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**Voices from the South, Voices of the Souths : Faulkner, García
Márquez, Vargas Llosa, Borges.**

I

In a debate at the international inauguration of the Faulkner Foundation in Rennes, in October 1994, Mario Vargas Llosa said that in his opinion in Latin America no writer had been more influential than Faulkner.

It is actually well-known that several of the foremost as well as of the lesser-known South-American writers have stated how important Faulkner was to them. Authors are so often asked the annoying question of what earlier writers might have influenced them that they tend to lie, contributing interesting fiction about the subject. Gabriel García Márquez is obviously a case in point¹: "Indeed I had already published my first novel, *La Hojarasca*, when I happened to read Faulkner for the first time. I simply felt like knowing about the influences that my critics were talking about."² Actually García Márquez *was* just reading Faulkner while writing *La Hojarasca*, and the influence is inescapable. In another interview, the same García Márquez said: "when I read Faulkner I thought: I must become a writer."³

¹The example of García Márquez is obviously not fortuitous, as he tends to be universally seen as the Latin American Faulkner. If statistics mean anything, consider that a search for "Faulkner AND García Márquez" on the MLA database of articles and dissertations (1981-May 1995) provides 22 entries, whereas "Faulkner and Borges" turns out six, "Faulkner and Vargas Llosa" finds one, no entry connects Faulkner and Juan Carlos Onetti or Juan Jose Saer.

²Interview with Armando Durán, *Revista Nacional de Cultura* [Caracas] 185 (July-August-September 1968): 23-34. Quoted in Mario Vargas Llosa, *García Márquez: Historia de un deicidio*, 142.

³"*Cuando leí a Faulkner pensé : tengo que ser escritor*" García Márquez to Luis Harss, *Los Nuestros* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1966, 396; my translation)

Rather than actual influence, I am more interested here in how much several Latin American writers have consciously claimed their affiliation to Faulkner. What they have said about the nature of this influence is worth our attention, even though, just as we cannot be content with a writer's statement about his/her work, we must question the nature of this bond or attraction.

Spanish American writers not only read the authors they admire: they study them, they teach them, they write criticism, they translate them. Cuban writer Lino Novás Calvo is a forerunner, although not really on the Latin-American literary scene, since his work is first published in Spain: he publishes the first article on Faulkner in Spanish in early 1933 ("El demonio de Faulkner") and his own translation of *Sanctuary* in Spain in 1934.⁴ Borges's translation of *The Wild Palms* comes out in 1940, one year after the American edition. They are not just serious readers, but very serious critics. And as they write about Faulkner as well as about each other, they are forming the agenda for the literary community of Latin-American writers.

In a 1969 essay on Faulkner, Carlos Fuentes noted: "To a certain extent, the history of the South gives us the key to the literature of the United States. . . . William Faulkner is the first North American author for whom the sense of tragedy — i.e. the sense of separation — is made obvious from within North American society. The history and the social complexity which bring it about are a key feature of the South."⁵

⁴Born in Spain, Lino Novás Calvo migrated to Cuba as a child and always regarded himself as a Cuban. As a young man, he travelled to New York to find a living, before he was sent to Madrid as a correspondent for a Cuban newspaper. When the newspaper disappeared, he had to earn a living by writing for various newspapers and journals and translating from English and French. He remained in Spain during the Civil War, and barely escaped to Cuba through France in 1939. On Novás Calvo and Faulkner, see Irby, 45-73 and Chapman, 127-132.

⁵"*La historia del Sur nos da, en cierto sentido, la clave de la literatura norteamericana. . . . William Faulkner es el primer escritor norteamericano para quien el elemento trágico — la conciencia de la separación — se impone desde dentro de la sociedad norteamericana. La historia y la complejidad social que lo provocan son las del Sur.*" Carlos Fuentes, "La novela como tragedia: William Faulkner", 64-5 (my translation). The same idea was expressed in an interview with Horacio Vásquez Rial, brought to my attention by Professor Beatriz Vegh, of the University of Montevideo: "*la conexión con Faulkner es muy importante, porque*

When Fuentes emphasizes Faulkner's sense of tragedy, he seems sensitive to the original response to Faulkner in France — an interpretation propounded by Malraux or Maurice-Edgar Coindreau, Faulkner's foremost French translator. Before him Novás Calvo, although he probably discovered Faulkner on his own, through his admiration for Sherwood Anderson, also showed the influence of Coindreau in his ground-breaking essay "El Demonio de Faulkner."⁶

Indeed it is largely through French critics and translators that Latin-American writers have discovered Faulkner in the 1930s and early 1940s, when Faulkner was not even very popular in his own country.⁷ As Mary E. Davis has noted,

Latin Americans have looked to France for guidance in literary affairs since the eighteenth century, and just as Baudelaire introduced Edgar Allan Poe to the French (and to Latin Americans), the French reception of Faulkner heightened the interest of Latin American readers in his work. . . . Spanish Americans first read Faulkner in French — by 1940, *As I Lay Dying*, *Light in August*, *Sartoris*, *The Sound and the Fury* and the short story collection *These Thirteen* had a strong circulation, particularly in Buenos Aires." (Davis, 131)

Coindreau, Faulkner's first translator, had been trained as a Spanish teacher. While translating Faulkner into French, he sent many reviews to the

great Argentinian daily *La Nación*, and a few articles to the literary journal *Sur*.⁸ Another *Sur* author, Borges, translated *The Wild Palms*.

Sur was a prestigious literary journal, with ample references to the French symbolist poets or to Baudelaire, who had also been important for Faulkner. Faulkner's early interest for poetry increases the parallelism between him and the great Latin American epic poets — Pablo Neruda, Miguel-Angel Asturias, or Octavio Paz. As Walt Whitman had put it before in his "Democratic Vistas" (1871), "[v]iewed today, from a point of view sufficiently overarching, the problem of humanity all over the civilized world is social and religious, and is to be finally met and treated by literature." Like Whitman, these poets were trying to recreate a historical and mythical account of their nations. To them, Faulkner was, like Whitman, uniquely *americano*.⁹ "His violent and overpowering lyricism owe nothing to Europe; they seem to spring from the very newness and vastness of the American continent," Irby notes.¹⁰ On the other hand, Faulkner was a reader of Cervantes and Allen Tate called him "a Dixie Gongorist." So although his novelistic design was basically in line with the European realist agenda of Walter Scott, Balzac, Flaubert or Dickens, Faulkner's literary approach was probably as much acquainted with the Spanish and Spanish-American view of fiction.

II

Now let us try to look a little more closely into the modalities of the Latin American encounter with Faulkner.

Faulkner aporta un sentido trágico a la literatura moderna de los Estados Unidos. No es que no lo hayan tenido antes . . . Pero Faulkner es importante porque no sólo se refiere a los demonios internos, los demonios nocturnos, como un Henry James o un Poe: se refiere al fracaso, a la derrota, de la nación, de la civilización norteamericana, derrotada por sí misma, por el demonio del racismo." (35)

⁶Novás Calvo's essay insists on Anderson's support for Faulkner, but also refers to Faulkner's Puritan legacy, a point that Coindreau had emphasized (Chapman, 128).

⁷As it is well-known, in 1945, when Cowley wrote to Faulkner about the project of a *Portable Faulkner*, he noted that every one of Faulkner's novels except *Sanctuary* was out of print. He claimed that New York Public Library listed only a book of verse and *The Hamlet* in its catalogue (Cowley, 22).

⁸The bibliography in the collection of Coindreau essays assembled by George McMillan Reeves lists 27 pieces by Coindreau in Spanish in *La Nación* and *Sur*, between January 1934 and January 1945, most of which are about writers of the United States.

⁹*Americano*, not *estadounidense*, i.e. continentally American, not belonging to the USA.

¹⁰"*Su genio y lirismo violentos y desbordados deben poco o nada a Europa; parecen surgir de la misma reciedumbre y amplitud del continente americano.*" (Irby, 43; my translation).

In his perceptive critical study of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Mario Vargas Llosa showed how García Márquez's encounter with Faulkner triggered his literary career and caused him to invent Macondo:

García Márquez's admiration was an acknowledgment: in the history of Yoknapatawpha he did not see Macondo but Aracataca. In Faulkner's fictions he could see an anachronistic and secluded world, like the world of his own country on which the exploits and devastation of a civil war weigh obsessively, inhabited by the vanquished, crumbling and dying, its memory frozen on the glory of already extinct opulence; he could see a world undermined by religious bigotry, physical violence and moral, social and political corruption — a rural and provincial world of decrepit little communities separated from each other by vast plantations which used to be the symbol of its prosperity and are now the symbol of its backwardness, and so — one can imagine with how much perplexity and excitement — he « saw » the demons of his childhood incarnate in words, he saw the myths, the ghosts and the history of Aracataca translated into fictions.¹¹

García Márquez's invention of the diegetic world of Macondo parallels another encounter Faulkner had described as decisive: Sherwood Anderson's advice that he should value the material he had in what he would later refer to as his "little postage stamp of native land":

"You have to have somewhere to start from: then you begin to learn," [Anderson] told me. "It doesn't matter where it was, just so you remember it and aren't ashamed of it. Because one place to start from is just as important as any

¹¹"La admiración de [García Márquez] fue un reconocimiento: en la historia de Yoknapatawpha no identificó Macondo sino Aracataca. En las ficciones de Faulkner vio aparecer un mundo anacrónico y claustral, como el de su propia región, sobre el que gravitan obsesivamente las proezas y los estragos de una guerra civil, habitado por los derrotados, y que se desmorona y agoniza con la memoria fija en los esplendores de una opulencia ya extinta; vio aparecer un mundo dominado por el fanatismo religioso, por la violencia física y por la corrupción moral, social y política, un mundo rural y provinciano, de pequeñas localidades ruinosas, separadas por vastas plantaciones que antes fueron el símbolo de su bonanza y ahora lo son de su atraso y — no es difícil imaginar con qué perplejidad, con qué alegría — 'vio' encarnados en palabras sus demonios de infancia, 'vio' transpuestos en ficciones los mitos, los fantasmas y la historia de Aracataca. (Mario Vargas Llosa, *García Márquez*, 141; my translation).

other. You're a country boy; all you know is that little patch up there in Mississippi where you started from. But that's all right too. It's America too; pull it out, as little and unknown as it is, and the whole thing will collapse, like when you prize a brick out of a wall."¹²

In 1968, in an interview with Vargas Llosa, García Márquez argued that in Faulkner Latin-American writers found what neither the European novel nor the Spanish tradition gave them: a narrative method suited to their reality. "This is not strange," he added whimsically, "Yoknapatawpha County borders the Caribbean, so that in a manner of speaking, Faulkner is a Caribbean author, in a sense, he is a Latin-American writer."¹³

Twenty five years later, Fuentes interestingly echoed this idea: "I think there is a *Mare Nostrum* of the New World, which is the Caribbean, where all the literary traditions, all the languages meet, and that there is a current of mutual acknowledgment from the Mississippi to the Orinoco, which includes Faulkner and García Márquez, Carpentier and Jean Rhys and Derek Walcott, Luis Rafael Sánchez and the French, such as Aimé Césaire — they really subsume the idea of the American Continent."¹⁴

Faulkner's most "Latin American" novel may be *The Hamlet*: in this novel, as in García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, genres and tones are mingled, and so are the social groups, the founders and the usurpers, the

¹²Faulkner, "A Note on Sherwood Anderson." (1953, *Essays, Speeches and Public Letters* 3-10). The metaphor of the postage stamp occurs in Faulkner's most noteworthy interview with Jean Stein in 1956 (reprinted in *Lion in the Garden*, 237-256): "Beginning with *Sartoris* I discovered that my own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about and that I would never live long enough to exhaust it. . ."

¹³Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, *La novela en América Latina: Diálogo* (Lima: Milla Batres, 1968), 52-3; quoted and translated by Davis, 533.

¹⁴*Yo creo que hay un Mare Nostrum del Nuevo Mundo, que es el Caribe, donde se dan cita todas las literaturas, todas las lenguas, y que hay una corriente de reconocimiento mutuo desde el Mississippi al Orinoco, que incluye a Faulkner, y a García Márquez, a Carpentier y a Jean Rhys y a Derek Walcott, a Naipaul y a los portorriqueños, a Luis Rafael Sánchez y a los franceses, como Aimé Césaire, que realmente subsumen la idea del continente americano.* (Carlos Fuentes to Horacio Vásquez Rial).

Sartorises and the Snopeses.¹⁵ In Vargas Llosa's novels, as in *The Wild Palms* or *The Hamlet*, narrators alternate at telling stories which belong to widely different genres: comic and tragic, mythic or political. In *La Ciudad y los perros* (*The Time of the Hero*), Vargas Llosa has part of the story told by an idiot who is made to record what he sees without understanding it, like Benjy in Faulkner's *Sound and the Fury*. Like Ike Snopes, the idiot in Faulkner's *The Hamlet*, he indulges in bestiality with his bitch Skimpy.

Each Latin American writer seems to tend to write his *As I Lay Dying*, be it *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* by Fuentes or *La hojarasca* by García Márquez. The death of a character allows his relatives and friends to look back on a whole collective past and to work through its mythic and epic dimension. It is a common subject, and they deal with it with the common technique of juxtaposed viewpoints.

In the best families, inheritors will argue over the spoils of a wealthy ancestor. As we have seen, Vargas Llosa argues that it is not Faulkner's flexible style, but the idea of the microcosmic country which was García Márquez's decisive borrowing from Faulkner. He himself underlined how much he was indebted to Faulkner for making him discover the formal potentialities of the novel. It is hardly surprising that Vargas Llosa should have claimed the formal treatment of temporality as Faulkner's most essential contribution to the art of the novel. It is the aspect of Faulkner's legacy that I should especially like to illustrate here.

III

At the beginning of the novel *Intruder in the Dust*, Chick Mallison; a young white boy, falls into a frozen river. He is fished out by Lucas Beauchamp, a mysterious black man who takes him to his home to get himself warm. The little white boy enters the black man's cabin:

So he didn't even check when they passed the gate, he didn't even look at it and now they were in no well-used tended lane leading to tenant or servant quarters and marked by walking feet but a savage gash half gully and half road mounting a hill with an air solitary independent and intractable too and then he saw the house, the cabin and remembered the rest of the story, the legend: how

¹⁵As Carlos Fuentes noted: see *La nueva novela hispanoamericana*, 59-60.

Edmonds' father had deeded to his Negro first cousin and his heirs in perpetuity the house and the ten acres of land it sat in — an oblong of earth set forever in the middle of the two-thousand-acre plantation like a postage stamp in the center of an envelope — the paintless wooden house, the paintless picket fence whose paintless latchless gate the man kneed open still without stopping or once looking back and, he following and Aleck Sander and Edmonds' boy following him, strode on into the yard. It would have been grassless even in summer; he could imagine it, completely bare, no weed no sprig of anything, the dust each morning swept by some of Lucas' womenfolks with a broom made of willow switches bound together, into an intricate series of whorls and overlapping loops which as the day advanced would be gradually and slowly defaced by the droppings and the cryptic three-toed prints of chicken like (remembering it now at sixteen) a terrain in miniature out of the age of the great lizards, the four of them walking in what was less than walk because its surface was dirt too yet more than path, the footpacked strip running plumbline straight between two borders of tin cans and empty bottles and shards of china and earthenware set into the ground, up to the paintless steps and the paintless gallery along whose edge sat more cans but larger — empty gallon buckets which had once contained molasses or perhaps paint and wornout water or milk pails and one five-gallon can for kerosene with its top cut off and half of what had once been somebody's (Edmonds' without doubt) kitchen hot water tank sliced longways like a banana — out of which flowers had grown last summer and from which the dead stalks and the dried and brittle tendrils still leaned and drooped, and beyond this the house itself, gray and weathered and not so much paintless as independent of and intractable to paint so that the house was not only the one possible continuation of the stern untended road but was its crown too as the carven ailanthus leaves are the Greek column's capital.¹⁶

A "social" novelist would have used the scene to expose the exploitation of the other half. But this paradigm corresponds to what the text calls "the story, the legend" — a reading of history which is also western. According to

¹⁶*Intruder in the Dust*, 5-7. This scene is a variation on the pattern of a recurrent scene in Faulkner, in which a little boy (generally poor white) approaches the door of a big unknown house, in general the house of a rich white man. Most of the time, the little boy is barred from entering through the front door: see *Absalom, Absalom!* or "Barn Burning" for the most obvious examples, and my forthcoming article "Black Laughter: Poor White Short Stories Behind *Absalom, Absalom!* and *The Hamlet* " in the collection of papers from the international Faulkner Seminar on the Short Story, Oslo, May-June 1995.

this interpretation the white landowner deeds to his black cousin — the child born of one of the clandestine love affairs which are part of the hidden history of plantations — a patch of land, such as the great white chief had bestowed on the Indian tribes to make up for the lands on which they roamed free. But as he sees the spot, "they were in no well-used tended lane leading to tenant or servant quarters," i.e. the sort of setting you read about only in well-meaning western stories.

This enclosure is "an oblong of earth set forever in the middle of the two-thousand-acre plantation like a postage stamp in the center of an envelope." The postage stamp is, as noted above, one of Faulkner's own phrases to refer to his imaginary county. The black man's patch is littered with refuse and marks of degradation. Every trace of vegetation seems to have disappeared: "It would have been grassless even in summer; he could imagine it, completely bare, no weed no sprig of anything." Seen from this Southern viewpoint, if we accept to take it as typical, the down-trodden are not noble savages belonging to the prehistory of civilization, but abandoned people left behind by the rush of progress.

The enclosed patch is described essentially in privative terms: the "paintless wooden house, the paintless picket fence" with its "paintless latchless gate." But this pervasive negativity takes an unexpected meaning, which can be seen gradually developing as one tracks the word "paintless." The spontaneous implication of the word is eventually denied: the word recurs five times, as if the lack insisted on asserting itself, pressing for recognition, pressing for meaning. Finally the obvious meaning is overridden: the house is said to be "not so much paintless as independent of and intractable to paint." This passage expresses the new meaning that barrenness will have for the boy, as signifier for challenge and pride. The shift in meaning is introduced through the use of a stylistic turn which is a mark of Faulkner's writing: the use of the swaying *not so . . . as* or *not only . . . but* — an example of this latter stylistic device is to be found further along the same sentence: "so that the house was *not only* the one possible continuation of the stern untended road *but* was its crown too as the carven ailanthus leaves are the Greek column's capital." This sentence structure can be regarded as a stylistic mark of Southern literatures. The device juxtaposes several outlooks on reality among which the author refuses to establish hierarchy or causality. It is characteristic of García Márquez's style as well, and this suggests that studying the literatures of the

South involves studying common features and variations of style as well as visions of social relations and history.

In this enclosure, the boy discovers something else: on this waste land, made barren by the historic process of usurpation by the planters, then by the return of the patch of land to the cousin / former slave, Lucas's women print some signs, "an intricate series of whorls and overlapping loops."¹⁷ As the day advances, these mysterious hieroglyphs, the signature of the lower classes, are in their turn covered by more intricate signs: the "cryptic prints" of chicken legs (*cryptic* warns the reader about the double meaning of these prints: not only footprints, but letter-prints). Faulkner compares these prints with those of dinosaurs: "a terrain in miniature out of the age of the great lizards."¹⁸

¹⁷This scene can be compared with a very similar one, also in chapter one but of another novel, *The Hamlet*: in it, Jody Varner carefully approaches the house of his new tenant Ab Snopes, also following an undefinable path, "neither road nor lane", to reach a "barren yard littered with . . . rubbish." The choice of words also suggests that the poor whites' enclosure is also a cryptic text, which at first sight Jody finds meaningless: "the perfectly blank house" by which he hears "two flat meaningless loud female voices." (21) But these two women turn out to be symbolic, in their own unexpected way: one of the women's body is "like a figure in a charade, a carved piece symbolising some terrific physical effort" (22) In "Barn Burning," the discarded first chapter of *The Hamlet*, Abner Snopes had deliberately walked into a heap of horse manure to leave the *print* of his foot on his landlord's rug. In that story, Abner Snopes, often described as a "black shape," was implicitly equated to a black man.

¹⁸The paleontological reference can be traced to Faulkner's early interest for Balzac's method. Balzac's admiration for Cuvier's analogical method, which allowed him to reconstruct the skeleton of extinct species out of partial evidence, by comparing the fossils to those of contemporary animals, is represented with a parodic twist in idealist Horace Benbow's reaction to seeing Goodwin's hands clinging at the bars of the jail-windows as he passes it: "it was as though from that tiny clot of knuckles he was about to reconstruct an edifice upon which he would not dare to look, like an archaeologist who, from the meagre sifting of vertebrae, reconstructs a shape out of the nightmares of his own childhood" (*Sanctuary: The Original Text*, 142).

The paleontological reference is also to be found in *Requiem for a Nun*, in the portrait of Thomas Jefferson Pettigrew, the mail rider after whom the early settlement of Jefferson is named: "like a weightless dessicated or fossil bird, not a vulture of course nor even quite a hawk, but say a pterodactyl chick arrested just out

Regardless of western chronology, the paleontological past is thus superimposed every day, in a daily cycle, on the slate of the people subdued by the whites. Thus an earlier, more primitive and elemental, cyclical time pattern is shown to overcome the linear time of white history.

The issue of a prehistoric palimpsest to be recovered under the desecration of Caucasian civilization is a major theme of contemporary Latin-American literature, with one slight variation: the pre-history to recover is generally identified as the pre-colonial past.¹⁹ But if we are to believe Fuentes, there is no great distance either between the timeless natural environment of Southern America and its past, as nature is an actor in the Spanish American novel²⁰

To wind up his long paragraph, Faulkner underlines the dignity and the unity of this vision by referring to a classical figure of harmony in the work of art as it is conceived in the Western tradition, culminating in the architectural ideals of his own North American South: the motif of the Greek column crowned by a Corinthian capital. This procedure can be compared with James Joyce's method in *Ulysses*, in which the author establishes a parallel between the Irish context of Ireland fighting for its independence and the Homeric epic, thus endowing the wanderings of an Irish Jew in Dublin with universal symbolism and dimension.

What has dawned on the young white boy is that the language of the oppressed joins an attitude of endurance, pride and moral freedom, and a link with the past of the community which goes back beyond the history of mankind as it may be reconstructed. This language articulates a discourse which connects the most organic forms of life with the highest stylisation. In the novel, this initial experience is given the weight of an essential stage in the education of Chick Mallison: this episode is told in the narrative frame of the young man's memories at sixteen, the age when he finds it his duty to stand up

of the egg ten glaciers ago . . ." (*Requiem for a Nun*, 17-18). In this case too, the fossil is a hieroglyph: in his article on "Some Yoknapatawpha Names," James Hinkle noted that *Pettigrew* is derived from the French term *ped-de-grue*, the symbol for filiation in genealogical studies.

¹⁹See Monika Kaup, "Reterritorializing the Border in Chicano/a Fiction."

²⁰Fuentes, *La nueva novela*. . . , 11.

for the black man who had helped him out of the river that day, and who is now charged with killing a white man.

Summing up, this passage can be considered emblematic because it introduces the double spatialization and temporality of the Southern experience: the *space* of the South is organised by territorial boundaries or borders, and by superposition on the same ground; its *time* is at once the time of history — the time of conquests, border disputes, spoliations and takeovers, and the recurring time of vital and mythical cycles. This relation to time frames the peculiar brand of Southern tragedy.

IV

Faulkner's novels, and the novels of the South evince an acute sense of tragedy. Malraux, Fuentes or Vargas Llosa saw it. But this tragedy is not theological, it is not inscribed in a sense of destiny: it is present because of the compulsion of repetition, and this relates it to comedy.

In Faulkner, as in García Márquez, each person is required to play a part in a community that watches him, but does not understand him. Joe Christmas in *Light in August*, Santiago Nasar in *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*. The paradigm of this social alienation may well be Faulkner's short story "A Rose for Emily." Widely anthologized in the USA, the novel was also extremely influential among Latin American writers.²¹ This story of an old maid her community saw as a symbol of the good old days, and whose death reveals

²¹In his early article on "Faulkner's demon," Lino Novás Calvo already praised *Sanctuary* and *These Thirteen* as Faulkner's greatest achievements (Novás Calvo, 102). His short story collected under the title *La luna nona* show the stylistic influence of *Sanctuary* and "A Rose for Emily," especially in the narrative technique. According to the bibliography of James East Irby's dissertation (iii), "Una Rosa para Emilia," translated by Ricardo A. Latchman, was published in *Antología de escritores contemporáneo de los Estados Unidos* (ed. John Peale Bishop and Allen Tate, Santiago de Chile: Nascimento, 1944, 2:50-61). On "A Rose for Emily" and the Cartagena group, see Oberhelman. Details doubtlessly borrowed from "A Rose for Emily" recur in García Márquez's work, for instance in the relationship between "Montiel's Widow" (1962, in *Big Mama's Funeral*) and her black servant Carmichael, or in the awed reluctance with which the local people consider entering the big house of the dead general in *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (see further down).

that she had tried, but failed to come to terms with the times, crushed by the community's constant and over-protective watch, is also the story of García Márquez's *Leafstorm* (*La hojarasca*).

It may not be surprising that "A Rose for Emily" should have impressed Latin American writers so strongly: Miss Emily's predicament may be a metaphor for the dilemma of the Southern writer, who must assert his Southern difference against the North, but also feel free to adopt what the North, as the cultural hub of the world, represents, if only as the undisputable stepping stone toward global audience.

One of the first fragments of Faulkner's fiction, a short vignette entitled "Wealthy Jew" published in New Orleans, is a kind of portrait of the artist as a Jew who boasts of possessing the riches of the universal radiance of the Holy Land. The radiance of the Good Book makes the whole world his fatherland. His detachment from any territorial bond allows him not to suffer nostalgia for his homeland.

Through Faulkner or with him, the Latin Americans inherited the Joycean revolution (what T.S. Eliot called "the mythical method"). In the twentieth century, after the massacres of the two World Wars and the genocides, the order of western values crumbles: it is difficult to look for meaning in a transcendence; as the centre does not hold, the peripheries can raise their heads. The drift of the Jew Leopold Bloom in the Dublin of the beginning of this century is equated with the journey of Ulysses, just as the crumbling shack of Lucas Beauchamp will conjure up memories of corinthian columns. In his essay "El escritor argentino y la tradición" (1932), Borges questioned the view that gauchesque poetry was more authentically Argentine because it was thought to derive from the spontaneous creations of the gauchos: in fact, in spite of its deliberate search for local color, gauchesque poetry was, he claimed, as artificial as any other. Actually, he noted "[t]he Argentine cult of local color is a recent European cult which the nationalists ought to reject as foreign." Emphasis on local color — in Faulkner's case, the black peasant's unpainted cabin — is alienation to the dominant culture's motifs. Borges reacted to a 1919 essay entitled "The Intellectual Preeminence of Jews in Modern Europe," by Thorstein Veblen. As Veblen did for the Jews, Borges claims greater freedom for the Argentines (as well as for the Irish in the English language tradition) to appropriate themselves of the western literary tradition.

Gloss on the canon, parody and intertextual references are forms of this libertarian appropriation which affect all the modern novel, but they are particularly well adapted to the development of new literatures out of this Southern experience. The re-reading of the Homeric myth is also the subject of an adaptation by Nobel-Prize laureate Derek Walcott, a Caribbean writer who also wrote his own version of *The Odyssey*. The point is to subvert a history that has been suffered without rejecting it, by means of a dynamic return to the force of the myths of the subjected people.

García Márquez and later Vargas Llosa were to renew the figure of the author as wandering Jew, that Joyce had already revived. The gipsy Melquíades in *Cien años de Soledad* is at the same time Tiresias and the wandering Jew; but Saúl Zuratas in *El hablador* by Vargas Llosa is especially interesting. This Jewish friend of the narrator gives up the religion of the Book in order to take the role of *speaker*, becoming the sorcerer-narrator of an Indian tribe in the virgin forest.

In *El hablador*, Saúl Zuratas is peripheral to the dominant culture, be it western in a general way or Peruvian, like the Machiguengas, the lost Indian tribe Vargas Llosa has him rediscover in the forest, whose foundational myths he appropriates for himself. Turning to myth passes by an enrichment through the multiplicity of voices, of discourse (no type of novel better exemplifies the Bakhtinian theory of the dialogic novel than the Southern variety). In parallel sections reminiscent of Faulkner's *Wild Palms*, Vargas Llosa's novel represents the discourses of Saúl Zuratas and the narrator, who supports a revolutionary solution to the Machiguengas' problems which is nevertheless a western solution: he uses the Marxist discourse of his generation of intellectuals. Which emphasizes the difference between commitment as it is generally seen in the west and the Southern way of commitment. Far from simply overturning the bourgeois values, the writer of the South reaches back to the foundational and initiatory experience of hybridation, of creolization, of other people's cultures.

Toward the end of his career, Faulkner was to distance himself from the idea that he was creating a mythical county which could be used as a rear mirror reflecting what the American community was, and insisted on the "apocryphal" nature of his imaginary world, thus choosing to emphasize that it was misleading to describe his Yoknapatawpha as a rendering of a mainstream American sense of community.

In the page from *Intruder*, we could see the complexity of this treatment of the past: not only did it recognize the pre-history of the South, but it acknowledged it as waste land *and* prehistory, post-colonial *and* native. This is a distinction which is not always made in contemporary discussions of what is commonly referred to as post-colonial literatures, especially when they are loosely referred to as "Third World literatures."²²

Faulkner had always been keenly aware of the problematic political value of art in the South. In the projected "Introduction to *The Sound and the Fury*," he even contended that art had no place in the South, unlike in the North. To a large extent, he was expressing the same concerns as Borges in his slightly earlier essay: the dilemma of digesting mainstream influences, coming to terms with a regional legacy of negative rejection of central influences, defining a new literary identity and finding one's own voice. Against a North that would be the natural home of serious literature and a popular literature devoted to glorifying the legendary South, the serious Southern literature would have to be invented.

Fuentes defined a similar dilemma: in his view, the Latin American artist aspires to universality, which demands the centrality of European culture, but he must pay a debt to the oppressed country and people from which he derives his identity and legitimacy. Like other post-colonial writers, Faulkner defines the literature of his country by a disruption, and this break from the imaginary of the colonial power raises the issue of identification with popular native cultures.

In South America, as in Faulkner, writing would seem to be the medium of the imperial power. In Faulkner, as in his followers of the other American *Souths*, *orality* stands for an alternative to writing, as a more authentic way toward truth than the lie that fiction tends to be.²³ Orality gives access to an ordered, cyclic, paradigmatic world, whereas writing is syntagmatic, logic and therefore foreseeable. I would suggest that this choice is related to the special American reality in which Southern writers have to build a national literature

²²Conversely, Linda Hutcheon makes it a point of making the distinction about Canada in her "Circling the Downspout of Empire," 156.

²³Also consider Mario Vargas Llosa's chosen title for his volume of essays on literature, *La verdad de las mentiras* (*The Truth of Lies*).

using the language which was introduced by the colonist: this situation makes the search for an original mode more challenging, and possibly more necessary. Edgar Allan Poe 's short story about a "Purloined Letter" that one could not see although it was only too conspicuous may be emblematic: on that letter, Faulkner, or the Southerner, displays the postage stamp: the least personal, the most venal of the elements on the front of a letter, but not the least ornate, and bearing the brazen assertion of the country.

Faulkner really spoke of the paradox it could be for a man of the former Confederate South to build a literary work using the language of those who had oppressed his country. But eventually, he commented, writing would become a natural reaction for the man of the South: having been vanquished, he did not have any economic responsibility and could thus devote himself to works of imagination.

He illustrated the dilemma in one of his most outstanding short stories, "Mountain Victory." The short story is about a former Confederate officer on his way back home after the defeat. Desperate, the young officer is aware of the weighty task of giving new meaning to the words that express his native country; he decides to seek his death in an ambush rather than to rise up to the challenge. What writing could be invented for the South? Fuentes answered in his manifesto for a Latin American literature: "Our works have to be works of disorder, that is, works related to a possible order in opposition to the current one..."²⁴

V

Talking about *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner explained that all the novel had developed out of the image of the little girl who was the only one who was brave enough to climb into the tree to watch into the window of the house the children were forbidden to enter.²⁵ Likewise, telling about the genesis of what he thought of as his best short story, García Márquez explained that "la siesta del martes" ("Tuesday Siesta") was born from the

²⁴"Nuestras obras deben ser de desorden: es decir, de un orden posible, contrario al actual. . . ." Fuentes, *La nueva novela*. . . , 32.

²⁵*Faulkner in the University*, 31.

image of a woman and a little girl dressed in black, walking under the blazing sun in a deserted village protected by a black parasol²⁶.

The seminal moment is also to be found in the initial image of *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (*El otoño del Patriarca*). Oberhelman reports that "In 1968 when he began to write this majestic novel, Gabriel García Márquez told an interviewer that the only image he had of it for years was that of an incredibly old man walking through the huge, abandoned rooms of a palace full of animals." (in Bloom, 76) Actually, as Katalin Kulin has argued, all García Márquez's work springs from images.²⁷ The whole novel could be considered an obstinate search for the meaning of the figure of the decrepit patriarch, sitting in his palace invaded by cows — a palace in which he had once managed to resist the cannonade of a North American expeditionary forces. The frozen moment becomes eternal:

Over the weekend the vultures got into the presidential palace, they pecked through the screens on the balcony windows and the flapping of their wings stirred up the stagnant time inside, and at dawn on Monday the city awoke out of its lethargy of centuries with the warm, soft breeze of a great man dead and rotting grandeur. Only then did we dare go in without attacking the crumbling walls of reinforced stone, as the more resolute had wished, and without using oxbows to knock the main door off its hinges, as others had proposed, because all that was needed was for someone to give a push and the great armored doors that had resisted the bombardments of William Dampier during the building's heroic days gave way. It was like entering the atmosphere of another age, because the air was thinner in the rubble pits of the vast lair of power, and the silence was more ancient, and things were hard to see in the decrepit light..²⁸

²⁶ "Todo el argumento de 'La siesta des martes', que considero mi mejor cuento, surgió de la visión de una mujer y una niña vestidas de negro, con un paraguas negro, caminando bajo el sol abrasante de un pueblo desierto." (in Armando Durán, "Conversaciones con García Márquez," *Revista nacional de Cultura*, Caracas 29.7 (agosto-setiembre 1968), 32, quoted by Escobar, 302).

²⁷ Katalin Kulin, "García Márquez: The Fall of the Patriarch," *Neohelicon* 4.1-2 (1967): 147, quoted by Escobar, 302.

²⁸ *Durante el fin de semana los gallinazos se metieron por los balcones de la casa presidencial, destrozaron a picotazos las mallas de alambre de las ventanas y removieron con sus alas el tiempo estancado en el interior, y en la madrugada del*

Unlike the novel of the North, the novel of the South could be defined as exposing a double temporality: communitary duration versus social history. From these two dimensions of time the novel as suspended instant is born: the frozen fall of the patriarch. The matter of the South is not a special interest for the downtrodden, but the critical moment of the fall, the critical place which is the border-line. But then the novelistic work itself becomes metafictional, as the arrested moment of the written sentence, integrally co-present with itself on the paper, unfolds its meaning through the fulfilment of the process of reading, which is necessarily inscribed within a temporal dimension. Thus the meaning is not born from succession as causality, but from the telescoping of events in the hybridization of plural scales of duration. The death of Santiago Nasar is announced long before it really happens, it is juxtaposed to its expectation, and the novel consists in invalidating all the causal chains that should have prevented its happening. The long sentences with their multi-coordinated or juxtaposed clauses agree with this non-causal logic, since meaning is more cumulative than logic. "Our literature," Fuentes wrote in a 1969 essay, "is actually revolutionary in the sense that it denies to the established order the wording this order is looking for and substitutes for it a language of urgency, renovation, disorder and humor. That is, the language of ambiguity, of multiplicity of meanings, of constellation of allusions: the language of openness."²⁹

lunes la ciudad se despertó de su letargo de siglos con una tibia y tierna brisa de muerto grande y de podrida grandeza. Sólo entonces nos atrevimos a entrar sin embestir los carcomidos muros de piedra fortificada, como querían los más resueltos, ni desquiciar con yuntas de bueyes la entrada principal, como otros proponían, pues bastó con que alguien los empujara para que cedieran en sus goznes los portones blindados que en los tiempos heroicos de la casa habían resistido a las bombardas de William Dampier. Fue como penetrar en el ámbito de otra época, porque el aire era más tenue en los pozos de escombros de la vasta guarida del poder, y el silencio era más antiguo, y las cosas eran arduamente visibles en la luz decrepita (*El otoño del patriarca*, 7).

²⁹ "Nuestra literatura es verdaderamente revolucionaria en cuanto le niega al orden establecido el léxico que éste quisiera y le opone el lenguaje de la alarma, la renovación, el desorden y el humor. El lenguaje, en suma, de la ambigüedad: de la pluralidad de significados, de la constelación de alusiones: de la apertura." (Fuentes, *La nueva novela*. . . , 32).

The consequences of the reversal of causality are indeed political because our Latin American writers have recovered the old political and social agenda of the European novelists of past centuries: to say that there are no father and son relationship between events is also to say that the traditional authority of the father over the son, of the fatherland over the colony, of the canonic text in regards to its parodies is not legitimate. Historiography and the logics imposed by the centers of imperial power do not hold any more.

Chick Mallison's initiation, the irruption into Miss Emily's house or the general's presidential palace: the seminal scene in the South is a scene of irruption, but not the violent irruption of the storming of the Bastille or Boston Tea Parties of the North. The South keeps telling about this almost fatalistic trespassing of borders — to such an extent that I should like to suggest that it resides in this fatality of transgression.

I should like to finish by referring to Borges's metaphor of "The Aleph." In this philosophical tale, in which he imagines the critical point in which all the points of space could be contained — "the only place on earth where all the places are — seen from every angle, each standing clear, without any confusion or blending," I see the paradigm of the design and of the poetic object of the South.

Faulkner had introduced new dimensions to the great visionary novelists of the nineteenth century. As their countries are struggling between third world social realities and western type economies, the novelists of Latin America were ready to take on the challenging task of making sense of their changing societies. Balzac had done so in France when it was poised between a moribund Monarchy and a stalled Revolution; Faulkner was doing it for the South of the USA, still stunned by the Civil War and traumatised by Reconstruction more than half a century later. Borges was a capital factor in defining "the Latin American condition of the texts"(Aizenberg, 21). He was influential in pointing out the post-modernist relevance of the Latin American experience, as it inherited the European tradition and the post-colonial assertion. Borges brings the awareness that the Latin American tradition fully inherits the European one, its position on the border does not signify a rupture from the canon, but simply rupture from the "authority" of the "center." This undefined territory has a lot in common with the Frenchman's Bend that Faulkner was describing in the first page of *The Hamlet*, "definite yet without boundaries, straddling into two counties and owning allegiance to neither," an

area whose boundaries are still defined only in the center — "the county court house in Jefferson" (*The Hamlet*, 3). Possibly as a homage to Borges, a number of recent so called "Third World" novels, such as Rushdie's famous *Satanic Verses*, feature Argentina as part of their "geography of imagination, a territory away from the "center" that conjures up a cluster of colonial topoi: colonization, linguistic displacement, exile, cross-culturality." (Aizenberg, 24). The Latin American writer has a privileged position "within and between two worlds" — in the tragedy of change turned into multi-layered space, on the transition made border, on the border made homeland.

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