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A Strain of Senequismo in Late-Medieval Literature of the Catalan Domain: The Case of Fra Francesc Moner (1463-1492)

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A STRAIN OF *SENEQUISMO* IN LATE-MEDIEVAL LITERATURE OF THE CATALAN DOMAIN: THE CASE OF FRA FRANCESC MONER (1463-1492)

PETER COCOZZELLA

ABSTRACT

This essay is an exploration of Seneca's influence on the bilingual (Catalan and Castilian) production, including poems and prose works, of Fra Francesc Moner, an extraordinarily talented Catalan writer of the late Middle Ages. After sampling Moner's pithy renditions of Seneca's sententious rhetoric, this essay delves into Moner's assimilation of the salient topics and motifs that distinguish the Stoic philosophical system of Senecan vintage. The essay takes into account, particularly, some points of coincidence between Moner's *senequismo* and that of Ausiàs March, the incomparable Valencian poet of the first half of the fifteenth century. An analysis of these coincidences suggests that Moner inherits from March a keen sensitivity to the metaphysical bond between the literary text as an icon of subjectivity and the moment-to-moment unfolding of human existence.

MONER AND THE *SENEQUISTA* BACKGROUND

Many hispanists, among whom Karl Alfred Blüher y Louise Fothergill-Payne deserve special mention, underscore the considerable influence of Lucius Annaeus Seneca on Castilian and Catalan literatures of the Middle Ages in general and of the fifteenth century in particular. As is well known, the powerful sway held by that renowned exponent of Stoicism over such notable figures as Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, Iñigo López de Mendoza, Ausiàs March, Fernando de Rojas, and the anonymous author of the *Libro del Caballero Zifar* is manifested, usually, in an indirect manner through numerous adaptations or translations, glosses or commentaries. According to Blüher, the long series of these miscellaneous transmitters of Seneca's ideology encompasses the critical period that extends from the sixth century as witnessed by the *Formula vitae honestae* by Martín de Braga (around 570-579) until the well advanced 1400's as documented by the vast production of Alonso de Cartagena (1385/6-1456) (Blüher 32-148). In this context Blüher as well as Fothergill-Payne cannot but acknowledge the extraordinary role of the collections of proverbs and sententious sayings—collections represented not only by the likes of Luca Mannelli's *Tabulatio et Expositio Senecae*, derived strictly from

Seneca's works, but also by heterogeneous anthologies, similar to Clemente Sánchez del Vercial's *Libro de los exenplos por A.B.C.*, compiled from various sources.¹

Without going into details that others have investigated in depth and with abundant documentation, here I should like to concentrate on some salient aspects of *senequismo* evidenced in the works of Fray Francisco Moner, a Catalan author of the second half of the fifteenth century. Fray Francisco, o Fra Francesc, whose life comprises, specifically, the period from 1462/3 to 1492, has bequeathed to posterity a bilingual production—that is, one written both in his native language and in Castilian.² Clearly, Moner's multifarious career as a member of the military even in his tender youth and as an intellectual in the literary circles of Barcelona during his early adulthood coincides with the two decades immediately following the wedding of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1469. At the age of twenty-eight, scarcely a year before his premature death, Moner decided to enter the religious life. He chose to become a Franciscan, joining the branch of the order known as "la Observancia" for its strict adherence to the monastic rule.³

Moner exhibits that very tendency toward ethical pragmatism—the penchant for, in Blüher's words, "los principios de una sabiduría táctica de la vida" (34)—which, by virtue of Seneca's influence, found throughout the Spanish domain a constant and fruitful reception from the lifetime of the aforementioned Braga up to the middle of the *Quattrocento*, when we come upon the illustrious case of Alfonso de la Torre (c.1410?-1460). The latter, as Blüher points out (159-61), incorporates into his *Visión delectable* those excerpts from Braga's *Fórmula vitae honestae* that effectively illustrate the "reglas del bien vivir" together with the "consejos prácticos... dentro de las fronteras de lo ético" (161).⁴ Harking back to the beginning of the fourteenth century,

¹ The aforementioned Cartagena translated a segment of Mannelli's *Tabulatio*. Eventually, that translation was included in the last of *Los cinco libros de Séneca*, published in Sevilla in 1491 by Meynardo Ungut y Estanislao Polono (cf. Fothergill-Payne 14-5, 17, 18). As for Sánchez de Vercial's collection and kindred publications, see Blüher 156-7.

² Moner's seventy-four extant compositions are distributed according to the following table:

	IN CATALAN	IN CASTILIAN	TOTAL
Poems	2	54	56
Prose works	14	4	18
TOTAL	16	58	

For the edition of these works, see the bibliography below.

³ For a comprehensive look at Moner's life and works, see Cocozzella, *Introducció* 9-28 and *1 Introducción* 3-38.

⁴ In his commentary on this moralizing *senequista* position, which is derived from

Blüher detects in chapter 54 of *Libro del Caballero Zifar* one of the earliest attestations of yet another distinctive mark of *senequismo* in the way in which "de una ideología estoica se saca la doctrina filosófico-vital de una desilusión frente a los bienes aparentes de la Fortuna y del cuerpo, que seduce tanto por su punzante racionalismo como por su enfoque fundamental hacia la vida práctica" (100). Not at all uncommon for Moner is the effort, alluded to in Blüher's foregoing statement, toward the adaptation of abstract doctrine to concrete circumstances. Interestingly enough, precisely in the dialectic of the type that we may consider connatural to Moner between the "ideología estoica" and the exigencies of an individual *vivencia*, Blüher recognizes the gestation of an attitude that will gradually assert itself as the *sine qua non* of the *desengaño* typical of the world view of the baroque age.⁵

Moner took part in the same literary activity that a couple of generations before him personages of the caliber of Pérez de Guzmán and López de Mendoza undertook in favor of reconciling Stoic ethics with Christian principles and the ideals of chivalry (Blüher 177-80, 186-201).⁶

A natural expression of Moner's stoicism is his solidarity, patent in his writings, with the trend of cultural traditionalism of notable archaic qualities, a *sui-generis* characteristic of those Spanish humanists of the early Renaissance, who regarded Seneca their patron

Braga's works and finds wide acceptance in the Spanish-speaking world throughout the Middle Ages, Blüher observes: "El rigor ascético de la vieja Stoa cedió a un ideal de conducta moral que se esfuerza por armonizar la integridad ética interior con la sagacidad externa del hombre de mundo" (34).

⁵ Of great interest is Blüher's following observation on the embryonic "desengaño" we find in *Libro del Caballero Zifar*:

Lo que más tarde se califica con la palabra 'desengaño' es ya aquí el principio de la desilusión ante el carácter de apariencia del mundo; los argumentos estoicos, basados en la razón natural, rasgan el velo del engaño que cubre los supuestos bienes de la vida. En este des-engaño puramente racional radica la doctrina del dominio sobre el destino, que predicaron los antiguos estoicos; doctrina proclamada aquí por boca de un caballero español medieval. Es una doctrina que, aunque siente el desencanto del mundo, no reclama, sin embargo, el desprecio del mismo. No educa, propiamente hablando, para renunciar al mundo, sino para soportar y aguantar varonilmente ese mundo librado de su ilusión. Por eso está totalmente de acuerdo con el sentido del escrito apócrifo de Séneca el hecho de que el Caballero Zifar... vuelve su espalda a la existencia de ermitaño que por algún tiempo había llevado y dirige sus pasos decididos hacia el trajín mundano: desilusionado, es capaz de superar el destino que todavía le espera. (100-1)

⁶ Underscoring a significant aspect in Pérez de Guzmán's production, Blüher observes that the latter "se sirve de los lugares comunes del concepto estoico del destino cuando se pone a describir el ideal cristiano de la caballería" (177). As for López de Mendoza, Blüher adds:

saint (Blüher 168-73).⁷ In all probability Moner could not realize how ironic it was that he and his compatriot devotees of the Muses should conjure up the spirit of Seneca in deference to what Pérez de Guzmán considers that philosopher's "obra llana," that is to say a literary discourse, as Blüher explains, "sin arte y carente de finura retórica" (173).⁸ Indeed, by a curious twist of literary fortune, the Seneca, whom Quintilian sternly criticizes for his artificial style, in Blüher's words, "incoherente, a saltos, abrupto y efectista" (21), is converted into a champion of the homespun stylistic sobriety, brandished, as Blüher points out, "contra la penetración de la forma artística, altamente desarrollada, del extranjero" (172). Allegiance to *senequismo* would be equivalent, then, to a guarantee of cultural protectionism, if not outright impenetrability, especially in the face the Italianate trends, toward which Moner and a host of traditionalists harbored considerable suspicion.

THE *FONTESICAS DE FILOSOFÍA*: "POTTED WISDOM"

Misguided as they well may have been regarding the perception and appreciation of the supposed "obra llana" of Seneca, Pérez de Guzmán, Santillana and other authors — Moner included — were right on target concerning the emulation of a basic feature of Seneca's style: the frequency, that is, of catchy sentences of the type that Fernando de Rojas, in some prefatory statements to the famed *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*, classifies as "fontecicas de filosofía" or, simply, "sentencias".⁹ Even without identifying specific sources, we could easily find in Moner's bilingual text the predilection he shares with his contemporaries for the exemplars of what Fothergill-Payne calls "potted wisdom" (38).

El intenso reflejo de las concepciones estoicas en este ideal casi clásico de caballería se echa de ver también en la alusión central que Santillana hace, en el prólogo, al dominio de sí mismo en el 'caballero': "¿cómo puede regir á otro aquel que á sí mismo no rige?" (193)

⁷ For a general study of the archaic qualities of Spanish culture of the fifteenth century see Roger Boase, *The Troubadour Revival*. Two articles, the one by R. O. Jones ("Juan del Encina and Renaissance Lyric Poetry") and my own "Ausiàs March's 'Encyclopaedic Form'" stress the archaizing features of, respectively, Juan del Encina and Ausiàs March without establishing, however, a connection with the trends of *senequismo*.

⁸ Pérez de Guzmán's words are integrated into his poem entitled "Coronación de las quatro virtudes cardinales". See Blüher 171-2.

⁹ I am referring to the preface, which under the heading of "El autor a un su amigo" (Rojas 35-7), appears in the sixteen-act *Comedia*, published in 1500 in Toledo by Pedro Hagenbach. Miguel Marciales (5-6) provides a description of the basic texts of Rojas's masterpiece.

The following list of sentences culled at random provides, I submit, a useful showcase of Moner's own "fontecicas."

I group the sentences beneath the titles of the corresponding works. The ciphers between parentheses unaccompanied by specific designation refer to the pagination pertaining to the edition of the work in question.

Resposta a Jaume de Ribes: "Lo verdader enemorat no deu voler tembre de qui ama, sinó lo que recela de ssi. Y cada hu donant lo compte a ci matex, li deu parer que l'ha donat a l'altre" (131).

L'ànima d'Oliver: "Quy de leuger creu lo report dels ulls poria enmalaltir cada hora; però la salut és incerta, y la cura, tarda y costosa" (46); "¿No sabs tu que la virtut és regla, y que són més estremo que migs? En les coses difícils, se guanya lo mèrit resistin als fàcils errors ab ànimo viril y constant" (57).

Bendir de dones: "O Déu, quant enganat va/ lo qui diu «Vuy no plourá»,/ per serè que sia el dia!" (vv. 83-5; 184); "Abans troba el criminós/ la mentira per escusa,/ que no fa lo virtuós/ la veritat per socors,/ quant algun traydor l'acusa" (vv. 176-80; 189); "La porga que fa salut,/ amarga comunament" (vv. 246-7; 193); "qui detrás te vol culpar,/ senyala que t'ha temensa" (vv. 319-20; 197); "qui de dones dejuna / ne resta més sadollat" (vv. 299-300; 196); "A qui les ama avorreixen,/ qui no se'n cura, scarneixen;/ qui les ben tracta, molt més" (vv. 418-20; 202); "Sa ira no s'acompara/ a les feres més yroses" (v. 451; 204).

Obra en metro: "tarde s'acaba buena conquista/ por quien no's governa sobre sus furias" (509-10; 93); "las obras regladas, discretas/ mejor se conocen y son más prefetas/ quando entre espinas puñientes se cogen" (vv. 513-5; 94); "todo el mal vence l'usar de buen seso" (v. 520; 94).

Sepultura d'amor: "Dan los xaques tantas vezes,/ qu'a la postre vyene'l mate" (vv. 53-4; 133).

Tratado sobre la paciencia: "de los extremos aquel que pareçe más al medio va menos errado" (B₅^v).

La noche: "la soledad a los muy congoxados da licencia de cosas que la compañía no haze" (75); "la pena sigue la culpa como las arenas el agua" (81-2); "no parescen bien en la yglesia las justas" (117); "quando ell uno no quiere, los dos no pelean" (118-9); "no hagas tan gran caso d'esmalte, que debaxo puede estar la fuslera" (122); "quien haze burla del amigo que muere no deve tener cosa buena" (122).

Even without any specification of the pertinent sources, these and additional *sententiae* that could be gathered in the same fashion clearly situate the reader within the unmistakable ambience of Seneca's influence.

SALIENT TOPICS

Fortune and Free Will

In order to define the *senequista* ambiance, which extends far beyond the terms of the stylistic traits we have just reviewed, of great relevance are, also, the prevailing issues to be identified in the most authoritative commentaries on Seneca, such as the ones by Alonso de Cartagena and Pero Díaz de Toledo.

In her well-documented study of these issues, Fothergill-Payne reaches striking conclusions, eminently applicable to Moner. Let us take as an example the following observation:

The topics singled out for clarification in the glosses represent typical concerns of the fifteenth-century reader. They also prove to have much in common with the themes and concerns of the *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea*. (26-7)

Adducing concrete references to a variety of subjects—religious ideologies (orthodox and heretical), psychological concerns, the interrelationship between the individual and his society—Fothergill-Payne adds:

In matters of religion, we have the question of the relation between man and God, of fate versus free will and of death and suicide. In the area of personal happiness the old question of the *Summum Bonum* crops up time and again together with analysis of pleasure, sorrow and anger. Finally, on the topic of human relations, both the Senecan commentators and the authors of *Celestina* focus on man's attitude to his equals and inferiors, that is to say, to friends, women and servants. (27)

As for religious or theological matters—the role of Fortune, for example, and the concomitant notions of Divine prescience with respect to the freedom of the will—Moner's works (especially *L'anima d'Oliver*, *La noche*, and *Obra en metro*)—contain, as I have indicated elsewhere (2 *Introducción* 3-23), memorable passages, in which Moner, not unlike the famous and not-so-famous authors studied by Blüher, strives to harmonize Seneca's legacy with sound Christian doctrine.¹⁰ Blüher traces meticulously the sinuous path taken by those who, eminently represented by Cartagena in their zeal to reconcile the pagan with the Christian world view, could arrive at no better solution than to turn a blind eye on the radical determinism of the Stoics and ultimately took refuge in the definition of *Fatum* as "Dei summi...

¹⁰ For an overview of these writers and their representative works see Blüher 212-22 and my 2 *Introducción*, especially pp. 12 and 21, n. 28.

voluntas et potestas" (Blüher 212-22).¹¹ In all probability this maxim borrowed from Saint Augustine (*De Civitate Dei* 5.8) was no less familiar to Moner than it was to Alonso de Cartagena and other prominent *senequistas*, including Antoni Canals, translator of Seneca's *De Providentia* into Catalan. The same goes for the famous passage of *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (4.6), in which Boethius establishes the interaction between *Providentia* and *Fatum*.¹²

Death and Suicide

In Fothergill-Payne's list of *senequista* subjects of a religious nature, those concerning death and suicide clearly stand out. As one may expect, Moner, at least from a theoretical perspective, does not deviate from a "reasonable" or "reasoned" position concerning the *topoi* that, in the course of the fifteenth century, lie at the focal point of the preoccupations—not to say obsessions—typical of poet-lovers throughout the Castilian and Catalan domains. Doubtless Moner espoused, with as deep a conviction as did any intellectual of his age, the argument in condemnation of suicide, regardless of Seneca's encomiastic defense of that "final solution" in his celebration of Cato's noble example.¹³ And, in view of the unassailable orthodoxy, which we have no reason to doubt in our Fra Francesc, a severe condemnation of suicide would have been de rigueur just as it was in the emphatic declarations proffered by the likes of Canals (Blüher 129) and Cartagena (Fothergill-Payne 29, Blüher 137). This notwithstanding, contrary to our expectations, Moner does not convey any overt repudiation of suicide

¹¹ Blüher points out that Alonso de Cartagena was aware of the only passage (see *Naturales quaestiones* 2.38.3) in which Seneca alludes to the compatibility between Fate and free will (217). Cartagena, however, did not fathom the consequences of the Stoic position. Blüher observes:

es evidente que en España entonces, por la confianza que se ponía en la interpretación de San Agustín y como consecuencia de una exégesis errónea de la *Pronoia* estoica (*providentia*) y del concepto estoico de la divinidad, no se conoció la verdadera esencia del determinismo estoico, según el cual todo el acontecer del universo se halla en un nexo causal continuo, en una serie encadenada, sin solución de continuidad, cuyo transcurso ni el mismo Dios puede cambiar y en cuyo encadenamiento, sin excepción, incluso cada una de las decisiones del hombre, que subjetivamente parecen libres, en último análisis, no es más que un miembro de esa dependencia causal. (217)

¹² For the pertinent quotations and commentaries, see Blüher 215-7. For the life and works of Canals, see Riquer, *Història* 2: 433-60.

¹³ See the passage glowing with enthusiastic admiration in *De Providentia* 2.8-12, pp. 7-8 in Viansino's edition. See, also, Blüher 194, n. 109, where we find an account of other references by Seneca to Cato's suicide.

even on the occasions in which the context invites strong condemnation of the pernicious act. We are surprised, for instance, that in *L'ànima d'Oliver* the protagonist—the Oliver of the title, himself driven to suicide by the “dark passion”—does not voice any regret for his derangement. Neither does Oliver, what with his vitriolic criticism of lovesickness (see, especially, *Oc* 146–51, 156–61), admonish his pertinacious interlocutor—that is, Moner’s literary persona—against the perils attendant upon the morbid attraction that death exercises upon the Macíases, Olivers, and Moners of this world, unsuspecting victims of unbridled passion.¹⁴ Despite his despicable act, objectively condemnable, Oliver manages to avoid eternal damnation: he makes his eerie appearance as a soul suffering in Purgatory. In any event, the example itself of Oliver may signal Moner’s bias in favor of the Stoic position.

Even more surprising is the case of yet another artistic alter ego of Moner’s, the protagonist of *La noche*, who on more than one occasion has to come to terms with the aforementioned strange compulsion, symptom, we have reason to believe, of a sick proclivity toward suicide. In response to the urging of *Desesperación* (“Despair”), one of the personified passions that confront the protagonist —“Echate en la mar, a los peçes, y muere antes del encuentro de la tierra escasa.” (136)—the allegorized Moner confesses that “lo que me aconsejaba era lo mismo que tenía en la voluntad...” (137). In much the same tone said protagonist concludes the scolding he levels at the personification of *Temor* (“Fear”):

Ya no temo la muerte, antes la desseo. Pero, ¿quiéreslo ver? Mira cómo me tarda. No busques mejor prueba.

—Pues si tú tienes el morir por el mayor mal, y a mí es byen y todos los otros males padesco, ¿qué quieres que tema? Poderles soffrir me cumple o que la vida me quite con mis manos, pues sé, por mi mayor daño, qu’el morir se me alaga. (140-1)

Soon after, dangerously contaminated by the toxic humor of *Ira* (“Anger”), a personage vividly depicted as “vieja barbada,” Moner’s artistic counterpart ends up venting his fury and frustration against himself rather than against the repulsive hag. When this fearsome interlocutor with little hesitation about rubbing salt in the wound harps upon the abuses perpetrated by the ladylove and remarks “Ya que no

¹⁴ The Catalan counterpart of the Galician poet, Macías, prototypical suicide, the Oliver effectively conjured up by Moner, took his own life because of his love for Violant Luña de Mur, Countess of Luna. Riquer identifies Oliver with the historical Francesc Oliver, who translated into Catalan Alain Chartier’s “La belle dame sans merci” (Riquer 3: 112-4).

puedes vengarte de quien te los procura [the abuses] véngate de ti mismo..." (146), she is met by a reply resonating with diquieting, self-menacing implications: "Si quieres ver la señal que dizes yo te prometo que la daré presto, y tal que será conforme a la grandeza de la causa" (146).

What bears underscoring is that Razón ('Lady Reason'), an outstanding character of *La noche*, in her own gloss on the encounters with the passions,¹⁵ sidesteps the central issue that is being dramatized in each of those encounters—the issue, that is, of death sought as an escape from a crisis that may be described as a situation problematic to the extreme (a "situación límite"). We may surmise that Razón does not wish to become involved in that disastrous escapism. She does not want to because she cannot and she cannot because in the realm of Christian ethics the option is unthinkable... not even open to discussion: suicide simply does not have a "reasonable" justification. Thus, Razón's position lands us in the vacuum inherent in the exposition of her argument and leaves us, *a fortiori*, with two possible options. Both of these remain outside her jurisdiction. The first, exemplified by Oliver's situation, consists in the recourse to the mercy of God.¹⁶ The second, the only one available to an individual who proves to be a creature of his own conflict, is realized in the strenuous, irresolvable struggle with the passions.

15 See Razón's long disquisition in *TMPW* 154-75.

16 Only the Creator's mercy can redeem the act of extreme desperation. This is what we come to realize the moment the tormented Moner begins to converse with "L'ànima." Moner comes up with a question that does not gloss over his surprise and allows us to perceive, all the while, signs of great preoccupation:

—Sy l'ànima est del qui dius, marvell-me que'm reprengues, perquè la tua fi més par las mies obres que no a tes paraules; que, pues per amor mataras la vida del cors, per justícia la culpa ha mort a tu. Si eres, donchs, morta y comdemnada, ¿per què'm castigues? ¿És mudada la ley en l'infern, o tens tu sola llicència de procurar-me al servey de Déu, de qui est enemiga?— (141)

The ghost, on his part, finds it relatively easy to deal with his interlocutor's surprise and satisfy his curiosity: God's justice defies human understanding. What is difficult for *L'ànima* is to convince Moner that the affinity the latter recognizes in the two cases—"la tua fi més par a les mies obres que no a tes paraules"—can be an omen of eternal damnation. Hence the alarming tenor of the entire situation, of which the youth afflicted with inordinate love, that is to say, Moner's literary projection, remains, evidently, precariously ignorant. Oliver's speech, which I quote below, shows a well equilibrated texture of rigorous argumentation and sincere altruism:

—Sy hagueses dit que la causa de la mort del meu cors par en les tues obres, acer-tares, que per amor desordenat se seguí. Mes que paregia a la mia fi, no'u cregues, perquè a la misericòrdia de Déu plagué donar-me temps, y gran, ab què poguí pene-dir-me, y'm perdonà la culpa; la justícia del qual ordenà en aquest lloch sia mon pur-gatori, fins arribi lo terme per què fuy creada. No só condemnada, morta, ni de Déu enemiga, sinó creatura sua, remuda, indigne. Així, que no't maravells si't reprench, que rahonablement me toqua per la ley y naturalesa dels dos, y perquè la via que't desvia ya la he sperimentada, y sé yo lo que tu sabs y lo que ignores. (141-2)

The *Affectus*

In the exploration of that struggle the principles of Senecan psychology come into play, a psychology based on the Stoic theory concerning the *affectus*, which they called *pathoi*. Now and then Moner identifies the *affectus* by means of his own terminology: the *furias* he mentions in various passages and the “muy furiosa pasión” highlighted in *La noche* (174). Starting from the Stoic premise that any *affectus* is a kind of psychological or mental illness—“a disease of the mind,” in the words of Fothergill-Payne (10)—Moner expends his constant effort in the investigation of the various aspects of the disease par excellence: the condition of the lover. In the final analysis, *mutatis mutandis* and with due allowance to the noteworthy differences that invariably come to light, Moner’s purpose remains basically similar to that of Fernando de Rojas. Both authors would agree on the maxim enunciated in Seneca’s *De Vita Beata* to the effect that the root of many if not all ills is the desperate pursuit of *voluptas*, which, in collusion with Fortune, produces the anguish, suspicion, unrest of the Calistos of this world (Fothergill-Payne 47).¹⁷ Not surprisingly, references or at least allusions to *voluptas* o *cupiditas* and its devastating consequence on the lover’s soul occur at every step in Moner’s compositions. Suffice it to take a look here at vv. 341–50 of *Obra en metro*, a passage that develops the topic of the maleficent alliance between precisely the pathos of *voluptas* and Fortune. The lover rebukes that capricious distributor of worldly goods in the following terms:

Y por acabarme del todo acabado,
y siendo el más baxo hazerme caher,
enamorado m’as hetcho en tal grado
que tal no será, ny es, ny es stado
ny s’espera tanpoco, que no puede ser.
D’amor m’as hecho pesada corona
en servicio de quyen por tyerra la huella.
Y quieres que quiera más la persona
que más me desama, que siempre blazona
en quanto la syrvo sin offendella. (87–8)

¹⁷ For an overview of the contrast between the Stoic and peripatetic theories regarding the passions in general and *ira* in particular, see Fillion-Lahille 7–14. Of special interest for the present study is summarized in the following observation:

la colère, comme toute passion, est un mal contre nature; c’est l’obstacle majeur à la sérénité intérieure qui assurerait le bonheur; mais la passion n’a pas d’existence propre: elle n’est, disent-ils [the Stoics], qu’une raison malade ou mal affermie; nous avons donc la possibilité, en mme temps que le devoir, d’en affranchir complètement nos mes. Telle est leur théorie de l’«apatheia».... (10–1)

A Paragon of Stoic Wisdom

Before proceeding with this search of more or less specific sources for Moner's *senequismo*, it is worth remembering that the overall negative assessment of the passions asserts on the rebound the exemplary wisdom of the individual who is successful in keeping them at bay. Moner, to be sure, has not left us a vivid portrait of that individual as does El Marqués de Santillana in his famous poem, *Bías contra Fortuna*.¹⁸ All in all, because such a portrait is conspicuous in its absence, the notion of the wise individual, as genuinely Stoic as Seneca himself would conceive it, is a constant point of reference throughout Moner's production. In fact, we sense the spiritual presence of a Bías, a Cato, or any kindred patron saint whenever we examine the flip side, so to speak, of the literal meaning of a key expression. The following *sententiae* couched in the mouth of Oliver echo the voice of the venerable figure that inhabits works like Seneca's *De Vita Beata*: "Flach és lo cor que a ssi matex no pot vèncer" (140). A little later the *senequista* tone is even more emphatic:

¿No sabs tu que la virtut és regla, y que són més estrema que migs? En les coses difícils, se guanya lo mèrit resistint als fàcils errors ab ànimo viril y constant. Gran vergonya de l'home, que no's puga guardar de mirar, parlar, pensar en lo que sab que li vol y'l porta a perjudici. (157)

This is a clear illustration of a canon that Fothergill-Payne describes in the following manner:

The Stoics conceived of the happy life in terms of living in harmony with Nature. Nature's gifts are plentiful and easily accessible, Seneca states more than once. (47)¹⁹

Passion and Reason: A Question of Harmony

The supreme law in the Stoic system is the one that governs human conduct and presupposes the submission of passion to reason. In the *Epistulae Morales* (37.4) Seneca admonishes Lucilius categorically:

¹⁸ See an interesting commentary on this poem in Blüher 195-200.

¹⁹ Séneca shares this notion of happiness with various philosophers of ancient times, "car celui-ci [the *summum bonum*]"—observes Fillion-Lahille—"pour les Anciens consiste, d'un avis quasi unanime, à «vivre conformément à notre nature»" (10). As for the "Anciens" in question, Fillion-Lahille specifies that

Il y a accord sur ce point entre toutes les grandes philosophies: cf. Cicéron, *De fin.* V, chap. VI sq. La formule semble mme appartenir à la langue courante: cf. Horace, *Ep.* I, x, 12." (296, nota 48)

"Vade certo gradu; si vis omnia tibi subicere, te subice rationi; multos reges si ratio te rexerit" (ed. Gummere 254). La "fontecica" attained, no doubt, wide diffusion through the Castilian anthologies within easy reach. In one of them we read: "Tú regirás a muchos si la razón rige a ti" (Fothergill-Payne 53). The concept is likely to prompt various reflections in accordance with the imagination of each writer that adopts it. The author of the first *auto* of *Celestina*, for instance, envisages Calisto contemplating his lute, woefully out of tune, and being thus sensitized to the his own inner turmoil. The connection between the lamentation of this lover ("¿Cómo sentirá el armonía aquel que consigo está tan discorde; aquel en quien la voluntad a la razón no obedece?") and the words, already cited, of *Epistula* 37 does not escape the sagacious commentary by Fothergill-Payne (53), who, in the agitation exhibited by Calisto and by other youths of his condition, intuitively discerns some psychological and moral nuances worthy of consideration. Noteworthy, also, are the "malos pensamientos" mentioned in *Epistula* 10 and interpreted in one anthology as engendered by the *affectus* of "greed, fear, anger, and lust," exacerbated by the pathology of solitude (Fothergill-Payne 53). Poignantly, she observes:

Thus the reader acquainted with the complete text of the Anthology²⁰ would have recognized Calisto's ranting and raving as the sign of an unwise man who has given in to his *affecti* and whose affliction will probably increase if he is left by himself. (53)

By the same token, in the context of Moner's ideologies, the morbid state of the lover – especially the lonesome lover – is born of the tension between reason, on the one hand, and the will in the company of the various passions, on the other. In *L'ànima d'Oliver*, the afflicted lover vents off his emotions as would any Calisto or *amant calistéen*, to borrow Marcel Bataillon's term, and, in so doing, subjects himself to the scrutiny of the wise and learned individual represented in one telling instance (that is, in Oliver's case) by *l'ànima* in question (ghostly emissary from the other world). From the conjoining of two perspectives, the wordly and the otherworldly, the crisis diagnosed by Seneca is brought into focus *sub specie aeternitatis*, through microscopic lenses. This indicates that Moner pays a great deal of attention to the precarious condition brought about by a radical *psychomachia* that shows unmistakable signs of great distress. References to obdurate conduct, to indetermination, and to an unsettled state of mind, for which an effective remedy is hard to come by, occur time and again

²⁰ Reference to *Las epístolas de Séneca* (Zaragoza, 1496): see the corresponding entry in the bibliography in Fothergill-Payne 152.

in a discourse that often crystallizes into a judgment proffered by a venerable authority:

Si ta voluntat fos sana, no desijaria lo que desija, ab desorde, com desija. Y si vols dir que'u fa que debaten en tu la rahó y la censualitat, y que per no ésser determenat te congoixes, si fos veritat no haguera durat tant: ya fores guarit, ho del tot malalt. Com est tant malaut, que't par que res no't poria gorir sinó que fosses tant volgut, que ella no't negàs cosa que li demanasses. (160)

Easy to spot are passages in which Seneca's latter-day *sapiens* adopts the expression of the Christian moralist, who mentions, in a clearly admonitory tone, the devil, the individual conscience, the judgment of reason, and the road to perdition:

Guarda que aqueixa fera bèstia sovint se dissimula y desfrassa moltes voltes, per portar a son molí, y entre de l'envés, fent-nos consciència de algun gran crim, que ns fa molt detestar per fer-nos tenir en poch. Lo que prou basta per a damnar-nos; però no pot fer tant que la consciència no acuse tota volta que guardaràs lo juhi de la rahó. Per què clar se pot veure que lo amor que serveys, te fa oblidar a Déu y a tu mateix. (159)

Stoicism and Scholasticism

The stoicism of these expressions clearly in sympathy with the Gospel message is self-evident. The same love-centered themes insightfully analyzed in *L'ànima d'Oliver* find a concise, full development in *La noche* in the disquisition of Lady Reason. A key passage in Razón's discourse goes into some distinctions of great significance and, at the same time, signals a deviation from Razón's systematic argumentation, patterned, in the main, after Aquinas's treatment of the emotions in *Summa Theologica Ia IIae*, questions 25-48. It is fair to say that at this point the "rational" exposition changes course by means of a new *exordium*, which reads as follows:

Es también amor muy fuerte y furioso, especialmente del hombre a la mujer. En esto es a las vezes de tal condición, que quyen a los comienços no se arma comigo contra él, luego le haze homenaje, en gran offença mía. (160)

With a terminology and an attitude not at all extraneous in a Stoic context, Razón points to the salient issues, which she proceeds to delve into without delay. Thus, she brings up the advisability of submitting passion to the sway of the intellective faculties ("ca yo, que soy hecha a semejança de Dios, no sólo Amor mas la Voluntad, que es más noble, me deve obedesser" [160]). In the same breath Razón touches upon the

injurious consequences of unrestrained love ("Siempre le siguen [a Amor] desastres, y nunca se castiga" [161]) and the need for an early remedy ("El verdadero remedio es defender la barrera por donde el falço entra manço y suave con su gesto plaziente y alegre" [162]).

Razón is no less accomplished than Oliver in the treatment of the essential details. It may be said that Razón does Oliver one better, even when the latter is presented in rather flattering terms: "ànima devota" (153), "bonaventurada, ...de Déu predestinada, eleta, dels lassos de aquest món desliura, de l'infern segura" (143). We may add that, in matters of love, Razón sets a clear distinction between the peripatetic and Stoic position—a distinction based on the characteristic underscored by the specification of two qualities: "furioso" and "fuerte" (see the passage we have just quoted). When joining with "fuerza," the term "furia" designates the vehemence of the quintessential *affectus* of the Stoics, a metaphysical common denominator of sorts, which has very little to do with the Aristotelian-Scholastic tradition.

Furia and Consequences

Even though Moner is very much aware of this tradition and does not fail to take it into account, there can be little doubt that in Razón's philosophical discourse and elsewhere the Stoic perspective on passion plays a predominant role. In specific terms, the recurrence of the word "furia" and its adjectival derivative brings to mind the two sides of the same semiotic medal: on the one side the vehemence of the erotic instinct and, on the other, the symbiosis between eros and the Stoic notion of the *affectus* par excellence, which turns out to be "ira" ('anger'). At the theoretical level, the definition provided in vv. 108-12 of Moner's poem, entitled *Quejas al alma*, situates us in the appropriate semantic field:

Amor, que a vos hos condena
y a mí sin culpa me accusa,
furia nascida de mena
qu'el favor no me enagena
por ser extraño el que usa...
Mi alma, ved lo que hos digo:
cruel metal es aquel
que quiere soldar consigo
su natural enemigo
porque se quiebra por él. (Vv. 108-17; 236)

As a "pathos" from the moment of conception ("furia nascida"), *Amor*, then, is sure to bring about the perdition of that soul, to which

the "vos" of v. 108 is directed. Taking the lover's confession at face value we would grant that this *Amor* "furioso" has not succeeded yet in disturbing the lover's mental faculties. This, however, begs the question as to how long the *amante* can hold on to his sanity (can keep saying "no me enagena"), while *Amor* does no better than bestow a dubious reward ("favor")—a strange one, indeed ("por ser extraño el que usa ") and, we may presume, far from beneficial. The bitter irony of these verses will soon strike home. The term "favor" is a misnomer, of course: it refers, in the final analysis, to the abuse and scorn the lover receives in recompense for his devotion.

The "furia," we now realize, erupts in the oblique semiotic, ironic and absurd all in one, that accompanies the state of mind of the mournful lover, beset by perplexity, bitterness, disillusionment. Typical is the emotion-laden rhetoric with which Moner-the-lover expresses himself in *L'ànima d'Oliver*:

La bellesa y altres gràcies ya no deurién sevar-me, perquè a mi les amaga ab vel negre de ultratges, de manera que, a ma voluntat, no li troba altra cosa per què ama, sinó sols perquè vol, y ab tant fúria, que quant puch dir és una sola sentit-la en comparació de la secreta flama que debaix del callar se cobra. (145)

Seizing on the central motif—the ever-present "furia"—Oliver, on his part, attempts to shed some rational light on the emotional obfuscation:

Pyetat me fa lo teu estament, perquè coneix lo poder que te asalta; però no tinguer tanta fúria si tu matex, deseparada la barrera, no li haguesses uberta la porta. Quy de leuger creu lo report dels ulls poria enmalaltir cada hora; però la salut és incerta, y la cura, tarda y costosa. (146)

The leitmotif resonates time and again in *La noche*. The following examples easily come to mind: 1) the rebuke with which the protagonist confronts Deseo, presented as "hijo de Amor" ("Serviendo a tu padre no pude de ti apartarme, y hame costado caro porque quien va contigo tu furia le desarma el seso y da presunción, y esquivo a quien devría piadar..." [118]) and in Deseo's reply ("Gran engaño recibes en querer culparme porque todos los que aman furioso me quieren" [118]); 2) Razón's description of the same personage ("Es mucho de la condición de su padre, y más acerca las mujeres donde es furioso y ciego" [165]); 3) Razón's explication of the *mote* of Tristeza ("«El libre» has de entender por el que fuere triste de qualquier otra cosa salvo de amor furioso porque él tal sigue la seña forçado" [168]).

Similar resonances are found in *Obra en metro*, especially in vv. 118-20, which recapture the protagonist's confession regarding Amor's character:

El amor me tiene por fuerça so llave,
 en su servicio, so jugo, so velo,
 entróme en ll'alma manço y suave;
 de que fue dentro, hízose grave
 y luego conmigo, dolor y recelo.
 Guardéle cubierto, callado, secreto,
 gran tiempo en cuydado, que mucho pesava;
 mas él con su fuerça, çegado, indiscreto,
 a las vezes me dava de furia un aprieto
 que, sin que rompía, mi mal señalava. (79)

The quotations do not leave room for doubt. When not applied to love or to its surrogate, desire, the lexicon of "furia" is employed in association with love's representatives: the "gran furia" in *Sepoltura d'amor*, v. 62, and the "furiós assot" in *L'ànima d'Oliver* (154) bespeak the cruelty of the ladylove; "furia" in *Sepoltura d'amor*, v. 608, and the variant "saña" in *Obra en metro*, v. 329, are attributed to capricious Fortuna. Of equal interest is the mention of *temor* "furioso" in *Cançión y glosa*. v. 82.²¹

PSEUDO-PHILOSOPHIZING: FAULTY VISION

This brief scanning of lexical items allows us to catch a glimpse of Moner's coming to terms with the salient characteristic of the prevailing *senequismo* of his age: the anarchy of the passions or the inability of reason to exert a healthy control over them. Moner is well aware, as is Fernando de Rojas, that the disorder of the various *affectus* is a factor concomitant to the aberration of the intellect. Once again we may have recourse to Fothergill-Payne, who, on the basis of Calisto's first speech—the one that, in fact, opens the first scene of *Celestina*—sketches out the phenomenology of the lover's emotive-intellectual discomfiture. As may be seen in the passage quoted below, in that speech Fothergill-Payne recognizes a major perversion of the Stoic epistemological system:

Calisto's pseudo-philosophizing not only sets the tone for further heresies; it also brings out the flaws in his logic. In this respect, his judgements regarding Melibea's beauty, Nature's greatness and his own happiness can be read as an ingenious illustration of error (*opinio*) as conceived in the Stoic theory of perception of knowledge. For the Stoics, knowledge is attainable and follows on a precise succession of mental exercises which start with perception through the senses. In order to make a judgement, assent (*adsensio*) has to be

²¹ The term "furias" is applied globally to the passions of the soul in *Quejas al alma*, v. 42, and to those of the individual in *Obra en metro*, v. 510.

given to the perceived picture (*visum*). But assent, hastily and wrongly given, leads to error (*opinio*) and all error is sin (*peccatum*). (48)

After describing some rhetorical procedures, which need not be brought up here, Fothergill-Payne concludes that "Calisto's conversation with Melibea can be read as an *exemplum* of Stoic *opinio* in a Christian context" (49).

Moner, in his own Stoic outlook, does not fail to take into account the disorientation of the intellect (*opinio* or *peccatum*) due to a flaw in the act of either assent (*adsensio*) or perception (*visum*). In the last passage we have cited from *L'ànima d'Oliver*, the wise interlocutor criticizes the lover for giving undue credence to the inaccurate, often deceitful "report" of the eyes, which he blames for what he calls "l'ànima malalta:" "Quy de leuger creu lo report dels ulls poria enmalaltir cada hora" (146). Oliver revisits the issue upon referring, specifically, to the moral blindness of the lovers of the third state ("tercer stament"), that is, those who have lost possession of the object of their affection: "són més dignes de reprençió perquè són més cyegos quant deurien més veure" (151). In another interesting passage, one taken from *Resposta a Jaume de Ribes*, the sickness of the soul is diagnosed in terms of a loss of direction ("desviada [el alma] de les fúries de les passions y censualitat"), aggravated by the proverbial blindfold ("enbenada y quasi feta ydolatrie") (132).

In *Obra en metro*, besides some loose allusions—see, for example, v. 524: "Tras la Razón yo mismo me ciego" and v. 687: "dell alma mesquina turbada de cyega"—the blindness motif finds a full development within the context of a topic that rouses the author's interest on various occasions. Stanza XXXI (vv. 301-10), in particular, gathers the essential points of a clear and precise exposition:

Ya no so yo en caso que sea
possible sallirme d'esta pyhuela,
que ny tengo manos ny ojos que vea.
Quyen quyerre librarse al comyenço provea,
que vela qu'es presa de balde se vela.
Quando Amor ceva estonses se guarde
quyen de sus furias el daño recela;
de que a 'prendido el consejo, es muy tarde,
que quando los males hazen alarde,
poco provetcha razón ny cautela. (86)

Here Moner paints a complete picture: the inefficiency of the eyes is gauged in correlation with the harmful effects that may be foreseen and with the ills that are bemoaned, at present, time and again. Hence the necessity of caution and preventive measures. These measures are

none other than the ones advised by Ovid in v. 91 of the *de Remedia amoris*: the best therapy consists in the determination of "nipping in the bud" or, in Ovid's expression, "Principiis obsta".²² Evidently, Moner was familiar with the entire passage that encompasses vv. 79-106 of *Remedia*. Needless to say, Ovid's sententious advice is in complete unison with the general tenor of Moner's *senequismo*:

principiis obsta; sero medicina paratur,
cum mala per longas convaluere moras.
sed propera, nec te venturas differ in horas;
quī non est hodie, cras minus aptus erit.
verba dat omnis amor reperitque alimenta morando;
optima vindictae proxima quaeque dies. (Vv. 91-96)²³

As index of a constant preoccupation for the sustenance of harmful love, the frequency of the verb *cevar* throughout Moner's production (see my commentary in *1 Introducción* 126-7), refers us to the "alimenta" of the Latin verse (v. 95), which A. A. R. Henderson translates as follows: "love is ever deceptive and finds food in procrastination" (Henderson 53, nota al v. 95).²⁴

In *La noche* the contextualization of the "deceit of the eyes" is amplified to the extent of encompassing a linkage with the cardinal points of Stoic ideology. Let us take, for a start, a critical incident. The encounter of Moner's persona with Costumbre ('Lady Custom') sets in operation the same ruinous process toward which Calisto feels irresistibly compelled the moment he catches a glimpse of his *femme fatale*. The sensuality of Moner's description could not be more explicit:

No trahía [Costumbre] otra cosa encima. Descubría los pechos toda desbrochada. Eran tan lindos qu'era maravilla. Vi que no me hablava sino que se refa. (91-2)

As Costumbre begins to speak, the hearer reacts in speechless abashment. His sensibility, after all, is greatly stimulated by the acoustic as well as the visual charms of the damsel. His coy, circumspect demeanor belies the turbulence of a highly dramatic moment:

²² Lola Badia finds a version of this "remedium" in *Primer del Chrestia* by Francesc Eiximenis ("Per la presència d'Ovidi" 83-4). In his splendid edition of the *Remedia* (see the following note), A. A. R. Henderson provides an extensive list of sundry versions of the same advice, proffered by various authors of Greek and Roman antiquity: see p. 51, the preliminary gloss to *Remedia Amoris*, vv. 79-134.

²³ I make use of the edition (text and commentary) of the *Remedia* by Henderson: cf. the select bibliography below. For the passage under consideration here see pp. 5-6.

²⁴ Henderson points out affinities with the expressions "maxima lena mora est" (*Ars amatoria* 3.752) and "ipse alimenta sibi maxima praebebat Amor" (Propertius 3.21.4).

Estas palabras me dixo con la boz suave y el gesto plaziente. Yo estava tan metido en miralla que no le respondí, sino que, acordándome de lo que por mí abía passado, saltáronme las lágrimas de los ojos, y arrepentido, la dixe... (92)

The glance, the memory, the tears, the prompting of the flesh... these are the symptoms of the dysfunctional "optics of love" and of the realm of self-consciousness, in which *peccatum* is unmasked by self-accusation disguised as repentance. Absorbed in the contemplation of that "mugeril hermosura," personification of the dubious quality that Andreas Capellanus calls "venustas," the protagonist of *La noche* may well indulge in complaints and protestations: "¿por qué, siendo tan engañosa, puedes tanto" (92)? The truth of the matter is that this lover is as hellbent on the route toward damnation as is the one who at the beginning of *Celestina* regards the beauty of Melibea as an epiphany of "la grandeza de Dios." In her own rehearsal of the fatidic encounter Razón harks back to the familiar Stoic motifs. She touches upon the symbolism of *cevar*—"[l]a qual [Costumbre] combida y ceva los coraçones tiernos a su condición" (151)—and, having returned to food imagery, relates it forthwith to Costumbre's physical attributes:

—Rehíase la Costumbre porque con su halago desde la niñes es desseada. Hermosa te paresció; assí es ella deleitable. Ca por esso con los pechos descubiertos que viste cría leche dulce, mas no provechosa. (151)

What may be considered Razón's learned treatise on the passions comes to a head in the central factor of Stoicism: the consciousness of the wise individual. The presence of this imposing personage is attested by the contrast between his ethical outlook and that of those who are enticed by the inducements of Costumbre. Razón's exposition is hand-somely epitomized by her description of Costumbre's accoutrements:

Su invención y letra declaró gran parte de su ser, si lo miraste, porque apropiadamente trae la su invención, y bien es dicho en la letra. Ca la doctrina de los hombres sabios se puede acomparar al sol, y quien d'esta tal doctrina carece es alumbrado por las luzérnigas que sólo de noche relumbran. (151-2)²⁵

²⁵ In the passage quoted below the narrator-protagonist of *La noche* provides not only the "invención" mentioned by Razón but also the lyrics that accompany the "invención" of Costumbre:

Trahía vestido un brial de terciopelo verde, broslado alrededor d'unas luzérnigas muy naturales y de letras que dezían:

Quando el sol de la doctrina
falta en los grandes y grey,
yo soy tenida por ley. (89-90)

EROS AND IRA

Senecan Sources

What may we deduce concerning the function of the *affectus* in Moner's production? First of all, Moner's treatment evinces a strict adherence to an essential characteristic that Janine Fillion-Lahille defines as follows: "ce monisme rationaliste qui constitue l'originalité et le fondement même du stoïcisme" (11). That is to say: as far as the conduct of the lover is concerned, reason is presented as an inescapable guide, even though the passions often put up resistance and rebel against her. The postulate of such a "monisme rationaliste" bears, in tandem, the grouping of the *affectus* as a homogeneous nucleus. A distinctive feature of Moner's *senequismo* is the special kinship, intuited rather than explained, or even explicable, between two main *affectus*: the one that Desesperación calls "enamorada soberbia" (*La noche* 136), that is, erotic love, and the one that Razón designates as "furiosa pasión" (*La noche* 174), that is, anger.

The metaphysical bond between love and its "furias" finds, of course, in Seneca an exemplary and most influential essayist. We may adduce as evidence the numerous "fontecicas," such as the ones that emanate from *Epistula* 18 and flow into the mainstream of the numerous compilations, from which March, Moner, Rojas and many others nourish their inventiveness. In paragraphs 14 and 15 of said *Epistula* Seneca takes up primordial issues—anger as a source of insanity, the close genetic ties among anger, erotic loves, and hatred, the advice to avoid anger—which Rojas assimilates into the dramatization of the "furias" of Melibea (Fothergill-Payne 86). The Latin text helps us identify the main strands that Moner integrates into the texture of his own creation. Following is a particularly significant passage:

Delegabo te ad Epicurum; ab illo fiet numeratio: "Inmodica ira gignit insaniam." Hoc quam verum sit, necesse est scias, cum habueris et servum et inimicum. In omnes personas hic exardescit affectus; tam ex amore nascitur quam ex odio, non minus inter seria quam inter lusus et iocos. Nec interest, ex quam magna causa nascatur, sed in qualem perveniat animum. Sic ignis non refert quam magnus, sed quo incidat. Nam etiam maximum solida non receperunt; rursus arida et corripit facilia scintillam quoque foveat usque in incendium. Ita est, mi Lucili, ingentis irae exitus furor est, et ideo ira vitanda est non moderationis causa, sed sanitatis. (Ed. Gummere 1: 122-4)

Besides the specific points already mentioned, the incendiary metaphor and especially the term "scintillam" bring to mind v. 388 of *Bendir de dones*, where we learn that women, taken as obvious instigators of libidinous love, "Fan flames de les scintil·les" (200). Of

great significance is, also, the "furor," associated, directly, with the great wrath ("ingentis irae"), of which it is a natural effect ("exitus"), and, indirectly, because of the context, with love and hatred. Moner's fascination with the "furias" reflects this direct and indirect association, which has, also, an Ovidian antecedent (see v. 119 of *Remedia*: "dum furor in cursu est, currenti cede furori") and a certain Ciceronian flavor apropos of the related issue of the distinction between *furor* and *insania* (cf. Henderson 36, note to v. 119).

Influence from Ausiàs March

While keeping ourselves well attuned to the possible influence from the great masters of classical antiquity, we should not underestimate the bond with the outstanding Valencian bard, Ausiàs March. March accords to the Amor/Ira dyad a truly dynamic representation that anticipates the context elaborated by Moner himself. In Cant LXV, vv. 5-16, the description of the turmoil ("contorn")²⁶ perpetrated by the two personified passions includes an allusion to the blindness of the lover and the latter's ineptitude in garnering the aid of Ira toward banishing Amor that holds him in a state of bondage. In order to highlight the affinities that here I can only register summarily, suffice it to read the verses in question:

E si mon cor en sa força retorn
y el torbament del enteniment pert,
porà saber qui d'amor no és cert
Ira i Amor com dins mi han contorn.

Sí com l'om cech no coneix nit ne jorn
si dels vehents ell no és avisat,
d'Ira y Amor no ssé qual m'a ssobrat;
haja'n avís dels qui m'estan en torn!
Yo desig molt qu' Amor m'abandonàs,
car sola és la causa de mon mal,
mas de poder Ira no té cabal
qu' encontre Amor yo tant me rebel·làs. (Ed. Ferreres 1: 346)

Later, in a short passage of Cant LXXXVIII (vv. 13-16), the poet foreshadows other topics—the pertinacious attachment to vicious conduct, the enslaving rule of Amor and Ira, the missed opportunity to apply a timely remedy—the very same topics we have seen integrated into *L'ànima d'Oliver*, *La noche*, *la Óbra en metro*. The

²⁶ Rafael Ferreres and Pere Bohigas interpret "contorn," respectively, as "trasiego" (1: 347) and "trasbals" (3: 70).

characteristic compactness of March's expression invites, as always, a careful reading:

Sí com aquell qui s' arm' a vicis dóna,
per un gran temps en hàbit aquells gira,
no té poder encontr' Amor ne Ira,
qui al començ son poder abandona. (Ed. Ferreres 1: 436)

As Amédée Pagès observes, "On pense, en lisant ces vers, à la phrase d'Ovide, devenue proverbiale: *Principiis obsta...*" (*Commentaire* 96). It hardly comes as a surprise that the famous French hispanist should suggest the same source that we have proposed for a kindred passage in Moner.²⁷

TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PERSONAL TEXT

Assimilating Seneca's Position

We realize, then, that Moner coincides with Ausiàs March and with other *quattrocentisti* authors, whether native speakers of Catalan or Castilian, in adapting into his own artistic creation Seneca's pivotal thoughts concerning anger. Moner has learned quite well the lesson that Alonso de Cartagena and other translators or compilers would teach us time and again—the lesson based on propositions lucidly stated since the exordium of the treatise that Seneca devotes to that primordial *affectus*. Three quotations will suffice, I believe, to elucidate the points that interest us here.²⁸ The most extensive one, taken from the preamble of the essay (1.1.1-2), constitutes the first reference not only to the lover's insanity ("brevis insania") but also to the self-destructive effects of his condition. This devastating consequence is illustrated, effectively, by

²⁷ Ramírez i Molas considers the salient topics of the last two passages as characteristic of Ausiàs March's late poetry, the "cants de folla Amor," so called (271-7). He adds that "[p]ropi d'aquesta època tardana és també el problema de l'hàbit amorós que esclavitzava el poeta i li barra el pas a l'activitat intel·lectual que voldria emprendre" (276). In his study of March's ideology, Pere Bohigas perceives in the poet's thought a preponderance of Aristotelian elements but recognizes, at the same time, Seneca's influence, evident, "costat per costat d'Aristòtil", throughout the production of the Valencian bard (Introducció 25-36). Some general comments on March's *senequismo* are found in Pagès, *Ausiàs March et ses prédécesseurs* 282. For March's position on *ira* see Pagès *Ausiàs March et ses prédécesseurs* 306-7.

²⁸ For the text of *De Ira* I am using A. Bourgerly's edition. Particularly handy is José M. Gallegos Rocafull's translation. For a summary of the content of *De ira* see Bourgerly XIX-XXII. I have found very useful, also, William S. Anderson's methodical study of Seneca's argumentation.

the metaphor of the ruins "que se deshacen sobre lo mismo que han oprimido" (trans. Gallegos Rocafull 6).²⁹ Here is the complete passage:

Exegisti a me, Nouate, ut scriberem quemadmodum posset ira leniri, nec immerito mihi uideris hunc praecipue affectum pertinuisse maxime ex omnibus rætrum ac rabidum. Ceteris enim aliquid quieti placidique inest, hic totus concitatus et in impetu est doloris, armorum sanguinis suppliciorum minime humana furens cupiditate, dum alteri noceat sui neglegens, in ipsa irruens tela et ultionis secum ultorem tracturae audius. Quidam itaque e sapientibus uiris iram dixerunt breuem insaniam; aequae enim impotens sui est, decoris oblita, necessitudinum immemor, in quod coepit pertinax et intenta, rationi consiliisque praecclusa, uanis agitata causis, ad dispectum aequi uerique inhabilis, ruinis simillima quae super id quod oppressere fraguntur. (Ed. Bourgery 1)

The second quotation registers Seneca's acknowledgment of his indebtedness to Aristotle: "Aristotelis finitio non multum a nostra abest: ait enim iram esse cupiditatem doloris reponendi" (ed. Bourgery 5). Thirdly, we may choose one among Seneca's many declarations of his intention to demonstrate that under no circumstance is anyone justified in giving in to vengeful impulses. In book 2, chap. 32, we read:

At enim ira habet aliquam uoluptatem et dulce est dolorem reddere. —Minime: non enim ut in beneficiis honestum est merita meritis repensare, ita iniurias iniuriis. Illic uinci turpe est, hic uincere. Inhumanum uerbum est et quidem pro iusto receptum ultio. Et talio non multum differt *iniuriae* nisi ordine: qui dolorem regerit tantum excusatus peccat. (Ed. Bourgery 58)

Articulating Two Different Views: Text and Subtext

The Aristotelian connection must have proven to be particularly attractive to Alonso de Cartagena, who adds the following marginal gloss: "y porende la saña nace de la injuria concebida en el corazón del que es injuriado, o la cuida ser adelante. Ca ya recibimos la injuria en nuestras imaginaciones y esto es lo que dice [Aristóteles]" (quoted in Fothergill-Payne 85). The recourse to the authority of the Stagirite holds in store a special interest for the student of Moner as it marks the birth of a dialectic between a peripatetic subtext and a Stoic text. It bears

²⁹ As far as "brevis insania" is concerned, Fillion-Lahille traces the coincidence between Seneca and other authors:

L'expression était tombée dans le domaine commun; elle était aussi bien épicurienne que stoïcienne; on la trouve chez Sénèque (*De ira*, I, 1), chez Philodème (*Peri orgs*, col. XVI), chez Epicure (cf. Sénèque, *Ad Luc*, 18, 14); on la trouve aussi chez les poètes, notamment Philémon (cf. Stobée, XX, 4, p. 540 H.) et Horace (*Epîtres* I, ii, 62).

pointing out that a dialectic of that type becomes fully operational in Moner's *La noche*. For instance, in Moner's allegorization of Odio, Aborrecimiento, and Ira the subtext is based on an ethical position that, rather than stressing the legitimacy of the *affectus* only "dans une certaine mesure", as Fillion-Lahille puts it (10), extends, instead, to the abuse of that "mesure" by appealing to cases in which anger and vengeance presumably would be justified fully. In Ira's motto, for example, which reads as follows:

Si entre el mal y el sentimiento
no puedo medio hallar,
¿por qué no m'e de ensañar? (145),

we perceive an implicit peripatetic position which becomes explicit in the advices offered by Odio ("A los que estorvavan su plática [the relationship with the ladylove] y agora se ríen de ti la vida y la metad dell alma debes poner en peligro por una vez vengarte..." [114-5]), Aborrecimiento ("Desecha quien te desdenea, aborrece quien te maltrata..." [121]), and Ira herself ("Ya que no puedes vengarte de quien te los procura, véngate de ti mismo pues has querido tan sin razón..." [145]).³⁰

To the extent that the subtext may be defined in terms of extremist antithesis, the text assumes the function of a thesis, which asserts itself by virtue of the gradual approach, on the part of Moner's protagonist, to the position of the wise individual (the *sabio*, we have referred to already). Moner would have us believe that true wisdom resides in the categorical rejection of the course of action proposed by Ira and her furious retinue. The rejection is carried out through a variety of procedures. In general it is brought into effect through the protagonist's hostile attitude toward all the allegorized *affectus*. That attitude may manifest itself in the reaction to a repulsive portrait, such as the one reflected in the mannerisms and appearance of Ira (*La noche* 144-5), which, in turn, calls to mind the clinical profile drawn by Seneca: "audax

³⁰ Cautela, bilious personage of *Bendir de dones*, recommends vengeance against women in the following terms:

Si no'y bastas, no te'n curs:
mude't hont millor veuràs.
Tenint pertrets per los murs,
si de moltes hest reffús,
sobre alguna 't venjaràs.
Sia la venjansa tal,
que, cortesies dexades,
llur condició natural
la tinges accidental,
y seràs venjat ausades. (Vv. 531-40)

et minax uultus, tristis frons, torua facies, citatus gradus, inquietae manus," to mention the salient features found in *De Ira* 1.1.3.

Evidently, what transpires from Moner's dialectic is a completely negative assessment of anger in accord with the long treatise Seneca dedicates to that *affectus*.³¹ There can be little doubt that Moner, apropos of anger or wrath, bears in mind the regrettable consequence that may be described as a boomerang effect. For an illustration we may use the passage that Fothergill-Payne quotes from the thirteenth-century translation of *De Ira* into Castilian: "Ca así como la casa que cae o se derriba se quebranta en aquello que hiere, asimismo la saña, cuidando hacer mal a otro, hizo peor a sí" (87). Unchecked rage redounds in a calamitous outcome for the enraged individual. Witness Pármeno y Sempronio, who, after their enraged altercation with Celestina, end up dead with busted heads and scattered brains.

Assimilating March's Insights into the Invidiual Vivencia

So, once again, Moner, Rojas, March coincide in their essential Stoicism. In one of his *cants* of profound intuition and forceful expression, March, for his part, does not lose sight of this nefarious coalition of wrath, inclination toward vengeance, omens of death and punishment, premonitions or self-destruction, longing for suicide:

Tots los assaigs que amadors han fets,
tots me són pochs sinó mort acordada;
sí'm fall amor, no'm fall pensa irada
per castigar mos passats malifets. (LIII, vv. 13-16; ed. Ferreres 1: 310)

Once again, Ausiàs challenges us to stretch our capacity to comprehend beyond the realm of logic. Thus he creates a compendium of Stoic dialectic in some verses of a prodigious rhetorical syncretism:

Sí com al hom frenètic l'és molt greu,
quant a fer mal se vol ésser llevat,
lo fort lligam que li hauran possat
y ell mal no sent fins la follia veu,
ne pren a mi quant só torbat per ira:

³¹ Anderson summarizes the philosopher's argument in the following manner:

If, then, anger cannot be considered a virtue, if it is wrongly associated with the martial spirit, with *simplicitas*, *libertas*, and *magnitudo*, how should men describe it? Seneca's comment on Caligula is, in fact, his definition of anger: *dementia*. He quotes with approval in his very first chapter the common assertion, similar to that of Horace's *Epist.* 1.2.62, that anger is temporary insanity... (157)

yo'm trob esforç, tant que no sent treball;
 quant me jaqueix, si bé tot jorn ho call,
 romanch tant llas, que sol mon cor sospira.

Llir entre carts, ma voluntat se gira
 tant que yo'us vull honesta y deshonestà;
 lo sant air, aquell del qual tinch festa,
 e plau-me ço de què vich tost en ira. (LIII, 33-44; ed. Ferreres I: 310-2)

In this passage we see epitomized the themes that we have been explicating in the course of the present essay. In an effort to reintegrate the passage into the context of Ausiàs March's *senequismo*, it is useful to study the commentary that Pere Bohigas provides for the totality of Cant LIII:

Comparant-lo al sofriment de l'agonia, de quan l'esperit s'arrenca del cos, el poeta expressa el dolor de la desesperança (1-8). El poeta es descriu com a presa d'aquest sentiment, posseït d'ira, i es compara al foll que no se sent dels lligams fins que li ha passat la fúria. D'altra banda prega a la dama, "mon déu e mon delit", que no el planyi, car s'ha lliurat a Amor i s'ha resignat a la seva ferida. La tornada revela torbació: la voluntat vacil·la, i adés vol la dama honesta, adés deshonestà; odia el que li és favorable i ama allò que l'irrita. (March, *Poesies*, ed. Bohigas, 3: 30)³²

A straightforward sample of an introspective text, Cant LIII documents a distinctive strain of a Hispanic *senequista* tradition, which comes down to Moner through Ausiàs March. Thanks to March's influence, Moner may be considered a worthy exponent of that literature rooted in what Américo Castro called "vivencia." In the final analysis, this is the literature that comes to a head in the chef-d'oeuvre entitled *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*. Thanks to this accent on the *vivencia*, Moner's *senequismo* confers an innovative spirit to those outstanding qualities that Blüher lists as "estoicismo práctico del caballero" (193), "autarquía de la virtud, centro de la gravedad de la ética estoica" (196), "la concentración de la aceptación ideológica de la Edad Antigua respecto al problema filosófico-vital de las relaciones entre *Fortuna y Virtus*" (203). In sum, Moner explores the dynamism of an ethical "praxis," which informs the phenomenology of an individual *vivencia*. Moner's perspective, then, is not an abstract one to be explained by means of a preceptive, dogmatic exposition. It is,

32 Pagès, in turn, summarizes the poem in the following manner:

Pièce obscure et subtile. L'idée essentielle nous en est indiquée par la répétition des mots *irada* (v. 15) et *ira* (v. 32, 37, 44). Le poète veut montrer qu'en n'exaucant pas ses désirs, sa dame ne fera qu'exciter en lui une terrible colère contre lui-même. (*Commentaire* 69-70)

rather, a vision born of a keen insight into the day-to-day unfolding of human existence.

CONCLUSION

Within the *senequista* movement, which spread far and wide in the late Middle Ages in the territories of both Catalan and Castilian, Francesc Moner shares with many authors a pronounced interest in an ethical focusing and a practical application of the Stoic ideology. Like many writers and intellectuals of his age, Moner shows a predilection for the type of sententious statement that Louise Fothergill-Payne identifies with the label of "potted wisdom." Among the commonplace topics of fifteenth-century *senequismo* reflected in Moner's production, those that deal with thorny theological issues clearly stand out. Take, for instance, the relationship of an unmistakable deterministic tenor between Fate or Divine Providence and free will.

A remarkable characteristic of Moner's *senequismo* is, also, his penchant for the psychologic introspection oriented toward the analysis of the struggle – the *psychomachia*, we may say – between reason and the passions. For the passions Moner uses a terminology centered on the *furias*, metaphysical entities identical to the *affectus* or *pathoi* of the respective Latin or Greek branch of the ancient Stoic tradition. Arguably, Moner's seminal notions of *virtus* and *peccatum* stem from the world view espoused by the great champions of that tradition. The same may be said of Moner's preoccupation with the lover's "blindness," *peccatum* par excellence among all the grievous consequences of the anarchy of the passions.

Along the path of psychological exploration Moner dwells on two points of extraordinary relevance. One, borrowed directly from Ovid, is propounded by that illustrious Roman poet by means of the maxim "*Principiis obsta*" ('nip in the bud'). Moner crafts his own version of the dictum by integrating it into the "topic of feeding." By employing the verb *cevar* ('to feed, nourish') and related terms, Moner dramatizes the disastrous effects of eros, a *furia*, which, if allowed to grow unrestrained, will end up feeding upon and devouring the unsuspecting and unwise lover. The second point has to do with the nature itself of eros, made even more *furioso* by its collusion with *ira*. As for the pernicious synergy between *Amor* and *ira*, Moner is inspired, in all probability, by some key passages found in the *cants* of Ausiàs March, the nonpareil Valencian poet of the first half of the fifteenth century.

It bears recognizing, particularly in the prose work entitled *La noche*, Moner's longest composition, traces of sharp intuition and striking dramatic effect. It is well to point out two alternating

perspectives that come into play in the allegorical representation of the various passions, eleven in all, such as the ones designated as *Amor*, *Odio*, *Aborrecimiento*, *Ira*. The alternation reflects the convergence of two value systems into one and the same esthetic. Though conceived as antithetical—one as Aristotelian-Thomistic, the other as Stoic—the two systems turn out to be mutually complementary. In the final analysis Moner produces a kind of stratification of the literary text: on the one level, the allegorized passions express themselves as partisans of the Aristotelian point of view; on the other, the protagonist, doubling as the authorial persona, rises in defense of the Stoic position and in condemnation of the ratiocination adduced by those redoubtable allegorical personages.

It becomes increasingly evident that Moner derived from Stoicism in general and from his *senequista* background in particular the principles of an ethical system that may be easily reconciled with the norms of Christianity. At the same time, it is fair to say that from the Aristotelian-Scholastic tradition Moner derived the traits of a systematic doctrine that provided, in turn, the basis of his distinctive world view.

Lastly, Moner's *senequismo* invites investigation for the light it may shed on Moner's use of language as a medium of the creative imagination. The investigation starts from a notion adumbrated in the course of my discussion — a notion well documented in the evolution of Moner's textuality as a verbal icon of an intensely lived experience. The *senequista* background exposes Moner to the two stylistic modes evinced in the reception of the Seneca corpus by the Spanish humanists of the early Renaissance. As has been shown above, Seneca's style was the object of an ambiguous perception. The "traditionalists" south of the Pyrenees regarded it as plain and straightforward, while the purveyors of the Italianate influence from across the Mediterranean viewed it as highly ornate and indirect.

Traces of the traditionalist viewpoint may be sufficiently documented in Moner's use of the *sententiae*, of which numerous samples have been provided (see list above). In Moner and kindred writers the *sententiae* in question turn out to be the stylistic or ontological correlatives of an authorial consciousness eminently incarnated in the paragon of Stoic *virtus*, such as the aforementioned Bias of Priene, and, we may add, the exemplary *docto varón* referred to in the prefatory statement ("El autor a un su amigo") that Rojas provided for his version of the *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea* (Cocozzella, "*Hombre Sciente and Docto Varón*"). It bears clarifying here that the sententiousness we behold in Moner and others is symptomatic of a poetic expression subjected to a great deal of control and fashioned to precise specifications in order to conform to the stylistic sobriety and incisiveness worthy of Bias or any other *docto varón*.

So much for the straightforward sententiousness of a controlled expression befitting the Stoic decorum at least as perceived by the aforementioned traditionalists. A review of Moner's stylistic traits would hardly be complete, however, without acknowledging the influence of the "other" Seneca, the inspirer, that is, of what we have called ornate expression, considered, as we have seen, artificial and severely criticized as such by none other than Quintilian himself. I submit, for the time being, that my present discussion adumbrates and further analysis of Moner's bilingual text would confirm traces of that other Seneca in the function of the poetic discourse as an instrument of introspective probing. In that instrument Moner discovers a practical way, if not a full-fledged method, of exploring the phenomenology of lovesickness. Here I have attempted to show Moner's distinctive insight born of his clinical approach of sorts to the plight of the "exemplary sufferer," if we may borrow a term from Susan Sontag (39-51). Take, for instance, Moner's intriguing articulation and subsequent stratification, as explained above, of two textual strands, derived, respectively, from the Aristotelian-Scholastic and Senecan traditions.

Closely related to Moner's *senequista* outlook on the lover's *psychomachia* is the distinctive ultra-*senequista* factor that Stephen Gilman identifies in his astute reading of the second prologue in Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (Gilman 161-9, 246-7, n. 29). As Gilman cogently argues, the factor, which by paraphrasing Gilman's own terminology we may call "sentimental," comes into full operation in the textuality of the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* and, in effect, motivates Rojas, or whoever the author of that masterpiece may be, to transform, as Gilman puts it, the "Stoic doctrine into a tragic sense of life" (180).

Evidently, wide, indeed, is the context of the full-fledged textuality Moner inherits from his *senequista* background. Out of that context Moner strives to fashion the object of his lifelong quest: his own expression, that is, which, in its impassioned rhetoric, may become, in the best of circumstances, the very emblem of authenticity in its own right. Arguably, Moner arrives at a text that reflects, faithfully, the turbulence of his afflicted condition. A couple of passages will suffice as illustrative samples. We may contemplate, for instance, the lamentations that constitute the exordium of *La noche*. The plot includes precise details as to setting and other pertinent circumstances.

During his somber sauntering at dusk in the vicinities of Torà, a town in the Catalan hinterlands where the author's patron owns a manor, the protagonist and first-person narrator delves into a strange *psychomachia* that is being waged between, on the one hand, the natural inclination to vent one's passion in weeping spells and, on the other hand, a curious masochistic compulsion to repress any ostentation of

sorrow. Let us hear firsthand the woes of a star-crossed lover if there ever lived one:

Poco tardaron a moverse en mi alma los pensamientos tristes como enxambre en colmena. El corazón rompía de apretado. Yo m'esforçava por no llorar, teniendo malicia que mi dolor como los otros comunes se quexasse, mas no pudo ser que las amargas lágrimas no sobreviniessen por su camino vezado.

Quería la pasión dar voces, pues de justa querella tenía sobra; pero el callar para mí era más encaesser porque dava lugar al pensar y también porque cualquiera razón era falta, por lastimera que fuesse. Es syerto que la palabra, liviana o de peso, me diera alyvio. Mas la pena del enmudesser se vengava de mí mesmo, my mayor enemigo, y esto me hazía querer bien a mi mal. (*La noche*, ll. 39-53; *TMPW* 75-6)

At the beginning of *L'ànima d'Oliver*, in a kindred crepuscular ambiance, Moner's impersonation of the lover vents his grief in a much similar vein:

Fon fet nit escura, molt queda. Yo treballava en exir del camí perquè ningú me hoys, mas lo que dins mi sentia no'm dexà elegir loch, ni que més esperàs, sinó que's rompé lo cor, y ab una veu destemplada, molt alta, diguí semblants paraules... (*Oc* 139)

Words soon give way to other mournful manifestations:

Soccorrien grosses làgrimes y redoblats sospirs, perquè mos mals, d'estrengés, faltaven de vocables. Volia més alt cridar, pus alre no sabia.... (*Oc* 140)

These and quite a few other excerpts that could be adduced stand out as compact specimens of a poetic diction iridescent with nuances of intellectual and emotive signification. On a small scale and in a condensed expression, the excerpts aim for the overall impact that Moner seeks in his entire production. Whether in the guise of the plain style or in the obverse manifestation of plainness that at times erupts in complex sentences and convoluted or contorted syntax, Moner's *senequista* poetics finds an apt embodiment in the literary creation that Moner himself identifies by a happy phrase of his own vintage: "letras matizadas del sentido." The phrase occurs at the beginning of Moner's longest poem, the composition written in Castilian that bears the title of *Sepultura d'amor* (see vv. 5-6). The rich signification of these "letras"—their multifarious resonances as dimensions of subjectivity and authenticity—may well turn out to be the most intriguing and rewarding aspect of Moner's *senequista* legacy.

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