

A POETIC COMPLEMENT TO REASON: HETEROGENEITY  
AND THE OTHER IN THE WORK OF  
ANTONIO MACHADO

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## ABSTRACT

*A Poetic Complement to Reason: Heterogeneity and the Other in the work of Antonio Machado* examines some of the late work of the Spanish writer. By focusing on his apocryphal project and especially on its two major texts, *De un cancionero apócrifo* and *Juan de Mairena*, I seek to show that the author's philosophical endeavors are intrinsically related to the major trends within European thought during the tumultuous first decades of the new century. Turning to the problem of reason and the rift that separates its conceptual and non-conceptual sides, Machado advances important understandings of ontological and epistemological nature that remain understudied. The conceptions of human knowledge, life, and freedom that the author elaborates evince his desire to reevaluate the dominant idealist ones and even to part ways with this tradition. From today's viewpoint, these notions are interesting because they continue to resonate with the ones we hold today. This project, therefore, intervenes in Machado's scholarship by addressing the theoretical stance of the author and its relationship to issues like emancipation, equality, and communal life that remain pressing.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Works by Antonio Machado:

*OPP* *Obras poesía y prosa*. Edited by Aurora de Albornoz y Guillermo de Torre,  
Editorial Losada, 1964.

*NC* *Nuevas canciones*. Clásicos Castalia, 1971.

NOTE: The fragments from *Juan de Mairena* are referenced by the chapter number and the number of the fragment within it; the poems from *Soledades* and *Campos de Castilla*—by title or number.

## PREFACE

The fact that Antonio Machado's work continues to attract popular and critical attention since the publication of his early and most acclaimed collections of poetry, *Soledades. Galerías. Otros poemas* (1907) and *Campos de Castilla* (1912), is more than simply noteworthy. Less than voluminous but singular in many ways—via transgressions of genre and disciplinary norms and boundaries; the integration of seemingly incompatible viewpoints; the promotion through enactment of aesthetic and philosophic theories; and so on—Machado's production presents a unique case with the continued interest it has promoted within and beyond his native Spain. Considering the late 20<sup>th</sup> century revisionist critique of modernist thought<sup>1</sup> and the overall diminished recognition of his more or less like-minded compatriots<sup>2</sup> as well as the glaring lack of complete

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<sup>1</sup> From the 1970s on, some critics like Fredric Jameson make it one of their goals not only to prove modernist aesthetics obsolete but also to paint it in predominantly negative colors, accusing the modernist thinkers and artists of elitism, imperialist aspirations, escapism, etc. These allegations turn out to be a watershed in the critical view of Modernism, mostly held in contempt thereafter. Only recently, a revision of both modernist thought and the influential reassessment lead by Jameson and others has started to take place. At its head are philosophers like Jay Bernstein and Robert Pippin, artists like Michael Fried, and others.

<sup>2</sup> Beyond the field of Spanish literary studies, very few of the 20<sup>th</sup> century pre-Franco writers have enjoyed a sustained interest. Among them are Miguel de Unamuno, frequently present in studies and anthologies related to existentialism and the modernist novel, José Ortega y Gasset in many dedicated to 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy, and Federico Garcia Lorca in a variety of literary studies. Machado's famous verses and numerous excerpts from the apocryphal and other late texts continue to circulate in Spanish and in translation, in some cases due to their provocative nature, but more often because of their depth and perspicacity. A case in point is Richard Polt's choice of Machado's poem "Al gran cero" for his chapter in *A Companion to Heidegger's Introduction to Metaphysics*, to be referred to later.

translations of his less studied texts,<sup>3</sup> Machado's sustained presence and influence is no small feat. Nor is it, in fact, a fluke that the author's name and ideas have persevered.

To be sure, unlike other similar but more limited in their scope or focus examples, Machado's diverse body of work continues to engage with some ongoing debates in the humanities. The onset of this commitment is only facilitated by some of the dominant trends of the time, as many enduring polemics, like those related to the nature of the self and its relationship to reality and itself, the sources and the mechanisms involved in acquiring and interpreting meaning, the correlation between the individual and the collective, the particular and the universal, among others, face new challenges around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and converge in the urgency to address them. Moreover, some long-standing points of contention take different shapes under the new circumstances. An example of one such transformation—not restricted to the period but with strong ties to it and central for Machado's late thought—is brought up by Jürgen Habermas in his book with the telling title *Postmetaphysical Thinking* where he asserts that “the perspectival difference between *outside* and *inside* develops and replaces the difference between *essence* and *appearance*” (35; emphasis of the author). The broad conclusion that can be drawn is that on the cusp of a variety of important revisionist tendencies, the early-century European thought marks the start of many crucial redefinitions.

The factors behind these developments are many: the unprecedented changes in the social make-up of the urban West, brought by its accelerated growth in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the ongoing processes of secularization, industrialization,

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<sup>3</sup> The major non-poetic texts *De un cancionero apócrifo* and *Juan de Mairena* are only partially translated in major languages like German and English and in very few minor ones like Polish, Bulgarian, and Russian among others.

automatization; the culmination of national and global conflicts; and so forth. As Machado notes in “El Mañana,” “Por todas partes las cosas parecen bruscamente cambiar, como si el árbol total de la cultura se renovase por sus más ocultas raíces” (*OPP* 854). Confronting both the general situation and their particular national and individual circumstances, Machado and many other intellectuals partake in the refreshed discussions and, as determinately as the Spanish writer or less so, in the radical changes of “el árbol total de la cultura,” which for most involves the reformulation of central human questions and concerns and the redefinition of many basic notions.

Nonetheless, while the issues that receive a refreshed look during the period have enjoyed continuous if not even increased attention thereafter, like, for example, the problem of meaning and the important question about its origin or the concerns related to the subject and the concomitant issue of agency, among many others, this is not true of all the tendencies that in one way or another have set the path for the intellectual developments to follow. Certain, regrettably, unfashionable in recent time polemics seem to lag behind the current discourse by reason of the diminished respect of the viewpoints they are said to purvey. Referenced herein are the debates surrounding the “vexed question” of European Modernism, with which line of thought Antonio Machado’s ideas can be broadly associated.

Frequently awarded to metaphysics, due to its presumed “death” in modern time and the ensuing inquests and quests of knowledge and certainty, the description as ticklish and insoluble fits the dwindling discussions related to the intriguing early-20th-

century movement.<sup>4</sup> Virtually “buried” as well, under mounting negative criticism of both its ethics and aesthetics in addition to the usual historical backlash, modernist thought, in my view, relates to the oldest branch of philosophy through more than their unsettling characteristic. Above all, their joint effort to find and reinstate some of the grounding lost to the modern transformations of Western thought, ends up being the swansong of the very promise and the hope that it is out there to be found; but then again, many of the endeavors to stake out alternative solutions make their debut precisely during the decades of the new century that have embraced some sort of metaphysical thinking. What stems from the coexistence of these and other irreconcilable ontologies around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that is, from the coincidence of a past not-yet-gone and an already-here future, is, namely, what interests me in Machado’s thought, and what, I believe, nurtures much of the attention it continues to receive.

The tension produced by the encounter of radically opposed narratives traverses Machado’s mature production and foments the poetic-philosophic stances and reformative ambitions of the proverbial apocryphal protagonists Abel Martín and Juan de Mairena. It is at the center of my analysis, whose focus is on the less studied within Machado’s scholarship apocryphal texts and some other isolated pieces, like published correspondence, notes, opinions, etc., of the famous writer, mostly used for reference. The principle aim of the inquiry is to present a sense of Machado’s purposes and commitments in view of his concern with the nihilistic tendencies and the problem of

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<sup>4</sup> Although just a curious fact, the recurrent choice of the phrase “vexed question” in reference to metaphysics is telling of the current state of the debate. With slight variations, the phrase is the translator’s choice of Theodor Adorno’s *Metaphysics: Concept and Problems* and the author’s in texts by Joseph Margolis, Marian Allsopp, Damian Ilodigwe, and Walter Taylor Marvin.

alienation of the human subject at the start of the new century. By submitting thinking itself to scrutiny, I argue, Machado's texts bring to light certain problems related to reason's precarious condition after being defined and redefined by many traditions, which allows the Spanish author to advance some new understandings of human being and freedom, and, as it is done through art, of the potential of the artistic expression. The notions of heterogeneity and the other are essential to the writer's project to revamp reason by recoupling its conceptual base with its marginalized non-conceptual side in order to eventually revive the artistic tendencies, which he fears to be deteriorating. Ultimately, this study seeks to defy some of the reasons for the diminished appreciation of the author's and, by extension, of modernist thought in general.<sup>5</sup>

Duly criticized but overly vilified or cast aside as barren, exhausted, over-the-top, and others of that ilk, during the last forty years or so, literary Modernism is finally given a chance to prove that the generalizations concerning its worth are necessarily flawed by virtue of its exceptional diversity. Ironically, the issue of universality, or of the possibility of one to stand for many is a dominant problem addressed by numerous thinkers associated with modernist thought, like the Spanish writer at the center of this study. Many of his central concerns, like his inquiries into questions like human knowledge, freedom, and the possibility of a dignified human life and experience, for example, are no less insightful than those of many philosophers and theoreticians who have dealt with the same. Yet, Machado's position among the European thinkers remains to be claimed.

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<sup>5</sup> Although variegated and continuously active, the highly repetitive scholarship on Machado, in my view, has followed the general trend in recent time to disparage the early-century thinkers, rejecting their elitism, essentialism, and so on. Moreover, the high regard in which the prominent Spanish ones were held by Franco's dictatorial regime has resulted in more than disrespect of their overall accomplishments after its end.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Akin to the notion of heterogeneity that it advocates, Antonio Machado's production appeals to a broad range of issues that both converge to enter the limits of the author's inquiries and diverge due to the emphasis placed on their distinctive characteristics by the very works. This unity in diversity of sorts becomes emblematic of the outlook that Machado develops in the mature stages of his career. During this most tumultuous for the Western world time of numerous social and political conflicts, the Spanish author actively engages with a great variety of intellectual dialogues and, like Nietzsche and other radical critics of his day, questions, excoriates, and repeals as many inconsistencies as he can detect, standing up to, among other things, the very idea of a system or any character blending or hierarchizing principles. The same model transpires into some of Machado's stylistic choices, like the fragment and the aphorism, again, not uncommon for Nietzsche, which attests to the author's effort to ascribe significance to the notion of a harmonious coexistence in difference that on a larger scale translates into, to borrow Drucilla Cornell's definition, "the ideal of community or communalism understood as belonging together without violence." Just a dream, yet one "worth dreaming," according to Cornell and the survivors of "the horror of the distortion of that dream" in whose steps she follows, but also according to Machado, notably from his early yet most perspicacious vantage point (60). Flaunting not disguising their utopian lining, the endeavors to discover the conditions of the possibility of this dream to become a reality convert in the seen as far-reaching but not as unattainable objective that takes the lead in many of Machado's late texts.

What his mature searches reveal, or, rather, confirm following many earlier observations, is an inadequate notion of reason, which reflects the imbalance of power within its facets around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It interests the Spanish author since its negative results make themselves most visible in the problematic relation of the self to reality and itself, which directly impacts its possibility of a fulfilling life experience. Judging by some personal statements, it is also clear that Machado blamed the marginalization of reason's non-conceptual side, that is, the one related to the senses, emotions, feelings, for the poor quality of the current artistic production, which he saw as progressively plummeting: "El arte no cambia siempre por superación de formas anteriores sino, muchas veces, por disminución de nuestra capacidad receptiva" (*OPP* 847). Reason's rehabilitation, then, becomes the first goal of the openly declared reformative efforts of the author his poet-philosophers, as attested by both the fiction and the personal correspondence and notes analyzed here.

After a long period of disregard, the mature works of the Spanish writer where the more than ambitious project to mend human thinking is staked out are now starting to receive the attention if not the credit traditionally given to the early poetry. As the tendencies behind the long-standing classification of Machado's production into more or less accomplished are losing ground, there has been an expected upsurge of interest in the less-studied prose and poetry, or idiosyncratic mixture of both, with important work done most recently by critics like Nicolás Fernández-Medina and Xon de Ros to whose seminal works I refer to and whose dialogue this study seeks to join.

In unison with this trend and especially with the renewed attention to the apocryphals that Machado developed in different forms between 1902 and 1939,

collected separately as *De un cancionero apócrifo* and *Juan de Mairena*, the posthumously published collection of notes *Los Complementarios*, written from 1912 to 1925, and some uncollected pieces, this study seeks out what still provokes inquiries into the writer's thought and, by extension, in literary Modernism. It argues that regardless of the often problematic from today's viewpoints goals, motivation, or execution of Machado's broadly classifiable as modernist searches, many of which of central human interest, like the nature of the self and reality, their relationship, knowledge and understanding, and so forth, the final results include certain groundbreaking understandings of epistemological and ontological nature. Moreover, some of them continue to resound in a similar if not the same form throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>. Among them are ideas related to the issues of finding and interpreting meaning, of the nature of the human, or, rather, the lack thereof, which mark a most significant cornerstone in the development of self-understanding, and so on.

While reviewing some others along the way, I focus here on the changed conceptions of human knowledge, life, and freedom by virtue of the author's peculiar project to stop art's decline by rehabilitating reason, for which purpose he elaborated the notion of heterogeneity and paid special attention to the role of the other. These basic human conceptions, in my opinion, receive a thorough makeover in Machado's time, which continue to be operational to some extent today. In view of these outcomes as well as of the changed appreciation of art which Machado's mature work makes visible, to revisit it, I believe, can also serve to reconstitute the significance of the author's work and of modernist thought in general in the light of the larger developments concerning the questions at hand.

The problem Machado and his apocryphal poet-philosophers<sup>6</sup> find with the conception of reason is not that it is flawed but that it is malfunctioning due to the fact that it is lacking. It neglects an important segment of the human mind, one directly involved with life, existence, and the self's relations to the world and itself, namely, the emotional, sensual, instinctual part of being. By complementing the notion of reason through bridging the rift that has opened within it, Machado hopes to upgrade the experience of living a human life, giving it a whole new level of breadth and fullness. The idea that our receptiveness has diminished is also expressed by Max Scheler, with whose pioneering work on the significance of feelings Machado was acquainted.<sup>7</sup> The popular-then German philosopher even insisted that humanity needed to be feminized in order to improve its ability to sense, intuit, and transmit feelings and emotions in a more meaningful way.<sup>8</sup> Machado's concern is similar with strong reverberations in his ideas of art and of communal life. The ultimate goal of the Spanish author is to revamp both and thus improve both the existential experience and the knowledge and the notion of its nature.

In light of the numerous attempts made before and after Machado to close the great divide between mind and body, or between the realm of causal relations and the one dependent on contingency and allowing for spontaneity and whim, opened by the advent of rationalist-idealist thought, it is important to note that the Spanish author successfully

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<sup>6</sup> Without conflating author and fictional characters, I refer to them collectively in the cases when the poet-philosophers exhibit the characteristics of *alter-egos* of the writer.

<sup>7</sup> Machado refers to Scheler in a variety of fragments in *Juan de Mairena*: LXIII 2, and others.

<sup>8</sup> Harold Bershady discusses this topic in his "Introduction" to the volume of Scheler's selected works *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing*. Scheler often brings up this idea in his writings on emotions.

avoids the pitfall of reconciliation that has compromised many similar intents. Using as symbols to refer to the two sides, respectively, the head and the heart, in a letter to Miguel de Unamuno Machado states that “[e]l corazón y la cabeza no se avienen.” Although in this particular quote he continues to say “pero nosotros tenemos que tomar partido. Yo me quedo con el piso de abajo,” which goes along other comments in the same vein that he makes and that give precedence to what the heart symbolizes, his idea is that the two aspects work in harmony, showing again that the notion of unity in difference becomes an essential part of his viewpoint during the mature part of his career (*OPP 925*).

This view of synchronization and not dependency between the operations of distinct human faculties is an example of the advancements Machado makes towards certain contemporary understandings of reality through views like the metaphysical, which he defends in the apocryphals, and which is of most traditional nature. As I hope to show later, he is able to do that through their innovative modification. Other examples of his perspicacity are the idea that that meaning is constructed, or as he terms it created, and not pre-established, or that the human has no other nature than the particular ways it relates to itself and the world. Naturally, since Machado lives in a period of transition, the relics of the past are still interspersed in it, and he holds on to the idea of essence while ascertaining the temporal dimension and thus contingency of everything in life, as, for example, in his claim that poetry is “palabra esencial en el tiempo,” which I will address later. Part of the explanation is that his idea of essence is only remotely related to that of proper essentialism, that is, to the belief that one or more of the characteristics of an object define it fully and permanently. Yet, this juxtaposition of incongruous stands, in

my view, is not a drawback but an advantage that provides insight of how the processes of transformation operated in the early century. As Slavoj Žižek notes in reference to Friedrich Schelling's unusual foresight, these moments caught between the disintegration of some overarching idea and the new ones that come to replace it can be most propitious (*Abyss of Freedom* 4). Curiously, Schelling's idea of freedom bears a striking resemblance to the one Machado crafts by virtue of his revision of human thinking. For both authors, moreover, besides the time gap that separates them, the notion of freedom is intrinsically related to their aesthetics.

Machado's recognition of difference, multiplicity, and variation, as well as of the significance of the other, is a crucial element of the more than important transition from the long-standing consciousness-centered model to alternative ones, a slow process whose first steps are clearly marked in the late work. It is not new for the author, in fact, since he employs doubles from the start and, as Fernández-Medina correctly points out, since in his work the subject-object dichotomy is dismissed long before developing a strong stand against the tradition that has endorsed it ("Reality"). As his views against this line of thought multiply, the central Kantian duality comes under attack and is eventually annulled through the plan to refurbish reason's two sides. Human dignity and freedom are no longer bound to self-determination and authority only, nor enclosed in a realm outside of space and time; they are liberated, in fact, the moment reason breaks the same confines. As in Schelling, to be free means to be able to temporarily transcend the current situation in order to imagine a different one. This can be accomplished successfully only through the better vision of the current conditions, which has become possible since reason has expanded its scope. Only in this way can one perform "el acto

magnífico de *desimaginar* el huevo universal, sorbiéndole clara y yema, hasta dejarlo vacío, para llenarlo luego de partículas imperceptibles en movimiento más o menos aborascado,” which refers to the image of the egg as refilled by each end every thought, with which he substitutes Parmenides’s sphere (XII 1; emphasis of the author). As he adopts “una lógica nueva,” premised on both causal links and contingency, inclusive of natural instincts, and dependent on the other, Machado is faced with the need to develop a position that accommodates all the changes.

On the face of it, the idiosyncratic standpoint that Machado, a relentless essentialist of sorts, adopts in his mature production, that is, of a Christian-like poetic metaphysics of temporality and cordial comradeship, is a thing of the past of little if any relevance to the current philosophic and theoretic audiences. Moreover, its central affiliation does not involve just any issue addressed routinely by them, but metaphysics—a mostly common foe since at least Immanuel Kant’s critiques. To reconsider its value, especially post-Jacques Derrida’s widely acclaimed denouncement of the ideas of presence and absolute origins, would be equivalent to heresy for more than a few among today’s philosophers and social and literary critics. While the other aspects of Machado’s peculiar stand, or rather reformative platform, mounted by the outspoken apocryphal voices and his own, do rank as more recent adversaries to the contemporary critical tendencies, they are still no less foreign to our predominantly secular, competitive, individualistic, progress-driven society that values neo-liberalism and regards “the ideal of community” with suspicion.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps only the temporal orientation of the author’s outlook has the potential to escape some of the assumed here discredit on the base of the

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<sup>9</sup> This generalizing expression belongs to Drucilla Cornell to whom I referred earlier.

very labels attached by the author himself, although it also lost some of its importance due to the attention paid to the concept of space from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century on. However, the questions of time and temporality have acquired at least some additional significance since being restated in their contemporary form by, namely, some early-century thinkers like Marcel Proust and Henry Bergson.<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless, both the lampooning of the propensities, the weaknesses, the routine blunders of individual and society and the critical view of their state and the prospects of change and improvement, prominently featuring in Machado's late work and forming an essential part of his reformative plan, are as pertinent today as they were a century ago. Neither is today's society any less mediocre, naïve, or parochial, nor does it signal positive transformations. To the contrary, many models and conventions that the author mocks are still operative and the uncritical trend- or tradition-following attitude that he holds accountable for the overall stagnation continues to prevail. Thus, in spite of the accurate classification of Machado's stance as somewhat *passé*, the mature texts offer certain observations and insights into the common mindset of the urban West that although often lacking the social component and, thus, limited are neither dated nor obsolete. What is more, some of the author's affiliations are going through revivals of their own since the so-called postmodernist discourse, generally associated with major adversaries of both the metaphysical and the communal ideas like, Fredric Jameson and Jean-Francois Lyotard, among others, has itself been on the wane.

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<sup>10</sup> I refer here to the idea of non-linear time and the importance of memory in reference to temporality developed by these authors.

Naturally, the most prominent reappearance on the critical stage among Machado's generalized associations is that of metaphysics. Not without numerous caveats and quite transformed, for sure, it has made its presence felt in recent time in both the human and, as it is "cross-listed," the natural sciences.<sup>11</sup> The refreshed attention it is enjoying has come after a hiatus of sorts but was not unforeseen. Many 20<sup>th</sup> century intellectuals, even some of Derrida's contemporaries and not-so-dissonant thinkers like Jürgen Habermas and Gilles Deleuze,<sup>12</sup> at one point or another and for different reasons have proclaimed metaphysics indispensable. Today, philosophers like Jean Grondin and Stephen Mumford are known for their efforts to reaffirm its worth and to incorporate its revamped principles in the current discourse. Yet, both the opinion that the age-old viewpoint towards reality has been disposed of too lightly or too soon or that it is still unexhausted, in fact, date back to Machado's time.<sup>13</sup> One routine explanation for the early-century revival of metaphysics is that it counterbalances the rise of positivism. On a larger scale, however, its reappearance also signals that the more than influential anti-metaphysical line of thought that has followed Kant's lead must have reached a turning point and is being reconsidered. As the idealist entrenchment is solid and ubiquitous, the transformations happen at a slow pace and are plagued by contradictions, forming a problematic but also propitious for creativity ambience.

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<sup>11</sup> Errol E. Harris advances the thesis that metaphysical thinking is inherent in scientific analysis in his book *The Restitution of Metaphysics*.

<sup>12</sup> In *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, Habermas insists that metaphysics should not be dismissed in order for its premises to be overcome for good. For Deleuze, a metaphysics based on change and differences is more than acceptable.

<sup>13</sup> Jean Grondin relates the "rekindled interest in metaphysics" during the early century to those trying to distance themselves from the neo-Kantians (204). Rodríguez Huéscar sees it also as a reaction against the rise of positivism and the encroachment of science over the human disciplines.

The abundance of texts that intend to introduce metaphysics published around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century attests to its resurfacing. Curiously, this occurrence parallels today's situation when many of the new books that deal with the subject purport to be introductions of sorts.<sup>14</sup> In Machado's time, however, it is some of the most prominent figures on the intellectual horizon, like Henry Bergson, José Ortega y Gasset, and Martin Heidegger, among others, that seek to reformulate the metaphysical principles in their particular ways.<sup>15</sup> Their works, as well as many modernist ones like Machado's that adopt a similar stand, can all propose some answers to John Mullarkey's question "Why did this metaphysics—a 2300-year-old discipline—need to be "introduced?" stated in his own opening piece to Bergson's volume, but as valid in reference to the initial as to the final decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (ix). The responses the critics have proposed necessarily vary, but explanations like the following often accompany the descriptions of the reworked metaphysical postulates: nostalgia for the certainty and stability provided by the belief in a source of authenticity, a refreshed interest in universality and in the conditions of its possibility, hope that the current reality has better counterparts and the need to imagine such in order to strive for change and seek alternatives, and so on.

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<sup>14</sup> Even a basic review of the recent publications on metaphysics shows that many are introductions and only some are intended to be textbooks, that is, they are not introducing it to students but in general.

<sup>15</sup> As John Mullarkey points out in his introduction to Bergson's text, the following publications present a similar case: Henry Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, first published as an essay in 1903 in the journal *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*; José Ortega y Gasset, *Some Lectures in Metaphysics*, delivered as lecture course in 1932-3; Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, also comprising a series of lectures in this case from 1935.

Certainly, Machado's turn to metaphysics is premised on a number of factors and his critics have not failed to ascertain different sources of motivation for his choice of platform. Yet, the stress of some, through mere reiteration if not deliberately, like, for instance, of the author's important but not singular searches of a new kind of grounding to counter the engulfing cynicism of his age or his desire to replenish the ever so void of content poetic forms, in my view, has obscured the broader picture of his metaphysical inclination and, what is worse, of his position in general.<sup>16</sup> Thus, not only has Machado's definitive break with traditional metaphysics been mostly overlooked, but the reformative and anticipatory potential of the apocryphal and other later texts remains largely understudied. Addressing these issues is essential for expanding the current conception of the author's ideas as well as of the modernist stand in general, the appreciation of which, I believe, has been affected by a similar trend of endless restatements of certain views at the expense of others and the overall understanding of the movement and its accomplishment.

In spite of their essentialist undertone, Machado's vehement attacks against the idea of universal sources of meaning and explanation, of authenticity, of representation in general, evince a major shift from the view that with stronger or weaker periods from Plato through the Judeo-Christian tradition has defended the existence of a more truthful reality than the one perceived as given. At the same time, he openly parts ways with the Kantian revision of this tradition and, progressively, with the rational-transcendental line

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<sup>16</sup> Pablo de E. Cobos is one of many: "Desde que nos recogimos por primera vez al seno de nuestro reposo con las prosas de Antonio Machado en la mano hemos venido entendiendo como metafísico su pensamiento en sus apócrifos" (27).

of thought. The Spanish writer, then, must also be re-introducing metaphysics on par with his famous contemporaries and as part of his larger effort to craft an adequate stance.

Indeed, Machado forges through the overabundant criticism of the metaphysical principles and the renewed efforts to reformulate them towards an idiosyncratic understanding of their purposes and goals, which is closely related to his worldview and the belief in the possibility to instigate change and improvement. Contrary to the traditional idea that an a-temporal and de-historicized reality matches the one of our existence as finite beings and in line with Heidegger's attempt to reconstitute the metaphysics of being, Machado recasts the *cogito* as "Existo, luego soy" (XII 9). The recurrent image of the veil and the reiterated comments that it both reveals and covers, as in the question "¿quién nos aseguraría que la realidad descubierta no era otro velo, destinado a rasgarse a su vez y a descubrimos otro y otro?" besides indicating the major uncertainty about knowledge expressed in the late texts, proves that the author has abandoned the idea of "another reality" (L7). Against Heidegger, however, and his attempt to revamp metaphysical thought, which for the German philosopher is human thought, by starting off anew but still excluding the other, Machado sides with Bergson who is both interested in the importance of the emotions and, against Heidegger, gives primacy to becoming. Machado's metaphysics is related to his insistence in creating meaning: individually yet in accordance with the other, or rather with the spirit shared by the community. As much as this spirit resembles essence, it stands closer to shared knowledge and feeling within the community that changes accordingly. It is true that he relates it to the spirit of the Spanish nation, but it is part of the shared experience and what it entails. It is not permanent in any way—thus the desire to reinstate it in those who

have lost it due to the extreme individualism of the previous epochs and to the narrowed scope of reason.

Machado's answer to the problem of reason involves complementing its logical-rational base. The apocryphal poet-philosopher Juan de Mairena's formula sums it up: Socrates joins efforts with Christ to battle the epistemological doubts that with the advent of the modern era have been disconcerting humanity and compromising hope. In his words, "Ellos son los dos grandes maestros de dialéctica, que saben preguntar y aguardar las respuestas" (XIV 6). Both choices are telling, as Socrates implicates the conceptual base of human thought and the act of extrapolation through an open dialogue and exchange of ideas, that is, an approach that some of the prose both promotes and enacts; and Christ, stripped of his religious inferences, stands for the fellow feelings of love and compassion, which lack a conceptual base but are not any less insightful when it comes to the inevitable contact with the other. Yet, Mairena is quick to introduce an important nuance to the tandem saying, "Pero la dialéctica del Cristo es muy otra que la socrática, y mucho más sutil y luminosa" (XIV 6). As the apocryphal texts reveal, however, the insistence in its precedence is not based on its epistemological advantage but on its ontological implications and its potential to foment a spiritual union. This viewpoint addresses another pressing issue, to wit, human alienation as further exacerbated during any time of crisis but even more so when the calamity is perceived as profound and multifaceted as in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

To attempt to completely overcome the oppressive feelings of dissatisfaction, indifference, frustration produced by the failed attempts to find meaning and purpose, to connect and to experience the feeling of belonging, perturbing the modern self from the

start, is, of course, a goal that even an incurable optimist like Machado would resist. However, the future projection of his efforts does provide some kind of solace in the present through the hope that it carries that all can change for the better. As in the work of Ernst Bloch that, according to Espen Hammer, “offer[s] an alternative that is able to point beyond the problems of temporal alienation and disenchantment,” the apocryphal project promotes the idea that the unrealized past and present hopes and dreams can be fulfilled in the future, analyzes and encourages day dreaming, that is, the active process of imagining their realization (199). “Sed originales,” “soñad despiertos,” are the slogans of the poet-philosophers and not what one would logically expect after reason is revamped, “think.” The idea that the world can be saved through art is reworked too: it can be saved through art’s potential to create better meaning, that is, to fill up the universal egg in a richer and fulfilling way.

Importantly, both Machado and Bloch see the anticipatory potential of consciousness and the human desire for emancipation as interrelated. Machado’s conclusion that “[l]a libertad es ... un problema metafísico” reveals his groundbreaking intention to approach the issue focusing not merely on consciousness, like the idealists, but on what the conscious being can perceive as accessible (III 6). This similarity with the early-Marxist Bloch’s thought highlights an important detail about Machado’s vision—it is eclectic and oblivious of genre, discipline, school, or any other differentiation.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Bloch published his *The Spirit of Utopia* in 1918 and it became very popular. There is no direct evidence that Machado has read it, but I am inclined to believe that he had some knowledge of it due to the similarities between Bloch’s idea of daydreaming the future and Mairena’s “soñar despierto.”

Situated in-between the idealist and the materialist currents of Western thought, critical of both but also borrowing from them and from fledgling approaches like the existentialist and the phenomenological, Machado develops an idiosyncratic stance, also a reformative platform, which is future oriented yet not progress but improvement driven. Unlike the indifferent to the past drive for progress, Machado's endeavors are informed by his desire to ameliorate the current situation of the human subject through the patronage of all known aspirations, past and present, which have sought the same, namely, an enhanced existential experience free of worries and constraints. The process is presented as two-fold and involves purging human knowledge and understanding of the accumulated over time false beliefs and misconceptions and discerning the human fundamentals. Here comes Machado's metaphysical mainstay: not the universally valid but the universally human, whose recognition is part and parcel of the author's goal to instigate change. Importantly, as pointed out by Mairena's remark about Christ "descubriendo otra suerte de universalidad: la del amor," in which both the conceptual and the non-conceptual modalities are involved (XIV 6).

Thus, while the focus of Machado's study and his analysis of reality is the human, the reform takes aim at its relations—with the world, itself, the other—in terms of knowledge and awareness, but also of a dear and appreciative feeling for the fellow being. With the need of human bonding heavily emphasized, the apocryphal texts and other pieces like Machado's letters and notes examine human relations and propose cordiality as yet another missing piece in the puzzle of the plenitude of life and being. Promoting love, as in Max Scheler, not "love (eros) as a lack" but "in terms of the Christian sense of *agape*, loving as giving," Machado promotes a vision of human

responsiveness that take aim directly at the previous notions of human life and relations as premised on hierarchy and authority (*Selected Philosophical Writings* 109). To level human relations may be a utopian dream but, as Cornell insists, the one “worth dreaming.” Machado’s texts are apocryphal not because they are fake, but because they envision this dream, not yet in reality but in the human mind through the power of imagination. To see it and make it possible is accomplished through art, not for art’s sake, as any modernist effort is often generalized, but for the sake of the human and its future, which Machado correctly perceives under imminent threat.

Thus, the second chapter is more general in content and outlines the problem of reason, seen not only as split but also as “instrumentalized” first by the modernists and then by the representatives of the Frankfurt school of thought who have coined the term. The chapter also analyzes Machado’s peculiar poetic skepticism, and some additional issues related to human reason and thinking. The third chapter introduces Machado’s apocryphal project and discusses his idea of freedom, relating his view to those of the German philosophers Fr. Schelling and Fr. Schiller, who have promoted the idea of freedom as aesthetic play. It also discusses the utopian position of the apocryphal text in relation to the utopia of hope of Ernst Bloch. Chapters four and five focus on the two major apocryphal texts, *De un cancionero apócrifo* and *Juan de Mairena*, respectively. In chapter four, I focus on the opposition self-other and the non-negative dialectic that the apocryphal poet-philosophers propose, discerning some of the major philosophers that the apocryphal figures have claimed as their new “fathers” appropriating freely and modifying their positions. Chapter five studies the most accomplished apocryphal text, that is, *Juan de Mairena*, discerning more major influences and discussing what is

incorporated from their stances. The replacement of the representational model with perspectivism is at the center of the discussion. The chapter ends with Machado's noteworthy attempt to establish a human community that is premised on difference.

## CHAPTER 2

### MENDING REASON, AMENDING LIFE AND BEING

As much as the beginnings of the modern period mark a sharp divide of a special kind, reason's preeminence since its triumph over myth in Antiquity has been more than steady. What has fluctuated is the significance of its objective and subjective variety, defined by Max Horkheimer respectively as "reason as a force ... in the objective world—in relations among human beings and between social classes, in social institutions, and in nature and its manifestations" and "reason as a force ... in the individual mind," that is, "the faculty of classification, inference, and deduction" also "concerned with means and ends" (*The Eclipse of Reason* 3). As Horkheimer clarifies, the predominance of one of the two forms during a particular period of time does not preclude the existence of the other, since, on the one hand, reason is inevitably related to thought, and thus to the self, and, on the other, thought cannot but rely on concepts and the objectivity that they presuppose.

While the imbalance of power and authority between the two versions of reason has a long history, the elimination of one by the other is, according to the German philosopher, not only unnatural but destructive and directly related to the major turbulences on the world political scene up until their culmination in the 1940s when he develops his thesis. Hence, Horkheimer denounces subjective reason's progressive neglect of its objective counterpart during the ascendancy of the former. In his view, its rise to power begins even before the onset of modern time, reaches its heyday thereafter, and continues strong well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century when, due to a variety of factors, it finally starts to falter. Tracing these developments and the gradual withdrawal of the objective

dimension, Horkheimer concludes that “[t]he current crisis of reason consists fundamentally in the fact that at a certain point thinking either became incapable of conceiving such objectivity at all or began to negate it as a delusion” (*The Eclipse of Reason* 7). Naturally, what he laments is the lost interest in the possibility that factors and influences beyond consciousness and the mind can determine meaning and understanding and not the end of the pre-modern objective yet predicated on myth and superstition model. Urged by the reality of the war to look for ways to explain its horrors, but also apparently convinced that subjective reason cannot but have a decisive role in human affairs, Horkheimer delves more into its current state than into the modern vision of its objective side. This choice for which he continues to be criticized by those unhappy with his preference for the consciousness-centered model, allows, however, for the parallel drawn here with Machado’s resolution not to change but to complement and thus revamp the notion of reason at hand.<sup>18</sup>

For Horkheimer, the problem deepens as his inquiry exposes the deviation of human thought even further, emphasizing subjective reason’s tendency to prioritize some of its aspects while ostracizing others, and its more recent but equally detrimental predilection for the epistemic norms of the natural sciences, as evinced by the rise of positivism in the 19th century and other trends. Thus, the complete consideration of the problem of thinking, according to Horkheimer’s presentation of its dimensions, would require at least a tripartite effort, which consists of reintroducing objective reason along with the subjective, restoring subjective reason’s curtailed less efficient side, that is its

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<sup>18</sup> Habermas was one of the leading critics of Horkheimer’s overt interest in subjective reason as well as of his and Adorno’s pessimism in terms of the project of Enlightenment and of its effect on social theory.

non-conceptual part, and barring the influences of scientific reason, also premised on efficacy. The stake, for the German thinker and for many more like-minded artists, philosophers, academics, and other intellectuals from around this time period, is nothing less than the existence of human race.

Arguing that Antonio Machado shares many of Horkheimer's concerns about reason and that some of his later texts prefigure the position expressed by the German philosopher and the critical strategies he employs, this chapter seeks to outline the Spanish writer's viewpoint with regards to the problem of thinking as well as to trace its place within similar endeavors in his time. General in nature, this overview hopes to offer a starting point for the discussion picked up in the following chapters of the vision of a solution proffered unanimously by both Machado's fiction and non-fiction writings analyzed here. With this goal in mind, I focus on Machado's idea of a poetic skepticism and other means that he promotes to open some "space" within the past and present philosophic horizon, that is, within existing theories, which he both adopts and reshapes. I hope to show that Machado joins many of the major voices of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century confronting various pressing issues related to human knowledge and that, although not as loudly as them, vocalizes a stand that has its merits in reference to the intellectual endeavors to deal with the widely discussed impasse of the West and the fear of catastrophe— impending for him, reality for those that follow.

Indeed, the perception that the Western world is at a standstill or in a deep state of crisis, whose ramifications reach as far as reason, has been the "talk of the town," also literally, since the European intellectual community during the first half of the century is concentrated in the urban centers. As expected, the plans to take action are not late to

follow and are torn by an equally unsurprising number of tensions that reflect the diverse problematics that are being confronted. By targeting first those of the Spanish writer that relate directly to the question of reason, this preliminary inquiry hopes to advance the discussion towards the special interest of the study as a whole, to wit, the emancipatory and anticipatory potentials of Machado's poetic-philosophic stance and its corresponding objectives, which, although (close to) utopian and not immune to defects, consider issues as pressing in the author's as in our own time of conflict and stagnation.

Unlike other crises at the center of the intellectual discussions from around the turn of the century, like those of subjectivity and meaning, provoked by the disintegration of the original metaphysical and religious grounds, or of being and of experience, addressed by the steadily making progress existentialist and phenomenological currents, the crisis of thinking that Horkheimer tackles is, in his view, not only leading humanity to self-destruction but, especially with the rise of Nazism, has almost reached this ultimate end. What he and the burgeoning post-war schools of thought offer as a possible deterrent, among them the Frankfurt to which the German thinker belongs, the post-structuralist, the post-modern, is radical criticism, a new trend of analysis that takes issue with a variety of ideas, customs, beliefs, concrete situations, and so on, and seeks to supplement philosophy by exposing the deficiencies and inconsistencies of human reason and action. Its ultimate goal is to avert the development of self-annihilating tendencies. In line with the censure against the narrowing focus of human thought that Horkheimer mounts teaming up with Theodor Adorno, the new trend's intentions, as James Bohman explains quoting Horkheimer, are not "to achieve some independent goal, but ... seek 'human emancipation' in circumstances of domination and oppression." However,

neither its objectives, nor the criteria proposed by Horkheimer for the evaluation of the new type of analysis, which Bohman boils down to the characteristics “explanatory, practical, and normative all at the same time,” sound that unfamiliar in reference to the critical and reformative strands that precede by a couple of decades those of the German thinkers and others that share their viewpoint (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*).

To be sure, the discourse challenging subjective reason’s hegemony along with its tendency to strip off some of its less calculable and efficient aspects, using the model of practical explanation and, if not regulation, experimentation with principles and rules, is already underway when the new critical wave that Horkheimer and Adorno instigate begins to articulate its standards. Only its otherwise no less detailed or caustic analysis of reality has been mostly disguised by intricate details; linguistic, stylistic, referential, and other puzzles and games; the adherence to traditional modalities such as the essentialist and the metaphysical while pursuing innovative goals; and so on—quintessential characteristics of many turn-of-the-century artistic and literary works often banded together, yet not without numerous caveats in order to accommodate their diversity, by the label modernist. A peculiar current predicated on its interest in the possibilities of artistic expression, in self-reflection and truth, Modernism, naturally, pays a lot of attention to the questions of thinking and knowing. The conception of reason as bound to the idea of rule and regulation and opposed to nature, experience, the senses by the influential idealist tradition in which the movement has its roots, has lost a lot of its

charm by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is in need of revamping. The modernists' searches often gear around the attempts of redefine<sup>19</sup> or reject it.

Nonetheless, while their objectives are easy to predict in view of the transitional nature of the period, the outcomes of many such inquiries, like those into the possibilities of a fuller life experience and an adequate artistic expression of Antonio Machado examined here, are not that expected. More specifically, many of the attempts to find new definitions or grounding have often lead to important discoveries in regards to meaning, namely, that it is provisional, constructed, holding true only for the brief moment of its conception as well as contingent upon many factors involved in the process. Advancing towards such groundbreaking understandings, however, Machado and the apocryphal poet-philosophers Abel Martín and Juan de Mairena, the protagonists of *De un cancionero apócrifo* and *Juan de Mairena*, confront many setbacks, like the ones outlined by Horkheimer with regards to the problem of reason: the pretensions of self-sufficiency of human thought, its proclivity to prune itself in certain ways, and the desire of the humanities to remodel their principles after those of the natural sciences.

### 2.1. The Question of Reason

Despite the gradual incorporation of the other and the important advancement towards the recognition of heterogeneity when it comes to the self and its affairs, Machado's conception of human existence as a sequence of self-originated acts never evolves into a more complex account of all the insights into the self and reality that he otherwise reaches. Without downplaying Horkheimer's better vision of being as a co-

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<sup>19</sup> This is the thesis of Robert Pippin's *Idealism as Modernism: Hegelian Variations*, which has served as an indispensable guide for this study although Machado belongs to those who reject idealist thought and Pippin is a Kantian.

ordination of a variety of practices, the German thinker's rundown and itemization of reason's problematic deviations, in my view, offers a useful analogue of the Spanish writer's understanding of the problem and of his plan to solve it. However, Machado confronts the same three issues with the current notion of reason that lie in the base of Horkheimer's (and Adorno's) critique of thinking, not always positively evaluated, yet considered important until today, mainly but not only due to the philosophers' significance for the initiation of the unique critical trend.

Machado's consideration of the different aspects of the problem of reason is not equally divided, but neither is Horkheimer's (nor Adorno's), which, naturally, affects their inquiries. For the Spanish writer this means a primary interest into subjective reason's abandonment of the emotional, the intuitive, the sentimental aspect of human understanding and expression, that is, of its the non-conceptual dimension, which is consistent with both his idea of being and his desire to improve human perceptiveness in order to positively impact artistic expression and the self's ability to bond with the other. Interestingly, in spite of their better understanding of the complex picture of human existence, the German philosophers' trajectory is more comprehensive but not that distinct from Machado's. In recent time, moreover, as the complete rejection of the agency of the self upheld by, actually, some of Horkheimer and Adorno's followers is undergoing a revision, the German philosophers' stand is welcoming one as well, just as Machado's and those of many other modernist thinkers who foresaw important developments, offering a perspective as interesting as those that follow.

The processes of diagnosing reason's malaise and of proving wrong any unsubstantiated or outdated knowledge go hand in hand in Machado's late production and

in the apocryphals in particular. That he is troubled by the reliability of many facts usually taken for granted, like those considered common sense, for instance, or the ones apprehended via rational thinking, becomes evident as early as the author's first collections of poetry, and especially *Soledades*, which is characterized by the unsettling searches of the lyrical subject. Yet, his concern with the development of human thought and what he considers to be its many aberrations and limits grows progressively as his outlook matures. Thus, Machado's attempts to expose reason's inadequacies become more and more aggressive and ingenuous. Emulating the methods along with the postures of many thinkers, the most developed apocryphal figure, Juan de Mairena, employs a variety of techniques of discerning inconsistencies and testing claims while reflecting on himself, his situation, society, common views and practices, etc. In this way, Mairena puts to the stand all the assertions in reference to knowledge and truth that come up in the discussions of the apocryphal texts. The methods he uses to bring to the surface underlying inconsistencies of different sorts are most varied and comprise a variety of rhetorical strategies, the Socratic dialogue, perspectivism, and so on.

Furthermore, the skeptic outlook that Mairena both practices and promotes puts under rigorous scrutiny as much reason's claims of truth as their ossified results such as common sense, convictions, beliefs, customs, habits, etc. It is done in a most engaging and entertaining way. His almost cynical view of reality is paired by a mode of being that the apocryphals propose, not based on the belief in the possibility of an immediate realization of a goal, but of imagining it first and dreaming, daydreaming that is, about it via an interesting practice propagated in the apocryphal texts: "ver e imaginar despierto" (XIV 1). The goal, as vague as the promoted vision of change and as hypothetical as the

apocryphal figures, is to acknowledge its possibility, serving simply as a guiding light, but also giving hope and instigating change.

In spite of his acute awareness of the variety of underlying issues related to reason, which helps him hit the mark by pinpointing its major issues before trained philosophers like Horkheimer and Adorno, the self-constriction of human thinking remains at the center of Machado's attention, whereas the abandoned objective aspect and with it the interest in how what lays outside of consciousness can also determine meaning and understanding, receive only the limited attention given to the other. Different factors, such as the broader social, political and economic relationships, for example, remain unacknowledged. Yet, this fact does not undermine the writer's insightful analysis of the problem of reason's deficiencies, which he correctly relates to the growing disillusionment with life, to the problem of human alienation and the nihilism that begins to permeate human existence. By trying to complement reason, he also attempts to restore hope and to revamp life experience, being, and the idea of human freedom. Furthermore, once the larger discussion about the incorporation of scientific method in the humanities gains momentum, Machado turns his attention to that aspect of the problem as well.

This last issue, namely, or reason opting for the certainty and calculability offered by scientific normativity, is at the core of the debates surrounding the epistemological concerns of both the human and the natural sciences in the 1920s. Probably without many exceptions, those participating in them through their intellectual endeavor—artists, philosophers, other intellectuals—take a stand with regards to the question of whether the humanities should compare themselves if not even consider uniting with the natural sciences, as propagated by the doctrine known as “unity of the sciences” and upheld by

the (logical) positivists, the members of the so-called Vienna circle, and others. For those disapproving of these tendencies, like Machado, Horkheimer, and many more, the reverberations of this new relationship between the humanities and the natural sciences is already a reality when it comes to the conception of reason, even before the contact let alone union of the two has been established in any definitive way. Their claim is that the more the epistemic pendulum swings towards the framework used by scientific research, the less reason needs to reflect upon itself, which directly affects self-understanding and self-criticism. Among those who uphold this view are leading intellectuals like Ernst Cassirer, Max Weber, Martin Heidegger.

In response to the ongoing encroachment of science, also empowered by the growing awareness of the complexity of human existence provided by the innovative psychological, sociological, and anthropological research, the tendency after Nietzsche's illuminating example is to direct the critical eye of the self, of the groups that it forms, of the humanities, towards their own stance as much as towards any other. This unique human ability of self-observation draws a line that the natural sciences, up until our time at least, have not been able to overcome. The first to employ it as a tool for both knowledge and criticism, and, unlike the romantics, to do so without losing sight of the rest of reality, are the modernists who take it to an extreme in the form of referential games modeled after the famous Chinese boxes or Russian dolls where all involves all but on a different scale in an endless succession. The apocryphal texts at the center of the discussion here make use of this model and most often than not what their protagonists, the poet-philosophers teach or describe matches the situation they are in. Also, Machado puts to use the new understanding of time proposed by Proust and Bergson, among

others, to analyze in a different way not only the present but also the past and the future and to look for hope and ways to improve the human condition. Moreover, the revamped model of reason outlined in the apocryphals purports to be able to give both knowing and understanding whole new meanings, which transform the conception of learning from “finding” or “receiving” meaning to “creating” it, which is not the same but stands closer to today’s idea of “constructing” meaning. The desired outcomes are many and range from the most trivial in human life and relations to major topics like the experience of life and freedom. The question of reason, however, needs to be addressed first, emphasizing the need for the issues related to it to be clearly identified in order for an attempt to solve them to be made.

## 2.2. The problem of human thinking

The observations about how human thought operates made in the apocryphal texts are many. Adding new perspectives to the picture, Mairena is able to address the problem in depth. In one fragment, the basic operations of reason are described as follows: “Pensar es deambular de calle en calleja, de calleja, en callejón, hasta dar en un callejón sin salida. Llegados a este callejón pensamos que la gracia *estaría* en salir de él. Y entonces es cuando se busca puerta al campo” (XVIII 2; emphasis of the author). As much as it is natural to wonder, it is also logical that the self would look for a resolution of the issue at hand. As pointed out throughout the apocryphal texts, the problem is when this exit leads nowhere but is presented as a solution. This is what, according to Mairena, and he never tires of repeating it, the idealist doctrines have provided. It is their generalized stance that the fragment that precedes the one just quoted mocks when it refers to “puertas al campo.” It presents the typical for the fragments collected in *Juan de*

*Mairena* mini-dialogue, supposedly from the aula where the poet-philosopher Mairena meets with his students:

— ¿Recuerda usted, señor Rodríguez, lo que dijimos de las intuiciones y de los conceptos?

R.—Que son vacíos los conceptos sin intuiciones, y ciegas las intuiciones sin los conceptos. Es decir, que no hay manera de llenar un concepto sin la intuición, ni de poner ojos a la intuición sin encajarla en el concepto. Pero unidas las intuiciones a los conceptos tenemos el conocimiento: una oquedad llena que es, al mismo tiempo, una ceguedad vidente.

M.— ¿Y usted ve claro eso que dice?

R.—Con una claridad perfectamente tenebrosa, querido maestro. (XVII 1)

Not only not a solution, according to Mairena, but, as elaborated in other fragments, the idealist model is a successful attempt to degrade human thought and to lead it to a dangerous mode of self-deception and the rejection of the other. The desire to restore human dignity that Mairena ascertains is intrinsically related to this problem.

Idealism is the first “enemy” of the new conception of reason that Machado is looking for, although only within its subjective field. The second is the long solipsistic tradition that dates back to Parmenides and the ancient Eleatic school of thought, which, based on the idea of permanence, originally segregated the intellect from the rest of reality. Machado and his apocryphal figures never stop to censure its premises and the most recent solipsistic tendency besides idealism: the self-centered searches of the romantics.

When it comes to Machado’s critics in general, there is an agreement that his support to the parallel ancient line of thought that sees everything in a flux, starting with Heraclitus who is often alluded to by the author, proves his disagreement with the Eleatic school. His views against Romanticism are also widely recognized as such. In the case of idealism, however, in spite of the overabundant criticism that he makes of Kant’s attempt

to isolate thought from time and space, to Hegel's logic and dialectic, and all the other ways he attacks the influential school of thought, many insist that he remains an idealist. For example, quoting not only just one fragment, but only part of it, that is, one sentence of Mairena's answer to a student's question: "Porque el solipsismo podrá responder o no a una realidad absoluta, ser o no verdadero; pero de absurdo no tiene pelo," one of his most famed critics, Antonio Sánchez Barbudo, argues that the author "nunca abandonó el extremo idealismo" (165). First, his is an inaccurate interpretation of the text. Second, Mairena's peculiar style to present all the views of an issue available to him in a parallel way is not taken into account. This fragment exemplifies the technique used by Machado, which, in my view, he borrowed from Nietzsche, that is, perspectivism. Nietzsche developed this method to perfection throughout his creative years, but its first uses are observed in his second book *Human All Too Human*, to which Mairena refers on a variety of occasions. It consists of presenting different views of the same issue, often exemplified in the criticism of the German philosopher as "snapshots," in such a way that they can all "make their case." This does not preclude the narrative voice from taking a stand, but it does that without dismissing other opinions.

So in the mini-discussion in the second fragment of chapter XXXVIII from which Barbudo quotes, a student comments to Mairena: "Del solipsismo se ha dicho que es una concepción absurda e inaceptable, una verdadera monstruosidad." Mairena's answer is an example of his typical full of irony style and carefully crafted sentences. Yet even without taking into account the use of perspectivism, I believe that the critic's reading of Mairena's response is obviously wrong. Here it is in the poet-philosopher's words:

—Todo eso se ha dicho en efecto... Pero a mí nunca me han convencido de ello los que tal dicen. Espero que a vosotros tampoco os convencerán.

Porque el solipsismo podrá responder o no a una verdad absoluta, ser o no verdadero; pero de absurdo no tiene pelo. Es la conclusión inevitable y perfectamente lógica de todo subjetivismo extremado. Por eso lo tratamos en nuestra clase de Sofística. Es evidente que cualquier posición filosófica—sensualista o racionalista—que ponga en duda la existencia real del mundo externo convierte *eo ipso* en problemática la de nuestro prójimo. Sólo un pensamiento pragmático, profundamente ilógico, puede confirmar la existencia de nuestro prójimo con el mismo grado de certeza que la existencia propia, y reconocer a la par que este prójimo nos aparece englobado en el mundo externo—mera creación de nuestro espíritu—, sin rasgo alguno que nos revele su heterogeneidad. Dicho en otra forma: si nada es en si nada que yo mismo, ¿qué modo hay de no decretar la irrealidad absoluta de nuestro prójimo? Mi pensamiento os borra y expulsa de la existencia—de una existencia en sí—en compañía de esos mismos bancos en que asentáis vuestras posaderas. La cuestión es grave, vuelvo a deciros. Meditad sobre ella. (XXXVIII 2)

The word “absurdo” is what probably misled the critic. Yet it becomes clear that what Mairena rejects is that certain position is dismissed. From the solipsistic viewpoint, things look the way they are presented and he accepts that, which does not mean that he agrees with the argument. To the contrary, it is the one that the apocryphal project tries to replace. Moreover, one of Mairena’s principal goals is to affirm the existence of the other when it comes to the conception of the world of the self, as a first step towards the communal bond that he desires to restore. It is at the center of his doctrine and the overall desire of Antonio Machado to restore reason’s fuller perception, that is, its conceptual and non-conceptual base and to allow them to work in unison.

The following fragment offers more insight into the uncommon way he teaches and addresses different issues. In it, again, a student brings up another common view, according to which the self and the other need to be very much alike in order to recognize each other’s existence. As Mairena’s goal is to establish the base of unity in difference, he again disagrees but does not reject. The student starts with the words “siempre se ha

dicho” and this is what Mairena picks on from the start, proceeding to explain his methodology:

—Eso se dice, en efecto. Pero nosotros estamos aquí para desconfiar de todo lo que se dice. Tal es el verdadero sentido de nuestra sofística. Para nosotros, el problema existe, y existe prácticamente, puesto que nosotros nos lo planteamos. La existencia práctica de un problema metafísico consiste que alguien se lo plantee. Y este es el hecho. Nosotros partimos, en efecto, de una concepción metafísica de la cual pensamos que no puede eludir el solipsismo. Y nos preguntamos ahora qué es lo que dentro de ella puede significar el amor al prójimo, a ese otro yo al cual hemos concedido la no existencia como el más importante de sus atributos, o, por mejor decir, como su misma esencia, puesto que, evidentemente, la no existencia es lo único existencial que podemos pensar de lo que no existe. (XXXVIII 3)

To stop believing in what is said and to start approaching the problems from a standpoint as disinterested as possible is one of the premises of Mairena’s school and he constantly urges his students to adopt a skeptical viewpoint. The next step to address this position in particular, or, in broader terms, to redefine the basic human conceptions that have deviated too far, is to analyze its stance and not to deny their existence. The approach is premised on a new type of metaphysics—the poetic metaphysics that Mairena develops, whose only universal is the love of the other.

The last sentence describes this view from the idealist perspective—it is nonexistent. This position is often ridiculed in the apocryphal texts, since the idealists believe in god, but not in the other. The fifth fragment of this chapter discusses the problem:

Y yendo a lo que iba, os diré: podemos encontrarnos en un estado social minado por una fe religiosa y otra fe metafísica francamente contradictorias. Por ejemplo, frente a nuestra fe cristiana—una “videncia” como otra cualquiera—en un Dios paternal que nos ordena el amor a su prole, de la cual somos parte, sin privilegio alguno, milita la fe metafísica en el *solus ipse* que pudiéramos formular; “nada es en sí sino yo mismo, y todo lo demás una representación mía, o una construcción de mi espíritu

que se opera por medios subjetivos, o una simple constitución intencional del puro yo, etc., etc.” ...Si todos somos hijos de Dios—hijosdalgo, por ende, y esta es la razón del orgullo modesto a que he aludido más de una vez—, ¿cómo he de atreverme dentro de esta fe cristiana, a degradar a mi prójimo tan profunda y substancialmente que le arrebaté el ser en sí para convertirlo en mera representación, en un puro fantasma mío? (XXXVIII 5)

Again, the way the problem is presented may leave the impression that Mairena is taking a Christian stance. Yet he is not and most critics have agreed on that in spite of his use of the image of Christ as a symbol of love. It is his perspectivism that is misleading and makes the reading quite challenging. In the end of this chapter, Mairena reveals his real interest in Christianity—it is predicated on the recognition of the existence of the other, with whom the self is always connected and their bond is premised on love. The chapter concludes with the statement:

Como mónada filial y fraternal se nos muestra en intuición compleja el yo cristiano, incapaz a bastarse a sí mismo, de encerrarse a sí mismo, rico de alteridad absoluta; como revelación muy honda de la incurable “otredad de lo uno,” o, según expresión de mi maestro, “de la esencial heterogeneidad del ser.” (XXXVIII 7)

This is the type of character that the apocryphal will seek to cultivate, transforming the traditions that have conducted human thought to its present situation and trying to reinvent the past a la Bloch. His real “father” when it comes to the idea of heterogeneous self and reality is, in fact, Henry Bergson. The French philosopher’s *durée* is hailed by Gilles Deleuze namely for its unique way to allow for a diverse conglomerate to exist in unity without any kind of juxtaposition or obliteration of differences. Moreover, Bergson introduces his innovative conception in his *Time and Free Will* analyzing the bonding formed through feelings. Bergson’s influences are many and inevitably mentioned in all the critical studies of Machado’s philosophical endeavors. Unfortunately, a more

comprehensive study is not available yet, and because Machado criticizes Bergson for his intellectual intuition, seeing it as a return to idealist thought, the attention to Bergson's influence is more and more on the wane.

Returning to the type of thinking that Mairena advocates in order to avoid the pitfalls of doctrines like idealism, a description can be found in another fragment of chapter XVIII. In a way it continues the quoted earlier comment of the student that his own recap of idealism that he understands his own words with “una claridad perfectamente tenebrosa.” Thus Mairena expounds on his idea of a different type of thinking, which he denominates as philosophical:

Por eso yo os aconsejo— ¡oh dulces amigos! —el pensar alto, o profundo, según se mire. De la claridad no habéis de preocuparos, porque ella se os dará siempre por añadidura. Contra el sabio latín, yo os aconsejo el *primum philosophari* de toda persona espiritualmente bien nacida. Sólo el pensamiento filosófico tiene alguna nobleza. Porque él se engendra, ya en el diálogo amoroso que supone la dignidad pensante de nuestro prójimo, ya en la pelea del hombre consigo mismo. En este último caso puede parecer agresivo, pero en verdad, a nadie ofende y a todos ilumina. (XVIII 8)

The numerous allusions made to the eyes and to seeing bring up an important part of Mairena's doctrine. The poetic thinking that he teaches is based on observation—see and what you see is, absolute and real. I take this position as additional evidence that Machado has adopted Nietzsche's perspectivism, but of course, it can be related to many other sources, among them scientific observation. The type of thinking recommended here is the one the poet-philosophers use, yet they preach a third version, called poetic thinking, which I will address later. Here, I only wish to present an overview of the issue and to show some of the strategies used to revive non-conceptual reason and to allow it to participate in thinking. Clearly, since it is based on the feelings and the emotions, the

problems of human bonding will be somewhat solved if it is reinstated. The fragments abound in details of both the problematic situation: the individualism of bourgeois society, the competitiveness, and struggles between individuals, and of an improved version where people are able to connect.

As regards the state of reason, it can be said that it is subjective reason's intent on pruning itself that attracts most of the attention of the first wave of thinkers dealing with the matter, like Machado and many more. Neither original, as already Aristotle in his *Politics* distinguishes between the unconditional "goods" for the body, for the soul, and those dependent upon the existence of a purpose, nor particular to the 20<sup>th</sup>-century epistemological searches, now that in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Blaise Pascal introduces his famous "logic" of the heart, with which he denounces the idea that rational thought and the senses are capable of disclosing everything in the world, the interest in reason's tendency to bifurcate and to cultivate only some of its strands, does reach a certain peak around the period of the global conflicts, as exemplified by Horkheimer and Adorno's well-known critique of "instrumental" reason and attracts much of the attention of Michel Foucault. Elaborating on its platform, Horkheimer states that in addition to rejecting its objective dimension reason has "purged" itself and that it has come to be considered "an intellectual faculty of co-ordination, the efficiency of which can be increased by methodological use and by the removal of any non-intellectual factors, such as conscious or unconscious emotions" (9). To use a hopefully not that inapt analogy in order to summarize the problem of subjective reason in the modern period, it can be said that it has behaved like a typical "tyrant" who, after demolishing its opposition, that is, its objective counterpart, begins to attack those within its own ranks, or non-conceptual

thought, that do not adhere to its central aim which, according to Horkheimer, is nothing more than self-preservation. His school of thought is the first to mount a proper “rebellion,” successfully rejecting idealism if not the consciousness-centered model.

Yet, some “conspiracy” is already in progress when Machado explicitly many of his contemporaries less so identify reason as deficient on the basis of the progressive downplaying of its non-conceptual base, backing their claims with observations of the numerous ramifications of the problem for knowledge and understanding as well as for human integrity, life, relations, and so on. Machado’s entire apocryphal project is predicated on the idea that reason is lacking and in need of repair. Whether we can subscribe to it today depends on how much we consider consciousness to be a decisive factor when it comes to knowing and understanding. If we are to give it some credit, in spite of inevitably ascribing most to external factors ranging from global political economic relations to the most intimate ones and a variety of other influences, then Machado’s observations of the epistemic and ontological value of the non-conceptual side of human reason continue to be relevant. What is more, its reconditioning would affect that of the human in reference to the experience of life and the possibilities it offers, although, necessarily, severely limited by the larger picture.

### 2.3. Reforming Thought

Machado’s pun on Antonio Maura’s<sup>20</sup> famous slogan “revolución desde arriba” with Juan de Mairena’s “revolución desde abajo” carries several more implications besides the natural disappointment with yet another political figure and a new set of failed promises. As an analogy to Maura’s proposal for a top-down reform, Machado pins

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<sup>20</sup> Antonio Maura was a five-time prime minister of Spain between 1903 and 1922.

no faith in systems of thought like the monolithic models of Kant and Hegel, also considered within the field of philosophy “top-down” reforms. Instead, he affirms the significance of the ordinary person and everyday life experience by using them as the basis for his apocryphal project. Machado’s inquiry, however, is not phenomenological, since his call for a revolutionary change extends further, or, per the slogan, lower, than the experience and leads him to investigate the problems of reason. Moreover, the goal of his poetic-philosophic endeavor is not to delimit any necessary conditions, the way the idealist tradition did, but, quite to the contrary, to show that infinite variety is the norm when it comes to the facts of human existence with all its changes, uncertainties, and discontinuities.

More in line with Martin Heidegger’s reassessment of the ways the notion of being is conceived in thought,<sup>21</sup> Machado’s apocryphals and other related texts target what, in his view, is at the crux of the problems of the common mindset when it comes to understanding and truth: the outdated conceptions of knowledge and objectivity; the unconditional acceptance of preconceived notions and the unquestioning use of the established mechanisms of constructing meaning; the readiness to follow a lead and blindly recognize authorities; among other issues. In Machado’s view, therefore, human thought is not free but shaped by factors such as different convictions, individual or shared by the community, as well as other conventionalities. As Mairena declares, “Por debajo de lo que se piensa, está lo que se cree, como si dijéramos en una capa más honda que nuestro espíritu.” The poet-philosopher goes on to add that under critical conditions,

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<sup>21</sup> This is the main thesis of his 1927 *Being and Time* to which Machado refers directly in several fragments in *Juan de Mairena*.

“la *opinión* muestra en su superficie muchas prendas que estaban en el fondo del baúl de las conciencias” (XXXIII 1; emphasis of the author). In a direct attack against the futility of politicians like Maura, Mairena claims that their frivolous reformatory effort “se caracteriza por la absoluta ignorancia de estos fenómenos” (XXXIII 1). In Mairena’s case, he not only takes them into account, but they motivate the inverse trajectory of his rehabilitative study and the attention paid to thinking.

The principal focus of Machado’s reform, therefore, is the very act of thinking of oneself and the world and understanding the situation correctly, besides the inevitable aspect of subjectivity, which is given full credit. As poem LXXXV of the section “Proverbios y cantares” in *Nuevas canciones* aptly states: “¿Tu verdad? No, la Verdad, / y ven conmigo a buscarla. / La tuya, guárdatela.” Then the notion of the Truth is dismissed and only the subjective ones are left behind. This tendency of thought to generate erroneous views and beliefs due to factors like tradition, confidence in authorities, mere inertia, etc., receives special notice and the goals of the project are reiterated over and over with the imperatives “despertad” and “velad.” This preoccupation is central for Machado’s position. It approximates Michel Foucault’s insistence on the primacy of human thought over any scheme or structure as well as the concern with its vulnerability to influence and the dangers of perpetuating error. Moreover, among the common strategies of both thinkers is to highlight the necessity of a critical review and to reexamine all things human, starting from thought itself, while refraining from putting forward solutions or different values. As Mairena claims: “...sólo me aplico a sacudir la inercia de vuestras almas, a arar el barbecho empedernido de vuestro pensamiento, a sembrar inquietudes” (XXXIX 7). Mairena’s

goal, which is not simply to renovate but to expose what he considers a problem or a deficiency and which will hopefully bring about a change in the *status quo*, disproves many standard accusations against the modernist reformers and the limitations of their artistic endeavors. At the same time, it brings Machado's ideas closer to similar approaches of his time, like Nietzsche's, but also of the future, as in the case of Foucault's, with whose positions he sides in more than one way.

Regardless of his affinity with Heidegger's common objective, clearly expressed in his *Introduction to Metaphysics* and in other major works, to liberate thought as well as to liberate through thought, in his desire to solve the issues related to knowledge and understanding Machado turns to the other and the question of relationality, while the German philosopher develops his famous notion of self-understanding as a radical interpretation. Machado's notion of the relationship between the self and the other improves significantly the model that has dominated on the literary scene in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Largely shaped after Hegel's dialectics, the relationship of the "I" to the numerous doubles that populate the romantic and post-romantic works is symptomatic of the growing interest in the interaction of the subject with other subjects. Idealist in its essence, the Hegelian scheme, however, is no longer self-sufficient: it demands not simply an external object, but another self-consciousness. Building on this Hegelian view that self-knowledge is not possible without a parallel Machado avoids Heidegger's semi-solipsistic entrapment. Aware of the limitation of Hegel's view of this analog, however, Machado sets on to improve it.

What his poet-philosopher Juan de Mairena does is reject the need for contrast. According to Hegel's model, the function of the other is primarily antithetical: it is the

reverse side that simultaneously opposes and complements, always with the intention of synthesizing a coherent whole. From the famous literary examples in Machado's day, an obvious one is presented by Robert Louis Stevenson's antagonistic characters Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. According to the view of the other that the Spanish author advocates, relationality is decisive in defining anything, including the self, which engages in a two-way communication with many others, which shares, discusses, exchanges information and, naturally, undergoes and provokes change and thus the plurality that inevitably arises.

The dialogue is an essential element of his grassroots reform of the knowledge and thinking. In contradistinction to the openly expressed by Kant and before him by Descartes contempt to the judgments of the *vulgo*, Machado turns to "el saber popular" that can be discerned in Spanish folklore, placing special attention to the exchange of ideas and avoiding assertion or rejection of viewpoints. His poetry, as Philip Johnston suggests, also makes good use of the dialogical form. Here is one example of a conversation between some of the principle concepts discussed in this study presented by poem VII of the section "Parabólas" of *Campos de Castilla*:

Dice la razón: Busquemos  
la verdad.  
Y el corazón: Vanidad  
La verdad ya la tenemos.  
La razón: ¡Ay, quién alcanza  
la verdad!  
El corazón: Vanidad.  
La verdad es la esperanza.  
Dice la razón: Tú mientes.  
Y contesta el corazón:  
Quien miente eres tú, razón,  
que dices lo que no sientes.  
La razón: Jamás podremos  
entendernos, corazón.

El corazón: Lo veremos.

The following analysis will show if they reach a consensus or not.

#### 2.4. The Poet as a Skeptic

Mairena's advice to his students to adopt a skeptical view and to seek out inadequacies within the issues they consider problematic instead of rejecting them resembles Habermas's position when it comes to metaphysical thought. In his *Postmetaphysical Thinking* the critic claims that the ancient doctrine was never overcome because it was dismissed as an option but never proven inadequate for modern thinking. It is only through its acceptance and objective analysis, he claims, that it can stop finding its way back into theory the way it does in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ironically, this is the view that Machado's poet-philosophers in a way hold while giving similar instructions to their disciples both in reference to idealist thought and solipsism in general. It comes to show, however, that their view of metaphysics is quite distinct from the traditional.

Mairena also urges his students to become as objective as possible in their approach to theoretical stands but also to their own thinking. As much as he has high appreciation of philosophical thought, the apocryphal thinker does not recommend to his students to doubt like the philosophers, that is, with "duda metódica," because, in his words, "el que tiene un método o cree tenerlo, tiene o cree tener un camino, que conduce a alguna verdad, que es precisamente lo necesario para no dudar" (LIII 1). Apparently, when he describes thinking as aimless walking along one way and then along another, often arriving at dead-ends, this is, actually, presented in a positive light. So the doubt that he wants them to adopt is different, as it is not the one of the traditional skeptics, but

rather of the poets: “la duda poética, que es duda humana, de hombre solitario y descaminado entre caminos. Entre caminos que no conducen a ninguna parte” (LIII 1). This almost counterintuitive doubt is, in fact, part of his poetic metaphysics, which is based on originality and aims at supplanting life and reality with new meanings.

This is why Mairena explains to his students that it should not be done in an organized way and he does not recommend to them to adopt “el escepticismo cansino y melancólico de quienes piensan estar de vuelta de todo.” It is, according to him, “la posición más falsa y más ingenuamente dogmática que puede adoptarse” (LV 4). On the contrary, Mairena clarifies addressing them, “El escepticismo que yo quisiera llevaros es más fuente de regocijo que de melancolía. Consiste en haceros dudar del pensamiento propio, aunque aceptéis el ajeno, por cortesía y sin daño de vuestra conciencia, porque, al fin, del pensamiento ajeno nunca sabréis gran cosa.” Returning to his observations about human thinking, the poet philosopher concludes: “Quiero enseñaros a dudar del pensamiento propio cuando éste lleva a callejones sin salida, que es indicaros la salida de estos callejones” (LV 4). This last statement demonstrates that this motivation comes in part from his desire to lead them to create new roads, that is, original meaning, which, as I will show later, is the main principle of all his poetic-philosophic theories.

As the following fragment shows, this doubt is also directed against the theories premised on certainty. First ascertained by Descartes, who claimed to be sure of his own thought if not of anything else, this view is taken up by the idealists who declare the objective reality impenetrable and marginalize it, never doubting their assertions. Unhappy with the certainty that lies behind such logic, Mairena claims that “[d]ejando a un lado nuestro pensamiento lógico, todo lo demás, incluso la materia, pudiera ser

perfectamente penetrable” (LV 5). This is one of Bergson’s<sup>22</sup> famous claims, but since Mairena never develops it further, it is probably used more as a rhetorical device to discredit even more Kant’s doctrine of the unknowable object-in-itself. Naming all the important names in the idealist tradition, in another fragment Mairena refers to them stating that “[l]es faltó escepticismo para acercarse ansiosamente a la verdad y plantearse agudamente el problema” and returning again to the idea that the problem has to be approached the right way.

Nevertheless, the idea that uncertainty is more productive than confidence, the latter standing close to conviction, is one of the topics picked up by the fragments on a variety of occasions. Thus Mairena explains, “El ceño de la incomprensión ... es, muchas veces, el signo de la inteligencia, propia de quien piensa algo en contra de lo que se le dice, que es casi siempre, la única manera de pensar algo” (XVIII 5). This claim is repeated in different forms, with confusion, mistakes, and everything contrary to logic presented in apposition and recommended.

The goal of this skeptic view is to get rid of any deep-seated opinions, which are not easily recognizable. Prefiguring Habermas’s statement about metaphysics, Mairena offers more justification to his claim about skepticism:

Nuestro escepticismo... nos llevará siempre a dudar de todas las hipótesis metafísicas, y a dudar, no menos, de que estas hipótesis hayan sido definitivamente retiradas de la circulación. En verdad, ellos reposan sobre creencias últimas, que tienen raíces muy hondas. Si en el estadio de la lógica, nos aparecen como contradictorias, envueltas en proposiciones que se excluyen, esto no quiere decir que en la esfera de nuestra creencia no pueden coexistir o alternar. Tampoco ha de entenderse que nuestras creencias sean, en general, más verdaderas que nuestras razones, sino que son más persistentes, más tenaces, más duraderas y que son ellas

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<sup>22</sup> In his *Introduction to Metaphysics* Bergson not only claims that it is penetrable, but this is where its analysis should start from.

también—las creencias y por ende las hipótesis metafísicas—más fecundas en razones que las razones en creencias. (LX 1)

As it will become clear later, this fragment sets the terrain for the apocryphal experiment, which will combine incompatible views as a last resort to produce a normative stand that can change not just the current path of development of the understanding of reality and being but also of the future. What sprouts out of the present one, according to Mairena, cannot be very different.

The other way to open space for new developments is to forget. Discussing his teacher Abel Martín, who, in Mairena's words, "exaltaba el valor poético del olvido," the diligent disciple explains one of his central theories according to which "[m]erced al olvido puede el poeta ...arrancar las raíces del espíritu, enterradas en el suelo de lo anecdótico y trivial, para amarrarlas, más hondas en el subsuelo o roca viva del sentimiento, el cual no es ya evocador, sino—en apariencia, al menos—alumbrador de formas nuevas" (VIII 4). Again, to urge them to create meanings is the ultimate goal of the poet-philosopher's instruction to his students to abandon all previous knowledge and beliefs.

Forgetting and remembering or reassigning meaning is at the core of Machado's skeptical attitude to knowledge of any kind. The new type of thinking that he promotes is premised on change unlike the idealist versions of certainty, like Kant's categorical imperative, for example, that are considered universal truths. It is only through adopting an attitude based on doubt that the past stands a chance to be reinvented, which the apocryphal texts envision as a possibility as long as reason is revamped and able to perceive of reality's many nuances and to play freely with them.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE APOCRYPHAL PROJECT AND FREEDOM AS PLAY

It would not be an exaggeration to say that some terms, conceptions, and other markers that belong to today's critical-theoretical jargon are so quarrelsome that they have almost become a taboo. Others have come to bear the minor stigma of carrying a problematic connotation, but one that also impacts their use. A prominent example of the first group is the notion of the "human," whose association with humanism, agency, or self-determinism is still so vivid in the critical memory that even the replacing denominations "self" and "subject," are employed with great caution if not outright avoided. Spelling out even a few of the presumed difficulties related to the use of these concepts in particular proves that the issue is quite paradoxical. On the one hand, to refer to the human in the singular is considered risky because this very act can be read as an attempt to underwrite individuality and with it authority; on the other, to speak in the plural in reference to groups of people can be taken as an endorsement of universalism or an acknowledgement that certain essential characteristics bind people together. The second category of such presumably awkward expressions is probably larger. It does not resort to renaming, or euphemisms, but the employment of any of the terms in it is also considered unsafe and for that reason they are often shunned. "Myth" is one of those notions probably tinged for good—what inevitably pops up in its case is the association with untruth. As much as the tendency of these changes is not at all unusual, circumventing serious issues for fear of treading on dangerous grounds is positively a recipe for disaster.

Many have commented on the matter while raising similar concerns. Slavoj Žižek, for example, brings up the problem of eluding the question of the self in his book with the telling title *The Ticklish Subject*. In it, Žižek claims that taking the human element out of the picture necessarily results in diminished efforts to improve the human condition and to achieve freedom. According to the Slovenian philosopher, the Cartesian subject “is haunting Western academia” due to the fact that many critics avoid referring to the self while unable to do the same, for the time being at least, to the issue of human oppression, thus allowing for a glaring discrepancy to arise (1). Žižek not only defends the importance of the presence of the human subject in the current debates in the humanities but insists that its role is pivotal.

Although from a completely different perspective, Joseph Margolis sees eye to eye on both aspects. In his book *The Arts and the Definition of the Human*, in which he addresses various problems of contemporary aesthetics, Margolis laments that philosophy has abandoned the human person in part due to the problematic nature of its definition. He points out with a heavy heart that “you will look in vain—well, almost in vain—for an account of what it is to be a human person, or self, in any recent standard English-language philosophy of art, or philosophy of mind, or philosophy of science for that matter” (xiii-xix). As he offers his definition worried that “[w]e don’t understand ourselves well enough—philosophically” (20), Margolis emphasizes “the need for a fresh analysis of the human condition,” which for him “matters, affords a sense of the common conceptual space of every inquiry and commitment” (xii). In unison with Žižek, Margolis insists that leaving behind the human element compromises our investigative efforts and obscures their ultimate goal—a free and improved life experience.

In light of these concerns, a revisit of Antonio Machado's human-focused apocryphal project does not seem to need that much justification as long as the biggest issues with the Spanish writer's approach, that is, its essentialist-metaphysical undertone and consciousness-centered viewpoint are kept in check and his peculiar vision of the role of poetry and the poet are properly analyzed. To the contrary, it may even be helpful to take a look back at the last pre-Derrida and Foucault discussions on the human subject in order to pick up the conversation from where it was abruptly dropped with due respect, of course, to the efforts of the French thinkers and their many followers to highlight the abuse of power and to discredit the subject's pretensions of presence, transparency, authority. Now this will definitely call for some defense—that full agency is an illusion that needs to be dispelled is not to be questioned, but that this fact does not completely compromise freedom and allows for some space in which the self can regard itself temporarily free of constraint, if not of models, is, according to Machado's apocryphal discourse, a possibility worth considering. This thought seems to be the driving force behind its master plan to expose what influences human thinking and what controls it as well as to revamp reason by way of complementing it with its long-forgotten non-conceptual power in order to improve human being and the experience of life and through them, artistic expression.

Following this lead, this chapter focuses on the fundamentals of the apocryphal texts that Machado elaborated in notes and publications between 1911 and 1936 with only two developed further than the presentation of an apocryphal figure and given substantial format—to be analyzed in the following two chapters, which focus

respectively on *De un cancionero apócrifo* and *Juan de Mairena*.<sup>23</sup> Here, after the idea behind the use of the apocryphal is outlined, the discussion moves on to the premises of the theoretic stance developed by its protagonists, the poet-philosophers Abel Martín and Juan de Mairena. Next, their view of freedom is compared to those of the German thinkers from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Friedrich Schiller and Friedrich Schelling, who are known for developing similar stands regarding freedom as the possibility to briefly transcend reality without succumbing to fantasy in order to envisage a change and to imagine its experience. Their groundbreaking stance resembles Mairena's doctrine of freedom as well as the apocryphal project as a whole. Since the described by the poet-philosophers different reality, that is, one premised on a new type of logic is presented as a promising alternative to the current situation, the discussion continues by turning to the topic of utopia and Machado's position is counterpoised with that of a contemporary of his known for delving into utopian thinking and hope—Ernst Bloch. Some important questions considering the nature of the apocryphal project must be raised from the start: Is Machado's otherwise ingenious enterprise yet another myth of plenitude, of a reconciled with the world and itself subject, of solved social and existential issues? If yes, how does this fit in with the intended reform of reason?

This last question is inevitable, as myth is largely considered reason's arch enemy. The two have been clashing since the beginning of time, but their antagonism has been highlighted in the modern period by the overtone of falsehood that myth has acquired and reason's claim on truth. The dichotomy truth-untruth, however, does not

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<sup>23</sup> I have consulted a number of sources for their interpretation of Machado's apocryphal project. Jorge Brioso's "Antonio Machado and the Apocryphal Tradition" although only an article, is, in my view, most informative both on the topic and the scholarship.

capture the full scope of the conflict. Earlier, myth was truth for those who believed in it. In more recent time, reason has been blamed, by Horkheimer and Adorno, in fact, for having relapsed into myth due to its extreme behavior, losing its rationality along the way yet not its rightfulness.<sup>24</sup> The contrast is complemented by the opposition real-unreal, also part of the reason-myth dyad. Although approached from different perspectives and taking distinct shapes over the years, the problems inferred by this opposition seem ones of the most pertinent in Western thought. And they continue to be today, when the processes of deception and manipulation have become most intricate, besides almost institutionalized by the consumerist late-capitalist society we live in and in which our “real” is toyed with too easily and by too many.

Machado’s motivation to see through his, then, should not be foreign to the contemporary attempts to do the same. His methodology is, of course, rudimentary, but the attention given to the self’s relationship with the real and the unreal brings his viewpoint up to today’s mark. This dichotomy is of paramount importance for understanding the author’s metaphysical inclination at the center of the stance he develops in the late work, but especially in the apocryphal texts and the idea of freedom that they put forward. The desire to learn about knowledge itself, including how reason operates, what plays a role in its function, what influences understanding, together with the rejection of objective truth is at the center of the complex apocryphal initiative. Following the model of the comprised of many fragments sections “Proverbios y

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<sup>24</sup> The thesis of their 1947 book *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* is that Enlightenment has lapsed into myth.

cantares,”<sup>25</sup> it opens up and reveals the tensions and the many nuances of the issues at hand. Besides adding new details to an already introduced topic, however, the fragments constantly enrich the discussion with different viewpoints. Since the apocryphal analysis concentrates on topics related to knowledge and understanding, it can be said that they invert the traditional roles of art and reason and now the former expresses an opinion about the latter and even tries to correct or rather complement it when it reveals some inadequacies. And it finds many.

### 3.1. An apocryphal Investigation

As the apocryphal narrators and protagonists put reason to the stand, they also conduct a meticulous investigation of new and old truth claims and certainties, trying to distinguish between what is authentic and what operates under disguise, to peek behind the masks once they are exposed, even to figure out how knowledgeable we are of the convictions that we have and the mechanisms that create and diffuse them. Most importantly, however, the apocryphal voices never correct. The claims, beliefs, and ideas that do not pass master are not substituted directly with new ones and no answers are given to the many questions raised in the texts. On the contrary, through the poetic-skepticism that Mairena promotes, doubt is cast over everything even, paradoxically, over the instruction that is given to the apocryphal disciples to follow suit: “Pero no me toméis demasiado en serio. Pensad que no siempre estoy yo seguro de lo que os digo” (VI 8). Different views are presented in a parallel way, and although some are shown in a better light, the same amount of details is offered about all the positions. So, if it turns out that

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<sup>25</sup> Machado added a section named “Proverbios y cantares” in both his *Campos de Castilla* and *Nuevas Canciones*. In a way, the apocryphal project is an extension of the poems—probably every major topic is present in both.

Machado is construing a myth, it must be of a special kind, as it does not seem to be directly solving any of the issues at hand or explain, as myths and illusions usually do.

One of the things that the apocryphal project, myth or not, does is delve into the problem of human convictions. Foreseeing ideology critique, Machado, first, subjects to scrutiny, calling them gods, the beliefs that we hold, and, then, turns to the ones that inform our thoughts and actions without our awareness. Thus, referring to “los dioses en que no se cree,” Mairena quotes his teacher Abel Martín’s admonition: “Nada hay más terrible que el celo sacerdotal de los incrédulos.” He continues with Martín’s wish, “Que Dios nos libre de los dioses apócrifos,” clarifying his teacher’s use of ‘apocryphal’ and the meaning of his words: “en el sentido etimológico de la palabra: de los dioses ocultos, secretos, inconfesados.” Mairena’s conclusion demonstrates Machado’s insightfulness into human motivation, which brings him close to discussing ideology. The poet-philosopher sums up the results of his investigation into consciousness with the claim that the “unknown knows,” to borrow the idea from Donald Rumsfeld’s famous classification<sup>26</sup> often used for this purpose, “han sido siempre los más crueles, y, sobre todo, los más perversos; ellos dictan los sacrificios que se ofrendan a los otros dioses, a los dioses de culto oficialmente reconocido” (XXIV 2). The metaphor of the gods proves

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<sup>26</sup> The US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s answer to a question about Iraq’s links with terrorist groups at a briefing in 2002 became viral and is often quoted in reference to ideology. He stated that “...there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know.” The fourth possibility is the one that Machado and many ideology critics have analyzed: the unknown knows, the things we do not know that we know.

how strongly, in Mairena's view, our convictions motivate us and thus how important, or real, the unreal can be.

Here Mairena begins to trace a peculiar space that is of great significance when it comes to knowledge and understanding. On one occasion he says that “[p]or debajo de lo que se piensa está lo que se cree, como si dijéramos en una capa más honda de nuestro espíritu” (XXXIII 1). In another fragment he offers more details: “Cuanto subsiste, si algo subsiste, tras el análisis exhaustivo o que pretende serlo, de la razón, nos descubre esta zona de lo fatal a que el hombre de algún modo presta su asentimiento. Es la zona de la creencia, luminosa y opaca—tan creencia es el sí como el no—, donde habría que buscar, según mi maestro, el imán de nuestra conducta” (LVI 4). Building on ideas of the importance of convictions and beliefs that Mairena in several fragments acknowledges to be Nietzsche's, the poet-philosopher approximates Lacan's analysis of the real and the symbolic when he claims that it has to do with the way we behave, that is, think. Although it is defined as space, it is a convincing argument, which, moreover, elaborates on Machado's central interest in the interior/exterior dichotomy and the self.

While it is not an outrageous statement that Nietzsche is behind the conception of the idea of this first inner space, when Machado in the draft of a speech “Proyecto de discurso de ingreso en la Academia de la lengua” makes an allusion to *Human, All Too Human* tracing a second one, in this case it is, most probably, just related to the concept of the human, which both authors regarded as central. Indeed, this second space is completely incompatible with Nietzsche's thought, which distinguishes between the strong and the weak within the community. Machado's position, to the contrary, includes

everybody, preserving the differences between people and trying to establish the premises of unity in difference.

While, as I hope to demonstrate, Machado's poetic metaphysics is very distinct from the Platonic prototype and his idea of art not that extraordinary as it seems due to the high expectations of the poet and anything poetic, this second inner space does seem problematic from today's viewpoint, as it harbors something that resembles essence. Machado offers his notion of such individual space in "Proyecto" in which, while discussing the most pertinent for him question about the state of art, the author asks himself whether the poets of his day fail to produce good poetry because "¿Son poetas sin alma?" Then he expresses his opinión: "Yo no vacilaría en afirmarlo, si por alma entendemos aquella cálida zona de nuestra psique que constituye nuestra intimidad, el húmedo rincón de nuestros sueños humanos, demasiado humanos, donde cada hombre cree encontrarse a sí mismo al margen de la vida cósmica y universal" (*OPP* 853). Although here this space looks like an extended version of the first one, at some point it becomes related to the spirit supposedly shared by the community and the idea takes on a problematic essentialist aspect. As much as at this stage it seems to adhere to some sort of permanence, I hope to demonstrate that this essence is rather the shared views of the community than something eternal. Behind Machado's antiquated terminology and the fact that he calls it a space, there lies, in fact, another "sneak-peak" of the future theories of knowledge and communication and of the idea that language is not something individual but necessarily shared. Another item on the list of seemingly problematic notions brought up in the apocryphals is the feeling of love, which is in the base of the poet-philosopher's idea of a community based on brotherly love. A more thorough

investigation of its meaning within the apocryphals easily shows that it is the common feeling and the relationship with the other that have motivated its use.

The apocryphal investigation, however, begins with a reevaluation of some current epistemological views. That Mairena has a better understanding of the complexity of the question of knowledge and understanding than that of his steeped in the self-determinism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century teacher Abel Martín, who had claimed to have introduced, like Socrates, his own “dioses,” becomes clear as he discusses their formation. Bringing up Socrates’s “mayéutica,” that is, the skill the ancient philosopher was famed for to help men “give birth” to beliefs, or ideas, the way his mother helped women do so to children, the poet-philosopher disagrees that our views and ideas originate in people. Doubting his teacher’s words, he takes a different position than Martín’s, who stands closer to some 20th century understandings of the topic: “Pero los dioses cambian por sí mismos, sin que nosotros podamos evitarlo, y se introducen solos, contra lo que pensaba mi maestro, que se jactaba de haber introducido el suyo. Nosotros hemos de procurar solamente verlos desnudos y sin máscara, tales como son” (XXIX 6). The conclusion proves that Mairena’s critical eye sees beyond the Kant-Hegel line of thought and, sometimes, quite ahead of the time period in which he lives

His direct criticism against la “*revolución copernicana*, atribuida al pensamiento kantiano,” hits idealist thought at the heart, prefiguring the idea of Adorno and Horkheimer that Enlightenment created another myth, namely, that of reason’s self-sufficiency (XLIII 7; emphasis of the author). Thus Mairena explains, echoing many other fragments that mock logic’s self-certainty in a similar way: “que nuestros conocimientos no se rigen por las cosas y acomodan a ellas, sino que por el contrario, son

las cosas las que se acomodan a nuestra facultad de conocer, me pareció siempre una ocurrencia maravillosa para saltarse a la torera y dejar intacto el problema del conocimiento” (XLIII 7). Since we never learned anything from the idealists, and the spell of their overarching theories is gone, we must find our way out of the new old predicament of the lack of knowledge. This new route is what Machado’s apocryphal figures try to trace in their idiosyncratic manner, that is, starting from the past and continuing to their day, remodeling certain notions and theories and expressing hopes that they can bring a better future.

This is what makes Machado’s approach most unusual. The contemporary meaning of ‘apocryphal’ is needed in this case. Since it is about poets and poet-philosophers who “*podieron existir*,” the apocryphal in the title of Machado’s project must be based on its popular meaning—‘inauthentic,’ ‘supposed,’ ‘false.’ Such a premise, however, does not correspond to what seems to be the immediate goal of the project, that is, to test the certainty of truth claims of all sorts, from casual platitudes to religious and ideological decrees, and to question the grounds of all convictions and beliefs. On the face of it, to base the project in a myth goes clearly against the grain of its goals to debunk those, as much as the one at hand is apparently different, since it neither offers ready-made solutions nor works toward finding any. Mairena’s exposition of the goals and purposes of the peculiar *Escuela popular de sabiduría superior* that they have purportedly founded with his teacher Abel Martín in order to prepare future poet-philosophers who can both feel and analyze reality being both artists and analysts, elucidates the matter.

In some of the fragments in which Mairena addresses the apocryphal project, often speaking in the plural as he refers to his teacher's and his attempts to promote "una lógica nueva," the poet-philosopher clarifies that their objective is not to replace obsolete truths and correct untruths. The history of many such failed attempts and their belief that truth has many colors and certainty fluctuates, which is in the base of their epistemological skepticism, is what really guides them:

Nosotros procuraríamos—hablo siempre de nuestra escuela—no ser pedantes, sin que esto quiera decir que nos obligásemos a conseguirlo. La pedantería va escoltando al saber tan frecuentemente como la hipocresía a la virtud, y es, en algunos casos, un ingenuo tributo que rinde la ignorancia a la cultura. Es más difícil de evitar. Nosotros ni siquiera nos atrevemos a condenarlo en bloque, sin distingos. Porque hemos observado cuán sañosamente se apedrea la forma más disculpable de la pedantería, que es aquella jactancia de saber que muchas veces acompaña a un saber verdadero. Y, en este caso, quien lapida al pedante descalabra al sabio. Y aun puede que sea esto último lo que se propone. ¡Cuidado! Porque nosotros no hemos de incurrir en tamaña injusticia. (XXXVI 5)

It becomes clear that for the apocryphal figures what has been done before in terms of a similar reform has failed. The effort will be renovated, Mairena claims, but carefully and selectively. Moreover, it is intimated that the self cannot see clearly into its current situation, and, therefore, its purging of falsehoods should also be done with this idea in mind—thus the repetitive declarations that nothing is certain and the promotion of skepticism.

In other fragments, Mairena clarifies the nature of the purposes of the apocryphal teachers—not to flaunt anything, especially now that that it was declared that not the knowledge but the lack there of and their disbelief and skepticism is what makes the apocryphal poet-philosophers different and what offers a solution to the inability or lack of desire to believe in anything: "dudar de su propia duda—el único modo de empezar a

creer en algo” (*JMI* 270). Thus, their ultimate objective is to encourage the self to wish for, hope, and expect: “¿Pretenciosos? Sin duda, lo somos—respondemos—; pero no presumidos ni presuntuosos. Porque nosotros de nada presumimos ni, mucho menos, presuntuamos. Pretendemos, en cambio, muchas cosas, sin jactarnos de haber conseguido ninguna de ellas.” Clearly, they are aware that at the present moment their initiative remains in the sphere of the hypothetical: “Que nuestro propósito sea más o menos irrealizable, en nada amengua la dignidad de nuestro propósito. Mas si éste se lograre algún día, nuestra lógica pasaría a ser la lógica del sentido común” (XXIV 13). A dream for now, it aspires to become shared ambition, at least for change if not for immediate results, as a first step in that direction and against the diffusion of nihilism.

This statement of the poet-philosopher, whose voice is sometimes very hard to distinguish from Machado’s, is pivotal. It does corroborate the theory that the apocryphal project presents an illusion and unfolds a certain worldview, but it does so in the form of testing out an alternative. As it is done through art, the artistic dimension must be taken into account. However, the apocryphals definitely dismiss the standard accusations against modernist works, like those of György Lukács, for example, that they visualize and promise solutions.<sup>27</sup> What the apocryphal project envisages is rather the search of a solution, sprouting from both past and present kernels, and not promising anything. It stakes out one possibility among many, that is, “una lógica nueva” that supplements what in the current situation is considered lacking, but does not present it as *the solution*. Rather, it takes a stand when it is most important to do so. Thus, it is a myth, but a myth or utopia seen in a positive light as a stimulus not to accept the *status quo* but to demand

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<sup>27</sup> This is an opinion expressed by Lukács in his *The Ideology of Modernism*.

change. Before turning to the specifics of this alternative reality, I shall look at the mechanism the apocryphals invent in order to reach it.

### 3.2. A Poetic Theory of Knowledge

The biggest culprit for the current situation, according to Mairena's investigation of knowledge, is Aristotelian logic. Thus, the hope that poet-philosopher expresses after making the above clarifications about the goals and the purposes of his school is that a change like the one it suggests happens, because "entonces se desenterraría la vieja lógica aristotélica la cual aparecería como un artificio maravilloso que empleó el pensamiento humano, durante siglos, para andar por casa" (XXIV 13). Referenced here are: Aristotle's identity theory, attacked and ridiculed on a variety of occasions, like, for example, in *De un cancionero* apócrifo: "Abel Martín tiene ... una profunda admiración por la lógica de la identidad que, precisamente por no ser lógica de lo real, le parece una creación milagrosa de la mente humana" (*OPP* 301); the logical thinking and its idea of time as an irreversible succession of past, present, and future moments, substituted by poetic thought, as I will show below; the idea of absolute truth, whose craving is considered a human flaw. Mairena often warns his students against it, insisting that "...el hombre es un animal extraño que necesita—según él—justificar su existencia con la posesión de alguna verdad absoluta, por modesto que sea lo absoluto de esta verdad" (XVII 6). To offer another view of human existence that not only gives it meaning but allows the self to invest it itself is the main goal of the poetic theory of knowledge that the poet-philosophers develop.

What Mairena suggests as a replacement is partially adopted from three other major thinkers of Antiquity: Parmenides, and his successors Plato and Democritus. These

philosophers did not believe in change and developed some sort of dualist visions, distinguishing between what is truthful and what appears to be so. The pre-Socratic Parmenides was the first to do that. He divided philosophical inquiries into these two categories but considered the world one sphere in which everything is always the same, or permanent. According to Parmenides all necessarily *is* and there is nothing that *is not*. Plato elaborated on this model and divided reality in two realms, labeling them the real and the ideal and insisted that the real consists of universal values that are matched by their appearances. Democritus continued in Parmenides's steps identifying the permanent reality with atoms. Just like Plato, he also believed that a counterpart based on change existed, which he considered of lower value. Also, he distinguished between "legitimate" knowledge, that is, one acquired by the intellect through the information supplanted by the senses, that is, through the "bastard" knowledge.<sup>28</sup>

The poet-philosophers' appropriation of certain elements of these stances is selective, heavily modified, and additionally qualified as poetic. Except for the poetic characteristic reserved for the central mechanism of the theory they develop, the other two apply to the numerous other appropriations from past thinkers and outlooks that become manifest throughout the apocryphal texts. When it comes to the Platonic metaphysical model, Mairena specifies: "Para nosotros lo esencial del platonismo es una fe en la realidad metafísica de la idea, que los siglos no han logrado destruir" (XV 4). Other elements, like the accompanying transcendentalism of Plato's ideas, for example, are taken with a grain of salt. Mairena's appropriation of it, however, is related to the idea

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<sup>28</sup> My main resource for these basic facts of the ancient philosophers' views has been their corresponding entries in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, referenced in the Works Cited.

of spirit that he has and that is harbored in the secret inner space discussed above. Thus he argues that “[s]in la absoluta trascendencia de las ideas, iguales para todos, intuibles e indeformables por el pensamiento individual, la razón, como estructura común a una pluralidad de espíritus, no existiría, no tendría razón de existir” (XV 4). Human reason, according to him, cannot exist in isolation, without the other. “Pero no basta la razón,” Mairena insists, explaining that for him “[l]a razón humana es pensamiento genérico” (XV 5). The incorporation of the other together with the insistence that all flows and changes and nothing is permanent compromise the poet-philosopher’s relationship with Platonism, but he moves away from it with caution: “Conviene creer en las ideas platónicas sin desvirtuar demasiado la interpretación tradicional del platonismo” (XV 4). So, he does not reinterpret them. What he does is generalize the duplicate reality model and use it as the base for his apocryphal replica. It does not include universal values but a shared spirit of sorts that will be addressed in the discussion of his idea of a human community premised on love and respect.

Despite the fact that it is related to Aristotle’s work and not to Plato’s, the etymological meaning of the term ‘metaphysics’ comes in handy in order to better understand the modification of the famous Platonic opposition real/ideal that Mairena develops. According to Jean Grondin’s account of the story of how the term ‘metaphysics’ was coined, Adronicus of Rhodes for lack of “a title for fourteen short unclassifiable studies attributed to Aristotle” decided to put the heading metaphysics, which for him “seemed to designate ‘that which comes after the physics,’” that is, after the works known as the “Physical writings.” But as Grondin and others have suggested, this name is also appropriate in view of their topic, which is, in Grondin’s recap,

“everything that is situated ‘beyond the physical’” (xxii-iii). In Mairena’s poetic metaphysics, the only thing that is not real is imagined, created individually but always in assistance with the other. Stripping off that much the real/ideal is probably close to moving away from it, but Mairena adopts it as part of his plan to revamp the relations in the community just as he plans to do with tradition.

In a similar way, that is, through some serious reformulation of Parmenides’s stance about permanence enclosed in a sphere, Mairena comes up with a new model of human thinking. Instead of the supposedly firm in order not to spill out its contents and allow for change sphere, he uses the fragile egg shell and argues, elaborating on Democritus’s idea of true knowledge, that to think is to empty it first and then to fill it up. This model, just as the metaphysical, is qualified as poetic. In the description that follows its explanation, Mairena insists that it is a specific type of artistic creation that is involved: “Fue grande el acto poético negativo, desrealizador, creador—en el sentido que daba mi maestro a esta palabra—del célebre Demócrito” (XII 1). It remains to be clarified what is the sense of the poetic for the apocryphal poet-philosophers.

The first fragment of Chapter XIV of *Juan de Mairena* offers an explanation of both the models and the special type of artistic creativity. Starting with a rejection of the solipsistic view and the poetry produced by those who have it—Machado himself in his early work from which he distances himself in the poem “Retrato” of *Nuevas canciones*—Mairena proceeds to the issue at hand:

¡Esta gran placentaria  
de ruiseñores que cantan!...  
Ninguna voz es la mía

Así cantaba un poeta para quien el mundo comenzaba a adquirir una magia nueva. “La gracia de estos ruiseñores—solía decir—consiste en que

ellos cantan sus amores, y de ningún modo los nuestros.” Por muy de Perogrullo que parezca esta afirmación, ella encierra toda una metafísica que es a su vez una poética nueva. ¿Nueva? Ciertamente, tan nueva como el mundo. Porque el mundo es lo Nuevo por excelencia, lo que el poeta inventa, descubre a cada momento, aunque no siempre, como muchos piensan, descubriéndose a sí mismo. El pensamiento poético que quiere ser creador, no realiza ecuaciones, sino diferencias esenciales, irreducibles, sólo en contacto con lo otro, real o aparente, puede ser fecundo. Al pensamiento lógico o matemático, que es pensamiento homogeneizador, a última hora pensar de la nada, se opone el pensamiento poético, esencialmente heterogeneizador.

The universal egg is replenished individually and freely but in tune with the other, or rather with the others, with the ideas of the community to which one belongs.

### 3.3. Freedom as Play

The stripped off to the basics version of a duplicate reality is at the heart of Machado’s idea of freedom—freedom as the possibility to think of a modified version of the current situation and imagine experiencing its reality, not as a temporary escape from the original one, but as a stimulus to begin to envisage and aspire for change. In a typical for modernist art way, the explanation is accompanied by an example and Machado describes in the text exactly what he does while doing it, which in this case is to think differently.

The first time freedom is brought up in the apocryphal discussion, it is through a brief comment left without any further elaboration: “La libertad... es un problema metafísico” (III 6). Naturally, out of the broader context the statement invites different interpretations besides the one that it is metaphysical freedom that worries the apocryphal poet-philosopher and not freedom from domination. Since the question of metaphysics is central for the apocryphal project, however, the sense it receives there should be the one taken into consideration. Thus, the changes introduced in the realm of the ideal or the

universally valid presented as an analogue to thought, or the universal egg and its always changing contents, perpetually emptied and filled up again, must necessarily relate to liberty as well. Yet thought is to create contents for the egg according to this model and the only thing universal for the apocryphal poets is the feeling of love. More information is needed.

It can be found in the description of the goals of the apocryphal school of thought in reference to the freedom of thinking. Touching on the proposed by Bertrand Russell in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but widely accepted until today categorization of freedom as positive, when one is able to act without internal or external restrictions, and negative, when one is free of oppression, Mairena claims that the latter is useless if the former is not guaranteed first: “¿De qué nos serviría la libre emisión de un pensamiento esclavo?” Elaborating on the intentions of his teaching, Mairena, in fact, redefines the positive version of freedom as the possibility to think in a different way:

Nosotros pretendemos fortalecer y agilizar nuestro pensar para aprender de él mismo cuáles son sus posibilidades, cuáles son sus limitaciones; hasta qué punto se produce de un modo libre, original, con propia iniciativa, y hasta qué punto nos aparece limitado por normas rígidas, por hábitos mentales inmodificables, por *imposibilidades* de pensar de otro modo. ¡Ojo a esto que es muy grave!... (XXIV 17; emphasis of the author)

The way the statement is closed with an exclamation in order to give even more emphasis to the italicized part of the phrase, shows that Mairena is adamant to lead the discussion towards the idea that this is the obstacle in front of freedom now that unfreedom can have many faces. It should come to no surprise that this is the unfreedom Mairena defines, since it stays in line with artistic expression as the ultimate goal of the reforms, the reiterated pleas of Mairena to his students to be unique and original, and the insistence that after it is emptied, the universal egg must be refilled creatively. The influence of

Nietzsche's initiative to explore the ways people can create meaning when it is distorted or obliterated is obvious, even more so since for both the artistic dimension is central and, in one way or another, reverberates in all the different aspects of the multifarious apocryphal project. Besides its other functions, the important roles in the processes related to knowing and understanding that art has, also guarantee its high standards and prevents it from succumbing to the growing in popularity linguistic and stylistic experiments of form at the expense of meaning that form the base of Machado's original concern.

An illustration of this view of freedom as a possibility to think in a different way is, in fact, the apocryphal project itself. Its focus is a reform of thinking and what it does is to suggest one. Certainly, it is a common modernist method of analysis to put into practice or "act out" what is being studied or put forward as an alternative. However, in the case of the analysis of freedom, it opens up a possibility that comes close to redefining the concept in a most important way. Rejecting both the Kantian notions of freedom as self-determination and of art as a goal in itself, Machado's analysis of the two together brings his close to some well-known previous attempts to do the same—namely, those of Friedrich Schiller and Friedrich Schelling.

Just like Machado, a creative writer who dabbled with philosophy due to a concern related to his artistic endeavors, Schiller turns to the question of freedom convinced that art plays a more important role than that of a mediator between reason and nature that Kant had suggested for it. In his famous letters on aesthetics, Schiller comes up with a different account of freedom along with the Kantian one that forms the very base of the latter's famous transcendental model. The question of why the two views are

presented in the letters simultaneously is usually answered with the background story of the letters. They were written by Schiller and sent to a Danish Prince while in expectation of an appointment for a government post in 1793, but partially destroyed by fire in 1794, and thus published incomplete as newspaper installments in 1795 by their recipient. The discrepancy that is obvious in the English version of their collection titled *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* is, however, not a disadvantage for a contemporary reader, but a clear illustration of the difference between the two views. On the one hand is Kant's vision of freedom, as guaranteed but limited within the confines of reason, on the other freedom as aesthetic play that allows for variation. A sort of liberation of the notion of freedom itself seems to be starting with Schiller who definitely is one of the first in modern time to offer a vision of it as a diversion of a norm, as the movement toward its contrary, which he calls the "play impulse."

This aesthetic play that has made Schiller famous stands very close to Machado's vision of freedom as the ability to think in a different way that he both promotes and illustrates with the apocryphal project. Both writers-turned-philosophers start off unsatisfied with reason's performance and its impact on artistic expression. Seeking to correct reason in one way or another leads them to foment experimentation with different alternatives. Naturally, rejecting Kant's model they have to provide a solution to the problem of the relation—the same, just spelled out differently in the respective historical moments—for Schiller, between reason and nature, for Machado, between the conceptual and the non-conceptual side of reason. Most importantly, for both is art at the bottom of the issue and provides the medium where they work out the solution. Also, the two put art before reason and declare reason inadequate through the

artistic prism. However, while Schiller merely judges reason, Machado goes further with the intention to correct it. Finally, Schiller restricts the model to the artistic space only, while Machado believes in its broader application. Besides a list of similarities and differences, this rushed comparison, I believe, offers an insight into Machado's definition of freedom, but also into some major issues with his curious incursions on the philosophical grounds that have baffled his critics.

Thus, the different solutions the two thinkers produce to the problematic relationship between reason and the senses come to show Machado's important step away from the idealist model, which gives special value to his analysis of the two sides of reason. Thus, when Schiller collapses the gap between reason and nature through the power of thought: "From being a slave to Nature, so long as he merely perceives her, Man becomes her lawgiver as soon as she becomes his thought" (*Letters* 120), he follows the typical idealist trajectory, which Herbert Marcuse outlines with the statement: "The truth of art is the liberation of sensuousness through its reconciliation with reason: this is the central notion of classical idealistic aesthetics" (*Eros and Civilization* 184). Machado's clear-sightedness leads him to steer clear of such attempts at reconciliation.

The view that he elaborates in the apocryphal texts is that reason and sensuousness, the conceptual and the non-conceptual operate in harmony and interdependently in spite of their differences. Their relationship is dialectical: "de lo uno a lo otro" and represents the constant oscillation in which human reason is caught in, and, as long as it continues, life can do the same and be marked by fullness. The problem is that this movement has been interrupted by reason curtailing its functions for the sake of efficiency. The attempt to stake out a plan of how it can be replenished and the motion

reinvigorated results in much more than the hypothetical achievement of the goals. Indeed, Machado's apocryphal experiment approximates an understanding of freedom that stands far from the idealist one although the author's stance is still battling its influences.

Similar credit is given today to Schiller's important advances towards this understanding, although strictly limited to art, unlike Machado's vision that is presented through the artistic medium but is announced as the general possibility "de pensar de manera diferente." As Marcuse elaborates on Schiller's achievement, his words somewhat reminiscent of Machado's statement that the negative liberty is dependent on the positive:

The quest is for the solution of a "political" problem: the liberation of man from inhuman existential conditions. Schiller states that, in order to solve the political problem, "one must pass through the aesthetic, since it is beauty that leads to freedom." The play impulse is the vehicle of this liberation. The impulse does not aim at playing "with" something; rather it is the play of life itself, beyond want and external compulsion—the manifestation of an existence without fear and anxiety, and thus the manifestation of freedom itself. Man is free only where he is free from constraint, external and internal, physical and moral—where he is constrained neither by law nor by need. But such constraint *is* the reality. Freedom is thus in a strict sense, freedom from the established reality: man is free when the "reality loses its seriousness and when its necessity "becomes light" (*leicht*). (187; emphasis of the author)

This high appreciation as well as high expectation of art will persevere through the romantics, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and will probably end with Adorno who seems to begin imposing the restrictions that the following generations of critics will, in my view, take a little too far negating both art's potential and human freedom. Machado remains in the first part of the trajectory of these developments and his enthusiasm for both is unbounded. What mars the picture is the alarming apathy and inactivity in society and its

acquiescence with the superficial life experience that such an existence provides. The apocryphal project is his attempt to reinvigorate life in a way through art and for the sake of art. What better way to do that by opening space for it to “play?” The new notion of freedom corresponds to precisely these specifics of the plan.

Also, Marcuse’s recap of the play impulse brings up the characteristic that make Schiller stand out—freedom is dialectically opposed to what is considered its opposite. Moreover, there is need to invent a new reality, just to loosen the ties that it imposes on the self’s behavior and thinking and let it be anything it may wish to be: “...it has been rendered possible for him *on the part of Nature* to make of himself what he chooses—that he has had completely restored to him the freedom to be what he ought to be” (emphasis of the author, *Letters* 101). For now only able to break the confines of want and need through imagination, the human is soon to realize that it can do that without its help as well.

Schelling is another thinker whose view of liberty changes after following in Kant’s steps for a while and becoming increasingly disappointed with the delimitation of freedom for the purposes of the Kantian model and its objectives, which seeks to secure its possibility and, through this act, to guarantee morality. The downgrading of art to a mere mediator between reason and nature according to the same viewpoint is what seems to have bothered Schilling, while the sacrifice required of freedom is what encourages Schelling to change directions various times before arriving at a similar, only updated with the new understandings of human existence and reality viewpoint. Although only a few decades after Schiller, a more complex version is already required: one that accommodates the historical dimension that Hegel adds to all knowledge as well as the

growing awareness of the complex character of human existence. While for Schiller these factors are still not part of the whole, Schelling finds himself at crossroads like Machado, that is, between some decaying structures and others that are yet to bloom. In recent time, he has been praised for the insights he has reached, according to Žižek, partially due to namely living during such a period marked by many discrepancies, ruptures, uncommon coincidences (*Abyss of Freedom*). One of them is definitely his view of freedom.

The most important feature that Schiller's and Schelling's views share is that the alternative vision of reality maintains strong ties with the original one. The constraints of the current moment are overcome for a brief period of time but without losing sight of its specifics. All the alternative details that are imagined, in the case when art is the medium, are not some arbitrary figments but, although chimeras, ones that are fully charged with the reality which they transcend, toying with, namely, these traces. As Andrew Bowie points out, this sense of freedom is different from the version that he denominates as the dialectic of Enlightenment and which, in his view, is premised on the desire to escape from reality. Thus Bowie summarizes Schelling's (and Adorno's, in Bowie's account) achievement:

Freedom in the sense of that which takes us wholly beyond this ground is a mere illusion, an omnipotence fantasy, whereas the capacity to respond in new and individual ways to what threatens our being even while it is also a necessary part of it, without pretending it can finally be obviated, means that freedom is both dependent on the ground and yet able temporarily to transcend it. The dialectic of Enlightenment results when freedom in modernity becomes the attempt to escape from or overcome the ground, rather than becoming aware of the need to come to terms with the limits of what human freedom, qua liberation from the ground, can achieve. (185)

Machado's apocryphal experiment adheres to these requirements and should be disqualified, as many other modernist projects that do the same, from the standard

accusations that their efforts aim to (self-) deceive and present a reality where problems are solved. On the contrary, in cases like the apocryphal project some possible improvements are imagined not to be presented as given but to be tested out, clearly only as optional solutions. Of course, there are those attempts when fantasy replaces reality, but they are namely the ones that Mairena as well as Machado in his letters and other writings reject with their incessant attacks against the poets who merely carry out such experimentations for the sake of experimentation. His problematic notion of deeper truth does not make references to universally valid ones, but the truths of reality, which he hopes to see in the artistic searches in order for their improvement when something is lacking or inadequate to be made visible and possibly resolved.

Thus, the apocryphals present a myth but they do so by announcing it as such and by declaring their goals to carry out an experiment, which only aspires to become a reality one day. Moreover, it seeks to improve the human condition and to give the individual guiding light, focusing on the singular person:

Nosotros no pretenderíamos nunca educar a las masas. A las masa que las parta un rayo. Nos dirigimos al hombre que es lo único que nos interesa; al hombre en todos los sentidos de la palabra: al hombre *in genre* y al hombre individual, al hombre esencial y al hombre empíricamente dado en circunstancias de lugar y de tiempo, sin excluir al animal humano en sus relaciones con la naturaleza. Pero el hombre masa no existe para nosotros. (autor XXXVI 4; emphasis of the author)

In the end, the self has to find the solution itself thinking differently about its own situation. The mechanism is offered by the project itself, if not as a model to be followed, as a guiding light that gives direction and hope and seeks to instigate change—a hard task in view of the situation in Spain, which Unamuno has aptly described as “marasmo.”

### 3.4. Dreaming the Possibility of a Better Life

The intellectual efforts of Machado's contemporaries to uphold such a dream have duly lost the extra luster that they were all given during Franco's era as part of the nationalist agenda of his regime. In recent time, however, this tendency to divest them of the extra glow has gone to such an extreme as to paint the entire work of accomplished writers like Azorín and Unamuno in negative colors based on one strand out of the variety that their work has to offer. The followers of the so-called *Quixotism*, for instance, rightly pinpoint the tendency among many Spanish intellectuals from around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to lament Spain's glorious past. Yet, they often do so through an unsubstantiated reduction of the larger efforts to call for change of many of the thinkers they target. Britt Arredondo, for instance, does an exceptional job in his book *Quixotism: the Imaginative Denial of Spain's Loss of Empire* to trace and strongly criticize such attempts that go as far as to try to even reinvigorate Spain's imperial ambitions. In my view, however, he and many others unfairly isolate these aspirations not from the context of the period, which they analyze in detail, but of the oeuvre of the writers they target and that in the case of such figures as Unamuno or Azorín is quite substantial to allow for a valid reduction of this kind.

The post-Franco denigration of the Spanish early-century intellectual endeavors to face the crisis, different but no less deep in Spain due to the loss of the last colonies and the war with the US, the perpetual failures of any democratization processes, and many other Spanish particularities, goes on the heels of the strong anti-modernist aesthetic tendencies that start in the late 1960s. As a result, a most general outlook of the period is made so popular that its many nuances seem to matter less and less. The fact that Europe

was progressively engulfed in nihilism that was extinguishing the last hopes for counteraction is also blatantly neglected by many of those eager to bare all the bones of the discourses of the past and to deconstruct them. Maybe this negligence is part of why their efforts are not yielding any great results today when, although stemming from different sources, nihilism is becoming as preponderant as a century ago.

While an initiative like the one to stir up the apathetic Spanish society and to encourage it to reflect upon its state by way of promoting a spirit of superiority, is to be disparaged, any effort to give hope in a time when it is most needed that does not exclude or resort to extremes should receive some credit for this very intention. The overall sense of disaster and of lack of purpose that afflicted the intellectual circles around the turn of the century also invigorated their endeavors to search for solutions. Parallel to the development of the extreme antihuman doctrines of fascism and National Socialism, the interest in the human condition grew and yielded some important results. Many have expressed the opinion that the time of crisis is important for human race as it entails reassessments that foment the need for change. Mikhail Bakhtin saw the hardest moments for humanity as crucial for its development and believed that they truly reinvigorated its potential. Yet, hope was probably never before in such shortage as around the time of the great transformations from the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first ones of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the importance of its recuperation should not be downplayed. The intellectual efforts to guarantee it besides laudable and unworthy of many later views that have depicted them from dangerous to laughing stock, in my view, reach some most interesting understandings and insights into the human and human life and existence.

One serious problem with many of the efforts to give hope, especially under such pressure is the need to produce a promise of some sort, that is, of a solution, of hypothetical grounding to be offered, and so on. It seems that Machado braces for such attacks with the skepticism that he promotes in the apocryphal texts, although, of course, it has other functions as well. Adding to it Mairena's acknowledgement that they are aware that their efforts are to remain fruitless at the present moment and that there is only a chance that the future will evolve the way his school hopes but no guarantee, seems to have saved Machado much of the criticism others have received. He can neither be blamed for promoting escapism, since Mairena does not paint rosy or dreamy pictures but dissects it all, nor for extreme nationalism as his painful experience to remember the past while touring the fields of Castile is accompanied by Mairena's utter rejection of national pride and chauvinism. The censure Machado's late work and especially the apocryphal texts will inevitably meet, however, is related to the utopian dimension of many of its endeavors—to prove art's prophetic powers, to impact reason's course of development, to restore the fullness of being that has resulted from them, and so on.

The apocryphal project's vulnerability to anti-utopian criticism is already cemented in its affiliation with Platonism. One of the first to describe a place where the issues of reality are non-existent, Plato offers a model that continues to baffle millennia after its inception. It is hard to refute it, due to its affinity with the very way we as thinking beings function, but it also hard to defend it, since it can and has been used to manipulate humanity and attack its integrity. Some have used the Platonic model itself to attack utopianism, like Karl Popper, for example, who asserts that "the Utopian approach can be saved only by the Platonic belief in one absolute and unchanging ideal, together

with two further assumptions, namely (a) that there are rational methods to determine once and for all what this ideal is, and (b) what the best means of its realization are” (161). The chance of the first condition to yield a positive result is null, declares Popper, and rejects the whole, claiming that ideals change and there is no guarantee that by the time they are reached they will be wanted. Also, he insists that we know so little about ourselves and reality that we cannot have a clear idea about the changes that are required. Popper suggests that we should focus on one concrete issue at a time instead.

This is one of the functions of the fragmentary structure of the apocryphals. Machado is also worried that the previous attempts to make improvements “en bloque” have failed. Yet, the current situation, which he measures with the state of art, troubles him enough to try to save the Platonic model. What he does is “update” it with the historical dimension that it naturally lacks and that after Hegel it would be impossible to “forget” to put in the mix. So Machado claims that all is in a flux and undergoes constant transformations, even that deep-seated source of intimate revelations that he cherishes so much. Thus, poetry cannot be static, as some of his contemporary artists infer, but is “palabra en el tiempo,” “diálogo del hombre con el tiempo.” (VII 3)

The motivating force behind his turn to metaphysics and the desire to adapt the old model are the negative results that his artistic meter of sorts yields—the best measuring rod in virtue of its proximity to what guarantees human existence, that is, time. Its daunting findings of “disminución de nuestra capacidad receptiva” and “debilitación y cansancio del esfuerzo creador” lead him to analyze the human condition that has allowed for this to happen and to the discovery that it is in a wretched state. What also diminishes as artistic complexity wanes is hope because, according to his understanding,

poetry is time and time is hope: “Vivir es devorar tiempo: esperar; y por muy trascendente que quiera ser nuestra espera, siempre será espera a seguir esperando” (VII 2). The narrative voice’s rhetorical question is telling: “¿cantaría el poeta sin la angustia del tiempo” (VII 2)? The answer is not unexpected: “Sin el tiempo, esta invención de Satanás [...] el mundo perdería la angustia de la espera y el consuelo de la esperanza. Y el diablo ya no tendría nada que hacer. Y los poetas, tampoco” (XXIV 6). Undoubtedly, the rest of humanity will follow suit.

The solution to be staked out as one possibility among many is contingent upon creativity. Nietzsche’s insight that when there is no meaning, it needs to be created rings loudly in the apocryphal project: “Cuando una cosa está mal, decía mi maestro—habla Mairena a sus alumnos—, debemos esforzarnos por imaginar en su lugar otra que esté bien; si encontramos por azar algo que esté bien, intentamos pensar algo que esté mejor. Y partir siempre de lo imaginado, de lo supuesto, de lo apócrifo; nunca de lo real” (XXIII 1). As per Machado’s understanding of time as past, present and future all together, the creative dimension extends as much in the future, as in the past. As Mairena insists, “no hay originalidad posible sin un poco de rebeldía contra el pasado.” He continues with one of the most reiterated exhortations in the apocryphal texts.

...os aconsejo una incursión en vuestro pasado vivo, que por sí mismo se modifica, y que vosotros debéis, con plena conciencia, corregir, aumentar, depurar, someter a nueva estructura hasta convertirlo en verdadera creación vuestra. A ese pasado llamo yo *apócrifo*, para distinguirlo del otro, del pasado irreparable que investiga la historia y que sería el auténtico: el pasado que pasó o pasado propiamente dicho. Mas si vosotros pensáis que un apócrifo que se declara deja de ser tal, puesto que nada oculta, para convertirse en puro juego o mera ficción, llamadle ficticio, fantástico, hipotético, como queráis; no hemos de discutir por palabras. (XXVIII 2; emphasis of the author)

More complex than Schiller's play, Machado's includes the past. Evoking Popper's concern with utopian thinking in general, he continues with the admonition: "También lo pasado puede *re-crearse* negativamente para desdoro o disminución de lo que fue; y aun ello es muy frecuente: tanto es demoledor y enemigo de grandezas el celo de algunos averiguadores" (XXVIII 2).

The utopian inclination and its defense, the searches for hope, the creative incursion in the past that characterize Machado's work, however, sound a little too familiar. It is not a matter of casting doubt on Machado's effort, but of casting light to trace them to their source. Indeed, Machado clearly creates his apocryphal philosophers by an eclectic selection of the available philosophies. Moreover, the idea of plagiarism is quite different in his time. Yet, it remains somewhat problematic why some sources are clearly identified and others not. Investigating the leads that are not specified is an important matter. It has to be acknowledged that in certain cases Machado shares the credit for some of his insights. The case with the thinker known for his defense of utopian thinking, for his ideas that the kernel of future hopes can be found in the past and for his promotion of daydreaming as a way to find a way forward seems to have escaped the critical eye.

Bloch's no less eclectic than Mairena's stance combines religious and mystical knowledge with a materialist outlook. He is known for his criticism of materialist thought for becoming too general and for his solution—to add a subjective viewpoint. His utopia of possibility bears many affinities with the notion of freedom that Schiller and Schelling defend as intrinsically related to the current moment and presenting its improved version and not any abstract one. His interest in Christianity, according to Tower Sargent, has led him and others to develop a non-religious 'theology' of hope" (99). The way he solves

the issue of the split between reason and the senses is dialectical. Even such a short list of some of the basic characteristics of Bloch's thought shows many resemblances with Mairena who also advocates the dialectical "de lo uno a lo otro," develops a non-religious 'theology' but of love, and combines in a way the materialist and the idealist viewpoints, or rather rejects both and proposes a different one. Moreover, Mairena seems to share Bloch's interest in folklore and his belief that it has guarded many insights from the passage of time. Last but not least, Bloch is, as Hammer points out, "an unapologetic essentialist" (204). The biggest affinity between the two thinkers, however, is the idea of the past coming alive in the future.

Adding a third meaning to apocryphal, that is, one that refers to its opposition to the authentic in the past, Mairena claims that this "plasticidad de lo pasado" needs to be manipulated to find hope, as its ideas can come to fruition in the future (XXVIII 1). He insists:

Como el arte de profetizar el pasado se ha definido burlescamente la filosofía de la historia. En realidad, cuando meditamos sobre el pasado, para enterarnos de lo que llevaba dentro, es fácil que encontremos en él un cúmulo de esperanzas—no logradas, pero tampoco fallidas—, un futuro, en suma, objeto legítimo de profecía. En todo caso, el arte de profetizar el pasado es la actividad complementaria del arte." (XXIV 12)

This is what Bloch suggests in his *The Principle of Hope*, which advocates, in Hammer's words, "the historical excavations of concrete moments of utopian consciousness expressed in private and public life, art, religion, science, and philosophy" (203). So, Bloch tirelessly explores many spaces in search of such kernels, and Mairena urges his students to do the same.

The mechanism that the two recommend in complete unison is daydreaming. As Mairena guides his students: "Hay que tener los ojos muy abiertos para ver las cosas

como son; aun más abiertos para verlas mejores de lo que son; más abiertos todavía para verlas mejores de lo que son. Yo os aconsejo la visión vigilante, porque vuestra misión es ver e imaginar despiertos y que no pidáis al sueño más que reposo” (XIV 1). Bloch insists that “the daydream projects its images into the future” and should be used to try to meet our needs, but, another interesting coincidence, with the other in mind (*The Principle of Hope* 207). Most importantly, Bloch’s utopia is “concrete,” in Tower Sargent’s words, “connected with human reality,” that is “embedded in an understanding of current reality and connected to the possibility of actual social improvement” (111).

Thus, utopian thinking, art, freedom seem to collide in the apocryphal project in their efforts to project alternative realities, or, as Tower Sargent calls them, “alternative futures,” through which “the utopia challenges the present to justify itself in values that transcend the immediate questions of power. The utopia emphasizes that life is for humans and that society should be designed to achieve the fulfillment of all the people in it” (100). It is unreal, but it does not diminish the dignity of its goals and, for those convinced by utopia, its potential.

## CHAPTER 4

### *DE UN CANCIONERO APÓCRIFO: TOWARDS A NON-NEGATIVE DIALECTIC* OR “DE LO UNO A LO OTRO”

After accumulating observations about its split nature throughout the early poetic searches— “Hay dos modos de conciencia: / una es luz, y otra, paciencia—,” the scrutiny of reason continues in the apocryphal texts and grows into a trial against the claims of authority of the side that has overpowered the dichotomy (*Campos de Castilla* XXXV). Bringing up the numerous implications of this and other related disparities, the two texts that have stemmed from the brief biographical sketches in *Cancionero apócrifo* of “doce poetas que pudieron existir—” *De un cancionero apócrifo* and *Juan de Mairena*—paint a picture of many contrasts.<sup>29</sup> However, the tendency to discern them starts earlier. In the poem from *Campos de Castilla* quoted above, the common functions of the two sides of consciousness are depicted as diametrically opposed. As the fishing metaphor in it suggests, the conceptual mode of thinking, or the one premised on logic and rationality, operates by snaring with dogged persistence one thought after the other, killing each one it catches by removing it from its natural ambience— time and space. The other side, or the one responsible for non-conceptual thought, that is, for the emotional, intuitive, sensual aspects of knowing and being, in contrast, is presented as throwing light on the deep-living and thus unreachable fish without assaulting their integrity. Once reason’s inner conflict is identified, it is only natural that it will be addressed, especially since other directly related or more distant oppositions begin to cluster around it as early as the

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<sup>29</sup> Including all the characters—philosophers, poets, essayists—labeled as apocryphal throughout Machado’s notes, Oreste Macrí counts 34 of them (77).

poems in the sections “Proverbios y cantares,” to the first one of which, in fact, poem XXXV belongs. Yet, the way the apocryphals approach this central for them matter is somewhat unexpected.

Indeed, regardless of the fact that most contrasts are presented as problematic, no attempt is made to close the gaps that define them. Nor does the lyrical subject’s often clearly expressed preference for one side, as in the comment from the same poem “... esa maldita faena/ de ir arrojando a la arena,/ muertos, los peces del mar,” lead to the rejection of the other or to any statement stronger than criticism. Moreover, the disparities between the opposite parts are constantly highlighted and the insistence that they are completely distinct and not merely juxtaposed in view of the presence or absence of some feature is reiterated. As the apocryphal project advances and other dichotomies, like self-other, inner-outer, and so on, are brought up, there is new evidence of a deliberate effort to present any two poles as necessarily irreconcilable. In the case of the paradigmatic opposition between the self and the other, for instance, it is often insisted that the self’s contrary is “esencialmente otro” and that “carece de contrario.” In addition, Mairena offers many examples to support his thesis that “[n]ada puede ser...lo contrario de lo que es:” the rose has no opposite that is “no-rose,” neither does the cucumber, the squirrel (XVII 6). It can be concluded that the logic that for every  $x$  there is a  $-x$  is unconvincing to the apocryphal voices. Also, it seems that the interest in the polarities in question is not limited to the fact that their two sides are disjoined. Or rather, the rifts continue to be the crux of the issue, but other factors, like the balance between the two parts and the nature of their relationship, are put into sharp focus.

This tendency starts in *De un cancionero apócrifo* and continues in *Juan de Mairena*. The two texts are very close thematically and also in terms of tone. The shorter, somewhat fragmented *De un cancionero apócrifo* alternates between prose, poetry, and dialogues; *Juan de Mairena* is fragmented and more diverse in form—it includes aphorisms, maxims, a mini play, poems, short pieces that sound like newspaper articles or philosophical treatises, etc. The tone oscillates between lighthearted: the jokes and silly situations abound in both, the ironic statements are most ingenious, the pithy comments besides to the point are intended to make one laugh, and so on; and quite somber tenor in other sections, which include criticism, details about the current state of affairs as regards any of the topics, comments about the disjointed reality, and culminate in the last installments whose topic is the Civil War. The poet-philosophers' optimism is strongly felt and the tone changes drastically towards higher notes when they discuss their platform or the principles of their school. The gravity of the issues at hand, however, marks every fragment and the atmosphere is tense.

Just as the tone alternates between the two broad categories, many more pairs are formed and take turns appearing in separate fragments or within the same one. These contrasts are one of the central characteristics of the apocryphal texts and are analyzed by most of their critics quite in detail yet, as I hope to show later on, overlooking one important characteristic.<sup>30</sup> As much as both sides are allotted the same attention, one is usually seen in a better light. Thus, many disparaging comments are made about the dominant sides of a pair: “La lógica es...la gran rueda de molino con que comulga la

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<sup>30</sup> Philip Johnston offers an analysis of the oppositions in Machado's work in his *The Power of Paradox*. I agree with much of what he says in the general analysis, and I think that the perspectivist view is related to the paradox that he describes but is broader.

Humanidad entera a través de los siglos” (XL 7). Similar ones about the solipsistic state of mind, attributed to: 19<sup>th</sup> –century thought, the Eleatic school or Parmenides in particular; the subjective viewpoint; the inner searches of the romantics, and so forth, are reiterated throughout the apocryphal texts. These two topics are one of the most vilified of all, yet neither they nor any other of the censured concepts, thinkers, theories, and so on are rejected. As nonconformist as the apocryphal figures are, they do not discard anything in spite of taking issue with much of what is brought up in the discussion, during which ideas and views are tirelessly condemned as ill-conceived, antiquated, inapplicable, and so forth.

This fact, together with the overabundant dialogues between Mairena and his students, has prompted some to conclude that the apocryphal teaching practice is modeled after the so-called Socratic dialogue. In broad terms, the rhetorical model that Socrates supposedly introduced is characterized by the use of the dialogue and its open-ended discussion that invites new opinions and demonstrates an interest in the reasoning behind any claim that is made in it. While some version of the Socratic dialogue is, definitely, used in the apocryphals, there are some additional aspects to this matter that need to be taken into consideration. Mairena himself offers some proof: “Os confieso ... que no acierto a imaginar cuál sería la posición de un Sócrates moderno, ni en que pudiera consistir su ironía, ni como podría aprovecharnos su mayéutica” (XXIX 2). Since the Socratic dialogue is mostly used in *Juan de Mairena*, I will discuss it in the following chapter. As *De un cancionero apócrifo* brings into focus relationality in more general terms and offers the poet-philosophers’ view of the issue as well as Abel Martín’s

solution to the problem of the oppositions the text constantly traces, I will address them first.

When Martín and Mairena focus their attention on some of the many disparities that mark human knowledge and being during their philosophic *costumbrista*-like apocryphal meanderings, their efforts tend to be twofold. First, they seek out the details and the implications of any serious imbalance between the different poles of the opposition at hand, and, then, some attempt is made to bridge the contrasting sides. The former is an ongoing effort, made evident by reiterated assertions like, for example, that the subjective viewpoint is important but insufficient or that the self naturally feels a metaphysical thirst for otherness. The struggles related to the latter, however, receive their basic formulation in *De un cancionero apócrifo*. Already claimed among Abel Martín's achievements, since one of his major works bears the same title, the dialectic that the apocryphal texts promote is most curious. It prefigures Adorno's concern that our tendency to count on negation to affirm has created too many fissures in our normative base (*Negative Dialectics*) and the preoccupation of Gilles Deleuze and Maurice Merleau-Ponty with the embeddedness of ideas like the negative and unity. What the apocryphal figures offer instead is a dialectic that involves a relationship between the one and not the "not-one" but simply the other, or "de lo uno a lo otro," that does not require synthesis of any kind but simply taking turns and active communication between the two sides. As Mairena asserts in a comment about the relationship between literature and philosophy, seen as the creative versus the normative or the analytic side of human understanding, "Hay hombres ... que van de la poética a la filosofía; otros que van de la filosofía a la poética. Lo inevitable es ir de lo uno a lo otro, *en esto como en todo*" (XXIII

2; my emphasis). Thus, “de lo uno a lo otro” becomes the leitmotif of the apocryphal inquiry into the contrasts that are part of life but also of life as a whole, since it is seen as a constant movement towards the *novum*. Whether “the new,” which in this case is “lo otro,” or, as termed in the first apocryphal text, “lo que no es,” is found or created becomes one of the central preoccupations of Juan de Mairena as the project gains impetus.

As much as it is dialectic of no theoretical merit, since it only implies going from the one to the other, the apocryphal attempt to find a substitute for the original Hegelian dialectic deserves some credit. After it is outlined, many central views of reality are analyzed with the new principle in mind, showing easy solutions that are unavailable in a world full of antagonisms. Also, this rewriting of the common dialectics marks an important step towards the equally oversimplified yet important Christian-like comradeship premised on brotherly love, which Mairena will develop later. The new dialectic is part of the bigger project of dreaming in the past tense that the apocryphals both represent and preach in unison with the innovative views in reference to the past of some major figures of the period like Marcel Proust, Henry Bergson, and Ernst Bloch. Just as the efforts of these same thinkers are not limited to the past but seek to redefine the concept of time in general, the apocryphals’ dream of improved human life and relations has different temporal projections. The ideas of what could have been and what is are used to stake out an idea of how the future could be improved. Allowing the past to speak with a voice different from the one recorded in the history books, the apocryphals become its microphone. Next, in Mairena’s words, “...habría que suponer una gran oreja interesada en escuchar una gran sinfonía. ¿Y por qué no una gran algarabía? (I 13).

Thus, this chapter focuses on *De un cancionero apócrifo* and the nature of Abel Martín's solution not to the many discrepancies in human life and being, but to the polarities between the opposing sides of the major ones and their implications—his dialectic “de lo uno a lo otro.” It analyzes the prototype of this dialectic, described in the previous chapter through the process of emptying and replenishing the universal egg, paralleled by Mairena's notion of freedom. In its original form, this dynamic is between “lo que es,” or the current reality as depicted by poem XXXV, and “lo que no es,” or the promoted by the apocryphals vision of a reconnected, not reconciled, with reality self, of balanced oppositions, unity in difference, and so on. Special attention is given to the subtexts that although seriously remodeled make the apocryphal narrative and that have been generally overlooked. The chapter concludes with Meneses's “máquina de trovar,” which elaborates on the notion that the process of assigning meaning consists of taking into consideration more than the self and its convictions and beliefs. Last but not least, an effort is made to ascertain the importance of *De un cancionero apócrifo*, which except for Meneses's invention and some peculiarities of the presentation of the “life and work” of Abel Martín is often considered less important. I, on the other hand, believe that it a fundamental part of the project because it lays its base and because the whole develops chronologically. If the two things the future poet-philosophers urge us to do are “despertad” y “sed creativos,” it is important to see how it happened with Abel Martín awakening from the solipsistic slumber and Juan de Mairena looking for ways to continue to dream. Moreover, without the first stage, the second is unattainable, which comes to show that the two poet-philosophers' views present an important continuum.

It is a fact that the apocryphal texts are understudied and that their significance within the author's oeuvre is undecided. The most logical explanation is that they remain eclipsed by the tremendous success of the poetry, lasting from Machado's day, throughout a variety of historical realities, and still going strong today— translated, taught, and studied. While it is normal that the acclaimed poetry has such impact, the fact that many of the unfavorable comments directed at the late work and especially at the unusual apocryphal project consist of a value judgment is not. In many cases, the comparison is entirely based on the claim that Machado's poetic mastery is not matched by his prose.<sup>31</sup> Although this opinion is often accompanied by a remark that the idea to recreate historical figures, that is, to reinvent the past is not uninteresting and that the wit and the ingenuity of the texts is to be praised, the interest in discerning their objectives is smaller than the attention given to the poetry oftentimes because they are not considered "good" literature. Although these tendencies are finally changing and the prose is attracting critical attention in recent time, if not even more than the poetry, very little has been done in terms of deciphering and analyzing the philosophical undercurrents that play a major role in it—after all, the protagonists are poet-philosophers. The fact that some quite obvious presences have not even been named, however, remains puzzling, since the texts continue to be read even if only to be rejected for their artistic value.

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<sup>31</sup> This is a standard comment made by the poetry critics over the years. Among the current, such comments are less frequent. The smaller group that has engaged with the prose often opens the discussion expressing disagreement but stressing the point: like, for example José María Valverde who has said, referring to Machado's post-*Campos de Castilla* period, "superficialmente se ha podido hablar de esta época machadiana como de un periodo de decadencia" (7). Dámaso Alonso in *Cuatro poetas españoles: Garcilaso, Góngora, Maragál, y Antonio Machado* calls the apocryphals unsystematic, bemused by what looks like contradictions.

Maybe Machado's prose skills are not that "bad" after all, since he has managed to occlude the apocryphal sources so well.

Another problem with the available criticism is the tendency to draw a line between the two major texts. There seems to be a consensus that the original attempt to advance the project and elaborate the presentation of two of the apocryphal figures has not produced a very successful result. Highlighting its structural and thematic shortcomings, most regard *De un cancionero apócrifo* unpolished and lacking in terms of overall intricacy, expression, argument, and so on. Many of the comparisons of the two texts suggest that the first endeavor has allowed Machado to rehearse his use of the techniques that have made *Juan de Mairena* a work of real accomplishment.

In line with the prevalent critical opinion, I consider *De un cancionero apócrifo* underdeveloped in many ways. It is also logical to think that its production must have helped Machado sharpen certain of his writing skills and master the concise expression, the aphoristic style, the use of the fragmentary structure, humor, irony, and so forth—all important characteristics that the two texts share. It is my contention, however, that the earlier and less accomplished text is an indispensable part of the whole. In my opinion, *De un cancionero apócrifo* not only sets the stage for some key developments that continue in the fragments of *Juan de Mairena*, but offers most important insights into the project as a whole.

One such gateway is presented by the key connections that it establishes with certain major philosophical schools and figures. While some of them have been traced and have received critical attention, like the directly alluded Leibniz, Bergson, Heidegger, among several more names, mostly of thinkers from Antiquity, others remain

undisclosed. One such example is the dialogue that *De un cancionero apócrifo* opens with the thought of Hegel. The fact that it remains unstudied is unfortunate as it is closely related to what I consider the two central elements of the project as a whole, that is, the other and heterogeneity on which the dialectical model that Abel Martín develops and passes on to his disciple Juan de Mairena is premised. Indeed, the first phase of the apocryphal experiment, as uncouth as it is, starts the discussion about the other, otherness, relationality by putting into sharp focus Abel Martín's amorous adventures. It is through the conclusions drawn as a result of this preliminary analysis that the second develops the key conception of cordial comradeship that Mairena envisions void of hierarchies and emancipated "de los vínculos de la sangre," which, although utopian, gives the apocryphal project a most important social dimension (IV 10). In both texts, Hegel's ideas resound loud and clear. While the disclosure of any presence in the eclectic poetic-philosophic project would enrich its interpretations, Hegel's, in my view, offers indispensable insight into Machado's goals and purposes.

#### 4.1. A Philosophical Astracanada

Bloch's idea to use the unrealized potential of the past takes the shape of reviving undeveloped philosophic tendencies that could have influenced the poet-philosophers Martín and Mairena, who could have existed. While analyzing their aesthetic-epistemic-ontologic position in this chapter and the following, I will discern more of its sources from the past besides those mentioned thus far: Parmenides, Plato, Democritus, Aristotle, and Bloch, that is, their "fathers." As it is common, Mairena's discussion of the topic is being illustrated by what is happening, and his advice to his students matches his own background, at the same time revealing an important contemporary influence. His

question from the fourth fragment of chapter XVII of *Juan de Mairena* clearly echoes Nietzsche: “Tenéis—decía Mairena a sus alumnos—unos padres excelentes, a quienes debéis respeto y cariño; pero ¿por qué no inventáis otros más excelentes todavía?” In the context of *Human, All Too Human* where to create and not to accept ready-made meaning is ardently advocated, Nietzsche’s “Correcting nature. – If one does not have a good father one should furnish oneself with one,” reads very close (150). Proving that one of the apocryphals’ intentions is namely that, the short parenthetical remark that introduces the fragment reads “*Sobre lo apócrifo.*” Nietzsche, however, will join Bergson and Heidegger as contemporary “brothers” if not “fathers,” whose positions are selectively adopted but not remodeled like those of the philosophers and the traditions of the past.

The invention of new parents, that is, teachers, origins, backgrounds, according to Mairena, should be done with caution and without haste. Unlike Nietzsche’s unflinching assertion, the poet-philosopher pleads to his students to respect the ones they have and gradually overcome their influence, that is, revamp it before building on an original stance. After urging his audience to do the same with “la vieja lógica aristotélica,” he goes on with his advice:

Pero vosotros habéis de ir mucho más despacio. Antes de soltar los andadores de la vieja lógica tenéis que hacer largo camino con ellos. Para nadar en las nuevas aguas necesitáis aun de esa calabaza, que compense con su vacío la pesada macidez de vuestros encéfalos. Hemos de proceder con método. Comenzaremos por estudiar las deducciones incorrectas, los razonamientos defectuosos, los ilogismos populares, las confusiones verbales de los borrachos y deficientes mentales, etc.; formas de expresión que no se adaptan con exactitud a los esquemas de la vieja lógica, pero que todavía no caen dentro de la nueva. (XXV 2)

Prescient about the future, as he is for the unfulfilled but not lost potential of the past, Mairena expounds on his philosophical choices, in fact, addressing us, his critics:

Que nosotros hacemos, en esta cátedra de Retórica y de Sofística, una especie de astracán filosófico es algo que podemos decir en previsión de fáciles burlas, y para socorrer, de paso, la indigencia mental de nuestros enemigos. Pero debemos añadir que este juicio responde a una visión superficial y un tanto burda de nuestra labor, porque, de otro modo, ¿cómo lo cederíamos nosotros al adversario? Nuestra misión es más firme de lo que parece, como probaremos en otra ocasión. (XXV 3)

Not only is it more than serious, the effort to resuscitate the past and trace an imaginary path that would lead to a better future is a lifesaver, in view of the endpoint of the path that was traced in reality.

Elaborating more on the idea of reworking the past, Mairena, referring to the neo-Kantians as “tornokantianos,” remarks that their “especialidad es comprender a Kant mejor que Kant se comprendía a sí mismo” (XLIII 4). Concluding this fragment with: “Lo que no es, digámoslo de paso—ningún propósito absurdo,” in the following Mairena turns to Platonism:

Esto que les digo no puede ir en descrédito, sino en loor del pensamiento filosófico, capaz de fecundar a través del tiempo la heroica y tenaz incomprensión de los hombres. Que después de veintitrés siglos haya quien dicte lecciones de platonismo al mismo Platón, no dice nada en contra, y sí mucho en favor, de Platón y de la filosofía. Mas yo quisiera—y esto es otra cosa—apartaos del respeto supersticioso, de la servidumbre a la letra en filosofía, sobre todo cuando pueda cohibir vuestra espontaneidad metafísica, sin la cual claro es que no iréis a ninguna parte. (XLIII 4)

And this is what the apocryphals do and promote—reject any authority, adopt freely, and create spontaneously.

Moreover, I believe that, it will make the “performance” understandable and its humor more accessible, as Mairena insists that the apocryphals are not aiming at just any convocation of past and present philosophies, but seek to deliver— “un astracán filosófico” (XXV 3). As defined by *The Oxford Companion to Spanish Literature*, the

astracanada is “a broad farce, often dependent on ambiguous situations and puns,” which was first created around 1900 (38). The genre fits very well with the apocryphal presentation of the numerous leading figures and theories from the past to Machado’s day—a farce, that is, a play that involves crude characterization and improbable situations, which in this case are the improbable collaboration between well-known adversaries, like Nietzsche and Socrates, for example. The specific kind of farce that the astracanada is, moreover, premised on uncertainty and wit, appeals both to the way the characters are presented and the problematic notions of truth and certainty that the texts discuss.

In order to see the presentation as comic, however, one needs to know what is mocked on the stage. Besides the absurd claims of logic to be able to explain it all, some ambitious attempts of overarching explanations are also ridiculed. Of course some of the laughter would naturally be incited by the very humor of the text, ranging from the witty comments of Mairena and his students to the simultaneous discussion of incongruous topics, like, for example, of consciousness and Abel Martín’s onanism. Yet the laughter that matters comes from the pitfalls we inevitably fall in due to the fact we can never fully see or understand reality or ourselves. Machado’s epoch is the first to realize this fact and face the gravity of the problem and to figure out what to do with this awareness—the same that Martín receives when his mirror is shattered. Therefore, I consider it important to name some of the central figures on the list of its *dramatis personae*, especially since Mairena ascertains that only on the face of it, it is astracanada.

Furthermore, no such attempt has been made by Machado’s critics and, except for some of the major figures that the apocryphals name, the other philosophers whose

presence is strongly felt remain unnamed. In general, Mairena's suggestion that the apocryphals are an astracanada of sorts has not been discussed. My viewpoint finds support in the point de Ros repeatedly makes in her book that Machado is first a dramatist and then a poet or philosopher.<sup>32</sup> Analyzed here, then, is the first part of the directed by the Spanish writer astracanada of the human searches for knowledge and understanding and some of their leading figures, or the part when one can laugh heartily as it is related to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the wars are still not a reality.

#### 4.2. The Poet-philosopher as a Modern Prometheus

Certainly, the apocryphal project is premised on the many contrasts that it highlights. At the outset, the philosophical searches of the first apocryphal figure to appear on the scene, Abel Martín, bring to the table the relationship between the self and the other and with it the larger debate related to the opposition subject-object. As the analysis progresses and Juan de Mairena takes central stage, that is, in the second apocryphal text, some other disparities are highlighted. One of them, noticeably featuring the formula "en nuestra lógica" in many of the comments that trace its contours, stands out with the major parallel that it draws. In this case, the juxtaposition is between, on the one side, the dynamics of a reality in which certain viewpoints and sides are domineering, and, on the other, the envisioned by the apocryphal poet-philosophers alternative situation in which the distribution of power is optimal, the two sides of consciousness and of the other central oppositions are counterbalanced, and the tensions, not the differences,

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<sup>32</sup> De Ros starts her book with "Antonio Machado's first vocation was the stage" and defends this statement throughout her very informative analysis of both the poetry and Machado's criticism.

captured by poem XXXV quoted earlier and the rest of Machado's creative searches are resolved.

The distinction between the two realities is the natural outcome of the notion of freedom that the apocryphal texts both defend and implement, simultaneously advocating the importance of thinking in a different way, "pensar de otro modo," and demarcating a parallel reality. The alternative one that the texts stake out and present as their solution to the many problems discerned in the discussion—just envisioning a possibility, not promising its success—is the one depicted in the sections elaborating on the principles of the new logic, as well as in many shorter retorts that allude to it or refer to the future. While it takes full shape in *Juan de Mairena*, the exploration of this model, closely related to poetry, or artistic expression, begins in the poems of the sections "Proverbios y cantares," which are very close to the apocryphal project. To quote again poems XCIX and LXXXIX, respectively, from the one in *Nuevas canciones*:

—¿Mas el arte? ...  
  —Es puro juego,  
que es igual a pura vida,  
que es igual a puro fuego.  
Veréis el ascua encendida.

Sin embargo ...  
  —Oh, sin embargo,  
hay siempre un ascua de veras  
en su incendio de teatro.

Apparently, art is seen as in possession of some special capacities. As poem XCIX implies, it is considered able to provide the space where experimentation can take place through toying with different options. Also, it is seen as equivalent with the dynamics of life itself, which corresponds to the apocryphal idea of freedom. Next, however, the element picked to represent it is fire. This allusion and the related notion of "ascua

encendida” receive a different interpretation in poem LXXXIX: “ascua de veras,” which at this initial point resembles a kernel of truth and, therefore, calls for more explanation of the problematic claim that anybody or anything can possess it. Tracing the origins of the ember is one way to approach the problem.

Another poem from *Nuevas canciones* offers additional information about the light, fire, or truth accessible to art. Through the use of a constellation of Machado’s preferred imagery, the poem describes the lyrical subject’s vision of a traveller who holds a piece of this ember, showing it to the world. This is the sonnet titled “Esto soñé:”

Que el caminante es suma del camino,  
y en el jardín, junto del mar sereno,  
le acompaña el aroma montesino,  
ardor de seco henil en campo ameno;

que de lengua jornada peregrino  
ponía al corazón un duro freno,  
para aguardar el verso adamantino  
que maduraba el alma en su hondo seno.

Esto soñé. Y del tiempo, el homicida,  
que nos lleva a la muerte o fluye en vano,  
que era un sueño no más del adanida.

Y un hombre vi que en la desnuda mano  
mostraba al mundo el ascua de la vida,  
sin cenizas el fuego heraclitano.

This poem, in my view, could be seen as another self-portrait like the famous “Retrato” in *Campos de Castilla*. It could be of Machado and his projections in the text, the apocryphal poet-philosophers. Just as in the first one, the author is revamping his stance, starting with the poems in the sections “Proverbios y cantares,” but this time he, or rather they, the poet-philosophers included, are also defending a cause. “Esto soñé” in the context of the apocryphals can be interpreted as a day-dream of a future when more are in

a possession of the fire—for now it is only the poet. The interest in the human and its situation and the desire to give to humanity fire or hope and the belief in the possibility of a brighter future, make the apocryphal figures modern-day versions of Prometheus. The origin of the fire, or that of the ember, however, is not Mount Olympus.

By following the traces that lead to its source, I pursue a much more important goal: namely, to dismiss the initial impression that this inextinguishable ember, which, according to the earlier description contains “un ascua de veras,” involves permanence or fixed and always-true knowledge or truth. Yet it continues to be called truth and remains problematic because even if not permanent, it includes an unnatural element. As indicated by the modifier “heraclitano,” the fire is taken from the fictitious river associated with the name of the ancient philosopher Heraclitus. According to the little we know about it, the philosopher described its running waters as similar to reality, which is always changing. Thus, what art provides also must be transforming as time passes and it must have its origin in the real world.

As suggested by many of Machado’s critics, Heraclitus is the leading figure among the numerous thinkers whose presence is visible in the apocryphals, or rather, in accordance with the presentation offered here, that have a role in the philosophic astracanada that he puts on the stage. Nicknamed the “weeping philosopher” as well as “the obscure,” Heraclitus of Ephesus was a pre-Socratic Greek thinker. He is mostly known for his idea that everything is always in a flux, *panta rhei*, captured by his famous phrase “No man ever steps in the same river twice.” Praised for “shifting the focus from the cosmic to the human realm,” as shown by the image of the river, Heraclitus is considered “the first humanist” although he has expressed on a variety of occasions his

disdain for most of humanity, which is “too stupid to understand his theory” (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). Nonetheless, he is a pioneer in taking the human and human affairs into consideration and, thus, paves the path that millennia later Machado follows while criticizing some of its modern deviations. Heraclitus favored fire as the most important element and his main interests were the paradox and the opposites, and he saw both not as split apart but as forming a unity. Even if Willis Barnstone’s observation that “Heraclitus . . . is for Machado what he is for Borges: an obsession” is a little too strong, it is true that the Greek philosopher’s central idea that everything is in a flux is not just one of the many “borrowings” that comprise the apocryphal stance but lays its foundation (qtd. in Fernández-Medina, *The Poetic of Otherness* 119).

The references that are made to Heraclitus and his thought are many and offer important insight into Machado’s viewpoint. Martín’s statement “No es posible . . . un pensamiento heraclítico dentro de una lógica eleática” attests to the central importance of the doctrine of the flow for the apocryphal project and traces the central conflict of the astracanada. It is not the often discussed battle between the classics and the moderns, but between the theories based on “fixities,” from Parmenides to Kant, and those that accommodate change (*NC* 198). The numerous comments about the river: the ember that it provides, the problematic situation when things are anchored in it instead of being allowed to flow, the fishermen on its banks, are also indicative of the apocryphals’ use of this doctrine to draw parallels or create more oppositions. Moreover, some mention is made about the added in modernity characteristic of Heraclitus’s thought as obscure, as in the fragment from *Juan de Mairena* in which it is elaborated into a hypothetical statement: “Si tu pensamiento no es naturalmente oscuro, ¿para qué lo enturbias? Y si lo

es, no pienses que pueda clarificarse con retórica. Así hablaba Heráclito a sus discípulos” (XXIV 10). Here once again the ancient philosopher’s position serves Mairena’s ongoing critique of the modern-day poets who, according to him, put too much effort in constructing intricate images that have no deeper meaning.

Obviously, Machado has adopted the doctrine of change for his poetic-philosophic stance as well as the fragmented aphoristic style and the preference for the riddle that characterize the little known doctrine of the ancient philosopher, although Machado’s stylistic resources the influences are, of course, many more. However, this fact does not necessarily mean that all of Heraclitus’s ideas have found their way in the apocryphal texts. What is more, the ongoing debate about the meaning of the few preserved fragments attributed to his thought, which, moreover, have come to us not directly but through his critics, brings up opinions as contrasting as the opposites Heraclitus supposedly discussed. A central point of contention is whether he asserted that the oppositions unite or just relate. Since we have too little information, unless new fragments are discovered, we may never know.

To understand better Machado’s use of certain aspects of Heraclitus’s logic of oppositions, however, it should be analyzed within the context of the many allusions made in the apocryphal texts to different dyads and the dynamics between their elements. Also, I believe that that other famous “borrowers” from Heraclitus should be taken into consideration, especially if they appear in the philosophic astracanada. Fernández-Medina makes some mention of one such position but does not pursue the clue any further in spite of the fact that there are many more in the apocryphal texts that point in the direction of this thinker. I refer here to Hegel who, as Fernández-Medina shows by

quoting from his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, has confessed that Heraclitus has been one of his major sources of inspiration and that he has appropriated many of the ancient philosopher's views. Indeed, Hegel's dialectics of a synthesis between thesis and antithesis, his idea of history and his always changing and evolving *Geist*, bear many similarities with the Greek philosopher's imagery.

While some influences may be less important, Hegel's is fundamental, especially with regard to the dialectical model and the question of the relation between the self and the other. Frequently used by Juan de Mairena later on, that is, after his teacher has supposedly passed away and he is the central figure, is the phrase "en nuestra lógica," which proves that in one way or another he has taken to heart the German philosopher's greatest ambition to replace the old Aristotelian logic. While how Hegel attempted to do it is not just shown as inadequate but some of his views are ridiculed, the desire to broaden the notion of human knowledge beyond the little that can be reduced to logical propositions and syllogisms is shared between the two. The same strategy of modified borrowing is used in view of Hegel's stand towards the relationship between opposing views but also between other entities as well as humans: namely, the model is preserved but some of its elements are modified. In this case, Mairena sees the contrasting elements as different and thus impossible to reconcile.

As much as he uses the dialectical model and attempts to write a "new logic," here, I believe, Machado cuts his ties with German idealism. Although Machado does not overcome the consciousness-centered model and is only able to peak into the future, he proves his exceptional perspicuity through many foresights, like his notions of heterogeneity or of life and freedom as playing with options. From what we saw thus far,

his metaphysics is far enough from the original model not to be problematic. The fact that poetry or art seems to have access to some special knowledge of reality and offers something nothing else can, however, is an issue from today's viewpoint and will be addressed in due time. Now, joining the already large troupe of the apocryphal astracanada is Hegel, the most radical of the German idealists.

#### 4.3. "La amada...no acude a la cita; es en la cita ausencia"

Often described by Mairena as entrenched in the tendencies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is only natural that Abel Martín's eclectic thought would in some way or another resemble the theories of one of its major figures, that is, Hegel's. Thus, as the poet-philosopher's viewpoint is expounded, it becomes clear that some of the central concepts of Hegel's theories are in the base of those of Martín's, but also of Mairena's, despite the common description of the disciple's views, by the narrative voice in this case, as belonging to the post-Hegelian tradition. Besides their use of the dialectic model, the desire to craft "una lógica nueva," and other minor details, Hegel's influence is felt through his theory of reconciliation between reason and reality, which the German philosopher proposes as the ultimate solution to the problem of alienation. Presented through what will become a common apocryphal technique—a small twist in an ongoing narration or description turns the whole thing on its ear—the theory is ultimately rejected and the dialectical model is reformulated. Since it is also Hegel's definition of freedom, later on, Mairena reworks that as well.

In Hegel's early writings, love relations are considered the paradigmatic case of his idea of reconciliation of reason and reality. His decision to close the gap between them is one of the major obstacles in front of today's considerations of certain of his

theories, like, for example, that of a rational social order that some still believe is not only viable but most appropriate for our society. Without going in that direction, I use here the insights offered into the matter of Hegel's idea of unity and his view of freedom by one of the supporters of this stance, Frederick Neuhouser.

The idea of reconciliation, Neuhouser agrees, commenting on the general opinion, is in the very base of Hegel's understanding of reality as a whole and is regarded by the philosopher, in Neuhouser's words "as the principle aim of philosophy in general." He goes on to elaborate:

In comprehending the whole of reality (Wirklichkeit) as informed through and through by the categories of rational thought, philosophy is supposed to reveal to human subjects that their world is not fundamentally alien to their basic aspirations—including the need to find the world good and intelligible to human reason—but rather an arena within which those aspirations can be satisfied. Thus, by demonstrating the rationality of the world, philosophy reconciles it to us. (7)

While Neuhouser tries to go around the problems with this view, stating that Hegel's "normative foundations," or "the force of the very demanding standards Hegel thinks social institutions ought to measure up to" are most propitious for a variety of interpretations, many go in the opposite direction and reject the whole theoretical stand of the German philosopher. Those who disagree argue that reality is not transparent to us and cannot be rationalized.

The line followed by Abel Martín and later Mairena is, in a way, a combination of the two major tendencies—they use the model but reject its basics, starting with the possibility of reconciliation. Unwilling to sacrifice individuality in order to battle alienation, they thus go in a very different direction through the old means. The first apocryphal text stages a peculiar encounter between the self and the other, which mimics

Hegel's description of the encounter between the lovers that ends up in their reconciliation, up to the last moment when the other does not meet the expectations of the self and does something else. Due to this small detail, the whole model collapses.

A recap of Hegel's view of reconciliation, which for him is freedom, is offered by Neuhouser. As he explains, "an entity is free, on Hegel's view, when it is determined by itself—when it is the source of its own determinations, or properties (*Bestimmtheiten*)—rather than determined by an "other" (that is, by something alien or external to itself)." This, Neuhouser says, cancels the self's relations to anything beyond itself and is often termed by Hegel as "being-with-oneself." A problem arises at this first stage of the definition with the doctrine quoted earlier that disallows "immediate" being and calls for the other to somehow enter the picture. Neuhouser explains that the solution comes through the appropriation of the other's otherness, which Hegel sums up with the expanded version of his formula, becoming "being-with-oneself-in-an-other (*Beisichselbstein in einem Anderen*)." The process of cancelling or overcoming of otherness is achieved by the subject "finding itself (its aspirations as a rational subject) to be fully realized in an other (the world)." In a parenthetical remark, Neuhouser offers a useful illustration:

It is perhaps helpful to note in this context that the young Hegel took love to be the paradigm for freedom conceived of as being-with-oneself-in-an-other. There is an obvious sense in which a loved one continues to be an other for the person in love, while at the same time, through an act of conscious identification with the loved one's needs and well-being, the demands those needs place upon the lover cease to appear as something foreign or limiting. (20)

It is true that in some of his first published works Hegel analyzes love relations in this light. In a fragment titled "Love" from his early theological writings, the philosopher

insists that "...genuine love excludes all oppositions" (304). The model he puts forward has three stages that develop from "immature to completely mature unity." During the first stage, the self is still facing reality as foreign and there exists "the possibility of cleavage between itself and the world;" in the second, "reflection produces more and more oppositions;" and during the final one "love completely destroys objectivity and thereby annuls and transcends reflection, deprives man's opposite of all foreign character, and discovers life itself without any further defect" (305). Although the two maintain their differences, together they are one. Hegel uses the same view of love in his moral theories, calling love an "ethical unity" (*Elements of the Philosophy of Right* 199). However, the other's choices are quite limited in this scenario. If all options are included, the lover can fall out of love. Hegel does not have an answer for this quite possible situation.

Thus a very different outcome is produced when the loved one, as the narrator in *De un cancionero apócrifo* jokingly suggests quoting Abel Martín, "no acude a la cita," rejecting the love of the self, in which case the whole model collapses (NC 195). As the text shows, it is not at all unlikely that "el objeto erótico...se opone al amante," with the result that "lejos de fundirse con él, es siempre lo *otro*, lo inconfundible con el amante, lo impenetrable, no por definición, como la primera y segunda persona de la gramática, sino realmente" (NC 196; emphasis of the author). This point that the abstract idealist theories are also unreal, even called apocryphal, is a recurrent one in *Juan de Mairena*:

Vivimos en un mundo esencialmente apócrifo, en un cosmos o poema de nuestro pensar, ordenado o construido todo él sobre supuestos indemostrables, postulados de nuestra razón, que llaman principios de la lógica, los cuales, reducidos al principio de la identidad que los resume y reasume a todos, constituyen un solo y magnífico supuesto: el que afirma

que todas las cosas, por el mero hecho de ser pensadas, permanecen inmutables, ancladas, por decirlo así en el río de Heráclito. (XXIII 3)

The narration of *De un cancionero apócrifo* starts with an earlier point when the object of love is available as a dream. At that initial moment “[I]a amada—dice Abel Martín—acompaña antes que aparezca o se oponga como objeto de amor; es en cierto modo una con el amante—” this last remark mocking Hegel’s view (NC 192). The reiterated poem: “Gracias, Petenera, mía: / en tus ojos me he perdido; / era lo que yo quería,” reveals the comfort temporarily offered by the solipsistic reality (NC 197). After a while, however, the illusion is dispelled by consciousness itself and the circle of self-referentiality is finally broken:

“La consciencia—dice Abel Martín—, como reflexión o pretengo conocer del conocer, sería, sin el amor o el impulso hacia lo otro, el anzuelo en constante espera de pescarse a sí mismo. Mas la conciencia existe, como actividad reflexiva, porque vuelve sobre sí misma, agotado su impulso por alcanzar el objeto trascendente. Entonces reconoce su limitación y se ve a sí misma como tensión erótica, impulso hacia lo *otro inasequible*.” (NC 203; emphasis of the author)

The parody of the Kant-Hegel line of thought continues with the description of the next step consciousness makes: “Descubre el amor como su propia impureza, digámoslo así, como su *otro inmanente*, y se revela la esencial heterogeneidad de la substancia” (NC 203; emphasis of the author). The description of the changes of consciousness’s viewpoint ends with the ironical evaluation of the “ser o sujeto absoluto” as a positive stage of the development, since it has led it towards knowing or suspecting its own heterogeneity, and of the ability to see that nothing can be permanently abstracted from reality. It only happens temporarily, when it is thought of, as reason by definition is abstract. The problem is that it has gone too far in creating its artificial monolithic

systems. A simple emotion like love and the not at all extraordinary act of the other to reject the love of the self are enough to dismantle them.

The lighthearted tone with which the narrator dismisses one claim or facet of the pillars of the idealist tradition after the other establishes the general tone of the apocryphals, synchronizing the serious with the comic, as it does with all the other oppositions. Yet the focus of their attention is on most serious matters and the whole text has a different tone. The issues are only seen through a different prism, or perspective, adding on to the already growing number of viewpoints that collide—the narrator’s, Martín’s, “lo gedeónico,” derived from ‘gedeonada,’ or something simple, silly, banal. What this last view points at is the fact that by reverting to absolutist values, reason has disconnected from simple life and being. While Mairena sometimes blames common sense for denigrating knowledge, “lo gedeónico” is always celebrated: “Para descubrir la cuarta dimensión de vuestro pensamiento, buscad el perfil gedeónico de vuestras paradojas, en el espejo bobo de vuestra sabiduría” (LI 11). The search for knowledge is established early on as one of the central problems to be faced from different angles throughout the apocryphal project while also discussing and criticizing them.

Thus, Martín’s reward for his failed attempt to establish an intimate relationship is knowledge: “fracasa el amor pero no el conocimiento, o, mejor dicho, es el conocimiento el premio del amor” (NC 204). As it happens throughout the text, a poem reiterates what the narration says, or vice versa for that matter. The one that follows this statement, however, seems more obscure than usual:

En sueños se veía  
reclinado en el pecho de su amada.  
Gritó en sueños: “¡Despierta, amada mía!”  
Y él fue quien despertó; porque tenía

Su propio corazón por almohada.  
(*Los Complementarios*). (NC 205)

Clearly, it alludes to the moment when the self realizes that the self-referential circle can be deceptive. In fact, this is a recurring motif in *Juan de Mairena*, who never tires of making disparaging remarks about the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which he often describes as obsessed with itself. “Despertad” is also a frequently reiterated slogan, together with, importantly, “Sed originales.” In part, the knowledge that the narrator refers to is that of the world outside of the solipsistic mind. However, the appearance of the loved one, although momentarily and like an illusion, brings about much more awareness: of reality and oneself. As per Martín’s metaphysics, “es precisamente el amor la autorrevelación de la esencial heterogeneidad de la substancia única” (NC 196). Like Petrarch’s lyrical subject, Abel Martín begins to see the world with different eyes upon his contact with the other, but with eyes that also change and are looked at with other ever-changing eyes. As the narrator states, at the moment of the erotic revelation “[n]i Dios está en el mundo, ni la verdad en la conciencia del hombre” (NC 207).

#### 4.4. “El gran cero”

The determination to reinvent one’s own “fathers” in order to be able to imagine a better future than the one that the current situation can produce is applied to god as much as to any other influential predecessor. The result is a god who creates nothing:

##### AL GRAN CERO

Cuando el Ser que es se hizo la nada  
y reposó, que bien lo merecía  
ya tuvo el día noche y compañía  
tuvo el hombre en la ausencia de la amada.  
*Fiat umbra!* Brotó el pensar humano.  
Y el huevo universal alzó, vacío,  
ya sin color, desubstanciado y frío,  
lleno de niebla ingrávida, en su mano.

Toma el cero integral, la hueca esfera,  
que has de mirar, si lo has de ver erguido.  
Hoy que es espalda el lomo de tu fiera,  
y es el milagro del no ser cumplido,  
brinda, poeta, un canto de frontera  
a la muerte, al silencio, al olvido. (NC 211)

After creating nothing, god creates the self who is accompanied by an absent other, with whom it is anxious to connect, and in possession of the empty universal egg, which it is free to refill, thereby giving meaning to everything. Since god, el Ser, is taking a deserved break, it is the self, who is to create, that is, to give meaning to things, as it is all there but god left it unnamed, that is, there is nothing. Nothing, then, is “lo que es,” or Parmenides’s *is*, and it can be changed to “lo que no es,” or Parmenides’s, *is not*, through replenishing the universal egg, that is, through thinking and assigning meaning. The poet rejoices, because the miracle of creation is in his hands. The dialectic in this case—“Necesita pues el pensar poético una nueva dialéctica—” is “del ser” al “no ser.” “El no ser,” Martín affirms, “es la creación específicamente humana” (NC 210-11).

The nothing that would perturb the philosopher, and it has not one but many, gives joy to the poet. A fragment from *Juan de Mairena*, recaps the events described in *De un cancionero apócrifo*. Moreover, it alludes to the philosopher who took serious issue with nothingness—Martin Heidegger. So the fragment reads:

Pero el poeta debe apartarse respetuosamente ante el filósofo, hombre de pura reflexión, al cual complete la ponencia y explanación metódica de los grandes problemas del pensamiento. El poeta tiene su metafísica para andar por casa, quiero decir el poema inevitable de sus creencias últimas, todo el de raíces y de asombros. El ser poético—*on poietikós*—no le plantea problema alguno; él se revela o se vela; pero allí donde aparece es. La nada, en cambio, sí. ¿Qué es? ¿Quién la hizo? ¿Cómo se hizo? ¿Cuándo se hizo? ¿Para qué se hizo? Y todo un diluvio de preguntas que arrecia con los años y que se origina no sólo en su intelecto—el del poeta—, sino también en su corazón. Porque la nada es como se ha dicho,

motivo de angustia. Pero para el poeta, además y antes que cualquier cosa, causa de admiración y de extrañeza. (XXXI 2)

Here Abel Martín evokes Heidegger's words with which he closes his "What is Metaphysics?" in 1929: "Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?" (qtd. by Polt 57). Machado, I agree with Antonio Sanchez Barbudo, must have been aware of Heidegger's work to do that and to make an allusion to the German philosopher's famous concept of *Angst*, "motivo de angustia."

While it bothers the philosopher, the nothingness brings joy to the poet. Nothingness, or, in Richard Polt's words, "the absence of final grounding" is liberating. Thus Polt affirms, "These "lacks" ... are actually *positive* phenomena—indispensable and enabling features of the human condition. As Antonio Machado suggests in his poem, properly human existence and thought *require* the absence of complete perfection and fullness. For Heidegger, this is the case because we are radically *temporal*, enmeshed in a past we cannot change and a future that is subject to death" (59; emphasis of the author).

Machado's attempt to solve the problem with the past is the apocryphal project. Heidegger echoes throughout it, the question about death is brought up on a variety of occasions, the urge to wonder at things as, for example in "El paleta perfecto es el que nunca se asombra de nada" (VI 2). Where Heidegger is most influential, however, is in regards to the concept of nothingness. It overturns Leibniz's affirmation that since god was good, he created the best of the worlds—his own conclusion after questioning the something vs. nothing opposition. He created nothing, according to Machado, Heidegger, also Schelling and many more who see that as freedom.

Schelling was one of the first to positively affirm this nothingness, according to Polt, and motivated by his disagreement with Leibniz's famous declaration that "Nothing is without a reason." Polt elaborates on the problem, also quoting Schelling:

In the various drafts of the unfinished *Ages of the World* (1811-1815), Schelling's goal is to grasp the origin of finite beings without simply explaining away the mystery of their givenness or "Being"—"this incomprehensibility, this active resistance to all thinking, this effectual darkness, this positive inclination to obscurity [Previous philosophy] would have preferred to get rid of the uncomfortable altogether, to dissolve the unintelligible completely into understanding or (like Leibniz) into representation." Schelling tries to grasp Nothing as "neither what is nor what is not, but only the eternal freedom to be" or as "the will that wills nothing." (66)

This is the freedom that Machado traces with his dialectical model that solves the issue with nothingness: "de lo que es a lo que no es." This second dialectic, again, plays on the words with a famous philosopher in need of reconsideration, that is, Parmenides, again, it does not have any theoretical merit. What it entails is simply the mechanics of creativity: to create a new thing out of what is available.

Not an insignificant acknowledgement in itself, Machado's poem "El gran cero" is used as the epigraph of Richard Polt's chapter "The Question of Nothing" in *A Companion to Heidegger's Introduction to Metaphysics*. What is more, its function is not only to set the theme, but is referenced by the philosopher in regards to his analysis of the tradition that starts with Scheler and Schelling and continues in Nietzsche's early works, like *Human, All Too Human*, in which the idea that the self has to create meaning is one of the central themes. It is, of course, related to the higher expectations placed on art. Machado's stance also involves the poetic, but the third component that he includes is unique for his variation of the model. It is the other, ignored by both Nietzsche and

Heidegger. Most important here is the other's assistance in the process of ascribing significance, as well as the attention paid to the importance of language.

Serrano Poncela is right to point out that the following poems from the section "Proverbios y cantares" in *Campos de Castilla* sum up Machado's poetics:

¿Dices que nada se crea?  
No te importe, con el barro  
de la tierra, haz una copa  
para que beba tu hermano. (XXXVII)  
¿Dices que nada se crea?  
Alfarero, a tus cacharros.  
Haz tu copa y no te importe  
Si no puedes hacer barro. (XXXVIII)

The contents of the cup is the meaning that the self assigns to things, passing it to the other.

*De un cancionero apócrifo* offers more details about this awareness of the importance of communication and language when it comes to the question of the creation of meaning:

Las palabras, a diferencia de las piedras, o de las materias colorantes, o del aire en movimiento, son ya por sí mismas significaciones de lo humano, a las cuales ha de dar el poeta nueva significación. La palabra es, en parte, valor de cambio, producto social, instrumento de objetividad (objetividad en este caso significa convención de sujetos), y el poeta pretende hacer de ella medio expresivo, objeto único, valor cualitativo. Entre la palabra usada por todos y la palabra lírica existe la diferencia entre una moneda y una joya del mismo metal. (NC 208)

The important thing is that everybody can create meaning regardless of its aesthetic value. It is only through the incorporation of the other that Machado developed such an understanding—Nietzsche's insistence in creativity is related to the desire of the self to have a life full of meaning. Language, then, is nobody's.

In “Problemas de la lírica,” he claims that “[e]l sentimiento no es una creación del sujeto individual, una colaboración del yo con materiales del mundo externo. Hay siempre en él una colaboración del Tú, es decir, de otros sujetos,” adding after that, “Pero el lenguaje es ya mucho MENOS MÍO que mi sentimiento” (714; emphasis of the author). This idea is also addressed in the apocryphals. Both comic and serious, the statement “Ayudadme a comprender lo que os digo, y os lo explicaré más despacio,” reiterates the same thought (LI 12). Machado’s attention to the role of language is most important, as it shows his growing awareness of its elusive nature and its importance as regards significance. Language is correctly placed between the self and the other and it is intimated that its use is premised on more than the meaning it has for either side.

The important change in reference to meaning captured by the tradition stemming from Scheler and Schelling all the way to Machado is explained by Paul Tom. Discussing interpretation and using as a base of his conjecture the literal meaning of the English phrase to ‘make sense,’ Tom suggests that the process has two trajectories. According to him, “[t]he difference between them corresponds to the difference between something’s making sense and our making sense of it” (28). Moreover, this conception of art and originality as related to playfulness and freedom seems to be a common denominator for them as well as for Schiller and Schelling. As Thom elaborates on the two possibilities:

Roughly, this corresponds to the two possible directions of the relation of fit—concept-to-object or object-to-concept. In the first case, interpretations are discovered: by finding out something about the object of interpretation we come to understand it. In the second case, interpretations are invented: we make of the object something it previously was not. Interpretations of the first type aim to be authoritative; interpretations of the second type aim rather at playfulness. (29)

This playfulness, of course, can be and has been used to create “castles in Spain—” the standard accusation against modernist art—but this is only one strand of a very rich movement that has also built hopes and not for glory but for a meaningful life.

#### 4.5. “La máquina de trovar”

Through a sort of an apocryphal within the apocryphal, Mairena imagines “un poeta, el cual, a su vez, había inventado un aparato, cuyas eran las coplas que daba a la estampa,” hinting at the possibility that some of them were created by Meneses’s machine (NC 229). The continuous play with the names Machado-Martín-Mairena-Menenses suggests the possibility that that they are intentionally presented as some projections, and even projections of projections of the author, rather than as distinct figures. This typical modernist devaluation of the opposition subject-object has received plenty of critical attention in view of the relationship between self and other and the notion of authority. Its implications for the problem of meaning, however, are also important.

The mechanism is exemplified in *De un cancionero apócrifo* by Menenses’s “máquina de trovar,” which serves Mairena to, on the one hand, attack the current poetic tendencies to reproduce pleasing to the eye and the ear yet superficial images, verging, according to him, on platitudes and clichés; and, on the other, it also assists him to move forward, as Valverde asserts, towards a conception of ideology (82). “[L]o que se produce es lo único que se puede producir” is a comment made by the narrator, but it can be applied to the “máquina de trovar—” an invention that captures the sentiments of a group and comes up with a poem. His argument against Meneses’s production of “mass” poems in defense of individuality offers many interpretations. As he warns in one of the

fragments that to be part of “la masa” is dangerous because “sobre ellas se puede disparar,” Mairena’s defense on individuality is probably both related to his desire to find a way to promote freedom and a fuller life experience, that is, to make sure that the universal egg is filled up individually and thus creatively, and to his growing awareness of the fact that the individual belongs to a community through more than an intellectual and an emotional bond. Since poetic thought creates differences, more poets are needed. Matched with love it becomes a unity in difference.

## CHAPTER 5

### *JUAN DE MAIRENA AND THE POETIC DREAM OF UNITY IN DIFFERENCE*

As Machado's production is not that voluminous, it is not a surprise that some quotes from his work, correspondence, and other sources have become recurrent in his scholarship. One such personal statement about his interest in philosophy seems to have found its way in many of the studies of the author's later pieces. It comes from the unpronounced "Proyecto de Discurso de Ingreso en la Academia de la Lengua," which Machado begins with presenting himself, his qualifications and ambitions, before moving on to some issues related to Spanish letters. In this popular quote, however, the author also makes a peculiar confession about his interest in literature that gets mentioned as a curious fact but is never discussed. It is probably dismissed by most critics along with the other details that he gives in an attempt to belittle his abilities and to paint a modest self-portrait. Yet it is unexpected to hear the following from one of Spain's most famous poets: "Si algo estudié con ahínco fue más de filosofía que de amena literatura. Y confesaros he que, con excepción de algunos poetas, las bellas letras nunca me apasionaron" (*OPP* 843). Under different circumstances, this lack of affinity for the literary arts could be seen as some peculiarity of his, but the fact that throughout his career Machado vehemently defended the importance of poetry poses something of a paradox. It is different from his standard diatribes against the new poets and their innovations, because it discards literature in general. As much as in the sentences that follow this statement he clarifies that part of the problem is the limited possibility for spontaneity when it comes to the written word, it remains a curious fact that his

appreciation for literature is so low, with only a few poets' work passing muster on the account of naturalness.

The question of what kind of poetry Machado has in mind looms prominent in the fragments collected under the title *Juan de Mairena*. They span numerous themes as well as artistic, philosophic, social, and political concerns, but poetry is always involved in what is presented in a good light: the poetic metaphysics and the poetic skepticism that the apocryphal texts propose as an antidote to the epistemological and the ontological issues they raise, the poetic thinking that they associate with non-conceptual thought and thus see as able to counter the ascendancy of its subjective counterpart, and so on. With its implications extending as far as the human and its condition, it is important to define it in order to understand Machado's stance towards them and their improvement—namely, what I have set as my goal with this study.

One way to go about this problem is to look for antecedents that share such lofty expectations of poetry. The task is not hard, as modernist thought in many ways stems from the movement that has inaugurated the idea that aesthetic behavior plays a decisive role in human life, especially when it comes to change and transformation—namely, Romanticism.<sup>33</sup> Reviewing one of the most prominent efforts to defend such a function of art, it can be said that the prospects that Machado invests in his poetry bear many similarities with the ones accorded by the contributors to the *Athenaeum* magazine,<sup>34</sup> The

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<sup>33</sup> The title of Robert Pippin's book in which he expresses a similar opinion but narrows down the threshold of the new era to Hegel's aesthetics is telling—*After the Beautiful*. For Kant art was the aesthetically pleasing or beautiful.

<sup>34</sup> The so-called Jena circle formed in 1798 in the university city of Jena and existed until 1804. Two of its members, the Schlegel brothers Karl and August started a magazine, *Athenaeum*, to which many of the members of the circle contributed over the years. It

Schlegel brothers, Schleiermacher, Novalis, and others, to their *poesie*. Nonetheless, while Machado's use of the fragment, the aphorism, the open-ended structure etc., as well as his insistence in the importance of the sentiment, the emotion, the free play of the imagination, all echo the staples of the collaborative efforts of the famous Jena circle, some important differences show that as much as his notion of poetry belongs to the same tradition, it has evolved into a different form.

To quote from the well-known *Athenaeum* fragment 116, which offers a definition of the *poesie* that the group promotes, it is regarded as “progressive” and “universal” and its purpose is said to be to reunite “the separate species of poetry and put poetry in touch with philosophy and rhetoric” as well as to “mix and fuse poetry and prose, inspiration and criticism, the poetry of art and the poetry of nature” (Schlegel 175). Alternating between “en esta clase de” “retórica,” “sofística,” “literatura,” and so on, while preparing future poet-philosophers, also explicitly denouncing specialization— “Cuando el saber se especializa, crece el volumen total de la cultura. Esta es la ilusión y el consuelo de los especialistas—,” Mairena shows similar intentions to relink the different disciplines (I 12). He also tries to bridge the gap between the literary genres and uses poetry and prose in a parallel way. With his philosophical *astracanada*, the mini play that serves as a separate fragment in the apocryphal texts, and all the comments about drama, the theatrical genre is also incorporated. True to his dialectical model “de lo uno a lo otro,” however, Machado does not “fuse” any of the oppositions that Schlegel mentions but connects them, keeping their differences intact and assuring that they enter in a dialogue

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published fragments, written by different people and left unsigned. Fragment 116 is considered their manifest.

and have equal rights of expression. In fact, as quoted earlier, he uses the dynamics between philosophy and poetry to expound on his dialectical stand: “Lo inevitable es ir de lo uno a lo otro, en esto, como en todo” (XXIII 2).

Thus, Machado’s poetry is not “transcendental *poesie*,” as Schlegel calls his in fragment 238: “There is a kind of poetry whose essence lies in the relation between the ideal and the real, and which therefore, by analogy to philosophical jargon, should be called transcendental poetry” (195). Schlegel’s is because, as Ernst Behler explains, he “abolished the distinction between philosophy and poetry by referring the reflective part of this interaction also to poetry and by rephrasing the notion of reflection as a ‘poetic reflection’ that includes the producer along with the product, ‘the portrayed and the portrayer’” (139). The way the two interpenetrate each other brings to mind Hegel’s model of reconciliation, but, since one of the characteristics is reflection and they begin to multiply in the process, Behler opts for an interpretation based on the views of Kant and Fichte. Indeed, reading Fragment 116 from which Behler quotes, it is easy to detect the Kantian idea of a subject and object “joined ... in an inseparable way” and his view of art as a disinterested moderator between reason/freedom and nature/necessity, unique in possessing something of both sides (139). Fichte’s notion of the super Ego, which reflects upon itself and by accumulating such reflections self-transforms endlessly, also bears significance to the kind of *poesie* that the romantic group defends. Replacing the self with art, they make Fichte’s reflection *ad infinitum* one of their central understandings. As Schlegel explains in Fragment 116, the “transcendental *poesie*” is able to “hover at the midpoint between the portrayed and the portrayer, free of all real and ideal self-interest, on the wings of poetic reflection, and can raise that reflection

again and again to a higher power, can multiply it in an endless succession of mirrors” (175).

Being “palabra en el tiempo” and “diálogo del hombre con su tiempo,” Machado’s poetry, in contrast, cannot be disinterested, that is, objective (VII 3). Passing or repetitive, whatever his idea of time could be, he sees poetry as premised on its temporal specifics as well as dependent on the perspective of the interlocutor. Furthermore, the logic of reflection goes against the grain of the dialectical principle “de lo uno a lo otro,” which lacks the element of unification of the traditional, that is, the Hegelian model. Machado’s poetry, then, is not only distinct from the “transcendental” *poesie* but is not reflective in any other way, and the mirror images, with which it has had an experience in the past, are only seen as causing confusion.

To be sure, Machado’s lyrical subject finds its way out of “el borroso laberinto de espejos” during the very first leg of its journey and, for the rest of it, mounts one attack after the other against the circulatory models of reflections of reflections of Kant, of Fichte, called the “father” of modern reflectivity, of Hegel (*Soledades* XXXVII). Machado, as it is his custom, appropriates from the romantics the framework, the basics. However, his idea of art is very different. First, he sees it as temporal in itself—thus the hatred of the written word as in fragment 5 of chapter XLVIII of *Juan de Mairena*: “Yo nunca os aconsejaré que escribáis nada, porque lo importante es hablar y decir a nuestro vecino lo que sentimos y pensamos.” Second, it does not reflect but produces meaning. To establish the ground and the mechanism for this creative effort is the primary goal of the apocryphal project.

The need to account for the presence of the other at the advent of existentialism and the new understandings of the world during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, breaks the self-referential circle and the self starts looking at reality. However, as it is typical for the apocryphals, Mairena imagines a better past alternative. Substituting Goethe, or the original romantic poet, with Shakespeare, for his interest “*into the seeds of time*,” fragment 1 of Chapter XV in *Juan de Mairena* elaborates on the idea of what poetry is: “En verdad, lo poético es ver.” With his new “father” in mind, Mairena proceeds to say that art is to see and to imagine—both meaning and a better reality. Stating how this second premise works, Mairena explains: “Hay que tener los ojos muy abiertos para ver las cosas como son; aún más abiertos para verlas otras de lo que son; más abiertos todavía para verlas mejores de lo que son” (XIV 1). This statement encapsulates the entire apocryphal theory of creating meaning in the present and in the future: the first stage is to start looking at reality for answers, the second demands that the poet creates different visions of what the current situation has to offer, and the third consists of imagining some improvements.

Together with the plasticity of the past, all these specifics accommodate Ernst Bloch’s view very well.<sup>35</sup> Like him, Mairena is a dreamer—of both the past and the future. He sees in the past some potential and traces its hypothetical future development. He is especially interested in the one that improves the current situation. It may be a utopia but it doesn’t require a special person, art, artistic skills. All it needs is that people imagine, that is, think in another way, which is to be free. Unlike Kant and Hegel who

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<sup>35</sup> Heidegger, Walter Benjamin and many others also discuss the importance of reviewing the past in a creative way, but Bloch’s vision of the future stands closest to Machado’s.

tried to frame freedom—with good intentions, because their desire was to guarantee it—Mairena sets freedom free. Like Hegel, who insisted that you are free only if you exercise your freedom, Mairena incessantly urges his students to create, hoping to both accelerate change and to shake people off and take them out of the lethargic slumber. It remains to be seen what the poet's role is since anybody can create meaning and the absence of what kind of poetry Machado bemoans.

The focus of this chapter is, therefore, on the replacement of the representational model that the apocryphal texts intimated from the start by their calls for originality and creativity. Revealing more key characters of the apocryphal philosophic astracanada, I analyze the texts' simultaneous use and defense of perspectivism and its implications for their epistemic stance. The second part of the chapter investigates the opposition Socrates-Christ, which Mairena uses to illustrate his ideas of collaboration and complementation as a solution to the rift between the two sides of reason represented by Socrates and Christ and as well as to the tensions of human life and being created by it. Building on the vision of their harmonious coexistence, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the purported social implications of the apocryphal reform—human relations based on camaraderie, sympathy and love.

### 5.1. Creating Something in the Image of Nothing

The dissatisfaction with the well-established tradition of representation that is premised on the notion of reflection becomes visible in the set of poems in the sections “Proverbios y cantares” and in *De un cancionero apócrifo* that discuss the eyes. At first, they are depicted as seeing themselves in el “espejo negro,” which can be interpreted as the impenetrable Kantian object-in-itself, but could also be part of the solipsistic state of

mind. During this initial stage, the look comes back to the looker, as presented by Abel Martín's poem: "Mis ojos en el espejo/ son ojos ciegos que miran/ los ojos con que los veo" (NC I). After the encounter with the other, however, the eye<sup>36</sup> that returns the look is no longer the same as the one that gives it, as in poem XX of "Proverbios y cantares" de *Nuevas canciones*: "El ojo que ves no es/ ojo porque tú lo veas:/ es ojo porque te ve." Making an allusion to the myth of Narcissus who, according to the legend, spent his time admiring his own image in the water, the lyrical subject only sees its own reflection in the impenetrable or unimportant world around until it encounters the other, or rather, until it falls in love.

One reason why love relations take precedence over any other human interaction stems from the desire, typical for the apocryphal astracanada, to update old models related to knowing and being, and there is a plethora of them when it comes to the dynamics of love affairs. In the case of amorous relations, the tradition dates back to at least Petrarch and the troubadours when they first assume their modern form, offering many literary and theoretic models to the apocryphal selection. Also, love implicates the existence if not the presence of the other, and thus the principle of self-referentiality cannot be the only explanatory one. Moreover, this emotion or feeling in particular forms the center of the solution Machado crafts out to confront the problems of purposelessness and alienation—a cordial relationship with the other premised on sympathy and affection. Being both a strong and common human feeling, love also offers a most sharp contrast to

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<sup>36</sup> Most critics agree that the use of the singular here has to do with Leibniz's monad, which is a single unit.

conceptual reason, whose logic Machado seeks to counterbalance since its dominance has grown beyond the healthy ratio.

That the astracanada includes some easily recognizable settings and conventions is made evident in the description of Abel Martín's love experience in *De un cancionero apócrifo* and the sonnets interspersed in it. In view of the tradition which the text revamps, naturally, the love dynamics are described in a sonnet. It narrates the instant when the self falls in love:

*Nel mezzo del camin* pasóme el pecho  
la flecha de un amor intempestivo.  
que tuvo en el camino largo acecho  
mostróme en el certero el rayo vivo.  
Así un imán que, al atraer, repele  
(¡oh claros ojos de mirar furtivo!),  
amor que asombra, aguija, halaga y duele,  
y más se ofrece cuanto más esquivo.  
Si un grano del pensar arder pudiera,  
no en el amante, en el amor, sería  
la más honda verdad lo que se viera;  
y el espejo del amor se quebraría,  
roto su encanto, y roto la pantera  
de la lujuria el corazón tendría. (NC 196-7)

As in the original sonnets of the courtly love tradition, the self's discovery of the feeling of love is an instructive and transformative experience. However, the shattered mirror in *De un cancionero apócrifo* shows that the problem is different.

If we trace back the prototype that Martín's sonnet revamps it can be said that the first sonnets capture the moment when subjectivity is originally constructed. After looking for answers at the world around for as long as it has existed, the human person gets to recognize its individuality and starts looking at itself for answers. The moment of falling in love under the new circumstances dictated by a world of changed dynamics and relations, that is the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, is transformational as the self begins to

see itself and the world in a different way. Unfortunately, the self-interest reaches many extremes in the centuries to follow. By breaking the mirror, the self gets to enjoy the knowledge it is given without entering in the vicious self-reflective circle.

As the sonnet shows, once again the act of learning is related to fire and burning. In combination with the broken mirror, it is described as exerting serious impact on the heart, already affected by the love emotions. Associated here mostly with love, the heart has a broader specter of meanings in Machado's work, which includes all the emotions, feelings, intuitions. As such, it is reason's counterpart in terms of receiving and processing but also in guarding and expressing knowledge, according to the model Machado begins to develop once his own mirror and self-reflective cycle have been broken: a moment marked by "Retrato," the famous opening poem of *Campos de Castilla* in which the author distances himself from the self-centered searches of *Soledades*. Before this model receives its ultimate formulation in *Juan de Mairena*, however, *De un cancionero apócrifo* paves the way towards it, introducing new "actors" of the astracanada, whose dialogue in effect leads to its development—as more and more of the number of the members of the *dramatis personae* join the performance, more aspects are added to the apocryphal viewpoint.

One such figure is Fichte and his reflective consciousness transpires in Abel Martín's theories. Repeating the key line "el espejo del amor se quebraría," the narrator offers his commentary following the sonnet: "Quiere decir Abel Martín que el amante renunciaría a cuanto es espejo en el amor, porque comenzaría a amar en la amada lo que, por esencia, no podrá nunca reflejar su propia imagen" (679-80). Yet Abel Martín remains a 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher and cannot reject the reflective model fully. To be

sure, the monad theory that he adopts from Leibniz shows that reflection is still playing a role. As the narrator clarifies, although “[l]a mónada de Abel Martín...no sería ni un espejo ni una representación del universo sino el universo mismo como actividad consciente,” like Fichte’s pure Ego, whose reason, in Behler’s words quoting from the German philosopher, “looks at itself” and in this looking penetrates ‘immediately all that it is’” (138), it is “*el gran ojo que todo lo ve al verse a sí mismo*” (NC 671; emphasis of the author). Reason’s desperate attempt to find grounding, that is, to have an original image to start off the process of reflection is to find it in itself. Fichte brings this tendency to an extreme by widening the rift between conceptual and non-conceptual thought, stating in *The Vocation of Man*: “It is no longer with the heart that I apprehend objects and connect with them, but only with the eye” (117). Abel Martín’s experience will prove this theory inadequate through the encounter with the other, without surpassing his time period. Besides showing a desire to trace the historical development of the idea, this can be interpreted as Machado’s attempt to show what could have happened, as the apocryphal poet-philosophers, born in Spain and belonging to the Spanish tradition, in his view, “*podieron existir.*” The reasons why they did are not the same ones that he confronts with his apocryphal project, which sees the passive and mimetic state of being as the heart of the matter.

Also entrenched in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but, unlike his teacher whose philosophical formation is dated during the acme of Romanticism, Mairena is said to be “*formado en el descrédito de las filosofías románticas, los grandes rascacielos de las metafísicas postkantianas*” (XXX 6). As he stands closer to the new century, Juan de Mairena is able not only to denounce the representational models of the German idealists but also to

come up with an alternative. Moreover, inspired by some new theories like existentialism and phenomenology, which argue that a direct interaction with reality is possible, Mairena is able to offer a better theoretic formulation to the problem:

La palabra *representación*, que ha viciado toda la teoría del conocimiento—habla Mairena en clase de Retórica—, envuelve muchos equívocos, que pueden ser funestos al poeta. Las cosas están presentes en la conciencia o ausentes de ella. No es fácil probar y nadie, en efecto, ha probado que estén representadas en la conciencia. Pero aunque concedamos que haya algo en la conciencia semejante a un espejo donde se reflejan imágenes más o menos parecidas a las cosas mismas, siempre debemos preguntar: ¿y cómo percibe la conciencia las imágenes de su propio espejo? Porque una imagen de un espejo siempre plantea para su percepción igual problema que el objeto mismo. Claro es que el espejo de la conciencia se le atribuye el poder milagroso de ser consciente, y se da por hecho que *una imagen de la conciencia es la conciencia de una imagen*. De este modo se esquivo el problema eterno que plantea una evidencia del sentido común: el de la absoluta heterogeneidad entre los actos conscientes y sus objetos.

A vosotros, que vais para poetas, artistas imaginadores, os invito a meditar sobre este tema. Porque también vosotros tendréis que habéroselas con presencias y ausencias, de ningún modo con copias traducciones ni representaciones. (II 5)

Here Mairena goes straight against Fichte's idea that "consciousness is only possible through reflection," but the context of the attack is larger (qtd. in Wood 166). In other fragments, he opposes the multiple facets of the problem of the logic of reflection and representation, which has informed the epistemological and the artistic theories for centuries, like the dominant narrative styles of the 19<sup>th</sup> century realism and naturalism, blind acceptance of ideas, the lacking in originality political action in Spain, which he considers "puro mimetismo" and blames for many problems, and so on (III 1). As a result, he proposes that the fundamental states of being, that is, presence and absence, are used in place of the no longer operative model of reflectivity.

Alluding to Heidegger as well as to the existentialist movement in general, Mairena's choice is motivated by one of the central issues that the apocryphal project confronts—namely, the lack of transcendent values and norms. The main reason why the representational model is no longer operative is that no image can be considered original and thus able to set off the chain of reflections. The universal egg, most likely modeled after Parmenides's sphere as a symbol of permanence and fixity, is, in fact, the exact opposite of its archetype. Borrowing the shell in this case, Mairena's version of the egg-sphere is perpetually emptied and filled up. Although its content is taken from reality, the different elements are creatively modified and combined, and, thus, it does not need to resemble anything. This is the reason why in the quote above the future poet-philosophers are called "artistas imaginadores." Furthermore, they are instructed to cultivate "la visión vigilante" (XIV 1) and the definition of poetry is expanded with "lo poético es ver" (XV 1). This understanding of reality and the self can be traced to another troupe member of the astracanada and an important to boot.

## 5.2. Perspectives, So Many Perspectives

While Fichte—the indirect teacher of his teacher Abel Martín— tried to distance the eyes from the heart, completely disregarding the latter and directly relating the former to thought, Mairena argues that the two are opposed to each other, that is, irreconcilable due to their differences, yet they operate in unison and complement one another. However, as much as most of Mairena's efforts are dedicated to the restitution of what is associated with the heart, the eyes play a most significant role within the poetic metaphysics of his teacher, which he adopts and continues to develop. Allowing for Abel Martín to speak through his words, Mairena explains: "Pensaba mi maestro que la poesía,

aun la más amarga y negativa, era siempre un acto vidente, de afirmación de una realidad absoluta, porque el poeta cree siempre en lo que ve, cualesquiera que sean los ojos con que mire” (XXX 7). Fichte is the one who has famously called what the eyes perceive upon looking at their own consciousness the Absolute, and Martín appropriates the idea and the terminology.<sup>37</sup> On the poet-philosopher’s view, however, the eyes are not directed at their own consciousness, nor at any other abstract place that the rest of the major idealists associated with the Absolute, but at the world around. They no longer see only reflections, like those provided by the water surface of Narcissus, Stendhal’s famous mirror, or any other—their gaze is directed at reality.

In “Reflexiones sobre la lírica,” Machado offers more details on the topic. Finishing his thought on the futile efforts of Bergson’s intellectual intuition to overcome reason, the author argues that “[e]n el camino hacia abajo está Bergson, acaso en el límite. Para refutarlo habrá que volver de algún modo a Platón, a afirmar nuevamente la posición teórica del pensar; porque la inteligencia pragmática no sirve para el caso” (*OPP* 826). This explains why the author proposes an updated version of the Platonic model as a substitute of the tradition that stems from Aristotle.

The rest of Machado’s conclusions on the topic allude to the new awareness. So, the author proceeds: “Con todo, conviene anotar eso: el hombre actual no renuncia a ver. Busca sus ojos, convencido de que han de estar en alguna parte. Lo importante es que ha perdido la fe en su propia ceguera” (*OPP* 826). Next, he imagines that the human has found them, which is, namely, what his apocryphal school envisions, and thus he adds,

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<sup>37</sup> According to Hilary Fink, in broad terms, even those modernists who denounced idealist thought retained the Absolute, as they considered it able to oppose positivism.

“Supongamos por un momento que el hombre actual ha encontrado sus ojos, los ojos para ver lo real, a lo que nos referimos. Los tenía en la cara, allí donde ni siquiera pensó en buscarlos. Esto quiere decir que empieza a creer en la realidad de cuanto ve y toca. El mundo como ilusión—piensa—no es más explicable que el mundo como realidad” (*OPP* 826). The elevated tone of the conclusión reveals his relief: “No soy ya el soñador, el frenético mimo de mi propio sueño. Tampoco el mundo se viste de máscara para que yo lo contemple. Las cosas están allí donde las veo, los ojos allí donde ven. Lo Absoluto está para mi tan inabarcable como ayer. Pero mi relación con lo real es real también.” The question that closes his exposé is not that unexpected: “¿No equivaldría esto a un despertar?” (*OPP* 826). It is an awakening in many ways, an important one being the fact that for the narrative voice reality is just as unexplainable as the illusions in which it was before. Instead of explaining it, then, it needs to give it meaning.

In a way, this explanation is an extended version of poem LIII “Tras el vivir y el sonar, esta lo que mas importa, despertar,” just quoted above. As much as the important moment when the self opens up for the new awareness and the poems that deal with the eyes have received critical attention, the role of the viewpoint has not. If everything is in a flux and always changing, with every glance one gets a different perspective, besides a distinct vantage point, as intimated by an often quoted section from the poem “A Orillas del Duero” from *Campos de Castilla* “Todo se mueve, fluye, discurre, corre o gira; /cambian la mar y el monte y el ojo que los mira.” This viewpoint, itself only one perspective among many, implies that all is inevitably seen from a specific angle. This is what I propose as a solution to the many ambiguities of the apocryphal presentation in terms of the seemingly contradictory opinions that they offer on one and the same topic,

suggesting that it is equally valid regardless of its accompanying more positive or negative evaluation. Their coexistence continues to be at the center of the critical debate that the apocryphals have provoked, but only a few of the critics that I have consulted mention perspectivism in relation to Machado's work.

In his introduction to *Spain's 1898 Crisis*, Alan Hoyle makes a comment about the famous quote from "A Orillas del Duero," saying that it shows a "profession of perspectivism" on Machado's part (42). However, as he is only giving an overview of the book's purposes, Hoyle's second and last comment has to do with the author's own perspective as refers the poem, and suggests that "[t]here is more to the soul of Spain and the soul of the writer than meets the eye" (42). I do agree with him and will address this essentialist streak in Machado's thought below. Hoyle's focus, however, is not on the apocryphals, where, in my view, perspectivism is both promoted by the poet-philosophers and used to describe the apocryphal stance, and he does not develop this promising beginning any further. Nor is De Ros analyzing the apocryphal texts in her excellent new study, which focuses on the mental and physical landscapes in Machado's work but does not bring up the question of the change of perspectives, except when she quotes from Brian Vickers: "the true aphorist has a fragmented kaleidoscopic vision for which this genre is the perfect form" (qtd. in de Ros 210). The only analysis of the apocryphals that I have encountered that somewhat brings up the question of perspectivism is Philip Johnson's study of the paradox in the work of the Spanish author. However, the numerous paradoxes, in my opinion, are the effect of the perspectival viewpoint used and promoted in the apocryphal texts. While Johnson concentrates on the results, my focus is on the model that has produced many, but not all of them. Some basic oppositions would

have been present no matter what the presentation—the split nature of reason, the dichotomy self-other, and so on. In their case, the perspectivist view has served to offer more details about their inevitable antagonism.

The philosopher whose position Mairena uses as a template to develop his own in terms of the splintered outlook of reality joins Plato and Hegel at the very top of the long list of the *dramatis personae* of Mairena's philosophical astracanada. This thinker is Nietzsche and his famous perspectivism clearly transpires in the apocryphal texts, which often present different views of the same topic in a contradictory manner that defies other explanations.<sup>38 39</sup> While some perspectives do comprise a paradox, like, for example, the poetic word seen as both essential and temporal, to be addressed below, in most cases it is a matter of a distinct viewpoint. The perspectivist presentation accommodates the dialectic “de lo uno a lo otro,” the poetic metaphysics of Juan de Mairena, and the universal egg model. Moreover, not only is perspectivism associated with heterogeneity but it generates it. Most importantly, however, it provides the framework for Machado's vision of a possible coexistence between humans, forming a unity in difference.

Before the perspectival feature of the apocryphal fragments is addressed, a brief overview of their use of the Socratic dialogue, also called elenchus or maieutic style, which has come to us through Plato's work, as well as their relativist strand, would definitely come in handy. There are several reasons for this. First, due to their heteroglossia, they are often confused; second, all three plus the direct adversary of the

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<sup>38</sup> In his celebrated *Nietzsche en España*, Gonzalo Sobejano analyzes a few similarities with Machado and expresses the opinion that “[n]o era Nietzsche uno de sus maestros” (419). I disagree with that and with many other generalizations that he makes.

<sup>39</sup> My knowledge of Nietzsche's perspectivism comes from Steven D. Hales and Rex Welshon's book with the eponymous title and from class discussions.

Socratic dialogue, to wit, Sophistic speech, are invited to present their cases in the apocryphal project. It is the mixture of all of them that makes Machado's fragments an interesting case of the popular fragmentary aphoristic tradition. The fact that it takes issue with reason, is most interesting, because it places it among the modernist works that have managed to discuss in their particular way topics not even around the corner for philosophy, one of them being interpretation, which is related to the idea of creating meaning.

As Mairena's primary interest is the quality of human thought, his view of rhetoric and the Sophistic speech, which he seems to regard as very similar, is not high if their mastery is not backed by what they express. As much as he agrees that "separar el pensamiento del lenguaje" is artificial, he feels that it is necessary to address the discrepancy and to try to restore the equilibrium (XXXI 3). The solution is to stop distinguishing between rhetoric, Sophistic speech, and philosophy, but the idea behind it is different from that of the early German romantics. Again, his goal is not to fuse them but to enable them to complement each other:

*(Fragmento de lecciones.)*

A muchos asombra, señores, que en una clase de Retórica, como es la nuestra, hablemos de tantas cosas ajenas al arte de bien decir; porque muchos—los más—piensan que este arte puede ejercitarse en el vacío del pensamiento. Si esto fuera así, tendríamos que definir la Retórica como el arte de hablar bien sin decir nada, o de hablar bien de algo, pensando en otra cosa... Esto no puede ser. Para decir bien hay que pensar bien, y para pensar bien conviene elegir temas muy esenciales, que logren por sí mismos captar nuestra atención, estimular nuestros esfuerzos, conmovernos, apasionarnos y hasta sorprendernos. Conviene, además, no distinguir demasiado entre la Retórica y la Sofística, entre la Sofística y la Filosofía, entre la Filosofía y el pensar reflexivo, a propósito de lo humano y de lo divino. (X 2)

As it is often the case, what the text comments upon is, employed and in this way illustrated by it, allowing for the subject and object to also arbitrarily take turns. Thus, the participants in the discussions, the apocryphal teachers, their disciples, the occasional visitors, as well as the narrators, all engage with different rhetoric devices with the goal to persuade and provoke, motivated by their desire to arouse interest and shake out of their lethargy their audience. However, they do that by carefully crafting their phrases and not by adding new content. The numerous repetitions in the text are, in a way, an example of how the same thing can be said in various effective ways. Naturally, it is also part of the fragmentary structure, which allows for the fragments to regroup and to continue elaborating on an idea over time—namely what Machado did with the fragments collected now in the volume *Juan de Mairena*. To sum it up, to wake up and to persuade the audience is not a whim, but the very first goal of the apocryphal project.

The fact that to refute and dissuade are secondary objectives is proven by the modification of the Socratic dialogue. True to his determination to adapt what he borrows from different theories and philosophers and to update it according to the requirements of the particular historical moment, Mairena's Socratic dialogue is different from the classic form. In general, it is designed in such a way that divergent views come together in order for a topic to be discussed from different angles. However, during the necessarily open-ended and always inviting new viewpoints conversation, at least some of the original positions must undergo changes and accept a different view. Mairena's discussion does question and allow for many outlooks to make themselves present and all is most actively steeped in doubt, but no such changes are observed. Moreover, Mairena explicitly states that this is unnecessary:

Nadie debe asustarse de lo que piensa, aunque su pensar aparezca en pugna con las leyes más elementales de la lógica. Porque todo ha de ser pensado por alguien y el mayor desatino puede ser un punto de vista de lo real. Que dos y dos sean necesariamente cuatro, es una opinión que muchos compartimos. Pero si alguien sinceramente piensa otra cosa, que lo diga. Aquí no nos asombramos de nada. Ni siquiera hemos de exigirle la prueba de su aserto, porque ello equivaldría a obligarle a aceptar las normas de nuestro pensamiento, en las cuales habrían de fundarse los argumentos que nos convencieran. Pero estas normas y estos argumentos sólo pueden probar nuestra tesis; de ningún modo la suya. Cuando se llega a una profunda disparidad de pareceres, el *onus probandi* no incumbe realmente a nadie. (XXXVI 3)

This modification demonstrates that there is no one correct viewpoint and that Mairena's only role is to start the discussion, that is, to make sure that the roulette is moving: "en nuestro mundo interior hay algo de ruleta en movimiento, indiferente a las posturas del paño, y que mientras gira la rueda, y rueda la bola que nuestros maestros lanzaron en ella un poco al azar, nada sabemos de pérdida o ganancia, de éxito o de fracaso" (VI 7).

Denouncing the role Socrates supposedly had as a leader, Mairena confesses to his students: "No es fácil que pueda yo enseñaros a hablar, ni a escribir, ni a pensar correctamente, porque yo soy la incorrección misma, un alma siempre en borrador, llena de tachones, de vacilaciones y de arrepentimientos" (VI 8). He then tells them that all they can learn from him is to doubt themselves.

Except for this adaptation of the method, its character is preserved and there is evidence of shared interest to analyze an issue as well as shared ignorance on a topic. Also, the reasons and the beliefs and the convictions of the discussants are brought to light and analyzed from different viewpoints. In addition, the conversations never come to a closure. To the contrary, if they start moving towards it due to too many sides agreeing on a matter, Mairena always adds a couple of statements replete of humor or

irony that turn everything around before he drops the conversation to pick it up or not in another fragment.<sup>40</sup>

The other view usually compared to perspectivism is relativism. Mairena addresses it just as he does rhetoric, Sophist speech, and the Socratic dialogue, allowing each one to present its view and while at the same time using all of them. Although he does not speak directly about perspectivism, if my reading is correct, it is implicit in his theory of the universal egg. In a fragment dedicated to the pre-Socratic philosopher Democritus, known for his atomic theory of the world and his subjectivist epistemology, Mairena refers to the philosopher's view that our knowledge of things is, in fact, merely our opinion. It is easily backed up by common knowledge, like, for example, that what in my view is hot, may not be so according to somebody else. It is a simple but powerful argument against the possibility of an absolute value: "Para Demócrito, opinión era un conocimiento obscuro, sin la menor garantía de la realidad." Although humorous, his comment "[c]laro está que todo esto, señores, es una opinión de Demócrito, que nadie nos obliga a aceptar," shows that relativism is not the key. Expounding further his position, Mairena touches on the problem of the lack of meaning after all the traditional grounding is lost and the only thing the self has left is the personal opinion:

Y yo os pregunto: si aceptamos la opinión de Demócrito, con todas sus consecuencias, ¿qué somos nosotros, meros aprendices del poeta, enamorados de lo dulce y de lo amargo, lo caliente y lo frío, lo verde y lo azul, y de todo lo demás—sin excluir lo bueno y lo malo—que en nada se parece a los átomos, ni al vacío en que estos se mueven. Seríamos el vacío del vacío mismo, un vacío en que ni siquiera se mueven los átomos. Meditad en lo trágico de nuestra situación. Porque aunque lográramos

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<sup>40</sup> With this being said, I still disagree with Pedro Cerezo Galán, who sees this characteristic of the apocryphal as the central one, calling Mairena "un Sócrates andaluz" and even using this phrase as a title to his book. Socrates is used as a symbol of conceptual thought—not exactly the side Mairena is trying to revive.

recabar para nosotros una sombra de ser, una realidad más o menos opinable, siempre resultaría que los átomos pueden ser sin nosotros, y nosotros no podemos ser sin los átomos. Y esto es para nosotros más trágicamente desairado que la pura zambullida en la nada. (XII 1)

Following these disheartening views is a recap of the apocryphal solution. The first thing to do is to take a stand—the opposite of the disinterested *poesie* of the romantics—and to get ready to defend it “de gatos panza arriba” (XII 1). Next is to adopt a skeptic viewpoint with no intention to refute but to doubt and thus, as quoted earlier, “*desimaginar* el huevo universal,” that is, to prepare the terrain for “el grande acto poético: negativo, desrealizador, creador” (XII 1). That the poet believes in what he sees and that it is its new Absolute was already discussed. This peculiar view of the Absolute, however, does not contradict the relativist stand, and relativism is present in the text. Yet it is one of those perspectives that do not receive a good evaluation.

Another way Nietzsche’s perspectivism works is to offer a plethora of views on the same issue in order to undermine the general opinion about it. In *Human, All Too Human*, he does that with Wagner, curiously, rejecting his own previous statements of his work. An example of this in the apocryphals is offered by the question of human nature. There are numerous statements that start with “lo esencial humano es,” “lo natural en el hombre es,” or something of this nature, but then proceed to offer a variety (I have counted 15, but there may be more) of characteristics: “buscarse en su vecino” (XXVII 6), “desear ser otro de lo que es” (XLIV 6), “el afán de medir” (XLVIII 1), “creer en la muerte” (I 7), and so on, the examples are many. The result of this presentation is significant: there is nothing that defines the human person in particular, but, depending on the viewpoint and during one particular moment something may look like it defines it. Unfortunately, many critical studies would pick one of the claims, or the one that serves

their purposes and insist that it represents Mairena's view of "lo esencial humano." Jorge Guillén does that in his "El apócrifo Antonio Machado," and he never clarifies that this is one of many most essential characteristics. The same is done with "el hombre moderno," "el siglo XIX," the reiterated "lo mejor" or "lo peor" with reference to different things, showing that better or worse depend on the viewpoint. This is clearly illustrated by the repeatedly used, "Nadie es más que nadie," which, together with the other statements about the human show the affinity first in style between Nietzsche's second book and the apocryphal texts.

Moreover, both make perspectivism an essential part of their epistemic positions. The two thinkers find themselves in need of a new theory of knowledge, and Machado is definitely indebted for his to the German thinker. Thus Alan Schrift's recap of Nietzsche's echo some aspects of Machado's apocryphal stance. As Schrift argues, "Nietzsche's perspectival account does not provide a theory at all; it is a rhetorical strategy that offers an alternative to the traditional epistemological conception of knowledge as the possession of some stable, eternal "entities," whether these be considered "truths," "facts," "meanings," "propositions," or whatever" (145). For Nietzsche, he claims, "there are no uninterpreted "facts" or "truth" (145). The model that Machado creates with his universal egg is not that dissimilar—refurbishing it one interprets reality. What is more, both authors loudly urge their audience to do it in a most creative way.

The affinities between Machado and the Nietzsche we know of his middle period are also many. Plenty of minor parallels can be made in reference to the topics discussed in the fragments. To mention a few: besides Wagner and Schopenhauer, logic, reason,

and metaphysics are the principal objects of criticism in *Human, All Too Human*, while poetry is seen in most positive light. Most importantly, both belong to the same tradition when it comes to the belief that human life has an aesthetic dimension and that an aesthetic reform can affect human being. Moreover, the two share similar experiences and distance themselves from their early creative efforts and beliefs, rejecting the “flirtation” with romanticism of their immature years. Machado does so after *Soledades* and his divorce with the trendy symbolist poetic modes and with Ruben Darío’s *modernismo*, paralleling Nietzsche’s rejection of the stance he defends in *Birth of Tragedy* and his dissociation, along with his vehement attacks against Wagner and Schopenhauer.

Moreover, for both thinkers, the new start is coupled with reformative efforts, which bear some striking similarities. As I showed earlier, Mairena declares that the ultimate goal of the apocryphal teaching is to explore the possibilities of thinking freely, which for him is equivalent to thinking in a different way, that is, to creating new perspectives or interpretations. In section 12 of the Third Treatise of his *On the Genealogy of Morality*, while rejecting the ascetic ideals promoted by many traditions, among them the idealist, Nietzsche states:

Finally let us, particularly as knowers, not be ungrateful toward such resolute reversals of the familiar perspectives and valuations with which the spirit has raged against itself all too long now, apparently wantonly and futilely: to see differently in this way for once, to *want* to see differently, is no small discipline and preparation of the intellect for the future “objectivity—” the latter understood not as “disinterested contemplation” (which is a non-concept and absurdity), but rather as the capacity to have one’s pro and contra *in one’s own power*, and to shift them in and out: so that one knows how to make precisely the *difference* in perspectives and affective interpretations useful for knowledge. (85; emphasis of the author)

The new objectivity is in quotation marks because it only shares its status with the traditional understanding of what is objective. Here it is, in fact, the ability to be creative and produce new meanings, to enrich the current moment and perpetuate life. It is clear, however, that the power received through this freedom will become the focus of the attention of the German thinker. Machado does not have such aspirations and rejects this side of Nietzsche's thought, which he associates with Zarathustra, in various fragments.

Furthermore, both Nietzsche and Machado invent assistants to accompany them on their quite lonely reformatory journeys and to provide some support. At the same time, these proxies incarnate the hope for the future that the two thinkers never abandon. For Machado, they are the past and the future poet-philosophers. Ironically, in one of the fragments that describe them, Machado dismisses any similarities between them and Nietzsche's Zarathustra, due to the "insolencia eticobiológica" of the latter (XXXV 9). The German philosopher's middle period, however, is less radical in many respects, although some of the problematic themes related to human power are already making headway. Thus, Nietzsche describes his "free spirits," saying that he "invented" them when he "needed to." He goes on to say, "'free spirits' of this kind do not exist, did not exist—but, as I have said, I had need of them at that time if I was to keep in good spirits while surrounded by ills" (*Human* 6). Machado does a similar thing with his apocryphal poet-philosophers, which he presents as antidotes of both the issues related to the past and the present.

What is more, both thinkers see their efforts as necessarily carrying a projection in the future. For Machado, and also for Bloch, as I showed earlier, one of the apocryphal project's arguments is that toying with different alternatives is a way to advance in the

direction of their realization. In “Proyecto,” Machado, jokingly but also making a point, comments about future hopes in general: “Es que, en verdad, lo que no estaba ya en el campo de nuestras esperanzas, si por azar nos aparece, no logra convencernos en su realidad” (*OPP* 843). While his poet-philosophers incarnate a hope from the past for the future, Nietzsche’s “free spirits” are entirely future oriented: “That free spirits of this kind *could* one day exist ...physically present and palpable and not, as in my case, merely phantoms and hermit’s phantasmagoria: *I* should wish to be the last to doubt it. I see them already *coming*, slowly, slowly; and perhaps I shall do something to speed their coming if I describe in advance under what vicissitudes, upon what paths, I *see* them coming” (*Human* 6; emphasis of the author). Drawing parallels between the two writers, Jorge Brioso comments on various similitudes like the ones I trace here and one of them is the notion of the past as open for reinterpretation that Nietzsche holds before developing his concept of the eternal return.

When Brioso begins to trace the dissimilarities, however, he argues that “[l]a principal distancia entre Nietzsche y Machado se produce a partir del rechazo que provoca en Machado el nihilismo y anticristianismo de Nietzsche y además, lo que en mi opinión es mucho más importante, la solución ética, afirmación del otro a través de un *ethos* y un *pathos*, que le da Machado al escepticismo y al nihilismo” (223; emphasis of the author). While I agree with Brioso, it must be mentioned that Nietzsche never addresses what the Spanish writer appreciates in Christianity, that is, the brotherly spirit. He does not, because he has no interest in the other. On the contrary, it is the individual self that is at the center of the philosopher’s attention during all the otherwise distinct periods of his creative life.

One central difference between their positions that must be brought up is made clear by Mairena's equivalent of Nietzsche's "free spirits." Aware of the danger of using the German thinker as a source when it comes to expressing a vision of the human potential, even worse if it is given concrete shape, as is the case with the description of his followers, Mairena tries to sever any ties with the philosopher's later extreme views like the notion of the *Übermensch* and many others. Thus, he describes the poet-philosopher in training as "un hombre extraordinario, algo más de un buen ejemplar de nuestra especie; pero de ningún modo un maestro a la manera de Zaratustra" (XXXV 9). Next come more details about it and, as much as Machado's ideas are secular and the religious is referred to as part of his somewhat essentialist searches, the allusion made to Christ presents a problem. The reason, however, is not strictly religious, as Mairena distances himself from the institution and its paraphernalia:

Nuestro hombre estaría en la línea tradicional protagoricoplatoónica, y también, convergentemente, en la cristiana. Porque de nuestra Escuela no habría de salir tampoco una nueva escolástica, la cual supone una Iglesia y un Poder político más o menos acordes en defender y abrigar un dogma, con su tabú correspondiente, sino todo lo contrario. Nuestro hombre no tendría nada de sacerdote, ni de sacrificador, ni de catequista, como sus alumnos nada de sectarios, ni de feligreses, ni siquiera de catecúmenos. (XXV 9)

Convinced by this peculiar type of essentialism that some basic goodness and humanness is available, Mairena traces down the Christian beliefs of his fellow Spaniards to get to it. However, what he hopes to find is the prototype of the love and sympathy for the other that, according to him, echoes in Christianity. Such feelings for the other are exactly what Nietzsche's "free spirits" do not have. This is revealed by the question that supposedly comes to the spirit's mind after the liberation: "If he has for long hardly dared to ask himself: 'why so apart? so alone? renouncing everything I once revered? renouncing

reverence?’” (*Human 9*) The answer to the last question is positive and is reinforced by the claim that through sacrificing the feeling for the other “[y]ou shall become master over yourself, master also over your virtues” (*Human 9*). Mairena is also interested in his students’ liberation from as many restraints as possible and strives to trace for them some larger parameters within which they can develop their potential. However, it is done through the total opposite, that is, through embracing the other the way one embraces God and through life in a community premised on solidarity and brotherly love.

Indeed, interested in all human beings and not distinguishing between strong and weak, also rejecting any version of the “self-man” (XXXIII 4), the school of knowledge’s pledge is to encourage its students to see their potential:

Nadie entre en esta escuela que crea saber nada de nada, ni siquiera en Geometría, que nosotros estudiaríamos, acaso, como ciencia esencialmente inexacta. Porque la finalidad de nuestra escuela, con sus dos cátedras fundamentales, como dos cuchillas de una misma tijera, a saber: la cátedra de Sofística y la de Metafísica, consistiría en revelar al pueblo, quiero decir al hombre de nuestra tierra, todo el radio de su posible actividad pensante, toda la enorme zona de su espíritu que puede ser iluminada y consiguientemente, oscurecida; en enseñarle a repensar lo pensado, a desaber lo sabido y a dudar de su propia duda, que es el único modo de empezar a creer en algo. (XXXV 9)

The two guiding figures that Machado suggests for his students to follow correspond to the two blades of the scissors he mentions in the quote: Socrates and Christ. They are in fact the ones that Nietzsche attacks the most—the first for degrading the Greek tragedy and its potential to evoke the strongest of emotions, the second for preaching such lofty goals for the human race that it loses the belief in the power of its will. For Machado, they symbolize the two sides of reason that need to be brought together.

### 5.3. “De lo uno a lo otro:” Socrates and Christ

In view of his goal to seek some essential spirit in the human soul in order to foment the communal feelings, for which reason Machado turns to Christianity, the fact that he does not drop or reject the side that cannot perform this function, is noteworthy. His desire to unite and not to uncouple oppositions can be related to his predilection for perspectivism. While for Nietzsche, as Schrifft suggests, it is mostly “a rhetorical strategy,” Machado’s predilection to this style seems to counterpoise the divisive tendencies in his day (157). While Nietzsche lived in a confusing time, the years before he got sick in the late 1880s were relatively peaceful. For Machado, in contrast, different conflicts and tensions of social, political, and, not to forget, personal nature, escalate and culminate throughout his lifetime. Clearly, it is also related to the thinkers’ idea of truth as impossible to pin down even as a notion. Yet, for the Spanish writer to connect with the other seems to be the most pertinent issue.

Machado’s awareness that the conceptual and the non–conceptual sides of reason represented by Socrates and Christ are, in fact, as irreconcilable as they are inseparable, proves his perspicuity in philosophic matters. Indeed, conceptual thought needs material to form its concepts in the first place, and even the feelings and the sentiments require concepts in order for the notion of them to be formed. When he appeals to the two figures, however, they are widely considered as distant as possible, and he tries to turn this view of them around. Thus he introduces the duo in a great number of fragments, which means different contexts, and also refers to them in a variety of ways, insisting repeatedly that they operate together.

For example, when Mairena uses philosophy and poetry to describe his dialectic model, he, in fact, evokes the same opposition that Socrates and Christ symbolize. In other fragments it is presented as the mind or the intellect and the heart. Sometimes, Christ is associated with the dialogue besides the feeling of love, and Socrates with the monologue. The poet-philosophers themselves are seen as an example of the two functioning together and also to appeal to people in a most direct way. In “El Poeta y el pueblo,” Machado urges his audience the way Mairena does his students: “Enseñad al que no sabe; despertad al dormido; llamad a la puerta de todos los corazones, de todas la conciencias” (*OPP* 663). This is the only special role the poet has, that is, he can knock on any door, as everybody is able to fill up the universal egg with meaning.

As much as their function as a tandem is one of the topics that traverse the apocryphals, Christ receives some special attention. Mairena often justifies his choice of Christ to be reason’s counterpart: “Nosotros partiríamos de una investigación de lo esencialmente cristiano en el alma del pueblo, quiero decir en la conciencia del hombre, impregnada del cristianismo. Porque el cristianismo ha sido una de las grandes experiencias humanas, tan completa y de fondo que, merced a ella, el *zoon politikón* de Aristóteles, se ha convertido en un *ente cristiano* que viene a ser, aproximadamente, el hombre occidental” (LIII 7; emphasis of the author). However, at the present time, Mairena believes that the most authentic person can be found in the small villages, even further from the threat of the English self-man, fighter, boxer, pirate, dominator or the bourgeoisie and its low worldview and lifestyle. He is the opposite of the one “de hombría degradada,” which is “un estilo peculiar de no ser hombre, que puede observarse a veces en individuos de diversas clases sociales” (“Los milicianos de 1936” I).

The one the poet-philosopher glorifies for harboring some authentic human spirit is both different from the mainstream person and from the “hombre-masa,” the second of which, according to Mairena, simply does not exist. The special one does: “Existe un hombre del pueblo, que es en España, al menos, el hombre elemental y fundamental y el que está más cerca del hombre universal y eterno” (LVIII 4). The spirit that he carries is also to be found in the folklore and in “el alma popular.” Mairena’s idea of these two notions is described by the narrator: “Mairena entendía por *folklore*, en primer término, lo que la palabra más directamente significa: saber popular, lo que el pueblo sabe; lo que el pueblo piensa y siente, tal como lo siente y piensa, y así como lo expresa y plasma en la lengua que él, más que nadie, ha contribuido a formar” (XXII 10). Besides knowledge, both the folkloric tradition and this authentic man, who in different fragments is identified with different regions of Spain, are said to guard the special spirit that Mairena venerates.

As much as this position of the Spanish writer is to be qualified as some nationalistic essentialism, it does not affect his non-essentialist position on any other matter. It is both related to his family tradition, which Richard Cardwell in his “Genealogy” traces farther back than his well-known folklorist father, and to the spirit of the epoch when all the intellectuals were trying to regenerate Spain. The same applies to metaphysics, which Machado only uses for his particular purposes, that is, to underline the importance of love, which he does by claiming that there is only one universal value—love. His rejection of certainty, universal and absolute categories, and, especially, of the essence of the human being, proves that Machado has overcome even if not fully many such tendencies.

#### 5.4. Unity in Difference

Machado's idea of community, naturally, has attracted the critical attention and has received numerous interpretations. That it is just a dream is the common denominator of all of them, and most concentrate on the fact that Machado uses the image of Christ. The description of the type of bonding between people that Mairena envisions is described in various texts through the expected images: Socrates and Christ, which underpin the unity they seek to establish on both intellectual and cordial grounds. Importantly, Christ is the driving force in this case, as the intellect is presented as individualistic. Thus Mairena explains, "Pero no basta la razón, el invento socrático, para crear la convivencia humana; ésta precisa también la comunión cordial, una convergencia de corazones en un mismo objeto del amor" (XV 5). He believes that such unity has been reached in Russia, mentioning that what Christ proclaims there is "la hermandad de los hombres, emancipada de los vínculos de la sangre y de los bienes de la tierra; el triunfo de las virtudes fraternas sobre las patriarcales" (IV 11). This exotic view of Russia reveals some other characteristics that Mairena envisions as a prospect, only adding to the utopian picture already painted through the love bond.

Mairena's suspicion of the possibilities of language to connect is probably one of the reasons behind his choice of a feeling as the bonding element. This inability has been observed on a variety of occasions and is related to Machado's ongoing concern about the relationship between the external and the internal. Like Leibniz's monad, the self has an interior and an exterior, but since the reflective model is inoperative, the two exist in opposition that the writer struggles to solve throughout his work. As Mairena explains:

Cuando un hombre algo reflexivo—decía mi maestro—se mira por dentro, comprende la absoluta imposibilidad de ser juzgado con mediano acierto

por quienes lo miran por fuera, que son todos los demás, y la imposibilidad en que él se encuentra de decir cosa de provecho cuando pretende de juzgar a su vecino. Y lo terrible es que las palabras se han hecho para juzgarnos unos a otros. (XXVIII 6)

Adding to this observation is the following warning: “Que cada cual hable de sí mismo, lo mejor que pueda, con esta advertencia a su prójimo: si por casualidad entiende usted algo de lo que digo, puede usted asegurar que yo entiendo de otro modo (XXVIII 6).

Thus, language cannot guarantee the unity. However, love needs to be shared.

For his idea of such a community, also backed up by Mairena’s words that many seem to read as directly the authors, Machado has been called a communist by Cerezo Galán and many more. It is true that one of the fragments quotes Mairena’s words: “Un comunismo ateo...sería siempre un fenómeno social muy de superficie. El ateísmo es una posición esencialmente individualista: la del hombre que toma como tipo de evidencia el de su propio existir...o no cree en Dios, o se cree Dios, que viene a ser lo mismo.”

Mairena continues a little further in the text, referring to the atheist: “Cuando le llegue, porque le llegará... el inevitable San Martín al *solus ipse*, porque el hombre crea en su prójimo, el yo en tú, y el ojo que ve en el ojo que le mira, puede haber comunión y aun comunismo. Y para entonces estará dios en puerta. Dios aparece como objeto de comunión cordial que hace posible la fraterna comunidad humana” (XXXIII 3). Since belief in god is not guaranteed, it is the love of god that is supposedly shared. It remains, however, a conjecture.

It seems to me that the choice of Christ is dictated by the religious Spanish nation as a way to guarantee the feeling of love, because, in my view, it is the sentiment that really matters here, being it love or just sympathy. Machado’s idea has always been related to Christianity, but this is the only element that is taken from it. Moreover, many

comparisons between Machado's work and Nietzsche's thought stop short because of this allusion to Christ. The feeling, however, is often connected to his preferred concept of heterogeneity, and I think that leading this clue is more promising in order to understand Machado's famous notion of brotherly love.

Thus, the last name to add to the long list of the *dramatis personae* of the apocryphal astracanada is that of Henry Bergson. With him I will conclude my consideration of its many facets, as, in my view, the apocryphal appropriation of Bergson's idea of multiplicity is the culmination of the endeavor to explore the possibilities of improving human life and the human condition in general. It is related to Bergson's concept of *durée*, which Abel Martín explains saying that it involves some qualitative change and that "no puede ser pensado conceptualmente" (NC 188). Bergson develops this idea of a heterogenizing always moving unity in his 1889 book *Time and Free Will* and Machado, who famously attended the French philosopher's lectures in 1911, was well-aware of its ideas, the central one of which is the *durée*.

Since the changes that it entails are qualitative, the concept is hard to explain and Bergson offers many examples in his book. The main characteristics of this qualitative multiplicity is the lack of juxtaposition between the elements—no negation whatsoever. For Bergson, to think of sympathy as a moral feeling is the best way to understand *durée*. As Leonard Lawlor explains, "Our experience of sympathy begins, according to Bergson, when we put ourselves in the place of others, feeling their pain" (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). The other characteristics that Lawlor adds are its heterogeneizing effect, temporal dimension, as space has homogenizing effects, progress but also conservation of the past—"memory conserves the past and this conservation does not imply that one

experiences the same (re-cognition), but difference” (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). Moreover, it represents Bergson’s idea of freedom, which is “mobility.” All sounds quite familiar. To boot, Suzanne Guerlac explains that “[Bergson] attributes metaphysical importance to affect and affirms free agency” (5). Obviously, the basics of Machado’s apocryphal project are all appropriated from Bergson, making him the main character of the philosophic astracanada that it presents.

While these although not recognized before details are not that unexpected, in view of the Spanish writer’s affiliation with the French thinker, the fact that he used the love feeling, which he relates to heterogeneity and duration, in the base of his peculiar human community, definitely is. As Lawflor asserts, “Many philosophers today think that this concept of multiplicity, despite its difficulty, is revolutionary...because it opens the way to a reconception of community” (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). This is the idea that Machado had in mind with his community based on brotherly love and as much as it remains just a model, it is one to keep in mind.

Bergson’s *durée* and the way Machado applied it to the community offer an explanation of the issue Machado took with poetry. Throughout the apocryphals, poetry is defined as “palabra en el tiempo” and “diálogo del hombre con el tiempo.” Nonetheless, in the prologue that Machado submitted to Gerardo Diego for his 1931 *Antología*, the definition is “palabra esencial en el tiempo” (144). Juan Antonio Sánchez, discussing Machado and “el tema de la temporalidad en su poética,” argues that mostly due to this addition “no podemos reducirlo a los límites del bergsonismo” (195). I agree with him that what Mairena is searching for is a poetry that is both related to the rich moment of the *durée* and to the essence he believes the human has—thus the truth related

to the ember from Heraclitus's river in "Esto soñé" discussed earlier. It is then not just poetry that is creative, although his goal is, in Cerezo Galán's words, "conservar al hombre imaginativo," but one that can reach this essence in the human soul and bring those who share it together. In my view, it is more what a community has in common than anything else. The poet should be able to see that and affirm it. He does not want to educate certain people to become poets, but all of us, there is no difference between this type of poet and the human:

Pensaba mi maestro que la poesía...era siempre un acto vidente, de afirmación de una verdad absoluta, porque el poeta cree siempre en lo que ve, cualesquiera que sean los ojos con que mire. El poeta y el hombre. Su experiencia vital—y ¿qué otra experiencia puede tener el hombre?—le ha enseñado que no hay vivir sin ver, que sólo la visión es evidencia y que nadie duda de lo que ve, sino de lo que piensa. (XXX 7)

All we can do is create meaning, "entretenido[s] con ese hueso que le dio la divinidad para que pudiera pasar el rato y engañar su hambre metafísica" (XXX 7).

This is more or less the note on which Stephen Mumford finishes his analysis of the opinions against the validity of the metaphysical model, agreeing with most of them yet not giving up on metaphysics:

Suppose metaphysics really is useful for nothing. Does this mean it is worthless? No. The value of many things is instrumental: they get you something else that you want. But some things have intrinsic value. They are valuable just for what they are, in their own right. Even if metaphysics is useless, its insights may be so deep and so profound that it could have the highest intrinsic value to us... In that case we don't do metaphysics so that we can stay healthy and wealthy: we want to stay healthy and wealthy so that we can do metaphysics. (108)

And we need to do it together, as a community.

## CONCLUSION

One more characteristic needs to be added to Machado's definition of poetry the way he described it when he bemoaned its absence in "Proyecto—" spontaneity. In many fragments he discusses the need to "agilizar y conservar nuestra espontaneidad pensante" (LXII). I am sure that a deeper investigation throughout his limited in size but more than variegated work would reveal the specifics of Machado's conception of spontaneity. Nevertheless, I find it particularly interesting that the author relates the spontaneous act to the idea that he shares with Nietzsche and so many others in his time that meaning is created as well as to the modern-time definition of freedom. It seems interesting to me, because I personally adhere to his view that if we have any freedom left, it is to act spontaneously. We cannot trespass the limits of our ideology, upbringing, experience, etc., nor can we do it in a different way than in accordance with the models of thinking and behaving that we know. Yet, within this super limited space, we can act spontaneously, that is, we can be free.

With this study I have tried not to fill gaps in Machado's scholarship but, hopefully, to participate in the ongoing effort to change its course, as, in de Ros's words, "[t]he prevailing critical approach ...has been fundamentally biographical and philological, interpreting his poetry in terms of authorial intent, and in the process, fixing its meaning according to its original context" (6). The same applies to the prose. Machado's attention to issues like reason and freedom, his view of a heterogeneous community where everybody is the other and there is no "I" have been overlooked, while his words have been paraphrased over and over and all the adjectives he has used

counted. We can all read and count. Not what and how but why he ascertained things as well as what they mean to us today is far more important.

This is the reason why I have taken a rather hasty yet unprecedented look at Machado's conception of reason as incomplete. As much as it can be classified among the common modernist inquiries into affect, counterpoised to, in Julie Taylor's words, "[t]he traditional view of modernist aesthetics as cold, hard, and cerebral," the apocryphal analysis of reason has a wider philosophic and normative significance ("Introduction: Modernism and Affect," 2). Its conceptual and non-conceptual sides are shown as working in harmony and the traditional oppositions mind-body and subject-object are invalidated. This fuller notion of reason not only has allowed the Spanish writer to improve his analysis of the current intellectual milieu but also to take a "sneak-peak" of many of its future criticisms. Most importantly, through the stepping stones of heterogeneity and the other Machado not only complements reason but the experience of life itself.

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