

Los teólogos

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Arrasado el jardín, profanados los cálices y las aras, entraron a caballo los hunos en la biblioteca monástica y rompieron los libros incomprendibles y los vituperaron y los quemaron, acaso temerosos de que las letras encubrieran blasfemias contra su dios, que era un cimitarra de hierro. Ardieron palimpsestos y códices, pero en el corazón de la hoguera, entre la ceniza, perduró casi intacto el libro duodecimo de la *Civitas Dei*, que narra que Platón enseñó en Atenas que, al cabo de los siglos, todas las cosas recuperarán su estado anterior, y él, en Atenas, ante el mismo auditorio, de nuevo enseñará esa doctrina. El texto que las llamas perdonaron gozó de una veneración especial y quienes lo leyeron y releyeron en esa remota provincia dieron en olvidar que el autor soló declaró esa doctrina para poder mejor confutarla. Un siglo después, Aureliano, coadjutor de Aquilea, supo que a orillas del Danube la novísima secta de los *monótonos* (llamados también *anulares*) profesaba que la historia es un círculo, y que nada es que no haya sido y que no será. En las montañas la Rueda y a Serpiente habían desplazado a la Cruz. Todos temían, pero todos se confortaban con el rumor de que Juan de Panonia, que se había distinguido por un tratado sobre el séptimo atributo de Dios, iba a impugnar tan abominable herejía.

Aureliano deploró esas nuevas, sobre todo la última. Sabía que en materia teológica no hay novedades sin riesgo; luego reflexionó que la tesis de un tiempo circular era demasiado disímil, demasiado asombrosa, para que el riesgo fuera grave. (Las herejías que debemos temer son las que pueden confundirse con la ortodoxia.) Más le dolió la intervención

The theologians

Having profaned the altars and their chalices, and trampled under the herbs and flowers of the garden, the Huns rode their horses into the library of the monastery and tore the books from the shelves and lecterns, and, shouting their curses at the incomprehensible letters, flung them to the flames: fearing maybe that the mysterious symbols pronounced blasphemies against the scimitar of iron they exalted as their god. The piled palimpsests and codices lay burning: but midmost in the pyre the ashes preserved intact the *Civitas Dei*, which tells how Plato had taught that, at the end of the centuries, all things shall recover their original state, and that he himself, stood before those his very auditors in Athens, would propound there the doctrine of Eternal Recurrence.

The flames spared an especially venerated book: and the monks who read it and read it over again were wont to forget, in their distant province, that Augustine states the doctrine only to better refute it. A hundred years had gone by after the Huns sacked the city when the bishop of Aquilea was told of the *Monotones* on the banks of the Danube: a new sect, so his suffragan and adjutor Aurelian deposed, whom some called *Annulars*: who professed that time is a circle, and that there is not one thing which has not been and would not once more be. In the mountains the Wheel and the Serpent had dispossessed the Cross. Everyone was afraid: but all took strength from the rumour that John of Pannonia himself, he of the treatise on the Seventh Attribute of God, had undertaken to confute the abominable heresy.

Aurelian deplored the circumstance: he knew that in matters of theology novelties are dangerous. But upon reflection the thesis of a circular time seemed too singular, though, too astonishing, to very gravely endanger faith; the heresies one should beware, he told himself, are those that may be confounded with orthodoxy. The intervention of John of Pannonia

— la intrusión — de Juan de Panonia. Hace dos años, éste había usurpado con su verboso *De septima affectione Dei sive de aeternitate* un asunto de la especialidad de Aureliano; ahora, como si el problema del tiempo le perteneciera, iba a rectificar, tal vez con argumentos de Procusto, con triacas más temibles que la Serpiente, a los anulares ... Esa noche, Aureliano pasó las hojas del antiguo diálogo de Plutarch sobre la cesación de los oráculos; en el párrafo veintinueve, leyó una burla contra los estoicos que defienden un infinito ciclo de mundos, con infinitos soles, lunas, Apolos, Dianas y Poseidones. El hallazgo le pareció un pronóstico favorable; resolvió adelantarse a Juan de Panonia y refutar a los heréticos de la Rueda.

Hay quien busca el amor de una mujer para olvidarse ella, para no pensar mas en ella. Aureliano, parejamente, quería superar a Juan de Panonia para curarse del rencor que éste le infundía, no para hacerle mal. Atemporado por el mero trabajo, por la fabricación de silogismos y la invención de injurias, por los *nego* y los *autem* y los *nequaquam*, pudo olvidar ese rencor. Erigió vastos y casi inextricables períodos, estorbados de incisos, donde la negligencia y el solecismo parecían formas del desdén. De la cacofonía hizo un instrumento. Previó que Juan fulminaría a los anulares con gravedad profética; optó, para no coincidir con él, por el escarnio. Agustín había escrito que Jesús es la vía recta que nos salva del laberinto circular en que andan los impíos; Aureliano, laboriosamente trivial, los equiparó con Ixión, con el hígado de Prometeo, con Sísifo, con aquel rey de Tebas que vio dos soles, con la tartamudez, con loros, con espejos, con ecos, con mulas de noria y con silogismos bicornutos. (Las fabulas gentilicas perduraban, rebajadas a adornos.) Como todo poseedor de una biblioteca, Aureliano se sabía culpable de no conocerla hasta el fin; esa controversia le permitió cumplir con muchos libros que parecían reprocharle

— his intrusion — that was more aggrieving. Two years ago the man had usurped with his verbose *De septima affectione Dei sive de aeternitate* that special theological province of the adjutor; and, as if the mysterium of Time were his own demense, he now proposed — with arguments Procrustean doubtless if not with the Eleusinian's instruments, precisely, or with tests more terrible perhaps than the trials blaspheming Ophites devise — to correct these erring Annulars.

That night Aurelian pored the pages through of that dialogue of Plutarch's upon the ceasing of the ancient oracles; and in the twenty-ninth of its copious paragraphs read a jesting defense, supplied with suns and moons and oceanous earths enough, and Apollos and Dianas and Poseidons to match, of the infinite cycle of worlds the Stoics postulate. The discovery seemed to him a favourable omen: resolved him to forestall the Pannonian, and refute the heretics of the Wheel himself.

There are men who seek the love of a woman in order to forget her, to think no more upon her; and even so did Aurelian wish to prevent and outdo John of Pannonia , not to do his rival harm, but to cure himself, only, of the pervading and souring rancour the man produced in him.

His accustomed work assuaged him now; and in the fabrication of syllogisms and the invention of offences, in their *nego* and *autem* and *nequaquam*, he was able to forget his soreness of soul. He indited labyrinthine sentences, involved, bewildering digressions, in which negligence and solecism seemed forms of disdain; made of cacophony an instrument. John would, he foresaw, denounce the Annulars with prophetic rage; he would scorn them therefore, so as to not echo, only, his rival's thunder. Augustine writes that Jesus is the straight way out of the labyrinth the impious wander; and Aurelian laboured to furnish its thronged circles with stammerers, with parrots and mirrors and echoes, with double-horned syllogisms, with mules yoked to water-wheels, with that king of Thebes who saw two suns, with the liver of Prometheus, with Ixion and Sisyphus; made of the fables of the pagans castigating parable.

su incuria. Así pudo engastar un pasaje de la obra *De principiis* de Origenes, donde se niega que Judas Iscariote volverá a vender al Señor, y Pablo a presenciar en Jerusalén el martirio de Esteban, y otro de los *Academica priora* de Cicerón, en el que éste se burla de quienes sueñan que mientras él conversa con Lúculo, otros Lúculos y otros Cicerones, en numero infinito, dicen puntualmente lo sismo, en infinitos mundos iguales. Además, esgrimió contra los monótonos el texto de Plutarca y denunció lo escandaloso de que a un idólatra le valiera más el *lumen naturae* que a ellos la palabra de Dios. Nueve días le tomó ese trabajo; el décimo, le fue remitido un traslado de la refutación de Juan de Pannonia.

Era casi irrisoriamente breve; Aureliano la miró con desdén y luego con temor. La primera parte glosaba los versículos terminales del noveno capítulo de los Epístolas a los Hebreos, donde se dicen que Jesús no fue sacrificado muchas veces desde el principio del mundo, sino ahora una vez en la consumación de los siglos. La segunda alegaba el precepto bíblico sobre las vanas repeticiones de los gentiles (Mateo 6:7) y aquel pasaje del séptimo libro de Plinio, que pondrá que en el dilatado universo no hay dos caras iguales. Juan de Pannonia declaraba que tampoco hay dos almas y que el pecador más vil es precioso como la sangre que por él vertió Jesucristo. El acto de un solo hombre (afirmó) pesa más de los nueve cielos concéntricos y trasoñar que puede perderse y volver es una aparatoso frivolidad. El tiempo no rehace lo que perdemos; la eternidad lo guarda para la gloria y también para el fuego. El tratado era límpido, universal; no parecía redactado por una persona concreta, sino por cualquier hombre o, quizás, por todos los hombres.

No possessor of a library will have read all the volumes he owns. Aurelian acknowledged the culpable lack; and the controversy he had joined allowed him to oblige the many tomes which seemed to reproach his neglect. Even so did his pen embellish a passage in Origen, in *De Principiis*, which denies that Judas will return to sell our Lord again, or Paul in Jerusalem witness once more the martyrdom of Stephen; and just as dutifully did he transcribe another, out of the *Academica Priora* of Cicero, in which the philosophic orator mocks those enthusiasts who imagine that, even as he and Lucullus are conversing, their paired doubles, infinitely many of them, in as many identical worlds, are saying as much in so many words. He trained upon the Monotones his text out of Plutarch then; and denounced the scandal that the *lumen naturae* of an idolater should lead him aright where the Word of God does not light *their* benighted way. His labours kept Aurelian nine days and nights. On the tenth day he was handed a translation of his rival's refutation.

It was brief, almost ludicrously so. Aurelian looked it over with disdain first; with trepidation then.

The Epistle to the Hebrews denies that Jesus was ever sacrificed before the world began: and affirms that his death on the cross is the consummation of the centuries: the closing verses of the ninth chapter say as much said John. He adduced then the interdiction, in the Sermon on the Mount, against the vain repetitions of the heathen, and appended there a passage from Pliny, from the seventh of his Books, which marvels that the capacious universe does not contain one face, even, that is identical to another: neither are there two identical souls John affirmed. The most abject sinner is as precious as the blood Jesus shed for him: and each act of every man is of as much moment, the Pannonian declared thereupon, as the nine concentric heavens which enclose the earth. To imagine men dying then living, over and over, was ostentatious frivolity therefore: time cannot revive the dead, nor any, nor ever: eternity keeps them toward glory and fire.

Aureliano sintió una humillación casi física. Pensó destruir o reformar su propio trabajo; luego, con rencorosa probidad, lo mandó a Roma sin modificar una letra. Meses después, cuando se juntó el concilio de Pergamo, el teólogo encargado de impugnar los errores de los monotones fue (previsiblemente) Juan de Pannonia; su docta y mesurada refutación bastó para que Euforbo, heresiarcha, fuera condenado a la hoguera. Esto ha ocurrido y volverá a ocurrir, dijo Euforbo. *No encendéis una pira, encendéis un laberinto de fuego. Si aquí se unieran todas las hogueras que he sido, no cabrían en la tierra y quedarían ciegos los ángeles. Esto lo dije muchas veces.* Después gritó, porque lo alcanzaron las llamas.

Cayo la Rueda ante la Cruz,¹ pero Aureliano y Juan prosiguieron su batalla secreta. Militaban los dos en el mismo ejército, anhelaban el mismo galardón, guerrreaban contra el mismo Enemigo, pero Aureliano no escribió una palabra que inconfesablemente no propendiera a superar a Juan. Su duelo fue invisible; si los copiosos indices no me engañan, no figura una sola vez el nombre del *otro* in los muchos volúmenes que atesora la Patrología de Migne. (De las obras de Juan, sólo ha perdurado veinte palabras.) Los dos desaprobaron los anatemas del segundo concilio de Constantinopla; los dos persiguieron los arrianos, que negaban la generación eterna del Hijo; los dos atestiguaron la ortodoxia de la *Topographia Christiana* de Cosmas, que enseña que la tierra es cuadrangular, como el tabernáculo hebreo. Desgraciadamente, por los cuatro ángulos de la tierra cundió otra tempestuosa herejía. Oriunda del Egipto o del Asia (porque los testimonios difieren y Bossuet no quiere admitir los razones de Harnack), infestó las provincias

1 En las cruces rúnicas los dos emblemas conviven entrelazados.

The argument was limpid, universal, was not aimed toward any particular person, but addressed at once each man and all men together.

Aurelian experienced an almost bodily humiliation. He wanted to tear up his indictment of the Annulars, did so almost, decried his own so elaborate demonstrations, wished to write them over; but he did not change a single letter, in the end, and with rancorous probity sent his dissertation to Rome. The Council of Pergamon, convoked some months after, entrusted to John of Pannonia the task of confuting the errors of the Monotones: predictably. His learned and withal measured refutation sufficed to condemn to the stake their heresiarch Euphorbus. *This has happened before and shall happen again* said Euphorbus: *you do not light a pyre, you set aflame a labyrinth of fire. Gather all the burning brands I have been, could you, the very earth would blaze and blind the angels.* But when the flames found his flesh he screamed.

The Wheel fell before the Cross, but Aurelian and John continued their secret and intimate struggle ... and as darkly close do these hostile emblems twine, perhaps, in the runic fabrications of the Celts. They laboured at the same appointed task, desired the same guerdon, fought the same Enemy; but not a word Aurelian writes seeks plainly to outdo John. They duelled in silence; and if the copious indices of Migne's *Patrology* do not deceive us, the name of the *other* does not occur even once in the many volumes by Aurelian hoarded there. Of John exactly twenty words have survived. Both condemned, in their turn, the anathemas pronounced by the Second Council of Constantinople; persecuted the Arians, who presumed to deny the eternal generation of the Son; and testified to the orthodoxy of the *Topographia Christiana* of Cosmas, which teaches that the earth is quadrangular, like the tabernacle of the Hebrews.

Out of those four corners of the earth then a tempestuous heresy spread disgrace. Spawning in Egypt or in Asia — the testimonies differ, and Bossuet will not admit Harnack's reasonings — the delusion

orientales y erigió santuarios en Macedonia, en Cartago y en Tréveris. Pareció estar en todas partes; se dijo que en la diócesis Britania habían sido invertidos los crucifíjos y que a la imagen del Señor, en Cesárea, la había suplantado un espejo. El espejo y el óbolo eran emblemas de los nuevos cismáticos.

La historia los conoce por muchos nombres (*especulares*, *abismales*, *cainitas*), pero del todos el más recibidos es *histriones*, que Aureliano les dio y que ellos con atrevimiento adoptaron. En Frigia les dijeron *simulacros*, y también in Dardania. Juan Damasceno los llamó *formas*; justo es advertir que el pasaje ha sido rechazado por Erfjord. No hay heresiólogo que con estupor no refiera sus desaforadas costumbres. Muchos histriones profesaron el ascetismo; alguno se mutiló, como Origenes; otros moraron bajo tierra, en las cloacas; otros arrancaron los ojos: otros (los *nabucodonosores* de Nitria) “pacían como los bueyes y su pelo crecía como de aguila”. De la mortificación y el rigor pasaban, muchas veces, al crimen; ciertas comunidades toleraban el robo; otras, el homicidio; otras, la sodomía, el incesto y la bestialidad. Todas eran blasfemias; no sólo maldecían del Dios cristiano, sino de las arcanas divinidades de su propio panteón. Maquinaron libros sagrados, cuya desaparición deploran los doctos. Sir Thomas Browne, hacia 1658, escribió “El tiempo ha aniquilado los ambiciosos Evangelios *Histrionicos*, no las Injurias con que se fustigó su Impiedad”: Erfjord ha sugerido que esas “injurias” (que preserva un codice griego) son los evangelios perdidos. Ello es incomprensible, si ignoramos la cosmología de los histriones.

En los libros herméticos está escrito que lo que hay abajo es igual a lo que hay arriba, y lo que hay arriba es igual a lo que

confused the Oriental provinces, swept Phrygia, its ravening votaries found sanctuary in Macedonia, in Carthage, in Treveris, the contagion was everywhere it seemed, in the diocese of Britain the crucifixes had been inverted, so it was reported, and the image of Lord had been displaced in Caesarea even, it was told, by a mirror.

The Mirror and the Obol were the emblems of the schismatics. Sacred history knows them by many names: *Speculars*, *Abysmals*, *Cainites*. But among these the most received appellation titles them *Histrionics*: the name Aurelian gave them, and which the audacious heretics adopted. In Frisia and in Dardania they were called *Simulacra*. John of Damascus called them *Shapes*: but that passage in the text has been rejected, it is proper to record, by the scrupulous Erfjord. The heresiologists are all amazed by their outrageous practices. Many Histrionics were professed ascetics, some mutilated themselves as Origen had, others tore out their eyes, some lived below ground, in sewers, or in fissures of the earth, others roamed the open wastes and commons ... the *Nebuchadnezzars* of Nitria famously, “stamping like bulls, their hair bristling, like unto eagles”. From mortifications and rigours they proceeded to crimes. Some of their communities tolerated thieves, there were bands of murderers among them, coventicles of sodomites, orders in which incest and lying with beasts were commandments. They were blasphemers all, cursing not only the God of the Christians, but the mysterious divinities of their own pantheon as well. They contrived sacred books whose loss the learned deplore. “Time has annihilated the aspiring Histrionic Gospels” Thomas Browne writes: but “not the Injuries with which their Impiety was punished” he avers. Erfjord has suggested that these “injuries” are the heresies, themselves, that their gospels declare: which a Greek codex happens to preserve. But the suggestion will remain incomprehensible until one has acquainted oneself with cosmology of the Histrionics.

What is below is equal to what is above, so the Hermetic Books propound, *what is above is equal to what is below*: and in the Zohar it

hay abajo; en el Zohar que el mundo inferior es reflejo del superior. Los histriones fundaron su doctrina en una perversión de esa idea. Invocaron a Mateo 6:12 (“perdonanos nuestras deudas como nosotros perdonamos nuestros deudadores”) y 11:12 (“el reino de los cielos padecerá fuerza”) y a I Corintios 13:12 (“vemos ahora por espejo, oscuridad”) para demostrar que todo lo que vemos es falso. Quizá contaminados por los Monotonos, imaginaron que todo hombre es dos hombres y que el verdadero es el otro, el que está en el cielo. También imaginaron que nuestros actos proyectan un reflejo invertido, de suerte que si velamos, el otro duerme, si fornicamos, el otro es casto, si robamos el otro es generoso. Muertos, nos uniremos a él y seremos él. (Algun eco de esas doctrinas perduró en Bloy.) Otros histriones discurrieron que que el mundo concluiría cuando se agotara la cifra de sus posibilidades; ya que no puede haber repeticiones, el justo debe eliminar (cometer) los actos más infames, para que estos no manchen el porvenir y para acelerar el advenimiento del reino de Jesús. Ese artículo fue negado por otros sectos, que defendieron que la historia del mundo debe cumplirse en cada hombre. Los más, como Pitágoras, deberán trasmigrar por muchos cuerpos antes de obtener su liberación; algunos, los proteicos, “en el término de una sola vida son leones, son dragones, son jabalíes, son agua y son un árbol”. Demóstenes refiere la purificación por el fango a que eran sometidos los iniciados, en los misterios órficos; los proteicos, analógicamente, buscaron la purificación por el mal. Entendieron, como Carpócrates, que nadie saldrá el cárcel hasta pagar el último óbolo (Lucas 12:59), y solían embauchar los penitentes con este otro versículo: “Yo he venido para que tengan vida los hombres y para que la tengan en abundancia” (Juan 10:10). También decían que no ser un malvado es una soberbia satánica ... Muchas y divergentes mitologías urdieron los histriones; unos predicaron el ascetismo, otros la licencia, todos la confusión. Teopomo, histrión de Berenice, negó todas las fabulas; dijo que cada hombre es un órgano que proyecta la divinidad para sentir el mundo.

is written that *the lower world is a reflection of the higher*. The Histrionics premised their doctrine on a perversion of these teachings. To demonstrate that we only mistake what we see they repeated the words of Paul: *now we see in a glass, darkly* (I Corinthians, 13:12). To prove that what is seemly only seems so they invoked Matthew: *the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force* (11:12) — taking for surety our prayer that the Lord *forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors* (6:12). Infected by some remnant of the Monotones maybe they imagined that each man is two men, and that the true man is the other, the one who is in heaven: and proposed thereupon that each of our actions projects skyward its inverted reflection — so that when we are awake our other sleeps, where we fornicate he is chaste, should we take what is not ours he shall give his all — and once dead we shall be united with them, they declared, shall be our heavenly others. Some Histrionics conjectured that the world would terminate with the exhausting of its possibilities: and as there could be no repetitions, the just should eliminate the most infamous deeds by committing them, they proposed, so that these should not stain the future and delay the advent of Christ's reign. In this particular they were negated by other sects: who maintained that the history of the world must be completed in the life of each man. The souls of many must have, like Pythagoras, transmigrated many bodies: but for some protean few, the proteicos, “at the end of one life only they are lions, they are dragons, they are wild boars, they are water and they are a tree.” Demosthenes tells of the purification by slime to which initiates into the Orphic mysteries were subjected. The proteicos sought an analogous purification through evil. Like Carpocrates they understood (Luke, 12:59) that no one will be released from the prison until the last obol is paid; and they would impose upon penitents with this one versicle, “I have come in order to have the life of men, and in order to have that in abundance” (John, 10:10), declaring upon the words of Christ that to not be an evil-doer was Satanic pride ...

The Histrionics contrived many and diverging myths. Some among them preached abstinence, others exhorted licence, and all decreed

Los herejos de la diócesis de Aureliano eran de los que afirmaban que el tiempo no tolera repeticiones, no de los que afirmaban que todo acto se refleja en el cielo. Esa circunstancia era rara; en un informe a las autoridades romanas, Aurelian la mencionó. El prelado que recibiría el informe era confesor de la emperatriz; nadie ignoraba que ese ministerio exigente le vedaba las intimas delicias de teología especulativa. Su secretario —antiguo colaborador de Juan de Panonia, ahora enemistado con él— gozaba del renombre de puntualísimo inquisidor de heterodoxias. Aureliano agregó una exposición de la herejía histriónica, tal como se daba en los conventículos de Genua y de Aquilea. Redactó unos paraffos; cuando quiso escribir la tesis atroz que no hay dos instantes iguales, su pluma se detuvo. No dio con la formula necesaria; las admoniciones de la nueva doctrina (“Quieres ver lo que no vieron ojos humanos? Mira la luna. Quieres oír lo que los oídos no oyeron? Oye el grito de pajaro. Quieres tocar lo que no tocaron las manos? Toca la tierra. Verdaderamente digo que Dios está por crear el mundo”) eran harto afectadas y metafóricas para la transcripción. De pronto, una oración de veinte palabras se presentó a su espíritu. La escribió, gozoso; inmediatamente después, lo inquietó la sospecha de que era ajena. Al día siguiente, recordó que la había leído hacia muchos años en el *Adversos annulares* que compuso Juan de Panonia. Verificó la cita; ahí estaba. La incertidumbre lo atormentó. Variar o suprimir esas palabras, era debilitar la expresión; dejarlas, era plagiar a un hombre que aborrecía; indicar la fuente, era denunciarlo. Hacia el principio del segundo crepúsculo, el ángel de su guarda le dictó una solución intermedia. Aureliano conservó las palabras, pero les antepuso este aviso: *Lo que ladran ahora los heresiarcas para confusión de la fe, lo dijo en este siglo un varón doctísimo, con más ligereza que culpa.* Después, ocurrió lo temido, lo esperado, lo inevitable. Aureliano tuvo que declarar

confusion. The Histrionic of Berenice, the famous Theopompos, boldly contradicted the many fabulations of his fellows, and declared that each man is an organ Divinity extrudes in order to sense the world.

In the diocese Aurelian administered the heretics all maintained that time does not admit repetitions; there were none of that sect which asserted that each act is reflected in heaven. The circumstance was rare; and Aurelian mentioned it in a report to the Roman authorities. The prelate who would receive the report was confessor to the Empress; and everyone knew that he particularly forbade her the intimate delights of speculative theology. But the secretary to the confessor — a collaborator with John of Pannonia once, his enemy now — this man enjoyed the reputation of a punctilious inquisitor of heterodoxies. So he would append an exposition of the heresy of the Histrionic, Aurelian decided, such as was given in conventicles of Genoa and Aquilea. He composed some paragraphs: but when he wished to set down the atrocious thesis that no event is like any other he found his hand arrested. He could not find the requisite formula ... *Do you wish to see what no eyes have seen? Look at the moon. Do you wish to hear what no ear has heard? Listen to the cry of a bird. Do you wish to touch what no hand has touched? Touch the earth. Verily I say unto you: God exists in order to create the world ...* Such were the exhortations and admonitions of the novel doctrine: they were too affected, Aurelian considered, improbably so, and much too metaphorical to translate. All at once twenty vocables made themselves a sentence for him: he wrote them down delighted: and immediately the suspicion disquieted him that they were another man's words. The following day he recalled the *Adversos Annulares* that John of Pannonia had composed; seemed to remember having read the sentence there; and verified the source. Aurelian was in a torment of indecision. To omit or change a single word would weaken the proposition: if he left the words as they were he plagiarized a man he abhorred: and declaring their source would denounce the Pannonian. Toward dusk on the following day his guardian angel showed him a way through. He kept the words in their

quién era ese varón; Juan de Panonia fue acusado de profesar opiniones heréticas.

Cuatro meses después, un herrero del Aventino, alucinado por los engaños de los histriones, cargó sobre los hombros de su hijito una gran esfera de hierro, para que su doble volara. El niño murió; el horror engendrado por ese crimen impuso una intachable severidad a los jueces de Juan. Esté no quiso retractarse; repitió que negar su proposición era incurrir en la pestilencial herejía de los monótonos. No entendió (no quiso entender) que hablar de los montones era hablar de lo ya olvidado. Con inconsistencia algo senil, prodigó los períodos más brillantes de sus viejas polémicas; los jueces ni siquiera oían lo que los arrebató alguna vez. En lugar de tratar de purificarse de la más leve macula de histrionismo, se esforzó en demostrar que la proposición de que lo acusaban era rigurosamente ortodoxa. Discutió con los hombres de cuyo fallo dependía su suerte y cometió la máxima torpeza de hacerlo con ingenio y con ironía. El veinteseis de octubre, al cabo de un discussion que duro tres días y tres noches, lo sentenciaron a morir en la hoguera.

Aureliano presenció la ejecución, porque no hacerlo era confesarse culpable. El lugar de suplicio era un colina, en cuya verde cumbre había un palo, hincado profundamente en el suelo, y en torno muchos haces de leña. Un ministro leyó la sentencia del tribunal. Bajó el sol de las doce. Juan de Panonia yacia con la cara en el polvo, lanzando bestiales aullidos. Arañaba la tierra, pero los verdugos lo arrancaron, lo desnudaron y por fin lo amarraron a la picota. En la cabeza le

order but prefaced them thus: *what the heresiarchs now bark out to confuse the faithful a learned man said in this century, though more in levity than intending offence.* The thing he had feared and hoped upon and known to be inevitable occurred: Aurelian was required to declare who the man was. John of Pannonia was accused forthwith of professing heretical opinions.

Some four months after a blacksmith of Aventino, deluded by the impostures of the Histrionics, heaved upon the shoulders of his little son a great ball of iron, in order that his double in heaven might fly. The boy died; and the general horror engendered by the crime imposed upon the inquisitors of John a blameless severity. But the theologian would not retract his proposition: maintained that to recant was to fall into the infernal error of the Monotones. He did not understand, did not wish to understand maybe, that to speak of them was to speak of a thing already forgotten. With seemingly senile insistence he paraded the brilliant and lucid pronouncements of his polemic against the Annulars: his judges would not even hear the words they had once listened to rapt. Instead of seeking to purge himself of the least taint, even, of the heresies of the Histrionics, he endeavoured to demonstrate that the sentence which accused him was rigorously orthodox: disputed with the very men upon whose rulings his fate depended: and committed the inexcusable blunder of doing so with wit and irony. On the twenty-seventh day of October, at the end of a deliberation which had lasted three days and three nights, the inquisitors sentenced John of Pannonia to the stake.

Aurelian witnessed the execution: not to do so was to confess himself culpable. The place of torture was a hillock into which a post had been driven. Wood for kindling lay around. A bailiff read out the sentence of the tribunal. The sun was at noon. John lay with his face in the dirt and howled like an animal, clawing at the ground. The executioners pulled him up and stripped him and lashed him to the gibbet. They set on his head a crown of straw smeared with sulphur, and placed beside him the

pusieron una corona de paga untada de azufre; al lado, un ejemplar del pestilente *Adversus Annulares*. Había llovido antes noches y la leña ardía mal. Juan de Panonia rezó en griego y luego en un idioma desconocido. La hoguera iba a llevarselo, cuando Aureliano se atrevió alzar los ojos. Las ráfagas ardientes se detuvieron; Aureliano vio por primera y última vez el rostro del odiado. Le recordó el de alguien, pero no pudo precisar el de quien. Despues, las llamas lo perdieron; despues grito y fue como si un incendio gritara.

Plutarco ha referido ue Julio César lloró la muerte de Pompeyo; Aureliano no lloro la de Juan, pero sintio lo que sentiria un hombre curado de una enfermedad incurable, que ya fuera una parte de su vida. En Aquilea, in Éfeso, en Macedonia, dejó que sobre el pasaran los años. Buscó los arduos limites del Imperio, las torpes ciénagas y los contemplativos desiertos, para que lo ayudara la soledad a entender su destino. En una celda mauritana, en la noche cargada de leones, repensó la compleja acusación contra Juan de Panonia y justificó, por enésima vez, el dictamen. Mas le costo justificar su tortuosa denuncia. En Rusaddir predicó el anacrónico sermón *Luz de las luces encendida en la carne de un réprobo*. En Hibernia, en una de las chozas de un monasterio cercado por la selva, lo sorprendió una noche, hacia el alba, el rumor de la lluvia. Recordó una noche romana en que lo había sorprendido, también, ese minucioso rumor. Un rayo, al mediodía, incendió los árboles y Aureliano pudo morir coma había muerto Juan.

El final de la historia sólo es referible en metaforas, ya que pasa en el reino de los cielos, donde no hay tiempo. Tal vez cabría decir que Aureliano converso con Dios y que Éste se interesa tan poco en diferencias religiosas que lo tomó por Juan de Panonia. Ello, sin embargo, insinuaría una confusión de la mente divina. Más correcto es decir que en el paraíso, Aureliano supo que par la insondable divinidad, el y Juan de Panonia, (el ortodoxo y el hereje, el aborrecedor y el aborrecido, el accusador y la victima) formaban una sola persona.

the now proscribed *Adversus Annulares*. There had been rain the night before, and the kindling burned poorly. John prayed in Greek and then in an unknown tongue. The smoke and the flames had enveloped him almost before Aurelian dared to raise his eyes. The fire burned suddenly clear: and Aurelian saw for the first and last time the face of the hated one. He recalled the face of some man or other but could not say whose. In the smoke and flame weltering around him again John screamed, as he was lost in them, and it was as if the fire had cried out.

Plutarch records that Caesar wept the death of Pompey. Aurelian did not shed his tears for John; he felt what a man would feel, rather, on being cured of an incurable illness, an infirmity that had long since become a part of his life. He was allowed to pass his years pondering his luck, in Aquilea, in Ephesus, in Macedonia. He sought out the arduous frontiers of the Empire, the torpid marshlands and the silent deserts, and in those solitudes contrived to understand his destiny. In a Mauritanian cell, through a night prowled by lions, he reviewed the accusation against John of Pannonia, in its entirety, and justified again the sentence of the inquisitors, as he had now countless times before. To excuse his own tortuous denunciation of his rival pained him more. In Rusaddir he preached the *Light of lights fiery in the flesh of the reprobate*: a sermon only anachronistic then. Somewhere in wild Hibernia, in a thatched hut beside a monastery surrounded by a forest, in the darkness before dawn, the rustle of rain woke him. He recalled a Roman night when he had been surprised just so by that so minutely murmurous sound. Toward noon a flash of lightning flamed the sodden trees: and Aurelian was given to die just as John had died.

The end of the story may be conveyed in metaphor only, for it takes place in the Kingdom of Heaven, where there is no time. Perhaps one is allowed to say that Aurelian conversed with God; and that He was little interested in those refinements of his Being John and Aurelian had disputed. But the

adjutor would have insinuated some confusion, surely, into divine understanding; or so our creaturely minds conceive. It is more correct to record that in Paradise Aurelian knew this: in the unfathomable divinity of God he and John, the heretic and the rector of the Faith, the abhorring and the abhorred, the victim and his accuser, in God these two had ever been one person only.

