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Neogongorismo and Gongora in Contemporary Spanish-American Poetry

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NEOGONGORISMO AND GONGORA

IN

CONTEMPORARY SPANISH-AMERICAN POETRY

By

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PREFACE

Gongorismo has been the object of much discussion and criticism ever since it reached its height during the Siglo de Oro in Spain. Neogongorismo, a similar tendency of modern times, has received very little attention either from the reading public or from critics. A. Serrano Plaja published an article in Sol (Madrid) in 1932 with the title "Hacia otra retórica: neo-gongorismos". A few articles and book reviews have appeared recently in such periodicals as Nosotros and the Revista Hispánica Moderna. These writings refer to "neogongorismo" or "los poetas neogongoristas", but only in a very cursory and off-hand fashion. There have, however, been several books and articles written on the subject of Góngora and his relation to the contemporary writers. Dámaso Alonso, the well-known authority on Góngora, published in 1932 a book entitled Góngora y la literatura contemporánea. R. Buendía published an article in the Gaceta Literaria (Madrid) during the Góngora Tercentennial Celebration (1927) entitled "Góngora, autor de la creación pura en la lírica moderna". Inspired, no doubt, by this same celebration, F. Ichaso published an article, "Góngora y la nueva poesía", in the Revista de Avance of Havana; and the outstanding Mexican poet and critic, Alfonso Reyes, obviously

an admirer of Góngora, has recently published two notable works, Cuestiones gongorinas and Reseña de estudios gongorinos, and Reyes, in other critical works, makes constant reference to Góngora and his style of writing. An article, "Góngora und Darío", has also been published recently by Petriconi in Die Neueren Sprachen, and a rather detailed review of this article has been made by C. E. Anibal in Hispania. Political conditions in Spain and other adverse circumstances have, unfortunately, made it practically impossible to obtain these books and articles. I have been forced, therefore, in evaluating their importance, to rely almost entirely upon reviews and passing references.

My purpose in this paper is twofold. In the first place, I wish to clarify somewhat the meaning and scope of the term "neogongorismo" and to show in what respects it resembles and in what respects it differs from gongorism. Secondly, I desire to show the attitude manifested towards Góngora by the contemporary Spanish-American literatos. I shall substantiate my deductions wherever possible with actual critical and poetic references.

The nature of neogongorismo itself, unlike analogous movements in other countries, demands that the study be confined to a consideration of poetry. A further limitation is achieved by the term "contemporary". In determining the

scope of this term I have used as my authority the Antología de poesía española e hispanoamericana by Federico de Onís, which anthology I have also used to a large extent in determining the classifications of the various poets as well as for a source of literary criticism. It has also served me as a guide in selecting the poets and their best works with the exception of the more recent poets, in which case I have used several current Spanish-American periodicals as a basis of selection. Chief among these is Nosotros, which has also been an invaluable source of critical reference. Onís limits the contemporary period to the years between 1882 and 1932, and it is principally to this period that this paper has been confined.

This paper is but a preliminary study of a subject extensive in both scope and possibilities. It is for this reason that, in spite of the fact that Spain also affords a wealth of material on the subject, I limit myself to Spanish-America and to only those poets in Spanish-America whose works seem best to exemplify the gongoristic trend in contemporary poetry. I shall show, wherever possible, the relationship which exists between neogongorismo and the new appreciation of Góngora, but I shall not attempt to prove whether or not the one movement was the result of the other.

CHAPTER I

NEOGONGORISMO: A BACKGROUND AND DEFINITION

Throughout the nineteenth century Spanish-American poetry was, for the most part, dull, monotonous, and lifeless. The poets seemed to have reached their artistic limit, and could only repeat themselves and their predecessors in a most insipid fashion. The trend was romantic, nauseatingly romantic. A reaction was inevitable, and when it came it took the form of the "movimiento modernista". This revolt against a degenerate type of romanticism, for such, in effect, it was, had its earliest manifestations during the early eighties under the guidance of poets as José Asunción Silva, José Martí, Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera, Julián del Casal, Salvador Díaz Mirón, and others. These poets, classified by Torres-Ríoseco as "precursores del modernismo", experimented with metrics, sought new themes, and enriched their vocabulary with new, and in many cases, foreign words. Probably the most active, and certainly the best known, of the "reaccionistas" was Rubén Darío, whose Azul (1888) is frequently considered to have marked the beginning of Modernism. His influence, already well-established in Spanish-America, was not long in reaching Spain, where it gained an equally strong foothold. In 1896 Darío published another important work, Prosas Profanas, which,

according to Onís, ". . . significa el triunfo o apogeo del modernismo".[1]

The reaction from which Modernism sprang was not peculiar to Spain and Spanish-America, nor was it confined solely to literature:

> El modernismo es la forma hispánica de la crisis universal de las letras y del espíritu que inicia hacia 1885 la disolución del siglo XIX y que se había de manifestar en el arte, la ciencia, la religión, la política, y gradualmente en los demás aspectos de la vida entera, con todos los caracteres, por lo tanto, de un hondo cambio histórico cuyo proceso continúa hoy.[2]

Modernism was, as Onís has pointed out, ". . . como todo movimiento revolucionario - breve en su desarrollo pero enormemente fecundo".[3] A revolt was started against this "nuevo romanticismo" as early as 1905 by two distinct groups, classified by Onís as post-modernista and ultra-modernista. The objective of the post-modernistas was to tone down the excesses of Modernism; whereas the ultra-modernistas carried the excesses of Modernism to the extreme and created as a result a completely new and often incomprehensible type of poetry.

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[1]F. Onís, Antología de poesía española e hispano-americana (Madrid: Revista de Filología Española, 1934), p. xvii.

[2]Ibid., p. xv.

[3]Ibid., p. xvii.

A comparison of the modernista period with the Siglo de Oro in Spain is inevitable. Modernism, short-lived as it was, succeeded in changing the course of Spanish literature. In the seventeenth century the Siglo de Oro had wrought a similar change in Spanish literature. Onís confirms this theory:

> . . . no creemos aventurado afirmar que la poesía modernista es comparable tan sólo a la del siglo de oro por el número y calidad de sus poetas y por su poder de creación de formas, sentimientos y mundos poéticos nuevos.[4]

The Siglo de Oro had produced such men as Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Góngora, and as was to be the case later, during the modernista period, poetry was the predominant literary genre. Among the many outstanding poets, probably the most revolutionary was Don Luis de Góngora y Argote, who, as a consequence, occupied a position comparable in many respects to that which Darío was to hold some three hundred years later. He was the founder of the group which has since borne his name, a group which reminds one of Darío and his followers in that it had as its objective the introduction of innovations of all kinds into poetry. But the gongoristas, as they were called, often carried this objective to the extreme, the result of which was obscurity and

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[4]Ibid., p. xvii.

incomprehensibility. So often was this the case that gongorism came eventually to be identified with "todo lo malo y no deseable" in poetry.

It would be equivocal to associate Gongorism and Modernism as movements similar either in scope or in influence. The underlying circumstances of the two movements were quite different. Gongorism arose during a period of literary exuberance when a writer, in order to be noticed, had to create a new and very different type of writing. Modernism grew out of a very impoverished type of literature, sadly in need of renovation. There was, however, a tendency within Modernism itself, which is quite comparable to Gongorism. This tendency crystallised into what is appropriately referred to as "neogongorismo", which, as the word implies, means simply a "new gongorismo" or recurrence of Gongorism.

Gongorism is not easy to define. One critic, in attempting a definition, resorted to such terms as "una exuberancia retórica"; "un galamatías gramatical"; "un fenómeno patológico"; or admitted somewhat ironically, that "el culteranismo,[5] juzgado con simpatía, es un brillante

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[5]The terms gongorismo and culteranismo are used synonymously and usually in reference to poetry. Conceptismo is a similar style which is usually used in reference to prose. Culto, culterano, cultista, gongorino, and gongorista are adjectives derived from the first two terms.

collar de tonterías".[6] Salcedo-Ruiz refers to it as "un esfuerzo para separar y elevar el arte literario de la vulgaridad por medio de un lenguaje poético exquisito y refinado y de una fraseología primorosa".[7] And Barja explains its development:

> Domina primero la severidad de la línea, la sencillez de la expresión, la proporción en las medidas, la claridad, el espacio. Poco a poco la línea se va haciendo flexible, y entre línea y línea se va colocando un color, una figura, un adorno. Crece la complicación, y disminuye la claridad. Un paso más y el adorno se multiplica de tal manera y en tal proporción que el cuadro total no es más que un abigarrado mosaico de adornos, un caos de ornamentación.[8]

And further on he speaks of the ". . .dislocación de la gramática, poniendo el sustantivo en Madrid, y su adjetivo en París; el verbo en Londres y el complemento en Nueva York".[9] One of the best lists of objections to the style of Góngora is the following quoted from Artigas, who in turn cites Díaz de Rivas:

> El uso de vocablos extranjeros, el hipérbaton, el uso y abuso de las metáforas, la oscuridad, la dureza y poca analogía en las metáforas, la desigualdad de estilo, el empleo de palabras bajas, las repeticiones,

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[6]C. Barja, Libros y autores clásicos (Brattleboro, Vermont: The Vermont Printing Company, 1923), pp. 351-58.

[7]A. Salcedo-Ruiz, La literatura española (Madrid: Casa editorial Calleja, 1917), p. 281.

[8]Barja, loc. cit.

[9]Ibid.

> las hipérboles, la extensión excesiva de algunos periodos, la redundancia de expresión, . . .[10]

Obscurity is evidently one of the predominating characteristics of Gongorism - an obscurity not merely of expression but also of allusion. The first is achieved by the rhetorical devices listed by Díaz de Rivas; the second is attained chiefly through the use of unfamiliar mythological allusion.

Gongorism was not a movement peculiar only to Spain:

> El culteranismo obedeció. . .a una corriente general de la época, corriente que no es puramente literaria, sino que transciende a la vida social. . .Que la corriente es universal y que Góngora, al implantar su escuela en España, no hizo más que refrendar y poner el visto bueno a lo que su época le dió ya hecho; los demuestran las diversas ramificaciones que el culteranismo tuvo. . y así no es extraño que hasta los grandes genios se contaminasen. Para encauzar los espíritus fué necesario renovar las fuentes de la vida, ya gastadas, con nuevos ideales y nuevos problemas suscitados a la aproximación del siglo XVIII.[11]

The "diversas ramificaciones que el culteranismo tuvo" refer to euphuism in England, preciosite in France, and marinism in Italy, none of which, though they all flourished at about the same time, lasted as long as did Gongorism. But the fact that Gongorism lasted for some hundred and fifty years does not mean that culteranismo was always accepted or admired by

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[10] M. Artigas, Don Luis de Góngora y Argote (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1925), p. 234.

[11] A. González-Blanco, Salvador Rueda y Rubén Darío (Madrid: Librería de Pueyo, n. d.), p. 60.

either the literatos or the reading public; on the contrary, the comment and criticism excited was opposed to rather than in defense of culteranismo.

As regards the immediate influence of Gongorism, it is well known that Lope de Vega was a sworn enemy of the culto style of writing; Francisco de Quevedo, though openly opposed to culteranismo, introduced a similar style in prose known as "conceptismo"; and Calderón de la Barca, last of the great Siglo de Oro dramatists, made a name for himself by employing the estilo culto in many of his dramas. Among the critics of gongorismo, pro and con, were Pedro de Valencia and Juan de Jáuregui. In fact, the controversies and arguments were kept up until the end of the seventeenth century; and, as Artigas says, "Si Góngora siguió estas controversias, no es extraño que dejase sin terminar las 'Soledades'".[12] Though the furor subsided somewhat during the eighteenth century, culteranismo continued to be imitated, especially in Spanish-America, until after the middle of the eighteenth century. Then we have the beginning of Modernism which ushered in so many new and radical ideas and brought with it a new type of culteranismo. It is to this "recurrence of Gongorism" that the term "neogongorismo" is applied.

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[12]Artigas, op. cit., p. 245.

All those who write an obscure type of verse or whose poetry shows a tendency towards affectation are not necessarily admirers and followers of Góngora. It is hardly likely that all the so-called neogongoristas should be acquainted with all or any of Góngora's works. It must be remembered, however, that the tercentennial celebration of the death of Góngora (1927), which, though centered in Madrid, received the support and enthusiasm of practically all the Spanish-speaking countries, was bound to incite many of the younger writers of the day to read and attempt imitations of his poetry. But this celebration can hardly be considered the reason for the rise of neogongorismo or for the recent reawakening of interest in Góngora. Darío shows traces of Gongorism as early as 1896 (Prosas Profanas); Herrera y Reissig, who, it is generally conceded, was the leader of the neogongorista group of writers, showed a gongoristic leaning as early as 1900 (Las pascuas del tiempo); and Los crepúsculos del jardín (1905) by Leopoldo Lugones is quite culterano in tone.

In selecting poetry with which to illustrate the neogongorista tendencies, one has to remember that the term "neogongorista" embraces more than a gongoristic vocabulary, verse form, theme, and style of writing, for it requires in addition a gongoristic tone or spirit.

We see, then, that not only are the Siglo de Oro and

the Modernista movement comparable in many respects, but that gongorismo and neogongorismo, separate trends within the respective periods, are, if anything, even more comparable. This relationship between gongorismo and neogongorismo will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II

NEOGONGORISMO: A TREND TOWARDS CULTERANISMO

Neogongorismo has been defined as a recurrence of Gongorism. Gongorism may be defined briefly as a style of writing which, to the average reader, appears obscure or affected in either thought or expression. The following excerpts from Góngora, who is indisputably the best executor of the estilo culto, will serve to clarify somewhat the distinction drawn between the terms "obscurity of thought" and "obscurity of expression":

> Era del año la estación florida
> en que el mentido robador de Europa
> --media luna las armas en su frente,
> y el Sol todos los rayos de su pelo--
> luciente honor del cielo,
> en campos de zafiro pace estrellas;[1]

This is an excellent example of obscurity of thought. The first line seems plain enough; but in the second the phrase "el mentido robador de Europa" is apt to be confusing to the average reader. The reference, we are told, is to Jupiter who disguised himself as a bull in order to abduct Europa. From this we gather that the sun was entering the Taurus sign of the Zodiac, a fact which sets the poem in the month of April. The next two lines - set off in the form of

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[1]D. Alonso, Las Soledades de Góngora (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1927), p. 43.

a parenthetical remark - are even more obscure. "La media luna" refers to the horns of the above mentioned Taurus, which shine in the middle of his (Jupiter's) forehead and are so illuminated by the sun that its rays and the hair of the animal are confused. And in the last line we learn that the aforementioned "robador de Europa" is grazing on stars, which are quite eclipsed by his own brilliance, in the sapphire-blue fields of heaven.[2] Such is the beautiful, if long-drawn-out and obscure, way that the gongoristas have of telling us that the season of the year was Spring! Obscurity of thought, then, is achieved, at least in part, through the method of enigmatical allusion. The allusion in this case is mythological; a use as well as abuse of mythological allusion was one of the favorite devices employed by the gongoristas in order to obtain the desired effect of incomprehensibility. The neogongoristas, though they make occasional references to mythology, are much more given to using other references of equally abstruse nature. Other gongorista devices which lead to obscurity of thought are irrational antithesis, illogical metaphors and hyperboles, long and involved parenthetical remarks (a good example of which may be found in the excerpt from Góngora cited above), personified abstractions, sustained puns, and allusion to fabulous

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[2]*Ibid.*, p. 134.

natural history and popular lore. These devices are also used to a greater or lesser extent by the neogongoristas.

The following excerpts exemplify what is meant by obscurity of expression:

> Plumas vestido, ya las aguas mora
> Apolo, en vez del pájaro nevado
> Que a la fatal del joven fulminando...

and

> Este el corvo instrumento
> Que el albano cantó segundo marte
> De sublime ya parte
> Pendiente cuando no pulsarlo al viento
> Solicitarlo oyó, selva confusa
> Ya doctra sombra, ya invisible musa...[3]

The obscurity of these examples is arrived at by means of disordered syntax. Other gongorista methods which lead to obscurity of expression are the use of rare or neologic words, affected Latinisms, foreign words, coined words, archaisms, and the omission of articles and conjunctions. These devices, all of which are elements which have to do with style, are employed to a limited degree by the neogongoristas.

Obscurity of expression, being a characteristic of style, is more tangible and hence more easily discerned than obscurity of thought, which is so often a matter of personal opinion. The most important consideration so far as

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[3]J. E. Englekirk, "Góngora and gongorismo" (unpublished article, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, 1927)

obscurity of expression is concerned is the diction of a poem. It has often been remarked that one of the redeeming features of Gongorism is the fact that through it, by the introduction of neologisms in the form of archaic, foreign, and coined words, the Spanish language was greatly enriched. The same can be said of neogongorismo. Góngora and his followers introduced such words as pompa, conducir, esplendor, celestial, ilustrar, and purpúreo, which, though common enough today, were not in common usage before the Siglo de Oro.[4] The gongoristas turned to the Latin and Greek classics in their search for new words; the neogongoristas turned to the old Spanish classics and then extended their search to France, Italy, England, and, in many cases, to the less important countries. The following are a few examples of the neogongorista fondness for coining words: panamericanizar, canallocracia, perlar, madrigalizar, and miliunanochesco. These words obviously have as their bases Spanish words that are in common usage. Such a tendency in a poet, while it does not make for obscurity, is a good example of the neogongorista spirit of innovation. But the neogongoristas also provide us with many unusual and hence obscure words: glicina, liróforo, gluglutante, hierofante, hipocampo,

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[4]G. Northup, Three plays by Calderón (New York: D. C. Heath, 1926), p. xxvii.

belcebué, rompope, nifelibata, faya, and poliédrico. Many of these words are not to be found in the average literary dictionary. And the following are a few of the many foreign words used by neogongoristas: baccarat, eureka, walpurgis, and rajah. These, of course, are but a few examples of the many neologisms introduced or used by the neogongoristas. A few such words in a poem do not make it obscure; but a conglomeration of such terms results in the following labyrinth of vocables:

> Cabe un lago de múrice,--como radial corona,
> o escudo excelso y nítido, el Sol occiduo esplende;
> y por el claro piélago inflada y sesga lona
> resbala, con ósculo del astro que desciende.
>
> El mísero casucho y la soberbia granja
> ostentan igual fausto, bermejo al par que blondo,
> y entre plomizas nubes aurina y crespa franja
> corta de Oriente o Ocaso el curvo y zarco fondo.[5]

Perhaps the most common device for rendering a poem obscure in expression is that which involves the use of disordered, or otherwise complicated, syntax. Some examples of this as found in gongorism have already been cited. It is significant, however, that hyperbaton should have been nowhere nearly as common in neogongorismo as it was in gongorismo. This is probably due to the fact that the Latin language, the word arrangement and phraseology of which is

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[5]S. Díaz-Mirón, Poemas (México: Cultura, 1918), p. 115.

quite different from that of Spanish, served as a prototype for practically every innovation the gongoristas undertook.

So much for neogongorismo as attained by means of obscurity of expression. The other means, obscurity of thought, since it depends, as pointed out earlier in this chapter, largely upon the opinion and cultural background of the reader, is, consequently, much more difficult to determine. The methods used in attaining obscurity through confused thought have already been indicated (See p. 10). Recondite mythological allusion was probably the most successful of these devices in Gongorism, but neogongorismo employs many other types of unfamiliar reference. Herrera y Reissig's "Fiesta de la ultratumba", for example, contains some seventy-five allusions, most of them quite brief, to characters ranging from the Queen of Sheba to Bluebeard. Such a poem, however, is exceptional. More frequent are such abstruse references as:

soy el genio de Atalanta[6]

...de mi Nirvana opioso[7]

flor de Estigia acre y marchita[8]

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[6]Onís, op. cit., Herrera y Reissig, "Desolación absurda", p. 477.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

...Casiopea y Melampo, turban
sólo el narcótico gran silencio[9]

...la nevada concha de Cíteres[10]

...La falda de Alençón[11]

reía en su máscara Término barbudo[12]

les oí hablar a los árabes, cual
Antonio a los peces...[13]

El alma ahita...como Zíngua,
reina de Angola...[14]

and many others. Of all the qualities of Gongorism which lead to obscurity of thought or expression, the following are seldom, if ever, found in neogongorismo: irrational antithesis, hyperboles, obscure paraphrasing, omission of articles and conjunctions, long, involved parenthetical remarks, personified abstractions, and sustained puns. We are left, therefore, with but one remaining consideration, the use of unusual figures of speech. This device is also to be included under the classification "obscurity of thought".

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[9]Ibid., Herrera y Reissig, "Meridiano durmiente", p. 487.

[10]Ibid., Darío, "Estival", p. 159.

[11]Ibid., Darío, "De invierno", p. 161.

[12]Ibid., Darío, "Era un aire suave", p. 163.

[13]Ibid., Darío, "Epístola a la señora Leopoldo Lugones", p. 188.

[14]Ibid., Darío, "El poema de otoño", p. 189.

Góngora seemed to take great delight in shocking the reader's literary sensibilities with such bizarre images as "nieve de colores mil vestida"; "cristal, agua al fin dulcemente dura"; and ". . .los anales diáfanos del viento". Though a little unusual and out of the ordinary, perhaps, such imagery is indeed beautiful. And neogongorista poetry abounds in such imagery, which, if not quite as obscure, is certainly quite as unusual and quite as beautiful. Let us consider a few passages:

> la orquestra perlaba sus mágicas notas[15]

> ...El cielo es la frente
> de Dios, sobre la eterna serenidad suspensa;
> cuando se llena de astros y sombra, es que Dios
> piensa.[16]

> y una araña en la punta de su hilo
> tejía sobre el astro, hipnotizada[17]

> .....las telarañas
> que son inmensas pestañas
> del desusado cancel.[18]

> las cuerdas (de una guitarra) le
> lloraban cual lágrimas de miel.[19]

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[15] Ibid., Darío, "Era un aire suave", p. 163.

[16] Ibid., Lugones, "Las montañas del oro", p. 322.

[17] Ibid., Lugones, "Delectación morosa", p. 374.

[18] Ibid., Lugones, "El solterón", p. 376.

[19] Ibid., Lugones, "Juan Rojas", p. 395.

Las lámparas se consumen en amarillas
lujurias
y las estufas se encienden en pubertades
de fuego[20]

y el molino es una araña
que se agita en el vacío[21]

Cuando en quietud de especular laguna
en plenilunio cálido alucina,
entorchan su bordón de plata fina
para el laúd eburneo de la luna.[22]

voló la rosa seca como una mariposa[23]

None of these images, with the possible exception of the next to the last, is in any sense obscure; yet they exemplify very well the neogongoristic striving for new and different images with which to enhance the poetic effect.

But this definition of neogongorismo, it would seem disregards such important items as the form, theme, type, and tone of a poem. No matter how outlandish the verse form of a poem may be, the poem itself is not obscure unless it is unintelligible in thought or in expression. Similarly,

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[20] Ibid., Herrera y Reissig, "Fiesta de la ultratumba", p. 422.

[21] Ibid., Herrera y Reissig, "Desolación absurda", p. 476.

[22] Ibid., Lugones, "Las cigarras", p. 387.

[23] R. Darío, Antología poética (Madrid: Agencia general de librería y artes gráficas, n. d.), "Las ánforas de epicuro", p. 104.

the theme of a poem has little relation to its being obscure. True, certain themes are more conducive to obscurity than others; but a poem which apparently treats of a very ordinary subject may be very obscure. Nor does the type of a poem, be it epic, lyric, or any other type, have any bearing on its obscurity. As for tone, one may refer to a poem as being gongoristic in tone, but such a statement must necessarily have arisen either from the gongoristic content or from the culto style in which it is written. One does, however, refer to a poet (as represented by his total poetic production) as being gongorista in tone or spirit, the reference being in this case to his striving after affectation in his poetry or to his desire to be understood only by the elite, either of which qualities is bound to lend to his work a gongoristic touch.

The distinction drawn between obscurity of thought and obscurity of expression is not as definite as the reader may have been given to understand. For though a poem may be very obscure in thought yet quite clear in expression, the poem which is obscure in expression is bound to be obscure in thought. Similarly, it is difficult to know where to draw the line in distinguishing between that which is culterano and that which is merely poetic. Hence, "la nieve, cual mariposas argentadas" is simply a very beautiful and poetic simile, the meaning of which is quite clear; and even

when the poet boldly tries to make us believe that "la nieve es mariposas argentadas" we must still, though we find the metaphor somewhat inverosímil, admit that its meaning is clear; but when we are simply confronted with the phrase "mariposas argentadas" without even a hint as to its significance, then can we say, and rightfully so, that we have found an example of gongorismo, or, as the case may be, of neogongorismo.

So far we have dealt only with the external qualities of neogongorista poetry. Some fifteen characteristics of Gongorism have been mentioned. Of these, only three have been retained as neogongorista characteristics: neologisms, unusual figures of speech, and baffling allusion. A consideration of the circumstances of the two trends may help to explain this difference.

Gongorism did not originate during the Siglo de Oro; but it did reach its height during this period. Why? As, mentioned before, many critics believe that the culteranismo of the Siglo de Oro was a method devised by a group of writers who realised that, in order that their poetry should be noticed during a period when Spanish literature was already overflowing with good writers and good works, they must create a type of poetry so exotic in form and tone that it could not fail to attract the attention of the general public and especially of the critics. This group even went so far

as to scorn the vulgo as unworthy of their notice and to maintain that the really artistic poet catered only to a select group of eruditos. It was in striving after this effect that the gongoristas made use of the several devices already mentioned. A literature arising from causes of this kind is bound to be forced and lacking in spontaneity. And in effect there is a constant straining and striving after effect; so much so, in fact, that the impression left on the reader is one of unnaturalness and artificiality. It is in this respect that neogongorismo differs from gongorismo. Neogongorismo is quite as guilty of affectation as was gongorismo; but the effect produced by the neogongoristas is usually much more convincing that that produced by the gongoristas. Neogongorismo supplies us with some excellent examples of imagery which, though gongoristic in that it is new and unusual, is nevertheless fresh and spontaneous:

la inocencia del día se lava en la fontana[24]
adioses de terciopelo[25]
como una luna pavorosa y negra[26]

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[24]Onís, op. cit., Herrera y Reissig, "Al despertar", p. 480.

[25]Ibid., Herrera y Reissig,"Desolación absurda", p. 475.

[26]Ibid., Herrera y Reissig, "Julio", p. 479.

blancas sedas de amistad[27]

bajo la inquieta laguna
hace piruetas la luna
sobre una red de marfil[28]

la luna argentaba lo negro de un pino[29]

And there are many other examples. Such images can only be described as "imágenes preciosas" for the very delicacy with which they are expressed. Another example of this nicety of expression in neogongorismo is found in the following verse: "Alisia y Cloris abren de par en par la puerta. . .". The realist would have simply called his characters Juan and María; the neogongorista, always seeking a finesse of expression, and never earthy in any event, uses the much less common and much more poetic Alisia and Cloris. It is trends like these in neogongorismo that give rise to the theory that whereas the gongoristas devoted much of their time to the external qualities of their poetry, the neogongoristas were more concerned with the spirit.

It will have been noted that the poets whose works have been cited as examples of neogongorismo are Darío,

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[27] Ibid., Lugones, "El solterón", p. 379.

[28] Ibid., Herrera y Reissig, "Desolación absurda", p. 477.

[29] Darío, Antología poética, "La canción de los pinos", p. 127.

Díaz-Mirón, Lugones, and Herrera y Reissig. In the works of the first three neogongorismo forms but a minor phase; but in the works of Herrera y Reissig neogongorismo plays a much greater part, and it is for this reason that he is often called the leader of the neogongorista group of poets. Traces of neogongorismo are found in numerous other contemporary poets of both Spain and Spanish-America - López Velarde, Borges, and others - but a detailed account of the neogongorista tendencies in their works would be a study in itself.

We have defined neogongorismo as a recurrence of gongorismo. Obviously the statement is only partly true. Neogongorismo is a modified, we might say, an expurgated brand of Gongorism. It neither goes to the extremes that Gongorism did, nor does it employ as many devices. Neogongorismo is sufficiently similar to Gongorism to justify its being called neo<u>gongorismo</u>, but it is also sufficiently new, different, and, in my opinion, superior to Gongorism to warrant the name <u>neo</u>gongorismo.

CHAPTER III

GONGORA IN CONTEMPORARY SPANISH-AMERICAN OPINION

Góngora was a great favorite among his contemporaries:

> No se ha dado en la literatura española un caso de veneración y entusiasmo por un contemporáneo como el que los admiradores y apasionados tuvieron por Góngora. Trasladaban, comentaban, defendían, glosaban, imitaban sus versos. Los analizaban con la advertencia y cuidado que los famosos comentadores habían empleado con los de Homero y Virgilio y no faltaron diligentes discípulos que recogieron los fragmentos y apuntaron versos sueltos de poesías que no pudieron encontrar.[1]

Such, for the most part, was the attitude shown towards Góngora throughout the seventeenth century. It is somewhat surprising, then, that this admiration and interest should have practically disappeared during the eighteenth century. So unconcerned were the eighteenth century literatos with Góngora that not a single Obras Completas de Góngora was printed. The indifference shown him was complete, for he enjoyed neither constructive nor destructive criticism, to any notable degree, in either Spain or Spanish-America. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century he fared somewhat better, and a more favorable attitude was shown towards him. His most ardent champion during this century was Don Marcelino Menéndez-Pelayo:

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[1]Artigas, op. cit., p. 217.

> En dos ocasiones, principalmente, trató don Marcelino de Góngora. La primera cuando todavía era estudiante, en el tema escrito que desarrolló en las oposiciones al premio extraordinario de la Licenciatura de Filosofía y Letras en la Universidad de Valladolid, sobre 'Conceptismo, Gongorismo y Culteranismo. Sus precedentes, sus causas y sus efectos en la Literatura española'. Asombra, en este trabajo de examen, la cantidad y calidad de las lecturas previas que el joven escolar había hecho.... No faltan tampoco observaciones personales acompañadas de ejemplos largos, de composiciones enteras de Góngora, que indudablemente sabía de memoria.[2]

These ideas he later incorporated with additions in the much more extensive Historia de las ideas estéticas en España (1884). Not long after the publication of this book, the Revue Hispanique saw fit to publish several articles on Góngora's life and works, but the real revaluation of Góngora came during the last few years of the nineteenth century:

> En los últimos años del siglo XIX se operó un cambio en el juicio y apreciacion de Góngora. Los parnasianos y los simbolistas franceses empezaron a hacer, un poco a ciegas en los comienzos, calurosos elogios de Góngora. No está claro como Verlaine y Moreas, que no sabían castellano, habían llegado a conocer el autor de las 'Soledades', y aun a recitar alguno de sus versos. Acaso fué Heredia...quien en aquellas reuniones de la Biblioteca del Arsenal dió a conocer a sus jóvenes amigos y poetas las obras de don Luis.[3]

Thus began an almost phenomenal reawakening of interest and admiration for a classic poet who at one time had been almost wholly forgotten. The fact that the French poets,

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[2] Ibid., p. 250.

[3] Ibid., p. 252.

Verlaine (who, we are told, frequently repeated the last verse of Góngora's first "Soledad": "A batallas de amor, campos de pluma") and Moreas should have been among the first to re-discover Góngora makes one wonder whether it was indirectly through their influence (and that of their successors, Mallarmé, Valery, and others) that the Spanish and Spanish-American poets began once again to turn to Góngora for inspiration or whether they re-discovered him themselves. Though the latter may seem the more logical, there are many arguments in favor of the former.

The revived interest in Góngora is not confined solely to an admiration on the part of the poets themselves or to the critical opinion which arose from this admiration. Several new editions of Góngora's works have been published. Foulché-Delbosc, Alfonso Reyes, Guzmán, and Enrique Díez-Canedo have all contributed towards a bibliography of Góngora, as have Hurtado, Palencia, and Fitzmaurice-Kelly. Dámaso Alonso has published an edition of Góngora's "Soledades", supplemented with a prose translation, and has also written many articles in defense of Góngora. Probably the most complete bibliography and critical study of Góngora is the already cited Don Luis de Góngora y Argote by Miguel Artigas. Perhaps the most active Spanish-American critic of Góngora today is Alfonso Reyes, whose Reseña de estudios gongorinos and Cuestiones gongorinas have already been cited.

These are merely a few of the many studies already done and still being carried out in Spain and Spanish-America on Góngora.

Darío was one of the first of the modernista poets to evince an interest in Góngora. On one occasion he refers to him as "el admirable Góngora" and classes him with Quevedo as one of the "grandes sonetistas del Siglo de Oro".[4] And on another occasion he shows us that he was aware of Góngora's skill as a writer of romances:

> En 'Primaveral' de El Año Lírico - creo haber dado una nueva nota en la orquestración del romance, con todo y contar con antecesores tan ilustres al respecto como Góngora y el cubano Zenea.[5]

His actual references to Góngora are few and brief. One of the best evidences we have of his admiration for the Cordoban is to be found in the sonnet series known as "Trebol" (1905). The style he uses in this poem is very evidently an imitation of Góngora's. The first sonnet of the series is entitled "De Don Luis de Góngora y Argote a don Diego de Silva Velázquez". The second, "De don Diego de Silva Velázquez a don Luis de Góngora y Argote", foreshadows, according to Artigas, "esta moderna adoracion de Góngora":

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[4]R. Darío, Opiniones (Madrid: Editorial Mundo Latino, 1906), p. 195.

[5]R. Darío, "Historia de mis libros", Nosotros, XXI (February, 1916), p. 208.

Alma de oro, fina voz de oro
al venir hacia mí, ¿por qué suspiras?
Ya empieza el noble coro de las liras
a preludiar el himno a tu decoro:
ya al misterioso son del noble coro
calma el centauro sus grotescas iras,
y con nueva pasión que les inspiras
tornan a amarse Angélica y Medoro.
A Teócrito y Possin la fama dote
con la corona del laurel supremo;
que en donde da Cervantes el Quijote
y yo las telas con mis luces gemo,
para don Luis de Góngora y Argote
traerá una nueva palma Polifemo.[6]

And the last of the three sonnets, dedicated by Darío to both the artists, contains the following delicately expressed simile, so remindful of Góngora:

> y tu castillo, Góngora, se alza al azul cual una jaula de ruiseñores labrada en oro fino...[7]

The critics are more or less divided as to the value of this poem. Whereas to Alfonso Reyes it is "su fracasado soneto gongorino",[8] in the opinion of Concha Meléndez "hace recordar por su emoción comprensiva el que escribiera Góngora para inscripción del sepulcro del Dominico Greco..."[9]

"Trébol" is one of the few instances in contemporary Spanish-American poetry of a poem which is openly inspired

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[6]Artigas, op. cit., p. 253.

[7]Darío, Antología poética, p. 261.

[8]A. Reyes, Cuestiones gongorinas (Madrid: Calpe, 1927), p. 249.

[9]C. Meléndez, "Revisión de Darío", Hispania, XIV (December, 1931), p. 443.

by or dedicated to Góngora. Nor do the poets themselves often mention Góngora in their prose works, except in an off-hand or purely critical way and without relating their admiration for him with their own poetry. Since such are the circumstances, one is obliged to rely upon the statements of recognised critics and the revelations of close friends or even of mere acquaintances in determining the extent of the admiration a poet has for Góngora. From such a source as this last-mentioned, we are informed that Darío, in 1908, was in Spain, and that after completing a poem he was to assemble "datos para escribir un estudio sobre Góngora, el egregio poeta cordobés tan interesante en su vida y en sus obras y tan amado por Darío".[10] We are not, however, enlightened as to how the writer knew that Góngora was "tan amado por Darío". Or, on another occasion we learn that "El gran poeta contemporáneo, Antonio Machado, que personalmente trató a Darío, me (Dámaso Alonso) ha asegurado que éste (Darío) solía recitar de memoria poesías de Góngora. . . ."[11] And we find such remarks as:

> (Darío). . . se dedica con entusiasmo al estudio de los grandes escritores españoles, Cervantes,

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[10] A. Torres-Ríoseco, Rubén Darío: casticismo y americanismo (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), p. 77.

[11] Reyes, loc. cit.

Quevedo, Góngora, particularmente éste. . .[12]

> Darío had read widely in the older Spanish classics. . . and had. . . been able to penetrate beneath the surface to see through the eccentricity of Góngora . . . That his study of Góngora influenced his style is highly probable. . .[13]

Such statements, if somewhat open to critical attacks, show, nevertheless, that the critics are aware of the fact that the contemporary poets are returning to Góngora in their search for new material.

A more substantial type of criticism is that in which a comparison is induced between Góngora and the contemporary poets as regards literary temperament or poetic devices and style of writing. A parallel is frequently drawn between Góngora and Darío. In fact, many critics term Darío "the new Góngora". Dundas Craig supports his statement to that effect with the "beautifully poetic figure":

> El áureo ovillo vespertino
> que la tarde devana tras opacos cristales
> por tejer la inconsútil tela de nuestros malos,
> todos hechos de carne y aromados de vino. . .

This, he says, is an example of the beautiful but somewhat obscure imagery which earned for him the title "the new Góngora".[14]

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[12]Darío, op. cit., p. 8.

[13]Dundas Craig, The modernist trend in Spanish-American poetry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1924), p. 257.

[14]Ibid., p. 268.

And Umphrey draws a similar comparison:

> As in the case of that other great poet of three centuries ago, Luis de Góngora, with whom Darío might well be compared as regards poetic temperament and literary influence, the master suffered from the abuses of his followers: just as gongorista came to be a term of reproach, so rubendariaco.[15]

And the following quotation shows in a more specific way the parallel between the two:

> The impeccable choice of words, the sapient harmony of line, the alliteration, the silvery combination of vocables, the inspired placing of the caesura - all these qualities, dropping at times into mannerism and preciosity, are something new in Spanish poetry. One must go back to Luis de León and Góngora to find anything resembling it, and then remotely.[16]

There have even been several mentions made to the effect that a study should be made of Góngora's influence on Darío. Torres-Ríoseco points this out at the end of his work on Darío, and Silva Castro, citing the following excerpt from Azul, exclaims, "¡Qué bella incitación para tratar del influjo de Góngora sobre Darío!"

> Y arriba el cielo con su inmensidad y con su fiesta de nubes, plumas de oro, alas de fuego, vellones de púrpura, fondos azules flordelisados de ópalo, derramaba la magnificencia de su pompa, la soberbia de

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[15] G. Umphrey and García Prada, Selections from the prose and poetry of Rubén Darío (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1928), p. 24.

[16] Griswold Morley, "A cosmopolitan poet: Rubén Darío", The Dial, LXII (July 14, 1917), p. 510.

su grandeza augusta.[17]

Though it is true that the recent revival of interest in Góngora is due to a great extent to the enthusiasm shown him by Darío, he (Darío) is not the only contemporary poet who is associated with Góngora. Salvador Díaz-Mirón, for example, is frequently mentioned in connection with Góngora:

> . . .Quevedo. . . y Góngora. . . con las cuales tiene más de una afinidad. . .[18]

> . . .en Lascas transparenta la asidua lectura de Quevedo y de Góngora.[19]

> Díaz-Mirón, indeed, has, with his later works, induced comparisons with the methods of Luis de Góngora.[20]

> Como poeta, empezó imitando a Byron y a Hugo; luego se hizo más complejo, más ceñido, más duro, al modo de Góngora.[21]

And there are many other similar quotations. We find similar opinions in the case of Leopoldo Lugones:

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[17] R. Silva Castro, Obras desconocidas de Rubén Darío (Santiago: Universidad de Chile, 1934), p. 58.

[18] Díaz-Mirón, op. cit., p. xviii.

[19] R. Blanco-Fombona, El modernismo y los modernistas Madrid: Mundo Latino, 1929), p. 68.

[20] Isaac Goldberg, Studies in Spanish-American literature (New York: Brentano, 1920), p. 68.

[21] A. Torres-Ríoseco, Bibliografía de la poesía mexicana (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), p. xxi.

> . . .Lugones. . .repetidor a distancia de unos siglos de la estéril hazaña de Góngora. . .[22]

> . . .bien se puede cantar y no entender los que escuchan. Góngora también (además de Lugones) cantó cosas en "Las Soledades", y¡con qué talento![23]

And similarly in the case of Herrera y Reissig we find such remarks as:

> In his article Conceptos Herrera admits the fascination for Góngora's concepts and maintains that modern symbolism is an "extraña resurrección"[24]

> Desde Góngora a nuestros días,¿cuántos se han escrito en castellano que lo superen (a Herrera y Reissig)?[25]

> . . .(Herrera) aprendió mucho de Góngora. . .[26]

or a comment like the following, which is another example of a critic who believes that it was through the French admirers of Góngora that the Spanish writers first began to recognise his value as a source of inspiration:

> --a este raro poeta, nieto de Góngora y consanguíneo de Poe,--sugestiones antiguas y veleidades modernísimas parten en dos su alma creadora. ¡Junto a Góngora, Poe!--Es indudable que--forma Herrera y Reissig en la falange de poetas que anuncian un

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[22]R. Guisti, "Leopoldo Lugones", Nosotros, IV (July and August, 1909), p. 290.

[23]R. Guisti, "Leopoldo Lugones y su obra", Nosotros, V (April, 1911), p. 226.

[24]J. E. Englekirk, Poe in Hispanic Literature (New York: Instituto de las Españas, 1934), p. 312.

[25]Blanco-Fombona, op. cit., p. 202.

[26]Onís, op. cit., p. 471.

> renacimiento neogongorino incitado por las eclípticas enseñanzas de Mallarmé.[27]

And there are numerous other such references being made about these and other poets in connection with Góngora.

The opinions cited thus far have been chiefly in reference to the culto or obscure Góngora. Of recent years, however, there has been a change in the type of reference made to Góngora. It is no longer to the Góngora culto that the critics refer, but rather to the early Góngora - the Góngora of the clear, sparkling, romance phase. This change in attitude is due, of course, to a similar change in the type and tone of the poetry of the day, a change which, it might be said, is taking the form of a reaction against neogongorismo:

> Pero no sólo influye sobre nuestra juventud el Góngora 'malo', como dicen puerilmente los textos, el Góngora de las "Soledades" y "Polifemo" sino tambien el Góngora 'bueno', el Góngora claro y punzante de las letrillas. Lo sigue entre nosotros un poeta, Luis Cané, poeta raro en nuestro medio a fuerza de ser natural, como va a resultarnos bicho raro, dentro de pocos años, el hombre que ande con sus propios pies. . .[28]

The favorite verse form of this new group of writers is the romance:

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[27]Englekirk, op. cit., p. 311.

[28]A. Torres-Ríoseco, Luis Cané (Buenos Aires: n. n., 1936), p. 31.

> Vuelven al romance los poetas de lengua hispana. Es un afirmarse en lo tradicional de nuestra expresión poética, un descender a lo vernáculo en defensa instintiva contra la anarquía que pretende destruir, fundada en capsiosas argumentaciones de novelera dialéctica, la jerarquía artística, como lo intenta contra la jerarquía política, social, religiosa, de toda índole, en fin. . . La vuelta a la forma madre de toda nuestra más genuina expresión literaria tiene el mismo sentido que la lapidaria frase de Marco Pomponio Marcello, 'Tu enim, Caesar, civitatem dare potes hominibus, verbo non potes'[29]

And Torres-Ríoseco confirms this last statement:

> Parece que la prestidigitación de las imágenes y el ocultismo en los conceptos, no son procesos simpáticos al genio de expresión artística de nuestra raza. . .[30]

Though both these statements were made within the last year or so, the "return to the <u>romance</u>" is not as recent a tendency as this would seem to indicate.

José Martí, only recently recognised as anything other than a very active and zealous Cuban patriot, began writing <u>romances</u> as early as 1891 (<u>Versos Sencillos</u>). Though not always written in the traditional <u>romance</u> verse form, and at times slightly obscure in thought, they are, nevertheless, fresh and spontaneous:

> Yo quiero salir del mundo
> Por la puerta natural:
> En un carro de hojas verdes
> A morir me han de llevar.

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[29] E. Suárez-Calimano, "Letras hispanoamericanas," <u>Nosotros</u>, LXXXII (August, 1936), p. 563.

[30] Torres-Ríoseco, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 1.

No me pongan en lo oscuro
A morir como un traidor:
Yo soy bueno, y como bueno
Moriré de cara al Sol.[31]

Though most of his Versos Sencillos are in this very subjective vein, he has written some which bear quite a resemblance to those of Góngora:

Quiero, a la sombra de un ala,
contar este cuento en flor:
La niña de Guatemala,
La que se murió de amor.

Eran de lirios los ramos,
Y las orlas de reseda
Y de jazmín: la enterramos
en una caja de seda.

. . . Ella dió al desmemoriado
Una almohadilla de olor:
El volvió, volvió casado:
Ella se murió de amor.

. . . . . .

Callado, al oscurecer,
Me llamó el enterrador:
Nunca más he vuelto a ver
A la que murió de amor![32]

Nothing much, with the possible exception of Lugones' Romancero (1925), has been written in this form or tone since Marti's time until comparatively recent years, when the "neo-romance" which we have already mentioned came into vogue. This trend has given rise to such remarks as:

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[31]José Martí, Obras completas, Vol. I (Paris: Editorial Excelsior, 1891), p. 39.

[32]Ibid., p. 25.

> (Max Jara). . .Ultimamente ha llegado a una sencillez absoluta comparable a la de Góngora en sus ratos de lucidez, y a la de nuestros poetas populares.[33]

and

> Sus últimos versos (los de Salvador Novo) empero son tenues y transparentes, nubes de verano desprendidas del horizante de Góngora, o acaso de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.[34]

But perhaps the most frequently cited of the adherents of this new tendency are Angel Aller and Luis Cané, to whom we have already made reference. Angel Aller, author of Romances de Mar y Tierra, has been called "un Góngora del periodo evolutivo en un poeta de nuestros dias." But Luis Cané, whose most recent contribution to his ever increasing collection of romanceros is Romancero del Río de la Plata, has probably excited more comment than have any of the others, at least so far as a comparison with Góngora is concerned:

> Con voz sencilla y penetrante, pero en versos de castiza estructura en los que se esconde cierta malicia lírica - lo que hace él, selecto discípulo del 'Góngora de la primera edad' - Luis Cané canta - comenta - motivos de niñas. . .[35]

> . . .los modernos descubridores de Góngora, de quien Cané es hijo predilecto. . .[36]

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[33] A. Torres-Ríoseco, "Poetas líricos de Chile", Nosotros, LIX (February, 1928), p. 155.

[34] A. Torres-Ríoseco, Bibliografía de poesía mexicana, p. xxxvi.

[35] A. Torres-Ríoseco, Luis Cané, p. 21.

[36] Ibid., p. 25.

> Recuerda a veces. . .la inspiración gongorina;
> la inspiración del Góngora de los tiempos mejores[37]

These comments were all inspired by Cané's early works, Romancero de Niñas, Mal Estudiante, Tiempo de Vivir, etc. But the romances included in his Romancero del Río de la Plata are not, strictly speaking, the Góngora type of romance. Though written in the traditional romance form, they are romances épicos rather than romances líricos. As one critic has expressed it, they are "de espíritu moderno y sabor antiguo". Practically all of the romances included in this collection treat either of Buenos Aires or of the indios of the países rioplatenses and are frequently quite realistic in tone.

There are in the works of other poets some good examples of this trend of romances, which bear a very strong resemblance to those of Góngora, not merely in form but also in spirit:

> Ah, mi lejano país!
> Cielo azul, río de nácar,
> tierra en que dejé mi esfuerzo
> y con el esfuerzo, mi alma!
>
> (Feliz tú que lo verás!)[38]

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[37] Ibid., p. 30.

[38] Onís, op. cit., Rafael Alberto Arrieta, "La voz ausente", p. 660.

Tres doncellas eran, tres
doncellas de bel mirar,
las tres en labor de aguja
en la cámara real.

. . . . . .

La niña que está en la torre
tendía la mano al cielo . . .
De agua se llenó su mano,
y la aljaba del arquero.[39]

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Amapolita morada
del valle donde nací:
si no estás enamorada,
enamórate de mí . . .[40]

-

Ausencia de catorce años,
silencio, mar, y distancia,
tienes dormidos los ojos
en lejanías de nácar,
azucenas de tus pies,
asomando en hojarasca,
mástil roto de bajeles
en la arena de la playa.[41]

This neo-romance tendency is but one phase of a general trend towards lo clásico popular found in Spain and Spanish-America alike today.

There can be no doubt as to the important rôle which Góngora, both as a man and a poet, has played and still

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[39] Ibid., Enrique Banchs, "Elogio de una lluvia", p. 704.

[40] Ibid., Alfonso Reyes, "Glosa de mi tierra", p. 727.

[41] Ibid., Torres-Ríoseco, "Ausencia", p. 1003.

plays in the literature of Spain and Spanish-America. As Reyes has pointed out:

> . . .el último florecimiento de las letras españolas y la poesía de Rubén Darío habían hecho que aún el público de la calle volviera los ojos hacia Góngora.[42]

One wonders what might have brought about this renewed interest and how important a part the Góngora celebration of 1927 played in its formation. We know that the older poets began long before 1927 to show gongoristic tendencies in their poetry and to manifest an admiration for Góngora, but we lack this information in the case of the younger poets. Was it the renewed interest in Góngora that caused the poets to imitate his works, or was their temperament such that they found in him an hermano espiritual after they had already begun to write poetry similar to his in form and spirit? Such questions are ever open to debate and will probably never be solved definitively. All that we can safely do under the circumstances is to make conjectures like the following:

> The glorious resurrection which Góngora is experiencing these days is neither a detached phenomenon, a consequence of critical-aesthetic development, nor mere chance. It is, like the whole Baroque cult, the natural result, or, rather, the indirect expression of the artistic modernism in which the art of the seventeenth century is being repeated.[43]

42A. Reyes, "Reseña de estudios gongorinos", Revista de Filología Española, V (1918), p. 316.

43C. E. Anibal, "Góngora and Darío", Hispania, XI (September, 1918), p. 275.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Neogongorismo, though it differs from Gongorism in many respects, resembles it in enough ways to warrant the appellation "new culteranismo". Gongorism stressed such qualities as the use of exotic words, irrational antithesis, illogical metaphors and hyperboles, affected Latinisms, archaisms, neologisms, obscure paraphrasing, hyperbaton, omission of articles and conjunctions, long and involved parenthetical remarks, abuse of mythological reference, personified abstractions, and sustained puns. It is significant that of this whole list, neogongorismo has retained but three: neologisms, unusual figures of speech, and baffling allusion. A brief consideration of the circumstances of each of these trends will perhaps help to give the reasons for this difference.

The two tendencies arose under quite different circumstances. Gongorism, many believe, arose as the result of an effort on the part of a group of writers, of which Góngora was the leader, to catch the eye of the public and especially of the critics. They realised that in order to be noticed during a period of good writers and good works, they must create a type of poetry so exotic, so rare, and so out-of-the-ordinary that it could not fail to attract attention

and excite comment. The result of their efforts was the obscure and affected culteranismo. Neogongorismo, on the other hand, was the unconscious outgrowth of the modernista seeking of innovations and novel effects with which to counteract the very spiritless poetry of the day. The gongoristas confess to having deliberately strived after a type of poetry which would be so obscure and so affected that the vulgo they so despised would be lost in confusion when trying to decipher it. They wanted it to be comprehensible only to the erudite. Such poetry was bound to be forced in tone. The neogongoristas, however, seem almost to be unaware of the obscurity and affectation which they are creating. Since there is no conscious effort on their part to create an affected or obscure type of poetry, their work is fresh and spontaneous. True, they write for the elite, but only in the sense that, being Spanish and hence essentially romantic and subjective by nature, they work individually and create a type of poetry which is satisfactory to themselves without regard for the reader's opinion.

It is well known that the modernistas returned to the classicists in seeking new material. Góngora in his culto phase was bound to attract them, but I continue to believe that their discovery of him came after and perhaps as a result of their gongoristic inclinations. The Góngora

celebration of 1927 accomplished two things: it gave the enthusiasm for Góngora impetus, and it acquired for Gongora more followers; but it certainly did not start the early modernista poets in the neogongorista direction which so many of them took. Gongorismo was the premeditated creation of a group of writers, who admitted, even boasted, that they were gongoristas; neogongorismo was the spontaneous creation of a group of writers who are termed neogongoristas only by the critics. Neogongorismo, being a more natural and spontaneous trend, is, in my opinion, superior as a literary contribution to gongorismo in spite of the fact that as the critics and writers become more and more aware of the tendency, a group of writers will very probably be formed which will carry it to the point of decadence, and neogongorismo, like gongorismo before it, will become a term of reproach.[1]

It is difficult to say whether the renewed interest in Góngora is the result of an actual rediscovery and revaluation of him on the part of the poets, or whether the critics, noting similarities to Góngora in the works of the poets, assumed that there had been a revival of interest on the part of the poets, and in this manner actually brought

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[1]This statement makes one wonder whether or not ultraísmo is not simply an exaggeration of neo-gongorismo. Such an assumption, of course, is purely theoretical.

one about. Certain it is that many studies and new editions of Góngora's works have been made in recent years, but it is significant that none of the so-called neogongorista poets should have evinced more than a passing interest in him; for until very recent times not one has published even so much as a brief study of Góngora and his works.

The neo-romance trend is a natural reaction against the neogongorista trend, and simply follows the classic-romantic-classic trend found in all literatures of all ages. Since the literatos were already interested in Góngora, the young writers, no doubt urged on by the Góngora celebration, sought a more simple, clear, and natural type of poetry and were therefore not long in realising what an abundance of material was to be found in the early Góngora. But even in the case of these poets, we find evidences of inspiration and similarities rather than influences.

Neogongorismo has undeniably contributed to and enhanced the value of contemporary Spanish-American poetry; for it has served to enrich the poetic language, and it has brought about the introduction of many new and beautiful figures of speech into Spanish-American poetry. And if, as the critics suggest, the contemporary Spanish-American poets are evincing a renewed interest and admiration for Góngora, especially in his early phase, their literary vision will undoubtedly be broadened and their poetry will be lent a new

vitality - de espíritu moderno y sabor antiguo.

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