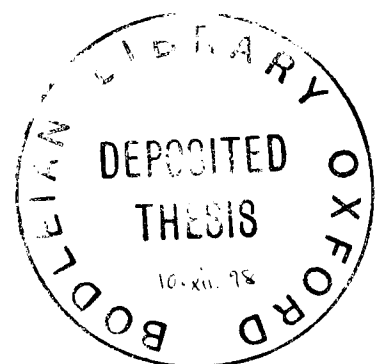


**The Reception of English Fictional and Non-Fictional Prose in Catalonia (1916-38), with
Particular Reference to Edwardian Literary Culture and Associated Debates
Concerning the Novel in England, France and Catalonia**

**D. Phil Thesis
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St Cross**



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Abbreviations

- Bkm* *Bookman*
D'Ací *D'Ací d'Allà / D'Ací i d'Allà*
DS *Diari de Sabadell*
EF *Estudios Franciscanos*
EM *El Matí*
ES *Esplai, suplement d'El Matí*
ILN *Illustrated London News*
LMerc *London Mercury*
LNR *La Nova Revista*
LP *La Publicitat*
LVC *La Veu de Catalunya*
LPC *La Paraula Cristiana*
LR *La Revista*
M *Mirador*
NRF *Nouvelle Revue Française*
RC *Revista de Catalunya*
RDM *Revue des Deux Mondes*
TLS *Times Literary Supplement*
- HLC* Antoni Comas and Joaquim Molas (dir.), *Història de la Literatura Catalana: part moderna*, 7 vols (Barcelona: Ariel, 1985-88).

Introduction

Following the Victorian reign, the short Edwardian period marked a new turn of mind coinciding with the first decade of the twentieth century.¹ The Victorian legacy, of an imperialistic dream and of scientific discoveries, came to be questioned by the Edwardian prophets who were prominent on journalistic platforms with their radical ideas. Generally speaking, the Edwardians shared a strong faith in changing society by making themselves accessible to a growing literate public who had been receiving the benefits of mass education from the second half of the previous century. The Edwardian period witnessed a boom in societies, debating clubs and organizations of all kinds of interests and ideological tendencies, from the socialist Fabians and the Society of Heretics to the National Anti-Vivisection Society and Baden-Powell's Boy-Scouts. It was a privileged age for the expansion of newspapers and magazines which spread the fame of Edwardian polemicists in Britain and America, and all around the world. Those called the Big Four — G. B. Shaw, H. G. Wells, G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc — continued to be famous far beyond the Edwardian period, as Frank Swinnerton vividly recalls in his literary memoirs of the Georgian scene.² Massive consumption of fiction meant a dramatic change in reading habits. The emergence of series of popular literature is for example an achievement of this period — the first fifty volumes of Everyman's were published in 1906 and Cassell's People's Library of classics had published, by 1909, eighty-five titles.³ Magazines and newspapers claimed a

¹ For the standard account of the period, see S. Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (London: Pimlico, 1991; first published 1968); idem, *Edwardian Occasions: Essays on English Writing in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972).

² *The Georgian Literary Scene* (London: Dent, 1938), pp. 31-78.

³ See D. Hudson, 'Reading', in S. Nowell-Smith (ed.), *Edwardian England, 1901-1914* (Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 303-26. For a thorough historical and social account of the literary market, see P. Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel, 1875-1914* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989).

substantial share in the making of a new reading culture by publishing their own fictional series in competition with the one-volume popular libraries.

In the process of a cultural and political surge in Catalonia, the early 1900s saw the birth of a new age, christened *Noucentisme* by Eugeni d'Ors, to name the cultural era born with the new century (Nou-cents, '1900'), spanning roughly the first two decades of this century. *Noucentisme* was a movement intended as a reaction against the *Modernista* sensibility which had dominated Catalan letters at the turn of the century. It started as an ambitious project of building a modern culture, far removed from the nineteenth century romantic revival, the *Renaixença*, also distanced from the *fin de siècle* manifestations of *Modernisme*. Although the *Modernista* era anticipated in many respects the cultural developments, *Noucentista* writers worked in close alliance with the Catalan bourgeoisie and its political leaders, to help to create a number of institutions.⁴

Barcelona was by the end of the century a thriving industrial city of more than half a million inhabitants. Its population had been almost quintupled (London jumped from one to four million inhabitants in the Victorian age), the medieval walls had been knocked down (1854), and a growing bourgeoisie was fulfilling a development plan to expand the city far beyond the old quarters (Pla Cerdà, 1859). For a *Noucentista* mind, the Catalan capital was in the process of

⁴ See the standard account by J. L. Marfany, 'El Modernisme', in *HLC*, VIII, pp. 132-41, and J. Murgades, 'El Noucentisme', in *HLC*, IX, pp. 9-72. An institutional achievement of the *Modernista* period was, for instance, the Biblioteca Popular de l'Avenç, which was modelled, according to Marfany, on the Cassell's National Library ('El Modernisme', p. 139). Catalan publishing launched by *Noucentistes*, chiefly by J. Carner, took a different direction, being radically selective about their own tradition, and finding among foreign authors those values which they did not recognise either in *Modernista* writers, or in those of the previous century such as Narcís Oller. In opposition to their predecessors, *Noucentista* writers, very much in tune with many a French counterpart, often used the term naturalism (and *Modernisme*) in a derogatory way, their targets ranging from followers of Zola to aesthetes and decadents (see Chapter 3). See, in general, A. Yates, *Una generació sense novel·la?*, pp. 109-49, and C. Arnau, 'Crisi i represa de la novel·la', in *HLC*, X, pp. 5-101 (9-16). For Carner's views, see J. Castellanos, 'Josep Carner i la literatura narrativa', in E. Bou et al., *Josep Carner: llengua, prosa, poesia* (Barcelona: Empúries, 1985), pp. 31-62, and M. Ortín, 'La prosa literària en l'obra de Josep Carner' (unpublished thesis, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1992), pp. 77-78, 85-87.

becoming a *Ciutat*, reviving echoes of the classic *polis*, mirroring Greece and Rome and their British counterpart. The idea of a national empire, however far-fetched it may seem nowadays, was central in the discourse of one of the theoreticians of Catalan nationalism, Enric Prat de la Riba, the leader of the dominant Catalan bourgeois party (La Lliga) and the first President of the Mancomunitat.⁵ This early form of autonomous government (1913-24), though merely representing the administrative powers of the four Catalan provincial Diputacions, provided a platform on which to consolidate the institutional campaign. *Imperialisme* was, for instance, a term used to describe the aim of building up a programme to modernise Catalonia, that is, the *Ciutat*, ideally conceived as a civilised European society to take the lead in Spain. Thus culture, social education and even urbanity were major assets in the Catalan enterprise. The range and social impact of the English publishing market, including a wealth of periodical publications, and even a sense of Britishness as embodied by the archetypal gentleman — polite, well-read, mastering witty discussion, and with a sense of humour — were regarded as models, coming as they did from a modern emporium. Josep Carner, the most prominent writer of those years, crowned as *príncep dels poetes* and a major essay writer, also had a reputation for his wit and his refined art of conversation:

Socialment, conversativament, tampoc no hem eixit gaire de la preciosa Obvietat. Som lluny de calcular les finors formals que sap atènyer la convivència; l'energia que ens donaria una contenció dels esplais innecessaris; l'imperi quiet que podria venir-nos de l'art de plaure; la fecunda eficàcia que hom guanya a parlar una mica més baix, a eliminar els temes imbècils, i a començar d'ésser educat amb la pròpia muller; la necessitat de graduar la sinceritat, la qual ha d'ésser una articulació i no pas un monòleg; la conveniència d'avesar-se al renunciament d'una comoditat o d'un petit interès particular

⁵ For the meaning of imperialism within the *Noucentista* programme, as formulated by Prat de la Riba and d'Ors, see Murgades, 'El Noucentisme', pp. 31-33.

per al bé superior de la coordinació. Totes aquestes coses ens sofisticarien una mica.⁶

Through language and writing, *Noucentista* writers sought to give shape to the *Ciutat*. Standardisation of the Catalan language was at the top of the cultural projects encouraged from the Institut d'Estudis Catalans (1907) through its Secció Filològica (1911), and was carried forward (1917-32) under the guiding force of Pompeu Fabra. The unanimous support that the new spelling rules, grammar and dictionary received amongst writers speaks of a communal feeling that did not fade when the *Noucentista* period was over. On the contrary, it widened to embrace those who had been marginalised as well as the younger generations. The idea of a *translatio imperii* outreached the boundaries of *Noucentisme* to remain, as a *translatio studii*, inspirational in cultural developments that took place well into the 1920s and 30s: only the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath put an end to the quest for a modern republic of letters.

Editorial Catalana was founded in 1917, Josep Carner being the literary director and promotor of translations from English (Biblioteca Literària); as far as fiction is concerned, Edwardian values were in the foreground. The English model was also present in the design of popular libraries that were advertised in the pages of *La Veu de Catalunya* — Biblioteca Enciclopèdica, Biblioteca d'Arts i Oficis, Biblioteca de Teatre, Biblioteca Infantil. The Enciclopèdia Catalana, a popular library of general knowledge, was modelled on the English

⁶ Preface to F. Trabal, *L'any que ve* (1925), in J. Carner, *El reialme de la poesia*, ed. N. Nardi and I. Pelegrí (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1986), pp. 160-63 (161-62). For an account of Carner's essay writing and the connection with English influence, see Ortín, 'La prosa literària en l'obra de Josep Carner', pp. 88-91; I am grateful to Dr Ortín for making available a copy of his dissertation, which is currently in press (Barcelona: Quaderns Crema). For Carner's gift of conversation and views on literary language, see L. Cabré and M. Ortín, 'Aproximació a Josep Carner, traductor: els anys de l'Editorial Catalana (1918-21)', *Els Marges* (June 1984), 114-25 (120, 125).

series Home University Library of Modern Knowledge, from which it drew some of the titles.⁷ In 1928 a similar pedagogical aim inspired Carles Soldevila's *Què cal llegir?: l'art d'enriquir un esperit, l'art de formar una biblioteca*, a literary guide which is reminiscent of the manuals produced in Edwardian times, by Arnold Bennett amongst others, to give advice to the common reader on how to form an essential, but cheap, library.⁸ Soldevila, being himself a director of various fiction series and of a magazine with a British flavour (*D'Ací i d'Allà*), marked with an asterisk those titles which were already available in Catalan, as if paying tribute to the previous work and envisaging future publication of the remaining books. As late as 1936, Editorial Proa, the most ambitious publishing project in pre-War years, publicised its first hundred titles by citing the models of Nelson and Tauchnitz:

Una antologia de la novel·la clàssica i moderna universals [...] Una gran col·lecció europea de novel·les digna germana de la 'Nelson' francesa i la 'Tauchnitz' anglesa, que hem volgut prendre per models.⁹

It was from the mid-20s that Catalan writers and intellectuals could make a living, relatively speaking, out of publishing and journalism. The Catalan press flourished. New magazines and reviews were launched (*Revista de Catalunya*, *Mirador*, *La Nova Revista*, amongst others); the major newspaper *La Publicidad* was published in Catalan from 1923, and a number of correspondents were sent abroad for the first time. This expansion of the Catalan

⁷ English works include E. Sichel, *The Renaissance* (trans. C. Riba); W. S. Bruce, *Polar Exploration* (trans. C. Riba); W. Barry, *The Papacy and Modern Times* (trans. J. Carner); A. F. Pollard, *The History of England*; A. R. Hinks, *Astronomy* (trans. C. Riba), and H. Belloc, *The French Revolution*.

⁸ *Què cal llegir?* (Barcelona: Llibreria Catalònia, 1928).

⁹ A. Manent, *Escriptors i editors del nou-cents* (Barcelona: Curial, 1984), p. 194. The Nelson Library, though published in France, was devoted to English fiction. The German Tauchnitz was the main publisher of English titles in the Continent up to World War II. For the history and the catalogue, see W. B. Todd and A. Bowden, *Tauchnitz International Editions in English, 1841-1955: A Bibliographical History* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1988).

media, and the wealth of material involved, justifies focusing on those writers active in the 1920s and 30s. Their contributions constitute the most important sources used for the present study. Over the last thirty years, much research has been done by drawing on these primary sources to describe the internal history of Catalan literature. However, little attention has been given to the British influence.¹⁰ The present study seeks to provide a general framework for the reception of English prose literature, with special reference to Edwardian ideas, in Catalan literary thought, as it developed from the time of *Noucentisme* (chronologically overlapping with the Edwardian period) to 1938.¹¹

The impact of G. K. Chesterton, an archetypal Edwardian figure, is first studied (Chapter 1 and Appendix 1). The exceptional acclaim that Chesterton received has to be set against an ideological, and in part religious, background. Neo-Thomism developed in France and Catalonia from the last decades of the nineteenth century, to gain a renewed intellectual dimension in France with the involvement of major thinkers and scholars such as Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson. It was part of a general reaction against the mainstays of modern secular culture (from socialism to darwinism), but it also aimed to produce an aesthetic doctrine to influence the intellectual milieu.¹² The thought of Aquinas provided a stream of rationalism, whereas the figure

¹⁰ J. Hurtley has studied the work of J. Janés as publisher of *Quaderns Literaris* (1934-37), which includes an important contribution of English works: *Josep Janés: el combat per la cultura* (Barcelona: Curial, 1986). M. Ortín's 'La prosa literària en l'obra de Josep Carner' has proved particularly inspirational in the analysis of some broad literary implications in the period reviewed. Further studies on particular authors are cited in the bibliography.

¹¹ I use the term reception following Y. Chevrel, particularly in his distinction concerning the interest of a community of culture (*aire culturelle*) for a literary period or movement, or even for a literature in general, developing in a limited period of time and revealed through chief literary figures: see 'Les études de réception', in *Précis de littérature comparée*, ed. P. Brunel and Y. Chevrel (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989), pp. 177-214 (186-87).

¹² A distinction must be made between the neo-Thomist intellectual reaction (instigated in 1879 with Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, 1879) and the anti-modernism in the religious sense which is related to Pius X's condemnation of the modernist heresy (encyclical *Pascendi*, 1907). See G. Fritz and A. Michel, 'La Néoscholastique', in A. Vacant et al., *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, XIV (Paris: Letouzey, 1941), col. 1725-28, and J. Rivière, 'Modernisme', *ibid.*, X (1929), col. 2009-47. For the controversy on modernism in English

of St Francis represented the spiritual side, both aspects being recognised in Dante's *Commedia*, for at the time it was perceived as a poetical counterpart to Aquinas's *Summa* and a pinnacle of spiritual love.¹³

The anti-modernist reaction in religious circles was somehow close to the anti-modern response that Chesterton had launched in his early books, *Heretics* (1905) and *Orthodoxy* (1908), and later developed in his religious writings (on St Francis and St Thomas). The literary reflections of French and Catalan Catholic thinkers of the period were akin to some principles that Chesterton had made explicit in *Orthodoxy*, a book which provided not only a religious creed, but also a source of inspiration for formulating key ideas on literary matters. Thus, to take but one of these, the idea of the common man as fictional hero — at the core of *Orthodoxy* and of Edwardian fiction in general — still appears two decades later, shaping a central idea of the influential French Catholic critic, Henri Massis, in his book on the art of the novel. Religious and literary thought are hard to disentangle in Massis's reflections, in which he claimed the 'renouveau du réalisme humain'.¹⁴ Such a concern with the moral implications of literature remains an implicit guiding principle behind much of the criticism reviewed in the present study.

The reception of Edwardian writers developed mainly within the journalistic domain. Their exemplary rôle as polemicists accounts for the aspirations of a circle of intellectuals that

Catholic opinion, and the involvement of convert writers, see E. Norman, *Roman Catholicism in England* (Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 83-129 (105-06, 123). One of the chief theoreticians in the formation of *Noucentisme*, Bishop Torras i Bages, was known for his early anti-progressive attitude held from the 90s; see E. Valentí, 'La posición antimodernista: Torras y Bages y su "Tradició Catalana"', in *El primer modernismo catalán y sus fundamentos ideológicos* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1973), pp. 243-65, and J. Massot, 'Torras i Bages i el Modernisme', in *L'Església catalana al segle XX* (Barcelona: Curial, 1975), pp. 193-97. A more open and complex approach was held by Fr. Rupert de Manresa, O. F. M. Cap, 'Acción intelectual católica', *EF*, 2 (1908), 257-345.

¹³ See, for instance, J. Torras i Bages, *La tradició catalana* (Barcelona: Edicions 62 and La Caixa, 1981; first published 1892), p. 305. The diffusion of this current of thought is clear from the titles published in *Enciclopèdia Catalana*, such as F. de Sanctis, *Crítica de la Divina Comèdia*, trans. J. M. Capdevila (Barcelona: Editorial Catalana, 1921) and C. Cardó, *Doctrina estètica del doctor Torras i Bages* (Barcelona: Editorial Catalana, 1919).

¹⁴ *Réflexions sur l'art du roman* (Paris: Plon, 1927), p. 83.

yearned to bring to the Catalan press an atmosphere of debate, such as they had encountered in the Big Four. The Edwardians aimed to bring ideas to a public forum in witty literary form, which could range from the journalistic column, such as Chesterton's notebook in the *Illustrated London News*, to G. B. Shaw's problem plays preceded by long philosophical essays. They were highly regarded for their capacity to blend ideas with fantasy. Chesterton was the archetypal example in his peculiar combination of both the philosophical and the fantastic dimensions, enlivened with his rhetorical skill. However, it was H. G. Wells who was regarded as the major representative of the fantastic stream of fiction, especially for his early romances (Chapter 2). In 1935 the critic Rafael Tasis proposed an excursion through the worlds of fantasy and imagination opened up by the novel, taking Wells as starting-point.¹⁵ Following Tasis's excursion through these imaginary worlds, the reader would delight in Scott's *Quentin Durward*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and fairy-tales for old and young. The reader would identify with an old friend in *Robinson Crusoe*, and would encounter the disguised anarchists of Chesterton's detective stories and Stevenson's romances, set against a London background. Dickens's child characters, as well as Mr Pickwick, would present the reader with a world of bonhomie. In all of them, Tasis concludes, a 'moral aim' could be found, for the trip would eventually lead to the moral improvement of society. One can recognise behind this gallery of authors and works a fictional canon close to the Edwardian taste, which had been so favourably received in Catalonia some time earlier, through Carner and his *Biblioteca Literària* (1918-23). Tasis was highlighting in his panorama not only a number of authors, but also a set of values in fiction, from a point of view not far removed from Carner's, which accounts for the establishment of a local tradition.

¹⁵ 'Viatge als móns meravellosos de la novel·la', in his *Una visió de conjunt de la novel·la catalana* (Barcelona: Publicacions de La Revista, 1935), pp. 127-45.

The mediating influence of French criticism, throughout the transmission of the English novel in Catalonia from 1918 to 1938, serves to highlight the Edwardian fictional canon — the tradition of the *roman anglais* — as opposed to the dominating mainstream of the French novel, often tagged as naturalism (Chapter 3 and Appendix 2). A report by Josep Pla on French reading habits, sent from Paris in the early 1920s, gives an idea of the divide between literary traditions in terms of the expectations of a common reader. Pla learned that the novels that were most in demand were adventure novels. He believed, however, that French writers could not claim to be at their best in that genre, despite the number of fans of Pierre Benoit and Pierre Loti. He asked a French newsagent to be more specific about the kind of adventure readers were looking for. The real success, Pla concluded, came above all from Stevenson, Defoe — Pla mentions Marcel Schowb's excellent translation of *Moll Flanders* — and more recently the works of Joseph Conrad promoted by the *Nouvelle Revue Française*.¹⁶ Pla's report can be taken, if not at face value, at least as indicative of how a prominent fictional value, the value of adventure, was then being explicitly recognised in the tradition coming from the other side of the Channel.

Many other literary trends played a part in both French and Catalan criticism of the novel from the mid-20s. Proust and his English *émules* (Joyce, Woolf), as they were referred to at the time, were at the centre of the picture; late Victorians, such as Hardy and Meredith, had a late heyday; and an Edwardian writer such as Conrad was judged afresh. They were all being appraised in the context of an increasing concern for character versus action, and for the pure novel of a psychological type. Innovation in narrative technique was a key factor in the renewal of the modern novel, from the most experimental attempts to commercial fiction. There is however an aspect that can be traced throughout that quest for the *roman pur*: the reflection on

¹⁶ 'El que es llegeix: novel·la d'aventures', in his *Notes sobre París (1920-1921)* (Barcelona: Destino, 1984), pp. 194-200.

the moral value of a novel in artistic terms, involving both the author and the reader. In this manifold aspect some of the Edwardian values can still be discerned, though adapted to the requirements of modern criticism and novel writing (Chapter 4).

The general scope of the present study implies several limitations, some of which may encourage further study. Since it deals with the reception of English prose literature, it has to exclude contemporary American writers, though some of them, such as Mark Twain, were influential in Catalonia at that period and not at all removed from the Edwardian taste. Secondly, the emphasis on Edwardian ideas means that the contribution of the moderns (James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, Aldous Huxley, amongst others) is only touched upon, most often to establish a contrast. Also the impact of D. H. Lawrence has been left out, despite the moralistic reaction prompted by the scandalous nature of his novels, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in particular: full enquiry into it would require a book on its own right. The English literary journals that have been quoted reflect a trend, however partial this might be, akin to the Edwardian writing under review, and were certainly the more widely read amongst Catalan critics. Thus the *London Mercury* and the *Bookman* (merging in 1935) feature prominently, rather than such modernist journals as *Athenaeum* and T. S. Eliot's *Criterion*.¹⁷ I am also aware of having marginalised popular literary genres such as detective stories and sentimental novels. (A sample of this production is, however, included in Appendix 2.)

The present account is deliberately partial, guided as it is by the production in Catalan.

¹⁷ See, for instance, J. L. Gili, 'The *Bookman* (Nadal 1933)', *LP*, 3 January 1934; R. Tasis, 'Barcelona i la novel·la, I: les ciutats inspiradores', *M*, 11 May 1933, p. 6, based on a series of articles under the title 'Literature and the Cities', in *Bkm*, 83 (1933), 394-95, 438-40. Familiarity with *LMerc* was not unusual. See M. Roser, 'Marià Manent and English influence in Catalonia' (unpublished thesis, University of London, 1995), pp. 167, 195. I am grateful to Dr Roser for making available a copy of her dissertation.

I am not unaware of the fact that Spanish was a most important language for Catalan readers in the period covered by this research, as it had been previously and most probably is today. Catalan translations coexisted with Spanish ones, and to a much lesser degree, with those in French. But here I am concerned with the capacity to import a foreign literature within the scope of the Catalan language. There is no doubt that French translations of English were most helpful, for instance, to a fond Catalan admirer of Stevenson and Conrad such as Pla, who once regretfully confessed to having a limited knowledge of English.¹⁸ His was not the only case. The language barrier is a problem to bear in mind in the study of the reception of English works at a time when only a happy few could read in the original. Those who had the chance to stay in Britain for a long period, or to learn the language properly, were certainly a minority: Josep Carner, the poet and critic Marià Manent, the correspondents Joan Crexells and Eugeni Xammar, the historian Ferran Solevila, who wrote the diary *Hores angleses* on his stay in Liverpool (1926-28), amongst others. In that, they may also represent a turn of mind.¹⁹ C. A. Jordana, a prolific translator of English works, and the author of *Resum de literatura anglesa* (1934), had expressed a deep concern for the acquisition of English in Catalonia. Jordana was amongst those to bear ‘an English mark’, a note that Carles Soldevila regarded in 1925 as being ‘molt de l’hora present’.²⁰

The increasing affection for English letters, competing with the ‘accentuat gal·licisme’

¹⁸ ‘Míster Ezra Pound’, in his *Obra completa*, XXXIII (Barcelona: Destino, 1977), pp. 619-25 (619).

¹⁹ Marià Manent spent three years learning English with a private tutor, eventually becoming the best Catalan translator ever of English poetry and a correspondent of numerous English and American writers and publishers. See A. Manent, *Marià Manent: biografia íntima i literària* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1995), p. 21, and M. Roser, ‘Els contactes amb l’estranger i el seu ressò en l’obra de Marià Manent’, *RC* (nova etapa), 31 (February 1996), 87-98. To single out a reverse case, the appeal of British life and culture brought to England, in 1933, J. L. Gili. He contributed to *LP* with literary notices. He later founded The Dolphin Book Co. in Oxford, specialising in Catalan and Spanish publications: see Susan Griffin, *A Short History of the Dolphin Book Company* (Oxford: privately printed, 1996).

²⁰ ‘Cara o creu’, *RC*, 2 (1925), 521-27 (526).

of Catalan culture, could be taken as a sign of health, revealing the aspiration to open Catalonia up to other cultural horizons little explored until then.²¹ To trace the impact of British influence in Catalonia would require a monograph on each of these anglophile writers and critics. In a general approach there is no room for such a detailed account. Instead, emphasis will be placed on the reception in terms of both publishing and criticism, for it was through these routes that English prose literature, or that of the Edwardians, at least, entered the Catalan literary scene. The most common route from Britain to Catalonia goes through France, and it is all too natural, paradoxical as it might seem, that the French reception often paved the way for the Catalan one. More circuituous ways may deserve further consideration when others scrutinise the territory I have attempted to chart.

²¹ C. Soldevila, 'El provincianisme literari', *LP*, 31 March 1931, p. 1.

Chapter 1

The Reception of G. K. Chesterton in Catalonia (1916-36)

It is impossible to find a word to encompass the wide scope of Chesterton's career. He was, *inter alia*, a debater, humorist, poet, essayist, novelist, and writer of detective stories. Above all, he saw himself as a journalist — 'a jolly journalist', that is what he wanted to be called. He started his career contributing to the *Daily News* (1901-12) and was a regular columnist for the *Illustrated London News* from 1905 until his death. He soon revealed himself as a fighting journalist, a true polemicist, famous for his paradoxes and the unexpectedness of his style. For his fighting spirit, Chesterton has been often compared with a crusader, a knight-errant tilting at the dragons of modern prejudices.¹ The dragon of the moderns was the principal target of his attacks. Born in 1874, he grew up in the age of the aesthetes and decadents, of Oscar Wilde and Walter Pater, but soon felt at odds with the spirit of his time. The very name 'modern' was for him 'a term of opprobium', descriptive of that *fin de siècle* atmosphere, 'free from all causes and all ethical creeds' as he described it, a vague label for what he regarded as the modern faults. 'Spiritualism', 'Science and religion', 'Science and the Savages', 'Monsters', 'The Suicide of Thought', 'On the Negative Spirit' are just some titles which themselves provide an idea of the reactionary tenor of his thought.

It must be remembered that I was born a late Victorian, amid all the strange simplifications of that epoch. I was educated in the fairy-tales of science [...] One of them was the dear old legend of Natural Selection or the Darwinian theory of Evolution [...] We all religiously believed it.²

¹ See M. Asquith, 'G. K. Chesterton: Prophet and Jester', in D. J. Colon (ed.), *G. K. Chesterton: A Half Century of Views* (Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 118-22.

² *ILN*, 18 September 1926, p. 823.

His crusade against the cult of science was a long-lasting one. It was at the core of his paradoxical thought: as a rational thinker, he had to produce a convincing rational refutation of science. And he managed to deliver one quite soon: *Heretics* (1905), which deals mainly with his own contemporaries, is a systematic compendium of modern vices, each of them being associated with modern writers: the negative spirit of Zola and Ibsen, the imperialism of Kipling, the worship of Superman of Nietzsche and Shaw, the scientific utopia of Wells, the pleasure-seeking creed of Wilde and Pater. In his response it is already possible to perceive a coherent value-system that can generally be described as a romantic-oriented one, pregnant with Christian values. Yet it was in *Orthodoxy* (1908), well before his conversion (1922), that the anti-modern reaction appears to develop in a way that pre-shadows his Christianity. Against the modernist revolt —revolt for its own sake, as he perceived it— he opposed his own revolt, which he preferred to call adventure. An adventure that he discovered first in fairy tales ('The Ethics of Elfland') and led him to Christianity ('The Flag of the World'), the Christian view of things providing him with an answer to his anxieties, and a thrilling way of living them.

Chesterton's religious and philosophical concerns underpinned his prolific career. His best writings were mainly produced, according to the critics, before World War I.³ His medieval fantasy *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904), the first novel to make him popular, is a vivid illustration of the challenging adventure against modern utopias. The most typical Chestertonian features found expression in this allegorical novel of ideas: defence of local patriotism, revival of legends, defence of nonsense and the grotesque, and underlying all that, the ideal of a medieval crusade. From the 'Introductory Remarks on the Art of Prophecy', the heroes appear, as if a projection of Chesterton himself, living on the border of fairyland, sword in hand, setting

³ See, for instance, H. Kingsmill, 'G.K. Chesterton', in Colon, *G. K. Chesterton: A Half Century of Views*, pp. 98-101.

out to mock the prophets of modern utopias: the novel turning into burlesque epic set against the background of the streets of London.

Chesterton sought to be one of the prophets of his age, along with H. Belloc, H. G. Wells, and G. B. Shaw, 'the Big Four', as they were called, being actively engaged in the current journalistic debates, in what some critics regard as the 'Edwardian war of ideas'.⁴ All Chesterton's works can be read as part of this ideological and moral war, and of a greater crusade for anti-modern causes: *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* is also a novel about the future, at the opposite pole to H. G. Wells's futurist utopias.⁵ *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908), his greatest novel, is 'a nightmare' about anarchism. *What's Wrong with the World* (1910) is mainly a defence of the family. His late religious work *The Everlasting Man* (1925), for some a masterpiece, originally written as a reply to H. G. Wells's *The Outline of History*, could be seen as the culminating point of this Christian adventure.

After 1914 Chesterton's popularity in England gradually declined, while his fame began to spread abroad, especially in the Latin world.⁶ My account of the reception of Chesterton in Catalonia starts in 1916, and ends with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Chesterton's popularity reached its peak in the mid-late 20s. It was a curious phenomenon which went far beyond the decades covered by this research: in the post-War years his works continued to be

⁴ The term is borrowed from J. Coates, 'Chesterton and the Meaning of Adventure', *The Chesterton Review*, 5 (Spring-Summer 1979), 279. For a literary account of the period, see also J. Batchelor, *The Edwardian Novelists* (London: Duckworth, 1982), esp. pp. 1-26; R. C. Churchill, 'The Comedy of Ideas: Cross-currents in Fiction and Drama', in B. Ford (ed.), *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature*, VII (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), pp. 287-97; and S. Hynes, *Edwardian Occasions: Essays on English Writing in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972).

⁵ D. Baker regards this novel as the antithesis of G. Orwell's apocalyptic novel *1984* in *G. K. Chesterton: A Biography* (London: Constable, 1973), p. 141.

⁶ Remarkable coincidences can be noticed in comparing the selection of works and the years of publication of Chesterton's translations into Catalan, French, Italian, and Spanish, which increased significantly after 1914.

published, and in the 50s and 60s he still enjoyed great popularity in Spain. Although the first piece of evidence we have dates from 1916, Chesterton's reception in Catalonia might be rooted some years before, during the growth of *Noucentisme*, an ideological movement that emerged with the new century and exerted an influence on many leading intellectual figures of the mid-20s and 30s.

1 The reception

Chesterton's fighting spirit was vividly captured in the emblem chosen for the Catalan series of his works. The illustration showed a knight killing a dragon, being taken from a gothic relief carved in the doorway of St Iu, in Barcelona Cathedral.⁷ In Catalan letters of the mid-late 20s Chesterton achieved the stature of a living legend, to have a lasting effect on the thought and literary ideals of a whole generation of Catalan writers.

The early years and the *Noucentista* connection

From 1914 to 1918 Chesterton's weekly column in *The Illustrated London News* was almost exclusively devoted to the events of the War. His anti-Germanic (or rather anti-Prussian) attitude was particularly obsessive, as for him Prussia was the evil power, and the war of 1914 a 'Holy War': the return of England to a united Christian Europe was for him the main question being settled. When Josep M. López-Picó published 'L'irreligió del militarisme germànic' in *La Revista* in 1916,⁸ he seemed to be most concerned with this particular view, as can be perceived

⁷ A picture of the relief can be seen in M. de Riquer, *L'arnès del cavaller: armes i armadures catalanes medievals* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1968), pl. 25. That relief was thought to illustrate the legend of the knight of Vilardell, traditionally called 'el valent de Sant Celoni'. See M. de Riquer, 'La leyenda del dragón de Vilardell', *Anthropos/Suplementos*, 12 (1989), pp. 169-82.

⁸ 'L'irreligió del militarisme germànic', *LR*, 2 (1916), 3-5, is the first Catalan translation of a Chesterton work that I have found. This article originally appeared in the *ILN* on 16 August 1916. For an extensive chronology of the

in his early assessment of the author:

Aquests dies [...] que torna a parlar-se de la possible federació dels estats d'Europa i s'afirma el desig d'unitat moral europea, és bo d'associar als millors dalers el nom de G. K. Chesterton, el generós escriptor anglès qui ha vençut l'isolament insular i ha proclamat l'unió dels esperits que conegué un jorn l'Europa cristiana. Semblava fins ara que de l'unitat europea se'n volgués excloure Anglaterra. Chesterton, tot sol, sabia aclarir aquell malentès. [...] Aquesta associació tan anglesa de la llibertat i de l'eternitat és alhora una reintegració d'Anglaterra als corrents de la cristiandat occidental que anomenem Europa.⁹

This was also the view of Miguel de Unamuno, when claiming that 'este humorístico y paradójico poeta hombre Chesterton [...] apenas entablada la guerra entre la civilización europea y la *kultur* pagana germánica, se puso, como genuino representante del sentido propio, del lado de la civilización, del cristianismo y de Europa'.¹⁰

The Great War brought to the surface, as current causes for debate, the issues of nationalism, the rôle of small nations, Federalism, Christian vs Pagan Europe, which Catalan and Spanish intellectuals, in spite of Spain's neutrality in the conflict, felt deeply concerned about. Eugeni d'Ors, the leading figure of Catalan *Noucentisme*, took an important part in this debate, although his pacifist view bears little comparison with the religious ones of López-Picó and Unamuno.¹¹

Chesterton's rôle as a regular columnist for the *Illustrated London News*, a magazine widely read in England and also abroad, played a significant part in popularising him in

reception of Chesterton, see Appendix I.

⁹ 'G. K. Chesterton', *LR*, 3 (1917), 48-49.

¹⁰ Preface to Chesterton's *Sobre el concepto de barbarie*, trans. H. Oriol (Barcelona: Oliva de Vilanova, 1916). In 1914 this book was translated into both French and Italian.

¹¹ The Great War is the main theme of the *gloses* written by E. d'Ors during 1915 ('Lletres a Tina', collected in book form in *Tina i la Guerra Gran*), 1916 and 1917; see Eugeni d'Ors, *Glosari 1915*, ed. J. Murgades (Barcelona: Quaderns Crema, 1990), pp. xi-xx.

Catalonia and the Peninsula, especially in connection with the War. The exemplarity both López-Picó and Unamuno found in him, however, went far beyond this. Most probably, they had been familiar with the ‘paradójico poeta’ well before. The second article that López-Picó chose for publication, ‘Contes de fades’ (‘Fairy-Tales’) had originally appeared in the *Illustrated London News* ten years earlier, and during that time it is likely that he read some of his works.¹² ‘Contes de fades’ deals with the very root of Chesterton’s philosophy: ‘The Ethics of Elfland’ is a central chapter of *Orthodoxy*, which was published in Spanish in 1917.¹³ In the article in question the ethics of fairy-tales apply to the world of journalism, both worlds being ruled by the same law:

But fairies are like journalists in this and many other respects. Fairies and journalists have an apparent gaiety and a delusive beauty. Fairies and journalists seem to be lovely and lawless; they seem to be both of them too exquisite to descend to the ugliness of everyday duty. But it is an illusion created by the sudden sweetness of their presence. Journalists live under law; and so in fact does fairyland.¹⁴

Josep Farran i Mayoral was the translator. He might have felt quite sympathetic to this statement, conveying both a moral and an aesthetic view of journalism, which he would like to be reflected in an idealistic literary world, removed from the bitter and sordid side of life. That is arguably one of the reasons why he admired *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* — ‘aquesta clownesca epopeia admirable del modern heroisme’ as he described it — and profoundly disliked, on the other hand, Chesterton’s defence of ‘the joy of the grotesque’ set forth in his

¹² ‘Contes de fades’, *LR*, 4 (1918), 263-64; reprinted from *ILN*, 15 February 1908. In the chapter devoted to Chesterton included in López-Picó’s *Escriptors estrangers contemporanis* (Barcelona: Minerva, 1918) a number of his works are mentioned.

¹³ *Ortodoxia*, trans. A. Reyes (Madrid: Oliva de Vilanova).

¹⁴ ‘Fairy-Tales’, in *A Gleaming Cohort* (London: Methuen, 1926), pp. 171-74 (172-73).

preface to Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*.¹⁵

'Modern heroism' is what López-Picó and Farran i Mayoral saw in Chesterton, which made López-Picó regard him as an exemplary modern journalist: 'el periodisme modern ha trobat en ell l'expressió que li calia en aquestes hores'.¹⁶ 'Fairy-tales' expresses a very *Noucentista* idea of law and order. If any connections are to be found between d'Ors and Chesterton, they do not go far beyond the belief in doctrine itself as an active guiding moral principle encouraging a doctrine of action.¹⁷ This faith in dogma is linked with the idea of ordering limits that is inherent in both Chesterton's and d'Ors's systems of thought: the 'authority' found in d'Ors's *gloses* is akin to that underlying philosophical principle of Chesterton that adventure cannot be expected in the land of anarchy, but in the land of authority: 'doctrines', he claimed, 'had to be defined within strict limits, even in order that man might enjoy general human liberties [...] this is the thrilling romance of orthodoxy.'¹⁸ It was perhaps this common characteristic, the 'catolicisme batallador i definidor', that made the critic Joan Sacs (a pen-name of Feliu Elies) describe Chesterton as 'el Glosador, i un de tants glosadors —i no el Pentarca!— de Londres'.¹⁹

This principle of law and order E. d'Ors equally found in the practice of journalism. For him the aim of the journalist was to discover harmony ('el joc d'harmonies') in the events he describes: 'I en aquest joc d'harmonies, prescindeix encara de l'accidental, i troba en el fons,

¹⁵ J. Farran i Mayoral, 'Una cançó nadalenca', in his *Lletres a una amiga estrangera* (Barcelona: Publicacions de La Revista, 1920), pp. 43-44. *A Christmas Carol* had been translated by J. Carner in 1918.

¹⁶ 'G. K. Chesterton', *LR*, 3 (1917), 48-49.

¹⁷ See E. d'Ors, 'Pragmatisme' (1907), in his *L'home que treballa i juga*, ed. O. Fullat (Vic: Eumo, 1988), pp. 49-50. The idea of doctrine of action is an essential part of Chesterton's constructive response to the pessimism of modern doctrines, fully developed in *Orthodoxy*. One of the targets for attack is the extreme pragmatism that d'Ors seems implicitly to oppose by calling for a pragmatism with humanitarian values. See also his 'Stuart Mill' (1918), in *La Vall de Josafat*, ed. J. Murgades (Barcelona: Quaderns Crema, 1987), p. 103.

¹⁸ *Orthodoxy* (London: Lane, 1908), p. 183.

¹⁹ 'Chesterton o la Sofística recreativa', *RC*, 8 (1928), 487-98 (498).

magnífica i sobirana, *la llei*' (his emphasis).²⁰ However dangerous it might be at this stage to compare two such radically different minds as those of d'Ors and Chesterton, they both had a target in common: the dignification of the rôle of journalists. This was a question of increasing importance in Edwardian England, in which the struggle between journalism and literature was a key note of the cultural scene.²¹ In Catalonia, however, the issue of the professionalism of writer-journalists was emerging at that time, d'Ors being a leading campaigner writing from the privileged platform of *La Veu de Catalunya*. D'Ors and Chesterton shared the same belief in the committed writer as against the art for art's sake writer, typical of the moderns. Journalists, as d'Ors perceived them, were those selected to 'escotar les palpitations del temps'.²² Journalism of ideas is perhaps the term that best suits d'Ors's *Glosari*. Yet the dogmatic and abstract tenor of his *gloses*, an educative purpose lying always behind them, bears little resemblance to Chesterton's journalistic essays. A reminiscence of d'Ors's style is detected in López-Picó's proclamations: short, concise, abstract, all containing a direct message, as this one about Chesterton: 'No proclamem: que bé raona, sino té raó!'.²³ It might be suggested at this point that López-Picó's unconditional adherence to Chesterton, dogmatically expressed as it was, was coherent with his ideological position, highly indebted to that of d'Ors's, but drawing originally from Prat de la Riba, chief theoretician of Catalan nationalism, 'home de fe, antimodern' as López-Picó described him in a review of Maritain's book significantly called *Antimoderne*.²⁴ 'Aquest és el títol d'un llibre que pot ésser també el crit animador d'una creuada', he claimed.

²⁰ 'Sobre la dignitat de l'ofici de periodista' (1906), in his *L'home que treballa i juga*, pp. 4-7 (6).

²¹ See Batchelor, *The Edwardian Novelists*, p. 2.

²² 'Sobre la dignitat', p. 6.

²³ 'La presència de Chesterton', *LR*, 12 (1926), 37.

²⁴ *Entre la crítica i l'ideal* (Barcelona: Publicacions de La Revista, 1923), pp. 139-42.

An ideal of order and law, founded on traditional values, embracing the Christian faith as an all-governing principle: that was the meaning of the anti-modern crusade.

The journalistic milieu

Catalan journalism witnessed a substantive change after 1923, coinciding with the years of the Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. In spite of the institutional repression — the Mancomunitat was abolished in 1925 — and the censorship imposed, cultural life survived and indeed flourished in the field of publications. *La Publicidad*, a major newspaper founded in 1878, started to appear in Catalan from October 1923. An ideal of bringing Catalan periodicals nearer to European standards seemed to be in the mind of the leading journalists, or writer-journalists. This was the view, for instance, of Antoni Rovira i Virgili, a historian, an active political journalist and editorialist for *La Publicitat*, shared by most of his colleagues who eventually became contributors to his *Revista de Catalunya*, 'una revista d'idees a l'alçada de les millors revistes europees', as Rovira i Virgili described it.²⁵

For the first time reports from foreign correspondents left their mark. Joan Crexells, a promising figure who died very young, became a correspondent for *La Publicitat*. He travelled to Germany to study philosophy before he went to England. In the reports he sent during his stay in England (1924-25) he revealed himself to be an admirer of 'la manera d'ésser dels anglesos' which he found exemplified, for instance, in Shaw and Chesterton.²⁶ Crexells's philosophical

²⁵ See D. Guansé, 'La Revista de Catalunya i l'esperit de l'època (1924-1938)', in his *De Maragall a l'exili: assaigs de crítica literària* (Tarragona: Institut d'Estudis Tarraconenses Ramon Berenguer IV and Ajuntament de Tarragona, 1994). See also J. Murgades, 'Rovira i Virgili, editorialista de *La Publicitat*', *RC* (nova etapa), 81 (January 1994), 91-99.

²⁶ Crexells was a great reader of these two writers, according to J. M. Capdevila, 'J. Crexells: les seves tendències filosòfiques', *LNR*, 1 (1927), 101-07. Very little, however, has been written about Crexells's experience in England. For a general account of his thought, see N. Bilbeny, *Joan Crexells en la filosofia del Noucents* (Barcelona: Dopesa, 1979).

career, centred on the philosophy of science, had reached a point of crisis, as is implied in his late contributions, especially in connection with the rôle of science as truth, and it might be his growing scepticism towards science that drew him closer to Chesterton's views: both men facing a parallel, everlasting conflict between science and religion, reason and affection.

Estem en una època on la ciència s'ha mostrat insuficient. Universalment es busquen derivatius per als impulsos humans. A l'home que creu en el valor absolut i universal de la ciència, que no tolera en la vida humana un aspecte religiós, un aspecte moral, un aspecte estètic, cada un amb problemes particulars que la ciència no pot resoldre, se li hauria de dir el que Chesterton deia en una ocasió: Que viu fora de la seva època. Jo, deia Chesterton, per tal de posar-me a to amb el temps en què el meu interlocutor es pensa estar quan parla del valor exclusiu de la ciència, li responc sempre: Aquest jove tinent, Napoleon Bonaparte, farà carrera. Ja m'ho sabreu dir...²⁷

Crexells emphasises in these articles his preference for an idealist solution. The double face of Chesterton's rational and romantic thought would have appealed to him, as a man with a rational mind, yet with a taste for nonsense. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* was for Crexells 'an extraordinary book of philosophy', and perhaps like Chesterton he felt close to Carroll's 'defiant folly' that could conjure up convincing arguments to unsolved questions.²⁸ Thus in the answer of the Unicorn to Alice —'Toquem i toquem! Jo creuré que tu ets un ésser real a condició que tu creguis que jo sóc un ésser real!'— he wished to find a way of reconciling progressive and antiprogressive views of history.²⁹ Chesterton's

²⁷ 'La ciència i la vida', *RC*, 1 (1924), 320-21. See also 'La ciència i el futur', *RC*, 1 (1924), 113-124, in which he mentions Chesterton (117). Crexells also refers to the debate about the eugenics and Chesterton's contribution, *Eugenics and Other Evils* (1922) in 'Sobre l'eugènica', *RC*, 2 (1925), 101-02.

²⁸ See G. K. Chesterton, 'Lewis Carroll' (1932), in his *A Handful of Authors* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1953), pp. 112-19. On the influence of Carroll on Chesterton, see A. Noyes, 'The Centrality of Chesterton', in Colon, G. K. *Chesterton: A Half Century of Views*, pp. 126-32.

²⁹ 'La història a l'inrevés', *RC*, 2 (1925), 13-25 (25). The admiration of Crexells for *Alice* is confirmed by T. Garcés in his review of the Catalan translation: 'Joan Crexells, un dels primers lectors que L. Carroll hagués tingut a Catalunya, somriuria satisfet si pogués tenir sota els seus ulls les pàgines de la sortosa traducció' (*Alicia en terra de meravelles*', *LP*, 8 February 1928, p. 1).

romantic and anti-progressive concept of history was in line with that conclusion, and he went even further, as for him the only reliable part of history was the romance of it.³⁰ Science, and progress, were two of the targets of his romantic crusade: an illustration of it was the common association of Chesterton with the knight-errant, rooted in his particular defence of medievalism which Crexells also helped to popularise.³¹

It would be misleading, nevertheless, to restrict Crexells's view to this anti-scientific interpretation. His assessment of Chesterton was centred on the way his thought was presented, in his paradoxical style. Paradox, for Crexells, was a refreshing way of drawing truth from common sense:

Les tesis de Chesterton són les tesis de l'home corrent. La paradoxa de Chesterton és el 'looping the loop' de la paradoxa. És la paradoxa al servei del sentit comú. Chesterton defensa la tradició, el catolicisme, l'agremiació, la llibertat i la cervesa amb arguments trets del sentit comú. La paradoxa és la seva manera particular de fer-se escoltar.³²

Crexells's colleagues in *La Publicitat*, such as Rovira i Virgili, Josep Pla, Carles Soldevila, and Tomàs Garcés, turned their attention to Chesterton's paradox and his talent as a brilliant polemicist. Beyond this talent they recognised a liberal mind, the voice of an atmosphere of freedom they longed to see one day in Catalonia, as Rovira i Virgili claimed:

Les paraules seves posades al davant d'una obra de Chesterton, on és discutit tot, no poden tenir altre sentit sinó el de la defensa de la lliure discussió entre homes verament tolerants. A casa nostra, aquesta llibertat en matèria filosòfica i ètnica és doblement necessària. Tenim molts apologistes i pocs polemistes. I davant la raó humana val més

³⁰ See, for instance, 'The Romance of History', *ILN*, 18 October 1924, p. 274.

³¹ 'El medievalisme de G. K. Chesterton', *RC*, 1 (1924), 101. See also T. Garcés, 'Chesterton i l'edat mitjana', *LP*, 16 January 1925, p. 1.

³² 'La paradoxa', *LP*, 19 March 1925, p. 1. Further remarks by Crexells are found in 'Sobre contingut i forma', *LP*, 9 October 1924, p. 1, and 'Chesterton i els francesos', *LP*, 26 March 1926, p. 1.

una bona polèmica que cent apologies sense contrast.³³

According to Crexells's insight, paradox in Chesterton operates as a powerful aesthetic filter for conveying a philosophical-aesthetic view, a world-picture, a traditional and Christian-oriented one, that proved to suit the ideological concerns of a wide section of Catalan readers, more avid for intellectual debate than for apologetic defences. Rovira i Virgili's words in this respect are in clear contrast with López-Picó's blind adherence to Chesterton — and Rovira i Virgili even showed later on some reservations towards Chesterton's ideological positions.³⁴ It might be suggested that Chesterton's paradoxical style served to breathe fresh air into Catalan intellectual discourse. Young Catalan writer-journalists of *La Publicitat* discovered it mainly in his journalism, by reading his weekly column in the *Illustrated London News*. Thus, for instance, Soldevila had translated some of his contributions as a hobby.³⁵ On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of that magazine, Pau Romeva wrote:

Encara que Chesterton no hagués escrit els seus seixanta o setanta volums, que no hagués fet novel·la ni poesia ni assaig, només amb aquests mil tres-cents articles seus damunt les planes del *London News* n'hauria hagut prou per adquirir, en el món de les lletres i el pensament, la categoria i el prestigi que li són coneguts. I si tant ens feien dir, gosariem assegurar que les manifestacions més brillants i característiques del seu geni, el moll de l'os de tota la seva producció, es troben precisament en aquesta tasca periodística.³⁶

By 1925, although none of his works had been translated, Chesterton had become a well-known

³³ This point was made in an editorial of his newspaper *La Nau*, which I quote as partially reproduced in *LNR*, 5 (1928), 281. In the same vein, Pla stated: 'Potser trobaria que la clau de la força de Chesterton és el gruix de llibertat que hi ha a Anglaterra' (*RC*, 7 [1927], 126).

³⁴ See, for instance, 'El vot de Chesterton', first published in *La Nau* and reproduced in *LNR*, 6 (1928), 89.

³⁵ 'Chesterton a Catalunya', *LP*, 17 August 1928, p. 1.

³⁶ 'Unes noces d'argent', *EM*, 15 October 1930, p. 9.

figure in journalistic circles.³⁷ It was in Catalan journals that he found the first ground of reception, as if preparing for a wider success to occur in the next few years.

The religious involvement

The anti-modernist concerns of Chesterton should be understood as part of a phenomenon of European dimensions taking root at the end of the nineteenth century and spreading in the war years and immediately after. He grew up in the age of aesthetes and decadents, finding himself in the middle of the campaign against modernists which dominated Church life in the first decade of the century.³⁸ A leading rôle in this debate was assumed in Catalonia by some figures of the Franciscan community, in close alliance with the Catalan cultural élite. Chesterton's rejection in *Heretics* of the dominant tendencies of the time finds, for instance, an interesting parallel in this contemporary call of Fr Rupert de Manresa.

Ello es cierto que hace tiempo van penetrando en España, vertidas en una lengua ramplona y estrafalaria, innovaciones literarias hermanadas con las más groseras e inmorales producciones de Zola, Dumas, Balzac, Ibsen y Tolstoi, las obras de la filosofía ultra-positivista de Littré y de Augusto Comte, de la monista de Darwin, de Spencer y de Haeckel [...] Y una necesidad de algo nuevo en cultura y en transformación de hábitos intelectuales, siendo en todos vivísima, es bastante esa sola nota para acreditar y dar primacía en la conciencia común [*sic*] a teorías y doctrinas del todo en todo opuestas a la verdad.³⁹

³⁷ Perhaps with the exception of the short-story *El cinc d'espases* (*The Five of Swords*), trans. by C. A. Jordana in the series *La Novel·la Estrangera*, 19 [n.d.], published around 1925.

³⁸ See C. Hollis, *The Mind of Chesterton* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1970), pp. 20-21.

³⁹ 'Acción intelectual católica', *EF*, 2 (1908), 257-76, 321-45. This article in which Rupert urged a direct involvement of the Church in cultural matters (translations being a prior issue), appeared on the occasion of the Spanish translation of a work by Cardinal Gibbons, the first of the new library *Religión y Cultura*. Fr. Rupert's position is, however, closer to Leo XIII's than to the radical condemnation of modernism by Pius X, as the translation of this work demonstrates; he was even suspicious of being a modernist himself, unlike the influential Franciscan Fr. Miquel d'Esplugues. See J. Massot, *L'Església catalana al segle XX* (Barcelona: Curial, 1975), pp. 193-97 (195). For the influence of Franciscan figures and publications in Catalonia, see J. Massot, *Aproximació a la història religiosa de la Catalunya contemporània* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1973), pp. 76-91, and A. Manent, *Literatura catalana en debat* (Barcelona: Selecta, 1973), pp. 183-84.

Literature certainly held a key place amongst the anti-modernist targets. Zola comes first in a list of names which fell into the general label of naturalism, as understood on moral grounds. The philosophic and religious sense of anti-modernism should not be confused with the reaction in terms of literary movements.⁴⁰ There are, however, some points of convergence. Some *Noucentista* writers had a religious commitment and were ideologically opposed to the *Modernista* generation which dominated the Catalan literary scene at the turn of the century. The term naturalism itself, primarily associated with Zola, was often invoked to reject the literary output of *Modernistes*. It is significant that a leading *Noucentista* figure such as J. Carner, himself a close disciple of Fr. Rupert and Fr. Miquel d'Esplugues, did not allow any French naturalistic novels, or any Russian novel, to be published in his series Biblioteca Literària.⁴¹ Ideological affinities certainly helped to develop an affection for Chesterton. For Carner, who was to become an anglophile man of letters and one of the most prolific translators of English works, Chesterton represented an archetypal example of romance, with a transcendental meaning, at the other pole to the *roman expérimental*. Carner had Chesterton's fiction in mind from the first year of Biblioteca Literària, when he offered to the young poet Marià Manent the chance of translating *The Man Who was Thursday*. Manent was, however, the author of the Spanish version of *St Francis*, published in 1925, and two years later he produced the first Catalan translation of any of Chesterton's books, *L'home perdurable*. Fr. Miquel d'Esplugues, one of the founders of *Estudios Franciscanos* (1907) and a close friend of Carner's, might also have been

⁴⁰ See E. Valentí, *El primer modernismo literario catalán y sus fundamentos ideológicos* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1973), pp. 28-43 and the review by J. Castellanos, in *Els Marges*, 1 (May 1974), 103-08. For a further account on Catalan *Modernism*, see J. L. Marfany, 'El significat del terme "Modernisme"', in *Aspectes del Modernisme* (Barcelona: Curial, 1975), pp. 35-60.

⁴¹ This aspect will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 3.

behind this particular religious selection of Manent's.⁴²

There is little doubt that the Franciscan involvement was a key factor in the reception of Chesterton in Catalonia. *Estudios Franciscanos*, for instance, was the pioneer in publishing the first analysis of his philosophy, by Joseph de Tonquébec, in 1920.⁴³ Two years before his conversion, Chesterton was regarded as a Catholic thinker, although some reservations were made in relation to his peculiar — and somewhat unorthodox — interpretation of saints such as St Francis.⁴⁴ For Chesterton was mainly interested in the legendary side of St Francis that best suited his romantic imagination, the romance of his religion. St Francis was a character in that romance that best embodied the Christian qualities he wished to find in all his literary heroes, the love of small things and of the common man. Chesterton also discerned in St Francis the ideal medieval figure: a humanist and a humorist, a troubadour, a fighting man of action, the 'humanitarian hero' *par excellence*.⁴⁵

The Spanish translation of *St Francis* came out at a decisive point. First of all, Chesterton's popularity was guaranteed after his conversion to the Roman Catholic faith in 1922 — the news having a profound effect in the Latin countries.⁴⁶ Secondly, the celebration of the seventh centenary of St Francis's death was due the next year. It was an event of international

⁴² In his review of *L'home perdurable* (*LNR*, 2 [1927], 291-97), Esplugues, the author of a life of St Francis, claims that Manent had let him see the proofs. For an account of Manent's appreciation of Chesterton, see M. Roser, 'Marià Manent and English Influence in Catalonia' (unpublished thesis, University of London, 1995), pp. 81, 98-100, 270.

⁴³ 'G. K. Chesterton: la filosofia de un humorista', *EF*, 24 (1920), 311-16, 382-86; 25 (1920), 222-25, 301-03. This study, translated from the Catholic journal *Études*, was the first book published in J. Maritain's Bibliothèque Française de Philosophie, along with other studies on the Thomist revival, such as Maritain's *Antimoderne* (1922), chapters including 'La science moderne et la raison', 'La liberté intellectuelle', 'Conditions de la renaissance Thomiste'.

⁴⁴ Fr. Basili de Rubí equally shows a degree of contempt towards Chesterton's interpretation of the life of St Thomas, in 'Chesterton, *Santo Tomás de Aquino*', *EF*, 48 (1936), 271-72.

⁴⁵ See *St Francis of Assisi* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923), pp. 94-112.

⁴⁶ Cf. E. Furt, 'Chesterton', *EF*, 29 (1922), 393-96; the article was reprinted from the *Osservatore Romano*.

importance, especially in the Catholic world. In Catalonia it turned out to be an impetus for the expansion of the Franciscan movement.⁴⁷ The involvement of writers is clear from the list of members of the ‘cultural committee’, which included names such as J. Ruyra, J. Carner, J. Bofill i Mates, J. M. Capdevila, T. Garcés, J. Batista i Roca, and M. Manent. Chesterton was also involved in the organisation of the Franciscan Year in England, as he reported in a letter addressed to J. M. Junoy.⁴⁸ Junoy seems to be the person chiefly responsible for the organisation of the visit of Chesterton, who went to Barcelona in May 1926, by invitation of the PEN Club.⁴⁹ When he arrived, celebrations were fully under way — and his book on St Francis was widely reviewed.⁵⁰ Chesterton’s visit was not, however, a mere coincidence. It was the culminating point of a growing admiration for this versatile man of letters with a profoundly religious mind. It is in this intermingling of ideological, religious and cultural interests that we can trace the origins of the intense pro-Chesterton campaign to take place in the coming years.

The peak years of Chesterton’s success: 1927-29

The publication of *L’home perdurable* in 1927, translated by M. Manent, was the starting-point of Chesterton’s great success in Catalonia. *The Everlasting Man* (1925), expressing Chesterton’s

⁴⁷ See Basili de Rubí, ‘Expansió cultural del franciscanisme a Catalunya’, *EF*, 86 (1985), 603-60. For an account of religious and cultural events celebrated on occasion of the centenary, see ‘Crònica de l’any franciscà a Catalunya’, in *Franciscalia* (Barcelona: Editorial Franciscana, 1928), pp. 389-96.

⁴⁸ See ‘Una carta inèdita de G. K. Chesterton’, *LNR*, 1 (1927), 84-85.

⁴⁹ The Catalan branch of the PEN Club was founded in 19 April 1922, its founder members including J. M. Lopez-Picó, J. Crexells, J. M. Batista i Roca, J. M. Millàs-Raurell, and the English poet J. Langdon-Davies. See 1. Cònsol, ‘Carles Riba i el Centre Català del PEN, una història en cinc seqüències’, *RC* (nova etapa), 81 (January 1994), 100-07. For an account of the visit, see: ‘Chesterton a la Universitat’, *LVC*, 6 May 1926, p. 6; ‘Chesterton a Barcelona: l’apat del PEN Club’, *LVC*, 8 May 1926, p. 4; ‘Conferència de Mr. G. K. Chesterton’, *LP*, 11 May 1926, p. 1; J. M. de Sagarra, ‘G. K. Chesterton’, *LP*, 11 May 1926, p. 1; ‘Les opinions de Chesterton sobre Espanya’, *LP*, 9 June 1926, p.1; J. Pla, ‘La tornada de Mr. Chesterton’, *LP*, 12 June 1926, p. 1.

⁵⁰ See, for instance, R. Rucabado, ‘Chesterton i Sant Francesc’, *LVC*, 16 May 1926, p. 7; J. F. Ràfols, ‘El Sant Francesc de Chesterton’, *LVC*, 12 May 1926, p. 5.

mature thought, was the book that made him a highly reputed writer in Catalonia, to judge by the favourable reviews published on the occasion of its Catalan translation. This translation also stimulated a negative response, especially because of the anti-evolutionist views presented in it. The controversy about evolution had been reflected in some of Crexells's articles, and now came again to the fore.⁵¹ Such debate acquired further ideological implications, at this stage, when Chesterton's success was reaching its peak: the attacks against his thesis stemmed from those who regarded his successful reception in Catalonia as being a product of religious affinities with some Catholic intellectuals and with some sections of the Catalan bourgeoisie.⁵²

As is suggested in the reviews of the book, it was *L'home perdurable* that encouraged Junoy's ambitious project of publishing Chesterton's works in Catalan and the intense pro-Chesterton campaign he launched in the following years (1927-29).⁵³ He might have founded *La Nova Revista* with that specific purpose, having in mind one idea: to make Chesterton the absolute protagonist of a Catholic cultural initiative. And he became so: a large number of translations of his articles fill this short-lived journal from the first issue of November 1927. Chesterton's main concerns, especially those with which Junoy felt more in harmony, found a reflection in the selection of articles chosen for publication: the attacks against modern progress, the conflict between science and religion, the famous controversies with Wells and Shaw on the

⁵¹ See, for instance, a series of six articles by Albert Sans, 'L'home perdurable?', *L'Opinió*, June-September 1928.

⁵² Joan Sacs, 'el seu formidable detractor a Catalunya' ('his formidable detractor') as described by Guansé, claimed that 'una gran part de l'èxit de Chesterton a Catalunya pervé probablement de la coincidència del catolicisme, predominant en la nostra burgesia i en la nostra intel.lectualitat, amb el catolicisme batallador i definidor d'aquest autor', 'Chesterton o la Sofística recreativa', *RC*, 7 (1927), 506.

⁵³ It is in the reviews of this book that Junoy's project appears 'enthusiastically' announced: see J. M. Capdevila, 'L'home perdurable, per G. K. Chesterton', *LPC*, 6 (1927), 358-59; and J. Pla, 'Nota sobre Chesterton', *RC*, 7 (1927), 121-31.

issues of evolution and socialism.⁵⁴

A number of Catalan intellectuals gathered around Junoy: notably Romeva, on whom Junoy was mostly to rely for carrying out the project of publishing Chesterton's works.⁵⁵ This ambitious project, however, did not fulfil the original expectations.⁵⁶ *Heretics* (1928) and *Allò que no està bé (What's Wrong With the World)* (1929), were the only works which were published. Romeva, the translator, saw in Chesterton 'un dels esperits que honoren més el pensament i l'art de la nostra època', and enthusiastically addressed the admirers of *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* when presenting the series, referring to 'the truth of his doctrines'.⁵⁷ Romeva's preface to *Heretics* was in itself a justification of an intellectual adherence and the selection of the books translated stresses the ideological side: both in Chesterton's philosophical-literary creed (*Heretics*) and in his socio-political programme (*What's Wrong with the World*). Chesterton was regarded as the spearhead of a Catholic renewal, which gathered first around *La Nova Revista* and found continuation in the Catholic newspaper *El Matí* (May 1929-36), run by Junoy and Capdevila, and in which Romeva was likewise involved.⁵⁸ It was also in this

⁵⁴ These articles appeared in the regular section 'El nostre carnet' (taking the name of the *ILN*'s column, 'Our notebook'), from November 1927 until January 1929. Excerpts from *What I Saw in America* (*LNR*, 4 [1928], 380); three essays from *What's Wrong with the World* (*LNR*, 6 [1929], 398-410); and the article 'L'escèptic com a crític' (from *The Forum*, New York, July 1928, in *LNR*, 5 [1929], 174-81), were also reprinted.

⁵⁵ Romeva was in charge of the section called 'Els amics de Chesterton', which appeared regularly from February until September 1928, changing into 'Obres de G. K. Chesterton' from October until the end of this year.

⁵⁶ The original project, as announced in *LNR*, included *Heretics* (trans. P. Romeva), *Charles Dickens* (trans. 'la Sra. de Josep Pla'), the first volume of *Father Brown* (trans. Modolell) and *The Man Who was Thursday* (trans. P. Romeva).

⁵⁷ *LNR*, 4 (1928), 184.

⁵⁸ As Pla claimed: 'És molt probable, en efecte, que sense la llavor deixada en el país per les traduccions de Chesterton el diari *El Matí* no hauria existit'. 'Josep M. Junoy. Inestabilitat', in his *Obra completa*, XXIX (Barcelona: Destino, 1975), p. 118. In this newspaper a number of articles by Chesterton, most of them dealing with his religious, social and political concerns, were published, translated by Romeva.

newspaper that Chesterton's social doctrines, known as distributism, were popularised.⁵⁹

Publications were a central target to be addressed for a successful 'intellectual intervention', as Fr. Rupert claimed in his call of 1908. Chesterton had to play a leading rôle in the expansion of the Catholic revival in the publishing field, which at that time was particularly significant in France. After the failure of his project, Junoy still had in mind the creation of a publishing enterprise devoted to Catholic texts, along the same line as the French series 'Le Roseau d'Or' of Maritain.⁶⁰ It was in these years before the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War that this intense Catholic movement exerted a profound influence, weighing heavily in the formation of young Catalan writers, and as a result Chesterton became for some of them a model to be emulated. Maurici Serrahima, who commented at length on Chesterton in his literary contributions for *El Matí*, recognised in him one of his masters.⁶¹ A few years later Chesterton was to become one of the favourite choices of Josep Janés — also connected with the Catholic group of *El Matí* — in his long career as a publisher.⁶²

It is no coincidence that Chesterton's fiction was initially left out of the project of translating his works, being not of prior interest in these years of religious agitation. The time

⁵⁹ See 'El distributisme de G.K. Chesterton', *EM*, 15, 17 and 19 February 1931, and 'Conferència del Sr. Pau Romeva: Chesterton i la qüestió social', *EM*, 15 May 1932, p. 16. It was Romeva who published the first article on that issue (see 'Chesterton i la qüestió social: el distributisme', *LNR*, 3 [1927], 197-206). Romeva was at that time deeply involved in politics, as a leading figure of Unió Democràtica de Catalunya, a political party closely linked with *EM*.

⁶⁰ 'La novel·la catòlica i el nostre temps', *EM*, 18 December 1929, p. 6; 'Catolicisme i edicions', *EM*, 28 February 1930, p. 10. Chesterton's philosophical novel *L'esfera i la creu* (*The Ball and The Cross*) was advertised in this newspaper (21 June 1931) to be published by Biblioteca Horitzons, though it never came out.

⁶¹ *Coneixences* (Barcelona: Publicacions Abadia de Montserrat, 1976), pp. 63-76. Serrahima specially mentions the influence of *Orthodoxy*, a book he wished to be incorporated in the series of Chesterton's works (*EM*, 12 June 1929, p. 10).

⁶² The complete works of Chesterton were published in 1952, in Spanish, by José Janés, with an introduction by Romeva. For an account of Janés's rediscovery of Chesterton, see J. Hurtle, *Josep Janés: el combat per la cultura* (Barcelona: Curial, 1986), pp. 250-52.

for that was yet to come. *L'home que fou dijous*, one of Romeva's translations to be published by *La Nova Revista*, was serialised in *Revista de Catalunya* in 1931.⁶³ A reprint of the book was published by Janés in 1936: it was intended as a homage to the author, who died earlier in the year, the last tribute of a 'posthumous enthusiasm'.⁶⁴ Yet the years of pro-Chesterton enthusiasms were over — 'Aquest curiós fenomen ja va ocórrer', says Jordana.⁶⁵ For him, the first Catalan translator of Chesterton's fiction, this was the aspect that was going to survive; more particularly, the *Father Brown* stories, which were to become highly popular in both Catalonia and the rest of Spain.⁶⁶ Jordana and Ramon Esquerra were promoters of English commercial fiction in Catalonia and of fashionable literary genres: detective novels, which in England saw their heyday in the pre-War period, were then attaining increasing popularity in Catalonia thanks to the newly available Spanish translations, to which Chesterton's contribution was to be specially appreciated.⁶⁷

Jordana's view of Chesterton may be a reflection of a changing cultural atmosphere, perhaps more akin to reading this kind of light fiction than to taking part in philosophical and religious controversies. Yet behind his detective stories, as Jordana equally suggests, as behind all his writings, from *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* to *Father Brown*, Chesterton's philosophical concerns kept appearing, as if they were chapters of a single work. *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*

⁶³ *RC*, 13 (1931), 131-45, 224-32, 322-36, 520-26.

⁶⁴ See J. Teixidor, 'L'home que fou dijous', *LP*, 16 July 1936, p. 2.

⁶⁵ 'Reflexions sobre Chesterton', *LP*, 2 July 1936, p. 2.

⁶⁶ Jordana's translation of the epilogue of *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* was published in *LR*, 11 (1925), 170-72. Around this year he translated the story *The Five of Swords* for *La Novel·la Estrangera*.

⁶⁷ In his chapter 'Defensa de la novel·la detectivesca', Esquerra bases his main arguments on Chesterton's defence of the genre made in his book *The Defendant. Lectures europees* (Barcelona: Publicacions de La Revista, 1936), pp. 136-37.

was the first of his novels to be popularised in Catalonia, receiving much praise from López-Picó and Farran i Mayoral. His articles from the *Illustrated London News* won acclaim among the young generation of journalists. His anti-scientific writings came to be known thanks to Crexells. His religious works were beautifully rendered by Manent, *The Everlasting Man* being the book that made him a writer of repute. *Heretics* and *What's Wrong With the World* provided admirable support for Junoy, Romeva and the Catholic campaigners, and finally *The Man Who Was Thursday* was the work that reinforced his popularity. Samples from the whole spectrum of this versatile writer came to be known in Catalonia. The widespread devotion he enjoyed had very few exceptions: even Joan Sacs, his great detractor, found in him 'un assagista delectador' ('a delightful essayist').

2 Literary implications of Chesterton's writing

The external reception of Chesterton gives an idea of the deep affinity between a wide range of Catalan writers and the ideas and religious thought of the Edwardian writer. There is no doubt, however, that Chesterton's success in Catalonia went beyond ideological affinities. Those who gathered around the pro-Chesterton campaigners were first attracted to the manners of the jolly journalist, the brilliant polemicist and master of paradox.

Humour and paradox

It was his rhetorical capacity, based on this original combination of humour and paradox, that led Catalan readers to think of Chesterton as a great thinker and a great writer at the same time, as these words by Serrahima clearly imply:

Escriu per satisfacció pròpia i per gust que els altres coneguin el seu pensament tal com

és quan ell el posseeix. I ell, el seu pensament, no sols l'expressa, sino que el crea en forma literària. Ell, no hi ha dubte, és un pensador d'una robustesa, d'una personalitat superiors. *Però la seva força és la forma*. Els seus llibres no són la manifestació d'una arca tancada que es complau a obrir els nostres ulls enlluernats, sinó un mirall grotesc, que reflecteix les coses i les idees en una posició nova, la del seu estil.⁶⁸

This new standpoint Serrahima refers to, that of his style, would bring a breath of fresh air into Catalan circles: the 'humorístico y paradójico poeta' emerged as the liberal Catholic, disseminating his truth — traditional Christian truth — in a new way, an unexpected one, far removed from the apologetic and somewhat dogmatic defences of certain Catholic thinkers. Even those who held different ideological views from him, like Pla and Rovira i Virgili, regarded him as a liberal mind, a free-lance thinker.⁶⁹ The first paradox of Chesterton's creed was in the very way he embraced the Christian faith, on the basis that 'a fixed creed is absolutely indispensable to freedom'.⁷⁰

This strong conviction lies at the root of Chesterton's thought, a thought that emerged as a reaction against the modern doctrines in which he had been taught to believe, and principally against the *fin de siècle* spirit that dominated the years of his youth: 'My first impulse to write was a revolt of disgust with the Decadents and the aesthetic pessimism of the nineties. It is now almost impossible to bring home to anybody, even to myself, how final that *fin de siècle* seemed to be; not the end of the century but the end of the world.'⁷¹ *Heretics* was conceived as a response to the paralysing effects of these doctrines. At the close of its first chapter, we are presented with

⁶⁸ 'Allò que no està bé segons G. K. Chesterton', *EM*, 12 June 1929, p. 10 (my emphasis).

⁶⁹ J. L. Borges takes a similar view to some Catalan writers in his defence of Chesterton as an unconventional Catholic, and finds in his use of paradox and humour the key-note of his appeal: see 'Modos de G. K. Chesterton', in his *Ficcionario*, ed. Emir Rodríguez Monegal (México: FCE, 1985), pp. 118-19.

⁷⁰ Cf. Preface to G. K. Chesterton, *Selected Essays*, ed. J. Guest (London: Collins, 1939), p. 13.

⁷¹ 'Milton and Merry England', in his *Fancies versus Fads* (London: Methuen, 1923), pp. 219-38 (220).

the image of the mediaeval monk, speaking in the light of a lamp-post which is suddenly knocked down:

Suppose that a great commotion arises in the street about something, let us say a lamp-post, which many influential persons desire to pull down. A grey-clad monk, who is the spirit of the middle-ages, is approached upon the matter, and begins to say, in the arid manner of the Schoolmen, 'let us first of all consider, my brethren, the value of light. If light is in itself good—' At this point he is somewhat excusably knocked down. All the people make a rush for the lamp-post, the lamp-post is down in ten minutes, and they go about congratulating each other on their unmediaeval practicality. But as things go on they do not work out so easily. Some people have pulled the lamp-post down because they wanted electric light; some because they wanted old iron; some because they wanted darkness, because their deeds were evil. Some thought it not enough of a lamp-post, some too much; some acted because they wanted to smash something. And there is war in the night, no man knowing whom he strikes. So, gradually and inevitably, to-day, to-morrow, or the next day, there comes back the conviction that the monk was right after all, and that all depends on what is the philosophy of light. Only what we might have discussed under the gas-lamp, we now must discuss in the dark.

That is the image Tomàs Garcés recalls from the book. He sees Chesterton as playing the wandering monk, proclaiming his truth, hammering out his paradoxes: 'En les lletres d'avui, Chesterton fa el paper de monjo. Dilucida qüestions prèvies. Contra els absurds de l'època exercita el seu atletisme sanítós [...] propaga la veritat i combat l'error, sense treva, amb esperit jovial, brandant els focs d'artifici — que són alhora martells lògics — de les seves paradoxes.'⁷² The motifs mentioned by Garcés — the medieval and jolly spirit, the use of the paradox, the contrast between light and darkness always at the foreground of a constant war and play upon ideas — are recurrent in all Chesterton's writings.

Paradox provided him with an ideal rhetorical weapon for his defence of anti-modern, and sometimes indefensible, causes. Paradox was inherent in his thought and it was his natural vehicle of expression, 'la seva manera natural de fer-se escoltar', to use Crexells's words. Both

⁷² I quote Garcés's comment on *Heretics* as reproduced in *LNR*, 5 (1928), p. 283. *Heretics* was the first translation of *LNR*'s series, published in May 1928.

Crexells and Unamuno defined his paradoxes as being at the same time a rhetorical device and a method of reasoning. Both of them regarded Chestertonian paradox as a way of elevating truth above common truism.⁷³ In a way, this idea is reminiscent of that of Eugeni d'Ors and his *Noucentista* idealistic poetic principle of 'elevation of anecdote to category'.⁷⁴ And it is this view, this way of drawing out truth by playing upon anecdotes, that lay behind the exemplarity Catalan journalists noted in the 'comentari Chestertonianà' as they admired it in his weekly column of the *Illustrated London News*: 'fi i brillant, agut i profund, llampeguejant i acrobàtic, de vegades, però sempre ple d'una valor humana i d'una revelació de pensament que sostreu de seguida la qüestió més trivial al pla de l'anècdota per transportar-la, com qui diu jugant i rient, al dels principis generals i de les qüestions eternes'.⁷⁵ D'Ors himself was a fond practitioner of paradoxes, although according to Crexells his paradoxes were at the opposite extreme to Chesterton's, representing a dangerous form of 'giving eternal meaning to things' ('donar a totes les coses una significació "sota l'espècie d'eternitat"'), very often trivial ones, of anecdotal value, whereas Chestertonian paradox was an expression of common sense.⁷⁶ This was the basis for his distinction between 'trivial paradox', that of d'Ors, and 'serious paradox', that of Chesterton. In his definition Crexells seemed to follow Belloc's view of Chesterton's use of paradox as meaning 'illumination through unexpected juxtaposition'.⁷⁷ On the whole, it is the conceptual use of

⁷³ See Unamuno, Preface to *Sobre el concepto de barbarie*, pp. 8-9, and Crexells, 'Sobre contingut i forma', *LP*, 9 October 1924, p. 1, and 'Chesterton i la paradoxa', *LP*, 19 March 1925, p.1.

⁷⁴ This principle is a central one of the aesthetics of arbitrariness formulated by d'Ors. For an account of the *Noucentista* poetics, see J. Murgades, 'El Noucentisme', in *HLC*, IX, esp. pp. 53-72.

⁷⁵ P. Romeva, 'Unes noces d'argent' [on occasion of the 25th anniversary of the *ILN*], *EM*, 15 October 1930, p. 9.

⁷⁶ 'Sobre contingut i forma', p. 1.

⁷⁷ 'On the Place of G.K. Chesterton in English letters', in Colon, *G. K. Chesterton: A Half Century of Views*, pp. 39-45.

paradox that is stressed in his essays, a philosophical purpose being always in play, as if in a kind of conceptual acrobatics. Each paradox, as one single idea of his, may not stand on its own but seen together, in the light of the whole of his writings, such constant playing with them gives the impression of a massive coherence of thought. Here is one example:

There seems to be some sort of idea that you are not treating a subject properly if you eulogise it with fantastic terms or defend it by grotesque examples. Yet the truth is equally solemn whatever figures or examples its exponent adopts [...] There is a distinct philosophical advantage in using grotesque terms in a serious discussion. I think seriously, on the whole, that the more serious is the discussion the more grotesque should be the terms [...] It is the test of a good philosophy whether you can defend it grotesquely. It is the test of a good religion whether you can joke about it.⁷⁸

This sense of the paradoxical and grotesque — this capacity of reflecting things through a ‘mirall grotesc’, as Serrahima put it — is one of the chief characteristics of Chesterton’s method in approach. ... any kind of subject.⁷⁹ It was almost an all-embracing principle, appearing from his early writings. In the essay, with this ‘tentative and wandering quality’, Chesterton felt at home for conveying his paradoxical thought — ‘I have myself been an essayist; or tried to be an essayist; or pretended to be an essayist’ — and he similarly found in some of his favourite essayists that sort of inconsistent and indefensible temper he attempted to justify in himself.⁸⁰ *The Glass Walking-Stick*, the title of one of his collections of essays, can also express this aesthetic, and ethical, attitude of wavering and wandering like a knight-errant, spreading his philosophy

⁷⁸ ‘Spiritualism’ (1906), in his *All Things Considered* (London: Methuen, 1928), pp. 151-55.

⁷⁹ J. R. R. Tolkien alludes to Chestertonian fantasy using the word *Mooreeffoc* (=Coffee-room), a term coined by Chesterton, ‘to denote queerness of things that have become trite, when they are seen suddenly from a new angle’. *Poems and Stories* (London: Harper Collins, 1992), p.166. On Chesterton’s sense of the grotesque, see A. Clayborough, *The Grotesque in English Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 58-62.

⁸⁰ See ‘On the essay’ (1929), in his *The Glass Walking-Stick* (London: Methuen, 1955), pp. 186-90. On Chesterton’s use of the essay and the English tradition, see J. Coates, ‘Chesterton and the essay form’, *Chesterton Review*, 19 (1993), 307-38.

made out of bits and pieces through the fantastic and apparently frivolous titles: ‘On Running After One’s Hat’, ‘On Being an Old Bean’, ‘The Boredom of Butterflies’, and ‘A Piece of Chalk’, just to mention a few, deal with some of his favourite theoretical concerns, whether political, social or literary. In ‘The Advantages of Having One Leg’, for instance, the poetic principle of the accidental isolation of things in order to appreciate their significance, is symbolised through the image of standing on a single leg: ‘If you wish to perceive that limitless felicity, limit yourself if only for a moment. If you wish to realise how fearfully and wonderfully God’s image is made, stand on one leg. If you want to realize the splendid vision of all visible things, wink the other eye’, he concludes.⁸¹ The essence of Chesterton’s sense of playfulness usually begins here, in the observation of a very human, everyday experience or a common object, which are subject to grotesque manipulation — thus giving this fantastic quality typical of him — leading to the illustration of a common thought or idea: ‘In contemplating some common object of the modern street, such as an omnibus or a lamp-post, it is sometimes well worth while to stop and think about why such common objects are regarded as commonplace’. Objects, common objects such as an omnibus or a lamp-post, become a means of grasping the significance of everyday life, of showing ‘that profound feeling of mortal fraternity and frailty, which tells us we are indeed in the same boat’.⁸²

Chesterton’s art of essay writing would appeal to *Noucentista* writers. In the aesthetics of *Noucentisme* there is an essentialist conception of art and literature, in its desire to shape everyday objects and common feelings into an idealistic and civilised image of reality. However, a difference has been remarked on between Chesterton and Eugeni d’Ors, the theoretician of the

⁸¹ *Selected Essays*, ed. J. Guest (London: Collins, 1939), pp. 95-99 (99).

⁸² ‘Lamp-Posts’ (1917), in his *The Uses of Diversity* (London: Methuen, 1920), pp. 7-12.

aesthetics of the arbitrary characteristic of *Noucentisme*. In any case, the impact of Chesterton developed later, when E. d'Ors's *gloses* were no longer in the foreground. The reason of Chesterton's appeal lay, then, in his capacity to stimulate debate with powerful rhetorical and poetical tools. On ideological grounds, his writings were welcomed by those who thought of literature as a means of educating society, a *Noucentista* idea that continued in the 1920s. On literary grounds, Chesterton's art appealed to those who believed that social education should materialise through intelligence — hence the value of paradox — making the reader think about the meaning of small things, with a degree of irony. Chesterton was regarded as a model, close to the tradition of the essay, in a context of journalistic debate.

The form of his journalistic essays — light essays, expressing a fanciful and laughing attitude — was first popularised in the early eighteenth century by Steele and Addison; Lamb and Hazlitt were regarded among the great exponents of this type of essay.⁸³ In these authors, and in more contemporary essayists, Carner saw an exemplary journalistic model for the kind of ironic play he showed in his articles.⁸⁴ It was this type of light journalism of ideas as practised by Chesterton that had an impact on Catalan circles. The very name of his column 'Our Notebook' has something in common with columns such as Soldevila's 'Full de dietari', or Guansé's 'De dia en dia': brief notes about various matters, rendered as if items from personal diaries. In one of them, Carles Soldevila takes Chesterton as an exemplary model of journalistic

⁸³ V. Woolf, who was a fond admirer of Lamb and Hazlitt, referred to the type of essay they wrote as 'triflers'; and *Tremendous Trifles* is precisely the title of one of Chesterton's collections of essays. See F. Swinnerton, *Figures in the Foreground* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), p. 117. The kind of journalism of ideas practised by Chesterton was very common in the Edwardian years. It can be compared, for instance, with Belloc's contributions to *The Morning Post*, which had been collected in book form under such titles as *On Everything*, *On Anything*, *On Something*, *This and That* and *the Other*, *First and Last*, *On*.

⁸⁴ For a thorough account of Carner's journalistic style, see M. Ortín, 'La prosa literària en l'obra de Josep Carner' (unpublished thesis, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1992), pp. 356-407; pp. 88-91 for the connection with the English essay.

writing, commenting on his art of contradiction:

Les persones que sense haver renunciat a l'evolució tenim la desgràcia de creure'ns obligats a cercar la coherència, estem en una evident situació d'inferioritat respecte els qui es consagren al conreu de la contradicció. Nosaltres sobre un tema tendim a fer un sol article o una tanda d'articles en una sola direcció. Ells tenen simultàniament un article per afirmar que és blanc, un altre per assegurar que és negre i encara un tercer per dir-nos que no és blanc ni negre, sinó que és gris.⁸⁵

This capacity for contradiction was one of the traits characteristic of that sense of playfulness Catalan admirers observed in his writings.⁸⁶ Yet as Soldevila implies, it did not only apply to Chesterton's essays but generally to the English style of journalism, with clearly distinct qualities far removed from the Catalan style: it was on the whole a question of point of view that provoked that sense of refreshing unexpectedness. And Chesterton could have been regarded as one example of what Rovira i Virgili described as 'estil curvilini' ('curvilinear style'):

Els qui estan acostumats a l'estil directe de la Premsa llatina, tenen la sensació de malestar quan es posen a llegir la Premsa anglesa. Certament, aquesta Premsa té moltes excel·lències, i és un model a seguir en el camp de la informació internacional. Però l'estil periodístic britànic és molt diferent al nostre. És un estil curvilini i lent, que diu les coses amb tómb i tómb, com de biaix [...] El resultat és sovint, des del punt de vista de l'art, molt apreciable.⁸⁷

The romance of adventure: Chesterton's literary views

The spirit of playfulness has a philosophical justification beyond its ephemeral journalistic purpose. Some Catalan writers expressed a sympathetic view towards this touch of humanity associated with everyday life, sometimes with a profound Christian meaning. López-Picó classes

⁸⁵ 'Chesterton a Catalunya', *LP*, 17 August 1928, p. 1.

⁸⁶ Soldevila called it 'esportivisme', Garcés, 'atletisme sanitos'; Fr Miquel d'Esplugues refers to Chesterton's 'mentalitat esbarjosa que pot dar-se el gust de jugar noblement', a quality he particularly recalls as deriving from his Franciscan spirit.

⁸⁷ 'Literats i literatura', *RC*, 10 (1929), 1-22 (16-17).

Chesterton among these ‘infantadors de quotidianitat’. ‘I per gràcia d’ells, he goes on, el món es refà com un convalescent gran per al qual la novetat d’ell [el divertiment] és la novetat de totes les coses’.⁸⁸ Repetition, ordinary recurrences, and a sense of wonder in the face of the oddity of ordinary objects is a principle dear to him that found early expression in *Orthodoxy*, bringing in the example of *Robinson Crusoe* and his discovery of the wonderful ‘feeling of cosmic cosiness’, the best thing Chesterton recalls from the book being the list of things Robinson saved from the wreck. This feeling he particularly attributes to his childhood memories, and this very perception — he describes himself as ‘every one of us in childhood’ — is inherent in his peculiar way of looking at things, and that is what gave the readers an impression of naivety and optimism.⁸⁹ To take again the example of the lamp-post, he writes: ‘It is proverbial that a child, looking out of the nursery window, regards the lamp-post as part of a fairy-tale of which the lamplighter is the fairy. That lamp-post can be to a baby all that the moon could possibly be to a lover or a poet’. The child’s point of view is here connected with the fairy-tale frame of mind, an essential part of his philosophy.⁹⁰

It is in fairy-tales that Chesterton found illustrations of the leading concepts of his literary thought and practice. The image of the child looking through the nursery window can be taken as symbolic of the first underlying principle of the philosophy of fairy-tales: the poetry of

⁸⁸ *Entre la crítica i l’ideal*, p. 47.

⁸⁹ This was one of the qualities much praised by Pla: ‘És un escriptor que envejo. Em sembla haver comprès, per altra part, tot l’interès que té. El seu optimisme desbordant, el seu gust per tractar les coses com un conte d’infants, els seus esponjaments i les seves meravelles potser no s’ajusten prou bé a l’experiència general de la vida. Potser la seva excessiva especialització sentimental, la seva dilatació de cor, els seus estats d’idealitat, són coses que la mitjana de la gent corrent no podrem mai absolutament comprendre.’ ‘Nota sobre Chesterton’, p. 131.

⁹⁰ ‘The Ethics of Elfland’, in *Orthodoxy*, pp. 79-116. This chapter has been regarded as a central contribution to the criticism of children’s literature. As such, it is included in P. Hunt’s *Children’s Literature* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 28-32.

limits.⁹¹ The word ‘limits’ is a key word in his theory of imagination — ‘art consists of limitation’, as he claimed — necessarily associated with the recurring events engendering the source of wonder. A certain reminiscence of the Chestertonian defence of this principle can be observed in the poetics of Catalan *Noucentisme*. ‘La paraula límit,’ says López-Picó, ‘té ressonàncies chestertonianes’, and it was also one of the favourite words used by d’Ors.⁹² He made of that word a kind of universal principle of his essentialist doctrine, and it may not be a coincidence that for him, as for Chesterton, *Robinson Crusoe* was the most universal of books.⁹³ For Chesterton, fairy-tales, *Robinson Crusoe* and the contemplation of a lamp-post share something in common, that spirit of wonder he discovered in childhood:

The baby is much more right about the flaming lamp than the statistician who counts the posts in the street; and the lover is much more really right about the moon than the astronomer. Here the part is certainly greater than the whole, for it is much better to be tied to one wonderful thing than to allow a mere catalogue of wonderful things to deprive you of the capacity of wonder.

By reading fairy-tales and *Robinson Crusoe* he learned to believe in the value of fantasy and tradition as truth, as against the truth of modern doctrines: first of all, against the truth of science, but also against the message of the dominant literature of his time. Fantasy — and all literary forms associated with it — provided him with a way of escape from the literary doctrines and their representatives that he opposed in *Heretics*: an alternative, suitable literary world in which

⁹¹ For a formulation of this principle, see also his ‘The Toy Theatre’ (1907), in *Tremendous Trifles* (London: Methuen, 1909), pp. 145-51, and ‘On the Romance of Childhood’ (1930), in *All is Grist* (London: Methuen, 1931), pp. 124-28.

⁹² ‘L’Amic dels Limits gusta de circumscriure mentalment tota cosa, abans de donar-se’n a la contemplació’, ‘L’Amic dels Limits’ (1914), in his *L’home que treballa i juga*, pp. 206-07.

⁹³ In paradoxical manner, d’Ors claimed that ‘Robinson és el més universal dels llibres. Defoe, el menys universal dels escriptors.’ ‘Defoe’ (1918), in his *La Vall de Josafat*, p. 124.

to project his philosophical concerns.⁹⁴ For him fantasy came to fulfil the dreams of the common man: ‘human beings cannot be human without a field of fancy or imagination; some vague idea of the romance of life; and some holiday of the mind in a romance that is a refuge from life.’⁹⁵ And the adventure he found in fairy-tales and *Robinson Crusoe* was the romance that appealed to his fancy and imagination, the one he wished to live as an ordinary man, in which the hero, unlike the hero of the realists, was a normal human boy:

The old fairy tale makes the hero a normal human boy; it is his adventures that are startling; they startle him because he is normal. But in the modern psychological novel the hero is abnormal; the centre is not central. Hence the fiercest adventures fail to affect him adequately, and the book is monotonous. You can make a story out of a hero among dragons; but not out of a dragon among dragons. The fairy tale discusses what a sane man will do in a mad world. The sober realistic novel of today discusses what an essential lunatic will do in a dull world.⁹⁶

Chesterton's defence of the common man as literary hero was also illustrated in Dickens. His study of Dickens (1906) was to make an impact on contemporary criticism both in England and in Europe.⁹⁷ This was one of the books initially selected by Romeva for publication, although it was never to appear, and was widely mentioned and favourably received by some Catalan writers. Some critics saw in his defence of Dickens a defence of himself, of his value-system: Dickens seen as ‘living expression of a world of hope’ — his defence of the common man, his

⁹⁴ According to S. Hynes, fantasy and supernaturalism was a main strain in the literature of the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods (its representatives including Barrie, Wells, Chesterton, James, and Hewlett), seen as a reaction to the social realism of the Victorians and the dominant cult of science. *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (London: Pimlico, 1991), pp. 146-47.

⁹⁵ ‘Fiction as Food’ (1934), in his *The Spice of Life*, ed. Dorothy Collins (London: Darwen Finlayson, 1964), pp. 30-31.

⁹⁶ *Orthodoxy*, pp. 24-25.

⁹⁷ See, for instance, Maurois's defence of Dickens in *Études anglaises* (Paris: Grasset, 1927), pp. 105-70. Maurois was equally an admirer of Chesterton, to whom he devoted special chapters in his books *Magiciens et logiciens* (Paris: Grasset, 1935) and *Poets and Prophets* (London: Cassell, 1936).

sense of humanity, his Christian view of life, his treatment of children, for instance. And this ideological reading of Dickens came to be reflected in the assessments of Chesterton: ‘Ha escrit el millor llibre probablement que es coneix sobre Dickens’, said Pla, ‘i Dickens qui fou sinó l’home del segle passat que sentí d’una manera més profunda el respecte pel poble?’⁹⁸ A Chestertonian note of that humanitarian interpretation of Dickens can be observed in some literary judgements of Catalan critics, who perceived in Chesterton a source of inspiration for their evaluation of more contemporary writers. Certain traits of Dickens’s narrative were to be discovered in Wilkie Collins, and more contemporary humorists such as Jerome K. Jerome.⁹⁹ On commenting on J. B. Priestley’s *Good Companions*, Serrahima, for instance, wrote:

Dos volums [...] plens d’aventures de diversa mena, de facècies divertidíssimes que, sense que puguin del tot acostar-se a Dickens, tenen la seva influència ben marcada, sobretot, en l’art de donar interès, de divertir amb les peripècies de l’argument, que sembla oblidat per tants escriptors d’ara. El públic anglès, cansat de tanta psicologia ensopida, s’hi ha abocat com un sol home, de la mateixa manera com s’abocà a Baring cansat de l’abús de brutícia sensual. També l’alegria de la taula i del beure, del tabac i de la conversa, la cordialitat optimista de la vella *Public house*, té un lloc importantíssim en aquesta obra: Chesterton deu trobar-hi un seguidor, ell que deia de Dickens: ‘Tots els camins duen a la fi a un hostel darrer on trobarem Dickens amb els seus personatges, i quan alcem altra vegada amb ell les copes, serà dintre els flancs amplíssims de la taverna de la fi del món’. Amb J. B. Priestley també és el cas d’omplir el got i de brindar-lo, amb joia i confiança, a la salut dels seus *Bons companys*.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ ‘Nota sobre Chesterton’, p. 130. It is not a mere coincidence that some of those most deeply involved in the reception of Chesterton in Catalonia were also fond admirers of Dickens. Notably, López-Picó, Romeva, Pla, and Serrahima. Dickens became one of the most translated of English writers by far, thanks mainly to Carner. This aspect was dealt with by M. Ortín, ‘Dickens in Catalonia’ (Graduate Spanish Seminar, Oxford, 8 March 1994).

⁹⁹ See, for instance, the presentation of this author in *Propostes de la Biblioteca Univers* (Barcelona: Llibreria Catalònia, n.d): ‘La seva obra es descabdella tota sota l’enseny de l’humorisme — un humorisme molt britànic que, no obstant, arriba a interessar tots els públics cultes del món. En els seus millors moments, un hom arriba a trobar-hi una ressonància de Dickens — el Dickens primerenc de *Pickwick*. L’observació justa, apuntada amb un tret viu i familiar alhora, el do d’escampar a dosis ben calculades la ironia i la pietat sobre les misèries humanes, fan el mèrit d’aquest autor enciser.’

¹⁰⁰ ‘El retorn a Dickens’, *EM*, 18 June 1932, p. 7.

Serrahima's allusion to the psychological novel is reminiscent of Chesterton's harsh attacks on the literature of snobbishness and the new aristocratic fiction, to which he opposed the novels of Dickens, as embodying the ideal of the common man: the humorist, the optimist, the Englishman, a gentleman.¹⁰¹ The rejection of the 'ensopida' ('tedious') psychological novel mentioned in Serrahima's review found a parallel in a growing weariness in cultural circles with the French psychological novel, and his call for a return to Dickens can also be read as an illustration of a widespread concern for fiction, and more specifically, for adventure fiction, which expanded in Catalonia in the mid-late 20s. This particular reaction has something to do with the appeal of contemporary English literature — somehow still keeping away from continental influences — which in the inter-war period enjoyed a booming production of commercial fiction. The account of the contemporary English novel by Edward Shanks published in *La Revista* in 1925 provides enough evidence: 'The modern public is willing to devour novels it is not willing to devour much else [...] because the novel is undoubtedly more in demand than any other form of literature.'¹⁰² Chesterton's idea of fiction looks particularly appropriate within this view: fiction to feed the hunger for fiction, fiction as a necessity and not a luxury. In Chesterton's criticism fiction appears clearly associated with romance and adventure, fitting well into his romantic ideal of life. It is this idea which led him to prefer 'those great nineteenth century novelists who gave an impression of bewildering bulk and variety, Scott or Dickens or Thackeray' and for the same reason he justified his particular taste for the sensational novel and the detective story, which he ranked very high for being an expression of a 'dangerous and

¹⁰¹ See *Heretics*, p. 215.

¹⁰² 'Reflections on the Recent History of the English Novel', *LMerc*, 4 (1921), 173-83, trans. M[illàs]-R[aurell], *LR*, 11 (1925), 238-43. Shanks mentions in this article Chesterton's *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* as a book 'to have more influence than is now apparent'.

startling' adventure.¹⁰³ His defence of Dickens and Conan Doyle was based on this quality, which was for him a test of popularity: he compares the two writers in terms of the capacity of their characters to become popular heroes.¹⁰⁴ All forms of popular fiction were for him acceptable as long as they conveyed adventure, and if possible meaningful adventure. Literature with a purpose, for all kinds of public: that was the idea behind his defence of popular literature which embraced the historical romances of Walter Scott and Fenimore Cooper, Dickens's *Pickwick*, R. L. Stevenson, Conan Doyle's stories of Sherlock Holmes, books for boys, and sentimental novels.¹⁰⁵ Feeding the public with fiction was also the aim of Catalan publishers when filling the Catalan market with an increasing range of translations of 'obres d'una amenitat indiscutible'.¹⁰⁶

In Catalonia Chesterton's fiction was mainly received in this tradition of adventurous fiction, going from Dickens to detective novels: the Dickensian spirit was detected in his peculiar quality of 'grotesque exaggeration', to use Sacs's words; López-Picó described him as a 'novel·lador de tradició stevensoniana constantment enlleminit per l'interès de crear personatges i situacions', and he found amusing adventure in his novels *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, *Manalive* and *The Man Who Was Thursday*. Carner viewed Chesterton's fiction as continuing the tradition of the English romance, and he offered to M. Manent, as we have seen, the chance of translating of *The Man Who Was Thursday*, the novel that made Chesterton a most popular

¹⁰³ 'Any literature that represents our life as dangerous and startling is truer than any literature that represents it as dubious and languid. For life is a fight and is not a conversation.' 'Fiction as food' (1934), in his *The Spice of Life*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁰⁴ See 'Sherlock Holmes', in his *A Handful of Authors*, pp. 168-74.

¹⁰⁵ See, for instance, 'Historical novels' (1901), in *A Handful of Authors*, pp. 197-200; 'On Sir Walter Scott' (1932), in *All I Survey* (London: Methuen, 1933), pp. 219-23; *R. L. Stevenson* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1927); 'On Detective Story Writers' (1929), in *Come To Think of It* (London: Methuen, 1930), pp. 29-33; 'Sentimental Literature' (1901), in *The Spice of Life*, pp. 3-9; 'Books for Boys', in *The Common Man* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1950), pp. 228-32.

¹⁰⁶ See *Propostes de la Biblioteca Univers*, p. 1.

writer. Chesterton did not rate his own novels very highly, although he happily bore the charge of being a practitioner of frivolous fiction: 'I have been a munificent patron of fiction of that description; and have even presented the public with a corpse or two of my own', he wrote.¹⁰⁷ Rather, he saw his fiction as a vehicle for providing light entertainment, while at the same time conveying a powerful philosophy. This particular combination of teach and preach within a literary genre proved to be highly influential. This appealed to a mind formed in the years of *Noucentisme* such as Soldevila, director of the Biblioteca Univers, avid for entertaining works but also for works with an edifying purpose, that 'ens ajuden a la formació del pensament i del cor'.¹⁰⁸

It similarly appealed to the younger generation of critics. Jordana, for instance, admired Chesterton's novels of ideas, as for him

la gràcia principal dels seus contes i de les seves novel·les és també la gràcia de l'assaig, i el mèrit principal dels seus arguments, ben trobats com són, és el de servir d'enfilador de les seves guspirejants reaccions d'home d'idees. Chesterton no ens ofereix llenques de vida, per més que tregui de la vida els elements del seu joc. La seva extraordinària vitalitat s'esmerça en la manipulació d'idees.¹⁰⁹

Esquerra found in Chesterton an illustration of the two salient characteristics of detective novels — that English genre *par excellence* he appreciated so much — which he described as the poetry

¹⁰⁷ 'On Philosophy versus Fiction', *ILN*, 8 March 1930, p. 632.

¹⁰⁸ *Propostes de la Biblioteca Univers*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ 'Reflexions sobre Chesterton', *LP*, 2 July 1936, p. 2 (my emphasis). Jordana, who was one of the pioneer writers of detective fiction in Catalonia, was the first to translate Chesterton's fiction into Catalan. Some traits of Chesterton's narrative were recognised in his early novels by A. Obiols: 'Per un paral·lelisme de visió, potser, l'obra de Jordana ens fa pensar en l'obra novel·lada de Chesterton. Els herois del nostre novel·lista tenen sovint per fons aquells horitzons al·lucinants, aquells roigs madurs i graves de l'anglès. L'acció té la mateixa força precipitada, com si escrivís aguantant-se el respir. No trobem ni un oasi de repòs, el final us aspira obstinadament.' 'L'incest', *La Nau*, 10 February 1928, p. 5.

of common things and the sense of the mysterious of modern epic.¹¹⁰ Chesterton's detective stories are filled with grotesque figures, fantastic elements and unresolved mysteries, with all these qualities he discovered first in fairy-tales and medieval legends. They came to be regarded as a 'translation' of his philosophy, as Tonquébec pointed out:

Chesterton literato es el mismo que Chesterton filósofo. Parte del principio de que lo fantástico es posible. Esta es la clave de sus composiciones, repletas de aventuras inauditas. Sus romances policíacos versan sobre espionajes, robos, descubrimientos los más sorprendentes [*sic*]: confuso torbellino de episodios que en vertiginosa carrera se suceden [...] El enigma no se deshace, los símbolos permanecen impenetrables; las palabras cabalísticas que parecen cargadas de alusiones profundas nadie es capaz de interpretar sus oráculos [*sic*]. El lector queda mixtificado, y sin poder llegar a comprender esta eterna antítesis de la razón contra la razón.¹¹¹

This principle of the fantastic and of incongruity, characteristic of literature of nonsense, blended with a commonsensical vein of thought, was an essential trait of Chesterton's writing: 'La traça i la gràcia de Chesterton és aquesta combinació de sentit comú amb una fantasia arravatada, folla'.¹¹² Paradox, humour, the grotesque, as Chesterton perceived them, go together as being an expression of nonsense, of that antithesis of 'reason against reason' flowing through all his writings. Nonsense was for him a variety of humour, a very English one, clearly distinct from wit, as he described it: 'Wit corresponds to the divine virtue of justice, in so far as so dangerous a virtue can belong to man. Humour corresponds to the human virtue of humility and is only more divine because it has, for the moment, more sense of the mysteries'.¹¹³ For his conception

¹¹⁰ 'Defensa de la novel·la detectivesca', in his *Lectures europees*, pp. 136-37.

¹¹¹ G. K. Chesterton', *EF*, 25 (1920), 222-25 (225).

¹¹² 'L'home que fou dijous', *LP*, 16 July 1936, p. 2.

¹¹³ 'Humour' (1928), in his *The Spice of Life*, pp. 22-29 (24). Chesterton classes Voltaire as writer of wit, 'because he represents the consistent human reason detesting an inconsistency', whereas humour is for him 'a confession of inconsistency'. Interestingly, in Catalonia Chesterton was mainly seen as the anti-Voltairian, the paradoxical versus the pure rational writer. J. M. Capdevila, for instance, in comparing the two writers claimed: 'En Junoy li digué que

of humour as ‘a confession of inconsistency’ he strongly sympathised with Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, with the ‘incongruous congruity’ of his world.¹¹⁴ He found in the literature of nonsense one of the best tests of that adventurous world of childhood, the instinct for nonsense being an expression of the child’s sense of wonder and the spirit of fairy-tales. Chesterton’s heroes, like Alice, like the legendary medieval heroes, seem to live with one foot on the earth and another in fairyland, living a romantic spiritual adventure, challenging the dangers of modernity. After winning the battle of the lamps, the two heroes of *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* feel free to impose their law, a Chestertonian law, of joy, laughter and fantasy. Here is the end of the book, in which all the typical elements of his fantastic world are brought together:

Wyne’s wild face flamed with something god-like, as he turned it to be struck by the sunrise.

‘I know of something that will alter that antagonism, something that is outside us, something that you and I have all our lives perhaps taken too little account of. The equal and eternal human being will alter the antagonism, for the human being sees no real antagonism between laughter and respect, the human being, the common man, whom mere geniuses like you and me can only worship like a god. When dark and dreary days come, you and I are necessarily, the pure fanatic, the pure satirist. We have between us remedied a great wrong. We have lifted the modern cities into that poetry which every one who knows mankind knows to be immeasurably more common than the commonplace. But in healthy people there is no war between us. We are but the two lobes of the brain of a ploughman. Laughter and love are everywhere. The cathedrals, built in the ages that loved God, are full of blasphemous grotesques. The mother laughs continually at the child, the lover laughs continually at the lover, the wife and the husband, the friend at the friend. Auberon Quin, we have been too long separated: let us

havia posat la riulla de Voltaire al servei de Déu. I semblà que no li desplaïa. Aqueixa frase és de molta justesa i ella fa veure la diferència de la ironia volteriana i la del gran escriptor anglès. Voltaire, i en això és molt modern, es prenia seriosament les cosetes lleugeres i frívols: un detall històric, uns versets, minúcies literàries; i en canvi es reia de les coses serioses. Chesterton fa al revés: es riu de les coses serioses i no d’allò que no és seriós.’ *‘L’home perdurable’*, *LPC*, 6 (1927), 358-60.

¹¹⁴ Literature of nonsense has an outstanding place in his literary criticism. See, for instance, ‘A Defence of Nonsense’, in *The Defendant*, pp. 61-70; ‘Lewis Carroll’, in *A Handful of Authors*, pp. 112-19, and ‘Both Sides of the Looking Glass’, in *The Spice of Life*, pp. 66-70.

go out together. You have a halberd and I have a sword, let us start our wanderings over the world. For we are its two essentials. Come, it is already day.'

In the blank white light Auberón hesitated a moment. Then he made the formal salute with his halberd, and they went away together into the unknown world.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ The epilogue of *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* was translated by Jordana and published in *LR*, 11 (1925), 170-72.

Chapter 2

H. G. Wells and G. B. Shaw and the Chestertonian Connection

Darwin's *The Origin of Species* appeared in 1859, just a few years before Shaw, Wells and Chesterton were born. All of them grew up in the years of scientific enthusiasm characteristic of the late Victorian age, and they all 'began life by hoping more from Science than perhaps any generation ever hoped before, and, possibly, will ever hope again', as Shaw put it.¹ Reactions against such scientific optimism became one of the dominant notes in the Edwardian cultural scene, the Darwinian theory of evolution being a principal target for debate. Shaw was never satisfied with the principle of natural selection, which clashed with his theory of the Life-Force, as is evident from his early play *Man and Superman* of 1901, and in a typical long preface to *Back to Methuselah* (1921) he made a final statement on evolution. The early scientific romances of H. G. Wells were clearly indebted to the influence of the scientific progress he witnessed in the years of his youth, and he became a strong Darwinian whose views were fiercely attacked by Hilaire Belloc and Chesterton. In this chapter I shall turn my attention to the Edwardian atmosphere of polemics, not only in journalistic writing but in the many literary manifestations in which Edwardian writers were involved.

1 The Edwardian prophets and the *fin de siècle*

Science was a favourite topic for debate which held Edwardian writers in long-lasting controversies, sometimes going on for entire lifetimes, as in the case of those between Shaw and

¹ Cited in S. Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (London: Pimlico, 1991), p. 182; for an account of the Edwardian reactions to the scientific ideal and to Victorian materialism in general, see pp. 132-71. On the view of Chesterton as archetypal Edwardian writer, see P. N. Furbank, 'Chesterton the Edwardian', in J. Sullivan (ed.), *G. K. Chesterton: A Centenary Appraisal* (London: Elek, 1974), pp. 16-27.

Chesterton. After Queen Victoria's death, years of anxiety and rapid social change followed the comfortable, conventional, and materialistic standards of the Victorians, and the critical spirit took root in an atmosphere of lively controversies.

In the Age of Victoria, the Voice of Authority was accepted in religion, in politics, in literature, in family life. It was not until the twentieth century that everything was held to be an open question; and the modern spirit was initiated by Samuel Butler and Bernard Shaw with their watchwords, 'Question! Examine! Test!'²

From the early stages of their careers, Chesterton, Shaw and Wells adopted critical attitudes towards the era in which they were formed and they all took an active part in the movements that emerged as a response to Victorian ideals. Chesterton was a strong liberal, a close friend of the influential liberal MP Charles Masterman, to whom he dedicated his preface to *What's Wrong With the World*; Shaw and Wells were Socialists, both to become star members of the Fabian Society, a socialist movement which started in the 1880s.³ Chesterton campaigned for the cause of nationalism, earning fame for his anti-imperialist position in the Boer War (1899-1902), when the imperial dream started to collapse. Wells fought for an utopian World State and took a prominent part in the League of Nations movement in 1917-19. Shaw was the principal campaigner for women's rights and brought into his problem plays the fashionable debate about the institution of marriage.

If something in common is to be found among this heterogeneous group of Edwardian men of letters it is the belief in the committed writer, actively involved in politics and social affairs and campaigning in newspapers and magazines. All of them wanted to be called

² W. E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 93.

³ The Liberals were in power between 1905-15. On Masterman's liberal career and views, see Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, pp. 57-73, and pp. 87-131 for an account of Shaw's and Wells's involvement in the Fabian Society.

journalists, as they aimed first of all at popularising their ideas, to reach a wide audience by stimulating public debate. The name 'Big Four' — that is how they were called at the time — clearly alludes to the common reputation they had as polemicists. They shared an ideal platform in *The New Age*, in which the confrontations between Wells and Chesterton and Belloc, involving the major issues of Socialism and Liberalism, reached a peak early in 1908. It was in that atmosphere that Shaw created the pantomime beast Chesterbelloc which came to represent the set of values both halves defended, although Shaw completely disapproved of Belloc and showed sympathy towards Chesterton, with whom he was to share a long lasting friendship.⁴

Their rôle as journalists went beyond the professional task of contributing to newspapers and magazines. They wanted to be immersed in public issues, to ventilate their views and ideas, and they principally addressed the common reader; they all sought for civilised ideals to which they gave shape in public debate. They were all sometimes referred to as prophets of their age, each of them championing his own doctrine and being mostly concerned with persuading an audience. They understood the art of writing as an art of prophecy, a prophecy that Chesterton projected into an idealised medieval past, Wells into his futurist utopias and Shaw into the religion of Superman. In their literary careers there is no dividing line between the journalists and the prophets and both have remained common labels for describing the Big Four.⁵

⁴ See, for instance, 'About Chesterton and Belloc' (11 January); G. K. Chesterton, 'On Wells and a Glass of Beer' (25 January); G. B. Shaw, 'Belloc and Chesterton' (15 February); Filson Young, 'On Shaw, Wells, Chesterton, and Belloc' (7 March), all of them published in *The New Age*. For a brief account of the current arguments involving these four writers, see D. Barker, *G. K. Chesterton: A Biography* (London: Constable, 1973), pp. 181-87.

⁵ F. Swinnerton viewed Shaw, Belloc and Chesterton as representatives of 'polemics and general literature [who] captured our fancies and gave us fingerposts to endless arguments during summer walks'. *Figures in the Foreground* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), p. 16. He includes Shaw and Wells in the section 'Teachers'. The French critic and historian L. Cazamian classes Shaw, Chesterton, Wells, and Belloc under the heading of 'The Doctrines of Action' in his *History of English Literature* (London: Dent, 1927), pp. 1292-324. In his *Poets and Prophets* (London: Cassell, 1936), A. Maurois regards Chesterton, Shaw and Wells as 'advocates of a doctrine'. In *Las profecías se cumplen* (Barcelona: Montaner y Simón, 1948) Juan Estelrich devotes special chapters to Shaw's and Wells's social ideals (pp. 103-32). For recent thorough accounts dealing with the journalistic and prophetic side, see W. W. Wager, ed., *H. G. Wells: Journalism and Prophecy 1893-1914* (London: Bodley Head, 1965) and W.

This double label of journalists and prophets explicitly embodies the kind of literature they all stood for. Literature of ideas could be a suitable term for describing it. Chesterton's *Heretics* (1905), published in the peak years of Edwardian controversies, can be regarded as epitomising this literary genre. That *Syllabus Errorum* was chiefly conceived as an attack against his contemporaries and the philosophy they represented. Despite the criticisms displayed throughout the book, he showed a degree of indulgence towards his contemporaries such as Shaw, Wells and Kipling, for on the whole, unlike some sceptical *fin-de-siècle* writers, they did possess a philosophy:

Of all, or nearly all, the able modern writers whom I briefly studied in this book this is especially and pleasingly true, that they do each of them have a constructive and affirmative view, and that they do take it seriously and ask us to take it seriously. There is nothing merely sceptically progressive about Mr. R. Kipling. There is nothing in the least broadminded about Mr. B. Shaw [...] Even the opportunism of Mr. H.G. Wells is more dogmatic than the idealism of anybody else.⁶

From this passage it is clear what Chesterton thought he had in common with some of his contemporaries, and this was the conception of literature itself as a form of polemics. However wrong he deemed Kipling's, Wells's or Shaw's philosophy to be, there he discovered something worth discussing, a point of reference for positive debate. Although they were part of the Society of Heretics, he saw in them examples of 'men of ideas'; they had a philosophy, *ergo* they were worth considering as writers, that was the moral of *Heretics*. A few years after the book came out, Chesterton was invited to speak at the Society of Heretics (Cambridge, November 1911) to reply to Shaw's talk on the future of Religion: it was the first Shaw-Chesterton debate which

B. Furlong, *Shaw and Chesterton: The Metaphysical Jesters* (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970).

⁶ *Heretics* (London: Lane, 1905), p. 289.

served to pair both authors, for all their obvious disagreements, as a unit.⁷

In his early writings Chesterton delivered a picture of both Shaw and Wells that revealed a profound sympathy towards them which persisted, and transcended the circumstantial, despite the long-lasting debates they were involved in. In the portrait Chesterton wrote of Shaw, one can perceive a sympathetic view of his fellow-writer:

There exists by accident an early and beardless portrait of him which really suggests in the severity and purity of its lines some of the early ascetic pictures of the beardless Christ. However he may shout profanities or seek to shatter the shrines, there is always something about him which suggests that in a sweeter and more solid civilisation he would have been a great saint. He would have been a saint of a sternly ascetic, perhaps of a sternly negative type. But he has this strange note of the saint in him; that he is literally unworldly. Worldliness has no human magic for him; he is not bewitched by rank nor drawn on by conviviality at all. He could not understand the intellectual surrender of the snob. He is perhaps a defective character; but he is not a mixed one. All the virtues he has are heroic virtues. Shaw is like the Venus of Milo; all that there is of him is admirable.⁸

Wells was likewise pictured in a sympathetic light, by rejecting the common impression of the scientific writer:

But the legend of the mechanical Wells is even more contradicted by his humane and responsive temperament than by his cheerful and almost rustic exterior [...] His theoretic morality is a maze of almost bewildering charity; he is always softening formulae, finding exceptions, thinking tenderly of hard cases. His philosophy is all anti-rationalist; and he sometimes comes near to saying that two and two may not make four so exactly as is commonly supposed. If in his brilliant mass of gifts, wild imagination, warm sympathy, and swift and unhesitating analysis, there be one gift omitted, it is the great last gift of dogma — of announcing the final victory of thought.⁹

⁷ See Furlong, *Shaw and Chesterton*, pp. 93-94.

⁸ *George Bernard Shaw* (London: Bodley Head, 1909), pp. 22-23.

⁹ R. Knille (ed.), *As I Was Saying: A Chesterton's Reader* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1985), pp. 285-86.

2 Journalism and ‘alta polèmica’: G. K. C. vs G. B. S.

Although neither Shaw nor Wells enjoyed the same popularity in Catalonia as Chesterton did, they started to be known as journalists and polemicists whose views were clearly different from those of their fellow-writer. The interest Catalan journalists took in them had to do with their rôle as polemicists playing a part in the journalistic scene. The time had come for expanding Catalan newspapers and magazines, and writers found themselves gradually involved in them from the mid 1920s. Eugeni d’Ors’s short contributions, called ‘gloses’, were still regarded by some as an established model of Catalan journalism, although notable attempts at renovating the style of journalism were produced by some writer-journalists who contributed weekly and sometimes daily columns to the newspapers. A pressing need for opening the journalistic field was felt by those who began to cast around for other European models. It is worth mentioning the case of Josep Carner, whose writings somehow mirrored the English essay, and who was familiar with the work of Chesterton, Belloc and Shaw.¹⁰ In early 1924 an interesting debate around the issue of journalism and literature was set off in the major newspaper *La Veu de Catalunya*, in which a number of writers were engaged. Among those who defended renovation were Josep Pla and Eugeni Xammar, who replied to Junoy’s praise of Eugeni d’Ors by favouring instead other European examples of journalism, starting with the English scene and putting at the top of the list both Chesterton and Belloc.¹¹

Chesterton, we may recall, was particularly admired for his literary qualities as essayist

¹⁰ For the influence of English essay on Carner, see M. Ortín, ‘La prosa literària en l’obra de Josep Carner (unpublished thesis, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1992), pp. 88-91. Specific references to Chesterton, Shaw and Belloc are also provided in Ortín, ‘Les traduccions de Josep Carner’, *Catalan Review*, 6 (1992), 418-19.

¹¹ ‘Periodisme?...Permetin!’, *LVC*, 15 March 1924., p. 4. Pla and Xammar’s letters to the editor of *LVC* are collected in E. Xammar, *Periodisme*, ed. J. Badia i Moret (Barcelona: Quaderns Crema, 1989), pp. 51-90. For an account of Pla’s involvement, see M. Gustà, *Els orígens ideològics i literaris de Josep Pla* (Barcelona: Curial, 1995), pp. 324-61.

and master of paradox. According to a witness of the Edwardian debates, it was Chesterton who preserved above all the literary tone, especially in his precise use of analogy, which complemented both the pugnacity of Belloc and the witty criticism of Shaw.¹² If Chesterton was enthusiastically praised for his gifts as polemicist, his adversaries had no less a place in the Catalan press, their confrontations with Chesterton becoming well known in journalistic circles. They were valued for the kind of polemics they represented and were admired and even emulated as elegant examples of the ‘alta polèmica’. A year after Pla’s response to Junoy, in praise of Chesterton and other English journalists, a defence of the ‘alta polèmica’ was made by Junoy himself taking as a model the Chesterton-Shaw match:

És, verament, una sort de poder combatre un adversari —un digne adversari, intel·lectualment i moralment — sense veure’s obligat, per tant, a rebaixar-lo, en principi, del seu just valor. Aquesta és l’alta polèmica. Un fort combat de dos ‘gentlemen’ correctíssims, però, en el fons, irreductibles. La boxa honorable entre dos campions —posem per cas— com és ara G. K. Chesterton i G. B. Shaw.¹³

This article appeared two years before Junoy launched the Chestertonian journal *La Nova Revista*. Neither Chesterton nor Shaw’s works had been translated yet. Nevertheless, in the journalistic milieu the ‘champions del fair play’, as they were called, were already well known, and their debates were seen as an ‘espectacle consubstancial de l’Anglaterra moderna’, which some writer-journalists followed as a stimulus towards civilised, fair discussion in the media, which could improve the intellectual atmosphere in Catalonia:

La cosa admirable per nosaltres que, salvant excepcions, patim la fòbia de la discussió, és la normalitat d’aquestes polèmiques angleses que no acaben sinó amb la vida dels escriptors. Aquí no sols sentim una mena d’horror per l’oposició ideològica, no sols ens

¹² That was the view of H. Pearson, cited by Furlong, *Shaw and Chesterton*, p. xii.

¹³ ‘El match Chesterton-Shaw’, *LVC*, 28 February 1925, p. 5.

esforcem puerilment per fer les paus a tothom, sinó que ens complavem a escriure com si fóssim uns solitaris, tancats i barrats en una torre inaccessible. Tractem cada tema com si cap dels nostres col·legues l'hagués tractat abans o l'estigués tractant simultàniament. Esmentar un punt de vista favorable al que sostenim ens sembla una feblesa, una minva d'originalitat.¹⁴

The Chesterton-Shaw pair fit perfectly in this cultural context with its aspiration to foster journalistic debate. Hesketh Pearson, a close friend of Chesterton and one of Shaw's biographers, called them 'Debaters of the Century', and in their long-lasting relationship the debates held them together from 1911 to 1928, attracting a large audience until the last of their formal debates, chaired by Belloc, in November 1927.¹⁵ Despite a chronological gap of about a decade, this career as debaters was followed in Catalonia. A key encounter of the pair which took place in Chelsea in September 1923, reported by Pearson in *The Adelphi*, was reproduced in a Catalan newspaper a few years later.¹⁶ In Catalan journalistic circles the association of Chesterton with Shaw was a reflection of the popularity they both enjoyed in Edwardian and Georgian England: 'the public said G. B. S. and G. K. C.: it said neither H. B. [Hilaire Belloc] nor H. G. W. [H. G. Wells]'.¹⁷ These initials became also very common in Catalan newspapers when reporting their controversies.

3 The place of Shaw

No doubt this close rapport with Chesterton went beyond the impact of the circumstantial debates, affecting notably the view of Shaw as writer. Comparison of both in literary terms

¹⁴ S[oldevila], 'L'esperit europeu o l'art de discutir', *D'Ací*, 16 (1927), 277.

¹⁵ Furlong, *Shaw and Chesterton*, pp. 133-34.

¹⁶ 'G. B. S. contra G. K. C.', *LP*, 7 May 1926, p. 1. For the impact of this encounter, see Furlong, pp. 121-33.

¹⁷ Swinnerton, *The Georgian Literary Scene* (London: Dent, 1938), p. 66.

seemed to be unavoidable, both appearing as forming a complementary unit: Crexells commented on their paradoxical manners, pointing out the deep differences in style, yet on the basis of an apparent similar attitude as writers; Pla placed the same value on both figures, judging them the two most influential authors in English letters.¹⁸ This view of Chesterton and Shaw as a friendly pair mediated in the reception of Shaw, starting with the sympathetic way some Catalan writers treated him. Their comments are clearly reminiscent of Chesterton's view of the writer. The humane, almost saintly qualities that Chesterton displays in his portrait of Shaw were likewise observed in some Catalan notices, after the early presentation by López-Picó in 1917: 'Potser no posseeix Bernard Shaw l'esponjor cordial de Chesterton [...] Però tancat, sec i desconcertant, és a la seva manera un generós apòstol', he stated, thus enforcing the Chestertonian view of Shaw as a potential Christian.¹⁹ Because of this Christian appraisal Shaw was to become, of all the heretics, the one who best deserved the name of heretic:

Avui, en tot el món potser només hi ha un heretge que valgui la pena, i és Bernard Shaw. Chesterton té profetitzat que, si viu tant com Matusalem, com ell mateix espera, Bernard Shaw es convertirà al catolicisme. Això està molt ben vist. Per ésser un heretge com cal avui dia, ha d'haver-hi aquesta possibilitat dins l'esperit, encara que la conversió no es produeixi; i la raó és molt senzilla. Sols el catolicisme, la preocupació del catolicisme, la intuïció, o la tràgica impossibilitat de tastar-li el moll, forma les característiques de l'autèntica heretgia.²⁰

This partial view of Shaw is essential for understanding the reception of his plays in Catalonia.

¹⁸ See, respectively, J. Crexells, 'La paradoxa', *LP*, 19 March 1925, p. 1, and J. Pla, 'Bernard Shaw', *LP*, 21 November 1926, p. 1.

¹⁹ 'Bernard Shaw', *LR*, 3 (1917), 320-21, reprinted in his *Escriptors estrangers contemporanis* (Barcelona: Minerva, 1918), pp. 26-28. Also Crexells took the view that sympathy for human beings was the essential quality of Shaw, and he used Chesterton's comparison of Shaw with a saint, in 'La pietat de Bernard Shaw', *LP*, 17 December 1925, p. 1. T. Garcés brings in this comparison quoting from Chesterton's *George Bernard Shaw*, in 'El deixeble del diable', *LP*, 15 November 1925, p. 1.

²⁰ J. M. Ràfols, 'Heretges', *EM*, 8 August 1930, p. 8.

It is difficult to draw a line between the polemicist, and more particularly the adversary of Chesterton — ‘the loyal adversary’, as he was called — and the playwright, to the point that the publication of Shaw’s plays found justification in their close association:

George Bernard Shaw comparteix amb Gilbert Keith Chesterton la popularitat més gran entre el públic anglès. Sigui prou dir que l’un i l’altre veuen sovint llur nom imprès amb les soles inicials en qualsevol diari, i tot lector sap sense vacil·lar de qui es tracta. En aquestes planes, on (ja es veu prou) G. K. C. té molt de bo i s’emporta les preferències, ens plau de començar la publicació íntegra de *Cèsar i Cleopatra* del seu adversari lleial i irreductible G. B. S. [...] Però si G. B. S. no ha estat representat, comença d’ésser traduït, gràcies a Carles Capdevila que n’ha emprès la tasca (amb més bons desigs de familiaritzar-hi el nostre públic que no pas d’un èxit material, cal dir-ho).²¹

Publication of Catalan translations of Shaw’s plays coincided with the peak years of Chesterton’s success in Catalonia (1925-27). Carles Capdevila, close to the Catholic group who carried ahead the pro-Chesterton campaign in *La Nova Revista*, was the man in charge of the ambitious project of translating Shaw into Catalan. Chestertonian enthusiasms which dominated the Catholic intellectual atmosphere were surely a factor in popularising Shaw as playwright, as the impact of his plays should be understood in connection with his controversial qualities. Shaw was presented as a controversial thinker, devoted to the defence of his ideas:

Ell és el primer descontent que combat les pròpies febleses amb ascendent rigorisme ascètic, sense vidències i sense transcendentalismes, com si la força de la victòria pressentida naixés del convenciment de tenir raó, que el fa, entre tots els personatges de les seves obres, l’únic protagonista, l’únic necessari, perquè *es necessita* per a justificar el combat. [...] El seu conflicte és ell mateix, i les idees juguen en la seva obra una tragèdia més apassionant que les *tragèdies naturals*.²²

²¹ Introduction to ‘Cèsar i Cleopatra’, *LNR*, 3 (1927), 119. According to *LNR*, Shaw could not have been published in Catalan before 1925 since the Spanish translator Julio Broutá had the exclusive rights to all Shaw’s plays. A Catalan performance of Shaw’s *Candida* is, however, mentioned by López-Picó ten years earlier. ‘Bernard Shaw’, *LR*, 3 (1917), 320-21.

²² López-Picó, ‘Bernard Shaw’, *LR*, 3 (1917), 320-21 (his emphasis). One may note an intention to contrast Shaw, despite his play with social ideas, to the naturalistic drama.

Such a presentation could easily apply to Chesterton. Both shared the same fighting spirit however opposed the causes were, ideas always underlying their works to the extent that they were described as allegories, a reflection of their philosophy, whose protagonists were necessarily the authors themselves. In Chesterton philosophical ideas gave that impression of unity to his works, no matter the form in which they were written. Likewise, ideas played the principal rôle in Shaw's plays, motivating the action itself, 'en el vaivé nerviós i llampant de les idees de Shaw hi ha tot el moviment de l'acció teatral', as López-Picó put it. Shaw's theory was that conflict had to be at the basis of each of his plays — 'problem plays', as they were called — all of them preceded by lengthy prefaces, in which he set out his philosophy. This theory, which was close to the kind of literature of ideas Chesterton defended in *Heretics*, fitted ideally into the expectations of ideological debate, providing stimulating and engaging philosophy to counterbalance his opponent's views, thus extending the atmosphere of polemics to the theatrical scene. Shaw's plays were read as a continuation of the journalistic debate, bringing into it controversial topics such as marriage, democracy, socialism, Darwinian theory of evolution, pacifism, and so forth.

Càndida was the only one of Shaw's plays performed in Catalan by the time López-Picó wrote his notice. For some critics, it was the best of his more serious plays, to stand as an example of comedy of ideas, bringing off contrasts of theory and ideas throughout. López-Picó alluded to the audience being infuriated by the long emotionless dialogues; such a reaction was likewise remarked on by a contemporary critic, who pointed out the lack of credibility of the characters because of the abundance of ideas.²³ López-Picó, however, appreciates Shaw's sincere philosophical intensity (the 'honradesa de la noble baralla') not only in *Càndida* but also in other

²³ G. S. Street, 'Sheridan and Mr. Shaw', *Blackwood's Magazine*, June 1900, in T. F. Evans (ed.), *G. B. Shaw: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1976), pp. 86-89.

plays — and he mentions *Man and Superman*, *Man and Fate*, *Major Barbara*, *Mrs Warren's Profession*, *Androcles and the Lion* and *Pigmalion*. Shaw's comedies of ideas were generally reviewed in terms of his critical spirit and his intellectual stimulation, as if they were written to be read, to make people think rather than to offer easy entertainment. The intellectual admiration expressed by López-Picó contrasting with the coldness of the audience foreshadowed the disappointing reception of Shaw in Catalonia, which can be clearly perceived from the above presentation of Capdevila's translations in *La Nova Revista*.

4 A case in point: G. B. Shaw's *Saint Joan*

The presence of Shaw in Catalonia was intensified with the performance of *Santa Joana* in October 1925, just two years after it opened in New York, and when Shaw's international fame was at its peak. The impact of this particular work in Catalonia must be analysed in the light of a number of circumstantial factors. First of all, Shaw's international reputation following his award of the Nobel Prize in 1925 clearly prompted the performance. Noteworthy, too, is that the wide acclaim *Santa Joana* enjoyed in Barcelona was preceded a year before by a successful French performance, when the canonisation of Joan of Arc (1920) was still a fresh event.²⁴ *Saint Joan*, moreover, turned out to be a world success, the most accepted of Shaw's serious plays, and surely the work which left the greatest mark in the Latin countries. As for France and Catalonia, it proved to be particularly appealing, for its delivering of a plausible picture of an heroic and familiar character.

²⁴ See, for instance, J. M. de Sagarra's review in *LP*, 25 October 1925, p. 1. Sagarra here takes the opportunity to address a call to theatre managers to perform more of Shaw, and he complains about the long silence affecting the reception of this author who had become a *rara avis* in Catalonia. The success *Saint Joan* had enjoyed in France might have prompted the decision to perform it in Catalan. See J. Carner-Ribalta, 'Bernard Shaw a Paris', *LP*, 23 August 1924, p. 1, and E. Martínez-Ferrando's summary of D. Saurat's article in *RC*, 3 (1925), 638-39.

The Chestertonian campaign, then at its peak, prepared the way for a successful reception of the play in Catholic intellectual circles. *Santa Joana* was specially reviewed as an illustration of the revival of Catholic letters in England championed by Chesterton and Belloc, and in this particular work some Catalan critics saw a clear influence of Chesterton on Shaw.²⁵ Catholic critics especially appreciated, as they did in the case of Chesterton, Shaw's capacity for informing historical figures with present-day meaning. *Saint Joan* came as a triumph, intellectually and theatrically, enforcing the Chestertonian connection through the work that was viewed as illustrating Shaw's mind at his best, through the heroic figure of Joan turned into 'a great middle-class reformer'.²⁶ There was general agreement among contemporary English critics in regarding *Saint Joan* as the culmination of Shaw's career as playwright; and it stands as the high point of Shaw's presence in Catalan letters.

The success of *Santa Joana*, however, was unique. Theatrical and intellectual concerns merged successfully in that play of ideas to the satisfaction of the group who longed to see Shaw triumphing in Catalan theatres. Such expectations, however, were not to be fulfilled. Other works by Shaw had been and continued to be performed in Barcelona without meeting with a favourable response from the audience, who felt uneasy about its witty satire:

Vull confessar que, tot i el meu liberalisme, de primer antuvi vaig sentir una irritació immensa. M'hauria costat poc de pronunciar contra aquella multitud de persones completament tancades a la comprensió d'una obra com *Càndida*, una paraula, una sola paraula, compendi insultant del meu judici: *ases* [...] Jo m'havia divertit i ells no s'havien divertit. A mi m'havia agradat l'obra de Shaw, els seus estirabots, la seva sàtira, la seva veritat i la seva poesia. A ells, els estirabots els havien desconcertat; la sàtira, quan en veien la direcció, els irritava, i quan no en veien la direcció, els ensopia. [...] Costaria poc d'esbrinar si la insuficiència de comprensió d'una obra com *Càndida* prové de falles de

²⁵ See, for instance, R. T. Hegarty, 'El catolicisme en la literatura anglesa moderna', *LPC*, 3 (1926), 346-49.

²⁶ See, for instance, T. S. Eliot's unsigned article from *Criterion*, October 1924, in Evans, *G. B. Shaw: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 293-94.

la cultura o de falles de la intel·ligència, de defectes de raça o de defectes de civilització.²⁷

This indifference shown towards *Càndida* that so annoyed Soldevila was also characteristic, according to him, of French audiences, *Saint Joan* being again the exception. The unpopularity of Shaw can be however understood if we bear in mind the type of dramas he wrote: Guansé described them as ‘dramas cerebrals’; *Candida* represented ‘una dona amb cor i cervell’, ‘mestressa del bon sentit i de seny’, who had nothing to do with the ‘innombrables figures femenines banals i adotzenades que integren el repertori habitual’ and she is compared with *Saint Joan* for her fighting attitude against the comfortable conventions of their times.²⁸ Pla was fascinated by the ideas Shaw brought into his works, and his dialectical, polemical abilities, without being much concerned about the performances. *Saint Joan* was for him an exponent of the comedy of ideas, especially for its epilogue (without which, said a contemporary critic, it would hardly be a Shaw play) and therefore ‘una obra molt diferent de les que solen agradar a París’.²⁹ Bringing Shaw to Catalan stages was a risk, commercially speaking, as some critics were aware, in that his plays were not of the kind which Catalan theatre-goers were used to:

Aquella vaga incoherència que desarticula aparentment la trama, l’agudeses de la frase i la profunditat de les idees que l’autor exterioritza, simplement, com de passada, deu ésser el motiu per què els directors de teatre no arrisquen l’aventura de posar les obres de Bernard Shaw. [...] No és d’estranyar que el nostre públic, més o menys barceloní, distret per naturalesa i estragat per mor del repertori que solen servir-li per a entreteniment dels seus ocis, li hagi passat per alt aquesta obra [*La Conversió del Capità Brassbound*], una de les més simples i de bon entendre de Bernard Shaw, i obligui a l’empresa a desdir-se de tan bona pensada i tornar a les comèdies inòcues de consuetud.³⁰

²⁷ Myself [C. Soldevila], ‘*Càndida* al Poliorama’, *LP*, 24 May 1928, p. 1. Neither did this play enjoy a popular reception when it was first put on in Barcelona, according to López-Picó (*LR*, 3 [1917], 320-21).

²⁸ A. A. [Avel·lí Artís], ‘*Càndida* al teatre Goya’, *M*, 15 January 1931, p. 6.

²⁹ Pla, ‘Joana d’Arc’, in his *Obra completa*, IV (Barcelona: Destino, 1967), pp. 46-49.

³⁰ M. Llor, ‘Bernard Shaw i el públic barceloní’, *M*, 20 February 1930, p. 5.

Shaw's comedies were difficult; they required interpretation of ideas, thus an active participation from the audience. The audacity of his plays might also have accounted for the unfavourable reaction, as if audiences were not ready to catch the witty criticisms and sharp comments; and apparently censorship was used in an attempt to make the actual performance sound more pleasant to the public's ear, to the annoyance of the critic:

Però, on quedaven els descordaments i les brutalitats de Bernard Shaw en l'obra, tal com era representada? Les asprors, les inconveniències del seu protagonista, havien estat atenuades, llimades de tal manera, que hom l'havia convertit en un 'gentleman'. El pensament i, sobretot, les intencions de Bernard Shaw resultaven així del tot frustrades. [...] Comencem, doncs, es pot dir, a tolerar Bernard Shaw, a condició, però, que ens sigui retocat, pentinat, perfumat. És a dir, que ens sigui ofert en unes formes que no són ben bé les seves. Així cal encara considerar Bernard Shaw com un autor atrevit entre nosaltres.³¹

The favourable claims of such influential theatre-critics as Sagarra, Pla, Soldevila, Guansé and Llor did after all have little influence on the Catalan public, who loved French theatre and the Spanish repertoire of 'comèdies de consuetud'. Capdevila's project of translating Shaw's works was discontinued despite his personal enthusiasm and the encouragement he received from intellectual circles.³² In Soldevila's *Què cal llegir* (1928) Shaw has an important place among modern English playwrights; of the six works recommended, four had been translated into Catalan by then: *Candida*, *Saint Joan*, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *The Devil's Disciple*. It is hardly a coincidence that Soldevila's selection matched with Capdevila's choice, but rather an indication of the significant, although limited, appreciation of Shaw among Catalan intellectuals.³³

³¹ D. Guansé, 'En quin país som?', *La Nau*, 7 June 1929, p. 1.

³² See, for instance, J. M. Sagarra, 'A propòsit de Santa Joara', *LP*, 25 October 1925, p. 1.

³³ Capdevila's translations of Shaw's plays produced after 1928 include *L'home i les armes*, *La professió de la senyora Warren*, *Com ell va enganyar el marit d'ella*, and *Androcles i el lleó*. To the best of my knowledge, only the first one was published (1934).

The expectations Soldevila and other Catalan writers had about Shaw's success clashed with the general indifference on the part of audiences: that deep cultural divide may well account for the failure of the many attempts at featuring this author as an important figure in Catalan letters. In his plays some critics may have dreamed of the ideal of encouraging civilised 'fair play' on current topics of interest, profoundly believing in changing the public's cultural habits from above. In the case of Shaw, however, such idealistic attempts proved a failure, maybe because the cultural divide was too wide to be ignored: as Soldevila thought on the occasion of *Càndida*'s performance in Barcelona, reactions towards Shaw might have turned out differently had the audience devoured the same number of novels as any English typist had by her thirties.

5 H. G. Wells and the impact of *The Outline of History*

Both Chesterton and Shaw were star figures in the Catalan literary milieu of the early twenties and thirties. In the atmosphere of 'alta polèmica' prior attention has been given to Shaw, Chesterton's loyal adversary, although other Edwardian writers, such as Belloc, also had a place in that journalistic context.³⁴

H. G. Wells was one of Chesterton's adversaries to whom a chapter in *Heretics* was devoted, although he may well have kept a lower profile than his colleagues in the public debates. The impact of Wells in the Catalan press was therefore weaker, if compared with that

³⁴ There is evidence Belloc was well known in Catalonia. Carner was familiar with the writer (Ortín, 'Les traduccions de Josep Carner', *Catalan Review*, 6 [1992], 418), and also Crexells ('La mort de la novel·la', *RC*, 1 [1924], 206-07). His book on the French Revolution was advertised by Editorial Catalana (*LVC*, 25 January 1919, p. 14) although it never appeared as far as I know. A number of his articles were also published: e. g. 'The Free Press', *LR*, V (1919), 204-06; 'Els mals que causa la falsa història', *RC*, 12 (1929), 501-03; 'El prestigi d'Anglaterra', *EM*, 22 October 1933, p. 10; 'Cròniques d'Anglaterra', *LPC*, 18 (1933), 220-24; 'Les coses essencials', *EM*, 30 November 1933, p. 8, and an obituary of Chesterton, *EM*, 21 June 1936, p. 9. Belloc's articles have been compiled in J. Galí (ed.), *Història i sentit: els articles d'Hilari Belloc a 'El Mati' (1929-1936)* (Barcelona: Barcelonesa d'Edicions, 1995).

of Shaw, and was mainly restricted to one of his works, *The Outline of History*, which sold thousands of copies and was translated into most languages. The intense controversy following its publication in 1920 concerned a much debated issue from the nineteenth century, the evolutionary view of History. The journalistic debate was primarily stimulated by the persistent attacks of Belloc, on the grounds of the ideological biases he saw in Wells's approach to Christianity, which were collected in book form under the title *A Companion to Mr. Wells's Outline of History*.³⁵ That vivid controversy — which was closely followed in the *London Mercury*, a journal some Catalan writers were familiar with — was a factor that helped to encourage interest in Wells's book. It was translated into Spanish in 1925, and some arrangements were made by M. Manent to obtain the rights for its publication in Catalan.³⁶

The real impact of Wells's book, nevertheless, did not materialise until a few years later. More specifically, it should be linked to Chesterton's rôle in the controversy, as he not only acted as mediator between Wells and Belloc, but also delivered his own reply. That was the principal purpose of *The Everlasting Man*, which came out in 1925, translated into Catalan by Manent two years later, to become the most commented on among Chesterton's books, the book that made him a highly reputed writer in Catalonia. The publication of *L'home perdurable* brought to the surface an ideological debate on the issue of history, polarising those who took part in it either on Wells's side (backing the Evolutionary view) or Chesterton's (postulating the orthodox

³⁵ Belloc's review of *The Outline of History* was published in the *LMerc*, 3 (1920), 43-62. For a general account of the controversy, see M. Coren, *The Invisible Man: The Life and Liberties of H. G. Wells* (London: Bloomsbury, 1994), pp. 151-70. Despite its success and influence, the book was regarded as a perishable, inaccurate work in some current reviews: see, for instance, 'Mr. Wells presents the Universe' [review of Part I], *TLS*, 27 November 1919, p. 693, and E. Shanks, 'The Outline of History', *LMerc*, 4 (1920), 255-57. On the preoccupation with history in Edwardian literature, see Hynes, *Edwardian Occasions* (London: Routledge, 1972), p. 7.

³⁶ I owe this information to Dr M. Roser.

Christian view of creationism).³⁷ But most importantly, the Wells-Chesterton contest was received as a significant result of the open polemical atmosphere characteristic of English culture, which had produced such outstanding achievements as *The Outline of History* and *The Everlasting Man*, no matter how distant they were from an ideological standpoint:

Davant d'un llibre així [*The Outline of History*] és perfectament natural que Chesterton hagués reaccionat d'una manera vivíssima i que, fatalment, s'hagués trobat empès a escriure una altra silueta contenint una vindicació de la religió i de l'Església com a factors positius. Aquest origen, una mica modest, fa tant d'honor a Wells com al seu propi autor [Chesterton], a part de la satisfacció que deu produir el fet de trobar un llibre tan bo que només de refutar-lo en pugui sortir un altre llibre excel·lent. Aquest és l'origen de *L'home perdurable*, i noteu, tot passant, els enormes avantatges que produeix a un país el fet de tenir la llibertat de pensament definitivament consolidada i els fruits considerables que dona l'adopció, com un fet de normalitat social, del règim de discussió i de polèmica, obert.³⁸

As Pla clearly suggested, this atmosphere of free controversy and brilliant polemics highlighted the popularity of *L'home perdurable*, and of Wells's *Outline*, in Catalan letters. In the case of Chesterton, Pla interestingly points out his rhetorical abilities, seeing them as his main weapon for defending his opposition to science. What mattered for Pla, above all, was the art of polemics itself and the method adopted by Chesterton and Wells, and here a clear parallel can be found with the Shaw-Chesterton contest as perceived in Junoy's account.

However important the interest aroused by *The Outline of History*, popularising Wells

³⁷ R. Rucabado, arguing along the same line as Belloc and finding support in Chesterton, attacked Wells's anti-Catholic points of view ('*L'Esbós de la Història*, de H. G. Wells', *LVC*, 10 June 1926, p. 5). The publication of *Història del món* by J. Pijoan prompted again Rucabado's reaction against both Wells's and Pijoan's versions of history ('*La Història del Món* d'en Josep Pijoan', *LVC*, 17 July 1926, p. 7). Also in *LVC* P. Bertrana proved a defender of Wells's approach ('Heribert G. Wells, company d'estiueig', 16 September 1925, p. 5). A vivid discussion on evolution arose in the socialist newspaper *L'Opinió* after the publication of *L'home perdurable*: see J. Miravittles, 'Chesterton, marxant de fum', 12 May 1928, p. 4; A. Sans, 'L'home, perdurable?', 23 June 1928, p. 8; 7 July 1928, p. 5; 14 July 1928, p. 6; 28 July 1928, pp. 4, 6; 15 September 1928, p. 7; and J. Sacs, 'Cal distingir', 21 July 1928, p. 1.

³⁸ J. Pla, 'Josep Maria Junoy: inestabilitat', in his *Obra Completa*, XXIX (Barcelona: Destino, 1975), p. 104.

at large was not a principal aim. Wells's other non-fictional works had failed to find an echo, nor did the writer become involved in the current controversies in the way his fellow-writers did. The debate about *The Outline* did, however, stimulate interest in its author, as Jordana once suggested when claiming that it was time to translate Wells after such a polemical book had been popularised.³⁹ Yet the fact remains that Wells's social and political works were largely unknown and were never translated into Catalan, unlike the early novels and short stories. The Catalan selection of this side of his vast production, the most favoured by Chesterton, requires further attention.

6 The reception of Wells's early fiction

Before the circumstantial impact of *The Outline of History*, Wells had been known in Catalonia for a long time as a writer of scientific romances and short stories. A large number of his works had been translated into Spanish from the early years of the century, many of them published in Barcelona, and a publishing house based in Barcelona was to carry out the publication of his complete works in Spanish.⁴⁰ As is evident from the list of works translated (with the exception of *Anticipations*), it was the author of scientific romances that Spanish and Catalan readers were familiar with.

The first attempt to have Wells rendered into Catalan was made by Carner, who in 1918 offered Manent the choice of translating a work by Chesterton, Wells or Kipling for his

³⁹ 'Les novel·les de Wells', *RC*, 3 (1925), 580-85 (580).

⁴⁰ Spanish translations published by La Vida Literaria in Barcelona between 1904 and 1905 include: *El hombre invisible* (1904), *La visita maravillosa* (1904), *Anticipaciones* (1905), *Los primeros hombres en la luna* (1905), *El alimento de los dioses* (1905), *El amor y el señor Lewisham* (1905); all of them reviewed by A. Martínez i Serinyà and Geróni Zanné in the Catalan *Modernista* journal *Juventut*. *La guerra de los mundos* was translated by R. de Maeztu and published for *El Imparcial* in Madrid in 1914, and *En el país de los ciegos* came out in 1919, published by Atenea, which was to publish the remaining works.

Biblioteca Literària.⁴¹ Catalan translations of Wells appeared some years later, and stuck to the preference for his early works: *La contrada dels orbs* (c. 1924), *L'home invisible* (1929), *L'amor i Mr. Lewisham* (1930), and *Pollock i l'indígena de Porroh* (1935: a reprint of *La contrada dels orbs* plus other stories). The only exception was *La perla de l'amor* (1928), a recreation of the Persian parable about the immortality of beauty, which is a late short story (1925) — and one of Wells's favourites — that shares, however, the spirit of the earliest.

The Chestertonian connection in the reception of Wells's novels lies in his particular preference for the fantastic side of Wells's early narrative. Alluding to the author of *The Time Machine*, Chesterton praised the gifts of wild imagination and warm sympathy in his portrait of the writer quoted above in this chapter, thereby dismissing the established view of the mechanical Wells. Within Wells's early works, however, a significant distinction must be noticed. In *Heretics* Chesterton fiercely attacked *The Food of the Gods* (1904), perhaps one of the less human and less poetic of the Wellsian fantasies, about the discovery of a nutrient which makes everything fed upon it grow to a gigantic size. He opposed above all the point of view from which the story was written, the giant's point of view, which clashed with his defence of the little man he found illustrated, for instance, in the old tale of Jack the Giant-Killer. *The Food of the Gods* was one of the first stories translated into Spanish, perhaps because of the impact it had at the time, although the Catalan reviewer, like Chesterton, thought it a 'monstrosity'. At the other extreme stood the poetic fairy stories of *The Country of the Blind* (1911): 'stories of almost intolerably ordinary people in almost too absorbingly extraordinary circumstances.'⁴² The

⁴¹ A. Manent, *Marià Manent: una biografia literària* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1995), p. 63. According to Ortín, Carner was particularly interested in the early Wells's novels ('La prosa literària en l'obra de Josep Carner', p. 79). For further detail, see Chapter 3. 1.

⁴² 'Mr. Wells's Short Stories', *TLS*, 24 August 1911, p. 310.

qualities of philosophical bonhomie, humanity and beauty of atmosphere, the English reviewer points out, were better suited to the imagination of that general public for which they were intended. Similarly, Catalan critics were to appreciate these qualities, highlighting the mixture of fantastic imagination and human sympathy so characteristic of Wells's romances.⁴³ The contrast between these two works clearly illustrates the notion of human sympathy, blended with the fantastic, that Chesterton observed in his portrait of the novelist.

Wells was above all appreciated as an inventor of marvellous stories, whose early fantasies bore scant resemblance to the social works of his later production, despite the fact that Wells himself presented his scientific romances as containing social and political issues. For example, he regarded *The Invisible Man*, the most popular of them, as an allegory with a social purpose. According to a contemporary reviewer, however, *The Invisible Man* was essentially a humorous story which could well be compared with a fairy tale, its comic source of inspiration being attributed to Gilbert's *Bab Ballads* (1904) — one of them is called 'The Perils of Invisibility' and tells the story of an old man who was given by a fairy the gift of invisibility.⁴⁴ English critics were later to dismiss Wells's social concerns when dealing with his scientific romances, emphasising, on the contrary, Wells's ability at writing fantasies which made the readers experience wonder, fear, perplexity, and human sympathy.⁴⁵

Reinforcing that critical view, *L'home invisible* was reviewed as a work of pure fantasy which the reader ('el lector una mica ingenu') would enjoy for its purely imaginative interest, sometimes comic yet tragic in the end, which had nothing to do with the author's social concerns.

⁴³ See, for instance, C. A. Jordana, 'Reflexions sobre Wells', *M*, 29 October 1936, p. 5.

⁴⁴ C. Shorter mentions in his review of the book the familiar fairy-tale theme of invisibility (*Bkm*, 8 [1887], 19-20). Others of Wells's early romances have been compared to fairy tales: E. Shanks points out the resemblance of *The Country of the Blind* to a Gourmont fairy-tale. 'The Work of Mr. H. G. Wells', *LMerc*, 5 (1922), 508-18.

⁴⁵ See, for instance, 'The Scientific Romances of H. G. Wells', *TLS*, 3 August 1933, p. 517.

The introduction to *L'home invisible* was changed to make clear that difference, perhaps following Jordana's suggestion, as he found totally inappropriate the statement included in its first edition that 'no cal pensar que l'interès novel·lesc de *L'home invisible* es vegi minvat pel tractament de problemes polítics i socials', which in a later edition was altered to 'No cal pensar, però, que l'interès novel·lesc, a estones còmic i finalment tràgic de *L'home invisible*, es vegi gens minvat per unes preocupacions que no havia d'exterioritzar plenament fins uns quants anys més tard'.⁴⁶ The change is significant. First of all, it emphasises a separate view of the author of fantasies versus the social novelist, in the same vein as contemporary English reviewers. It also brings out a value judgement on these two aspects of Wells's narrative, stressing the 'novelistic interest' characteristic of Wells's fantasies as against the 'social worries' that were to weigh so heavily in his later novels.

This view of the imaginative Wells was, however, mediated in contemporary criticism through the association with a particular name: Jules Verne. The French writer was systematically brought in for the purpose of comparison, and Wells was even called 'the English Jules Verne'. The comparison was relevant in that Verne anticipated to some extent Wells's formula for the scientific romance, although this was questioned and even rejected after the publication of *The First Men in the Moon* in 1901, mainly on the grounds of Wells's moral and imaginative qualities.⁴⁷ Verne's stories concerned ingenious predictions — some of which came true — whereas Wells's were purely fantastic. But more importantly, it was the imaginative and literary gifts of the English novelist that were mentioned in claiming for him superiority over his

⁴⁶ Jordana, 'H. G. Wells, *L'home invisible*', *M*, 8 August 1929, p. 4.

⁴⁷ For the comparison of Verne and Wells, see A. Bennett, 'Herbert George Wells and his Work' (1902), in H. Wilson (ed.), *Arnold Bennett and H.G. Wells: A Record of a Personal and a Literary Friendship* (London: Hart-Davis, 1960), pp. 260-76; F. Gribble, 'H. G. Wells', *Everyman*, 4 (1914), 295-96; and 'Scientific Romances', *TLS*, 3 August 1933, p. 517.

French counterpart, as Jordana observed in his review of *L'home invisible*, dismissing the established comparison of some 'ill-informed critics'. Wells's superiority had no less to do with the interest in the human reaction towards the experiments, which was found missing in his forerunner, who worried little about the consequences of the invention:

El constant adonament científic de Wells li permet de fer *tours de force* convincents en els seus vols imaginatius. La construcció de l'esfera, vehicle de viatges interplanetaris, en *Els primers homes a la lluna* destrueix de cop tota comparança amb Jules Verne. No costava massa de fer davallar els marcians de Wells a la Terra, però com desempallegar-se'n? Tanmateix, l'operació és acomplerta amb una netedat que enamora [...] Però ni el vol imaginatiu ni l'ànima científica que li permet descriure una corba adequada, no explicarien tots sols la satisfacció que deixen els millors d'aquests *imaginative romances* de Wells. Imaginar-se uns quants éssers estranys en mons a part i enllaçar-los amb fantasioses aventures no és gaire difícil. El que costa és de fer-nos sentir que aquests éssers, amb caràcter extraordinari, són solidaris amb nosaltres, hi estan relacionats no solament per contrast, sinó per prolongació.⁴⁸

Wells's scientific romances went beyond mere scientific invention: they were more complex and had some touch of human reality, for which they were regarded as superior in imaginative power and in human depth. It was that touch of reality that made his fantastic romances sound plausible, 'tangibles' and even 'casolans', as Guansé described them, far removed from the metaphysical visionary Poe.⁴⁹ 'Maliciós' was a common adjective applied to Wells, used in contrast with the naïve ('ingenu') Verne whose stories were primarily intended for youngsters.

The different sides of Wells's career were well known by the time he started to be translated into Catalan and they appeared clearly distinguished, for instance, in López-Picó's outline of 1917 (one of the earliest pieces of criticism on Wells published in Catalan). López-Picó regards with scepticism the creator of utopias and critical reformer, though he admits to the

⁴⁸ Jordana, 'Reflexions sobre Wells', p. 5.

⁴⁹ '*L'home invisible*', *RC*, 11 (1929), 165.

intelligence of the visionary who has just shaped a new post-War Europe in *Mr Britling Sees It Through*; looks sympathetically on Wells's marvellous fantasies (*The Time Machine* being a culminating exponent), and specially appreciates both his realist novels (*Love and Mr Lewisham*) and character novels (*History of Mr Polly*).⁵⁰ López-Picó's view embodies in itself an implicit value judgement of Wells's narrative which was to be enforced by the younger generation of critics.

Like their English contemporaries, Catalan critics held the view that Wells's social and political writings had some harmful effects on his literary gifts: his later novels are often qualified as didactic and propagandist, thus uninteresting and of ephemeral value. The more favourable judgements applied to the story-teller, author of fairy tales and scientific romances, and not to the socialist utopian author of political allegories of the post-War years.⁵¹ Jordana brought in Wells's personal view to point out how the 'reformador social' that dominated in his later works had discredited the creative writer:

En la seva recent autobiografia, Wells es queixava que un dels seus personatges de postguerra, Bulpington, no hagués tingut el mateix èxit del seu Kipps de principis de segle. La culpa no és pas del públic sinó de l'escriptor, que ha preferit l'èxit del tercer Wells [ie. the social investigator] al del creador literari.⁵²

Wells's social dimension, however, should not be totally dismissed, for it was almost unavoidable to associate his work with his socialist convictions. *Anticipations* (1901), the first

⁵⁰ 'H. G. Wells', *LR*, 3 (1917), 368-71.

⁵¹ See 'The Scientific Romances of H. G. Wells', *TLS*, 3 August 1933, p. 517, and E. Shanks, 'The Work of Mr. Wells', *LMerc*, 5 (1922), 506-18, and 'Reflections on the Recent History of the English Novel', *LMerc*, 4 (1921), 173-83 (175-76), trans. M[illàs]-R[aurell] in *LR*, 11 (1925), 238-43.

⁵² 'Reflexions sobre Wells', *M*, 29 October 1936, p. 5. Soldevila might have agreed with this opinion, as in his choice he only includes Wells's early novels: *The War of The Worlds*, *The Invisible Man*, *When the Sleeper Wakes*, *Love and Mr Lewisham*, and *Kipps*. *Què cal llegir?: l'art d'enriquir un esperit, l'art de formar una biblioteca* (Barcelona: Llibreria Catalònia), p. 82.

Wellsian utopia, was still a touchstone in the reputation of the socialist writer in post-War years, as can be observed in the common labels such as ‘reformador social’, ‘réformateur’, ‘inventeur d’idées’ circulating in Continental journals.⁵³

The problem lay in how to reconcile Wells’s social *penchant* with the favourable literary evaluation of his early works. In Jordana’s review of Wells’s novels, although he makes no explicit value judgement on particular titles as if not daring to dismiss any of them, he does mention the apparent contradiction between the social purpose and Wells’s artistic talent.⁵⁴ He avoids comparing the novels in literary terms, focusing his approach on the contribution of Wells to the novelistic treatment of social problems, no matter what novel is involved. In Jordana’s eyes, this treatment appeared substantially different from the widespread ‘*novel·les de tesi*’, presumably French. He argues that Wells’s novels might serve a moral purpose, yet the novelist never adopted the manner of a preacher: his sense of humour, his ‘*sentit esportiu*’, his need for ‘fair play’ set him, according to Jordana, apart from any authoritarian, partial view of society. Jordana’s argument interestingly sheds light on qualities similarly dealt with in English assessments of the writer: the ‘*philosophical bonhomie*’ praised by the *TLS* reviewer, for instance, is close to Jordana’s notion of ‘*humanisme patètic*’, by which he understood the serenity with which Wells looked at the world, his acute observation of social behaviour, his sense of humour and playfulness ultimately mitigating his social and moral concerns. For Jordana the most valuable quality of Wells was his faith in men, a quality he especially recognised in *The Outline of History*. Although López-Picó would not have gone that far, he agreed with Jordana

⁵³ See, for instance, F. Roz, ‘*Les Anticipations de M. Wells*’, *RDM*, 41 (1917), 445-56. Roz’s *Le Roman anglais contemporain* is the bibliographical reference provided in López-Picó’s article in which Wells is also described as ‘reformador’ (*LR*, 3 [1917], 368-71). E. Cecchi (whose ‘*Visita de Chesterton*’ was published in *LR*), alludes to the ‘*eloquente divulgatore d’esperienze intellettuale*’ (‘*Petimenti d’un socialista intellettuale*’, *Nuova Antologia*, 250 [1926], 318-24).

⁵⁴ ‘*Les novel·les de Wells*’, *RC*, 3 (1925), 580-86.

on one essential point: the humanity they discovered in Wells's fantasies would always be prior to his social interests, and would make his writings more attractive and humane when compared with the *roman à thèse*. Wells's social novels, whatever their impact, were always regarded as holding a lower place in the ranking of his vast production. He became first famous for his scientific romances and realist novels — says the presentation of Biblioteca Univers — and 'escriu també grans utopies i sàtires socials [...] que obtenen un gran ressò'⁵⁵ Enough evidence has been provided to demonstrate how highly Catalan critics thought of his early fantasies.

The Catalan preference for the early Wells was not limited to the scientific romances. It includes a second important aspect of his narrative, concerning the novels he wrote in the Edwardian period, between the turn of the century and World War I. *Love and Mr Lewisham* (1900) and *The History of Mr Polly* (1910) are in particular regarded as the most representative of Edwardian concerns. In looking at the different sides of his narrative, Jordana paid special attention to these 'novel·les de tarannà més normal', which he thought to be Wells at his best. Jordana himself was the translator of *Love and Mr Lewisham*, which tells the story of a student of science with lofty ideals who falls in love and whose career is, as a result, ruined. *Love and Mr Lewisham*, the story of the self-making of an ordinary man, has remained a classic example of the Edwardian novel: the romance about ordinary existence. But in this picture of an ordinary life Jordana observed a degree of emotional power — always displayed with 'restraint' — a suggestion of real life problems, and he understandably criticised the superfluous, and misleading, presentation of the novel as 'una novel·la lleugera, com si diguéssim a l'aquarel·la, d'unes amors somrients'.⁵⁶ For Jordana the 'element ponderat' ('balancing') chiefly characterised

⁵⁵ *Propostes de la Biblioteca Univers* (Barcelona: Llibreria Catalònia, n. d.), p. 15 (my emphasis).

⁵⁶ 'H. G. Wells: *L'amor i Mr. Lewisham*', *M*, 12 March 1931, p. 4.

Wells's standpoint, and even applied to his social works. This was the quality most praised by Catalan critics, the key point about which both López-Picó and Jordana coincided in their approach. Their views clearly contrasted with the one presented in an earlier review of the Spanish translation of *Love and Mr Lewisham*, which appeared in 1905, by G. Zanné:

una veritable novela moderna, filla de l'estudi profund d'un baix món intel·lectual. El professor Lewisham, l'home qui sots l'exterior d'un ésser purament cerebral, amaga l'ànima d'un romàntich, es un tipo ben humà, quals esforços pera enlayrarse, quals deliris sociològichs naufraguen primer a l'impuls de l'amor; a l'impuls de les tristes necessitats de la vida després. La vida dels pobres estudiants anglesos dóna lloch a l'autor a descriure pàgines plenes d'observació y d'humorisme; éssers extravagants, exaltats, visionaris, se mouen febrosament en el medi grisench y ombrívol de la immensa London, qual grandesa arriba a l'ànim del llegidor.⁵⁷

For Zanné, himself a *Modernista* poet, the stress was on the 'estudi profund d'un baix món intel·lectual', tinged with gloomy *fin de siècle* romantic undertones. Some years later, the Catalan presentation of the same work shifted the emphasis to the depiction of 'un tipus ben humà' and on 'pàgines plenes d'observació i humorisme'. Similarly English reviewers, far from observing a decadent note, discovered in this novel and *Mr Polly* Wells in his most sympathetic and familiar vein.⁵⁸

Almost half a century after its publication, *Love and Mr Lewisham* was still regarded as widely representative of the Edwardian age and concerns, and its author was viewed as 'a master of suburban comedy'. For some critics Wells's realist novels could well fit in the tradition of English comedy as epitomised by Dickens.⁵⁹ This type of suburban comedy offered a

⁵⁷ 'El amor y el señor Lewisham', *Juventut* (1905), 622-23.

⁵⁸ According to contemporary reviewers of *Love and Mr Lewisham*, 'healthy realism' is the note observed for this 'romance of a very ordinary young man', contrasting with the decadent atmosphere of the 1890s: see P. Parrinder (ed.), *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1972), pp. 78-84.

⁵⁹ 'The Edwardian Novel', *TLS*, 28 June 1947, p. 322. For the Dickensian connection, see R. Churchill, 'The Comedy of Ideas', in B. Ford (ed.), *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature*, VII (London: 1983), pp. 287-97.

sympathetic portrait of ordinary types like Mr Lewisham or Mr Polly with simple, unsophisticated adventures, facing the real problems of life: it was after all representative of a kind of realistic novel, epitomising the English tradition:

són superiors les seves novel·les realistes en les quals es perpetua la sensació de continuació de la vida ordinària que dona la lectura dels escriptors anglesos. No altra cosa vol dir la moderació, la coratgia davant la realitat i la minuciositat narrativa de pàgines com les de *L'amor i Mr Lewisham*. En pàgines com aquestes, sense recórrer a l'element passional de Hardy o a l'element religiós de Humphry Ward, o a l'enjogaçament infinit i grotesc de Chesterton o a l'atracció del misteri tan volgut dels escriptors anglesos, es revela amb plena naturalitat el narrador artista.⁶⁰

Wells was seen as unaffected by the excesses the critic identified in the passionate Hardy, in the religious conflicts of the popular Mrs Humphry Ward's novels, and in the grotesque exaggeration of Chesterton. To some extent López-Picó's views reflect a *Noucentista* aspiration in that he is alluding to a type of urban, bourgeois novel, embodying a civilised ideal of society. Such an aspiration was still alive in the minds of younger critics, such as Jordana when praising the 'serenity' and 'balanced element' as a common feature of Wells's novels. In the 'plena naturalitat' (López-Picó) and in these 'novel·les de tarannà més normal' (Jordana) they may well have devised a literary model, grounded on this mixture of human and literary qualities. It was on the same basis that Jordana thought Wells's scientific romances had little to compare with Verne, as Wells's scientific ideals, like those of Mr Lewisham, aimed very high.

Despite the critics' acclaim, *L'amor i Mr Lewisham* never achieved the reputation of *L'home invisible*, a reputation which rose further when this work was adapted for the cinema and

On Wells and the English tradition, see also Chapter 3.

⁶⁰ J. M. López-Picó, 'H. G. Wells' (1917), in his *Escriptors estrangers contemporanis* (Barcelona: Minerva, 1918), pp. 31-32.

shown in Barcelona in 1934.⁶¹ In the later years of his career his work increasingly emphasised the utopian social side that some critics so overtly disregarded. A Wellsian fan such as Jordana could still admire the new utopian novels — *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933), for instance, which was also adapted for the cinema in 1935 —, but like his earlier social novels they were never translated into Catalan. The ideological side of Wells appeared clothed in a new garb, the fashion of cosmological fantasies, whose literary value was barely noticed. That was the case of *Star-Begotten* (1937), presented by Manent as a mere transposition in novel form of Wells's historical, scientific, social and political reflections applied to the economic Superman of the American paradise.⁶² Wells was then still a figure in the public eye, notably because of his recent success in the cinema, touring around Europe and the United States. In the literary scene he also had a rôle to play as he was elected president of the PEN Club in 1934. He was invited to Barcelona in May 1935 on the occasion of the PEN thirteenth annual meeting. It was, however, a quick visit which almost passed unnoticed. Estelrich recalls Wells's being indifferent and almost in a hurry to leave, and when interviewed he avoided all questions about literature: the only thing that interested him was apparently the cinema.⁶³

The reception of Wells's fiction illustrates a common and growing desire to achieve a situation of cultural normality. López-Picó revealed it as he alluded in his article on Wells to the 'sensació de continuació de la vida ordinària' provided by English novels. Critics similarly expected to fulfil such a desire as they yearned for the performances of Shaw's plays, and for the enlivenment

⁶¹ J. Cabot, 'Wells al cinema: hem vist *L'home invisible*', *M*, 8 March 1934, p. 4.

⁶² 'La nova utopia de Wells', *RC*, 16 (1938), 136-39.

⁶³ See *Las profecías se cumplen*, p. 120, and R. Tasis and J. Cabré, 'El XIII Congrés del PEN Club: un entreviu amb Wells', *M*, 30 May 1935, p. 1.

of the press with the atmosphere of ‘alta polèmica’ they admired in the Edwardian scene. The ‘Big Four’ represented a convincing ideological model that crystallised in a wide spectrum of literary manifestations. In all of them ideas played the big part: certainly in essay writing, but also in Shaw’s ‘dramas cerebrals’, in the romances of Chesterton and Wells’s early fiction. All their works were intended for a large readership, to teach and please the general public at the same time. In the eyes of a number of Catalan intellectuals, Edwardian writers typified English literary tradition, and English society. The literary values recognised in the work of Chesterton and Wells were not far removed from those praised by the critics of the *London Mercury*. Their emphasis equally lay in the value of romance and fantasy as means of fictionalising ideas, making them accessible and more appealing to the common man. In the next chapters I shall analyse how such values inherent in the Edwardian literary canon kept appearing all through the 1920s and 30s in the Catalan views of the novel, as critics aimed to achieve a normal development for Catalan culture.

Chapter 3

Transmission of the English novel: Translations (1918-38)

The aim of this chapter is to account for the transmission of the English novel to Catalonia through the translations produced between 1918 and 1938. The figure of more than sixty English novels that were translated in this period should be regarded as a remarkable achievement resulting from the intense cultural renewal launched in the early 1900s. Both in terms of quantity and chronological range (from Defoe to Virginia Woolf), they reflect an unparalleled interest in the English tradition, which illustrates a persistent belief in the need to make up for centuries of literary isolation. The concept of national revival was still a guiding force. In the 1900s the word used was *Renaixement* (as opposed to *Renaixença*, a term coined by nineteenth-century romantics), meaning a second revival: 'diem que el renaixement català comença en el noucents com una evolució plena'.¹ A policy of translations — a modest *translatio studii* — was crucial. Josep Carner, the most prolific translator of the period, was to explain some years later the need for such a policy in the case of nations with 'quadres de cultura incomplets'.²

Translations went hand in hand with a growing publishing market. For present purposes, a division can be established *grosso modo* between two phases. The foundation of Editorial Catalana (1917), which relied upon a subscription system and on bourgeois patronage, marks the

¹ See A. Plana, 'Les valors del nostre Renaixement' (1915), in his *Les valors del nostre Renaixement*, ed. I. Pelegrí (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1976), pp. 37-46 (38). That second revival had been advanced in many respects by the *Modernista* generation of writers and cultural entrepreneurs. See J. L. Marfany, 'El modernisme', in *HLC*, VIII, pp. 75-142. The mainstream of the English novel, however, was not a major model in the turn-of-the-century. For a description of the *modernista* novel, see also A. Yates, *Una generació sense novel·la?* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1975), pp. 23-108, and J. Castellanos, 'La novel·la modernista', in *HLC*, VIII, pp. 481-623.

² 'En tot estat d'ordenada cultura caldria [...] un sistema raonablement complet i tècnicament segur de traduccions d'obres essencials de parles alienes. Això s'aplicaria, amb doble raó, als pobles amb quadres de cultura incomplets.' 'L'art de traduir' (1944), in his *El reialme de la poesia*, ed. N. Nardi and I. Pelegrí (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1986), pp. 195-96 (195).

starting point. In its series *Biblioteca Literària*, launched in 1918 by Carner, translations of English novelists found a prominent place. Carner himself provided a substantial share of the overall output (Defoe, Dickens, George Eliot, Arnold Bennett) and commissioned other classic titles such as *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Vicar of Wakefield* and *The Jungle Book*.³ A second phase followed in the mid-1920s as a result of the creation of new publishing houses, namely *Llibreria Catalònia* (1924), which took over *Biblioteca Literària* and launched *Biblioteca Univers*, and *Edicions Proa* (1928). It was in this second stage that a number of contemporary authors were incorporated, especially in Proa's fiction series 'A Tot Vent', in which Virginia Woolf, Aldous Huxley and Maurice Baring coexisted with Walter Scott and Dickens. Classic and modern titles also mixed in the popular fiction series *Quaderns Literaris*, launched in 1934.

The present chapter seeks to put on the map of Catalan letters the range of English novels offered in translation. France has a prominent rôle in the picture. French translations of English novels were available in Catalan bookshops and French was the foreign language *par excellence* all educated readers knew at the time, compared with a far more limited knowledge of English. The success English novelists had on the Continent is not an element to be found in the histories of English literature of the period.⁴ George Meredith and Thomas Hardy, both regarded as the two major survivors of the Victorian age (both still living at the time *Biblioteca Literària* was founded) were not published in Catalonia until the early 1930s. Of the five best-known

³ For a survey of the early years of *Biblioteca Literària* (with bibliography), see L. Cabré and M. Ortín, 'Aproximació a Josep Carner, traductor: els anys de l'Editorial Catalana (1918-1921)', *Els Marges*, 31 (June 1984), 114-25. For a general account of Carner's translations and literary taste, see M. Ortín, 'La prosa literària en l'obra de Josep Carner' (unpublished thesis, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1992), pp. 70-88.

⁴ See, for instance, *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, ed. A. W. Ward, 13 vols (Cambridge: University Press, 1916); A. Compton-Rickett, *A Primer of English Literature* (London: Nelson, 1912); H. Williams, *Modern English Writers* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1918); A. Chevalley, *Le Roman anglais de notre temps* (London: Milford, 1921), and E. Legouis and L. Cazamian, *A History of English Literature* (London: Dent, 1927). All show as bibliographical references in C. A. Jordana, *Resum de literatura anglesa* (Barcelona: Barcino, 1934).

contemporary English novelists, Kipling, Wells, Bennett, Galsworthy, and Conrad, generally treated under the heading 'post-Victorian novel', Bennett was the first to be offered (1919), whereas Joseph Conrad was not translated until just after his death (1924), at the peak of a Conrad vogue promoted by the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. Sometimes extraliterary circumstances were a factor in the Continental reception, such as the impact of a death (Conrad), the close contact some English novelists maintained with France (Bennett), or the awarding of a Nobel prize (Kipling, Galsworthy). To make sense of this, newspapers and journals provide the most useful evidence. For it is that immediate critical reception which sheds light on the esteem in which any given work was held when being translated.

The presence of the English novel in France attracts special attention in Michel Raimond's extensive account of the crisis of the French novel.⁵ From Brunetière's early statement in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* about the 'banqueroute du naturalisme' (1887), claims followed in which the English novel served as a contrast, almost as an antidote, to French naturalism: English naturalism was, as Brunetière put it, 'vivifié par un principe intérieur, une sympathie de l'intelligence éclairée par l'amour'.⁶ The concern for the *roman anglais*, which developed in France from the early years of the century, stems from certain 'insuffisances' critics observed in their own writers, highlighted when compared with their foreign counterparts. In the quality of sympathy mentioned by Brunetière lay the secret of a growing admiration for the English novel, which they regarded as a breath of fresh air that might revivify the decline into which they believed French naturalism had fallen.

⁵ See *La Crise du roman, des lendemains du naturalisme aux années vingt* (Paris: Corti, 1966), esp. pp. 87-105, 159-75.

⁶ See *La Crise du roman*, pp. 25, 32-33, and R. Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism 1750-1950*, IV (London: Cape, 1966), p. 87.

In the study of Catalan translations of English novels I follow Raimond's interpretation of the French crisis. The cultural climate in the early years of *Biblioteca Literària*, just after the peak of *Noucentisme*, did not favour further translations of French naturalists, nor of the decadents, who had been in the past a strong influence on Catalan narrative. Zola's works were perceived as presenting too crude a depiction of society, with excessive analysis of characters, and unsympathetic to mankind. The name of Zola was only the epitome of a far more complex reaction against what certain influential French and Catalan critics saw as the flaws of the naturalist spirit still surviving in the practice of contemporary French novelists, namely the scientific direction of literature. In the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, the journal taking the lead in novel criticism from 1909 and well known in Catalan circles, the attacks fell on the popular novels by Paul Bourget, regarded *malgré lui* as a continuation of naturalism: they were labelled as examples of the *roman à thèse*, and were blamed for being the main cause of the falling standards of the *roman de consommation*.⁷ Bourget's productive career spanning the whole period of the French novel crisis makes him a particularly interesting point of reference in the comparative approach followed in the present chapter, to contrast with Edwardian writers such as Arnold Bennett and with contemporary critical views on both sides of the Channel.

The *Revue des Deux Mondes* was a pioneer in establishing cultural links between France and England, increasing from the late 1880s. Brunetière's writings in this journal had for instance an influence on Thomas Hardy's perception of art, as he followed the French debate between the advocates of realism and of symbolism.⁸ Cultural relations were stimulated by the rôle of

⁷ See M. Raimond, *Le Roman depuis la Révolution* (Paris: Colin, 1981), pp. 133, 135.

⁸ J. B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Work of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 12. For a general account of the Anglo-French cultural relations, see M-F. Guyard, *La Grande-Bretagne dans le roman français 1914-1940* (Paris: Didier, 1954).

correspondents who took on the task of promoting English novelists, as Edmund Gosse did with Hardy (and Meredith) in *La Revue*. It was during the Edwardian period (1901-10) that English figures gained prominence in French literary circles. Just one year after the *Nouvelle Revue Française* was launched, G. K. Chesterton was presented by Valéry Larbaud, who was to have a reputation some time later as Joyce's main advocate in France. At a time when the critical positions against naturalism began to crystallise, Larbaud chose for translation the central chapter of *Orthodoxy* (1909), the book that made Chesterton well-known for his anti-*fin de siècle* reaction.⁹ Also in this journal Larbaud translated in 1912, for the first time and at Gide's suggestion, a novella by Arnold Bennett, anticipating in the introduction 'la révélation' of an admired author whose works were expected to be published soon in France.¹⁰ Both Gide, editor of that journal, and Firmin Roz, from the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, were touched by the warmth they discovered in the two heroines of *The Old Wives' Tale*, pictured in a radically different manner to that of Bourget and other French practitioners of the thesis novel.

French journals helped to popularise Edwardian figures in Catalonia. The Edwardian connection that has been established in previous chapters, mainly through the presence of Chesterton, takes on an enriched meaning in the light of the French background. Many parallels can be detected between the presence of English novelists and the selection of works translated on both sides of the Pyrennees. The shadow of French naturalism, and the reaction against it, was a major factor in the translations produced during the first phase. The Biblioteca Literària was primarily the work of one man, Carner, who was one of the few who knew English and had

⁹ 'Les Paradoxes du Christianisme', *NRF*, 4 (1910), 129-64. According to Ch. d'Haussy, Chesterton was discovered by P. Claudel, translator of this fragment: 'Chesterton in France', in J. Sullivan (ed.), *G. K. Chesterton: A Centenary Appraisal* (London: Elek, 1974), pp. 206-18 (208).

¹⁰ L. F. Brugmans (ed.), *Correspondence André Gide-Arnold Bennett: vingt ans d'amitié littéraire* (Geneva: Droz; Paris: Minard, 1964), p. 23. See also Larbaud's introduction to *Le Matador des cinq villes*, *NRF*, 8 (1912), 272-74.

a fresh knowledge of the classics and the few contemporaries he thought worth translating. However personal his choice was, some clear affinities can be detected with those French critics who took an interest in translation. In the second phase, as the publishing market expanded, parallels with France can be drawn even closer in terms of choice of works. It is not the aim of this chapter to account for them in detail, but to make sense of such a remarkable influence in the process of the transmission of the English novel to Catalonia.

1 Josep Carner's Biblioteca Literària and its legacy

Another kind of naturalism: Arnold Bennett

Carner's hostility to French naturalism is easy to recognise in the early years of the *Biblioteca Literària*. It was no coincidence that none of Zola's works, nor any French realist novelist (apart from Alphonse Daudet) were published in *Biblioteca Literària* while he was in charge (1918-21). Rejection of naturalism was for Carner a matter of moral principles and literary taste. The naturalistic aim of documenting a case, or a thesis, searching after the exceptional and abnormal, clashed with his Horatian desire to please and educate the reader. With a characteristic *Noucentista* attitude, he believed that a novelist should seek the 'ennoblement de la vida'. His attitude could well be compared to the views many a Victorian novelist had expressed in response to crude and mimetic realism. He would have agreed, for instance, with Trollope's statement that 'a novel should give a picture of common life enlivened by humour and sweetened by pathos. To make that picture worthy of attention, the canvas should be crowned with real portraits, not of individuals known to the world or the author, but of created personages impregnated with traits of character which are known'.¹¹ Such an 'enlivening' quality came first

¹¹ *An Autobiography* (Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 126. For Carner and the Trollope connection, see L. Cabré, 'Josep Carner i Anthony Trollope: els marges d'una traducció', *RC (nova etapa)*, 92 (January 1995), pp. 111-30.

into play in Carner's view of the novelist. In his preface to *L'abrandament*, the first Catalan work published in Biblioteca Literària (1918), he stated that the great merit of Soldevila's little novel was that readers would meet 'veritables coneguts' at whom they would smile, 'perquè la vida té sempre recança de malmetre un posat cortès'; and the story had a gently humorous ending ('un desenllaç piadosament humorístic').¹²

Carner's first choice of a contemporary novelist was Arnold Bennett. He could well sympathise with Bennett who, despite his attempts to popularise French novelists in England, had always distanced himself from naturalism, especially from Zola. Pragmatic critic as he was, he believed that Zola's works could never be favourably received in the puritan atmosphere of England. Bearing in mind the average reader, Bennett expresses in his reviews of works contempt for all kinds of subversive attitudes, oddness and eccentricities.¹³ As he set to write, in France, *The Old Wives Tale*, his major attempt to rival French naturalism in English fiction, he stated clearly what sort of woman he would never pick as a heroine — the fat old woman he once came across in his local French restaurant. He wrote:

Of course, I felt that the woman who caused the ignoble mirth in the restaurant would not serve me as a type of heroine. For she was too old and obviously unsympathetic. It is an absolute rule that the principal character of a novel must not be unsympathetic, and the whole modern tendency of realistic fiction is against oddness in a prominent figure. I knew that I must choose the sort of woman who would pass unnoticed in a crowd.¹⁴

¹² Carner, Preface to *L'abrandament* (1918), in his *El reialme de la poesia*, pp. 143-47.

¹³ See 'The "Average Reader" and the Recipe for Popularity' (1901), in S. Hynes (ed.), *The Author's Craft and Other Critical Writings of Arnold Bennett* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1988), pp. 51-60. For the influence of naturalism in England, see W. C. Frierson, *The English Novel in Transition 1885-1940* (New York: Cooper Square, 1965), pp. 35-47. Despite the interest some English writers took in French naturalists (George Moore, in particular) Frierson concludes that the case for Zola had never been won in England.

¹⁴ *The Old Wives' Tale* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), p. 32.

For his *Old Wives' Tale* Bennett was looking for the ordinary type, and he found inspiration in Guy de Maupassant's *Une Vie*. He challenged this book by narrating the lives of two sisters, Constance and Sophia. Life in the Potteries is minutely described in the routine of the heroines. Only the French portion of Sophia's life, a long break in that homely routine, follows to some extent naturalistic lines of determinist behaviour. There is, however, a moderate degree of detailed analysis in the novel, and this was a feature that particularly appealed to the French critic of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Roz appreciated how Bennett's heroines were different from their French counterparts, since the author made them live their lives, 'sans accompagnement de commentaires'. This may not sound a fair comment if one considers the many judgements the narrator makes about his heroines, yet it makes sense from the point of view of the French reviewer who had in mind the long digressions which filled the novels of his fellow-writers (e.g. Bourget).¹⁵ According to Roz, in conveying the passing of time in the life of a little community Bennett was displaying the essentially English quality of his art.¹⁶

The Old Wives' Tale is one of the most characteristic works produced in the Edwardian period. It was a portrait of the transition from Victoria to Edward — the action developing from 1860 until 1907 — a transition which led to no substantial change.¹⁷ Back in Bursley, after thirty years in Paris, Sophia does not succeed in changing one bit the sacred homely routine. The people of the Five Towns remain indifferent, if not suspicious, to the new habits she brings back from France. In 1907, the year in which the story ends, Bennett was still living in Paris. Although he was an outsider in the thriving cultural circles of the *belle époque*, he soon gained the esteem

¹⁵ On the question of the intrusive author in *The Old Wives' Tale*, see W. C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991; first published 1961), pp. 144-47.

¹⁶ 'Romanciers anglais contemporains: M. Arnold Bennett', *RDM*, 17 (1913), 818-53 (851).

¹⁷ For an account of Edwardian themes in *The Old Wives' Tale*, see J. Hunter, *Edwardian Fiction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 189-214.

of some French writers.¹⁸ Bennett's literary talent was recognised above all in his early novels of the Five Towns. *The Old Wives' Tale* was followed by the *Clayhanger* series, and *Clayhanger* was the first of his novels to be translated in France (1915).¹⁹ In 1920 *Le Ménage à Clayhanger* (*These Twain*) and *Le Prix de l'amour* were serialised in French magazines, and in the year of Bennett's death, Gide rendered a final tribute by publishing the preface to *The Old Wives' Tale* in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, just a few months before the publication of *Conte de Bonnes Femmes*.²⁰

El preu de l'amor, the first Catalan translation of Bennett's work, was published by Biblioteca Literària in 1919. Carner was offering women readers ('senyores i senyoretetes') a delicate novel of fashion. *The Price of Love*, a minor work, had become a popular success in England, serialised initially in *Daily News* in 1914, and appearing in the same year in Methuen's Popular Novels. The publicity read as follows:

This is a novel of the Five Towns. Indeed, it is the only novel written by Mr. Bennett in which the whole of the action passes in the Five Towns. Its chief quality is that it is a story. The plot is important, and the effect of the plot is such that the reader's interested anxiety for the heroine, roused in the first chapter, is not tranquillised until the end of the tale. But the novel has also a moral, and that moral is connected with the subject of marriage for love.

Methuen's title-list of 1914 included, amongst others, *Every Man his Price*, *The Wedding Day*,

¹⁸ For Bennett's life in Paris, see M. Drabble, *Arnold Bennett: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974), pp. 104-27.

¹⁹ This novel deals with a semi-autobiographical male hero suffering from repressive parental authority, a theme dear to certain late Victorian and Edwardian authors and of particular attraction to both Larbaud and Gide. Larbaud's version of Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* (1903), a landmark in this type, came out in 1921; *Father and Son* (1907), Gosse's masterpiece, was translated in 1912. For the Gide connection, see L. F. Brugmans (ed.), *The Correspondence of André Gide and Edmund Gosse 1904-1928* (London: Owen, 1960), p. 10.

²⁰ For an account of Gide's admiration of this work, see his *Éloges* (Paris and Neuchâtel: Ides et Calendes, 1948), pp. 49-54, and *The Correspondence of André Gide and Edmund Gosse*, pp. 104-07.

Prince and Heretic, *The Choice of Life*, and Bennett's *Whom God Hath Joined*, a study of the divorce problem he wrote on the publisher's request after the success of Paul Bourget's *Divorce* in 1904.²¹ Carner thought that *El preu de l'amor* — anticipating by one year the French serialisation — could also easily move Catalan readers, finding in the author interesting connections with 'tota una arrelada psicologia catalana'.²² He was selling this popular novel, translated by himself with the pseudonym of Joan d'Albaflor, as a novelty in terms of easy reading: 'una novíssima llatinadura' to tempt the taste, presumably, of the educated women readers of his magazine *D'Ací d'Allà*. It was a deliberately commercial choice, meant to rival the novels of the successful Paul Bourget.²³ Both the melodramatic plot and the psychological 'licences françaises' parodied in *The Price of Love* might have proved part of the attraction, though they were hard to forgive in the eyes of a less tolerant French reviewer who thought that because of the dubious moral standards *Le Prix de l'Amour* was not an appropriate work to be included in a series called 'livres pour demoiselles'.²⁴

Carner's second choice from Bennett's novels delivered, in 1920, a far greater one. *These Twain* (1916) was the last part of the *Clayhanger* trilogy, the last novel of the Five Towns series, likewise serialised in a French magazine. Bennett fictionalised in this novel the favourite Edwardian theme of marriage — Wells's *Marriage* was published in 1910 —, the life of a couple being minutely explored in the same vein as in *The Old Wives' Tale*. On the publication of *The Price of Love* Bennett was described by the reviewer of the *Manchester Guardian* as 'a bit of a

²¹ See Drabble, *Arnold Bennett*, pp. 126-27.

²² 'Nota preliminar' to *El preu de l'amor* (Barcelona: Editorial Catalana, 1919), p. ii.

²³ Cf. Ortín, 'La prosa literària en l'obra de Josep Carner', p. 81. For Carner's commercial interest in the novel, see Castellanos, 'Josep Carner i la literatura narrativa', in E. Bou et al., *Josep Carner: llengua, prosa, poesia* (Barcelona: Empúries, 1985), pp. 31-62 (52-58).

²⁴ See L. Gillet, 'Deux romans nouveaux de M. Bennett', *RDM* (1923), 910-23 (922-23).

modern Dickens'. *These Twain* was regarded as a far more complex novel which offered 'a deep and wise study of life faithfully and beautifully presented'.²⁵ This concluding part of the romance of the Five Towns marked the peak of Bennett's reputation as a novelist; the novelist who through those panoramic pictures of provincial life continued the Victorian tradition, taking even further the essential qualities of English realism. This was how the French critic and historian Louis Cazamian classified Bennett:

Though unaware, in this field, of any conscious imitation, he takes up a tradition, that of minute, and at the same time broad and healthy realism, dwelling with indulgence upon the portraits of mediocre beings; his line is that of Dickens and George Eliot. No other is more English; and nothing is more national than the matter to which Arnold Bennett applies his method. Neither Dickens, whose social perspective is older by a whole century, nor George Eliot, who described a different world, had touched upon it before him. It is a drab and dull-looking mass of human beings, who swarm under the smoky skies of the industrial districts.²⁶

Carner had translated Dickens and George Eliot in the first year of *Biblioteca Literària* (1918). His selection of Bennett pointed to the same kind of purified, dignified realism, to that 'fina dignitat literària' he was seeking for his readers. He chose Bennett as the contemporary alternative to the French commercial novel, namely Bourget. More importantly, Bennett embodied the continuation of the literary — and also moral — values Carner would associate with that 'healthy realism' of the English tradition. Some of Carner's followers understood perfectly well the importance of such a choice in the process of constructing a novel tradition. On the same essential grounds of purity and balance, the critic Armand Obiols, while

²⁵ Both *The Price of Love* and *These Twain* were reviewed by A. N. Monkhouse in the *Manchester Guardian* (1 October 1914, p. 3; 14 January 1916, p. 12, respectively), in J. Hepburn (ed.), *Arnold Bennett: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1981), pp. 320-24 and 325-42; Carner mentions frequently this newspaper in the 1920s: Ortín, 'Prosa literària', p. 90. For a comparative assessment of both works, see W. Allen, *Arnold Bennett* (London: Home, 1948), pp. 85-90.

²⁶ *A History of English Literature*, p. 1335.

encouraging his fellow writers to search for models abroad, pointed to the English novelists: ‘i com més pregonament anglesos millor, per exemple Arnold Bennett. I això ja ho ha remarcat en Carner.’²⁷

George Eliot and English realism

In France a concern for both the *roman anglais* and Russian novelists proved powerful antinaturalistic forces. Brunetière had stated that breadth of was the distinctive feature of what he called ‘English naturalism’. Melchior de Vogüé’s *Le Roman russe* (1886) struck a blow for the discredit of French realists, as he unfavourably compared them to Tolstoi and Dostoevsky with respect to the qualities of ‘pitié évangélique’ and ‘large sympathie humaine’. On the same quality of Vogüé discovered in George Eliot in particular what he called ‘vrai réalisme’.²⁸ For those late nineteenth century critics, George Eliot stood as the epitome of the tradition of English realism. Her early novel *Silas Marner*, half-way between the realist novel and the legendary tale, was a popular success in France —four different translations of this work had appeared by 1890. The association between ^{‘sympathy’} and truthfulness to life (‘le vrai’) pointed out by Vogüé was inherent in the very conception of realism George Eliot had expressed in a famous essay in which she attacked the idyllic and picturesque art of some of her contemporaries: ‘Where, in our picture exhibitions shall we find a group of true peasantry?’ Realist pictures, she thought, should provide a truthful rendering of a group of people with whom the author should be well acquainted

²⁷ ‘Lletres i llibres’, *DS*, 16 July 1925. A. Obiols translated for this newspaper, in the same year, a Bennet tale, ‘Un concert a Cinc Ciutats’ [‘Hot Potatoes’], *DS*, 8 February, p. 4 and 5 March, p. 2. Obiols’s statement should be understood against his critical view of *vuitcentista* writers. For Carner’s influence in this opinion, see J. Castellanos, ‘Josep Carner i la literatura narrativa’, in E. Bou et al., *Josep Carner: llengua, prosa i poesia* (Barcelona: Empúries, 1985), pp. 31-62 (61). Arnold Bennett also shows as an example of the moral dimension of the English novel in Riba’s essay ‘Una generació sense novel·la’ (1925). See Chapter 4. 1.

²⁸ For the impact of Vogüé, see Wellek, *History*, IV, p. 21, and Raimond, *La Crise du roman*, pp. 33, 87-105, and *Le Roman depuis la Révolution*, p. 128.

(otherwise the portrait would be idyllic, picturesque, or sentimental, thus false). A true hero can only be conceived if the author has got to know his fellow-men: 'the greatest benefit we owe to the artist, whether painter, poet or novelist, is the extension of our sympathies'.²⁹ The idea of sympathy, expressing such a communal feeling, is well illustrated in her early novels, especially in *Adam Bede*, and also in *Silas Marner*, whose hero embodies what she called, in capital letters, 'the People'.

This emphasis on the author's characters was a quality many a French writer had made explicit in the discussions about the crisis of French naturalism. Marcel Schwob, for instance, described as the novelist's most vital quality the capacity to alienate himself in a 'bain de multitude', to become 'autre que soi par l'ivresse de facultés morales'.³⁰ Schwob's point helps us to understand the anti-naturalistic reaction in terms of moral attitude, basically applying to the author's standpoint in relation to characters. In expanding on her idea of sympathy, George Eliot recalls how much more effective Scott's stories are than hundreds of sermons and philosophical dissertations. Long digressions and excessive analysis were precisely at the centre of the critics' attacks against Bourget's *romans à thèse*: Bourget could not follow his heroes as he went through the story, but had to fit them into the thesis he had previously planned for them. Many a French critic was aware that, to awake readers' sympathies, the author should step aside and let the character find his own way through the story.

A novel by Bourget, for instance, gave Albert Thibaudet the excuse for expanding on the key requirement in a successful novel: the creation of a living character, made out of a 'possible life' rather than 'real life'. The following passage from the *Nouvelle Revue Française* has been

²⁹ 'The Natural History of German Life' (1856), in her *Selected Essays, Poems and Other Writings*, ed. A. S. Byatt and N. Warren (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), pp. 107-39 (110).

³⁰ Raimond, *La Crise du roman*, pp. 476-77.

read as an antinaturalistic manifesto:

Il est très rare qu'un auteur qui s'expose dans un roman fasse de lui un individu vivant [...] En d'autres termes, le romancier authentique crée ses personnages avec les directions infinies de sa vie possible, le romancier factice les crée avec la ligne unique de sa vie réelle. Le vrai roman est comme une autobiographie du possible [...] Le génie du roman fait vivre le possible, il ne fait pas revivre le réel.³¹

Those who delivered a *vie possible* (or an 'autobiographie du possible') suited the kind of realism Thibaudet was ready to welcome. Drawing on a comparison with English novelists, he established a set of features within the category 'roman passif', described as the most typical novel form: that in which a hero's life — the hero being 'un homme moyen' — is told: 'une vie qui a pour fin naturelle une expérience moyenne, indulgente, et qui se termine quand le héros est "arrivé".' Thibaudet found classic illustrations of his 'roman passif' in Dickens (*David Copperfield*), for instance, and George Eliot illustrated this passive quality to perfection. She achieved the 'parfait équilibre' between author and character, as opposed to constant interference of the author typical of the 'roman actif', the favourite form practised by Bourget. In *Silas Marner* this ideal of balance was fully accomplished, in moral and artistic terms, in the perfect drawing of the 'courbe d'une vie humaine'. Thibaudet comments on this book, and on *Adam Bede*, to illustrate the search for a 'profound moral life'.³²

Echoes of Thibaudet's reflections are clearly present in Carner's preface to his translation of *Silas Marner*. Carner calls it an example of 'quieta perfecció insuperada', in which the dramatic elements balance perfectly 'en deliciosa i proporcionadíssima unitat'. In the eyes of Carner, moral edification derives from formal perfection, the heroic virtues of the main character

³¹ 'Réflexions sur le roman: à propos d'un livre récent de M. Paul Bourget', *NRF*, 8 (1912), 207-44 (211-12).

³² 'Le Centenaire de George Eliot', *NRF*, 14 (1920), 265-79 (277).

balancing in ‘noble mesura’ the mixture of ‘pessimisme’, ‘elevació’ and ‘exquisit humorisme compassiu’ — the stress is again placed on the dignifying virtues. They all reflect the ideal of that profound moral life Thibaudet had experienced in George Eliot’s early works. The quality of the ‘individu vivant’ is recalled by Carner in the anonymous character, ‘figuració vivent del Poble’. Silas Marner achieved a legendary value, presented in a gallery of English literary figures, for he ‘no és menys anglès que Shakespeare o que Drake, que Mr. Pickwick o el Cardenal Newman.’³³ In this little masterpiece Carner was identifying the qualities he had also encountered while translating, in the same year, Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*. In both works one can recognise that communal feeling that George Eliot mentioned in her manifesto on realism. Carner observed the same communal feeling in Bennett, alluding to the novelist’s capacity to connect with ‘tota una arrelada psicologia catalana’. What Carner found appealing in all these three works was the portrait of an ordinary existence — presented in a fantasy, in a legendary tale, or in a sentimental plot — which could awake the common reader’s sympathy.

Such an appeal to common human sympathies was symptomatic of Carner’s concern to promote a novel tradition which was accessible to a wide readership. French novels did not suit his expectations in that respect. Nor did they suit those of some French critics who were weary of an overproduction of thesis novels in France. The gulf between George Eliot’s moral attitude and the naturalistic spirit was still too wide. Thibaudet’s phrase about the *vie possible* became a good piece of advice not only for Bourget, but for the numerous practitioners of the *roman à thèse* and the many French writers who were judged to be lacking in ‘human sympathy’. Carner, like Thibaudet, was aware that a novel made of possible characters living out plausible stories was not likely to be found in France at the time he was in charge of Biblioteca Literària. Seeking

³³ Preface to *Silas Marner* (Barcelona: Editorial Catalana, 1918), p. 6.

a healthy development of Catalan letters, he believed that the right way was to open Catalan culture to wider horizons, especially at the time when the development of that culture was threatened. In 1923, he stressed the vital need to step away from the ‘narrow window’ of France:

jo no crec possible de prescindir, en la nostra cultura, de la comunicació amorosa amb la gran florida de la civilització francesa. Però transportar a Catalunya, poble dèbil i sotmès, la sensibilitat francesa d’aquest moment, em sembla una equivocació pintoresca. Un poble dèbil i sotmès —i aquest és un fet històric— no té més remei que afrontar la universalitat.³⁴

One could also apply such a general statement to the literary atmosphere. By recommending a way out from French naturalistic currents, however paradoxical it might seem, he was following the advice of French critics, especially of those who turned their attention to the cultural tradition coming from the other side of the Channel.

Romance and adventure via French criticism

The need to open up tradition to fresh influences had been felt in France from the last decades of the nineteenth century. ‘La littérature contemporaine est profondément triste, plus triste que n’a été aucune période littéraire du monde [...] il faut aujourd’hui des romanciers spéciaux.’³⁵ In search of romance and adventure, Schwob became interested in the English novel. Romance was the category, ever since Walter Scott’s romantic recreation of medieval chivalric adventures, that had been primarily associated with the popular stream of English fiction. Romance shows in many of Dickens’s works, for instance, belonging to the idealistic strain of the mid-Victorian novel. Stevenson in particular played a part in the revival of romance that took place in late

³⁴ Bellafila [J. Carner], ‘El finestró de França’, *LVC*, 18 May 1923, p. 9.

³⁵ *Écrits de Jeunesse*, in his *Œuvres Complètes*, I, ed. Pierre Champion (Paris: Bernouard, 1927), p. 5.

Victorian times as a response to the arrival of realistic novels from France, most prominently those of Zola.³⁶ On anti-*fin de siècle* grounds — which included naturalism — romance was for Chesterton a favourite principle in his defence of the chivalric spirit in both his philosophy and his novels and stories. Stevenson and Dickens, one may recall, were his favourite authors. In comparative views of English and French realism, romance proved an effective category to highlight the differences in direction. Schwob's quest for the 'special novelist' was in fact a quest for romance and adventure to revitalise the 'sad' contemporary novel.

Schwob discovered in the English novel the value of a solid tradition. From 'finesse d'observation' and 'ironie aimable', both represented in the English word *sensible*, meaning 'pleine à la fois de bon sens et de sentiment', he was drawing attention to the essential qualities he observed from the fathers of the English novel up to Stevenson, lacking in his own tradition:

Si Stevenson relève d'une tradition quelconque, ce n'est pas de la morbide névrose que Poë nous a inoculée, mais des idées saines et spirituelles du XVIIIe siècle, des Swift, des Smollett, des de Foë et des Sterne. Greffez sur la prose nette et limpide de cette époque un bourgeon d'originalité fantasque, une fleur de coloris romantique, et vous aurez le style de Stevenson. Supposez qu'il n'a pris parti ni pour le roman subjectif, l'analyse psychologique de Paul Bourget, ni pour le roman objectif, la description physiologique d'Émile Zola, mais qu'il fabrique des êtres vivants, qui parlent, marchent et agissent dans des paysages vrais, coloriés, brossés en trois touches de pinceau, qui ne sont ni tout âme ni tout corps — et vous aurez son procédé de composition.³⁷

Schwob was thus defining for his 'special novelist' a new sensibility opposed to the scientific spirit of Zola and the psychological analysis of Bourget. It is interesting to note how the two names had become, at that early stage, closely associated with the evil forces of naturalism, and

³⁶ See K. Graham, *English Criticism of the Novel: 1865-1900* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 61-68.

³⁷ 'Robert L. Stevenson' (1888), in his *Chroniques*, ed. J. A. Green (Geneva: Droz, 1981), pp. 23-27 (25). This article was also published in *New Review*, 12 (1895), 153-60. For an account of the Stevenson connection, see P. Champion, *Marcel Schwob et son temps* (Paris: Grasset, 1927), pp. 159-73.

how they were opposed to the ideals of liveliness and truthfulness, meaning the creation of lively characters ('êtres vivants, qui parlent, marchent et agissent dans des paysages vrais'). Schwob's view was in tune with a much broader anti-*fin de siècle* reaction. His obsession with light and colour, used again and again to illustrate the divide between his fellow-writers and their English neighbours, is reminiscent of Stevenson's reaction against the dark, pessimistic descriptions of late nineteenth-century writers, expressed, for instance, in his essays 'The Lantern-Bearers' (1892) and 'A Plea for Gas Lamps' (1888).³⁸ Light and colour became for Stevenson inspirational motifs to brighten up the sad path of realistic fiction, for only in them could emotion materialise. That sort of emotion is what Schwob experienced in reading *Treasure Island* when travelling towards the Midi, 'sous la lumière tremblotante d'une lampe de chemin de fer'. Drawing on his contemporary Stevenson, Schwob was thinking of 'le roman d'aventures dans le sens le plus large du mot'.

Jacques Rivière, one of the founders of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* and its general editor from 1919 to 1925, was a pioneer in France in establishing the concept of adventure for the novel. He applied the term in the context of the antinaturalistic reaction launched in that journal, in a long article-manifesto called 'Le Roman d'aventure' (1913): 'Le roman que nous attendons sera un roman d'aventure'. Action was what he was seeking for the 'nouveau roman', for only action would provide the emotion of reading, 'en attendant quelque chose, de ne pas tout savoir encore [..] *qui va arriver*, quelque chose qui est à la fois inconnu et absolument inévitable'.³⁹ Echoing Schwob's words, he exemplified that emotion in a popular book by

³⁸ See, respectively, *Memoirs and Portraits* (London: Heinemann, 1922), pp. 250-67, and *Virginibus Puerisque* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1906), pp. 189-93.

³⁹ 'Le Roman d'aventure, III', *NRF*, 10 (1913), 56-77 (69-71). Wellek analyses it in the context of the reaction against both the French psychological novel and symbolism, though neglecting the element of adventure, which is only present in the third section of the article. See *History*, VIII (New Haven and London: Yale University Press,

Stevenson (*The Ebb-Tide*, 1894; French version, 1905; *El Reflujo* was published in Barcelona in 1912):

Relisons dans le *Reflux* de Stevenson l'arrivée des trois aventuriers dans l'île perlière. Non, il n'y a aucune ressemblance entre le battement de coeur tout matériel dont nous émeut le soupçon soudain que: "C'est un tel, l'assassin!" et ce délicieux déploiement de l'âme en face de l'avenir tout proche et encore muet. À la lecture de ces pages, au lieu qu'elle se contracte et s'épaississe, la vie en moi s'étend jusqu'à une sorte d'immensité; mon sang circule avec clarté; ma respiration est légère; et pendant ces instants où rien n'arrive encore, où les événements continuent à se préparer [...] je me sens doucement devenir égal à tout ce qu'il y a de prodigieux dans l'univers; et mon ravissement est pareil à celui de Herrick qui, penché sur l'eau diaphane et à peine remuée de la lagune, y voit passer "une traînée de poissons peints comme un arc-en-ciel, avec des becs comme des perroquets".⁴⁰

Taking up Schwob's general idea of 'roman d'aventure', Rivière infused it with new meaning to identify it with the novel of action — not to be mistaken for the 'roman actif' typical of Bourget, as defined by Thibaudet. Adventure became the all-embracing category in which all the ingredients of the novel (form, action, sentiment, psychology, and characters) were intertwined. The concept of adventure served to reshape the attack on naturalism from the pages of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. The contemporary French psychological novel was a principal target in Rivière's manifesto — 'comme il est morne et fermé! C'est toujours l'étude d'un cas' — and Bourget continued to be the one to blame: *Le Disciple* was used to illustrate that negative philosophy, going 'en sens inverse de la vie', that served to contrast with the English examples. *Robinson Crusoe* exemplified the 'parfaite activité', as the most extraordinary events were made accessible to the ordinary reader. Action was the common quality (shared by Defoe and Stevenson) which allowed the reader to identify with the hero. Further reflections by Thibaudet

1992), pp. 33-35.

⁴⁰ 'Le Roman d'aventure, III', p. 76.

based on Robinson's adventure — 'la plus extraordinaire qu'un homme puisse vivre, et en même temps on la voit à la portée de chacun' — led to the explicit recognition of the superiority of the English tradition of the *roman d'aventure*.⁴¹ The French boom of translations from English novelists, starting in pre-War years, was a positive response to Rivière's expectations for the future of the novel. His pro-adventure manifesto concluded: 'Le moment me semble venu où la littérature française, qui tant de fois déjà a su se rajeunir par des emprunts, va s'emparer, pour le fondre dans son sang, du roman étranger'.⁴²

The virtues of romance: From Defoe to Stevenson

Carner's expectations about the novel were close to those of Rivière, in that he also was ready to welcome in Catalonia the *roman d'aventure*: 'M'agrada que hi hagi acció. El meu gust refusa l'excés de caràcter de la majoria de les novel·les franceses', he once admitted.⁴³ His productive career as a translator certainly favoured the novel of adventure, from *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1918) to *Robinson Crusoe* (1925). He shared with Schwob, who was himself a prolific translator of English literature, a strong admiration for Defoe, Mark Twain, Stevenson and for the Victorian novel in general. Of all English novelists, Dickens was his favourite.

Adventure and romance were for Carner exemplary values of the English novel.⁴⁴

Dickens was the first to illustrate them in the Biblioteca Literària. *A Christmas Carol* was first

⁴¹ See A. Thibaudet, 'Le Roman de l'aventure', *NRF*, 13 (1919), 597-611 (611).

⁴² 'Roman d'aventure, III', 76.

⁴³ T. Garcés, 'Conversa amb Josep Carner' (1927), in his *Cinc converses* (Barcelona: Columna, 1985), pp. 61-67 (64).

⁴⁴ For the centrality of romance in Carner's translations, see Ortín, 'La prosa literària en l'obra de Josep Carner', pp. 78-79. The choice of Dickens has been analysed in the background of Carner's fictional values, namely epic quality, exemplarity, linguistic dignity and popular appeal with an educative purpose, mostly assimilated in the category of romance. See Ortín, 'Dickens in Catalonia' (Oxford, 8 March 1994).

choice amongst Dickens's works, and Carner translated it, together with *The Chimes* (1918), from the Everyman Library's edition which contained an introduction by Chesterton. Carner's view of Dickens was akin to the Edwardian revival of the writer in which Chesterton had played a part. In his early study of 1906, Dickens was presented as an archetypal example of the Victorian reaction against materialism, a character to fit into the anti-*fin de siècle* crusade Chesterton launched in the early years of this century. Chesterton's book also had an impact in France. It was mentioned, for instance, at the beginning of a survey of the contemporary English novel published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1907. T. de Wyzewa alluded there to a 'renouveau' of Dickens's popularity in England, meaning a return to the 'peintures décentes' in contrast to the passing fever of naturalism.⁴⁵ Stevenson was placed in the same context, being a representative of the novel of adventure which Wyzewa saw as the essentially English 'nouveau genre'. From Wyzewa to Rivière and Thibaudet, the *roman d'aventure* became the favourite form to reshape the vision of the modern novel.

The search for adventure and romance had to do with that moral attitude French critics identified in the feeling of sympathy, recognised first in George Eliot, and in the *roman anglais* in general. George Eliot alluded to the romances of Walter Scott while illustrating such a feeling.⁴⁶ Sympathy was the principal quality Stevenson himself expected from any fellow-writer: 'he should see the good in all things [...] and he should recognise from the first that he has only one tool in his workshop, and that tool is sympathy', and he cited Dickens as example.⁴⁷ It was Chesterton who had expanded on the atmosphere of heartiness and sympathy — akin to

⁴⁵ 'Le Roman anglais en 1907', *RDM*, 42 (1907), 425-48, 897-920.

⁴⁶ *Selected Essays*, pp. 107-39 (110).

⁴⁷ 'The Morality of the Profession of Letters' (1881), in his *Essays in the Art of Writing* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908), pp. 63-64.

humour and humanity — flowing through Dickens's Christmas books. 'Moral' and 'sympathy' were key words in the Chestertonian defence of both Dickens and Stevenson. In the same year as *A Christmas Carol* appeared in the Biblioteca Literària, the poet and critic Carles Riba commented on Pickwick, a character which reminded him of the 'alè de simpatia humana' in *Don Quixote*. By sympathy Riba meant the atmosphere of goodness and happiness emanating from both comic heroes, as they sally forth chapter by chapter in their idealistic quests, both redeemed at last by the greatness of their pity.⁴⁸

Carner's version of *Robinson Crusoe* (1925) was the last translation he did for Biblioteca Literària. This classic of the English novel tradition (and a classic of the adventure novel) was received with enthusiasm. Domènec Guansé's review sounds more like a literary manifesto, for it was a direct attack on the 'observadors de llapis i paper' for whom *Robinson Crusoe* was to be, he thought, an exemplary lesson. His argument repeats familiar concepts of the anti-naturalistic reaction. For instance, he sees the hero as a recreation of a *vie possible*, with whom both young and old readers could more easily identify: 'tot el que fa Robinson pot *realment* haver-ho fet'.⁴⁹ Guansé was regarding *Robinson Crusoe* as a prime example of 'roman passif' in which the hero has his adventure with little interference from the author: living on a solitary island, free from outsiders who might feel inclined to comment on his behaviour. Guansé draws a comparison with a popular French autobiographical work, *Le Petit Chose* by Daudet, an author Carner had published in Biblioteca Literària. Daudet's tender evocation of his life in a provincial town, said Guansé, was a sequence of delightful, lively portraits ('quadres vius'), which did not match, however, the ambition of Defoe's classic book, the great adventure of the ordinary man.

⁴⁸ 'Al marge del *Pickwick Club*' (1918), in his *Obres completes*, II (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1985), pp. 65-66.

⁴⁹ *RC*, 4 (1926), 205-06 (my emphasis).

In late nineteenth-century views of the English novel a stylistic issue was involved. According to Schwob, the divide between English and French writers lay in the ideal of clarity and purity of language which he had observed in English writers, from Defoe and Swift to Stevenson. He realised how far removed the practice of his fellow-writers, and of himself, was from that stylistic ideal: ‘Si la forme littéraire du roman persiste elle s’élargira sans doute extraordinairement. Les descriptions pseudoscientifiques, l’étalage de psychologie, de manuel et de biologie mal digérée en seront bannis. La composition se précisera dans les parties, avec la langue, la construction sera sévère; l’art nouveau devra être net et clair.’⁵⁰ His friend Stevenson made that clear to him in writing:

You have to give us — and I am expecting it with impatience — something of a larger gait; something daylight, not twilight; something with the colours of life, not the flat tints of a temple illumination; something that shall be *said* with all the clearnesses and the trivialities of speech, not *sung* like a semi-articulate lullaby. It will not please yourself as well, when you come to give it us, but it will please others better. It will be more of a whole, more wordly, more nourished, more commonplace — and not so pretty, perhaps not even so beautiful.⁵¹

Stevenson’s letter to Schwob (7 July 1894) proved a salutary piece of advice for many a French writer. André Gide, for instance, wrote to his friend Edmund Gosse (8 October 1911) that he felt as if the advice was addressed to himself —and he had just embarked on reading Stevenson’s *Weir of Hermiston*.⁵² Such a stylistic concern motivated French critics in their quest for the novel of the future. Rivière reproduced the above fragment in his influential article ‘Le Roman

⁵⁰ Preface to *Cœur double*, in his *Œuvres Complètes*, VII, ed. Pierre Champion (Paris: Bernouard, 1928), p. xx.

⁵¹ S. Colvin (ed.), *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, II (London: Methuen, 1899), pp. 339-40. This fragment was reprinted in *NRF*, 7 (1912), 315.

⁵² See Brugmans, *The Correspondence of André Gide and Edmund Gosse*, p. 69.

d'aventure'.⁵³ Deterioration of literary standards in the novel, one may recall, was a main concern in the crusade that critics of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* launched against Bourget, for they all agreed that his pseudo-scientific descriptions of reality could hardly encourage a limpid prose.

The ideal of improving literary standards was also a prime concern in Catalonia in the first decades of this century, when standardisation of the language was at an early stage. *Noucentista* writers and their successors were well aware that they were working in a decisive transitional period. There was a need to expand the resources of the Catalan language, to achieve the 'fina dignitat literària' that Carner had evoked in his early prefaces to some English novels. *Modernista* rural dramas had been despised for using an unrefined language. Translations were of paramount importance in constructing a literary language and familiarising readers with it. Josep Farran i Mayoral referred to this concern in his introduction to his translation of *Gulliver's Travels*, which was offered as an improvement upon an earlier version published in the *Modernista* series of Biblioteca Popular de l'Avenç (1913). He praises precision and clarity and rejects the picturesque in a way that is reminiscent of Schwob. There appears again what they both saw as wrong in prose writing ('passion or emotion', 'picturesque and abstract words') as opposed to the healthy stylistic virtues of one of the fathers of English fiction: 'estil precís', 'noble senzillesa', 'evocació justa', 'severa elegància'. The prose of *Gulliver's Travels*, like that of *Silas Marner*, could provide an ideal example of formal perfection and balance:

L'estil de Swift és precís, ple de noble senzillesa, sense passió ni emoció, però d'una puixança formidable d'evocació justa. Severa elegància d'home de Cort i de pensament, qui no exclou la vida i una agilitat graciosa. Res de mots familiars ni pintorescos; abundor de paraules abstractes i cultes. Estil que presideix una clara, enèrgica intel·ligència. Ell mateix en traçava el model quan parla dels escriptors de Brobdingnac. 'Llur estil és clar, masculí, polític, però no florit; res no eviten com el multiplicar les

⁵³ 'Le Roman d'aventure, II', *NRF*, 9 (1912), 931.

paraules innecessàries o repetir les coses de distinta manera'.⁵⁴

Carles Soldevila's *L'abrandament* was presented as a modern example of Catalan prose. According to the reviewer, it matched those stylistic standards: 'no deixa mai el fil subtil d'un comentari silenciós, que cal endevinar i que dona a la narració un interès que fa més viu encara l'estil net, retallat i precís' ('a clean, clear-cut, precise style').⁵⁵

Continuity of tradition: Wells and Kipling

Schwob was a pioneer in stressing the value of continuity in the English tradition —a solid tradition from Defoe and Swift to Stevenson. Such a continuity was observed by Firmin Roz in the opening article of a series on English contemporary novelists that he published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1912). Roz's statement was in itself a manifesto about the superiority of the English novel:

Ce ne sont pas nos romans qu'il faudrait faire lire à nos voisins pour leur donner une idée vraie de nous-mêmes. [...] Ils ne me paraissent tenir dans notre littérature contemporaine autant de place que, dans la littérature anglaise, le roman anglais contemporain. Ils ne paraissent pas justifier autant l'opinion célèbre que la littérature est l'expression de la société [...] Le roman psychologique prend assez volontiers chez nous un tour abstrait. Notre esprit rapide, ardent, logique, est peu porté au réalisme. Comment en sommes-nous venus, dans la patrie même de Stendhal, de Mérimée, de Balzac, de Flaubert, de Daudet, de Maupassant, à fausser la signification du mot jusqu'à le déshonorer? On dirait, au contraire, que c'est à qui, d'un Dickens ou d'une George Eliot, de Mme Humphry Ward ou de Rudyard Kipling, le réhabilitera, fallût-il même, pour cet effet, dissimuler sous son couvert quelque peu d'idéalisation. Encore qu'il soit devenu, parfois, au cours de l'ère victorienne, plutôt timoré, le réalisme reste la tradition par excellence du roman anglais. Celui-ci n'a d'autre matière que la vie, la vie anglaise. Pour bien connaître l'Angleterre,

⁵⁴ 'Their style is clear, masculine, and accurate, but not florid; for they take pains to avoid multiplying unnecessary words, or repeating expressions in a different way' (*Gulliver's Travels*, ed. P. Turner [Oxford University Press, 1971], p. 131). Preface to *Viatges de Gulliver* (Barcelona: Editorial Catalana, 1923), p. 29.

⁵⁵ A. Plana, 'L'abrandament', *LR*, 5 (1919), 26-27, in his *Les valors del nostre Renaixement*, pp. 103-06 (106).

on ne saurait mieux s'adresser qu'à ses romanciers.⁵⁶

In Roz's thesis the idea of fidelity observed ⁱⁿ ~~for~~ the English tradition found primary justification on social grounds. He focused on what he called 'la portée sociale du roman anglais', arguing that English novelists had never betrayed the spirit of their tradition in that they never lost touch with real society. The emphasis was again on the vital quality, the same quality that both Rivière and Thibaudet pointed out for the concepts of adventure and 'individu vivant'. With Roz, the illustration of this vital quality extended to the Edwardian novelist *par excellence*, H. G. Wells, and he alluded to the connection between *Robinson Crusoe* and *Mr Polly*.

Wells was the contemporary author who best fitted Roz's social thesis grounded on the idea of continuity. In Wyzewa's survey of the English novel of 1907, for instance, he was regarded as the successor of Dickens — and *Mr Polly* in particular was seen as a good illustration of the Dickensian comic vein. Roz's social point was in line with Wells's principles on the novel, which he had popularised just a year before in a famous talk at the Times Book Club (June 1911).⁵⁷ By 'the social scope of the novel', Wells meant to enlarge the novel to bring all life within it, objecting to the 'character obsession' of some of his colleagues, namely Henry James.⁵⁸ He came up with the 'Weary Giant Theory of the Novel' that he designed for the tired man in the office who 'wants to dream of the bright things, gay excitements of a phantom world, in which he can be hero'. Wells provided for him entertaining characters, romance and humour.

⁵⁶ *Le Roman anglais contemporain* (Paris: Hachette, 1912), pp. ix-xii. The survey includes articles on Meredith, Hardy, Humphry Ward, Kipling, and Wells, originally published in *RDM* from 1908 to 1911. Bennett followed in 1913.

⁵⁷ *Le Roman anglais*, p. xviii. Wells's talk was published in his *An Englishman Looks at the World* (London: Cassell, 1914), pp. 148-69. For an account of the contemporary novel debate, see L. Edel and G. N. Ray (ed.), *Henry James & H. G. Wells: A Record of their Friendship, their Debate on the Art of Fiction, and their Quarrel* (London: Hart-Davis, 1958).

⁵⁸ *Experiment in Autobiography* (London: Gollanz, 1934), II, p. 489.

Roz's concept of the 'portée sociale' was akin to the popular note Wells intended for his novel. His theory of the novel — if one may call it a theory — was most in tune with the democratic note of many Edwardian novelists who used the word pot-boilers (coined by Bennett) to refer to their work, regarding themselves closer to Dickens's popular taste.⁵⁹ The tradition which Roz was following by reviewing the modern English novel had in Wells its most popular exponent. In France, Wells was, with Kipling, at the top of the list of the best-known English novelists living in post-Victorian times, followed by Bennett, Galsworthy, Chesterton and Conrad.⁶⁰ The English correspondent for the *Revue des Deux Mondes* noted with some disappointment the little attention paid to the subtle Henry James, and his *émules* Meredith and Hardy, contrasting with the 'foule de lecteurs' devouring the entertaining Wells's novels and Kipling's *récits*.⁶¹

Kipling is the contemporary name that appears in Roz's statement on the social quality of the *roman anglais*. In Roz's thesis, Kipling was fully assimilated into the category of 'portée sociale'. His classic work *The Jungle Book* exemplified an ideal of harmony in a view of nature and society that appealed to French critics. The emphasis in this case fell, however, on the ethical values Kipling represented, as can be perceived in the studies of André Chevrillon — the anglophile nephew of Hypolite Taine — on the poet of the Empire.⁶² Chevrillon stressed above all the ethical value of self-restraint contained in Kipling's poems and stories. 'Reticence' was one of the notions Chevrillon borrowed from the poet: the word itself expresses an idea of restraint and moderation in the depiction of society, which was one of the distinctive qualities

⁵⁹ For the Dickensian connection in the Edwardians, see Hunter, *Edwardian Fiction*, pp. 14-17.

⁶⁰ See A. Chevalley, *Le Roman anglais de notre temps* (London: Milford, 1921), pp. 145-84.

⁶¹ E. Gosse, 'France et Angleterre: l'avenir de leurs relations intellectuelles', *RDM*, 35 (1916), 526-41.

⁶² 'La Poésie de R. Kipling' (1912), translated in 'Rudyard Kipling's Poetry', in his *Three Studies in English Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1923), pp. 1-152.

French critics attributed to English realism.⁶³

The reputation of Kipling was boosted after he was awarded the Nobel Prize (1907). On the Continent, his popularity survived throughout the inter-war period and afterwards. He was one of the English veterans, 'écrivains d'actualité' as they were dubbed, to appear in the booklet of J. M. López-Picó, *Escriptors Estrangers Contemporanis* (1918), in which Roz's *Le Roman anglais contemporain* was the only bibliographical reference provided. Of the best-known contemporary English novelists in Catalonia — Chesterton, Wells and Kipling — Kipling was the favourite choice. In 1918 Carner encouraged the young poet Marià Manent to translate a Wells novel (perhaps *The Invisible Man*), and offered him Kipling and Chesterton (*The Man Who Was Thursday*) as alternatives. Manent chose Kipling.⁶⁴ His celebrated version of *El llibre de la Jungla* (1920-23) had a similar impact to that of *Robinson Crusoe*, translated by Carner a few years later. Like *Robinson Crusoe*, Kipling's books had the potential of a children's classic which would certainly be most welcomed in the Biblioteca Literària.⁶⁵ It would also appeal to all readers, as a prime example of the modern English novel — as was the case of *The Invisible Man* or *The Man Who Was Thursday*. The three of them shared the values of romance and adventure. And they had, in addition, a powerful social value. *The Jungle Book* was the incarnation of a popular myth, the myth of civilisation, from one of those regarded as poets and

⁶³ See, for instance, T. de Wyzewa, *RDM*, 42 (1907), I, 425-48 (436).

⁶⁴ A. Manent, *Marià Manent: biografia íntima i literària* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1995), p. 63. Manent's choice is understandable in the light of his poetical bias. See M. Roser, 'Marià Manent and English Influence in Catalonia' (unpublished thesis, University of London, 1995), pp. 81, 98-100, 270.

⁶⁵ Leading Catalan writers such as Carner and Carles Riba made contributions in the field of children's literature. They wrote, for instance, for the magazine *Jordi* (February-August 1928) in which from Kipling's *Just So Stories* Manent translated 'How the Whale Got his Throat' ('Com es transformà la gola de la balena', 5 April 1928, pp. 6-7). A translation of *Kim* was supposed to appear in Biblioteca Literària (cf. *D'Ací*, 18 [1929], 196-97).

prophets of the age.⁶⁶ ‘Kipling és l’únic escriptor modern que ha creat mites durables’: that was the message of Maurois’s talk in Barcelona, just a few days after Kipling’s death.⁶⁷ Kipling’s achievement was to produce a poetical creation out of an appealing social ideal which Roz summarised in his idea of loyalty. Mowgly was for him a ‘héros de la volonté anglaise’, and the story reached a mythical dimension, reconciling Nature with ‘humanité’ in a perfect blending of moral and literary values.⁶⁸

The Catalan reception of Kipling follows the same approach as Roz’s. The ideal of harmony in Kipling’s mythical book is thus stated in Manent’s presentation: ‘La doble naturalesa del minyó, participant d’una salvatgeria aspra i d’un fons humà molt pur, promou conflictes dramàtics que Rudyard Kipling sap descriure severament, però amb una matització sentimental exactíssima.’ The stress lay on the poetic qualities of the story. Kipling’s poetic force was identified with an ideal of moderation in which dramatic conflicts were nuanced to the extreme: he was therefore, according to López-Picó, at the opposite extreme from detailed analysis.⁶⁹ The poet of the Empire represented an artistic sensibility close to the *Noucentista* creed, embodied in the all-embracing category of ‘civilisation’ — the same value attributed to *Robinson Crusoe*. Well into the 1930s, such a sensibility still showed in young critics such as Maurici Serrahima, who would find in Kipling the same sense of humanity:

Kipling és pregonament humà, i perquè ho és, obté per intuïció, *sense anàlisi visible*, aquelles meravelloses precisions sobre situacions psicològiques que, aparentment complicades, ens apareixen tan simples, tan comprensibles quan ell les il·lumina amb la

⁶⁶ Both Chesterton and Wells were translated some years later. See Chapters 1 and 2.

⁶⁷ ‘Kipling segons Maurois’, *LP*, 28 January 1936, p. 6. This view repeats in R. Tasis, ‘Curs de literatura anglesa’, *LP*, 16 April 1936, p. 2. See also A. Maurois, *Poets and Prophets* (London: Cassell, 1936), pp. 1-40.

⁶⁸ *Le Roman anglais contemporain*, p. 201.

⁶⁹ *Escriptors estrangers contemporanis* (Barcelona: Minerva, 1918), pp. 20-21.

seva visió. *Alhora Kipling és sa, net, vigorós, alegre.* Fins quan tracta els temes relliscosos de la vida desvagada i *non sancta* dels estiueigs a Simla, el seu punt de vista és d'una sanitat inatacable. I encara més, no cal dir-ho, quan se'n va a pintar a través del seu món, que és l'Índia, una vida que és de tot lloc i de tot temps. Perquè Kipling és un escriptor èpic, un dels raríssims èpics veritables de l'Europa moderna.⁷⁰

The italicised words stand for a whole conception of literature which has been observed from the beginning of this chapter. Serrahima's words mirror Schwob's ideal of an 'art net et clair' evoked in many a French manifesto, applied in this case to the way Kipling treated psychological themes preventing analysis from taking the place of a living impression of life. It was not only on puritan moral grounds that he made the above statement, but dreaming of an epic quality he did not find in modern European literature. The essential classics of the English novel produced by the Biblioteca Literària helped to give shape to those ideals which contributed to a modest, yet growing, Catalan tradition of novel criticism, modelled on French critics.

Humour and entertainment

English novels enjoyed a privileged place in the vast category of distraction. The Biblioteca Literària was set up to provide entertainment, and also edification, through popular classics intended for family reading (*Gulliver's Travels*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*), adventures for both young and old (*Robinson Crusoe*, *The Jungle Book*), moral parables (*Silas Marner*), and novels for 'senyoretetes' (the works of Bennett). An archetypal English humour also contributed to the popularity of the English novel. Dickens epitomised the comic treatment of characters. Comparing Dickens and Wells on the success of *Mr Polly*, the French critic Henri Ghéon pointed out 'le procédé d'humour' that both writers had in common: 'C'est là tout le secret de la faveur

⁷⁰ M. Serrahima, 'Rudyard Kipling', *EM*, 21 January 1936, p. 9 (my emphasis).

du roman anglais, non seulement en Angleterre, mais partout où le lecteur exige du roman distraction; c'est là tout le secret aussi de sa valeur.⁷¹

In an article dedicated to Carner, the critic Josep M. Capdevila remarked, in a characteristically *Noucentista* manner, on the distinction between the popular quality of *riure* ('laughter') and the superior form of art conveyed in *somriure* ('smiling'), 'nascut amb la serenitat més pura'.⁷² Laughter made comedy the most popular genre. Smiling concerned a more subtle kind of humour, which had to do with an author's ability to distance himself from his creations, thus providing for the reader a higher artistic experience. Carner held the view that the novel was 'ubiquitous', intended for people of all walks of life. This 'ubiquitous' quality, however, did not prevent him from encouraging the reader to 'smile' at his neighbours and also at himself.⁷³ In the light of Carner's principles, the value of humour could well be compared to that of sympathy in that both appealed to a bright view of reality. Humour and sympathy intertwined in that communal feeling of getting in touch with our fellow-mortals. Chesterton's definition of humour as a 'deep appreciation of the absurdities of the others' points to a similar feeling: Cervantes represents for him the grand Christian quality of the man who laughs at himself (and mocks chivalry), and he also evokes Dickens.⁷⁴ Dickens was an illustration of the popular blend of a comic vein and *pathos*, designed to move readers to laughter and tears, and to compassion. The delightful *captatio benevolentiae* he wrote for *A Christmas Carol* could well exemplify the kind of humour Carner was seeking for his readers:

⁷¹ 'L'Histoire de M. Polly', *NRF*, 7 (1912), 123-28.

⁷² 'El riure', *LVC*, 24 March 1921, p. 7.

⁷³ 'L'abrandament de Carles Soldevila', in his *El reialme de la poesia*, pp. 143-47.

⁷⁴ 'Humour' (1928), in his *The Spice of Life* (London: Darwen Finlayson, 1964), pp. 22-29.

I have endeavoured in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it.⁷⁵

At a time when language was thought to be endowed with the power of shaping society, translations could make an important contribution. They would contribute, for instance, to the expansion of literary resources in the popular comic register. The grotesque, even when lacking any higher artistic value, served to familiarise the reader with humour and word play. Carner's rendering of *Pickwick* (1931), for instance, is a feast of verbal wit and imagination in its attempt to convey Dickens's comic gift. Likewise, translating Chesterton's paradoxes was a great stylistic challenge for the many Catalan writers involved, of whom Manent was the most successful in his beautiful rendering of *The Everlasting Man*.

Biblioteca Literària published in 1919 Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men on the Bummel*, followed in 1921 by his most famous novel *Three Men in a Boat*, translated into French in the same year. Jerome's sense of humour, close to caricature, was thus described by the Catalan reviewer:

És d'un humorisme còmic partint generalment del ridícul de les situacions. [...] El comparariem a un dibuixant de tradicional periòdic humorístic anglès, amb aquell humorisme *gens intel·lectual*, *gens esteta*, basat en incidents sovint bon jans i sovint clownescos.⁷⁶

Translating a popular humorist such as Jerome K. Jerome had the value of offering entertaining reading for the plain man. The reviewer's remark ('not at all intellectual, not at all aesthetic') made clear that entertainment, even popular easy reading, was a top priority. *Tres homes dins*

⁷⁵ Preface to *A Christmas Carol* (1843) (London: Palmer, 1922).

⁷⁶ J. Lleóart, 'Tres homes dins una barca (sense comptar-hi el gos)', *LVC*, 31 July 1921, p. 11 (my emphasis).

d'una barca was reprinted in the Biblioteca Univers, a series launched by Carles Soldevila with the aim of providing fashionable works 'd'una amenitat indiscutible'.⁷⁷ According to the presentation, Jerome's 'ingènua barreja de plors i rialles' and 'dosis d'ironia i pietat' were reminiscent of the author of *Pickwick*. Dickens was also a favourite choice in Soldevila's pocket library: the Christmas series was completed with translations of *La batalla de la vida* (*The Battle of Life*) in 1932 and *El grill de la llar* (*The Cricket on the Hearth*) in 1933. Carner may also have been involved in the publication of the first English title of the series, *L'home invisible* (1929), perhaps the work that he offered to Manent in 1918. From the English titles published in the Biblioteca Univers, it is clear that Soldevila relied on Carner's taste. After the first phase of the Biblioteca Literària was over, Carner was to remain influential for several years in the choice of English literature for the growing Catalan market for translations.⁷⁸

2 Expansion of translations: a more complex panorama

New trends and the contribution of Carles Soldevila

Soldevila had a guiding rôle in the many projects which gave shape to an expanding publishing market from the mid-to-late 1920s. He took over from Carner as director of *D'Ací i d'Allà* in 1924.⁷⁹ He was literary advisor to one of the main Catalan publishing houses, Llibreria Catalònia, both as director of Biblioteca Univers and translator for Biblioteca Europa and Biblioteca Literària. He was a regular contributor to *La Publicitat* (under the pseudonym *Myself*), and wrote

⁷⁷ See 'Propostes de la Biblioteca Univers' (Barcelona: 1928), p. 7.

⁷⁸ In the case of Dickens, see Ortín, 'Dickens in Catalonia' (Oxford, 8 March 1994).

⁷⁹ For an account of Soldevila's involvement as general editor, see J. M. Tresserras, *'D'Ací i d'Allà': aporador de la modernitat (1918-1936)* (Barcelona: Llibres de l'Índex, 1993), pp. 43-141. See also A. Manent, 'Carles Soldevila, un home de lletres', *Llengua & Literatura*, 6 (1994-95), 43-52.

for the *Revista de Catalunya*. He was the author of manuals such as *L'home ben educat* and *La dona ben educada*, and of plays (such as *Escola de senyores*). The position Soldevila enjoyed in the cultural *milieu*, as editor, translator, novelist, and above all, cultural entrepreneur, allowed him to gain a privileged view of the changing literary panorama. *D'Ací i d'Allà* was a platform for his vocation to promote modern and civilised values. 'Ell era un europeu, un afrancesat [...], fins i tot un britanitzat, a imatge d'altres escriptors noucentistes, [que] somniaven en la normalitat i la correcció angleses', states the journalist Sempronio.⁸⁰ *D'Ací i d'Allà* especially cultivated the increasing female readership. The section called 'A l'hora del te' presented refined social chronicles in which English sportswomen, for example, were presented. Beautiful advertisements and pictures filled the pages of this periodical which under Soldevila's editorship became more like an English magazine.

The booming production of novels and the large novel readership in England was a cause for admiration all over the Continent. In his influential survey on contemporary English fiction, *Le Roman anglais de notre temps* (1921), Abel Chevalley remarked: 'On oublie que, d'après un calcul approximatif, dix-sept millions d'Anglais sur quarante lisent au moins un volume de fiction par mois. Si nos écrivains avaient ce même nombre de clients, est-on sûr qu'ils seraient moins puérils, moins prolixes?'⁸¹ This commercial point was precisely what Thibaudet singled out in the reflections on the English novel that he wrote on the the publication of Chevalley's book, focusing on the essentially democratic note of the English tradition of the genre, from Scott to Wells and Kipling.⁸² In Catalonia such a rich production of English novels served to contrast

⁸⁰ Cited in Tresserras, p. 50.

⁸¹ *Le Roman anglais de notre temps*, p. 128.

⁸² 'Du Roman anglais', *NRF*, 17 (1921), 601-10.

with the poor conditions at home, just at the time when the Catalan debate on the novel was reaching its peak. According to one critic, an article by Hilaire Belloc predicting the death of the novel seemed an ironic contrast to the Catalan situation.⁸³

Consumption of fiction was one of the civilised standards Soldevila sought to achieve. In his literary guide *Què cal llegir?* he raised Chevalley's point at the beginning of the chapter on the novel. At a time when the Catalan novel could provide little, he thought, it was advisable to turn to the land that could provide most, namely England, 'la pàtria de la novel·la', as Soldevila defined it, borrowing Chevalley's words.⁸⁴ He set out in each chapter (essay, poetry, novel and drama) a list of recommended works, and marked with an asterisk those already translated into Catalan. Soldevila was assuming in this guide the pedagogic task of advising Catalan readers on matters of literary taste, as Carner had done in previous years as director of Biblioteca Literària... providing advice to the subscribers to *La Veu* or *La Publicitat* on how to form a basic library. Like Carner, Soldevila sought to influence the whole Catalan readership, from the cultural élite to the general reader. This pedagogic purpose was reflected in his hierarchical conception of the reading public:

Concebeu, si us plau, el públic com una piràmide i precupeu-vos tant com vulgueu de l'exquisidesa de la cúspide. Jo també me'n preocupo. Però no oblidem que sense una base atapeïda i esbarjosa no hi ha cúspide que s'aguanti. Si això és cert per a totes les piràmides, més ho serà per a la piràmide catalana, sense altre suport, fins avui, que el que la nostra paraula li conquista.⁸⁵

The general reader at the bottom of the pyramid was one of his concerns. As for English titles,

⁸³ J. Crexells, 'La mort de la novel·la', *RC*, 1 (1924), 206-07. For this much debated issue, see Chapter 4. 1.

⁸⁴ *Què cal llegir?: l'art d'enriquir un esperit, l'art de formar una biblioteca* (Barcelona: Llibreria Catalònia, 1928), pp. 69-70.

⁸⁵ 'La nova era literària' (1930), in his *Obres completes* (1967), pp. 1312-22 (1322).

before he set up Biblioteca Univers, Soldevila himself translated a novel by a popular writer of Edwardian times, William J. Locke.⁸⁶ He might have been inspired in this by Chevalley's survey, in which Locke is praised for his qualities of 'ironie souriante' and 'style délicieux'. *L'inventor de canons* (*Septimus*) was presented as 'una novel·la per a homes', to the annoyance of Guansé, the reviewer, who thought that 'una novel·la per a senyoretas. I per a senyoretas de casa bona' would have been a more appropriate subtitle.⁸⁷ *L'inventor de canons* was one of the first English novels to be serialised in a Catalan newspaper.⁸⁸ It could well bear comparison with Bennett's *The Price of Love* that Carner offered to 'senyores i senyoretas'. In their reading programme Carner and Soldevila agreed that satisfying the demands of plain readers also meant indulging them with sentimental comedies. Carles Riba contributed to that popular aim, as he translated for Biblioteca Literària half of the popular adventure novel *She*, by H. Rider Haggard. He was encouraged by his friend Josep Millàs-Raurell, who told him that such an interesting and entertaining *récit* was also 'morally correct'.⁸⁹

Soldevila had a more selective target in his quest to modernise the taste of the Catalan reading public. His concern was also with the tip of the pyramid. Soldevila spoke for the cultural élite that was yearning to connect with modern European literary trends, and felt a deep kinship with the leading critics of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, such as Gide, and also 'l'exquisit i

⁸⁶ Locke was promoted by J. B. Pinker, the major literary agent representing Bennett and Wells, amongst others. He was the fashionable author of 1907, according to F. Swinnerton, *Background with Chorus* (London: Hutchinson 1956), pp. 106-07.

⁸⁷ '*L'inventor de canons*', *RC*, 3 (1926), 542-43.

⁸⁸ *La Nau*, 1 December 1927 to 16 March 1928.

⁸⁹ *Ella*, trans. J. Millàs-Raurell (vol. I) and C. Riba (vol. II) (Barcelona: Llibreria Catalònia, 1931). For Riba's involvement, see *Cartes de Carles Riba*, ed. C. J. Guardiola (Barcelona: La Magrana, 1990), p. 239. *She* was a well-known work in France, specially after being plagiarised by P. Benoit (V. Larbaud, 'À propos de *She* et de *L'Atlantide*', *NRF*, 14 [1920], 747-51). Such a plagiarism is evoked by Soldevila in 'Una nit a bon repòs', in his *Històries barcelonines* (Barcelona: Selecta, 1950), p. 195.

sensible' Valéry Larbaud. Soldevila wanted to provide for the readers of *D'Ací i d'Allà* a taste of what was then *à la page* in European fiction. The *Nouvelle Revue Française* proved a reliable canon to draw upon.

Conrad, between conscience and adventure

In the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, Larbaud was a pioneer in the establishment of Conrad as an object of critical appraisal. Larbaud's aesthetic interests were akin to the moral 'conscience' that pervaded the tragic note of destiny in Conrad's novels, although he had little interest in the 'intrigue' itself. He interestingly noted how distant Conrad was in this respect from popular English writers such as Wells, or Dickens. In such a distinction Larbaud was describing a fundamental modern preoccupation:

Que nous fait l'intrigue? du moment que ce n'est pas d'elle que l'écrivain tire la substance et les effets de son roman; du moment qu'il la nourrit, au contraire, avec les richesses de son expérience et de sa fantaisie; du moment qu'elle n'est pour lui qu'un moyen. [...] L'important, c'est que l'intérêt moral ne languit jamais, que les situations sont toujours saisissantes, humaines et vraies.⁹⁰

Larbaud was focusing his attention on moral interest and human values. While comparing Conrad with Kipling as representatives of modern epic, he remarked on the crucial difference between them, those existential worries that made Larbaud prefer the Slav element of Conrad to the bright colours of Kipling's Indian world. In the eyes of the modern critics of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, Conrad announced a new stage in the renewal of the novel, whereas Kipling, according to Larbaud, was a step behind. A new direction for the novel was suggested on the grounds of a moral concern for human values: Larbaud was appealing to the 'moral interest' of

⁹⁰ 'Chance', *NRF* [no vol. no.] (1914), 527-28.

Conrad's 'situations saisissantes, humaines et vraies'. His words are reminiscent of the emotion described a year before by his colleague Rivière, stimulated by the reading of Stevenson, for the 'roman de l'aventure'.

The death of Conrad in August 1924 marked the climax of the intense critical interest in him, culminating in a homage issue published by the *Nouvelle Revue Française*.⁹¹ Just a month after Conrad's death, Soldevila presented in the pages of *D'Ací i d'Allà* the first Catalan translation of a work by him, 'The Lagoon', preceded by an eulogistic introduction about the Polish writer who had become 'the first novelist in England'.⁹² Also in 1924, Joan Estelrich wrote a documented study, based on the sources provided in the special Conrad issue of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. Estelrich makes clear the secret of Conrad's success in the context of a new interest in the novel of adventure, applauding him as 'the only great novelist who was at the same time a great psychologist'. He echoed Larbaud while mentioning the value of 'conscience' and pointed to the way Conrad managed to create a 'moral atmosphere' by appealing to temperament.⁹³ According to Estelrich, Conrad was in this sense closer to Russian novelists than to his British fellow-writers, namely Stevenson and Wells. He was rather a strange case, a solitary figure, an exotic writer who did not fit in with the 'portée sociale' attributed to the English novel. He could appeal, however, to a minority of readers, to the 'happy few', like

⁹¹ *NRF*, 23 (1924). It includes articles by J. Aubry (translator), B. Crémieux, A. Chevrillon, R. Fernandez, R. Francillon, J. Galsworthy, A. Gide, E. Jaloux, H. R. Lenormand, A. Maurois, and P. Valéry.

⁹² J. Millàs-Raurell, 'Josep Conrad', followed by 'La llacuna' (from *Tales of Unrest* [1898]), *D'Ací*, 14 (1924), 98-105.

⁹³ 'Josep Conrad' (1925), in his *Entre la vida i els llibres* (Barcelona: Llibreria Catalònia, 1926), pp. 237-314 (288, 303-04). Estelrich alludes to that moral interest by quoting from Conrad's preface to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*: 'Fiction [...] appeals to temperament. And in truth it must be, like painting, like music, like all art, the appeal of one temperament to all the other innumerable temperaments whose subtle and resistless power endows passing events with their true meaning, and creates the moral, the emotional atmosphere of the place and time' (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989, pp. xlviii-ix).

Soldevila and Estelrich, followers of modern doctrines of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*.

In Catalonia, translations of Conrad followed the avalanche of French translations. Biblioteca Literària published the first two choices from the Complete Works of Conrad published by the *Nouvelle Revue Française* under Gide's supervision, namely *La follia d'Almayer* (1929) and *Typhoon* (1930). Yet, as Estelrich recalled, for all the critical acclaim, Conrad, unlike Stevenson, Wells, Kipling, or Chesterton, was not a popular writer. According to some English views, Conrad had more in common with Henry James than with the rest of the Edwardians.⁹⁴ What made Conrad, and not James, an object of such critical interest in France (and Catalonia) was his determined moral commitment, conveyed through adventure and exoticism. Both these values proved highly fruitful in the quest for the modern novel, as we have seen in the case of Defoe, Stevenson or Kipling. Such values kept feeding the modern critical mood, always moving away from the ghosts of naturalism and analysis, though now, with Joyce and Proust in the picture, concern for the *roman anglais* was not restricted to the healthy English realism praised by Roz. A move towards an appreciation of artistic values other than clarity and popularity was taking place, though the moral issue remained essential. J. M. de Sagarra called Conrad 'el literat de l'exotisme sa' who was promoted by Gide and the *Nouvelle Revue Française* and widely read 'entre els nostres intel·ligents'. However, he contrasted Conrad's exoticism with the 'false exoticism' of Gide and Larbaud, and with the 'lúcida comoditat burgesa' of Anatole France. Still showing disapproval of naturalistic methods, he wrote:

El món de Conrad és un món vist en gran, vist per un home que [...] ha amidat tota la

⁹⁴ See, for instance, W. Allen, *The English Novel* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), pp. 302-13. However, Conrad is also described as 'a moralist, not a psychologist' and compared to André Malraux for their romantic qualities and exoticism (303, 305). On Conrad's anticipation of the aesthetics of the moderns, and comparison with H. James, see K. Graham, 'Conrad and Modernism', in J. H. Stape (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 203-22 (207-14).

tenebra i tota la grandesa de les ànimes de raça menyspreada [...] Però Conrad no ha portat totes aquestes ànimes al seu escenari amb la fredor d'un biòleg, o amb la impertinència d'un col·leccionista, sinó que d'una manera sinceríssima, amb una gran pietat, amb un gran respecte [...] ha deixat clavades de viu en viu damunt de les planes emocionants dels seus llibres tota la magnitud de les passions [...] no rebutja pas aquestes olors patològiques, però al costat d'aquestes olors cerca tots els perfums de la mar.

From heroism and adventure a sympathetic quality was to be learnt ('aquesta moral comprensiva i pietosa de l'home que s'ha jugat cent cops la vida'), and such a generous attitude, Sagarra concluded, made Conrad 'un destructor d'egoismes i de prejudicis'.⁹⁵

A taste of Joyce

The first translation of Joyce published in the Peninsula appeared in the pages of *D'Ací i d'Allà* in 1926.⁹⁶ It was a story from *Dubliners* ('Eveline'), which was likewise the first piece to be translated in France. The publication of the original version of *Ulysses* in Paris, in 1922, marked the arrival of the moderns in French letters. In the same year Larbaud presented the 'stream of consciousness' in a famous lecture which also had an impact amongst English writers.⁹⁷ T. S. Eliot, as he recalled Larbaud's contribution, alluded to the gulf that divided modern writers (Joyce at the top) from those of the previous generation (Kipling, Wells, Bennett, Chesterton) without hiding his contempt for 'vulgarity'.⁹⁸ In post-War years, Eliot's attitude was shared by many British writers who distanced themselves from their Edwardian predecessors, whom

⁹⁵ 'Exotisme' (1925), in his *Obres completes: prosa* (Barcelona: Selecta, 1967), pp. 399-401.

⁹⁶ 'Evelina', trans. Millàs-Raurell, *D'Ací*, 16 (1926), 432-33.

⁹⁷ For the presence of Joyce in France and Larbaud's involvement, see Raimond, *La Crise du roman*, pp. 257-61. Larbaud's inaugural talk on Joyce appeared in *NRF*, 18 (1922), 385-409; see also his 'À propos de James Joyce et de *Ulysses*', *NRF*, 24 (1925), 5-17.

⁹⁸ 'Lettre d'Angleterre', *NRF*, 18 (1922), 617-24.

Virginia Woolf labelled as ‘materialists’, namely Bennett, Wells, and Galsworthy.⁹⁹ Larbaud, who not that long before had presented both Chesterton and Bennett in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, was now Joyce’s main *apôtre* in France. From the French side of the Channel, however, the kind of popular literature Edwardian writers produced was not to be disregarded yet. They were no longer the centre of attraction, though they were still appreciated in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* throughout the 1930s. Gide’s translation of the preface to *The Old Wives’ Tale*, and his late *éloge* of Bennett, are symptomatic of a long-lasting admiration.

Soldevila mirrored his French masters as he faced the challenge of embracing modern trends. In *D’Ací i d’Allà* Joyce was the name to shape the new spirit in literature (‘el crit del capdavanter de la literatura’), yet *Ulysses* never became the *dernier cri*. He mentions Joyce in the preface to *Fanny*, a timid attempt to imitate the stream of consciousness, though the real source was *Mlle El. u.*, a work by Arthur Schnitzler which had also inspired a French practitioner and theoretician of the *monologue intérieur*.¹⁰⁰ The stories Soldevila published from *Dubliners* only announced the modern challenge, far removed from *Ulysses*. In the presentation of the first one, the name of Joyce was associated first of all with that of Proust, and with Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield, but also with Galsworthy.¹⁰¹ In the pages of *D’Ací i d’Allà*, modern innovation was no obstacle to the appreciation of popular Edwardian writers, such as Chesterton

⁹⁹ This confrontation was asserted in V. Woolf’s essay ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ (1923), in her *A Woman’s Essays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), pp. 69-87 (70). For the gulf between the cultural élite and mass culture, see J. Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939* (London: Faber, 1992), pp. 3-90.

¹⁰⁰ Preface to the second edition (Barcelona: Llibreria Catalònia, 1930), pp. 7-8 (8). *La senyoreta Elsa* appeared in Biblioteca Univers, just preceding *Fanny*. For the impact of this work, see Raimond, *La Crise du roman*, p. 263.

¹⁰¹ See the introductory note to ‘Evelina’, *D’Ací*, 16 (1926), 432. Also from *Dubliners*, Soldevila published ‘Un nuvolet’, trans. J. Pius i Lluís, *D’Ací*, 19 (1930), pp. 305-09. The first Catalan translation of fragments from *Ulysses*, by Millàs-Raurell, appeared in an avant-garde journal, *Hèlix* (February, 1930), pp. 4-5, preceded by L. Montanyà, ‘Les primeres notes sobre *Ulysse*’, in his *Notes sobre el surrealisme i altres escrits*, ed. E. Centelles (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1977), pp. 78-80. Montanyà mentions the *NRF* article by Larbaud and gives his opinion on the book after reading the French version (*Ulysse*).

and Shaw, whom Soldevila had also helped to popularise. Later he was to regret the decline into which the reputations of such distinguished men of letters had fallen, reckoning himself amongst their few faithful admirers ('*exígua minoria de fidels*').¹⁰²

Soldevila's hierarchical conception of the reading public sheds light on the eclectic choice of writers he helped to introduce to Catalonia. From the modern prose of Joyce and Conrad to the popular comic vein of Dickens, Wells, Chesterton, and Jerome and from Shaw's dramas of ideas to Locke's sentimental comedies, each author had his place on a different level of the pyramid, but they all came together in the fundamental aspiration of educating literary taste. From Larbaud and the *Nouvelle Revue Française* Soldevila learned that it was possible to reconcile the interests of the discriminating modern reader with the popular enjoyment the *roman anglais* could provide for all kinds of readers. All moderns and Edwardians had a place in that leading literary journal, all through the 1920s and early 1930s. For Soldevila, the key word was *bon gust*, a concept which sometimes comes close to mere fashion. *Bon gust*, and fashion, served a social purpose, for he was enthusiastically absorbed in the task of building up a Catalan readership.

Proa and the search for purity in the novel

As he echoed his French masters, Larbaud and Gide in particular, Soldevila opened the publishing market to new authors, for France was at the centre of literary renewal through the reception of foreign literatures.¹⁰³ In Catalonia, Gide's study on Dostoevsky (1922) had a major

¹⁰² 'La nova era literària' (1930), in his *Obres completes*, pp. 1312-22 (1317). For Soldevila's contribution to the presence of Chesterton and Shaw in Catalan journalism, see Chapter 1. 1 and Chapter 2. 2.

¹⁰³ For Gide's influence on Soldevila, see C. Arnau, 'Crisi i represa de la novel·la, in *HLC*, X, pp. 9-101 (77-82).

influence in the spreading of the modern fashion of *russisme*.¹⁰⁴ A translation of a Dostoevsky work (*La dispesera*) was amongst the first volumes published in the Biblioteca Univers. Soldevila had followed the impact of the Russian novel in France, anticipated by Vogüé. It was principally the Russian model that he had in mind when he defined what was expected from the modern novel: ‘emoció’ and ‘sensació’, ‘passions de viu en viu’ were the fundamental qualities; they were to bring about the exploration of the elemental states of the souls — ‘ànimes elementals, on l’instint s’ofereix sense mescla, en estat d’absoluta puresa’.¹⁰⁵ Russian literature, though overlapping with English literature, thus came to the fore:

La literatura russa i anglesa han esdevingut en aquests darrers anys el model en el qual han convergit les mirades de tots els escriptors. I àdhuc, si volem establir una jerarquia, ens caldrà posar la literatura que compta amb un Dostoiewski i amb un Bunin, per sobre de la que s’envaneix d’un Dickens i d’un Joyce.¹⁰⁶

The impact of the Russians shed new light on the appreciation of the English and the French novel. In his reflections on *le roman domestique* of 1924, on the publication of the first complete French version of *Les Frères Karamazov*, Thibaudet compared the profound ‘élan vital’ flowing through the novels of George Eliot with the common domestic quality he recalled in Russian novels from Turgenev’s *Fathers and Sons* to *The Brothers Karamazov*. The parallel was even expanded to include Bourget’s *Drames de familles*, in what was a clear attempt to bring together the three traditions.¹⁰⁷ In a still prevailing context of reaction against the analytic tendency, Dostoevsky was at the centre of the critical comparisons, representing the psychological model

¹⁰⁴ See C. Soldevila, ‘Propaganda i propagandistes’ (1926), in his *Obres completes*, pp. 1279-81. For the influence of Dostoevsky in Catalan literature, see Arnau, ‘Crisi i represa de la novel·la’, pp. 21-22.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Els enemics de l’intel·lecte’ (1928), in his *Obres completes*, pp. 1304-12 (1309-11).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1309.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Le Roman domestique’, *NRF*, 21 (1924), 457-67.

par excellence.

This combination of literary influences becomes clear in the second phase of Catalan translations, which substantially increased after the foundation of Proa in 1928. Russian novelists had a remarkable presence. Proa's fictional series 'A Tot Vent' included works by Tolstoy, Turgenev (*Pares i fills*), Chekhov, and four works by Dostoevsky. The novelist Joan Puig i Ferrater, director of the series, had a good reason for promoting Dostoevsky in particular.¹⁰⁸ Proust made an entrance with *Du côté de chez Swan*, and even a work of Zola was published in Proa's fictional series in which all kind of ideological barriers were suppressed. 'A tot vent' presented an ambitious choice of Russian, French and English writers, as if pursuing that 'vie complémentaire' Thibaudet suggested when trying to reconcile the three lines of fiction. In 1936, with some hundred volumes in the market, Proa publicised the series as follows:

Una antologia de la novel·la clàssica i moderna universals. Les millors obres estrangeres traduïdes pels millors escriptors catalans. Les més importants novel·les del nostre temps. Cap sectarisme, cap exclusivisme. Del catòlic Baring al comunista Bogdànov, del cristià Dostoevski al sensualisme de Proust, totes les formes del pensament són acceptables en la nostra col·lecció mentre siguin encarnades en una intensa i pura obra d'art. Una gran col·lecció europea de novel·les digna germana de la 'Nelson' francesa i la 'Tauchnitz' anglesa, que hem volgut prendre per models.¹⁰⁹

The spirit of the series was summarised in the phrase 'una intensa i pura obra d'art'. The quest for purity played a part in the process of literary renewal in post-War years. Gide had defined *la pureté* as the process of 'purging' the novel of all the unnecessary elements he found in the 'exacte peinture de l'état des esprits' of his predecessors. English novelists had been successful

¹⁰⁸ Puig i Ferrater was a *Modernista* novelist who made a comeback in the 1920s. For the influence of Dostoevsky on his novels, see C. Arnau, 'Crisi i represa de la novel·la', in *HLC*, X, pp. 36-44.

¹⁰⁹ Cited in A. Manent, *Escriptors i editors del nou-cents* (Barcelona: Curial, 1984), p. 194. For a list of titles, see *50 anys (1928-1978) Edicions Proa* (Barcelona: Proa, 1978).

at it, he admitted, and he mentioned Thibaudet's statement on the 'individu vivant' which he would bear in mind as he set to write *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* (1925).¹¹⁰ Gide recognised Bennett and Dickens (and also Dostoevsky) as masters in painting social 'panoramas', and Bennett's tale of two sisters became in particular inspirational for his reflections on the *roman pur*. Dostoevsky was, however, the first name to come to the critic's mind when shifting to the 'panorama' of the inner being. The feeling of sympathy with the Russian soul was also echoed among English critics. Bennett, for instance, in his review of Maurice Baring's outline of Russian Literature for *New Age*, stated that 'nobody, perhaps, ever understood and sympathised with human nature as Dostoevsky did'.¹¹¹

It is in the light of this concern for the *roman pur* that English novels should be analysed. Titles published by Proa during the period 1928-36 include *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (Hardy), *The Tragic Comedians* (Meredith), *Daphne Adeane* (Maurice Baring), *Mrs Dalloway* (Virginia Woolf), *The Constant Nymph* (Margaret Kennedy), and *Nocturne* (Frank Swinnerton). Both modern English novelists and those of older generations, such as Meredith and Hardy, had a part in developing the French concept of *roman pur* which was adopted in the presentation of the major Catalan novel series 'A Tot Vent'. Such an analysis will supply further evidence of the close French critical involvement in the transmission of the English novel in Catalonia.

¹¹⁰ *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs* (Paris: Gallimard, 1927), p. 58. See also Raimond, *La Crise du roman*, pp. 156-57.

¹¹¹ 'Turgenev and Dostoievsky' (1910), in S. Hynes (ed.), *Critical Writings of Arnold Bennett* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1968), pp. 112-15 (114).

Hardy, Meredith and Galsworthy

In the name of purity, the work of Thomas Hardy, who after *Jude the Obscure* (1895) had stopped writing novels, was reappraised. His principle that an artist should no longer ‘reproduire le vrai mais imaginer le vraisemblable’, accepted by French critics since the early years of the century, continued to attract them.¹¹² *Teresa dels Urbervilles: una dona pura, fidelment presentada* (1929) was the first English title presented by Proa, just a year after Hardy’s death. The translator, C. A. Jordana, took the opportunity to highlight in the preface the significance of Hardy’s perception of the novel. He drew attention to his ideal of verisimilitude (‘fidel a la veritat’), which concerned in that case the ‘faithful’ presentation of a character — as indicated in the subtitle: ‘a pure woman, faithfully presented’— within her social milieu. Jordana was projecting in such an ideal the quality of purity generally sought for the modern novel, meaning a profound handling of the psychological truth. Alluding to Hardy, Guansé explained how *versemblança* worked in the portrayal of passions in a rural drama, supporting his argument with Russian rural novelists (e. g. Turgenev). Interestingly, he refers to Hardy’s idea of verisimilitude to contrast it with picturesque and distorted representations of reality (no matter whether they were taken from rural or urban life).¹¹³ Such a reaction against what he regarded as false versions of ruralism is close to that expressed by George Eliot while criticising the idyllic picturesque representations of peasants in art and literature.¹¹⁴ A new and important element, however, was now at work: human passions. In modern critical views of psychological novels, sympathy applies to the portrayal of passion. Hardy’s perception of verisimilitude conveyed an ideal of

¹¹² See Raimond, *La Crise du roman*, p. 97, quoting from an article by J. Aynard in *Revue de Paris*, 1 July 1903.

¹¹³ ‘El ruralisme en literatura’, *La Nau*, 8 October 1929.

¹¹⁴ *Selected Essays* (1990), pp. 107-39.

sympathy in that it suggested a shift from the reproduction of the real. Both Jordana and Guansé admired Hardy's endeavour to shape passions, and they both emphasised the feeling of 'pietat humana' flowing through *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, an example of a pure character.¹¹⁵

Of the two great late Victorian survivors, Meredith enjoyed a higher critical acclaim in France. In *Le Roman anglais contemporain* (1912), Roz discovered in Meredith the essential value of truthfulness in the presentation of characters as observed 'dans les moeurs': he was the sublime example of serenity, 'sanité', and common sense displayed through the observation of characters in situation, or rather, in conversation.¹¹⁶ Meredith became an appealing target for theoretical reflection in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, from the early 1920s until the mid-1930s, in connection with a moral debate on the novel which was stimulated by the impact of Proust. Continuing the spirit of Thibaudet's reflections, Ramon Fernandez raised again, in a debate he held with Rivière. 'le fait moral' in relation to representation of characters: Bourget was categorically refused such a label. But even Proust did not succeed in creating 'un être vivant'. Fernandez persuaded Rivière, a fond admirer of Proust, of the moral potential of the *roman anglais*, namely George Eliot, Hardy, and above all Meredith. The great moral lesson to be learnt from Meredith, both critics in the end agreed, concerned the 'vérité psychologique' of his characters. Meredith distanced himself from his creatures, by means of the comic spirit, and managed to create out of them what Fernandez called a 'unité vivante' (a unity of feeling, action, life, and mood). Echoing Thibaudet, Fernandez appealed to Meredith's ability to 'suivre avec lenteur les fluctuations des âmes'. In the process leading to the 'non' of Claire Middleton,

¹¹⁵ *Teresa dels Urbervilles* (Barcelona: Proa, 1929), pp. 6-7. See also Jordana's notice in *M*, 19 September 1929, p. 4, and Guansé's notice in *RC*, 12 (1929), 249-50.

¹¹⁶ *Le Roman*, pp. 32-49. In Catalonia, E. d'Ors had admired Meredith as a subtle psychologist, on anti-naturalistic grounds: see J. Castellanos, 'Les figuracions de la fantasia: Eugeni d'Ors i la novel·la', in *Els Marges*, 50 (June 1994), 10-27 (23).

rejecting the marriage proposal from Willoughby Pattern in *The Egoist*, Fernandez found a symptomatic illustration of that ‘courant morale’.¹¹⁷

Maurici Serrahima followed the French debate on ‘moralisme et littérature’ in his literary contributions for *El Matí* (1932-33). A year later, *Els comedians trágics*, the only Catalan translation of Meredith, was published by Proa. In the preface, Meredith was praised, perhaps by Jordana, the translator, for vraisemblance in the study of characters, recognised in his ‘passionate sincerity’ and gifts of ‘acuity of perception’ and reticence.¹¹⁸ Fernandez’s reading of Meredith proved for Serrahima an interesting case study in the treatment of the psychological. Psychological truth had to do, for Serrahima, with the ideal of balance, which he recalls in his long analysis of *The Egoist*. The moral lesson he draws from Meredith focuses on the ‘actitud veritable, viva’ that makes the character sound true. Serrahima refers to the ‘art de la matització’ in the character of Willoughby — the same words Manent had used to describe the art of Kipling.¹¹⁹ Balance applied in particular to the comic spirit on which Meredith had reflected in a famous essay he wrote just before *The Egoist*. Appealing to common sense, Meredith spoke of both the ‘delicate balance of the comic idea’ and ‘the genius of thoughtful laughter’, and he found examples in Dickens, the comedies of Molière, and Don Quixote and ‘his good sense along the high road of the craziest expeditions’.¹²⁰ The greatness of Meredith was that he

¹¹⁷ See J. Rivière and R. Fernandez, *Moralisme et Littérature* (Paris: Correa, 1932), a compilation of lectures held after 1924. See also Fernandez, *Messages: Première série* (Paris: Gallimard, 1926), pp. 120-46.

¹¹⁸ Preface to *Els comedians trágics* (Badalona: Proa, 1934), p. 6. Guansé also singles out the ‘accent de veritat’ in Meredith’s study of characters’ (*Els comedians trágics*, LP, 27 September 1934, p. 2). M. de Riquer refers to Fernandez’s contribution in familiarising Catalonia with this author (*Les editorials grans catalanes: Edicions Proa*, LP, 25 February 1935, p. 5).

¹¹⁹ ‘Willoughby Pattern, l’Egoista’, *RC*, 17 (1938), 185-212. An extensive comment on *The Egoist* following the Fernandez-Rivière discussion is included in ‘Moralisme i literatura’, in his *Assaigs sobre novel·la* (Barcelona: Publicacions de La Revista, 1934), pp. 23-41 (33-41).

¹²⁰ ‘An Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit’ (1877), in *The Egoist*, ed. R. M. Adams (London: Norton, 1979), pp. 431-50.

managed to make Willoughby the embodiment of selfishness, giving shape to a character with whom everyone could identify: 'it is yourself that is hunted down', said Stevenson, who greatly admired *The Egoist*.¹²¹ Those 'possibilitats moralitzadores' Serrahima alludes to in commenting on Meredith's masterpiece concerned the process of identifying with the main character.

In Meredith some critics recognised a model for the psychological novelists, centred on the balanced view of individuals as social types. Chevrillon was the first to apply the value of reticence he observed in Meredith to the analysis of a more popular writer, John Galsworthy.¹²² Chevrillon continued Roz's thesis on the *roman anglais* by contrasting the analytic method characteristic of French novelists with the 'types de l'humanité anglaise contemporaine'.¹²³ In his study of Galsworthy, however, a new emphasis was laid on the Russian influence (Turgenev), pointing as he did to the correspondence between ordinary appearances of social life ('life going on before us') and the 'elemental states of our own souls'. Recalling Meredith's *The Egoist*, he illustrated this point with Galsworthy's conjugal drama, *Fraternity*:

The final and inevitable crisis is brought about by the gradual accumulation of minute circumstances, by the petty daily play of characteristic impressions and reactions of the soul. There is no scene of any sort between husband and wife. Without any apparent shock or conflict, a rift appears in their relations, and widens slowly and surely. The drama closes naturally with the quiet exit of the husband. The secret process suggested here makes one think of those imperceptible molecular activities which culminate in the silent, spontaneous rupture of an impossible fusion of metals.*How the structure and the intimate movement of souls is revealed in such a study! We seem to be looking at them

¹²¹ *Essays in the Art of Writing* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1908), p. 85.

¹²² Catalan translations included *El jueu errant i altres narracions* (Barcelona: La Novel·la Estrangera, n.d.), *L'homenet* (Barcelona: La Novel·la Estrangera, n.d.; reprinted in *Quaderns Literaris*, 1934), and 'Evolució', *Es*, 18 December 1932, p. 3, coinciding with Galsworthy's award of the Nobel Prize of Literature. Biblioteca Europa announced publication of a Galsworthy novel (cf. *L'Opinió*, 18 February 1928, p. 4). Spanish versions included, for instance, *El mono blanco* (Barcelona: Mentora, 1928), *La cuchara de plata* (Barcelona: 1933), *Más allá* (Barcelona: Juventud, 1935).

¹²³ 'John Galsworthy', *RDM*, 9 (1912), 314-58; revised in his *Three Studies in English Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1923), pp. 153-219.

through a magnifying glass, or, rather, listening through a microphone to their life-breath. Their slightest vibrations acquire an unexpected value, and meaning; their very silences are full of strange, disturbing murmurs, significant of the inner being.¹²⁴

What Chevrillon defined as ‘elemental states of the soul’ is reminiscent of the ‘ànimes elementals en estat d’absoluta puresa’ that Soldevila alluded to when defining passion and emotion in literature, distancing himself from bland sentimentalism. The Russian model was in the mind of both critics. Passion and emotion, suggested through the slow, quiet movements of souls, were understood in a context of prevailing reticence in which even silences were meaningful. A particular reading of the Russians — and of Galsworthy, regarded as trying to emulate them — was being highlighted: instead of extended analysis, they offered an alternative strategy for handling psychology, the inner passions being suggested but never spelled out in detail. That was the strategy Serrahima (like Manent and López-Picó) recalled in Kipling’s treatment of characters ‘sense anàlisi visible’, and in Meredith’s skill in making the reader feel that ‘tot allò que ell veu no és visible’. In the eyes of some French and Catalan critics, a general quality of the *roman anglais* was identified with that emphasis on what was perceived as the social observation of characters (as opposed to crude inner observation). Thus the ‘apassionada sinceritat’ of Meredith repeated in Galsworthy, described as ‘un observador apassionat de l’evolució social’.¹²⁵ An ideal of artistic (or poetic) transposition in the portrayal of characters was in play in Hardy, Meredith and, to a lesser extent, Galsworthy. In the view of French (and Catalan) critics, all of them were faithful to the principle of ‘true to art’ which meant also ‘true-to-life’: to both inner and social life. As they dealt with the psychological element, the surface of social life was never obscured

¹²⁴ *Three Studies*, pp. 208-09. *Fraternity* is the only work by Galsworthy mentioned in Soldevila’s *Què cal llegir?* For an account of this novel about London intellectuals and parallels with Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*, see J. Batchelor, *The Edwardian Novelists* (London: Duckworth, 1982), pp. 198-202.

¹²⁵ See R. Tasis, ‘Curs de novel·la anglesa’, *LP*, 16 April 1936, p. 2.

by the depths of the inner being, creating those ‘types d’humanité anglaise’ French and Catalan critics appreciated as an expression of the ‘pure novel’.

The centrality of Maurice Baring in the choice of contemporaries

The modern reader might be surprised to find the name of Baring besides those of Dostoevsky and Proust in the presentation of Proa’s series. At the time, he was ranked as high as Proust by André Maurois. Baring had a place in the context of the modern search for *la pureté*, and in the growing interest in the *roman anglais*. He was one amongst the ‘nouveaux venus’ to be quickly welcomed in France, together with Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, and Margaret Kennedy.¹²⁶ The Catalan translation of *Daphne Adeane* (1931), Baring’s best-known novel, appeared in Proa’s special series ‘Els d’ara’ (‘Writers of the moment’), following Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway* (1930). However big the gulf was between both works, in the eyes of French and Catalan critics they were representative of that concern for purity in handling introspection. Both Baring and Woolf were held in France to be part of the élite of the modern renewal, which brought with it a *renouveau moral*. T. S. Eliot alluded to it when commenting on Virginia Woolf:

Elle n’illumine pas par éclairs soudains mais répand une lumière douce et tranquille. Au lieu de rechercher le primitif, elle recherche plutôt le civilisé, le hautement civilisé, un hautement civilisé où pourtant quelque chose se trouve *omis*. Et ce quelque chose est délibérément omis, par ce qu’on pourrait appeler un effort moral du vouloir. Et, se trouvant omis, ce quelque chose est dans un sens, dans un triste sens, présent.¹²⁷

In *Daphne Adeane* we can observe how the concern for *la pureté* was fictionalised, including the moral concern for the ‘hautement civilisé’. André Maurois summarised it in his preface to

¹²⁶ Raimond, *La Crise du roman*, p. 167, n. 44.

¹²⁷ ‘Le Roman anglais contemporain’, *NRF*, 28 (1927), 669-75 (673). Woolf was being favourably compared in particular with D. H. Lawrence.

the French translation:

J'aimais tout du nouveau livre de Baring: la simplicité du ton, la *hauteur morale* sans emphase des héros, les caractères de femmes dessinés à petites touches, énigmatiques et changeantes comme les femmes adorables de Tourguéniéff, et surtout le sentiment de la fuite irréparable des heures, qui seul peut donner au roman la poésie mélancolique et la grandeur consolante de l'épopée.¹²⁸

In Catalonia, *Daphne Adeane* was warmly received by those, like Guansé, who felt weary of the overwhelming presence of the contemporary French novel, the Catalan translation of a typical thesis novel by Bourget, *Le Disciple*, having been published, for instance, two years before. He wrote:

És ben de lloar que les editorials catalanes tendeixin, com en els casos recents de Proa i de la Biblioteca Univers, a donar en les seves aportacions d'autors estrangers moderns, la preferència als anglesos i als alemanys, en lloc de donar-la, com fins avui, als francesos. La producció literària francesa — el mateix que el seu periodisme — es mercantilitza més cada dia, amb resultats, però, ben negatius. Els entesos atribueixen la minva [del llibre francès] a la baixa que ha donat la seva qualitat. Mentre anglesos i alemanys per renovar-se recerquen els grans problemes morals i psicològics que avui neguitegen els homes, els nostres veïns d'enllà dels Pirineus, esclaus de la banalitat, de la lleugeresa, de l'arrivisme, no passen [...] de les simulacions i mixtificacions més barroeres que no criden ja l'atenció sinó de quatre snobs superficials i badocs.¹²⁹

Beauty of characters was the first characteristic Guansé noted in Baring's novel. He did not hesitate to borrow Maurois's words: 'l'evocació [de Daphne Adeane], a través del vel de la mort, *dóna a l'obra un especial encís torbador*. Poques vegades la influència dels morts damunt els vivents ha estat descrita d'una manera tan *suggestiva* [my italics]', almost repeating those of Maurois: 'Le thème, la mystérieuse présence de l'héroïne invisible, donne à ce livre un charme

¹²⁸ *Daphné Adeane* (Paris: Stock, 1930), p. x (my emphasis). This translation went through 22 printings.

¹²⁹ D. Guansé, 'Daphne Adeane', *LP*, 26 April 1931, p. 5.

triste et doux. [...] Rien n'est dit; tout est suggéré'.¹³⁰ Daphne is dead from the beginning of the book. Her haunting presence proved to Maurois the sublime example of the author's art of suggestion. Baring's drama bears comparison with Galsworthy's *Fraternity* in that, in both, conflict develops without any spelling out of what is going on in the characters's minds. That pervading reticence over action, detail and even character was the secret of Baring's appeal, that made Maurois speak of the 'hauteur moral' in Baring's art. To the French reviewer of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, such a suggestive, unemphatic quality placed *Daphne Adeane* at the other extreme of the 'optique des tréteaux', stressing the simplicity and absence of exact detail ('sans précisions'): Baring was for him closer to Chekhov, and perhaps the critic had in mind what Baring himself had written about Chekhov's art.¹³¹ In one of his well-known booklets on Russian literature, Baring stated his admiration for Chekhov's power of selection, a quality he generally attributed to Russian realism to prove how distant it was from the detailed representations of 'certain French Naturalists'.¹³²

Baring was for Serrahima an ideal author to promote in Catalonia. Serrahima started to write on him while reviewing the numerous French translations for the Catholic newspaper *El Matí*, and in this, he was echoing the moral interest in French criticism, akin to his own value system. He referred to the moral conscience in the way characters were portrayed, as he compared Baring to his French populariser, Maurois. Serrahima might have good cause to esteem the elegant French critic, yet he could hardly appreciate his novel *Climats*, for Maurois made his characters live in an artificial (thus immoral) atmosphere. The moral issue was particularly

¹³⁰ D. Guansé, 'Daphne Adeane', *RC*, 12 (1930), 557.

¹³¹ Ch. du Bos, 'Daphne Adeane', *NRF*, 29 (1927), 549-52.

¹³² *An Outline of Russian Literature* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1914-15), p. 14.

emphasised when Serrahima compared Baring's work to Aldous Huxley's *Point-Counterpoint*, which had quite an impact after the French translation (1928). On moral and artistic grounds, Serrahima thought that Baring's portrait of individuals in society, however frivolous his aristocratic world may be, was more effective in terms of art, in being more true-to-life, whereas the prolix pictures delivered by Huxley of every section of his intellectual world, crammed with principles and theories, could not be artistically justified, and thus were not edifying at all.¹³³ Serrahima, finding support in Riba, argued that the moral interest of Baring's psychological novel lay on the 'efecte de conjunt' drawn from both individual and social life, rather than the accumulation of anecdotes and ideological theses as ~~is~~ was the case ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ *Point-Counterpoint*. He also brought into the comparison the Catalan novel *Vida privada* by Josep M. de Sagarra, as a local example of the thesis novel in which accumulation of detail was taken to extremes, to illustrate the decline of an aristocratic family. Baring took the 'efecte de conjunt' into account in his delicate pictures of the 'drama of life' in which all excesses of tragedy and conflict could be redeemed by his artistic capacity for toning down the facts. Baring's own concept of the novel spelled out the same reaction against detail and too obvious analysis. On the same grounds on which he had praised Chekhov's art of selection, he proposed the following formula:

You can find the story in the old files of a newspaper; but, in turning the true story into fiction, I had to attenuate the facts, to foreshorten, to lessen, to diminish, to tone down; because what is true in life is not necessarily true in art — the old tag about *le vrai et le vraisemblable* — and to give to fiction the appearance of reality, to make the reader swallow it, you must needs temper the powder of fact with the jam of (relative) probability.¹³⁴

Baring's concept of *vraisemblance* sounded convincing to those in favour of the pure work of

¹³³ See 'Baring-Huxley', *EM*, 10 December 1933, p. 9.

¹³⁴ 'Dedication to Hilary Belloc', in his *Cat's Cradle* (London: Heinemann, 1925), pp. v-vi.

art. It suggested the same shift from 'exact painting' which led the quest for the *roman pur*, and matched Serrahima's strategy of abolishing 'anàlisi visible'. In the above passage, Serrahima found inspiration for his own concept of the novel. The artistic value of what he called 'novel·la normal' concerned the notion of balance in the treatment of reality. Paraphrasing Baring, he stated:

Cal només una mica de bon gust, una anàlisi feta amb cura, una mica de sentit de les proporcions i de la realitat, i un estil ben planer, ben simple [...] Això sí, cal que l'escriptor sàpiga veure i sentir la realitat com a cosa d'art, i que, en atenuar-la i retocar-la per a fer-la admissible al lector, sàpiga crear-la novament [...] L'esperit, el to de la vida real, construït conscientment per l'escriptor, això és la realitat artística. Tal com ho diu modestament Baring en aquell pròleg que dèiem, posat al principi d'una obra mestra del gènere: "Jo he, doncs, retocat i endolcit la realitat: en certa manera, he espatllat una història i n'he fet una de nova."¹³⁵

The contribution of Baring had little to do with the innovation in narrative technique which characterised the work of some of his fellow-writers. *Daphne Adeane* was far removed from *Mrs Dalloway*, the previous work which also appeared in Proa's series 'Els d'ara'.¹³⁶ *Mrs Dalloway* was an exponent of the modern experiments in the exploration of subjectivity, and had a major impact as such.¹³⁷ Baring's novels were certainly more accessible to the common reader because of that simplicity which Maurois so much admired. Interestingly, Maurois quoted Virginia Woolf to praise Baring in his preface to *Daphné Adeane*: 'Votre simplicité est une leçon pour nous tous'.¹³⁸ Baring was amongst those novelists Serrahima was thinking of for his

¹³⁵ 'Novel·la normal', *EM*, 31 May 1931, p. 13

¹³⁶ For an analysis of Jordana's translation of Woolf's novel, see J. A. Hurlley, 'On the Arrival of *Mrs. Dalloway*: Badalona 1930', *Catalan Review*, 5 (1991), 121-32.

¹³⁷ See, for instance, 'A Novelist's Experiment', *TLS*, 21 May 1925, p. 349.

¹³⁸ Woolf's biographer, however, states that she 'contemptuously dismissed' Baring's novels, though her friend Ethel Smith considered them 'masterpieces of the highest order'. Q. Bell, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*, 2 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1972), II, p. 152.

'novel·la normal', and he mentioned in the same article Balzac, Thackeray, Meredith, and Forster. Woolf was not among them. Not even Huxley. *Point-Counterpoint* was not translated, despite the critical interest it aroused, and only one of Huxley's minor works, *Dues o tres gràcies*, was published by Proa (1934).¹³⁹ Serrahima would have agreed with Edmond Jaloux that a great novelist first of all 'a le devoir d'être vulgaire', and 'cette vulgarité est exactement ce qui manque en Angleterre à Mrs. Virginia Woolf, ou, en France, à M. Jean Giraudoux, mais elle est la qualité fondamentale de Balzac, de Dickens ou de Dostoievsky'. *Contrepoint* is not one of Jaloux's favourite books, for he found it too philosophical and it reminded him of Zola. Yet *Two or Three Graces*, which is about 'une femme normale', gets a more sympathetic judgement.¹⁴⁰

The choice of *Daphne Adeane* was also consistent with the French canon of fashionable English novels, as established in surveys from the late 1920s onwards.¹⁴¹ There was no clear divide between fashion and literary innovation. The French critic Lalou ranked, under the same category of 'impressionistic' works, *Mrs Dalloway* with Margaret Kennedy's best-seller *The Constant Nymph* (1926), published by Proa in 1931. With *Daphne Adeane*, they all were representative of the fashionable psychological trend, dealing with love and marriage in upper-middle class society, and appeared around the same time (1925-29) in the list of Tauchnitz '500 Best Titles'. Of the English contemporary novelists translated in Proa, Baring became the

¹³⁹ See, for instance, R. Tasis, 'Aldous Huxley', *RC*, 16 (1938), 181-211.

¹⁴⁰ Preface to *Deux ou Trois Graces* (Paris: Stock, 1934), pp. vii, xiii, xiv.

¹⁴¹ R. Lalou devotes special attention to *La Nymph au coeur fidèle*, *Mrs Dalloway*, *Nocturne*, and *Daphne Adeane* in his *Panorama de la littérature anglaise contemporaine* (Paris: Kra, 1929). E. Jaloux's survey *Au pays du roman* (Paris: Corrêa, 1931) includes, amongst others, *Gens de Dublin*, *Daphne Adeane*, *Contrepoint*, *La Nymph au coeur fidèle*, *Mrs Dalloway*, and Katherine Mansfield's *Félicité*; reviewed by R. Esquerro, 'La novel·la anglesa contemporània a França', *EM*, 7 June 1932, p. 9. A. Obiols echoed the French fever for the English novel, mentioning translations of Conrad, Chesterton, Bennett and the more recent Swinnerton (*DS*, 31 March 1925, p. 1).

favourite choice in the new popular fiction series *Quaderns Literaris*, launched in 1934 by Josep Janés, in which only a minor work by Virginia Woolf (*Flush*) was published.¹⁴²

Frank Swinnerton's *Nocturne*, the last contemporary English title published in Proa (1932), was also a best-seller in England (1917), one particularly praised by Chevalley in his account of *Le Roman anglais contemporain*, and later translated into French (1925). *Mrs Dalloway* was the novel the Catalan critic had in mind when commenting on the Catalan translation of *Nocturne*. He compared both works in terms of the technical trait they had in common, namely the concentration of action in one single day, and night, respectively.¹⁴³ Critics favourably commented on the unsophisticated manner in which Swinnerton dealt with psychological themes, a characteristic which can be compared to Baring's simplicity and ponderous tone. *Nocturne* was the tale of two sisters, craving for love and marriage. There are no haunting presences in Swinnerton's novel, but a 'thrilling' story, as Guansé put it, involving two ordinary women.¹⁴⁴ Certainly plain readers, specially women readers, could more easily identify with both Emmy and Jenny than with the aristocratic Fanny of *Daphne Adeane* or the wealthy Clarissa Dalloway. In the next chapter I will argue how *Nocturne*, perhaps even more appropriately than *Daphne Adeane*, provides a case study to illustrate what Serrahima understood by 'novel·la normal'. The favourable reception this work enjoyed in Catalonia fifteen years later raises a point about the

¹⁴² Both *Mig minut de silenci* and *Diumente de juliol* appeared in 1936. Contemporary works included Woolf's *Flush* (1938), Mansfield's *La Garden-Party* (1937), Huxley's *El somriure de la Gioconda* and *El petit Arquimedes* (both 1937). For an account of the English titles published by Janés in *Quaderns Literaris* and the Spanish series launched in post-War years, see J. Hurtle, *Josep Janés, el combat per la cultura* (Barcelona: Curial, 1986), pp. 209-73, 358-59; 249-51 for Janés's predilection for Baring.

¹⁴³ See G. Díaz-Plaja, 'Novel·les d'una jornada', *M*, 30 June 1932, p. 6.

¹⁴⁴ 'Nocturn', *LP*, 19 July 1932, p. 5. The story of the two sisters is vividly recalled by Fanny (Soldevila's heroine), for *Nocturne* is an example of books that have influenced her: *Fanny* (Barcelona: Selecta, 1959), p. 90.

critical values that were at play in the transmission of a different tradition of the novel.

Chapter 4

Reflections on an Aspect of the Novel

From the early years of this century Catalan writers and intellectuals were aware of the crisis of the Catalan novel. Although such concern was related to the crisis of the genre in general, as reflected in the French criticism of the later decades of the nineteenth century, specific cultural conditions added to the Catalan situation. Catalan novels had flourished in the years of *Modernisme*, at the turn of the century, yet the model proposed by *Modernista* writers was not favourably received in the peak years of *Noucentisme*.¹ Carner, although he did not oppose the novel as a genre, recognised in the novels of the *Modernistes* the legacy of naturalism which he rejected. Nevertheless, by the time the Biblioteca Literària was launched, critics were already fully aware that the lack of novels could threaten the normal development of Catalan letters: ‘Una vegada i altra s’ha dit que fóra un perill a l’expandiment de les nostres lletres, el desequilibri cada cop més visible entre la poesia i la novel·la. Com més viu és l’esclat de la nostra poesia, més arraulida en la foscor s’amaga la nostra novel·la.’ As he described an imbalance, Alexandre Plana was also pointing to the crisis of naturalistic fiction. For him, novels should not be a product of the milieu, but rather a correction to naturalistic documentation: ‘el bon novel·lista és el qui endevina la vida com és’ (‘the good novelist is the one who can invent life as it is’).²

In connection with the antinaturalistic prejudice, a new issue was at stake: *Noucentista* writers were calling for an urban novel, to satisfy the demands of the bourgeois audience they represented. In 1908 Carner claimed that an ‘urban novel’ was still not possible in Catalan

¹ See J. Castellanos, ‘La novel·la modernista’, in *HLC*, VIII, pp. 481-92; A. Yates, *Una generació sense novel·la?* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1975), pp. 7-146.

² ‘La novel·la’ (1917), in his *Les valors del nostre Renaixement*, ed. I. Pelegrí (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1976), pp. 81-87.

literature as a normal institution, at a time when 'la Ciutat' was still in the making.³ Ten years later, as he presented the first Catalan work in Biblioteca Literària — *L'abrandament: novel·la*, by Carles Soldevila — he insisted on the need to solve the persistent imbalance between poetry and the novel: 'El noucentisme necessita, darrera els seus poetes, els seus novel·listes.' According to his preface, a fifty-page *nouvelle* could count as a novel, and Soldevila would become the 'standard author' who would contribute the kind of novel Carner was ready to welcome: '*L'abrandament* és una bella aportació lúcida a la saó catalana que comença. Hom hi veu tot d'averanys gentils.'⁴ This preface supplies evidence for the importance he attached to the 'sympathy' he had also discovered in the early translations of English works he produced for the Biblioteca Literària.⁵ Carner was appealing to the potential novel reader, drawing his attention to the characters, to those 'veritables coneguts' the reader would encounter and which would make him smile. Carner had identified in those 'true acquaintances' of Soldevila's a starting point for a would-be Catalan novel. Even in the mid 1920s, however, the problem of the novel continued to be a matter for concern in intellectual circles, vividly indicated by Joan Crexells as he showed his surprise at Hilaire Belloc's statement that 'the novel is doomed', when comparing English overproduction with the lack of Catalan novels: 'A Catalunya no hi ha problema ja que a penes hi ha novel·la.'⁶ The Catalan problem, as Crexells put it, had a specific cultural dimension.

³ 'Amb motiu d'una novel·la' (1908), in his *El reialme de la poesia*, ed. Núria Nardi and Iolanda Pelegrí (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1985), pp. 96-97.

⁴ Preface to *L'abrandament*, in J. Carner, *El reialme de la poesia*, pp. 143-47 (144).

⁵ For the place of *L'abrandament* in Carner's conception of the novel, see M. Ortín, 'La prosa literària de Josep Carner' (unpublished thesis, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1992), pp. 50-51, 64-71.

⁶ 'La mort de la novel·la', *RC*, 1 (1924), pp. 206-07. Crexells's comment was based on Belloc's 'Bad News' (*New Statement*, 26 July 1924, pp. 466-67). Also reviewed by G. de Moragas, 'La novel·la', *DS*, 16 September 1924, p. 1.

It was Josep M. de Sagarra who brought the problem to the fore in 1925, in his article called ‘La por a la novel·la’:

El públic català està demanant amb la boca oberta i amb uns crits desesperats que li donguin novel·les. Novel·les llargues, amb argument i incidents, novel·les entretingudes que siguin escrites en català i parlin de la vida del país [...] Aquest públic es vol entretenir amb un llibre a les mans, vol somniar, vol plorar, vol entendre-se sense deixar-hi la pell i els ossos, gastant-se una quantitat de diners enraonada.⁷

Sagarra’s call gave rise to an intense debate on the novel amongst Catalan writers.⁸ He later made a specific remark about the kind of novel most in demand: ‘Pensem que a hores d’ara, per a seguir paral·lelament altres branques de la nostra literatura del nou-cents ençà, hauríem d’haver publicat dues-centes novel·les [...] Però novel·les amb tots els ets i uts, no contes allargassats i assaigs apreciables.’⁹ This could well be an allusion to *L’abrandament*, optimistically presented by Carner as ‘a novel’. The two-volume novels Carner had translated for Biblioteca Literària certainly fitted better into the standard category of ‘novel·les amb tots els ets i uts’. Sagarra’s emphasis was, however, on local production, on the grounds that the public would be willing to read novels about the life and people of their own country. Contributions to the debate focus on that local demand and the need to fulfill the expectations of a growing reading public. Joan Estelrich made clear, as he endorsed Sagarra’s claim, that he was not addressing the 4,000 faithful subscribers to Editorial Catalana, for they were already ‘conquerits’ and would feel happy about whatever was offered, but the general reader, that heterogeneous public to which

⁷ ‘La por a la novel·la’, *LP*, 26 April 1925, p. 1.

⁸ For the standard analysis of the novel debate in Catalonia, see A. Yates, *Una generació sense novel·la?* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1975), pp. 147-205. See also C. Arnaú, ‘Crisi i represa de la novel·la’, in *HLC*, X, pp. 9-23, and F. Codina, ‘Comentaris a “Una generació sense novel·la”’, in *Actes del Simposi Carles Riba* (Barcelona: Institut d’Estudis Catalans, 1986), pp. 265-77.

⁹ ‘La utilitat de la novel·la’, *LP*, 10 May 1925, p. 1.

publishers should be devoted; and according to him, translations of foreign novels were not a priority.¹⁰ Satisfying the general public's demands meant questioning the system of production based hitherto on bourgeois patronage. Publishers were principally to blame for not playing a bigger part in revitalising the Catalan fiction market. The writer and journalist Josep Pla, coinciding with the publication of his first book of fiction (*Coses vistes*, 1925), took a special interest in promoting the involvement of publishers.¹¹

Commercial conditions, however important they were in the Catalan situation, were not the only factor in a far more complex problem. To use Gaziol's self-explanatory simile, no novels were produced because there were no novelists, just as no eggs would be produced if there were no hens.¹² The critic Armand Obiols pointed out how difficult things were for a Catalan novelist, starting, as it were, from scratch: 'És precis que els joves prosistes catalans parteixin del principi essencial i absolut, ben determinat i perfectament resolt de que abans d'ells res no s'ha escrit a Catalunya en novel·la que valgui la pena. Si volem models, és precis que surtin a fora.' Obiols was encouraging potential Catalan novelists to learn from abroad. Such an experience had proved fruitful in the recent past, he said, for the best Catalan prose-writers (E. Duran Reynals), and he felt optimistic about the good influence that 'tot el pes d'un segle de novel·la anglesa' would have on young Catalan practitioners of the genre, such as C. A. Jordana and Ernest Martínez Ferrando.¹³

The most thorough analysis of the Catalan novel problem was made by Carles Riba. To

¹⁰ 'Per la novel·la nostra', *LVC*, 17 May 1925, p. 7.

¹¹ For Pla's position in the Catalan novel debate and his relationship with the publishing market, see M. Gustà, *Els orígens ideològics i literaris de Josep Pla* (Barcelona: Curial, 1995), pp. 391-411, and Yates, *Una generació sense novel·la?*, pp. 174-91.

¹² 'En busca de las gallinas', *La Vanguardia*, 22 May 1925, p. 5.

¹³ 'Lletres i llibres', *Diari de Sabadell*, 16 July 1925.

answer Sagarra's call, he attempted to explain in his article 'Una generació sense novel·la' the reasons why his was a handicapped generation. It had to do, he thought, with social and cultural development in Catalonia: a society still in a transitional period, as he perceived it, could not produce the suitable atmosphere for a novelist to develop his career successfully. For he believed that the hens should come first, namely the social upbringing of the novelist. After reviewing the rich novel traditions of England, France and Russia, Riba stated:

i a casa nostra? Els nostres escriptors, presos col·lectivament, amb què poden comptar, inicialment, per a la creació de la novel·la que hom els demana? [...] un esforç seriós, coordinat, humil amb ímpetu, per les humanitats, en llur més complet sentit, que és el literal, ha començat tot just; cal, doncs, un llarg temps, perquè una atmosfera d'humanisme envolti i impregni el cos social. I en l'ànima col·lectiva? Entre la suma d'instints heretats i més o menys arbitrats, què hi trobem, mentrestant? Per ventura aquell interès, o aquella curiositat, o tan sols aquell amor per l'home en si; aquella passió per tot allò que és humà, nostre o dels altres, tota intel·lectual com hem vist a França, o tota moral com hem vist a Anglaterra, o tota mística com a Rússia? [...] un tal interès simpatètic per l'home, avui, a Catalunya, *col·lectivament, culturalment, socialment* —és a dir, *fent atmosfera*— no existeix.¹⁴

Riba's diagnosis allowed little scope for a solution to the urgent demand for Catalan novels. If it was a matter of waiting for this social and cultural background to flourish, no novels would be produced in decades. Yet solutions were provided after the debate was over, to encourage novel production in the short term: a novel prize was founded in 1928 (named Premi Joan Crexells) and a number of novels appeared in the new fiction series launched in Catalonia in the late 1920s (by Proa as well as in Biblioteca Univers) to promote both Catalan and foreign authors. The aim of this chapter is not to pass judgement on the Catalan novel production, nor to discuss whether the

¹⁴ 'Una generació sense novel·la' (1925), in his *Obres completes*, II, ed. E. Sullà and J. Medina (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1985), pp. 311-19 (317). For the historical significance, see J. Castellanos, 'Carles Riba i la novel·la'; for an interpretation of the key concepts in this essay, see F. Codina, 'Comentaris a "Una generació sense novel·la"', both in *Actes del Simposi Carles Riba* (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1986), pp. 255-63 and 265-77, respectively.

problem was solved or not after 1925.¹⁵ This brief account of the debate serves, however, to focus on an aspect of the critical reflections on the novel, in the European context, in which the English novel represented, in Riba's words, 'la passió tota moral'.

Behind the Catalan novel problem, however specific the circumstances might have been, a connection can be established with the crisis of the novel as a genre. This was certainly the most important factor in the French reception of foreign trends, as we have seen in the previous chapter, and in the transmission of the English novel in Catalonia. The expectations Catalan critics shared as they approached the English novel are indicative of the particular model they wanted to be adopted in the discussions that followed the debate. Riba's diagnosis highlights the key element for understanding the critical frame of mind in which those expectations were put forward. It concerned the moral value he attached to a foreign tradition in the process of building up a Catalan novel. A social background 'fent atmosfera' was the lesson he expected the coming generations of Catalan novelists would derive from the foreign novel. The solution was, then, to transplant a foreign tradition into Catalonia. His essay concluded: 'Resta, en fi, el recurs del colgat: fer arrelar, en sòl catalanesc, una branca d'una novel·lística estrangera, fins a la seva independència.' It is no coincidence that a similar solution had been proposed in France by Jacques Rivière, as we may recall, when calling for a foreign tradition to provide fresh blood for the French novel in crisis: 'Le moment me semble venu où la littérature française, qui tant de fois déjà a su se rajeunir par des emprunts, va s'emparer, pour le fondre dans son sang, du roman étranger.'¹⁶

¹⁵ For the impact of the first edition of the Joan Crexells prize, see M. Casacuberta, 'Gènesi i primera adjudicació del Premi Crexells: notes sobre cultura i novel·la en el tombant dels anys vint als trenta', *Els Marges*, 52 (March 1995), 19-42. For a general account on the publishing market after 1925, see C. Arnau, 'Crisi i represa de la novel·la', *HLC*, X, pp. 16-24, and A. Manent, *Escriptors i editors del nou-cents* (Barcelona: Curial, 1984), pp. 180-202.

¹⁶ 'Le Roman d'aventure, III', *NRF*, 9 (1912), 76.

1 Horizon of moral expectations about the novel

The moral dimension Riba gave to the novel problem should not be mistaken for a broader moralistic issue, which also played a part in the Catalan discussions.¹⁷ This chapter is concerned with Riba's fusion of moral and aesthetic concerns in his demand that a 'moral atmosphere' be achieved, and primary attention will be given to what critics regarded as the literary transposition of such an atmosphere to the novel. As he gave shape to this central idea, Riba was being receptive to the way French critics had handled their moral concerns in critical reflections such as those published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. From Thibaudet he learned that the driving force in novel criticism was the pursuit of a 'profound moral life' which the French critic had recognised in the 'élan vital' and the 'courant de sympathie et de tendresse' of the early George Eliot. Both of Thibaudet's concepts merged in the phrase 'alè de simpatia' Riba used in his commentary on *Pickwick*.¹⁸ On the basis of the vital quality expressed by the word *élan*, meaning something flowing, in a Heraclitean way, and infusing life, Riba made a key point in defining his conception of the novel. The flowing element of *élan vital* shapes the meaning of 'cultura moral', as he refers to the 'atmosfera d'humanisme que envolta el cos social', to the 'interès simpatètic per l'home fent atmosfera', to the 'evolució d'un cor al llarg d'uns altres cors', or to 'un joc concomitant de psicologies en moviment'. Behind *élan vital* we can identify the basic concepts French critics associated with the contribution of the *roman anglais* — sympathy, adventure, humour, the common man, *vie possible*, purity — as they stand for a characteristic artistic reflection on the moral concern in the novel.

The place Riba attributes to the English novel in his essay makes sense in the light of that

¹⁷ For the debate regarding morals in Catalan novel writing, see, for instance, C. Soldevila, 'L'art i la moral', in his *Obres completes* (Barcelona: Selecta, 1967), pp. 1281-93, and C. Arnau, 'Crisi i represa de la novel·la', pp. 22-23.

¹⁸ 'Al marge del *Pickwick Club*' (1918), in his *Obres completes*, II, pp. 65-66 (66).

persistent moral appraisal. Of the three novel traditions he reviews in the passage quoted above, the English tradition is the one to bear the moral label. Riba points out the ‘wide range of moral perspectives’ he finds ‘from Defoe to Rider Haggard and even in an English writer by adoption such as Conrad’. He also mentions Arnold Bennett to illustrate his point. In his brief but condensed judgement on the English novel Riba was working out the values he had learned from French critics, drawing particular attention to adventure and humour, and exemplified in the English authors Carner had translated for his *Biblioteca Literària* (namely, Defoe, Scott, Dickens, Bennett), and others that were to appear later (Rider Haggard, translated by Riba himself, and Conrad, introduced by Soldevila under the spell of French criticism). The English novel served to justify on artistic grounds Riba’s idea of creating an atmosphere appropriate to the Catalan novel in a European context.

Moral atmosphere

The concept of ‘moral atmosphere’ came originally from Conrad. It was adopted by Ramon Fernandez in his essay published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* on the occasion of Conrad’s death (1924). Paraphrasing a passage from the preface to *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’*, he wrote: ‘C’est avec une bonne conscience de ses moyens qu’il a déclaré que dans un roman, ainsi que dans toute oeuvre d’art, l’appel d’un tempérament aux autres tempéraments “doit être une impression transmise par les sens”, puisqu’il s’agit de fixer “les événements éphémères” en recréant “l’atmosphère morale et émotionnelle du lieu et du temps”.’¹⁹ In the Catalan milieu, it was Estelrich who first circulated this notion, as we may recall, in his long study of Conrad based on French critics. He analysed the meaning of ‘atmosfera moral’ while evoking the moral values

¹⁹ ‘L’Art de Conrad’, *NRF*, 23 (1924), 730-37.

he thought to be incarnated in Conrad, as a representative of the British soul: human sympathy, vital quality, solidarity, balance, purity of soul, and self-control.²⁰ From such a moral position emerged what Fernandez and Estelrich believed to be the secret of Conrad's art, the art of evocation, which was crystallised in his capacity for creating a human atmosphere:

D'un bout à l'autre d'une oeuvre patiente il s'acharne, non sans peine mais presque toujours avec bonheur, à nous combler de sensations, à nous saturer de couleurs, de sons, de voix humaines, de contacts, de visions, *d'atmosphères*, à nous laisser tout vibrant des mille effluves d'un monde qui nous comprend plutôt que nous ne le comprenons. [...] C'est par cette science du mystère (qui n'a rien à voir avec les effets un peu scéniques de Stevenson) que Conrad se distingue de ses frères slaves. Pour eux le monde est incompréhensible en fait et quelquefois, oui quelquefois, malgré eux; chez Conrad au contraire l'intelligence précise de l'observateur se compose avec l'émotion de l'acteur, mais cette intelligence, au lieu de transposer l'expérience, évoque, *par la création de l'image atmosphérique*, la naissance obscure de l'événement.²¹

Conrad was here being seen as having moved a step beyond the novel of adventure as embodied in Stevenson, thereby approaching the modern sensibility of the 1920s, dominated by the concern for the inner life of characters as suggested within the novel. Moral atmosphere was a result of Conrad's appeal to an exterior, sensory reality, made up of voices, images, colours and human contacts. The narrative emphasis falls on the exterior reality surrounding the character, either through a plural conception of character appealing to another character ('l'appel d'un tempérament aux autres tempéraments'), or through the senses, as illustrated in the above fragment. In his essay Riba assumed a plural conception of character in similar terms, as he alluded to the 'evolució d'un cor al llarg d'uns altres cors'. Such a complex psychological reality lies at the heart of his conception of the novel, as is clear when he makes a fundamental

²⁰ 'Josep Conrad' (1925), in his *Entre la vida i els llibres* (Barcelona: Llibreria Catalònia, 1926), pp. 237-314, 302-06 for his comment on Conrad's preface.

²¹ 'L'Art de Conrad', p. 730 (my emphasis).

distinction, based on Ortega y Gasset, between two stages in the making of a narrative tradition: a primary stage represented by those 'narradors que només al·ludeixen'; and a more advanced phase corresponding to those 'creadors i presentadors de realitats psicològiques imaginàries'. His idea of creating an atmosphere relies on those 'psychological realities' coming to life as they are given movement, turning into a 'joc concomitant de psicologies en moviment'.²²

Character and atmosphere were intertwined in the expression 'personatge vivent' which turns up again and again in the views of the Catalan novel. The critic Just Cabot, as he reviewed a novel by Sagarra (*All i salobre*, 1929), appealed to the gift for endowing the characters with the 'sensació' of being living persons in contact with an atmosphere ('fer-ne homes vivents en contacte amb un ambient'). Sagarra's characters were for him failures in that they were still far from achieving what Fernandez had described as the 'coherence between the inner life and the exterior (apparent) reality'.²³ In his general account of the Catalan novel, Rafael Tasis explicitly states, as he commented on the refined psychological manner of Alexandre Plana, how the evocation of an 'atmosphere' ('ambient') served to define 'l'atmosfera moral on es mouen els caràcters'.²⁴ The word atmosphere *tout court* helped sometimes to underline the distinction between dead (artificial) and living characters. To a francophile reader such as Pla, the numerous characters in Pierre Loti's novels often looked like 'carn congelada', and as a result atmospheres 'es congelen i cristal·litzen rarament'. Also according to Pla, the admired critic André Maurois was a failed novelist, despite the success enjoyed by one of his novels, significantly called *Climats*. However perfect and distinguished his characters were, Pla thought, Maurois could not

²² 'Una generació sense novel·la', p. 315. For Ortega's distinction, see 'Ideas sobre la novela' (1925), in his *Obras Completas*, III (1917-1928) (Madrid: Revista de Occidente), pp. 390-91.

²³ 'All i salobre, novel·la de Josep Maria de Sagarra' (1929), in J. Cabot, *Indignacions i provocacions*, ed. V. Soler (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1992), pp. 89-92 (90).

²⁴ *Una visió de conjunt de la novel·la catalana* (Barcelona: Publicacions de La Revista, 1935), p. 72.

bring himself to convey the impression of life: ‘l’obra d’aquest autor té una cosa esquelètica, una cosa de mort glacial.’²⁵ Serrahima, we may recall, would also agree with this judgement, and would even regard *Climats* as an ‘immoral’ work, on the grounds that the author had made his characters live in an artificial atmosphere. The task of the novelist, one may conclude, was to bring a character into life, to transmit, as a creator, that ‘alè de simpatia’, or ‘élan vital’, by means of an atmosphere.

From *homo sapiens* to *homo fictus*: The contribution of E. M. Forster

A moral dimension shows in the way E. M. Forster handles character in his influential book *Aspects of the Novel* (1927).²⁶ Fragments from this book were soon translated into Catalan.²⁷ Interestingly, the Catalan reviewer Armand Obiols drew attention to the chapter devoted to ‘People’, in which characters are seen as human beings, appraised in terms of a criterion of truth-to-life. He dwells on Forster’s distinction between *homo sapiens* and *homo fictus*, to make a point *about* ~~on~~ the artistic principles (or restrictions) which apply in the representation of characters. According to Forster, a *homo fictus* should be a more comprehensible being than the real *homo sapiens*, to make him more accessible to the reader by suggesting ‘a more comprehensible and thus a more manageable human race’. Obiols appealed in particular to the artistic dimension of the ‘comprehensible’ character, as he understood Forster’s perception to be based on the artistic principle of ‘arbitrariness’. Such a concept would bridge, according to Obiols, the gulf between

²⁵ ‘Pierre Loti’ (1923), and ‘André Maurois’ (1929), in his *Obra completa*, XLIII (Barcelona: Destino, 1983), pp. 110 and 354-56, respectively.

²⁶ Forster was regarded by a contemporary reviewer as a moralist, and his approach to the novel as ‘essentially ethical’: D. S. Misky, ‘*Aspects of the Novel*’, *LMerc*, 17 (1927), 208-09.

²⁷ ‘*Aspects of the Novel* (Aspectes de la novel·la)’, *LR*, 15 (1928), 90-92. Reviewed by A. Obiols, ‘Aspectes de la novel·la’, *RC*, 8 (1928), 519.

homo sapiens and *homo fictus*. In his view, 'arbitrariness' should prevail in all kinds of novels, from the most realistic to the most imaginative. His notion of 'arbitrary character' concerned the artistic transposition of human beings in the novel, in order to satisfy the readers' desire to identify with the characters in a fictional world:

Una novel·la és, al capdavant, en aquest sentit, una mica de son sempre a l'abast de la mà. I un home pot aconsolar-se de no conèixer la seva dona, de trobar-se indefens davant les misterioses i insospitades reaccions, coneixent d'una manera detinguda els sinuosos camins i corriols de l'ànima d'un d'aquests grans ninots arbitraris que són els personatges de novel·la [...] La novel·la és, en certa manera, el paradís dels impotents.

Through sympathy for the *homo fictus*, precisely because it is a fictional character but representative of mankind (ie. 'arbitrari'), the reader would recreate the unknown but real dimension of life, and the novel would achieve, in artistic terms, a moral dimension.

In his chapter 'People' (*Multitude* in the French translation), Forster draws attention to the vital quality of novel heroes, lingering in the reader's mind as living creatures. He takes as examples Defoe (Moll Flanders), Dickens (Mr Pickwick), and George Eliot, amongst others. Gide's *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* could well be for him 'among the more interesting of recent books', but never 'among the vital'. Forster's judgements on character indicate certain moral concerns in that they point to the ideal of bringing life into the novel and expanding towards the reader. 'Human beings have their great chance in the novel. They say to the novelist: "Recreate us if you like, but we must come in".' To make that possible, Forster refers to what he thinks should be the driving force in a novelist: expansion. Further on he uses the parallelism with music to illustrate that idea: 'Not completion. Not rounding off but opening out. When the symphony is over we feel that the notes and tunes composing it have been liberated, they have

found in the rhythm of their whole individual freedom.’²⁸ In Forster’s idea of expansion we can recognise a strong kinship with other Edwardian novelists, as illustrated in this parody by Wells of Henry James, which Forster draws on later in his reflections:

The only living human motives left in the novels of Henry James are a certain avidity and an entirely superficial curiosity [...] His people nose out suspicions, hint by hint, link by link. Have you ever known living human beings do that? The thing his novel is about is always there. It is like a church lit but without a congregation to distract you, with every light and line focused on the high altar. And on the altar, very reverently placed, intensely there, is a dead kitten, an egg-shell, a bit of string [...] Like his ‘Altar of the Dead’, with nothing to the dead at all [...] For if there was they couldn’t all be candles and the effect would vanish.²⁹

There is in Forster’s treatment of characters a straightforward appeal to the basic feeling of sympathy all novel readers may experience as characters linger in their minds. Expansion works as an all-embracing idea to serve first of all the most democratic purpose of the novel as a genre: to become accessible to a large readership, to satisfy what Obiols called ‘el nostre etern desig d’ubiquitat’.

For both the novelist and the reader, Forster’s concepts of a comprehensible character and expansion involved a moral dimension. The critical writings of Carles Riba provide a suitable touchstone as he passes judgement on two Catalan writers: Carles Soldevila, highly valued before the peak of the novel debate, and Josep Pla, who made in 1925 a promising début on the Catalan literary scene.

²⁸ *Aspects of the Novel* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), p. 149. This is one of the passages selected by the Catalan translator, in *LR*, 15 (1928), 92.

²⁹ *Aspects of the Novel*, p. 144.

2 A portrait in the making: Soldevila and Pla in the eyes of Carles Riba

In Riba's review of *L'abrandament* (1918) we can recognise a familiar attitude towards those 'veritables coneguts', repeating the words Carner used in his preface to Soldevila's *nouvelle*. The common man was there welcomed, in the first year of the Biblioteca Literària, announcing future developments far removed from naturalistic tendencies: Soldevila set out to explore his types 'no a la manera de l'així dit roman experimental'.³⁰ According to Riba, Soldevila produced in this early story a number of characters 'de mesures molt mesquinament limitades', trapped in their petty ordinary lives. However, Riba was aware that such an attempt to recreate the common man, delivered as it was in a series of quick portraits, could not be judged on established novelistic standards. He makes clear that Soldevila's characters are lacking in sympathy ('cordialitat'), for they are rigid and cool in their reserved behaviour: Soldevila 'conta, però calla molt més', and the story conveys a degree of cruelty. Soldevila does not manage to let the story expand, as Dickens would have done by filling the 'silent gulf' with 'tender sympathy'.

As he reviewed Soldevila's next book of stories in 1926, Riba introduced a distinction between the epic man ('l'home com a gènere') and the moral man ('l'home en clima moral'), the two alternatives for the novel.³¹ The first one would correspond, for instance, to the epic tale Kipling produced with *The Jungle Book*. Riba, however, places the emphasis on the second type. He is now attesting to a more advanced stage in the history of novel criticism, when the new ingredients of passion, as well as moral atmosphere, first come into play. One of the stories in the collection, *El senyoret Lluís*, a tale about a bachelor running after a housemaid, brought

³⁰ 'L'abrandament, novel·la de Carles Soldevila' (1918), in his *Obres completes*, II, pp. 99-101 (99).

³¹ 'Contes de Carles Soldevila' (1926), *ibid.*, pp. 332-35.

about a moralistic reaction.³² But Riba, far from joining the chorus of detractors, shifted the issue to raise a point about the way Soldevila handled the psychological element, for he discerned in Soldevila's work a manifestation of the new developments of the novel, 'que dels fets externs, tantes vegades noblement emplomallats, ha anat descendint cap als motius i llurs subtils arrels, furtives dins la fosca subconsciència'.³³ Then he discovered in Soldevila's story the device of suggesting characters in the settings that surround them, which was the same idea he stressed when commenting on Baring's *Daphne Adeane*.³⁴ Riba regarded Soldevila's technique as an example of modern narrative because it presents the life of the main character moving from the inner self to the apparent reality, living 'on the surface of external facts', as Riba puts it borrowing the phrase from Edmond Jaloux. Emphasis on surfaces was artistically effective since it suggested feeling, as Riba recognised in the impression of 'inanitat moral' left by Soldevila's stories.

There is little doubt that Riba found that Soldevila's craft had improved over the years, thus coming closer to the critic's pre-requisites of novel writing. The definition of 1925 (the novel presenting 'l'evolució d'un cor al llarg de la d'uns altres cors') was now, one year later, echoed in his comments on *El senyoret Lluís*: 'Dues vides, doncs, han lliscat l'una al llarg de l'altra, s'han tocat en un punt d'instint, i s'han esmunyit novament.'³⁵ Nevertheless, that 'silent gulf' was still there, and, perhaps more importantly, a short story could only provide a moment of contact between those lives along the road of life, whereas Riba was aiming at a full account

³² See C. Soldevila, 'L'art i la moral', in his *Obres completes*, pp. 1281-93, and M. Campillo, 'Situació i sentit d'Una mena d'amor, de C. A. Jordana', *Els Marges* (September 1977), 101-09 (101-03).

³³ 'Contes de Carles Soldevila', p. 332. On this point, see F. Codina, 'Comentaris a "Una generació sense novel·la"', p. 272.

³⁴ M. Serrahima, 'Baring-Huxley', *EM*, 10 December 1933, p. 9.

³⁵ 'Contes de Carles Soldevila', p. 333.

of the social atmosphere. Thus he ends his essay striking a note of wishful thinking, hoping that in due course Soldevila's sketches will become the composite equivalent of a novel.³⁶

Pla seemed to Riba a far more promising figure as far as novel production was concerned. In the long essay he devoted to Pla's early works of fiction, the author is described as 'un gran temperament nat d'escriptor'.³⁷ However, as he analyses in depth the artistic recreation of Pla's characters ('els homes de Josep Pla'), Riba showed some reservations, as if foreseeing a potential danger. He fears that the artistic effort Pla made in portraying his fellow-creatures could be easily spoiled by his tendency towards frivolity. On this moral ground, Riba compares Pla unfavourably to some of his European counterparts. He believes that Pla has a destructive sense of humour, unlike Chesterton's, since Pla has no consistent unity of thought to make sense of human contradictions, contrary to the case of Chesterton's paradoxes, and his humour is destructive in that its function is exclusively aesthetic. Driven as Pla is by his persistent desire to obtain an immediate aesthetic pleasure, according to Riba, he cannot be a match for the Russians either. And even when compared to Gide's 'immoralisme', Riba thinks that Pla lacks the responsibility of the French writer: 'incapaç de solitud per amor als problemes humans: del pla de la intel·ligència pura, sense una responsabilitat que vagi més enllà del seu propi joc'.³⁸ Such moral judgements reinforce the view that Riba had made clear a year earlier in 'Una generació sense novel·la': any writer, however gifted he may be, should have a quality of mind which expresses a more generous response to life. His judgement was a warning to a young writer whose works

³⁶ 'Quan l'obra del nostre contista farà una massa variada en la seva unitat, de la qual hem assajat de fixar el principi, tindrem una vera *Commèdia* [sic] del proteic tipus de senyoret Lluís'. 'Contes de Carles Soldevila', p. 335.

³⁷ 'Josep Pla' (1926-27), in his *Obres completes*, II, pp. 335-52. For a general account of Pla's early narrative, see M. Gustà, 'Josep Pla', in *HLC*, X, pp. 129-89 (133-57), and her *Els orígens ideològics i literaris de Josep Pla* (Barcelona: Curial, 1995), pp. 53- 98 and 297-453.

³⁸ 'Josep Pla', p. 338.

showed enough talent for the critic to predict a promising career ahead.

Riba was projecting into his analysis of Pla the moral and artistic qualities he sought for the Catalan novel. He finds in Pla's portraits a number of elements which fit well into his own conception of the novel, as well as some drawbacks which do not. We can recognise first of all Riba's aspiration to bring in the common man, in the way he sees Pla's characters always portrayed in a 'zona grisa i tèbia'. Also on the positive side, he draws special attention to the element of fantasy: for each of his portraits Pla manages to produce a 'sensació d'estranyesa'. According to Riba, Pla's characters are framed from the perspective of the 'hobby-horse'. Riba's simile is not far removed from the 'toy-theatre' that Chesterton had in mind for his theory of imagination, expressed from a child's point of view, wondering at the marvels of an imagined, yet self-contained reality.³⁹ The only limit to this magic reality is, according to Riba, the humanised landscape in which Pla frames his creatures. In *Coses vistes* they are portrayed in the landscape of his little community — 'Pintura de Palamós feta per un meu avantpassat', 'Història de Gervasi', 'Història de Carrau', 'Misèria de Pardal'. It is also the landscape natural to the characters, and in this harmony Riba locates the concept of *vie possible*. Those characters, Pla himself amongst them, manage to evoke the principle of sympathy:

No hi ha escapada: aquest home únic és cadascú, els mil possibles de cadascú, esdevinguts objectius en tant que realitzats en la pròpia imaginació o en tant que encarnats en altres homes de destins independents respecte a nosaltres. Aquests altres possibles són, en rigor, els únics que estimem i no entenem; això, encara que ens hi barallem: en el fons, una simpatia instintiva ens duu sempre a assentir-hi.⁴⁰

As he moves from his local community to depict a foreign landscape, Pla keeps to the principle

³⁹ 'The Toy Theatre' (1907), in his *Tremendous Trifles* (London: Methuen, 1909), pp. 145-51.

⁴⁰ 'Josep Pla', 340.

of *vie possible*, ‘creant, per dir-ho en paraules de Thibaudet, “amb les direccions infinites de la seva vida possible”’.⁴¹

In Riba’s judgement, however, Pla’s artistic standards did not remain as high when he attempted to portray the inner being. He may well feel at ease as he describes his characters in their natural landscapes, but he seems to be at a loss when facing the obscure mysteries of the soul, the real challenge of the modern novel: ‘Davant la immensitat, per exemple, de la plana (i de l’ànima) russa diria’s que resta perplex.’ Riba perceives a gulf between Pla’s method of tracing first a ‘semblança moral’ with an abundance of external details and the modern concept of passion suggested as characters are gradually displayed in action. Excessive emphasis on detail (or on triviality and anecdote) produces a humorous effect, states Riba, which undermines the searching exploration of the inner life, and makes it difficult to bring the inner world into harmony with the landscape that surrounds the characters. The major flaw Riba found in Pla’s artistic practice was the gratuitousness of anecdote and detail that revealed the writer’s moral deficiency: a sceptical outlook on life which prevented him from taking the human dimension of his characters seriously or sympathetically enough.

By way of illustration, we can now examine Pla’s observation of one of his characters to see how the moral virtues and drawbacks are in play, taking Riba’s standpoint. The character in question appears fictionalised in the memoirs written during Pla’s stay in England in the mid 1920s. The author runs into a bizarre type in a cemetery in Meanwood, and immediately provides a vivid description:

Era un home sec, llarg, galta-xuclat, sense que es pogués dir, però, que no tingués la pell fresca, amb cap senyal de pèl a la cara, la barba de llossa tirada enlaire al capdavant d’un crani petit com el d’un ocell, cobert d’una caballera rossenca que deixava veure una taca

⁴¹ Ibid., 346.

de calvicie rosada sobre el clatell [...] Tenia les orelles més aviat grans i el seu nas era una veritable tarota. Sobre aquesta prominència, hi transportava uns vidres gruixuts, lleugerament entel·lats d'humitat, darrera els quals dos ulls clars, que miraven lleugerament guenyo. Fumava un cigarret i quan l'aspirava se li movien tots els músculs de les mandíbules i la barba se li connectava gairebé amb la punta del nas. Malgrat el seu caràcter, era impossible de no veure en aquell cap un punt d'espesseïment com si el travessés una veta de badoqueria [...] tant bon punt hagué acabat de fumar, s'alçà del banc, s'assegurà els vidres sobre el nas allargant i escurçant els braços i, fent unes postures efeminades, començà a caminar [...] En el moment d'alçar-se, vaig poder veure com vestia i vaig quedar més parat que mai: portava coll d'aletes i corbata de llaç, blanca, una camisa de pics vermells molt sargida i per sota l'impermeable, blanquinós i suat, li sortien els canons d'unes calces negres i deformades. El capdavall s'acabava a dins d'unes sabates rompudes i enfangades.⁴²

The anonymous character happens to be Pla's next-door neighbour, Tom O'Grady. Mr Tom takes a special interest in the newcomer and follows him everywhere. When they meet again in a bookshop, the narrator tries to avoid him (Tom tells the narrator that he loves rugby because of its brutality), but Tom keeps insisting and suggests they go together to Sunday mass. Although Pla fails to keep the appointment, Tom sends him a bunch of artificial flowers the following day. Pla comes to the conclusion that the man is just 'an excellent humorist', a 'grotesque character', not worth keeping in touch with. He goes to London to see a friend and after three days receives a letter from Tom. He wonders whether the man is an unhappy fellow or just a fraud — or a repressed character, says Pla's friend. Back in Leeds, he finds Tom at the station, waiting to tell him that a rugby match is on that very afternoon. Pla is determined to clarify once and for all the purpose of this pursuit. Tom eventually tells him that he was only pretending to look like one of Pla's fellow countrymen, trying to adopt the Southern behaviour he had learned from travel books, to get a few free French lessons.

From the beginning we are presented with quite an eccentric character. Every detail in

⁴² 'Meanwood, Leeds, Yorkshire', in his *Obra completa*, VI (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1974), pp. 377-96 (382-83).

the description helps to create a grotesque impression of his external appearance, as Pla places emphasis on the character's prominent traits (his head small like a bird's, a large nose), exaggerated gestures (his muscles moving as he smoked, the beard joining the tip of his nose) and his clown-like clothes (a mended shirt with red spots, loose black pants which show under the trousers, and muddy shoes). At one point Pla takes him for one of those 'professional layabouts' ('badocs professionals') he has seen hanging around in the streets. Such an external description awakens the reader's curiosity as to what lies behind the miserable life of such a vulgar character. The fact that he is the narrator's neighbour could help in getting to know him better. Yet Pla immediately drives his character into a grotesque story line. Now we understand what Riba meant when he claimed that Pla was a pessimist. Indeed, the writer does not give his creature a chance to expand into a human being — a *vie possible*. From the first verbal encounter at the bookshop, the grotesque element grows, for the sake of humour, as the story develops into Tom's bizarre hunting of the narrator. It seems as if Pla, emulating his alter-ego the narrator, was making an effort to trivialise Tom's life by reducing it to mere performance, and turning him into a puppet. Such an effort is taken to an extreme as he decides to round off the story with a pathetic, cruel ending: even Tom's strange interest had no roots in human sympathy whatsoever; he just wanted to get some French tuition for free. The moral Pla draws from the story, appearances of friendship are misleading, is anecdotal rather than disenchanting.

Early in the story the narrator makes clear that he had planned to make of Tom a character for his novel in progress. However, as he learns from his landlady about the wretched life of Mr Tom, he immediately abandons his idea: 'M'havia fet la il·lusió, un moment, d'haver trobat un personatge interessant per a posar a la novel·la que tinc en projecte i em resultà un qualsevol Mr. Tom i encara en forma de rampoina vulgar.' Riba would have regarded such an statement as an

example of Pla's capacity for destroying potential fiction. Lack of sympathy was the crucial question: Tom is ruled out as a novel character as Pla finds him uninteresting. Without providing any justification, he hastens to label the poor creature as a 'rampoina vulgar'. From that moment on, the tone is set and we can predict no surprise in his attitude towards his creature, just the unexpected effect of the *guignol*. From this point of view, the underlying moral of the story is bitter: life only offers a disappointing spectacle, and the final effect is one of emptiness.

By the time Riba published his essay, Pla had made a confession as he set out to write his first love story ('Escenes d'un primer amor'): 'Les persones que coneixen la meva modèstia habitual s'estranyaran potser de la meva gosadia d'escriure un primer amor. Quan sabran, però, que la meva temptativa ha fracassat quedaran, no hi ha dubte, tranquil·litzades.'⁴³ Pla admits to failure from the outset. Again, he ironically states that the effort is not worth making if everything is to end in 'banality': 'El meu primer amor és —cal subratllar-ho— un primer amor completament veritat. Els sentiments, les situacions, les paraules, han estat transportats per mi sobre el paper amb una preocupació de fidelitat. És per això, probablement, que tot plegat és tan vulgar.'⁴⁴ Pla devises a number of elements for his would-be love story: a dialogue with few intrusions, a landscape in the background, a certain feeling of tenderness. Yet he is aware that his story lacks passion, the dialogue becomes uninteresting, and everything ends in absolute mediocrity. Amongst other reasons, Pla adduces his lack of imagination. Certainly we should not take such a statement at face value, for the story is in itself a critique of romantic attitudes rendered in the form of a parody of a sentimental novel. Nevertheless such an sceptical, sarcastic approach, Riba would have thought, could not possibly lead to the recreation of the moral

⁴³ *Primers escrits*, in his *Obres completes*, I (Barcelona: Selecta, 1956), p. 192.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

dimension required in the novel. According to Riba, Pla lacked the 'patience' to follow the slow movement of hearts, and that explained why he would never be able to write a novel:

Potser trobaríem la raó de la nostra temença que Josep Pla no escriurà mai una novel·la pròpiament dita, en la seva pressa a resumir i esgotar en espectacle i a destruir en humorisme, tota una vida, tot un possible altre ell mateix: en la seva manca de paciència, en suma, a seguir l'evolució, tan lenta!, dels cors.⁴⁵

From the gallery of fellow-creatures he had introduced in *Coses vistes*, Pla drew inspiration for many a type to bring into the novel in progress he had been planning for many years.⁴⁶ Yet, as Riba had predicted, his desire to concentrate on exterior performance prevented him from endowing his creatures with 'a possible life', and turning them one day into characters in a full novel. Perhaps the cultural climate in Catalonia, as Riba suggested, failed to provide the necessary stimulus for its writers to develop beyond corrosive humour and become true novelists.

3 'To make you see': The appeal of Joseph Conrad

We can now apply the moral criterion for novel writing, as understood by Riba at the peak of the novel debate, to Joseph Conrad. He was presented in Riba's essay of 1925 as an example of that 'branca d'una novel·lística estrangera' worth transplanting into Catalonia. As we may recall, Conrad had been popularised in Catalan circles a year earlier, as a prominent point of reference in the context of a *renouveau moral* that developed in French culture from the mid 1920s. Conrad was praised for having addressed, ^{through} into the appealing concept of adventure, the key issue in novel criticism: the process of harmonising exterior reality with inner being. As he gave shape to his idea of moral atmosphere in his preface to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, he expanded on the

⁴⁵ 'Josep Pla', in his *Obres completes*, II, p. 340.

⁴⁶ Gustà, *Els orígens ideològics i literaris de Josep Pla*, p. 436.

artistic method for achieving coherence between the two dimensions of reality — ‘the perfect blending of substance and form’. Appealing primarily to sensory reality, Conrad drew particular attention to the visual:

My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel — it is, before all, to make you *see*. That — and no more, and it is everything. If I succeed, you shall find there according to your deserts: encouragement, consolation, fear, charm — all you demand [...] The task approached in tenderness and faith is to hold up unquestioningly, without choice and without fear, the rescued fragment before all eyes and in the light of a sincere mood. It is to show vibration, its colour, its form; and through its movement, its form and its colour, reveal the substance of its truth — disclose its inspiring secret: the stress and passion within the core of each convincing movement.⁴⁷

Conrad was proposing in the above passage a modern formulation of a commonplace in the history of the genre.⁴⁸ He tackles visualisation as a modern concern of the author who is driven by the desire to give up his self and show before the readers’ eyes the most secret reality of things and characters, thus appealing to the reader’s moral response (encouragement, consolation, fear, or charm). Conrad’s perception of the visual points straight to the issue discussed in the following reflection: the moral effect produced as a result of visual suggestion in the dramatic presentation of characters.

The moral aspect of the visual had been explored by Conrad’s predecessors from Victorian times. In George Eliot, visualisation worked as a central artistic device, specially in *Adam Bede*, as she literally takes the reader into the scene, showing a rural world, introducing new characters: ‘Let me take you into that dining-room, and show you the Rev. Adolphus Irwine’ — and she proceeds: ‘We will enter very softly, and stand still in the open doorway,

⁴⁷ Preface to *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’* (Oxford University Press, 1984), p. xlii.

⁴⁸ See J. B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Work of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 1-2.

without awaking the glossy-brown setter who is stretched across the hearth.⁴⁹ We see figures in doorways, seated, laughing and talking in cosy places, or framed in the open air as we look from a window towards the fields. Characters are set in a landscape, and light helps to draw them more vividly as they appear on the scene. Here, for example, is Hetty, the beautiful country girl, who gradually takes shape as Arthur approaches her:

It was along the broadest of these paths that Arthur Donnithorne passed, under an avenue of limes and beeches. It was a still afternoon — the golden light was lingering languidly among the upper boughs, only glancing down here and there on the purple pathway and its edge of faintly-sprinkled moss; an afternoon in which destiny disguises her cold awful face behind a hazy radiant veil, encloses us in warm downy wings, and poisons us with violet-scented breath. Arthur strolled along carelessly, with a book under his arm, but not looking on the ground as meditative men are apt to do; his eyes would fix themselves on the distant bend in the road, round which a little figure must surely appear before long. Ah, there she comes: first, a bright patch of colour, like a tropic bird among the boughs, then a tripping figure, with a round hat on, and a small basket under her arm; then a deep-blushing, almost frightened, but bright-smiling girl, making her curtsy with a fluttered yet happy glance, as Arthur came up to her.⁵⁰

In chapter 17 ('In Which the Story Pauses a Little') George Eliot pauses to reflect on the sympathy she has been indulging in while looking at her creatures. Dutch paintings provide her with a source of inspiration to explain her ideal of giving a faithful portrayal of her fellow-mortals. She mentions 'the old woman bending over her flower-pot' and the 'cheap common things' surrounding her. In the scenes of *Adam Bede* we can visualise how domestic atmospheres frame the people of a rural community. The visual is there to invite us to take part in a loving communion made of common things and ordinary people, in a similar way to George Eliot's delight in the 'faithful pictures of a monotonous homely existence' by Dutch painters, when she

⁴⁹ *Adam Bede* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 56. See, in general, H. Witemeyer, *George Eliot and the Visual Arts* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979).

⁵⁰ *Adam Bede*, p. 129.

distances herself from the 'lofty-minded people' who despise them. Through this pictorial simile, George Eliot was defending a moral attitude, as she made clear the angle from which she was approaching the task, common to mid-Victorian novelists, of recreating the ordinary man, the anti-hero.⁵¹

A similar pictorial vision has been recognised in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Many a collective harvest scene in the open air vividly reminds us of those depicted in *Adam Bede*. Yet in Hardy's picture the emphasis does not fall on communal feeling, but on the suggestion of passions. In the preface the author stated that he tried to 'give artistic form to a true sequence of things', as he defined the novel as 'an impression'. A more sophisticated stage is achieved in Hardy's treatment of the visual, in accord with the faithful impression he intended when portraying a 'pure woman' within her rural environment. Appeal to the visual was a device that justified the highly valued place *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* held amongst the pure works of art according to modern critics, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Visual effects helped in that case to achieve the aim of dramatic coherence between the self and outside reality, working as a powerful mediating force in the expression of feelings. The next passage illustrates how contrasts of light and darkness suggest passion, and mood, through a symbolical connection with the character's inner life:

The gray half-tones of daybreak are not the gray half-tones of the day's close, though the degree of their shade may be the same. In the twilight of the morning light seems active, darkness passive; in the twilight of the evening it is the darkness which is active and crescent, and the light which is the drowsy reverse.

Being so often — possibly not always by chance — the first two persons to get up at the dairy-house, they seemed to themselves the first persons up of all the world. In these early days of her residence here Tess did not skim, but went out of doors at once after rising, where he was generally awaiting her. *The spectral, half-compounded, aqueous*

⁵¹ See M. Praz, *The Hero in Eclipse* (Oxford University Press), pp. 319-83; 372-76 for the connection with the realistic observation of Dutch painters.

*light which pervaded the open mead, impressed them with a feeling of isolation, as if they were Adam and Eve. At this dim inceptive stage of the day Tess seemed to Clare to exhibit a dignified largeness both of disposition and physique, an almost regnant power possibly because he knew that at that preternatural time hardly any woman so well endowed in person as she was likely to be walking in the open air within the boundaries of his horizon; very few in all England. Fair women are usually asleep at midsummer dawns. She was close at hand, and the rest were nowhere.*⁵²

Awaking of mutual passion emerges in the 'active' morning light, as the opening comparison suggests, and all through the passage light takes an active rôle in impressing feeling. Light is there to expand mutual passion, projecting it to the open universe and to a future relationship which characters feel has just been born, like that of the *Genesis*, once *facta est lux*. In the artistic technique of transmitting passion modern critics saw crystallised a widespread moral ideal: the recreation of a pure soul displayed on the surface of a landscape, whether rural or urban.

A further stage was reached in Conrad. He appealed to visualisation to make effective the aesthetic principle which pervaded his work: the recreation of an emotional and moral atmosphere. In *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* he explores the problem of conduct as he relates a voyage from Bombay to London in a sailing ship.⁵³ From the preface onwards Conrad puts in the foreground the moral driving force of a true artist:

He [the artist] speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery that surrounds our lives; to our sense of pity, and beauty, and pain; to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation — and to the subtle but invincible, conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts: to the solidarity in dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity — the dead to the living and the living to the unborn.
(p. xl)

⁵² *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), pp. 186-87 (my emphasis). For an analysis of visual patterns in *Tess*, see Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, pp. 191-222.

⁵³ For an analysis of this classic of sea fiction, see J. Berthoud, Introduction to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. vii-xxvi. Hereafter I quote from this edition (page numbers in brackets). For a survey of the ethical themes, see also C. Watts, Introduction to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989), pp. xi-xxvii.

Conrad introduces his crew of seamen as a group of silhouettes thrown into the light: 'two streaks of brilliant light cut the shadow of the quiet night that lay upon the ship. A hum of voices was heard there, while port and starboard, in the illuminated doorways, silhouettes of moving men appeared for a moment, very black, without relief, like figures cut out of sheet tin. The ship was ready for sea' (p. 3). We see the newcomers shaking hands, gazing at each other with 'friendly glances' (p. 5). Figures gradually take human form as they come to the illuminated foreground, taking on full relief one by one: 'Old Singleton, the oldest able seaman in the ship, sat apart on the deck right under the lamps, stripped to the waist, tattooed like a cannibal chief all over his powerful chest and enormous biceps' (p. 6). As they pass through a patch of light, their names are spelled out: Craik, Singleton, Donkin. Then the light is raised to the black face of the 'Nigger', the dying man of the *Narcissus*: 'He held his head up in the glare of the lamp — a head vigorously modelled into deep shadows and shining lights — a head powerful and misshapen with tormented and flattened face — a face pathetic and brutal: the tragic, the mysterious, the repulsive mask of a nigger's soul' (p.18).⁵⁴ From the beginning the visual brings about impressions of a bulk of humanity. On lighted faces a soul is projected, of one of the 'children of the mysterious sea'. Faces and gestures gather together in the illuminated fore-castle to convey the sense of 'brotherhood' which Conrad intended to suggest for his picture of the seamen:

Night and day the head and shoulders of a seaman could be seen aft by the wheel, outlined high against sunshine or starlight, very steady above the stir of revolving spokes. The faces changed, passing in rotation. Youthful faces, bearded faces, dark faces: faces serene, or faces moody, but all akin with the brotherhood of the sea (p. 30).

⁵⁴ For a comment on this travelling shot, see R. Esquerria, 'Conrad i el cinema', in his *Lectures europees* (Barcelona: Publicacions de La Revista, 1936), pp. 83-87 (83).

Conrad lets the faces speak for themselves of their secret mysteries. They speak of the emotional atmosphere that pervades the ship. Through the cinematic movement of his narration we follow the gradual build-up of tension, expressed in the changing faces of his creatures. Ethical values appear visualised in movement: we see how the feeling of solidarity that united the seamen is shaken by the tumult provoked around Jim Wait, the dying man. We observe the atmosphere of turmoil and distress through the eyes of the shipmates, whose feelings gradually turn in compassion towards the suffering fellow-man. We observe how the movements of the *Narcissus* slow down after the turmoil on the poop: ‘now and then a loud gust of babbling chatter came from forward, swept over the decks, and became faint, as if the unconscious ship, gliding gently through the great peace of the sea, had left behind and forever the turbulent mankind’ (pp. 125-26). The ship, symbolically called ‘Narcissus’ (the myth of deceptive beauty), plays an active part in the atmosphere of unrest, as she appears humanised against the lighted scene, projecting a moral vision.⁵⁵

On clear evenings the silent ship, under the cold sheen of the dead moon, took on the false aspect of passionless repose resembling the winter of the earth [...] In the magnificence of the phantom rays the ship appeared pure like a vision of ideal beauty, illusive like a tender dream of serene peace. And nothing in her was real, nothing was distinct and solid but the heavy shadows that filled her decks with their unceasing and noiseless stir; the shadows blacker than the night and more restless than the thoughts of men (p. 145).

The Nigger of the 'Narcissus' provides a powerful illustration of how the qualities critics associated with the concept of moral atmosphere could be displayed through the visual. As we visualise a group of seamen in solidarity the emphasis is placed on the force of temperaments in their plural reality — in Conrad’s words, on ‘the appeal of one temperament to all the other

⁵⁵ On Conrad’s animistic conception of the sea, see Berthoud, Introduction to *The Nigger of the the 'Narcissus'*, pp. xx-xxii.

innumerable temperaments' — which Riba would have translated as 'evolució d'un cor al llarg d'altres cors'. The visual works as the main way of extending the sympathies of the crew to the central temperament, Jim Wait. As we approach the moment of death, sympathies grow to a tragic feeling of compassion, turning into 'developing anxiety not to see him die' (p. 138). The tale invites a moral reading in visual terms from the beginning to the end, as ethical values are finally projected on to the men as they watch the nigger die:

He influenced the moral tone of our world as though he had in his power to distribute honours, treasures, or pain; and he could give us nothing but his contempt. It was immense; it seemed to grow gradually larger, as his body day by day shrank a little more, *while we looked*. It was the only thing about him — of him — that gave the impression of durability and vigour. It lived within him with an unquenchable life. It spoke through the eternal pout of his back lips; *it looked at us through the profound impertinence of his large eyes*, that stood far out of his head like the eyes of crabs. *We watched them intently*. Nothing else of him stirred. He seemed unwilling to move, as if distrustful of his own solidity. The slightest gesture must have disclosed to him [...] his bodily weakness, and caused a pang of mental suffering. He was chary of movements. He lay stretched out, chin on blanket, in a kind of sly, cautious immobility. *Only his eyes roamed over faces: his eyes disdainful, penetrating and sad*. (pp. 139-140; my emphasis).

A sensual passion for the tropics: J. M. de Sagarra

Interplay between the moral aspect and the visual was highlighted in the modern appraisal of Conrad. In his country of adoption, he was eventually selected as one of the great names of English fiction. In F. R. Leavis's influential book (1948), Conrad's visual energy of characterisation, so inviting to the cinematographer, was associated with 'Dickensian vividness'.⁵⁶ In the previous chapter we have seen how highly continental critics thought of the visual gift in particular, which was regarded as part of the English legacy adopted by the Polish writer. Conrad's sense of the visual also provided an aesthetic method for achieving the

⁵⁶ *The Great Tradition* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), p. 224.

renouveau moral of the contemporary novel. Josep M. de Sagarra, one of his Catalan admirers, celebrated this two-fold quality in Conrad's writing, when appealing to the 'moral comprensiva i pietosa de l'home' revealed in a world being seen: 'és com si passegéssim per un moll ple de rostres i barques de tot el món; és aquella sensació de desig d'aventura i d'heroisme, combinada amb el trasbalsament que dóna la barreja de les olors dels productes colonials.'⁵⁷ I shall now assess the extent to which Conrad's perception of the visual, especially as developed in his early tales of seamen, left a mark in Sagarra's writing.

Sagarra had a particular cause for admiring Conrad: they shared a passion for sea life. He once embarked on a long journey to Polynesia, out of which came a travel book, *La ruta blava* (1937). As we reach a section called 'El cor sobre el Pacífic', an atmosphere reminiscent of Conrad's world is evoked:

El pas del Canal de Panamà ens va mig bullir el cor amb la seva humanitat càlida i anguniosa, però l'opressió —que potser no ens volíem confessar— durava des que deixàrem el mar dels Saragassos i entràrem al mar de les Antilles [...] *una mena de pressió de caràcter moral* ens allargava el dia i ens tenyia d'insomni la suor neguitosa de les nits [...] la brisa, suavíssima, *moralment i materialment, ens havia vestit d'un optimisme fresc, d'una lleugeresa a la sang i als nervis, d'una alegria franca als ulls.* Havíem baixat encara tròpic avall, érem més a la vora de l'Equador, però el Pacífic, enorme, amb els vels d'aire refrescats per algun misteri climatològic (perquè el vent, en realitat, venia del Sud) havia operat un miracle.⁵⁸

The whole section invites a close reading in the light of Conrad's aesthetic method. First of all, the setting of the Pacific Ocean provides Sagarra with an open, illuminated horizon — he later alludes to the change in the 'efecte òptic' — to expand on the effect produced by sensory reality on the shipmates' feelings. The sea becomes personified as a driving force that pervades the

⁵⁷ 'Exotisme' (1925), in his *Obres Completes: prosa* (Barcelona: Selecta, 1967), pp. 399-401 (401).

⁵⁸ *La ruta blava: viatge a les mars del Sud*, in his *Obres completes*, pp. 726-847; for the section, pp. 755-62 (755, my emphasis).

mood and ideas of travellers: ‘La manera amable de conduir-se amb nosaltres l’Oceà Pacífic ens anima per a passar els darrers catorze dies de viatge sense veure ni una ombra de terra [...] Aquests darrers dies el mar sembla que vagi modelant les nostres idees. Són unes idees de calma i d’oblit, de pau absoluta’ — Sagarra seems to evoke here the vision of ‘serene peace’ from the ‘Narcissus’. In the very title of the section, ‘The Heart on the Pacific’, we recall the essence of Conrad’s moral message about recreating passion by appealing to natural forces in movement. Moral atmosphere is displayed here, as passion and mood (‘el cor’) define themselves against the rhythm of flowing waters (‘el ritme de les aigües’). The ‘taste of Conrad’, to use Sagarra’s words, is intensified as he alludes to the ‘curving line of the poop’. Conrad makes a predictable appearance while the traveller is looking at a group of ship-boys playing on the poop:

Els *boys* de Madagascar s’enfonsen dintre la piscina de fustes i lona i es claven cops de puny sense contemplació. A la punta de popa hi ha un club de boxa amateur que pot donar resultats positius. Tot aquest món *davant els meus ulls* és ple de records de Conrad. Personal tarat, amb gotes translúcides d’idealisme, de misèria, de febre. Barreja de colors de pell, barreja d’olors acres. Tot això en la calma nocturna del Pacífic, entre les Marqueses i les Tuamotu... Penseu en el *Negre del Narcís*, en *Typhoon*, en *Lord Jim*... Conrad pur!⁵⁹

The description that follows is a clear imitation of Conrad’s style: ‘La calor àcida i greixosa va destriant i barrejant olors i les va passejant, amb una calma cruel, per les cadenes i els pulmons àvids de frescor, sota la implacable lividesa de la lluna [...] Els malgatxes, suadíssims i lluents, amb el cos nu, s’agafen per la cintura i projecten, sota el sofre lunar, tota la musculatura en estat de trepidació i de desllorigament [...] Com que fa tanta calor a les cabines, les ombres s’estiren pels ponts, les converses s’allarguen.’⁶⁰ The fragment could well have been modelled on *The*

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 760 (my emphasis).

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 761.

Nigger of the 'Narcissus': we can recognise there the silhouettes of seamen, projecting their shoulders under the moonlight shadows filling the forecastle of the 'Narcissus'.

Early in his diary, in a section called 'La moral sobre l'Atlàntic', Sagarra comments on the delight he would take in disclosing the secret passions of his shipmates, and he makes a confession: 'A mi, aquest món secret i poc esbandit, que portem a coll-i-be damunt l'aigua de l'Atlàntic em commou més que la follia dels paisatges endreçats amb els quals compartim la taula i la conversa.'⁶¹ In *La ruta blava* such a desire is manifested in a number of reflections that serve as bridges between his depictions of colourful exotic landscapes. Sagarra had previously given a full portrait of the life of a whole family in his novel *Vida privada*, awarded the Crexells prize in 1932, which soon became famous for the scandal provoked by its dissection of the Catalan aristocratic milieu.⁶² *Vida privada*, written as it was by a fond admirer of Conrad, provides a chance to examine how Sagarra uses the visual technique in the novel.

The opening scene brings the visual element into the foreground, as if Sagarra wished to keep up with the modern aspiration of suggesting an atmosphere by appealing to the senses:

Els parpres, en obrir-se, varen fer un clac gairebé imperceptible, com si estiguessin enganxats a causa d'una pretèrita convivència amb les llàgrimes i el fum, o per aquella secreció produïda en els ulls irritats després d'una lectura molt llarga sota una llum insuficient.

El dit menut de la mà dreta va fregar-se les pestanyes, a la manera de cop de pinta ràpid, i les nines van intentar veure alguna cosa. De fet, la visió va ser un panorama d'ombres fofes i semilíquides d'una gran imprecisió: allò que un hom enlluernat del carrer copsa en penetrar en un aquàrium. Enmig de les ombres, agafava autoritat una mena de ganivet, llarg i vaporós del color que té el suc de les taronges esclafades en el port. Era un raig de llum que passava per l'esclatxa dels finestrons i que anava tornant-se agre amb

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 740.

⁶² See M. Gustà, 'Notes sobre *Vida privada*', *Els Marges* (May and September, 1981), 33-48; D. Guansé, preface to Sagarra, *Obres Completes: prosa*, xxii-xxiv.

l'atmosfera carregada de dins l'habitació.⁶³

Pain is metaphorically conveyed through the pupils making an effort ('les nines van intentar'). The author proceeds to describe an aqueous image, which is felicitously compared to the impression captured by a man coming from the light of the street as he enters into an aquarium, making the reader feel involved in the bewilderment. Then comes a complex metaphor about a long, 'vaporous' knife, expressing pain and sordidness ('squashed oranges'); as if to make up for the obscure image, the author next provides an explanatory remark, to make clear that it is a ray of sunlight cutting 'l'atmosfera carregada de dins l'habitació' ('the oppressive atmosphere of the room'), thus breaking the effect of the metaphor. Sagarra evokes the character's inner mood, as he depicts him awaking from an 'absurd and colourless dream', again with a remark: 'que quan un es desperta [dels somnis], amb prou feines si en recorda l'argument.' A *tristitia post coitum* situation is suggested through the objects Frederic sees as he comes to terms with real life — a blouse 'desinflada' and 'bruta', 'pompa lúgubre', 'princeses de barraca excessivament magres' — as if conveying a feeling of wretchedness, predicting as it were the miserable story which is to come for his creature. From the beginning, Frederic is seen through the evocation of a sordid atmosphere, as he is lying in the flat of a prostitute. Sagarra decides at the end of the scene to make his character's eyes fix on a stuffed dog with a garter round its neck. The same symbolic image turns up again to close the section (p. 17).

However, between the two appearances of the dog, Sagarra pauses to give a detailed report, in *feuilleton* style, of the life of Frederic de Lloberola from the time he met his lover Rosa, fifteen years before. The author does not spare his own judgements, in making specific remarks on Frederic's behaviour: 's'ha de fer constar que, les relacions amb la seva amiga, Frederic les

⁶³ *Vida privada* (Barcelona: Proa, 1984), p. 13. Hereafter I quote from this edition (page numbers in brackets).

mantingué per vanitat' (p. 15); 'Frederic, excessivament egoista i gens donat a la reflexió' (p. 16); 'enmig de la seva banalitat i la seva inconsistència moral' (p. 16); 'no deixava d'ésser un tímid' (p. 17), and so forth. The flash-back ends with an evocation of Rosa's perfume, followed by an atmospherical comparison: 'com el perfum d'aquelles barques que han navegat per moltes mars i desconcerten amb les ressonàncies contradictòries de tots els ports que han visitat' (p. 17). And then back to the camera, focusing again on the stuffed dog, not so much to remind the reader about Frederic's feelings, as to arouse interest in the plot: 'Per quins escorrancs s'havia esclavissat l'ànima de Frederic de Lloberola, fins a arribar en aquella cambra d'aire consumit, davant els ulls de vidre d'un gos dissecat amb una lligacama al coll?' (p. 17).

Sagarra's attempt at visualisation only partially satisfies modern demands for suggestion. The opening section, however successful or otherwise it might be, certainly produces a *recherché* effect. Yet it is destroyed from the moment the author draws a moral portrait of his character so that the reader is left with no surprises. The question that closes the section shows that Sagarra's chief concern in writing *Vida privada* was to capture the reader's interest in the lives of his aristocratic types, out of which he intended to make a long intriguing plot: 'si els poguessis guaitar per dins, si els poguessis seguir els passos inconfessables tindries arguments que no se t'acabarien mai' (p. 185). There is no room in the novel for the characters to develop by themselves without any interference from the author. This absence of suggestion was remarked on by the critic Maurici Serrahima, supported by Riba, in a comparison between *Vida privada* (reminiscent as they thought of *Point-Counterpoint*) and the evocative portrait of upper-class society in *Daphne Adeane*.⁶⁴ In *Vida privada* in particular, Serrahima found grounds for describing Sagarra as a moralistic writer. He stated:

⁶⁴ 'Baring-Huxley', *EM*, 10 December 1933, p. 9. See the section on Baring in Chapter 3. 2.

Molt sovint, no ens fa conèixer els personatges per allò que fan i que diuen en la realitat fictícia de la novel·la on els ha posats, sinó per allò que ell ens en diu i ens en conta, com si només ell ho sabés, com si ja tot fos donat i beneït i els nostres judicis no hi poguessin afegir res, com si ens volgués donar de tots aquells esdeveniments i de tota aquella gent la mateixa imatge que ell se'n feia, i no pas la que, veient-los actuar i sentint-los parlar, ens n'hauríem pogut fer nosaltres.⁶⁵

A Conradian gusto can be nevertheless detected in a central scene which illustrates Sagarra's skill in depicting sensual atmospheres: the party at Hortènsia Portell's (pp. 129-38). At the house of the rich widow, on a hot summer night, more than a hundred people gather in the halls and garden, waiting for the Dictator to join the party. Against the sound of jazz music, gesticulating figures fill the air in a visually suggestive way:

En els salons enlluernava la lluentor de braços i espatlles; la crema rosada de les pells amb el ritme de la respiració, feia com una mar d'onades lentes i grasses tenyides lleugerament de sang; entre les onades flotava de tant en tant la medusa herpètica d'un clatell (p. 154).

Tropical elements keep showing now and then as the author moves the camera, to picture a bunch of legs, ankles and knees covered in gauze tights which bring to his mind the image of 'un bar amb sodes lleugeres, picants i policolors' (p. 155) or to focus on the metallic silk of a countess's shoulder giving off an odorous pigment which reminds him of 'les torrades al·lucinacions de la mar Caribe' (p. 157). Black lace dresses follow on agile muscles, and a dashing Josephine Baker is evoked as she steps out from the silver sphere of *Folies-Bergère*, showing off 'les anques de cautxú més dinàmiques que s'han vist mai' (p. 156). Such a sensual evocation of the scene enabled Sagarra to develop his characteristic witty satire, to make a grotesque portrait out of the external appearances of respectable upper-class types:

⁶⁵ 'Vida privada', in J. Castellanos (ed.), *Guia de literatura catalana contemporània* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1973), pp. 237-45 (244). For an account of Sagarra's narrative technique, see M. Gustà, 'Notes sobre *Vida privada*', *Els Marges* (May and September, 1981), 33-48.

En la sala més petita hi havia una reunió d'abdòmens una mica indignats per la trinxa del frac i les exigències de la camisa forta. Aquests abdòmens s'havien d'accontentar amb unes galtes de més de seixanta anys i amb una bronquitis crònica.

De tant en tant, algun senyor de la vella guàrdia anava a refrescar-se els bigotis blancs amb la grassa perfumada dels escots més tendres, i tornava amb una anècdota agafada amb dos dits, delicadament, com si fos una papallona, i la deixava volar entre els nassos i les rialles, per untar amb una mica de mel i de cinisme la manca d'imaginació de l'arteriosclerosi (p. 155).

We recognise in those pictorial visions a quality which Sagarra was to explore further in *La ruta blava*, as he set out to portray the exotic landscapes of the South Seas. The oppressive atmosphere which pervades the ship as it enters the Pacific is suggestively present in the 'calor colonial i greixosa' that impregnates the atmosphere of the party, as Sagarra uses his full palette to capture a lively impression of the different human groups. In the passage above, heat is suggested through the grotesque portrait of old fat men and their partners expressed in visual metaphors. Odours, sounds, and heat surround the silhouettes of the party. Sagarra's gift was for social satire, and for painting open-air scenery. However, what mostly interested critics at the time was the inner world of the passions, dramatised in an urban comedy.

4 Ordinary types on stage: Frank Swinnerton and M. Teresa Vernet

In the early 1930s Catalan critics continued the quest for the novel as they followed the gallery of *romanciers d'actualité* presented by Proa in its series 'A Tot Vent'. As we may recall, Serrahima promoted Maurice Baring as an alternative model for the modern psychological novel — with suggestive evocation but without excessive analysis — to make it more accessible to the general reader. Serrahima was making a deliberate case for the lesser-known Baring as against modern writers like Huxley and Woolf. The grounds are made clear in his comment to the cinema critic of *El Matí* that the audience was weary of 'estremituds', willing again to

delight in stories that made them laugh and cry.⁶⁶ Baring could well be an example for Serrahima's 'normal novel', though within a closed aristocratic world, as the critic specified with the additional label of 'alta novel·la'.⁶⁷ Proa's repertoire contained examples of psychological novels intended to recreate the life of middle-class types. A case in point in the English novel was *Nocturne*, by Frank Swinnerton. The translator M. Teresa Vernet provided, with *Les algues roges* (1934), a Catalan counterpart to that so-called normal psychological novel. They will both be analysed in this last reflection on the moral dimension of the novel, centred on the novelist's capacity to dramatise an ordinary type.

Frank Swinnerton's *Nocturne* (1917)

Frank Swinnerton (1884-1982) was well established in the literary world of his time, as critic and reader for various publishers. His reminiscences of a whole gallery of Edwardian figures, enlivened with an abundance of anecdotes, are displayed in *The Georgian Literary Scene* (1938). He admired Wells's scientific romances and Shaw's farcical comedies, noting how the verbal irreverence of the playwright provoked the audiences of his time. He developed a special affection for Arnold Bennett and H. G. Wells, both of whom helped him to triumph as a novelist. Success came in 1917 with *Nocturne*, partly because of his handling of psychological themes in a suburban milieu. Bennett suggested to Swinnerton a first title (*In the Night*) for this novel, predicting a commercial success for it. Wells agreed to write a eulogistic introduction for the American edition which sold thousands of copies, although he clearly distanced himself from the

⁶⁶ 'Baring-Huxley', *EM*, 10 December 1933, p. 9; for the contrast Baring-Woolf, see also Serrahima, 'Novel·la impressionista', *EM*, 16 November 1933, p. 9. Serrahima took a similar dismissive attitude towards modernity as he endorsed the success of *The Good Companions*, by J. B. Priestley, against the 'snob audience' that admired D. H. Lawrence ('De l'atreuiment', *EM*, 10 October 1933, p. 9).

⁶⁷ 'Alta novel·la', *EM*, 25 May 1930, p. 18.

method of his *protégé*:

Such a writer as Mr Swinnerton, on the contrary, sees life and renders it with a steadiness and detachment and patience quite foreign to my disposition. He has no underlying motive. He sees and tells. His aim is the attainment of that beauty which comes with exquisite presentation. Seen through his art, life is seen as one sees things through a crystal lens, more intensely, more completed, and with less turbidity.⁶⁸

The American success helped to spread Swinnerton's fame around the Continent, where *Nocturne* was translated into many languages (Dutch, French, Italian, Russian, Swedish, Czech) as later was Baring's *Daphne Adeane*.⁶⁹ Such an enthusiastic response took Swinnerton by surprise. He remained somewhat sceptical about the real achievement of his novel, not highly thought of by one of his *mâitres à penser*, G. B. Shaw, who sent him a letter with this comment:

On the whole I found it a damned dismal book about people who ought not to exist. Don't you get tired of a world in which there is nothing but squalid poverty and women cut off about the waist? You impress me as a discouraged man discouraging other people [...] As to Wells, God forgive him! He has a kindly mania for praising people whom he ought to stir up by stupendous yawns in their faces. However, you make your people live all right enough. You would be much better employed in killing them.⁷⁰

A more balanced insight on the place of Swinnerton was provided by Edward Shanks in his 'Reflections on the Recent History of the English Novel' (1921), translated into Catalan in 1925, at the peak of the Catalan novel debate.⁷¹ Shanks was a regular contributor (and even an assistant editor) to the *London Mercury*, an influential literary platform of the 1920s which

⁶⁸ Preface to *Nocturne* (London: Hutchinson, n.d.), p. xii.

⁶⁹ For an account of the genesis and reception of Swinnerton's novel, see B. Green's introduction to *Nocturne* (Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. vii-xxvii. See also H. Orel, *Popular Fiction in England, 1914-1918* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), pp. 79-90.

⁷⁰ Cited in *Nocturne*, pp. xix-xx.

⁷¹ 'Reflexions sobre la història recent de la novel·la anglesa, per Edward Shanks', trans. M[illàs]-R[aurell], *LR*, 11 (1925), 238-43. First published in *LMerc*, 4 (1921), 173-83.

merged with the *Bookman* in 1935. A remarkable Edwardian influence was exerted on both periodicals to judge by the many reviews devoted to 'the Big Four'. Shanks belonged to the group of critics led by J. C. Squire, in opposition to the *élite* journals, such as the *Athenaeum* of Middleton-Murry and T. S. Eliot's *Criterion*.⁷² His reflections on the English novel tradition, covering from around 1912, contain interesting remarks on the vogue for the psychological novel. Shanks fears the growing presence of psychological novelists, because of their obsession with portrayal of character over the forces he particularly admires in the narrative of Conrad — action, atmosphere and poetic vision. Swinnerton is placed as a successor of Wells and Bennett in that he draws his material from ordinary life of 'normal English types'. Yet he is seen as an exponent of the modern novel of psychology which recreates normal types with a primary interest in their behaviour rather than in the story and the creation of an atmosphere. The psychological novel is identified with a stream of realism, that is, realism not as a means but 'as an end in itself'. At the extreme of realism, Shanks places Proust, Joyce and Woolf, for they aim at recording life as it is in a single consciousness.⁷³ Younger novelists such as Swinnerton were realists in a 'looser sense'. Shanks appreciates in particular the 'beautiful *Nocturne*', which he associates with *Clayhanger*, yet at a distance, for Bennett was 'thoroughly romantic in temper'.⁷⁴

A similar assessment of Swinnerton's writing appeared earlier in the *Bookman*, just after the publication of *Nocturne*.⁷⁵ On the whole, his novels were labelled as 'comedies of environment', but a sympathetic treatment of them prevails. The major fault, according to this

⁷² See J. Gross, *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters: Aspects of English Literary Life since 1880* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969), pp. 239-42.

⁷³ 'Reflections on the Recent History of the English Novel', p. 178.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁷⁵ C. S. Evans, 'Frank Swinnerton', *Bkm*, 53 (1918), 175-76.

critic, C. S. Evans, is that they were ‘too often overburdened with a ponderous psychology’. Swinnerton was, however, ‘only intellectually in love with the analytical method’, for what interested him most was to observe his creatures alive. By way of illustration, the reviewer points out Swinnerton’s attention to groups of characters as opposed to single individuals — a comment that bears comparison with Shanks’s unfavourable view of modern psychologists focusing on a single consciousness. The reviewer concludes by recognising in the vivid types that filled Swinnerton’s urban scenario a ‘faculty of intense sympathy’, which the author himself had claimed as a prime value in his introduction to *Nocturne*.

The unenthusiastic judgement on the psychological novel passed by Shanks and his fellow-critic was by no means the dominant view on the Continent. Nevertheless, it helps us to understand the paradoxical position occupied by *Nocturne* after quite a late arrival in both France (1925) and Catalonia (1932), following its American success. Swinnerton, with *Nocturne* in particular, became an archetype of the modern English psychological novel opposed to the line represented by Proust and his *émules*, Joyce and Woolf. Such a paradox is reflected in the Catalan presentation of the novel. Ramon Esquerra makes a distinction between the detailed analysis of Proust and his English followers (Woolf, Huxley) and the opposite tendency represented by Baring and Priestley, whereas he regards Swinnerton as an exponent of the ‘modern stream of the English psychological novel’ — overlooking the fact that *Nocturne* had been published fifteen years earlier. However, he later associates *Nocturne* with *Daphne Adeane*, pointing out the novelist’s capacity to interest the reader with ‘uns quants fets normals i corrents d’unes vides grises i humils’, while also recognising a poetic element flowing behind it all.⁷⁶ Likewise, Domènec Guansé regards *Nocturne* as an archetypal example of the psychological

⁷⁶ ‘*Nocturn*, de Frank Swinnerton’ (1932), in *Lectures europees* (Barcelona: Publicacions de La Revista, 1936), pp. 92-93.

novel as he highlights the technical device of condensing action in one single night. He values the unsophisticated manner in which Swinnerton dramatises his characters, contrasted with the impression of ‘obstinat i lent analista’ produced by Proust. Swinnerton, Guansé points out, does not analyse complex feelings, but lets his characters ‘dialogar d’una manera animada i vivent’. The author’s great achievement was to have made them alive (‘haver fet vivents aquests caràcters’), a quality also noted by the *Bookman* reviewer.⁷⁷

The essential difference between Catalan and English views of Swinnerton derived from the angle from which the psychological novel itself was perceived on both sides of the Channel, bearing in mind also the chronological gap between them: whereas English reviewers seem to wish that Swinnerton would shed his psychological apparatus, their Catalan counterparts promoted him in a vogue for the psychological novel. For present purposes, attention will be given to the elements of technique which Catalan critics held in admiration like the English reviewers, when they compared Swinnerton with other representatives of the modern psychological novel. Firstly, the narrator’s focus on a group of characters, rather than on a single mind, and the contrast established within the group. Secondly, the ability to create interest by avoiding lengthy analysis and bringing into play elements of ordinary life. And most importantly, the value of dialogue as a dramatic means of revealing character and relationships.

The model proposed in *Nocturne* was halfway between the moralistic attitude, as observed, for instance, in *Vida privada* — in which an omniscient author feels free to intrude into the character’s life — and the modern psychological novel in which the character is presented in stream-of-consciousness technique, with no room for the author to intervene. Swinnerton sought to bring into *Nocturne* a sense of modern technique by condensing the action in one single

⁷⁷ D. Guansé, ‘Nocturn, de Frank Swinnerton’, *LP*, 19 July 1932, p. 6.

night, yet with the purpose of making his novel resemble a play, and sought to create in his readers the feeling of recognising themselves in what they were to see dramatised in the novel:

The novelist creates his own atmosphere, and depends upon a variety of dexterities for something akin to visual illusion. He has no accomplished actress to play the part of his heroine; no footlights; no curtain to emphasize his climaxes. But he has immeasurable resources in the matter of indication. If his own belief is strong enough he can persuade all but resistant readers that what he tells is actually happening in their own experience. He can make the spoken words of his characters assume tone and colour. He can tell what they think and feel, as well as what they say and do.⁷⁸

Nocturne tells the story of two sisters in their prime who live with an invalid father, in a London suburb. Jenny is the 'roving blade', longing for adventures and romance. Emmy is the long-suffering housekeeper, taking care of Pa. Action begins in the kitchen of a cupboard-like house. A lithograph portrait of Edward VII hangs over the mantelpiece. Pa is sitting with his pipe and his bottle of beer, a constant witness of the rivalry between the two sisters, which colours their domestic life. Routine is broken for once: Emmy is given the chance to go to the theatre with Alf, a friend of Jenny's. In the meantime, Jenny leaves Pa alone to escape to a bigger adventure, meeting the lover of her dreams in his yacht by Westminster Bridge.

In the closing scene of the second section (pp. 43-49) we can observe how technical elements intertwine to convey tension between the four characters who met in the kitchen early in the story. Tension specially centres around the feeling of rivalry between the two sisters, as Alf steps in:

Alf Rylett appeared in the doorway of the kitchen, Emmy standing behind him until he moved forward, and then closing the door and leaning back against it. His first glance was in the direction of Jenny, who, however, did not rise as she would ordinarily have done. He glanced quickly at her face and from her face to her hands, so busily engaged

⁷⁸ Introduction to *Nocturne* (Oxford University Press, 1937), pp. xv-xvi. Hereafter I quote from this edition (page numbers in brackets).

in manipulating the materials from which she was to re-trim her hat. (p. 43)

Detailed remarks are provided, in the manner of a director of a play, on the way characters are placed, as it were, on stage. The narrator follows Emmy's movements from the moment she is standing at the door behind Alf, as she is trying to catch his attention, keeping him away from her sister. There is a progressive tension as Alf is looking at Jenny while being caught by Emmy's persevering attention: 'He [Alf] came over and stood by the table, in spite of the physical effort which Emmy involuntarily made to will that he should not do so' (p. 46). Alf is seen trapped by the looks of the two sisters, and those coming from Pa, who also wants his attention. In a brief conversation with him the word 'bigamy' turns up, alluding to the embarrassing situation in which Alf finds himself.

An atmosphere of tension is created. The turning point is the following dialogue in which the dramatic effects — of glancing, of Pa's oppressive presence, of the unspelled rivalry between the two sisters — lead to Alf's reaction:

'He's been very good, I will say,' answered Emmy. 'Been quiet all day. And he ate his supper as good as gold.' Jenny's smile and little amused crouching of the shoulders caught her eye. 'Well, so he did!' she insisted. Jenny took no notice. 'He's had his — mustn't say it, because he *always* hears that word, and it's not time for his evening... Eight o'clock, he has it.'

'What's that?' said Alf, incautiously. 'Beer?'

'Beer!' cried Pa. 'Beer!' It was the cry of one who had been malignantly defrauded, a piteous wail.

'There!' said both of the girls, simultaneously. Jenny added: 'Now you've done it!'

'All right, Pa! Not time yet!' But Emmy went to the kitchen cupboard as Pa continued to express the yearning that filled his aged heart.

'Sorry!' whispered Alf. 'Hold me hand out, naughty boy!'

'He's like a baby with his titty bottle', explained Emmy. 'Now he'll be quiet again.'

Alf fidgeted a little. This contretemps had unnerved him. He was less sure of himself (p. 47).

In this short piece of dialogue the author shows the rivalry of the two sisters (over the business of nursing Pa) through the contrast between their reactions towards Alf after he had put his foot in it — a rude, disapproving Jenny and a condescending Emmy. Tension grows as Alf mentions to Jenny that he has got two tickets for the theatre, while she is doing her needlework, not at all expecting such a proposal:

‘Oh, extravagance!’ cried Jenny, gaily, dropping the pin from between her lips and looking in an amused flurry at Emmy’s anguished face opposite [...] ‘Ah, that’s where you’re wrong. That’s what cleverness does for you. Alf nodded his head deeply and reprovingly. ‘Given to me, they were, by a pal o’mine who works at the theatre. They’re for tonight. I thought—’

Jenny, with her heart beating, was stricken for an instant with panic. She bent her head lower, holding the rose against the side of her hat, watching it with a zealous eye, once again to test the effect. He thought she was coquetting, and leaned a little towards her. He would have been ready to touch her face teasingly with his forefinger.

‘Oh’, Jenny exclaimed, with a hurried assumption of matter-of-fact ease suddenly ousting her panic. ‘That’s very good. So you thought you’d take *Emmy*! That was a very good boy!’ (pp. 47-48)

Jenny makes Emmy feel uneasy about the situation — for Emmy knows that her sister has the best chance of going. As Jenny learns that the tickets are for that night, fearing that Alf will ask her, she keeps to her needlework as if ignoring the proposal. But Alf misunderstands her staring at the hat as coquettish behaviour; and then comes the final twist with Jenny’s sudden, unexpected decision that Emmy, and not she, is going with him. From the very beginning of the scene, Jenny assumes the stronger part, gradually taking control of the situation, emerging at last triumphant, over Pa, her sister, and Alf. It is mainly by focusing on Jenny, by placing her in the spotlight, that Swinnerton conveys her domineering presence. In contrast, the weakness of Emmy and Alf is disclosed by making them take Jenny as a reference point, either looking at her or leaning towards her. Remarks on the characters’ movements are supplied, as well as on the meaning of silent looks — the ‘anguished’ look towards Emmy, the ‘zealous’ eye of Jenny

awaiting Alf's reaction. The reader watches the scene, imagining from performance the characters' inner world. The passage is a vivid example of Swinnerton's capacity for dramatising a strong character, as if seen on stage, just before the curtain falls:

'Good boy!' cried Jenny. 'Buck up, Em, if you're going to change your dress. Seats! My word! How splendid!' She clapped her hands quickly, immediately again taking up her work so as to continue it. Into her eyes had come once more that strange expression of pitying contempt. Her white hands flashed in the wan light as she quickly threaded her needle and knotted the silk (p. 49).

M. Teresa Vernet's *Les algues roges* (1934)

Les algues roges, awarded with the Crexells prize in 1934, was published two years after M. Teresa Vernet's translation of *Nocturne*. An influence of Swinnerton's novel on the Catalan novelist has been generally suggested.⁷⁹ In the case of *Les algues roges*, there are certainly a number of parallels in the general structure. Both novels are organised in a three-part division; the action takes place within a closed period of time — one night and three years, respectively — with symmetrical settings at the beginning and the end — the kitchen in *Nocturne*, the tennis club in *Les algues roges*. Also, they both present a contrast between two female middle-class characters, and craving for love, whether repressed or fulfilled, is in both the theme that keeps the story going. Romance does not change the lives of the characters in either case, yet the ending is equally open. Some specific motives indicate a closer inspiration from *Nocturne*. In *Les algues roges*, the portrait of Marina's alcoholic mother (paralysed after an accident) looking for her bottle and cigarettes hidden in the cupboard brings to mind the image of Pa's obsession for his beer. Marina's escape with Jaume happens in Paris and the climactic scene of her attempt at suicide takes place on St Michel's bridge, which suggests a parallel with the setting for Jenny's

⁷⁹ C. Arnaú, 'Crisi i represa de la novel·la', in *HLC*, X, p. 100.

romance at Westminster Bridge. The rivers' waters play in each novel a symbolic rôle associated with the heroine's passion. I do not intend here to develop these parallels further, but to analyse the extent to which Swinnerton's technique in dramatisation of characters is visible in Vernet's novel.

Two main characters are presented in contrast: Isabel is the pure woman who has fulfilled her rôle in life as an intellectual. Marina, her friend, is the passionate woman who has decided to finish her long relationship with Aleix to begin a more exciting life. She escapes to Paris with Jaume and when he abandons her after a while, she makes attempts suicide. Isabel, who happens to be in Paris doing research, meets her in hospital. She embarks on the task of transforming Marina into a pure woman, like her. Isabel, however, is concealing from her friend a relationship she had in the past with Juli, which she broke up to become an independent woman. Yet the past is still alive in her consciousness. Both friends eventually go home to live a peaceful, passionless life together, filled with friends and cultural pleasures. However, the true existence of a repressed desire remains an open question at the end.

In the two scenes I shall analyse a feeling of jealousy between the two friends is portrayed. In the first one, the author prepares a climactic moment by presenting Marina and Isabel involved in a triangular situation, as they go on an excursion with Juli, Isabel's former lover, and a French family. Isabel is described playing with the children, laughing with them, delighting in the scenery, while Marina is seen all the time with Juli. There is an intention to make the reader recognise Isabel's anxiety, through her gazing at the pure sky, the effect of a sharp bird-song ('agut com un xiulet') cutting the stillness, and the silence that follows:

Berenaren, sempre Juli al costat de Marina. Mme. André acabà ajaient-se a l'herba i cantant a mitja veu. Isabel mirava el cel rosa i pur entre les cimes dels arbres verd pà·lid. Un cant d'ocell estrany, agut com un xiulet, s'enfonsava en el silenci brogidor de la

boscúria [...] Feren el retorn en vaporet. Juli estava de colzes a la barana entre les dues noies. Callaven.⁸⁰

At the close of the scene, the narrator focuses on Isabel's observation of the couple, and next she proceeds to spell out her feelings: 'Isabel els mirava. Sentia una mena de neguit. Temia l'embruix de l'hora, per a Marina la feble. I el temia també per ella mateixa, per a la seva serenor tan difícil d'aconseguir' (p. 172). In the next scene the reader is expecting a moment of tension after learning that Marina is seeing Juli. A vivid dialogue follows between the two friends:

Finalment arribà, animosa, els ulls brillants.

Isabel no esmentà la trigança i examinà la seda lentament. Després aixecà els ulls:

—Si que has hagut de rodar per trobar-la.

—És que m'he topat amb Juli quan sortia de la botiga.

—Ah— féu Isabel, i la mirà als ulls. Marina parlava amb perfecta naturalitat.

—I on heu anat després.

Marina va riure.

—Com si ho sabessis, que hem anat a una banda o altra!

—Naturalment! No heu festejat pas pels carrers, amb aquest plugim.

Marina, que s'estava posant la bata de casa, i tenia el cap embolcallat en la roba, parlà des de dintre amb la veu un xic sibilant d'indignació.

—Festejat! Qui et diu que festegem! Hem anat a prendre el te, com a bons companys.

Juli no em parla d'amor, ho sents? Som amics i prou.

—Oh! —féu Isabel.

Marina, que havia reeixit ja a posar-se la bata, anà vers Isabel mig rient.

—Escolta, escolta! Em sembla que veus fantasmes a tot arreu, tu. Que estàs gelosa? Si de cas, no és que jo...

—Gelosa? —féu un gest amb els llavis, gairebé menyspreador— A tu et semb'la que és home per a mi, Juli? (pp. 173-74)

A number of elements help to enliven the dialogue: Marina's eyes glittering as she arrives at the flat; Isabel's looking up at her, and next straight in the eyes ('als ulls'); Marina's excitement, bursting into laughter as she is putting on her housecoat, then walking to Isabel and crying out her jealousy, and Isabel pulling her lips in a dismissive attitude. However, once the tension is

⁸⁰ *Les algues roges* (Barcelona: Proa, 1938), pp. 169-70. Hereafter I quote from this edition (page numbers in brackets).

over, the author makes Isabel speak in a patronising tone, as she confesses her secret to Marina:

—Escolta, Marina. Quan un noi de París et parli de companyonia, no te'l creguis. Només pensa en una cosa: amor. Millor: no amor, desig.

Un vel de tristor emboirà els ulls negríssims de Marina.

—Sí —murmurà— com tots...

—Com tots, no. I ací mateix, n'hi pot haver d'altres... però els que jo he conegut, no eren capaços de sostenir amistat de debò amb una noia: o la indiferència, o l'amor. Almenys, el flirt. I el flirt és molt perillós... ja ho sé, jo; massa que ho sé. (pp. 174-75)

The intended effect of the previous dialogue is spoiled by Isabel's words, leading in turn to Marina's reaction: 'Si a mi tant se me'n dóna, de Juli. Encara em fa massa mal *allò*, per a pensar en ximpleries... I, a més —enrogí— ara he canviat, vull canviar... vull ésser més... més... més formal. (Volia dir pura, i l'espantà el mot)' (p. 175). After what we know from the previous scene, and from the rest of the book, such a reaction is not believable. The contrast of character between Isabel and Marina is unevenly rendered. The author may disappear behind them most of the time, yet she keeps projecting a didactic tone in dialogue. After all both characters embody a type (as represented in the remark 'Marina la feble') rather than ordinary human beings. Only when the novelist manages to make Marina shed her mask of pure womanhood — as illustrated in the first dialogue — is a more lively effect achieved, and Marina appears as a believable normal woman.

Another element characteristic of the modern novel should be considered to produce a fair judgement on the novelist. Both Catalan and English critics had noticed a poetical quality behind the vulgar life recreated in *Nocturne*. One may recognise it, for instance, in the presence of the Thames against the lights of the city and the black waters gliding beside Jenny, fearing darkness (pp. 103-05). In *Les algues roges* the river's waters have a more significant rôle on account of the symbolic dimension which the author intended for her characters. A symbolic

element has been already observed in the first scene, in the way Isabel's anxiety is conveyed through the shrill whistle of a bird. The title itself, *Les algues roges* ('Red water-weed') contains a symbolic leit-motif that encompasses passion: reminiscences of Isabel's desire emerge when contemplating the weed flowing in the river's cold waters ('I al fons hi havia només un color d'algues: les algues roents del desig amorós sota l'aigua gelada', p. 85); the flowing of red weed associates with her emotional turmoil ('mentre dins el seu esperit el tumult era eixordador, i les algues roges es desvetllaven sota l'aigua geliua', p. 147; 'No era la passió de Juli qui l'havia torbada, era la passió oculta del seu ésser. La fam encegadora, el turment secret i vergonyós, l'ondulació lenta de les algues roges sota les aigües glaçades', p. 160). At the end of the climactic scene the symbolism of French verse springs to her mind, as if shaping her consciousness:

Mais blessure, sanglots, sombres essais, pourquoi?
 Pour qui, j. j. aux cruels, marquez-vous ce corps froid,
 aveugle aux doigts ouverts évitant l'espérance!
 Où va-t-il, sans répondre à sa propre ignorance,
 ce corps dans la nuit noire étonné de sa foi?
 Terre trouble... *et mêlée à l'algue*, porte-moi,
 porte doucement moi... (p. 172; my emphasis)

When Isabel comes to terms with her life, the drift of weed becomes quiet, sleeping underneath the river ('estava tan lluny del tumult sentimental, que li semblaven talment un somni les tèrboles hores viscudes a París. Les algues roges dormien al fons del gorg', p. 253). Such an extensive use of this symbolic device is more in tune with the modern spirit of the most up-to-date novel than with Swinerton's. For example, in this passage from Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* seaweed plays a comparable symbolic rôle, in that it is associated with the character's feeling as he is thinking back to his lost boyhood:

There was a long rivulet in the strand and, as he waded slowly up its course, he wondered

at the endless drift of seaweed. Emerald and black and russet and olive, it moved beneath the current, swaying and turning. The water of the rivulet was dark with endless drift and mirrored the highdrifting clouds. The clouds were drifting above him silently and silently the seatangle was drifting below him; and the grey warm air was still: and a new wild life was singing in his veins.

Where was his boyhood now?⁸¹

By the time she wrote *Les algues roges* Vernet may have been familiar with Joyce's book, which she was to translate into Catalan in 1967. In any case, her novel should be regarded as an early attempt to recreate the inner life of two female characters, though at the expense of dramatic enactment. Still, Vernet gives them a chance to linger in our minds by leaving the story with an open ending, as Forster required, to give the reader an opportunity to exercise his sympathy. It is hard to predict what such a young novelist as Vernet would have achieved, had her career not been halted by the Civil War. She never resumed it. From such an early work of a novelist in the making, one may wonder whether Riba's predictions about the Catalan novel were right or not. In the judgement of Maurici Serrahima, the problem was that too often 'es diu que en la nostra societat ciutadana hi ha pocs elements per fer novel·la'.⁸² *Les algues roges*, to take a suitable example, could have been a starting-point. This survey, however, comes to an end in 1938, on the verge of the devastating aftermath of the Civil War.

⁸¹ *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914-15) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), p. 185.

⁸² 'Novel·la normal', *EM*, 31 May 1931, p. 13.

Conclusion

This study is mainly aimed at assessing the influence of English prose literature in Catalonia. The following conclusions have been reached.

1 The reception of G. K. Chesterton (1916-36) was an important phenomenon (as demonstrated in Appendix I). It should be partially attributed to religious affinities. *The Everlasting Man* became the best-known amongst his books in the year of celebration of the seventh centenary of the death of St Francis of Assisi, and coinciding with Chesterton's visit to Catalonia. It should be also attributed to his ideological positions akin to the *Noucentista* reaction against the *fin de siècle*. However, these are not the only reasons for Chesterton's success, as is clear from the admiration that he enjoyed among journalists, including Catalan writers of a wide ideological spectrum such as Josep Pla and Antoni Rovira i Virgili. The critical emphasis was placed on his ability as polemicist, on the way in which his thought was conveyed rather than on its contents (Chapter 1.1). It was his use of the paradox that Catalan writers drew attention to. Catalan writers saw it as a means for stimulating witty debate on journalistic platforms. Against the dogmatism of Eugeni d'Ors's *gloses*, Chesterton was seen as an exponent of the art of shaping ideas in literary form, rather than of axiomatic writing. Both his essays and fictional works displayed what one might term Edwardian values: the ability to play with ideas, the stress on fantasy, the values of romance and adventure, and a respect for the Victorian anti-hero *par excellence*: the common man. All these elements account for the appeal of Chesterton over the years covered by this research, being a touchstone for the following chapters (Chapter 1. 2).

2 The impact of the other members of the Big Four, H. G. Wells, G. B. Shaw and Hilaire Belloc was of less importance, and their presence is connected with the influence of Chesterton. All the same, the Catalan *intelligentsia* admired their capacity to promote civilised debate ('alta

polèmica'), which they would yearn to bring to Catalonia; such a pedagogical ideal was characteristic of a *Noucentista* mind, but it was nevertheless maintained as an aspiration by the following generations. The value of playing with ideas was equally recognised in Chesterton's essays, Shaw's plays and also in the polemical work by H. G. Wells, *An Outline of History*. However, the expectations of Catalan writers hardly met with the actual response of the general public, as demonstrated with Shaw's plays (Chapter 2. 1-5). The reception of Wells's early work, including his scientific romances and the novels of the Edwardian period, highlights the Edwardian value of human sympathy, inherited from Victorian novelists (Dickens) and akin to the spirit of Chesterton's writings. The appeal of the Big Four has to be understood in terms of their ability to connect with a large readership, however remote an ideal this might have been in contemporary Catalan society, by fictionalising ideas, through essay writing, romance, fantasy and plays (Chapter 2. 6).

3 The study of translations of English novels (1918-38) shows the extent to which Edwardian values influenced the process of transmitting English fiction to Catalan culture (the remarkable effort is reflected in Appendix II). Since emphasis is here placed on the transmission itself, the study draws on comparative analysis of Catalan and French sources (with particular attention to the *Revue des Deux Mondes* and the *Nouvelle Revue Française*) and proves the mediating effect French criticism had over the whole reception of the English novel in Catalonia. It becomes clear that the guidelines of the Catalan translation policy must be analysed in the context of a reaction against naturalism and the *roman à thèse*, which brought to the foreground, by contrast, the Edwardian fictional canon. This canon represented at the time the mainstream of the English novel, that is, a sound, independent tradition to be opposed to the dominant French model on the Continent. Sympathy is the key concept that binds Edwardian values — inherent

in the earliest French assessments of the *roman anglais*. Edwardian values are prominent in the first phase of translations (1918-23, expanding up to 1925; Chapter 3. 1). This stage is chiefly represented by Carner's taste, notably in his selection of works for Biblioteca Literària. Sympathy was detected in George Eliot's work (*Silas Marner*), and romance and adventure are central values in the remaining choices (Defoe, Dickens, Kipling, Stevenson); also the common man and humour feature. In the second phase (1924-38), when translations expanded, French critical guidance continued to influence the Catalan selection of titles. Edwardian values and authors continued to be appreciated within new literary developments that included an increasing presence of the psychological novel. Conrad's special appeal has to be interpreted in that context, representing old values of adventure, though now blended with new moral and aesthetic concerns; thus Conrad was seen to mark a step beyond Stevenson's novels of adventure and Kipling's epic tales. In this context of *renouveau moral* of the modern novel, a contempt for excessive psychological analysis was a recurrent thread associated with the English tradition, as opposed to what were regarded as fresh manifestations of *roman à thèse* (e.g. Huxley's *Point-Counterpoint*). Hence the revival of late Victorians such as Hardy (and his call for verisimilitude), Meredith (and his concern for balance) and his Edwardian successor John Galsworthy; they were all reappraised in contrast with French practitioners of the psychological novel. The centrality of Maurice Baring (*Daphne Adeane* being a best-seller of the time) in the choice of contemporaries becomes explicable in the light of the search for *la pureté*, in which the tradition of the *roman anglais* played a part by contributing the values of sympathy and balance. Excessive analysis was kept away from the novel. With a view to making the novel accessible to the common reader, a degree of contempt was revealed towards the experimental novel as represented by James Joyce and Virginia Woolf (Chapter 3. 2).

4 The reflections on the ethical aspects of the novel, as expressed in Riba's article of 1925 ('Una generació sense novel·la'), are still to be read in connection with an Edwardian frame of mind. A close connection has been detected between Riba's understanding of this moral concern, linked to an aesthetic outlook on the novel, and French criticism. Such a connection is confirmed by Riba's proposing the same solution as the French critic Jacques Rivière, for translations to take a leading part in the renewal of the novel. 'Moral atmosphere' is the key concept that accounts for the moral and aesthetic values that Catalan and French sought for the modern novel. It derives originally from Conrad, and circulated in Catalonia via the French critic Ramon Fernandez. Such an ethical concern, as expressed in narrative technique, has been detected in E. M. Forster's approach in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), through his distinction between *homo sapiens* and *homo fictus* (Chapter 4. 1). Riba's ideas may be gleaned from his analysis of two writers of the moment, Carles Soldevila and Josep Pla, and it emerges that Riba's ideal of 'crear atmosfera moralment' is not achieved as he deals with inner life of characters (Chapter 4. 2). The English tradition offers an effective technique for transmitting the inner life of a character through visualisation, an aspect which is examined in a work by Conrad (*The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*), with reference to the use of pictorial vision in his predecessors (George Eliot, Hardy). The influence of Conrad's visual technique is patent in Josep M. de Sagarra's *La ruta blava*, though Conrad's moral concerns are not apprehended in Sagarra's narrative, as demonstrated in *Vida privada* (Chapter 4. 3). The Edwardian value of depicting ordinary types through dramatic enactment is illustrated by Frank Swinnerton's *Nocturne*. As a light alternative to the modern psychological novel, this best-seller of Edwardian years is seen to have had a late influence on the Continent. Despite the parallels observed between *Nocturne* and *Les algues roges*, a novel by the Catalan translator of *Nocturne*, M. Teresa Vernet does not quite manage

to minimise authorial intrusion by means of dramatisation; however, a brush of symbolism, not that far removed from Joyce, can be read as a prelude to developments in the Catalan novel harshly interrupted in 1939 (Chapter 4. 5).

The defence of fiction *per se* is a sustained thread associated with Edwardian writers. In the Big Four, Catalan writers admired the capacity for playing with ideas and expanding them into the imagined worlds created in Shaw's plays, Chesterton's fantasies and paradoxes, and Wells's romances. Fiction was the utmost value attached to the *roman anglais*, by those who were thrilled by Stevenson's novels of adventure and indulged in laughter and tears with Dickens's and Wells's comic characters; all these admirers on the Continent kept in mind the social success of British publishing. Fiction, as they thought, was the missing value in the *roman à thèse*, which by addressing a single case failed to give a picture of a 'vie possible', not least one enlivened with fantasy and adventure. As Edwardian polemicists had proved, even ideology was fictionalised in the English tradition, whereas the *roman à thèse* (and in general naturalism and realism) was regarded as quite the reverse procedure. Story and adventure meant the power of dreaming and fantasy: that is what Wells wished to provide for the tired man in the office, the hero of his romances; that power attained a poetic quality in the exotic tales of Kipling, and in Conrad's adventures of seamen. English fiction was welcomed as a source of entertainment and excitement, with an educative potential for the reader through the exercise of his imagination.

The diagnosis of the novel made in 1921 by Edward Shanks, a powerful representative of Edwardian critical attitudes, brings to the foreground the value of fiction as opposed to the extreme manifestations of realism he saw in modern psychological novels (Proust, Joyce, Woolf). Fiction goes with poetic quality in Conrad, a favourite writer of Shanks's. His

predictions concerning the bad influence of realism and the good influence of Chesterton's fantasy (*The Napoleon of Notting Hill*) did not prove prophetic in the short term, but perhaps they were not wide of the mark. The Edwardian values of poetic invention and *fabula* have endured in magic streams of modern fiction. They are much present, for instance, in Jorge Luis Borges, a defender of what he called the 'método de la invención circunstancial', as practised by Defoe, Wells and Kipling, and a fond admirer of Chesterton. Bringing in his fantasies by way of illustration, Borges once made a distinction between the realist and the magic mode of fiction: 'He distinguido dos procesos causales: el natural, que es el resultado incesante de incontables e infinitas operaciones; el mágico, donde profetizan los pormenores, lúcido y limitado. En la novela, pienso que la única honradez es el segundo. Quede el primero para la simulación psicológica.'¹ Many Catalan and English writers of the period under review would have assented.

¹ 'El arte narrativo y la magia' (1932), in his *Discusión* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1957), pp. 81-91 (91).

Appendices

Appendix I completes Chapter 1 with a chronology of the reception of G. K. Chesterton in Catalonia (1916-36), including (i) translations and (ii) criticism. Appendix II completes Chapters 3 and 4 by providing a list of Catalan translations of English works of fiction published from 1916 to 1938 organised in alphabetical and chronological order. The main fiction series are hereafter abbreviated thus: ATV(Biblioteca A Tot Vent), BDC (Biblioteca de la Dona Catalana), BL (Biblioteca Literària), BU (Biblioteca Univers), and QL (Quaderns Literaris). This list does not attempt to be exhaustive and includes only works of fiction; American writers are excluded. Place of publication is Barcelona unless otherwise stated.

Appendix I

The Reception of G. K. Chesterton in Catalonia (1916-36)

Translations

- 1916 'L'irreligió del militarisme germànic', trans. J[osep] F[arran i Mayoral], *LR*, 2, 3-5.
Sobre el concepte de barbarie, trans. Héctor Oriol with a preface by Miguel de Unamuno (Oliva de Vilanova).
Ortodoxia, trans. Alfonso Reyes (Madrid: Calleja).
- 1918 'Contes de fades', trans. Josep Farran i Mayoral, *LR*, 4, 69, 263-64.
- 1921 'Irlanda', trans. M[illàs] R[aurell], *LR*, 7, 234-38.
- 1925 'Dues veus (epíleg de *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*)', trans. C. A. Jordana, *LR*, 11, 170-72.
San Francisco de Asís, trans. M. Manent (Políglota).
- 1927 *El cinc d'espases* [from *The Man Who Knew Too Much*], trans. C. A. Jordana, *Llegiu-me*, 2, 729-40, 820-32; first published in *La Novel·la Estrangera*, n. d. [1924?].
L'home perdurable, trans. M. Manent, Biblioteca Horitzons (Llibreria Catalònia).
Review of Henri Massis's *Défense d'Occident*, *LNR*, 2, 352-54.
- 1927 'El nostre carnet' ['Our Notebook', *ILN*], *LNR*, 1927-29: 3 (1927), 230-33, 324-27; 4 (1928), 29-32, 122-25, 219-22, 319-22; 5 (1928), 47-50, 127-31; 6 (1928), 81-83, 181-84, 263-66; 7 (1929), 52-55.
- 1928 *Herètics*, trans. Pau Romeva (Edicions La Nova Revista).
- 1929 'L'escèptic com a crític', *LNR*, 7, 174-81.
'Tres assaigs' [from *Allò que no està bé*], *LNR*, 7, 398-410.
Allò que no està bé del món, trans. Pau Romeva (Edicions La Nova Revista).
'El que nosaltres pensem i perquè no discutim les equivocacions de Moises amb Mr. Miggs of Pudsey', *EM*, 29 June, p. 1.
'L'estat, infal·lible', *EM*, 18 September, p. 1.

- 1930 'Shylock i l'Internacionalisme', *EM*, 19 March, p. 9.
- 'La llibertat i les llibertats' (*ILN*, 4 January 1930), *LPC*, 11, pp. 448-50.
- 'Bestialitat de l'ateisme rus' (*ILN*, 22 February 1930), *LPC*, 11, pp. 551-54.
- 1931 *L'home que fou dijous*, trans. Pau Romeva, *RC*, 12, 131-45, 224-32, 322-36, 520-26.
- 1932 'Què és el distributisme', *EM*, 1 December, p. 9.
- 'Les altres qüestions', *EM*, 18 December, p. 11.
- 1933 'Kant i l'educació catòlica', *EM*, 4 January, p. 8.
- 'El dia del senyor', *EM*, 26 January, p. 9.
- 'Nosaltres no ens avorrim', *EM*, 16 February, p. 8.
- 'El cavall i el clos', *EM*, 18 April, p. 8.
- 'L'ideal americà', *EM*, 11 June, p. 11.
- 'El pacifista, com a prussianista', *EM*, 12 July, p. 8.
- 'El judaisme de Hitler', *EM*, 4 August, p. 8.
- 'La política irlandesa', *EM*, 22 September, p. 8.
- 'Una resposta', *EM*, 31 October, p. 10.
- 'Una mort al camí', *EM*, 11 November, p. 10.
- 'La qüestió dels paraigües', *EM*, 2 December, p. 8.
- 'El Nadal s'aguanta', *EM*, 16 December, p. 8.
- 1934 *Santo Tomás de Aquino*, trans. H. Muñoz (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe).
- 'Espanya vista des d'Anglaterra', *EM*, 5 January, p. 8.
- 'Tornem a parlar d'Espanya', *EM*, 27 January, p. 9.
- 'Parlem d'Espanya, encara', *EM*, 4 February, p. 10.
- 'Què és política', *EM*, 4 March, p. 8.

- 'El silenci dels Parlaments', *EM*, 17 March, p. 9.
- 'El retrat de Hitler', *EM*, 1 September, p. 6.
- 'El *Gangster*', *EM*, 5 September, p. 6.
- 'L'instrument', *EM*, 15 September, p. 6.
- 1935 'Un imperi expandit i una intel·ligència contreta', *EM*, 23 January, p. 6.
- 'Economia i política', *EM*, 16 February, p. 6.
- 'Primera resposta al feixisme', *EM*, 5 September, p. 6.
- 1936 '*L'home que fou dijous*, trans. Pau Romeva, *QL*, 117-18 (La Rosa dels Vents).
- 'La Blanca Fetillera', *EM*, 16 June, p. 9.

Criticism

- 1917 López-Picó, Josep M., 'G.K. Chesterton', *LR*, 3, 48-49; rep. in his *Escriptors Estrangers Contemporanis* (Minerva, 1918), pp.11-14.
- 1920 Cecchi, Emilio, 'Visita de Chesterton', trans. T[omàs] G[arcés], *LR*, 6, 243-45.
- Tonquébec, Joseph de, 'G.K. Chesterton, *La filosofia de un humorista*' [from *Études*, April 1920], *EF*, 24, 311-16, 382-86; 25, 222-25, 301-03.
- 1922 Furt, Emilio, 'Chesterton' [from *Osservatore Romano*], *EF*, 29, 393-96.
- 1924 Rovira i Virgili, Antoni, 'Uns quants pensaments de Chesterton', *RC*, 1, 322.
- Crexells, Joan, 'El medievalisme de G.K. Chesterton', *RC*, 1, 101.
- Crexells, Joan, 'Sobre contingut i forma', *LP*, 9 October, p. 1.
- 1925 Garcés, Tomàs, 'Chesterton i l'edat mitjana', *LP*, 16 January, p. 1.
- Junoy, Josep M., 'El match Chesterton-Shaw', *LVC*, 28 February, p. 5.
- Crexells, Joan, 'Chesterton i la paradoxa', *LP*, 19 March, p. 1.
- Crexells, Joan, 'Chesterton i els francesos', *LP*, 26 March, p. 1.
- 1926 Rucabado, Ramon, 'L'hoste: Gilbert-Keith Chesterton', *LVC*, 4 May, p. 7.

- ‘Chesterton a la Universitat’, *LVC*, 6 May, p. 6.
- ‘G. B. S. contra G. K. C.’ [from Hesketh Pearson, in *The Adelphi*], *LP*, 7 May, p. 1.
- ‘Chesterton a Barcelona: l’apat del PEN Club’, *LVC*, 8 May, p. 4.
- ‘Tot dinant amb Mr. Chesterton’ [advertisement of an interview by Josep M. Junoy], *LP*, 8 and 9 May.
- ‘Conferència de Mr. G. K. Chesterton’, *LP*, 11 May, p. 1.
- Sagarra, Josep M. de, ‘G. K. Chesterton’, *LP*, 11 May, p. 1.
- Ràfols, Josep F., ‘El Sant Francesc de Chesterton’, *LVC*, 12 May, p. 5.
- Ràfols, Josep F., ‘Chesterton a Sitges’, *D’Ací*, 15, 569.
- Rucabado, Ramon, ‘Chesterton i Sant Francesc’, *LVC*, 16 May, p. 7.
- ‘Les opinions de Chesterton sobre Espanya’, *LP*, 9 June, p. 1.
- Pla, Josep, ‘La tornada de Mr. Chesterton’, *LP*, 12 June, p. 1.
- López-Picó, Josep M., ‘La presència de Chesterton’, *LR*, 12, 37.
- 1927 Capdevila, Josep M., ‘*L’home perdurable*, per G. K. Chesterton’, *LPC*, 6, 358-60.
- Miquel d’Esplugues, ‘*L’home perdurable*’, *LNR*, 2, 291-97.
- ‘Una carta inèdita de G. K. Chesterton’ [a J. M. Junoy], *LNR*, 1, 84-85.
- Romeva, Pau, ‘Chesterton i la qüestió social: el distributisme’, *LNR*, 3, 197-206.
- ‘G. K. C.’, *LNR*, 5, 131.
- ‘Els amics de Chesterton’ [section], *LNR*, 4, 184, 281, 380; 5, 92-93, 185, 281-85.
- ‘Obres de G. K. Chesterton’ [section], *LNR*, 6, 87-89, 189, 285, 374.
- Pla, Josep, ‘Nota sobre Chesterton’, *RC*, 7, 121-31.
- Guansé, Domènec, ‘*L’home perdurable*, de G. K. Chesterton’, *RC*, 7, 38.
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