelona: UIB and College of the Holy Cross, 2002), 493-503.

[9] In Mario Praz's words: 'One can safely assume that Petrarch was a forerunner of the Seicento not only because of his taste for conceits but also because of his emblematic bias', *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery*, p. 11.

poem, are rhetorical figures related to the poetics of the emblem and by implication of the baroque. Likewise characteristic of the tradition is the display of humanistic erudition, here with the reference to Hippocrates, whose authority was among those invoked by emblematists.[10] But above all, it is the understanding of the conception and function of the picture in an emblem, the way the central image relates to the rest of the poem, what makes 'Consejos' emblematic. Introduced by a simile, the image stands in analogical relation to the message of the poem, a visual embodiment of its abstract meaning, which is different from the accompanying commentary. In Machado's poem the stranded ship has the function of a word-emblem: a verbal image that has qualities associated with the emblem, and functions as a double of the poem, in this case, reflecting back its indeterminacy.

From this perspective, the view of the poem as a satirical commentary on Baroque aesthetics, which the reference to art as 'juguete' seems to confirm, may explain the fact that it originally appeared under the heading 'Humoradas' in the first edition of *Campos de Castilla* (1912). However, Machado might retrospectively have recognized a deeper significance in the poem beyond that of a *jeu d'esprit*, because in subsequent editions it was moved to a section under the general heading of 'Parábolas'. The same term is used in the title of Erasmus's *Parabole sivi similia* (1505), whose promotion of the study of nature as a source of philosophical ideas is said to prefigure the specific metaphorical structure of the emblem.[11] Another small change was made in the poem as it appeared in the 1917 edition, where in the second line 'el partir' became 'al partir'. We will never know the reasons for these changes but they have an effect on the way the poem is received. While 'parable' conveys the idea of illustration and comparison, reinforcing the analogical character of the image, the shift in the referent for 'partir', now applied to the receding tide, invites a figurative reading rather than a metaphysical one. Oreste Macri notes the change with a laconic remark but without exploring its implications: 'El sujeto de "te inquiete" es "la marea". Parece mejor y *difficilior* la lección de *Campos de Castilla* ['el partir'].'[12] Macri's allusion to the Erasmian dictum 'Lectio difficilior potior' (what is more difficult, is stronger)

[10] The same motto is used by Juan de Borja, in his *Empresas morales*, ed. by Carmen Bravo Villasante (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1981), emblem n. 19.
[11] Michael Bath, *Speaking Pictures* (London: Longman, 1994), pp. 45-46.
[12] In Macrì's edition of *Antonio Machado: Poesía y Prosa*, p. 922 n.2.

suggests the neo-Platonic poetics of the image that informed Golden Age aesthetics associated with rhetorical invention and derived from literary sources. The textual change reflects instead a preference for the natural image based on physical perception, more in line with late Medieval Aristotelian doctrine.[13]

This partiality for the poetic symbol over metaphor is exemplified in other poems of the collection, most eloquently in 'A un olmo seco', also on the theme of hope, which shows a strong attachment to the actuality of the decaying tree, while rejecting the more conventional image of the personified singing poplars inhabited by brown nightingales, an image which has a definitely Baroque tinge.[14] While in 'A un olmo seco' a metapoetic reading is prompted by the homonym 'hoja', in 'Consejos' it is the shared signifier of 'galera' whose meaning is also linked to the printing press, denoting the metal tray into which the type-set was laid in plac, and by extension the first printed proof. While the invention of the printing press effected a literal separation of word and image in different technologies, the poetic image represents a symbolic reconciliation between the two, an aspiration which is best illustrated in the emblem. As Mario Praz argues in his historical study of European emblems 'every poetical image contains a potential emblem'.[15] In the emblematic poem the word transcends its temporal nature through its appeal to the imagination to visualize an image, thereby turning time as it were, into space. This conception of the image informs Machado's view of poetry as a combination of 'esencialidad y temporalidad',[16] and in 'Consejos' it reveals a poetics based more on sensible experience than on the authority of tradition, and ultimately, a *desideratum*, as in the more

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[13] Michael Bath discusses the emblem in terms of the relation of natural to conventional signs with reference to the opposition of Aristotelian and Platonic philosophies of knowledge and expression; see *Speaking Pictures*, p. 155-58.

[14] Cf 'La inteligencia […] nada puede intuir; no tiene ojos. […] La metáfora no suele ser en poesía sino retórica, abunda en el barroco literario, es decir, cuando el mundo intuitivo del poeta ha cedido su puesto al mundo de conceptos […]', in 'Sobre el libro "Colección" del poeta andaluz José Moreno Villa', *Los complementarios,* in *Antonio Machado: Poesía y Prosa,* pp. 1360, 1369.

[15] Mario Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery*, vol 1, p. 12.

[16] 'Poetica' (1934)*,* in *Antonio Machado: Poesía y Prosa*, p. 1802; *cf*. 'la lírica [...] sin renunciar a su pretensión a lo intemporal, debe darnos la sensación estética del fluir del tiempo' ('Nota (sobre su propio quehacer)', *Los complementarios,* in *Antonio Machado: Poesía y Prosa,* p. 1312*.*

personal and abstract emblematic genre of the *impresa*.[17] From this perspective we can explain the plural form in the title as the poet's resolution to be patient, but also to watch, and hope for inspiration.

Another emblematic image which finds its way into Machado's poetry is that of the soap-bubble. It appears in the poem that opens the first series of 'Proverbios y cantares' (CXXXVI) in *Campos de Castilla,* having first been published in *La Lectura* where it figured in the middle of the series, but the poet transferred it to the front in the first edition of the collection, where it appeared with the title 'Prólogo'. Whereas the title was subsequently dropped, the poem kept its place at the beginning in later editions.

> Nunca perseguí la gloria
> ni dejar en la memoria
> de los hombres mi canción;
> yo amo los mundos sutiles,
> ingrávidos y gentiles
> como pompas de jabón.
> Me gusta verlos pintarse
> de sol y grana, volar
> bajo el cielo azul temblar
> súbitamente y quebrarse.

To all appearances this is a throw-back to the Symbolist spirit of *Galerías,* related to Rubén Daríos's *modernismo*. Its prominent position may be baffling in the context of a collection which marks the poet's moving away from his previous French-influenced aesthetics. Perhaps

[17] Even though there is a degree of inconsistency and overlapping in terminology, Denis L. Drysdall's essay 'Authorities for Symbolism in the Sixteenth Century' offers a useful distinction between emblem and impresa: 'impresa expresses a personal proposition or state of mind, and requires the freedom to create meanings for individual perceptions and situations[...] Unlike the emblem, which all agree expresses universal moral teachings and for most 'signifies' by traditional and fixed allegory, the *impresa* enjoys a considerable freedom because the image can be associated with any words, any context the creator may choose, and can express his personal, original concept or feeling' (*Aspects of Renaissance and Baroque Symbol Theory 1500-1700*, ed. by Peter M. Daly and John Manning (New York: AMS Press, 1999), 111-24 (p. 120).

in part because of this perceived anomaly it has not attracted much critical attention, and then most often has been read as a kind of existential *carpe diem*. But if we look at the way the poem is constructed as an emblem poem—or more precisely, as a nude emblem[18]— it acquires a new significance.

The motif of the bubble appears in Boissard's book of emblems (1588), under the motto 'Homo Bolla' (man is like a bubble), an ancient proverb which had been given new currency in the Renaissance after its inclusion in Erasmus's collection of *Adages* (II: iii, 48: 'Homo Bulla / Man is but a bubble'), widely used by emblematists. In the picture a child on the right is blowing bubbles while a philosopher on the left, holding a rod, is puncturing one of them. On the ground between the two figures there are symbols of earthly power and glory: palms, crowns, and armour, and the Greek inscriptions within the picture refer to the transience of life and the insignificance of men, in line with the accompanying quatrain in Latin.[19] While the textual and symbolic components of the emblem reinforce the philosopher's gesture, guiding the viewer to read the picture along the lines of the moral message, the image also invites an interpretation of the two figures as metaphors for human types: the carefree, idealistic youth confronted by the killjoy, materialist old man. Here the representational is vying with the symbolic in a tension which reflects the conflicting epistemologies of religion and science at the heart of emblematics from the Renaissance onwards.[20] Machado's poem displays a similar ambivalence. Whereas the initial couplet declares indifference to the idea of reputation and immortality, implied in the image of the rising bubbles against the blue sky, the delight expressed at their airborne, delicate and luminous appearance clearly places the poet on the side of the young character in Boissards's emblem.

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[18] Nude or naked emblems are those devoid of pictures; see Manning, *The Emblem*, p. 40.
[19] The epigram translation by Alison Adams is: 'Transient and vain is everything in our life: everything hangs from the thread of Lachesis. As quickly as the wet swelling of the bubbled water perishes, so the certain hour of death comes to anyone', in Jean Jacques Boissard, *Emblematum liber: Emblems latins* (Metz: A. Faber, 1588), facsimile edn using Glasgow University Library SM add 415. *Imago Figurata studies*, vol 5 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2005) (http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/french/emblem.php?id=FBOa007) .
[20] Donald S. Russell, 'Perceiving, Seeing and Meaning: Emblems and some Approaches to Reading Early Modern Culture', in *Aspects of Renaissance and Baroque Symbol Theory 1500-1700*, 77-91 (p. 80); see also Michael Bath, *Speaking Pictures*, 155-59.

In the poem, the image is described in a brief ekphrastic poem functioning as an epigram, which is preceded by the inscription in the couplet. The two parts are linked by the idea of impermanence, expressed in the couplet and illustrated in the image of the bubbles. This interpretation gives primacy to the verbal, making the image redundant. But the poem's emblematic structure, by foregrounding the visual image, encourages an active participation of the reader. The simile introduces an object — the bubble — which only acquires visibility by its ability to reflect the light: an idea that in an early modern context suggests the Humanist approach to artistic and literary creation through the practices of *imitatio* and *aemulatio* of models. This idea, as argued below, is relevant for Machado's poetics as they appear exemplified in this poem.

In the seventeenth century the bubble became a motif in *vanitas* still life paintings, representing the futility of human ambition, as in David Bailley's *Self-Portrait with Vanitas Symbols* (1651), Nicolas Poussin's *A Dance to the Music of Time* (1638), and Valdés Leal's *Alegoría de la vanidad* of 1660. We find in this genre the same ambiguity of the emblematic picture, as the excess and exuberance in the ostentatious display of worldly possessions and achievements apparently undermine and challenge the sobering moral message which is often reinforced with textual inscriptions.[21] While the self-referential convention of including the artist's tools in *vanitas* compositions corresponds in Machado's poem to the word 'canción' which stands for lyric poetry, here identified with the ephemeral bubble, the glaring 'sol y grana' projected onto them can be seen as reflecting the sensual richness of this tradition. At the same time, the heraldic ring of the expression 'sol y grana' reinforces the emblematic character of the image. In pictorial representations the bubble stands as a mirror, not only capturing and reflecting light, but also drawing the artist, figuratively and at times literally, into the picture, and it often functions as a *mise-en-abîme* device for the whole composition. This link to the notion of the microcosmic explains the appearance of the motif in another configuration.

In the early modern context, the bubble linked to the vanity topos often conjured up the figure of Democritus and his doctrine of atomism in which the universe is conceived in

[21] Wayne M. Martin 'Bubbles and Skulls: The Phenomenological Structure of Self-Consciousness in Dutch Still Life Painting', in Hubert Dreyfus and Mark Wrathall (eds), *The Blackwell Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialim* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 559-84 (pp. 564-65)

terms of spherical atoms moving randomly in the void, colliding, dissolving and reconstituting matter.[22] The revival of Atomism in the Renaissance fostered an interest in the fragment, of which the collection of miscellaneous topics in emblem books was an expression. Machado's increasing interest in the aphoristic and the proverbial, illustrated in his series of 'Proverbios y cantares', picks up on this aspect. By opening the series, this poem becomes a symbolic frontispiece, which traditionally has the form of an emblem, shaping the mind-set for the whole series[23]. Don Paterson's translation of the poem as a *carmen figuratum,* where the typography of the poem has a spherical design, is an astute equivalent of this type of colophon in emblem-books. The principle of atomism, *Ex Nihilo Nihil Fit,* from Lucretius's *Rerum naturam*, is recalled in Machado's description of the creative process in terms of transformative imitation ('el poeta no puede crear *ex nihilo* […] el artista crea a la manera del hombre: transformando una cosa en otra o, si queréis, dando una forma a una materia').[24] And it doesn't seem coincidental that the epigraph added to the publication of a sample of 'Proverbios y cantares' in *La Lectura* of 1913 comes from the same source.

In his history of Western philosophy Bertrand Russell explains Democritus's cosmology quoting some lines from Shelley that bear a striking similarity to Machado's:[25]

> Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
> From creation to decay,
> Like the bubbles on a river
> Sparkling, bursting, borne away.[26]

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[22] See Angel M. García Gómez*, The Legend of the Laughing Philosopher and its Presence in Spanish Literature (1500-1700)* (Córdoba: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Córdoba, 1984).

[23] See Alistair Fowler, 'The Emblem as a Literary Genre', in *Deceitful Settings*, ed. Michael Bath and D. Russell, *AMS Studies in the Emblem*, 13 (New York: AMS Press, 1999), 1-25 (pp. 18-21)

[24] 'Entrevista con AM "dos preguntas de Tolstoy: ¿Qué es el arte? ¿qué debemos hacer?"', in *Antonio Machado: Poesía y Prosa*, p. 1614.

[25] Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* [1st edn 1947] (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 72.

[26] Shelley, *Hellas*, in *The complete poetical works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 452.

Russell doesn't quote the poem's subsequent line — 'but they are still immortal' — where Shelley's Romantic idealism comes to the fore. By contrast, there is no sense of immortality in Democritus's materialist philosophy where everything is the product of chance or necessity. In *Juan de Mairena* Machado dedicates a passage to Democritus, noting the relevance of atomism for modern science. Although Mairena recommends a relatively sceptical stance towards Democritus's mechanical view of existence, he concludes with a eulogy, celebrating the originality and imaginative power of his vision: 'nosotros hemos de cantarle, sin olvidar en nuestro poema aquel humor jovial —¡Quién lo diría!— que le atribuye la leyenda, y la nobleza de su vida y la suave serenidad de su muerte.' [27] Machado's reference to the traditional representation of Democritus as the laughing philosopher, invokes in turn his counterpart in the figure of the weeping Heraclitus. They symbolized two philosophical dispositions towards the human condition and the acquisition of knowledge, the pessimist and the optimist respectively. Their pairing alludes to the notion of the unity of opposites articulated in the rhetoric and philosophical discourse of Humanism. One of the poems in Unamuno's *Cancionero* uses the duality to suggest a *coincidentia oppositorum*, reflected in the symmetry of the lines within a continuous sentence:

> Los átomos danzando en el vacio ríen,
> Demócrito!
> en la corriente ensueños de las sombras lloran,
> Heráclito![28]

The interconnection between the two figures was often symbolized through a circular pattern, as the emblem scholar John L. Lepage notes in Alciato's emblem where the two philosophers are portrayed under the motto 'In vitam humanam' (emblem number 152).[29] Democritus is extending his arms upwards in contrast with the downwards gesture

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[27] 'Demócrito y sus átomos', in *Antonio Machado: Poesía y Prosa,* pp. 1951-3; see also p. 2367.

[28] *Miguel de Unamuno, Cancionero,* in *Obras Completas*, vol. XV (Madrid: Afrodisio Aguado 1958), n. 559 (13 December 1928), 324. See also Angel M. García Gómez, *The Legend of the Laughing Philosopher,* pp. 277-78.

[29] John L. Lepage, *The Revival of Antique Philosophy in the Renaissance* (New York: Palgrave, 2012), p. 114.

of Heraclitus. In some paintings, standing between them, there is an actual globe, a motif particularly associated with Democritus's atomism, as in Bramante's fresco (1477) or Jacob de Gheyn's *Vanitas Still Life* (1603). A circular image is also employed by Lapage to describe the interconnection of the two figures: 'fused together like opposite hemispheres in emblem books and in paintings, they called forth all facets of intellectual contemplation in varying degrees of clarity and obscurity and light and darkness, yet above all circumscribed by doubt'.[30] Without making the connection explicit the critic is here describing the composite reflection of images on bubbles. Their spherical shape produces the optical effect of doubling the image: the upper section reflects an upright image while the lower functions as a concave mirror producing the same image inverted.

If we were to look for the opposite hemisphere of Machado's bubble-image we could easily alight on one of Baudelaire's poems, 'L'Amour et le crâne', from *Les Fleurs du mal*, which uses the same motif and was inspired by the engraving of the Dutch painter Henrick Goltzius in 1504, designed in the manner of Alciato's emblems. In the picture a child reclined on a skull blows bubbles, with the lemmantized epigrapm 'Quis evadet?' (who escapes?), and a caption with a remark on the transience of human existence. But in Baudelaire's *carmen figuratum* poem the reaction elicited by the bubble-image is far from joyful, as the gloomy and despondent skull of a tormented humanity bitterly laments the fleeting nature of the 'golden dreams' on which so much experience and intellectual effort has been lavished. In the central quatrains, Cupid perched on the skull and impervious to its protests, joyfully blows bubbles:

Qui montent dans l'air,
Comme pour rejoindre les mondes
Au fond de l'éther.
Le globe lumineux et frêle
Prend un grand essor,
Crève et crache son âme grêle
Comme un songe d'or.[31]

[30] Lepage, *The Revival of Antique Philosophy*, p. 84.
[31] 'L'Amour et le crane (vieux cul-de-lampe)', *Baudelaire, Œuvres completes*, ed. Marcel A. Ruff (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1968), 118.

Even though Machado keeps the prevailing octosyllabic of Baudelaire's quatrains, his version might be responding to the first Spanish translation of the French poem by Eduardo Marquina in 1905, which introduces colour and 'trembling' in his otherwise clunky and flawed version:

> [Amor] Se agita y sopla, hacienda pompas
> de ópalo y topacio
> que suben á juntarse á los mundos
> del espacio.
> Cada globo redondo y claro
> temblotea en el aire sonoro:
> luego revienta, y entrega su alma
> como un sueño de oro.[32]

Certainly in terms of their attitude towards immortality Baudelaire's poem stands as the Heraclitus to Machado's Democritus. The proverbial expression 'Heraclitus weeps while Democritus laughs' has been traced by Edgar Wind back to the classical sources, among them Seneca (*De tranquillitate animi* XV. 2) where Democritus's laughter is explicitly identified as an expression of hope. Subsequently, during the Renaissance his figure was associated with *euthymia* (a positive outlook on life).[33] In any case, Democritus's contemplative relation to nature, as described in Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholia*, should make him a congenial figure for Machado.[34]

Machado's appreciation of Baudelaire's poetry was conducted *sub rosa,* most likely because his much admired mentor Unamuno held Baudelaire's work in contempt, as he had made explicit in a public letter to Machado published in the magazine *Helios* in

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[32] 'El amor y el cráneo (antigua viñeta)', in *Carlos Baudelaire: Las flores del mal, poesías* trans. Eduardo Marquina (Madrid: Librería de Fernando Fe, 1905), 326-27; the same edition was reprinted by José María Álvarez (Madrid: Pre-textos, 2002).
[33] Edgard Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, rev. ed. (Oxford: OUP, 1980), 49. See also Martin, 'Bubbles and Skulls', in Dreyfus and Wrathall (eds), p. 11 note 19.
[34] Robert Burton*, The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ([1621], p. 2.

1903.[35] There he discouraged the young poet from following the example of what he called the 'atrocities' of Baudelaire. However, as Hans Mattauch convincingly argued in 2003, Machado's early poetry shows an attentive and appreciative ('enthusiastic' in Mattauch's view) reading of *Les Fleurs du mal*, and some of his poems published in 1903-04 under the heading 'Galerías' contain not only echoes but also direct borrowings from Baudelaire.[36] Interestingly Mattach highlights one poem ('Desgarrada la nube; el arco iris') in connection with Baudelaire's 'Rêve Parisien'(CII), which ends with a reference to floating bubbles: 'Y todo en la memoria se perdía como una pompa de jabón al viento' (LXII). Incidentally, the title of Baudelaire's collection evokes the tradition of *florilegia*, collections of passages from classical authors used as source texts for imitation, instruction and reference which were instrumental for the emergence of the emblem. According to the critic, the presence of Baudelaire in Machado's poetry is signalled by a violent fluctuation between despair and hope, which disappears from his poetry after 1904 together with the Baudelairean resonances. However, if Machado's allegiance is to Democritus, as the poem discussed here suggests, his Heraclitus was never far from the surface. While the bubble that enfolded his relation with Baudelaire might have imploded, their unity in difference was soon transferred to the dialectical relation between the splenetic Abel Martín and his light-hearted disciple Juan de Mairena.

The emblem has been defined as a 'mode of thought'[37] and also 'a way of looking at the world'[38] promoting a creative and imaginative engagement with images which is also grounded on ethical principles. As in the examples discussed here, Machado's emblematic poems combine his pictorialism with an aspiration to transcend the perceived limitations to rational thought through play and paradox.

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[35] Miguel de Unamuno 'Vida y Arte, al señor don Antonio Machado', *Helios*, 2, pp. 46-50. For the reception of Baudelaire in Spain see William F. Aggeler, *Baudelaire Judged by Spanish Critics 1857-1957* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1971).

[36] Hans Mattauch, 'Las "Galerías" de Antonio Machado: Origen y evolución de una metáfora central de su poesía', *Revista de Literatura*, LXV, 129 (2003), pp. 225-35.

[37] Dietrich Jöns (1966), cited in Peter M. Daly, *Literature in the Light of the Emblem,* p. 57.

[38] Daly, *Literature in the Light of the Emblem, p.* 59.

Homo bulla, Jean Jacques Boissard, *Emblemes Latins* (1588)
(http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/french/emblem.php?id=FBOa007)

De la vida humana, Alciato's Los Emblemas (Lyons 1549)
http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/picturae.php?id=A49a096

SPES PROXIMA Emblemata Padua 1621
http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/emblem.php?id=A21a043

Valdes Leal, *Allegory of Vanity* 1660

Pieter Claestz, Vanitas 1620.

Hendrick Goltzius, engraving 1594 web gallery of Art http://www.wga.hu/html_m/g/goltzius/quisevad.html

David Bailly, Self-Portrait with Vanitas Symbols 1651.