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Title of thesis THE LIFE AND WORK OF JUAN MASCARÓ (1897-1987), MALLORCAN TRANSLATOR OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA Degree PHD

There is considerable agreement that the publication of Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* in 1978 inaugurated the field known as "postcolonial studies." Building upon the work of Said and other historians and translation theorists, who have written on the social and cultural implications of European colonialism, this doctoral thesis attempts to place the English, Catalan and Spanish writings of the Mallorcan Orientalist and translator Juan Mascaró (1897-1987) – in particular his translation of the Bhagavad Gita for the Penguin Classics series – in their proper context and thus provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Orientalist/Eurocentric premises underlying his work. Though best known for his translations from the Sanskrit and Pali, Mascaró was also a prolific letter-writer whose letters, manuscripts, diaries and notebooks are preserved in three different archives. The principal motivation for pursuing this PhD project lies in the realization that Mascaró has never received any critical attention in England and that an assessment of his work can contribute to broaden the terms of the debate over the question of Orientalism and Western appropriations of non-European cultures. The thesis is divided into five chapters, preceded by a general introduction and followed by a short conclusion. The first chapter examines the period Mascaró spend as vice-principal of a Hindu college in the British colony of Ceylon; the second studies Mascaró's Orientalist conceptions of Indian culture; the third gives an overview of Western and Indian interpretations of the Bhagavad Gita and analyses Mascaró's reading of the text within this larger hermeneutical enterprise; the fourth presents a theoretical and practical study of Mascaró's translation of the Gita; the fifth and last chapter covers several subjects, but is mainly concerned with Mascaró's religious viewpoint and his involvement in the inter-faith dialogue. Although the association of Orientalism with Western colonial aspirations does not seem evident in the case of a Catalan-speaking Orientalist, Mascaró's writings attest to the universalist tendencies of Orientalism and are part of this hegemonic European movement.

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THE LIFE AND WORK OF JUAN MASCARÓ (1897-1987), MALLORCAN TRANSLATOR OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA

DOCTORAL THESIS – PHD DEGREE

CANDIDATE: NUNO MIGUEL COURELA MOURATO

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SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH ASIA

LONDON, FEBRUARY 2010

ABSTRACT

There is considerable agreement that the publication of Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* in 1978 inaugurated the field known as "postcolonial studies." Building upon the work of Said and other historians and translation theorists, who have written on the social and cultural implications of European colonialism, this doctoral thesis attempts to place the English, Catalan and Spanish writings of the Mallorcan Orientalist and translator Juan Mascaró (1897-1987) – in particular his translation of the Bhagavad Gita for the Penguin Classics series – in their proper context and thus provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Orientalist/Eurocentric premises underlying his work. Though best known for his translations from the Sanskrit and Pali, Mascaró was also a prolific letter-writer whose letters, manuscripts, diaries and notebooks are preserved in three different archives. The principal motivation for pursuing this PhD project lies in the realization that Mascaró has never received any critical attention in England and that an assessment of his work can contribute to broaden the terms of the debate over the question of Orientalism and Western appropriations of non-European cultures. The thesis is divided into five chapters, preceded by a general introduction and followed by a short conclusion. The first chapter examines the period Mascaró spend as vice-principal of a Hindu college in the British colony of Ceylon; the second studies Mascaró's Orientalist conceptions of Indian culture; the third gives an overview of Western and Indian interpretations of the Bhagavad Gita and analyses Mascaró's reading of the text within this larger hermeneutical enterprise; the fourth presents a theoretical and practical study of Mascaró's translation of the Gita; the fifth and last chapter covers several subjects, but is mainly concerned with Mascaró's religious viewpoint and his involvement in the inter-faith dialogue. Although the association of Orientalism with Western colonial aspirations does not seem evident in the case of a Catalan-speaking Orientalist, Mascaró's writings attest to the universalist tendencies of Orientalism and are part of this hegemonic European movement.

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A NOTE ON SPELLING, TRANSLATIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

In Catalan, the word "Joan" means "John." However, in English, the name "Joan" is a female name. "Juan" is also the name that Mascaró used in his English publications. For consistency's sake, I have replaced "Joan" for the Spanish "Juan" in all the Catalan works quoted in the thesis. Except for words like "Gita" or "Upanishads," all the Sanskrit terms and phrases have their diacritical marks; they are also enclosed between quotation marks.

I am responsible for all the translations from the Catalan and Spanish languages. The original passages can be found in the appendix.

The following abbreviations have been used (they refer to the places where Mascaró's papers are deposited):

HMC – Harris-Manchester College

DCA – Downing College Archive

AGCM – Arxiu General del Consell de Mallorca

PREFACE AND ACKOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea of writing a thesis on the life and work of Juan Mascaró (1897-1987), a minor and neglected figure in European Orientalism, had never occurred to me when I first met Dr. William Radice at SOAS in the autumn of 2003. I was then studying English literature at King's College London (my academic training is in Portuguese and English literature), but I was eager to start working on a topic that would allow me to combine my two strongest interests: European literature and Indian philosophy. My first idea for a PhD research project was to study the impact of India and European Orientalism on European, mainly English Romantic, poetry. I decided to take a look at the SOAS internet site, where I found Dr. Radice's profile in the Department of South Asia. I wrote him an email, explaining what I was doing and what I was planning to do, and we quickly arranged a meeting. We exchanged emails and met two or three more times (if my memory does not deceive me) till we finally agreed on a suitable PhD topic. The thesis would focus (I do not need to be specific about the contents of that research proposal here) on the writings of some European scholars and Orientalists, particularly on their response to two of the most popular Sanskrit texts in Europe: the Bhagavad Gita (henceforth, I will use the abbreviated form "Gita") and the Upanishads. The English scholar William Jones, the German Max Müller, the Victorian poet Edwin Arnold and Juan Mascaró were the chosen individuals. At that time I did not know anything about Mascaró, except that he was one of the translators of the Gita, which I had read when I was still a literature student at the University of Lisbon. Dr. Radice had known him personally through his mother, Betty Radice, joint editor of the Penguin Classics from 1964 until her death in 1985, and I felt that I could perfectly well include him in my thesis and make it less Anglo- and German-centric. I was under considerable pressure when I started to discuss my ideas with Dr. Radice, because I wanted to apply for a scholarship in Portugal and the deadline was in the second week of January 2004. To cut a long story short, my proposal was approved by SOAS and I also received the excellent news that my doctorate degree would be sponsored by the Calouste Gul-

benkian Foundation in Lisbon. After spending the whole summer writing a MA thesis on the poetry of John Keats, I started to work on my PhD in September 2004. I also began to attend Sanskrit classes (I had always wanted to learn this ancient Indian language since I first heard about it in a general linguistics class at the university in Lisbon) and to read the biography of Max Müller by the Indian writer Nirad C. Chaudhuri. At the same time I became absorbed in Mascaró's Catalan letters, the first texts that I had ever read in that Iberian language.

A few months later, I came to realize, after a period of reflection, that writing a thesis on scholars and translators from different cultural and intellectual backgrounds was an ambitious task. What did German orientalist scholarship have to do with the amateurish interest in Indian religions and theosophy in twentieth-century Spain? The prospect of never being able to finish the thesis in four years was real and disturbing. I did not know much about India and European Orientalism. Sanskrit was as incomprehensible to me as Chinese, and before studying Max Müller, I should at least become acquainted with topics I had never studied before in my life (comparative religion or Victorian society and culture, for example). I talked again to Dr. Radice and asked him what he thought about a PhD on Mascaró's life and work. Needless to say, the task, though certainly less impressive, would not be substantially less demanding: at that time, I could not read and understand Catalan very well, I did not know anything about Catalan history and literature, and the first thing I associated the island of Mallorca with was tourism. Dr. Radice's answer was "yes," but, not unexpectedly, this "yes" did not come readily (and I was expecting a more energetic affirmative reaction). There were some obstacles in the way. First, there was the archive in Harris-Manchester College, Oxford, where Mascaró's English papers had been deposited, but which no one had ever ordered and catalogued. Secondly, there were Mascaró's Catalan and Spanish essays and talks which were lying in the archival collections of the municipal council of Palma de Mallorca. (When I began my research work on Mascaró, it never occurred to me that Downing College, Cambridge, where Mascaró

had taken his degree in English literature and Sanskrit in 1929, could have some of his papers and letters.) Finally, I would have to deal with Mascaró's poor reputation among scholars and Sanskritists. I had not been trained as a Sanskritist, had never studied Indian culture and history and had never done archive work in my life. I asked myself how I could write a thesis on a Catalan expatriate in England and try to assess his work in a critical, but not unsympathetic way. I seem to imply that my efforts were herculean and that I achieved something great and unique that I and my supervisor could not initially foresee, but which was finally and successfully brought to fruition. This is far from the truth. What I mean is that I had to struggle with many challenging difficulties, some of which seemed insurmountable to me, and that I am the first to acknowledge the shortcomings of my own work. In the end, we agreed – very optimistically, I would say – that most of these still unknown (otherwise, I would have probably embarked on this PhD more reluctantly) difficulties could be gradually overcome. On 8th January 2005, I left London and settled down in Oxford in order to do research on Mascaró's English papers. I had to give up my Sanskrit classes at SOAS (I would, however, resume them in September 2005) and I began to study Catalan with a Catalan-speaking teacher.

There are several reasons why I chose to write a thesis on Mascaró. I wanted to study Western appropriations of Asian literary and sacred traditions, and investigate how European and American writers or translators used them in their works and presented them to their audiences. My interest in India dates back to my student years at the university in Lisbon, and it was sparked by one of my lecturers, who had a passion for the mystical and the esoteric. In those years, I tended to associate India and Asia with spirituality, "nirvāṇa," "mokṣa" and so on. I was totally ignorant about India's rich secular and modern history, and I never took into consideration the important fact that it had been colonized by a European nation. The lives of contemporary Indians never roused my interest. A French translation of the selected works of Swami Vivekananda (I will return to him later) introduced me to a Vedantized Hinduism that

I assumed to be the true Indian religion, and superior to all others. Thus, this thesis made me discard knowledge which I had acquired when I was an undergraduate student: unlearning is a slow and often painful process, but I feel it is worth going through. My views on India have changed a great deal. As far as Mascaró is concerned, my interest in his life and work, which had never been properly studied and examined, grew enormously when I started to read his letters and realized that there was sufficient material for a doctoral dissertation. Furthermore, I wanted to share my findings in the archives in Oxford and Mallorca with those who, like me, had read and enjoyed Mascaró's translations. The bibliography accompanying the Mallorcan edition of Mascaró's letters increased my curiosity in a translator with whom I felt some cultural bond or affinity, though I knew almost nothing about Catalonia. The cultural proximity between Catalonia and Portugal also acted as an additional incentive and I did not hesitate to start working on Mascaró. Indeed, the destinies of these two small Iberian nations are intertwined. In 1640, Portugal regained, after sixty years of Castillian rule, its independence, but in the case of Catalonia, that year marked the beginning of a series of revolts against Castile, which would later incorporate Catalonia into the Spanish crown. Today, Catalonia (Balearic Islands included) is the richest autonomous region of Spain with Barcelona as its vibrant and bustling cultural and political capital. Though politicians and Catalan people in general have managed to preserve much of their nation's cultural and linguistic traditions, the region has not yet dropped its demands for more political and economic autonomy. Many think that one day Catalonia will become an independent nation-state.

As it will be seen, my thesis does not revolve around a single subject or area, and this was one of the reasons why I had to spend more than four years working on its structure and writing it. I could not have predicted in January 2005 that I would only be able to submit the PhD five years later. Yet, I had a feeling or a premonition that the whole project would eventually propel me to explore topics related to Mascaró's life and work that did not have much

in common: the educational system in Ceylon, Orientalism, translation theory, inter-faith dialogue, etc. Writing such a thesis would have certainly been a much more difficult and strenuous task had it not been for the help and support that I received from friends, family and all those I met on my "journey." In the first place, I would like to thank Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation for funding my research degree for three years and three months (without its financial support, I would not have been able to study abroad). Secondly, I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Radice, for trusting me and for supporting this project. I particularly appreciate his kindness and patience throughout these years. Thirdly, my mother Maria, grandmother Conceição and grandfather José, who died in September 2009, the month when I started to revise the thesis, have also been very important. The lives of my grandparents were very often fraught, particularly when they were young, with many difficulties and they were deprived of the opportunities and resources that I have had. This thesis would have never been written if they had not first gone through those hardships and I am thus greatly indebted to them.

In England, I received the kind assistance of Sue Killoran and Joyce Meakin, librarians at Harris-Manchester College, who gave me full access to all the library resources. I also owe a great debt to Dermot Killingley, formerly Reader in Hindu Studies at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who was always extremely patient with me. He answered all my questions and kindly commented on the two chapters I wrote on the Gita.

In Palma, the help and friendship of the historian and politician Gregori Mir, the first person who introduced me to Mallorcan culture and history, were vital. Mir suffered a severe stroke in April 2006, just two or three days before I left Palma on my second visit there. He is living at home with his wife Maria Antonia and though his mental and physical condition has improved greatly since he fell ill, he will never be able to return to his former life as a writer. I learned many interesting things about Mascaró from Gonçal López Nadal (a relative of the Mallorcan diplomat, translator and poet Guillem Nadal, whom Mascaró knew) and from An-

toni Mas, who was born in Mascaró's hometown Santa Margalida. When I was in Palma working on Mascaro's personal library, I stayed at the university hall of residence. Thanks to Dr. Avel·lí Blasco, Rector of the University of the Balearic Islands in 2005, I had full board there without paying anything. In April 2006, the Municipal Council of Santa Margalida offered to pay all my accommodation fees in the same student hall while I was carrying out research work in the municipal archives in Palma. At the university in Palma, the librarian Ana Rodriguez was very supportive. I was also lucky to have made the acquaintance of Elena Gili and Xavi Jimenez, with whom I became good friends afterwards.

Finally, I would like to mention two friends of mine, one Portuguese, the other Japanese. Dr. João Gonçalo do Amaral Cabral, the President of "House of Bragança Foundation," has always showed great concern for my postgraduate work. I have known him personally for more than eight years. I always felt more confident about my work every time I talked to him and listened to his words of encouragement. The financial help of the cultural and agricultural institution over which he presides made possible my stay in London for another seven months when my funding from Gulbenkian came to an end. Ayako Aihara, a PhD student at SOAS like me, became my best friend in England. We shared an apartment together in Temple Fortune for three years. Her intelligence and humour helped me to overcome moments of pessimism and frustration. I will always recall with particular fondness our walks in Golders Hill Park and Hampstead Heath, the films we watched and discussed together, the words we exchanged, sometimes passionately, about politics and literature, or simply the ordinary talks we had while sipping cups of Portuguese coffee.

Nuno M. C. Mourato

Vila Viçosa, Portugal

January 2010

INTRODUCTION

Each chapter of the thesis has its own introductory section and it would be impossible and pointless to try to cover all the theoretical and contextual issues, which I will discuss later and in more detail, in a five-thousand-word introduction. My main purpose here is simply to make clear the theoretical framework which informs my analysis and appraisal of Mascaró's writings. To begin with, I would like to write a pithy, introductory account of Mascaró's life. From 1931, the year he left England for Ceylon, till the mid-1940s, Mascaró had probably the most intense, overwrought period of his entire life. First comes the taxing experience abroad in a distant British colony. After his return from Ceylon, he settles down in Barcelona, where he teaches English and Sanskrit at the university. In 1935, he publishes the first direct translation of a Sanskrit text (chapter eleven of the Gita) into Catalan. In 1936, a fateful year, Mascaro witnesses the ill-omened beginnings of the Spanish Civil War in Mallorca, while spending his summer holidays in the island. In November 1936, he travels to England seeking refuge from the war after spending a few weeks in Algeria (then a French colony with a significant number of Mallorcan immigrants) where his relatives were living and working.[1] His first major translation from the Sanskrit (a selection from the main Upanishads) comes out in 1938. In this same year, Mascaró receives a letter from the Bengali writer and Nobel Prize laureate Rabindranath Tagore praising his translation. In the letter, Tagore says that he feels "grateful to you for your translation which fortunately is not strictly literal and therefore nearer to truth, and which is done in a right spirit and in a sensitive language that has caught from those great words the inner voice that goes beyond the boundaries of words."[2] In the 1940s, Mascaró participates in the Spanish services of the BBC, presents a paper on the "Hindu Classics for Eng-

[1] Mascaró decided to move to England not only because of the civil war, as his letters and Juan Maimó, his Mallorcan biographer, might lead one to believe, but also because of his desire to work in that country, where he had already lived for six years (three of which as a student at the University of Cambridge) from 1925 until 1930. It could be said that the war provided Mascaró, not with an excuse (this is a false claim), but with a justifiable reason to travel to England. The Spanish Civil War created a mass exodus of Spanish and Catalan writers and intellectuals. Mascaró was acquainted and corresponded with some of them.

[2] HMC. Tagore's letter was written in Santiniketan, Bengal, on 22nd December 1938. As it will become clear in one of the chapters later, I am critical of the use of expressions such as "right spirit" or "inner voice" when they are employed to describe translations.

lish Readers" at the Royal Society of Literature, and becomes involved in the question of Basic English, which he opposed, taking part in debates and writing articles about the topic. In October 1943, he moves from the village of Brockweir, not far from which are the ruins of the famous Tintern Abbey, to Comberton, near Cambridge, the place where he would live the rest of his life with his wife and twin children till his death on 19th March 1987. In 1958, his anthology of passages from sacred scriptures and philosophical texts, *Lamps of Fire*, is published by his friend, the great linguist and untiring scholar Francesc B. Moll (1903-1991). In the 1960s, his books *The Bhagavad Gita* and *The Upanishads* are published in the popular Penguin Classics series. *The Dhammapada*, the classical Buddhist text and Mascaró's final translation, comes out in 1973. Mascaró continues to write down his thoughts and reflections in his notebooks for several more years, but family problems and the deterioration of his physical health (he dies of Parkinson's disease) do not permit him to work on any publication. *The Creation of Faith*, a collection of passages from Mascaró's diaries and notebooks selected with the help of his wife Kathleen (née Ellis) and arranged by William Radice, is published posthumously in 1993. An almost complete list of Mascaró's writings is given in the bibliographical section and there is thus no need to enumerate all of them in the introduction.

Though he was born in a small Mediterranean island, Mascaró's life was always inextricably linked to England. It was his love of England that somehow stirred him to leave Mallorca in 1936 and even attempt (unsuccessfully) to obtain British citizenship four years later.[3] His work as a clerk and interpreter in the British Consulate in Palma during World War I, his education at the University of Cambridge in the 1920s, and his colonial experience in Ceylon

[3] In a letter to the Ministry of Labour and National Service (dated 14th December 1940), in which he expresses his willingness to offer his services to H. M. Government in time of war, Mascaró sums up his relationship with England in the following terms: "Perhaps I should state that my record of friendship with this country, the country of my adoption, is a long one. After leaving the High School of Commerce in my native Island of Mallorca, I became for four years Secretary to H.B.M. Consul in the Island. Since then I have either been carrying on University studies or engaged in literary work in this country, or engaged in the spreading of British culture abroad as a teacher of English language and literature. I was Vice-Principal for two years of Parameshwara College at Jaffna, Ceylon, and then for four years Director and organizer of English studies at the University of Barcelona and at the model Teachers Training College and Secondary School" (HMC).

connect him indirectly, but by no means cursorily, with a country that ruled vast areas of the world. It is impossible to consider Mascaró's views on the education of Ceylonese people, his interpretation and translation of the Gita, or his interest in the inter-faith dialogue without the historical phenomenon of imperialism in mind. The five chapters which comprise the bulk of the thesis are all held together by the idea that Mascaró's writings cannot be properly understood and evaluated without taking into consideration Europe's hegemonic place in the world and its claims to economic, cultural and military domination over non-Western territories and peoples. The cultures and religions of the colonized countries have always been the object of an intense European curiosity and their influence on Western writers, artists and thinkers cannot be disputed. Mascaró's interests, as well as the interests of those who turned enthusiastically to Eastern religions and spiritual traditions in search of novel alternatives that could impart a note of harmony and hope to the political instability, wars and industrialization of their own societies, are inseparable from the colonial project, which, as is too well know, repressed the racial, cultural and historical difference of colonized peoples. Eric Hobsbawm points out that the Age of Empire "was not only an economic and political but a cultural phenomenon."[4] Therefore, even in the deeply Catholic and traditional society of Mallorca, a deficient Spanish translation of the Gita was able to arouse in a young and inquisitive adolescent a longing for distant, Eastern expressions of spirituality which could bestow a new meaning and transcendence upon what was probably an uninspiring religious routine. Significantly, it was the Gita that drew Mascaró towards the Bible and later to mysticism. As Hobsbawm says, "Imperialism brought a notable rise in the western interest in, and sometimes the western conversion to, forms of spirituality derived from the orient, or claiming to be so derived."[5] Colonialism was responsible for the global meeting and mingling of cultures, but this does not signify that the unequal power relationships between colonized and colonizer have disappeared. On the con-

[4] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914* (1987; London: Abacus-Warner, 1994) 76.
[5] Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire* 81.

trary, they tenaciously persist in today's world and preclude a more just and wholesome interaction between Western countries and their former colonies. One of the aims of the academic discipline and theoretical field known as "postcolonial studies" – the subject of the next paragraph – is precisely to contest the colonial structures of domination and the historically constructed social hierarchies which have relegated some peoples of the world to a subordinate position. It is worth citing the words of the Palestinian writer and scholar Edward W. Said:

> One of imperialism's achievements was to bring the world closer together and, although in the process the separation between Europeans and natives was an insidious and fundamentally unjust one, most of us should now regard the historical experience of empire as a common one. The task then is to describe it as pertaining to Indians *and* Britishers, Algerians *and* French, Westerners *and* Africans, Asians, Latin Americans, and Australians despite the horrors, the bloodshed, and the vengeful bitterness.[6]

Before providing a definition of the term "postcolonialism," it is first important to say what colonialism is. Colonialism is, to put it simply, a system of exploitation in which a nation (generally a European one) seeks to extend its political and economic control over other territories. The invaded country is forced to comply with the invading power which wants to use and manipulate the human and material resources of the people it has subdued by force of arms. In order to achieve that, the conquering country eradicates native resistance, imposes its rule and deprives the subjugated people of their freedom. "Postcolonialism" refers to the period after the dissolution of European empires and designates a set of theoretical approaches whose main purpose is to analyse the political, social and cultural effects and implications of colonialism in colonized countries. According to Leela Gandhi, the theoretical value of post-

[6] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993; London: Vintage, 1994) xxiv. Mascaró was never an outspoken supporter of colonialism, but he had a good opinion of the British Empire. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Spain was the most powerful imperial nation in the world and Mallorcans like the Franciscan friar and missionary Juníper Serra (1713-1784) were actively involved in the proselytization of Native Americans in California. Serra established the first settlement (the "Mission San Gabriel Arcángel") in the city now known as Los Angeles. In 1898 (one year after Mascaró was born), Spain relinquished its colonial control over three important overseas territories: Cuba, the Philippines and Puerto Rico. The northern part of Morocco was a Spanish Protectorate (the rest of the country was controlled by France) and it only become independent in 1956. The (Western) Sahara remained Spanish till 1975, when it was handed over to Morocco and Mauritania. It is impossible to determine to what extent the Spanish Empire (to which Mascaró never refers in his papers) had a direct bearing on his views on British imperialism. In some of his letters, Mascaró mentions the physical and psychological sufferings his parents and brothers went through when the farming lands they had in Algeria were plundered and later confiscated by Algerian revolutionaries. From 1954 to 1962 (the year Algeria gained its independence), France waged a ferocious war against the Algerian nationalists. Mascaró was, needless to say, well aware of all this.

colonialism resides in its therapeutic potential. She argues that postcolonialism "can be seen as a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath. It is a disciplinary project devoted to the academic task of revisiting, remembering and, crucially, interrogating the colonial past."[7] I am aware of the controversy that the word "postcolonialism" has generated, but it is beyond the scope of this introduction to examine its contentious history or define other terms which are associated with it, such as the condition known as "postcoloniality." I think it will be more useful to leave this matter aside and consider instead the goals of the so-called "postcolonial theory," to which I am indebted. Postcolonial theory is an interdisciplinary area of studies which attempts to rethink and reform the epistemological structure of the human sciences, a structure built upon Western cultural models which have became globally hegemonic as an outcome of the historical fact of colonialism. It seeks thus to give voice to those who have traditionally been rendered voiceless by the intellectual and epistemological exclusions of the Western academy. Thomas Babington Macaulay's infamous 1835 minute concerning the introduction of English education in colonial India is paradigmatic in this respect. Even though he did not know a word of Sanskrit, the English historian and politician did not feel ashamed to declare that all the information gathered in the Sanskrit language was "less valuable than what may be found in the paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England."[8] Postcolonial studies challenge the prevailing and canonical knowledge systems, and the entrenched and elitist views of those who, like Macaulay, do not concede that there is historical and cultural value in the non-Western world.

Postcolonial theory draws upon a variety of disciplines and theories. The most important ones are Marxism and poststructuralism. While Marxism provides a platform for a critique of social unjust practices perpetrated by Western powers upon the peoples of Asia and

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[7] Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1998) 4. I learned a lot from Gandhi's work. It is one of the best (if not the best) available introductions to postcolonial studies.
[8] Cited in Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory* 30.

Africa, poststructuralist thought is used to reveal the inconsistencies and expose the violence of Western philosophical discourse. Poststructuralism is extremely valuable because it helps postcolonial theory to unmask the hidden ideological agenda of Western rationality and philosophical traditions and their hostility towards and negation of the "other." I have mentioned poststructuralism, but I must confess that I have never studied the writings of such poststructuralist luminaries as Jean-François Lyotard (1924-1998) or Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). In fact, my knowledge of these and other authors – I am not, however, as ignorant about Michel Foucault (1926-1984) as I am about Lyotard and Derrida – derives primarily from secondary sources. What I found particularly interesting in poststructuralism (I am, needless to say, simplifying enormously the whole philosophical movement) is its rejection of the narcissistic and all-knowing subject of the Enlightenment philosophical tradition, as well as its deconstruction of Western (universal and prescriptive) notions of "rationality" or "human nature." Postcolonial theory's alignment with poststructuralism has allowed the latter to mount a critique of the arrogant anthropocentrism that has informed Western modes of thought and paved the way to the destruction of civilizations deemed inferior, "primitive" or less rational. Foucault's analysis of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant's article "What is Enlightenment?" (1784) illustrates this point. In Kant's view, Enlightenment is the act of leaving behind a condition of immaturity in which the individual is incapable of using his own mental faculties. The French philosopher demonstrates how an ostensibly neutral conception of "maturity" is imbued with ideological concerns and claims. He questions and historicizes Kant's account of "mankind" and argues that the transition from immaturity to maturity does not apply to the entire human race, as the eighteenth-century thinker suggests in his essay. Instead of being understood as a historical change with worldwide social and political consequences, Enlightenment should be construed as involving "a change affecting what constitutes the humanity of human beings."[9]

[9] Foucault's "What is Enlightenment?" (1984), quoted in Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory* 31.

According to Foucault, Kant is not so much describing "mankind" as stating what it ought to be, since he identifies it with the acquisition of adult rationality. Such a line of thought suggests – from a postcolonial studies viewpoint – that not all human beings deserve to be called "human," that there are some human beings more human than others. The "non-human" (the colonised "other," for instance) is either not accepted or compelled to yield to the violence of European rationality; hence the colonial dichotomies "mature/immature," "civilized/barbaric" or "advanced/primitive." In brief, poststructuralism has helped me to realize that the universalism propagated within the Western intellectual tradition is actually a particularism that excludes the possibility of difference and imposes a certain idea of the "human" on an exceedingly diverse humanity.[10]

Edward W. Said's postcolonial classic *Orientalism*[11] constitutes a foundational contribution to postcolonial theory. It has had a great impact on Western academy and stands out as a seminal work that, though subject to harsh criticism, has nevertheless managed to maintain much of its political relevance and theoretical vitality. Much has been written on Said's book and synopsises of his concept of "Orientalism" can be found in any introductory book to literary theory or postcolonial studies. Said's principal claim is that the knowledge produced by the Orientalists legitimized and stimulated Europe's territorial expansion in the East. There is thus a mutually supporting relationship between power and knowledge in the colonial context which transformed the Orient into an object of Western imperialist aggression. Said attributes three meanings to Orientalism, all of them interrelated. First, it refers to the scholarly or academic study of the Orient: "Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient – and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist – either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist (...)."[12] Mascaró can be included in

[10] I must say that I am not in any way defending a relativism that accepts all claims to truth as equally valid.
[11] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (1978; London: Penguin, 1995).
[12] Said, *Orientalism* 2.

the group of those whom Said identifies as Orientalists, since he learned Sanskrit, studied it at the university and translated works composed in that classical Asian language. Secondly, and in a more general sense, Said defines Orientalism as "a style of thought" grounded in an ontological and epistemological distinction between "the Orient" and "the Occident."[13] Following Foucault, Said classifies Orientalism as a discourse. In this third meaning, Orientalism is seen as "the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views about it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."[14] According to Foucault, a discourse is a series of statements or propositions which possess institutional force and are classified as knowledge; these are regulated by a set of rules and practices which govern their production and delimit what can be thought, said or written about a particular subject. It is a system which structures the way reality is perceived and controls people's thinking and the way they represent the world around them. Sara Mills points out that "there is no intrinsic order to the world itself other than the ordering which we impose on it through our linguistic description of it."[15] Said claims that the East, which could only be thought or imagined within certain discursive parameters, was invariably represented in terms that denigrated the peoples who lived there. Orientalist discourse produced sweeping generalizations (presented as facts or objective knowledge, though they were actually value-laden) about Orientals: "the inscrutable Chinese, the untrustworthy Arab, the docile Hindu," etc.[16] This Orientalist stereotyping of the East legitimized the establishment of Western colonial rule and confirmed the superiority of the West over an inarticulate and inferior East.

It is often said that the value of *Orientalism* lies not so much in its theoretical consistency or historical accuracy, but in the fact that it initiated a lively and often heated debate on

[13] Said, *Orientalism* 2.
[14] Said, *Orientalism* 3.
[15] Sara Mills, *Discourse*, 2nd. ed., The New Critical Idiom (London: Routledge, 2004) 47.
[16] Mills 97.

the relationship and complicity between colonialism and the production of knowledge. While Orientalists (Mascaró would be one of them) consider their profession a perfectly honest and innocuous field of studies, Said extends the meaning of the term "Orientalism," describing it in pejorative terms, that is, as a powerful discursive system responsible for the dissemination of (constructed) prejudices and assumptions about Eastern peoples. This was one of the main reasons why *Orientalism* was not well received by Orientalists, for whom their scholarly activities were not informed by any desire to master or control the East. It is absolutely impossible to review or summarize the most important responses to Said's work or the books and articles that have been written which discuss, contest, clarify or expand his thesis. I have read a few of them,[17] and though I agree with some of the criticisms that have been levelled against Said's book, there are others which seem to me groundless and even malicious.[18] One of the most frequent is that Said ignores the role played by the colonized in his or her interactions with the dominant Western culture, and the positive ways in which those who were ruled appropriated Orientalist conceptions to counter colonialism and assert their cultural uniqueness *vis-à-vis* the West.[19] I do not think this type of argument is very convincing since it suggests that Europeans can be oppressors and at the same time and unintentionally provide the means for the elimination of oppression. Richard King stresses that "in representing the Orient as the essentialized and stereotypical 'Other' of the West, the heterogeneity and complexity of both

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[17] A sympathetic, but not uncritical assessment of Said's *Orientalism* can be found in Richard King's *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and "the Mystic East"* (London: Routledge, 1999) 82-95.

[18] I have in mind Robert Irwin's *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and their Enemies* (2006; London: Penguin, 2007). Irwin's book adds nothing relevant to the debate over the question of Orientalism, but he is terribly harsh on Said. What I find particularly problematic in this book is the fact that Irwin imagines himself impartial (unlike, for instance, Said). In fact, he is so impartial that he does not see anything wrong in using the works of the American Daniel Pipes, a Zionist and anti-Arab propagandist, when discussing Islam (Irwin 317). Yet, he is, among other things, a student of Arab culture and history, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and a Senior Research Associate at SOAS.

[19] In "East of Said," *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*, ed. Michael Sprinker (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992) 144-56, Richard Fox discusses what he calls "affirmative Orientalism" and argues that Mahatma Gandhi's moral and political campaign against modern Western society drew upon the Orientalist image of India as a "Wisdomland of spirituality and anti-materialism" (Fox 151).

Oriental and Occidental remained silenced."[20] The argument that East and West are more diverse than Said admits in *Orientalism* diverts attention from colonialism as a world-historical process and system of domination which is still affecting the lives of many people in palpable ways. The result is that one finds articles and books written about the complicity of the native with the colonizer, the "hybridity" of the colonial subject, or the ambivalence of the Orientalist discourse. This is, in my view, a defensive attitude on the part of certain postcolonial theorists. Leela Gandhi observes that Said ends up creating other stereotypes (the racist Westerner, for instance) in *Orientalism*, and stresses that one should crucially "refuse the pleasures of an Occidental stereotype."[21] This seems obvious to me, but I doubt if there is any merit in such a point. Probably it is as irrelevant as to say that not everyone in Europe is a racist when racism is a pervasive, institutionalized phenomenon in Western societies.

Mascaró is best known for his Penguin translations and most (if not all) of his readers in England and in the United States are not familiar with his other writings (letters, short articles, etc) and publications (not only in English, but also, and above all, in Catalan and Spanish). One of the aims of this thesis is to fill this gap and explore other facets of Mascaró's life and work. All the books and articles written about Mascaró are in Catalan and were published in Mallorca, and it is impossible to find them in England (the British Library has only two of his works in Catalan). I had to buy them in Mallorca when I was there in September 2005 and April 2006. When I started to work on the thesis, I thought there was nothing written on Mascaró in English, but I was mistaken. In "The Song Celestial: Two Centuries of the *Bhagavad Gītā* in English" (1981), the American scholar Gerald James Larson looks at different translations of the Gita and devotes several paragraphs of his article (as many as he devotes to other more widely known and scholarly editions of that Sanskrit text) to analysing Mascaró's version for Penguin Classics. The translator of Sanskrit literature W. J. Johnson also makes some

[20] King, *Orientalism and Religion* 86.
[21] Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory* 79.

observations about Mascaró's translation in his "Making Sanskritic or Making Strange? How Should We Translate Classical Hindu Texts?" (2005).[22] In Catalan, the indispensable primary source is Gregori Mir's two-volume edition of Mascaró's Catalan and Spanish letters *Correspondència de Juan Mascaró (1930-1986)*, published in 1998. Gonçal López Nadal and Antoni Mas edited together *Juan Mascaró i Fornés (1897-1987)*; the book contains a useful selection of Mascaró's essays and talks, scholarly articles about Mascaró's translations and political views, as well as other writings of a more personal nature by Mascaró's Mallorcan and British friends. Mir's *Diàlegs Amb L'Índia* (2002) assembles in one single volume Mascaró's writings on Indian sacred texts, preceded by an informative introduction by Mir himself. The Mallorcan writer Juan Maimó published two biographies of Mascaró, namely, *Mascaró: Trobador de la Llum, de L'Amor i de la Vida* (1985) and *Juan Mascaró i Fornés: Els Múltiples Espais de la Saviesa* (1990). I found several inaccuracies in Maimó's two works, but they are essential reading. The last article on Mascaró seems to have been written by Gregori Mir and was published in 2006. Mir gave me a photocopy of "Juan Mascaró: Mundialització i Identitat Nacional" when I was in Palma, but only in July 2009, on my first visit to Barcelona, did I have the chance to acquire *Sobre Nacionalisme i Nacionalistes a Mallorca*, the book in which this particular article is included.[23] The Mallorcan Juan Miquel Mut Garcia wrote a PhD thesis on Mascaró in 2003 with the title "El Ioga de Juan Mascaró i Fornés" ("The Yoga of Juan Mascaró i Fornés"). I had a look at this work in 2005, but I am not in any way indebted to it; Mut Garcia's approach to Mascaró is completely different from mine.[24] Although I have read

[22] The complete bibliographic details of these and the other (Catalan) works cited in this paragraph can be found in the bibliography at the end of the thesis.

[23] More recently (in October 2009), I came across and bought a beautiful hardback edition of Mascaró's anthology *Lamps of Fire* (*Lámparas de Fuego*) in a bookshop in Badajoz, a Spanish city not very far from where I live in southern Portugal. Mascaró's most important English works have all been translated into Catalan and Spanish.

[24] In the abstract, Mut Garcia writes that the "the main interest of [his] thesis is Mascaró's vital attitude towards spirituality and Yoga as a tool to gain access to the apprehension of the spiritual Truth." Garcia's main goal is to show that Mascaró was a yogi (Garcia 4). As far as I know, he never looked at Mascaró's archive in Oxford; he only used the Catalan and English sources with were available to him in Mallorca.

almost, if not all, the books and articles in which there are at least two or three paragraphs on Mascaró, I have only cited those which I considered relevant to my thesis.

I remember that in my first year as a PhD student, I was told two or three times that I tended to take sides with Mascaró and should therefore try to assess his work in a more even-handed way. Initially, I was reluctant to accept that point; maybe, I tried to reassure myself, they do not like Mascaró's translations from the Sanskrit, which is in fact the only thing they know about him. I started to read about Orientalism and the history of India under the British Raj, Vedānta and other schools of Indian philosophy, and I gradually moved in the direction of a much more scholarly and sober approach to the object of my research. I also came to realize that their criticisms were not unfounded. Though I have not written much about it, Mascaró's translation of the Upanishads is, in my opinion, one of the best translations available. It is not a perfect translation (just as the Gita and the Dhammapada are not perfect translations) and it contains what more conservative translators would describe as inaccuracies or mistakes. Yet, I often open the book at random and find a passage that moves me, unlike other translations of the same text. But in a PhD thesis one cannot simply put forward one's impressions of a particular topic or author. What I mean is that it is not enough to read the Upanishads or the Gita at home and in a moment of leisure and discover, often without any critical reflection, there is something in them which can give purpose and meaning to one's life. This is all obvious to me now, but it was not five years ago. I would just like to add that in the process of writing a doctoral thesis, one learns as much about oneself as about what one is studying. The only thesis worth writing is, in my view, that which is able to transform and challenge its author, shatter his or her initial convictions and presuppositions; it must be an eye-opener. If after completing the thesis, the student still thinks as he or she thought four or five years before, the thesis can only be treated as a sham.

COLONIALISM AND EDUCATION IN CEYLON

INTRODUCTION

Three months before leaving the island of Ceylon (renamed Sri Lanka in 1972) in the last week of December 1932, Mascaró wrote to H. C. Whalley-Tooker,[1] notifying him that he would not be able to take his M.A. in January 1933, and that he would alternatively send the fees and take it by proxy. The letter, written in Jaffna on 20th September 1932, is particularly illuminating, since Mascaró not only informs Whalley-Tooker about his plans for the future, but also about his disenchantment with the Asian country where he had been staying:

> It was very kind of you to tell me that I might have rooms in College if I came to Cambridge. I hope I may some day. My post here extends until July next, although if I found a post in an English or Spanish University for October 1933, I might come before that time. In any case I hope to pay a visit to Cambridge some time next year.
> I am very tired of being in Ceylon and only financial considerations keep me here. I shall love Europe much more after being in the East. With very few exceptions, I am convinced now of the superiority of Europe over Asia in thought, emotion and action, and also in spirituality. But they have some values that are interesting to study. I have been doing a little more Sanskrit. When Indian politicians say that the English like to be in India, I feel they are wrong. I cannot imagine a European in India not feeling that he is an exile, and not longing to come back to Europe. But many missionaries stay here all their lives, never to be thanked in many cases.[2]

While still teaching at Parameshwara College (Mascaró was supposed to stay in the college till July 1933, but he resigned in December 1932), the University of Barcelona offered him a post as lecturer in English. Writing from his Jaffna College on 8th November 1932, Mascaró tells Whalley-Tooker that he "shall be extremely pleased to be in Europe again;" he contemplates the idea of taking "a PhD at Madrid University," and has the "ambition to come as a lecturer in Spanish at Cambridge for two years in a few years' time" (the outbreak of the war in Spain would eventually hasten his departure to England in 1936).[3] Indeed, the time Mascaró spent in Ceylon had not been an enjoyable or memorable one. While he was staying at the college, an incident took place (the actual causes are unclear) that compelled him to leave the island before his contract expired. However, as the letter cited above shows, this was not the

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[1] Hyde Charnock Whalley-Tooker (1900-1992) was a Fellow of Downing College (Cambridge University) from 1927 to 1967, and Emeritus Fellow from 1967 till his death. I owe this information to the Downing College archivist, Ms. Sarah Westwood, who kindly sent it to me.
[2] DCA.
[3] DCA.

one and only motive behind Mascaró's premature departure. Although I did not come across any letter or document explaining what actually happened, the episode in which Mascaró became involved seems to have undermined his reputation at Parameshwara College. I will give more details about the topic later in this chapter.

Interestingly, Mascaró's letter to Whalley-Tooker differs significantly from the one he sent to J. H. Widdicombe two weeks after his arrival in the city of Colombo on 24th January 1931.[4] Mascaró's expectations are high in the first weeks: the pleasant company of his Ceylonese friends, the generous remuneration, the opportunity of improving his knowledge of Sanskrit with a local pandit and the prospect of learning a new language could only make his stay in the British colony an enjoyable and rewarding experience. The spiritual traditions of Hinduism, which Mascaró most likely thought were readily available in the island as the translations of Sanskrit texts in European bookshelves, were also in his mind:[5]

> Here am I at this place in the North of the island about a mile from the town of Jaffna. I have not seen a single European yet since I left Colombo; but my Indian friends are kindness itself, and at the College I am treated with great respect and affection.
> I am giving a few talks on English literature to the more advanced students. This takes me some 2 ½ hours a day some five days a week, but as there is a very good salary attached to the post I may stay here some time. There is besides a Sanskrit Pandit who can speak Sanskrit fluently and I hope to do some work with him. Unfortunately Tamil is not a Sanskrit language, but as it is spoken by some twenty million people of South India and it seems to possess a very fine literature I may be tempted to learn it. I am also in very good circumstances to study Hindu spirituality as it is living at the present time.[6]

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[4] James Henry Widdicombe (1871-1938), also a Fellow of Downing College, was Senior Tutor (college officer responsible for college teaching and discipline) from 1911 to 1931, and Senior Proctor (University disciplinary officer) in 1908. I am again indebted to Ms. Sarah Westwood for this information.

[5] Many writers, contemporaries of Mascaró, felt attracted to the East and undertook journeys to India and other Asian countries in search of religious teachers or gurus, who in turn became world-famous. Paul Brunton (1898-1981), the first European to introduce the South Indian ascetic Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950) to the West, is a case in point. The Englishman Richard Nixon (1898- 1965), known as Sri Krishna Prem, the Dutch-born Cornelius Heijblom or Swami Atulananda (1870-1966), and the French scholar and musician Alain Daniélou (1907-1994) are three examples of European "converts" to Hinduism. I am not suggesting that Mascaró was interested in the spiritual journeys and in the works written by Western seekers such as Brunton, author of the well-known book *A Search in Secret India* (1934). However, as the letter indicates, Mascaró did not travel from England to a remote part of Ceylon only for a teaching position at a Hindu college. It is worth pointing out that the foreword to Brunton's work was written by Sir Francis Younghusband, with whom Mascaró was acquainted. I will return to Sir Francis in the last chapter of the thesis. Harry Oldmeadow writes about Western seekers and their experiences in India in his *Journeys East: 20th Century Western Encounters with Eastern Religious Traditions*, fwd. Huston Smith (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2004) 63-94.

[6] DCA. The letter was written on 10th February 1931.

Mascaró's meeting with the Tamil politician Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan (the founder of the Parameshwara College) in Cambridge in 1930, the year before his departure to Ceylon, could have also stimulated his interest in Hindu spirituality. If there was an earnest or pre-meditated quest for Hindu spirituality, it was never successful: it simply melted away, though it is impossible to say exactly when Mascaró started to feel dejected and yearned to return to Europe. The only letters I was able to trace were those he wrote to his university friends and those that Millicent Mackenzie wrote to him from England. The other source of information is Mascaró's biographer and close friend, Juan Maimó i Vadell. In the two books he wrote on Mascaró's life, the Mallorcan writer affirms that Mascaró embarked on a voyage to Ceylon in order to become acquainted with the spiritual values and traditions of the Orient. The Bhagavadgita[7] also seems to have had a considerable weight in his decision to travel to Ceylon. In one of his diary entries, Mascaró makes a reference to the copy of the Gita that Ponnambalam Ramanathan had offered him in 1930:

> Yesterday morning I got up very early and walked in the silence of the morning to the chestnut tree by the lane that leads uphill to the church. It was a radiantly clear sunny morning and there was a wonderful silence in the air. As it was about 7 o'clock the infernal noise of planes had not begun yet. I took the copy of the Sanskrit Gita that Ramanathan gave me in 1930 and read several verses. The verses seemed to me the seeds of life. I don't think I ever remember reading them with a deeper feeling of their inner meaning."[8]

As Maimó stresses in *Juan Mascaró: Trobador de la Llum, de l'Amor i de la Vida*, "His love for the Bhagavad Gita continues and he feels, deep in his heart, the spiritual and humane values of the Orient and in search of the Orientalist ideal, leaves for the island of Ceylon in the following year as 'Vice-Principal' and Director of English Studies at Parameshwara College (...)."[9] Likewise, in his second biography, *Joan Mascaró i Fornés: Els Múltiples Espais de la Saviesa,* Maimó points out that Mascaró's position as Vice-Principal of Parameshwara College unexpectedly opened a new path in his life: thus, "After having achieved his great ambi-

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[7] Henceforth I will use the abbreviated form "Gita."

[8] HMC. The passage was written on 28th June 1956.

[9] Juan Maimó i Vadell, *Juan Mascaró: Trobador de la Llum, de l'Amor i de la Vida* (Santa Margalida: Ajuntament de Santa Margalida, 1985) 12-14.

tion of experiencing the culture of the university, the opportunity arises for him to search into the spiritual traditions of India and enjoy at the same time the beauty of life."[10] In Mascaró's own words: "My ideal of culture had been taking form little by little, but reading and writing were only the precepts of a much more important reading: because, in order to read the book of life, it is necessary to comprehend the book of men."[11] Mascaró felt the impulse to see the East with his own eyes, observe the religious traditions of an Asian country as he had envisaged them in Europe, as well as to learn directly from the native people (the Hindu pandit, for instance). Although he was deeply immersed in the politics of his native island, Ramanathan was also engaged in scholarly work,[12] and Mascaró must have also taken this aspect into consideration. Hence when he asked Mascaró if he wanted to join his college, the Mallorcan "accepted the proposal full of illusion. (...) On board the English liner Orones, he undertook the journey in search of the Orientalist ideal."[13] Maimó also discusses Mascaró's frustration with the East and his inability to adapt to new and unfamiliar surroundings. Mascaró's biographer quotes a letter in which Mascaró expresses his unwillingness to remain in the island because he could not devote time to his own studies (it seems that the local pandit and the Tamil language were no longer part of his priorities). His work with students and his teaching obligations did not permit it. As Mascaró writes, "It is interesting, but at the moment I do not have the opportunity to develop my activities here as I would like to and I will think about coming to Spain or travelling to England."[14] Bound to the routine of school duties, tied to what might have been a monotonous life in Jaffna, and faced with limited intellectual inducements, Mascaró even renewed his interest in hypnotism.[15]

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[10] Juan Maimó i Vadell, *Juan Mascaró i Fornés: Els Múltiples Espais de la Saviesa* (Palma: Universitat de les Illes Baleares, 1990) 41.
[11] Maimó, *Múltiples Espais* 41. Maimó does not refer to the source of the quotation, but it is not unlikely that he copied it from one Mascaró's letters to him.
[12] His translation of the Gita into Tamil came out in 1914. I will write more about it in the next section.
[13] Maimó, *Múltiples Espais* 41.
[14] Maimó, *Múltiples Espais* 42-43. Maimó fails to mention the source of the letter again.
[15] "Finding himself unable to enjoy the cultural life that he desired, he feels discouraged and starts to read again works on hypnotism" (Maimó, *Múltiples Espais* 43). Maimó observes that Mascaró felt the need for "a positive

In short, Mascaró felt at odds in a place he was not prepared to live in. In the letters he wrote on board the Japanese ship "Katori Maru" – which took him back to Europe in January 1933 – Mascaró declares his great relief on leaving the island (I will look at these writings in the last section), but I think this is understandable. Unlike British civil servants, colonialists and missionaries – who had run the Empire for centuries and who were used to the hardships of living in hot climates with peoples, cultures and religions they were more or less familiar with – Mascaró was a complete outsider, unprepared and inexperienced. He could not have foreseen the tribulations and difficulties of living in an isolated part of Ceylon and away from the European amenities. As Maimó states, "Mascaró felt lonely, he did not have men of his own rank with whom he could exchange ideas and, apart from the surroundings, the climate was not very suitable to him as well. As a Mediterranean man used to northern temperatures, the hot proximity of the equator forced him to wear the clothes of the people from the country: the white tunic which is so characteristic of the Hindus."[16] But Mascaró also contradicts himself. In his letter to Whalley-Tooker, he concedes that he was in fact mistaken about Ceylon and his words are clear in that respect: he says that he is "convinced now" ("with very few exceptions" though) that Europe surpasses the East (even in spirituality!). Yet, in his BBC talks, broadcast ten years later, Mascaró does not make any allusion to his personal experiences in Asia, and most importantly, he depicts the East as essentially spiritual and static, and contrasts it with Europe, where materialism is the defining and dominant element. Mas-

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auto-suggestion, because the college had economic problems, and he found himself all alone and outside a great culture" (Maimó, *Múltiples Espais* 44). When I was doing research work at Harris-Manchester College library, I came across several envelopes that contained photos of Mascaró conducting his experiments on hypnotism in Jaffna. All the hypnotics looked young, and they could well be Mascaró's own students. Mascaró refers briefly to his practice of hypnotism in Ceylon in a letter to one of his former students at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Maria Solà de Sellarés. He tells her that "On page 39 and 40 of the Introduction to my *Upanishads* I talk a little about Hypnotism and thought transmission. But I did not talk about it superficially. Without saying it in public, obviously, I was thinking that I had practiced hypnotism in Ceylon and in Barcelona as well, and that I had practiced thought transmission with absolute success." This passage is taken from Gregori Mir, ed., *Correspondència de Juan Mascaró (1930-1986)*, vol. 2 (Mallorca: Moll, 1998) 229. Mascaró had a copy of the second edition of Hugh Edward Wingfield's *An Introduction to the Study of Hypnotism, Experimental and Therapeutic* (1920) in his personal library. It was signed "Juan Mascaró, Ceylon."

[16] Maimó, *Múltiples Espais* 43.

caró was not particularly interested in the contemporary political situation in India or Ceylon. Indeed, he considered British rule in Ceylon beneficial. Even though his experiences in Ceylon failed to correspond to his original expectations, he could always select and single out, as he tells Whalley-Tooker, "those values" that were relevant to his own field of studies. In the next section, I would like to draw attention to the life of the only person who could have possibly acted as Mascaró's mentor in the island: Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan. Unfortunately, when Mascaró landed in Colombo, he was unexpectedly informed that the aged Tamil politician had passed away while he was still in England.[17]

SIR P. RAMANATHAN AND PARAMESHWARA COLLEGE

Ponnambalam Ramanathan (1851-1930) was born into a prestigious and influential Tamil family from Ceylon.[18] His maternal grandfather, Arumuganathapillai Coomaraswamy Mudaliyar, was the first Tamil member of the Legislative Council, established in 1833. The Council was initially constituted of nine official members and six non-official members. The latter, formed by representatives of the Sinhalese, Tamil, Burgher and European communities, were nominated by the governor, whose legislative programme they discussed. In 1862, the Tamil seat was occupied by Coomaraswamy's son Muthu Coomaraswamy. He spent long periods in England, neglecting his role as a Legislative Councillor. According to Sir Ponnambalam's biographer, Muthu Coomaraswamy's erudition, eloquence and charming personality "opened up for him the homes of the elite of English society."[19] He was a close friend of the

[17] Not everything was bad in Ceylon. Writing to one of his Indian friends, who had invited him to stay as a guest in his house in Madras, Mascaró states: "I was two years in Ceylon, but very long ago. It was in 1931 and 1932. There at Kandy I met Pandit Nehru, his wife, and their girl of about 16, now Mrs. Pandit Nehru [sic], the Prime Minister. I only went to South India for two days to see the great temple of Tanjore. Have you seen it? We feel the Infinite so deeply in the greatness of those temples. But all this is a dream. Nothing may come out of it, so think that I may never come." The letter to S. R. Devaraj (the name of the addressee) was written on 9th January 1975, and is in HMC.

[18] I have relied chiefly on M. Vythilingam's work *The Life of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan*, 2 vols. (Colombo: Ramanathan Commemoration Society, 1971-77). This biography is distinctly hagiographic, but it was the only one I could find and without it I could not have written this chapter.

[19] Vythilingam, vol. 1, 119.

British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli and other Victorian personalities. In one of his lectures on Indian philosophy, he met an Englishwoman, Elizabeth Beeby, whom he married. The distinguished scholar, art critic and interpreter of Indian culture to the West, Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), was their son. Coomaraswamy's successor in the Legislative Council was his nephew Ponnambalam Ramanathan (from 1879 to 1892). Ramanathan's brother, Ponnambalam Arunachalam (1853-1924), was one of the first Ceylonese to enter the Ceylon Civil Service, as well as one of the leading founders of the Ceylon National Congress, (he was its first president in 1919). Arunachalam received his knighthood for his services to the country in 1913 (his brother Ramanathan would obtain it later in 1923). Edward Carpenter (1844-1929), the English writer, met him in Cambridge in the 1870s and the two men became good friends. It was Ramanathan's brother who encouraged Carpenter to travel to Ceylon after his meeting with Ramaswamy (or "Ilakkanam, the Grammarian"), the South Indian guru to whom Arunachalam had become greatly attached.[20] In a letter to Carpenter dated 18th November 1888, he writes: "So come out to the East and seek the truth. You must work out your own evolution with the zeal of a hero and you will see the truth when you are ripe for it."[21] I wonder if Ramanathan was to Mascaró what his brother Arunachalam had been to Carpenter. He could well have persuaded him to make a journey to Ceylon in order to receive instruction in the spiritual traditions of his native island. Actually, in "Impressions of Ceylon," Mascaró states that the invitation to travel to Ceylon came from Sir Ponnambalam himself, and his biographer writes that the Ceylonese politician not only asked Mascaró to teach

[20] In *A Spiritual Bloomsbury: Hinduism and Homosexuality in the Lives and Writings of Edward Carpenter, E. M. Forster, and Christopher Isherwood* (Lanham, MD: Lexington-Rowman, 2006) 43, Antony Copley suggests that Arunachalam met Ramaswamy during a pilgrimage he made to Tanjore in 1888. Ramanathan's biographer, M. Vythilingam, gives a different account of the story. He asserts that Arulparanandha Swamigal, a swami from Tanjore, paid a visit to Ramanathan at his home in Colombo and that Ramanathan became his devoted disciple. Afterwards, Ramanathan summoned his brother Arunachalam and told him to accept Swamigal as his own guru too: "The two brothers betook themselves to an impassioned study of religion and philosophy and the practice of yogic meditation under the enlightened direction of their teacher" (Vythilingam, vol. 1, 329). Vythilingam also observes that "Arunachalam's letters to Edward Carpenter abound in ecstatic and laudatory references to this religious teacher. The great Englishman became so far enamoured of him from all that he had heard of him that he journeyed to Ceylon to see him in person and partake of his spiritual repast" (Vythilingam, vol. 1, 330).

[21] Copley 44.

at Parameshwara College, but wanted Mascaró to learn yoga from him ("aprende ioga d'ell"). Maimó also says that Ramanathan sought Mascaró's help for his commentaries on the Gita ("ajudar-lo en els comentaris de *Gita*").[22] On the subject of Ramanathan and yoga, Maimó is not incorrect, but he provides the wrong information when he says that Ramanathan required the assistance of Mascaró to write his commentaries on the Sanskrit text. Ramanathan's translation was published in 1914, fifteen years before Mascaró met him; in M. Vythilingam's words, what Ramanathan made available to the Tamil-speaking peoples of both Ceylon and India "was not merely a translation of the verses of the Gita into simple and lucid prose, but more, exhaustive and illuminating commentaries on them."[23] Maimó is therefore far from the truth. As for Ramanathan's practice of meditation, his biographer writes that after he received the unexpected visit of Arulparanandha Swamigal, the swami from Southern India, "religion became the chief preoccupation of Ramanathan's life. Long hours spent in meditation (*Yoga*) and in the assiduous study of the Scriptures made Ramanathan a true saint at heart, though to all appearances, he was a man of the world."[24]

As I have already said, Mascaró met Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan in Cambridge. In 1930, the Tamil politician travelled to England in order to meet members of the government and convey his opposition to the new constitutional reforms suggested by the Donoughmore Commission in 1928. One of the "controversial recommendations" of the Commission led by Lord Donoughmore was the abolition of communal representation and the belief "that only by its abolition would it be possible for the island's diverse communities to develop together a truly national identity."[25] Unfortunately, this was not the case. The extension of the suffrage (universal franchise would be introduced in 1931) and the replacement of the communal for a territorial representation that the Commission wanted to implement in the legislature signified

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[22] Maimó, *Múltiples Espais* 40.
[23] Vythilingam, vol. 1, 495.
[24] Vythilingam, vol. 1, 332.
[25] S. R. Ashton, "Ceylon," *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, ed. Judith M. Brown and William Roger Louis, vol. 4 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999) 456.

that the proportion of seats Tamils and Sinhaleses held in the Council could be considerably uneven, since the majority of the people in the island were Sinhalese. According to Richard de Silva, "the minorities were hostile and resentful, particularly the Sri Lanka Tamils whose representation in the legislature *vis-à-vis* the Sinhalese had been reduced from 1:2 to 1:5."[26] It was to impede the implementation of these reforms, which were jeopardizing the interests of the Tamil population of Ceylon, that Ramanathan decided to travel to England. Nevertheless, his reactionary stance did not help to solve the communal problem, which had worsened with the constitutional reforms. He was sceptical about the expediency of universal franchise and, as A. Jeyaratnam Wilson asserts, "His pronouncements in the end caused more harm to Tamil claims."[27] For example, he disapproved of commensality between higher and lower castes at Kopay Training College, and criticized the extension of the right to vote to non-Vellala castes and women as "anathema to the Hindu way of life."[28] Writing about Ramanathan's views on electoral politics, Vythilingam writes that "Government based on a mere arithmetical counting of heads or the one man, one vote principle so sacred to modern exponents of democracy was abhorrent to him."[29]

While he was in England, Sir Ponnambalam met the Scottish philosopher John Stuart Mackenzie (1860-1935) and his wife, the educationist and writer Millicent Mackenzie (1863-1942), to whom Mascaró was filially attached. They had known Ramanathan for quite some time. After their retirement in 1915 (they were both lecturers at the University College in Cardiff), "chiefly with the view of gaining a wider experience of life in various parts of the world,"[30] they travelled and lectured for some years in Asia and America. In 1919, Ramana-

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[26] Chandra Richard de Silva, *Sri Lanka: A History*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Vikas, 1997) 213.
[27] A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism: Its Origins and Development in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Hurst, 2000) 58.
[28] "Memorandum of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan to the Donoughmore Commissioners" (London, 1930) cited in Wilson 58. The Vellalas were the dominant caste among Tamils, and the main beneficiaries of the new opportunities opened up by the British administration in the island.
[29] Vythilingam, vol. 2, 707.
[30] John Stuart Mackenzie, *John Stuart Mackenzie*, ed. Millicent Mackenzie (London: Williams, 1936) 113.

than wrote a letter to Millicent Mackenzie offering her a place as Principal of the Ramanathan College.[31] As Professor Mackenzie points out: "In the spring of 1920 my wife and I had arranged for a joint lecture tour in India. The initial step in this undertaking was made possible by an invitation that she had received from Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan (...). He had founded a Hindu College for Girls at Chunnukam; and Millicent undertook the reorganization of it so as to bring it more into harmony with the best modern methods of education."[32] They became well-acquainted with Ramanathan, whom the Scottish philosopher described as a remarkable man, "recognized as an authority [in Eastern traditions], and undoubtedly a man of high character and earnest purpose."[33] Yet, he had misgivings about his superstitious beliefs; Mackenzie comments that "he was too much under the influence of his Guru."[34] Mascaró had just finished his degree at the University of Cambridge and was looking for a job when John and Millicent Mackenzie introduced Ramanathan to him in 1930. On 24th May 1930, Millicent writes to Mascaró to say that:

> Sir P. Ramanathan and Mr. Natesan are in London and I would like you to meet them. If you are up in London during those days I will try to arrange a meeting, but if you cannot come I might send you their address. They want to come to Cambridge one day. Sir P. R. is old but Natesan is quite young; he is his son-in-law. *Both know on spiritual matters.*[35]

Earlier that year, Mascaró had applied for a position at the University Library (Cambridge) but without any success. He had also collaborated with the Spanish literary critic and university lecturer Joaquín Casalduero (1903-1990) in the translation of F. A. Kirkpatrick's *A History of the Argentine Republic* into Spanish (the book was published in 1931 with the title *Compendio de Historia Argentina*), and lectured on the Spanish mystics at the University of Oxford, but his plans for the future were not clear at the time. One also needs to consider the

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[31] The letter, dated 26th December 1919, says the following: "We are in urgent need of a Principal for the Ramanathan College and Training School. Will you accept this work for £250 sterling a year, with free board and lodging, and a free 1st class passage to Colombo? If so, it is necessary that you should reach Colombo on or before 1st May next." I found this letter amongst Mascaró's papers in HMC.
[32] Mackenzie 119-20.
[33] Mackenzie 122.
[34] Mackenzie 121.
[35] HMC. The italics are mine.

impact of the economic crisis between the two world wars, as well as the Great Slump (1929-1933).[36] What I mean is that practical factors might also help to explain why Mascaró agreed to become the Vice-Principal of a Hindu college in a British colony. Millicent Mackenzie had already been in Asia, and she and her husband had greatly enjoyed their stay in Ceylon. I infer from what John Stuart Mackenzie writes in his autobiography that Millicent could have induced Mascaró to accept the post. He points out that his "wife was encouraged by the genuine enthusiasm of Ramanathan,"[37] and she must have probably, and with all good intentions, assumed that Mascaró would also enjoy and benefit from his stay in Jaffna as long as Ramanathan was around. Had Ramanathan lived for two or more years, Mascaró's experiences in Ceylon could have been considerably different, and he might even have decided to stay in the island for a few more years. In Mascaró's own words, the Tamil politician "was a remarkable man and in many ways the most important personality of the island. His death, that unfortunately took place soon before I left for the East deprived me of valuable help."[38]

Vythilingam depicts Ramanathan as a profoundly religious man, and this facet of his personality must have captivated the young Mascaró. Even Millicent knew that Mascaró was interested in "spiritual matters." Ramanathan's high regard for the Gita – "of which he was a life-long student and exponent"[39] – could have worked as an additional incentive. According to his biographer, "The Bhagavad Gita, which embodies the teachings of Lord Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurushestra, was to him a treasure-house of spiritual wisdom."[40] He also emphasizes that "Religion was the chief motive force of his life, the fundamental fact of his history, the main reservoir from which he drew all his solace, strength and sustenance."[41]

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[36] As Eric Hobsbawm highlights in *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991* (1994; London: Abacus-Warner, 1995) 92, "the primary consequence of the slump was unemployment on an unimagined and unprecedented scale, and for longer than anyone had ever expected."
[37] Mackenzie 120.
[38] "Impressions of Ceylon" (AGCM).
[39] Vythilingam, vol. 1, 222.
[40] Vythilingam, vol. 2, 674.
[41] Vythilingam, vol. 1, 18.

More critical of Ramanathan's religious views than the sympathetic Vythilingam, A. Jeyaratnam Wilson declares that "Sir P. Ramanathan in the last phase before his death in 1930 was more pietistic than political."[42] Notwithstanding his obduracy in politics in the last years of his life, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan's political career was impressive. He made a start as the representative of the Tamil-speaking people of Ceylon in the Legislative Council, and in 1892 was appointed Solicitor-General by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, a post which he would occupy until 1906. In 1911, he became the first candidate to be elected "Educated Ceylonese Member" of the Legislative Council (he was elected again to the seat in 1916 and held it until 1921). From 1905 to 1906, while he was still Solicitor-General, he set out on a lecture tour to the United States of America. Vythilingam elucidates: "At about this time, Ramanathan received an earnest and moving appeal signed by about two hundred American ladies and gentlemen beseeching him to go to them and teach them the Truth."[43] Sir Henry Blake, the Governor of Ceylon at the time, granted Ramanathan the year's leave he needed to travel to America. During his stay there, Ramanathan lectured on topics related to religion and philosophy, and made a strong impression on his American friends and also on those who attended his talks. They probably looked at him as the followers of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) had looked at the Bengali religious leader and founder of the Ramakrishna Mission ten years earlier, when he attended (without invitation) the Chicago World's Parliament of Religions in 1893. Indian gurus had just started to become popular in Western countries. Not less significant than Ramanathan's political achievements were his scholarly works. Some of his writings became well-known in the United States of America, Europe and Australia, notably the several commentaries he wrote on the Christian Gospels. Vythilingam writes that "all the religions of the world came within the range of his study and contemplation."[44] He also collaborated with Colonel Henry Olcott, the co-founder of the Theosophical Society and its first

[42] Wilson 55.
[43] Vythilingam, vol. 1, 510.
[44] Vythilingam, vol. 1, 489.

President, in the Buddhist revival that took place in the island as a reaction against the missionary work of Christians. It was Olcott who established the Buddhist Theosophical Society in Ceylon, and worked for the propagation of various Buddhist institutions and schools.

In 1906, Ramanathan, who was then a widower, married an Australian lady of English ancestry, Miss R. L. Harrison. Disappointed with the Theosophical Movement in Australia, she had travelled to Ceylon in search of spiritual guidance, and when she encountered Ramanathan, Vythilingam remarks, "she knew she had found her *Guru*, her Master and would not depart from him until she had achieved her life's purpose."[45] Their only daughter, Sivagamasundari, became the wife of an eminent politician, scholar and educationist from South India, S. Natesan. Ramanathan's biographer describes Natesan as a very bright and cultivated man, whose grandfather was none other than Ramanathan's guru, Swami Arulparanandha. Ramanathan met Natesan at his summer residence in Kodaikanal (in Tamil Nadu), and the two men became instantly and fondly attached to each other. Vythilingam writes: "Whenever Ramanathan addressed learned audiences in Tamil, it was his practice to have the scholarly youth at his side."[46] Natesan also assisted his father-in-law in the literary and philosophical works the latter wrote in Tamil, and "as Principal of Parameshwara College for many years, he left the imprint of his personality on it."[47] After the island gained independence in 1948, Natesan became a minister and a Member of the Parliament. Mascaró must have known him reasonably well. Both were in charge of Parameshwara College in 1931 and 1932: Mascaró as the Vice-Principal and Natesan as the Principal. It was Natesan who wrote the foreword to Mascaró's *Ideals of Education in Modern Ceylon*, which had been first delivered as a lecture before the members of the Jaffna Town Teachers' Association in 1931. Mascaró and Natesan exchanged a few letters when the former was already living in Europe. Mascaró's final letter to Natesan

[45] Vythilingam, vol. 1, 504.
[46] Vythilingam, vol. 1, 507.
[47] Vythilingam, vol. 1, 507.

seems to have been written in 1962; Natesan died in January 1965.[48] In this letter, a reply to a letter that Natesan had written to him on 29th December 1961, Mascaró tells the Tamil politician that he is pleased to know that he wants to order a copy of *Lamps of Fire*, Mascaró's anthology of sacred texts published in 1961. He also expresses the hope that his coming translation of the Gita might "be appreciated in India and Ceylon."[49] Interestingly, I came across an Allen and Unwin 1920 edition of Edward Carpenter's work *A Visit to a Gnani* in Mascaró's personal library. This work by Carpenter had been given to him by Natesan in 1931. The wise man or "gnani" of the title was Arunachalam's guru: according to Antony Copley, Ramaswamy; but according to Vythilingam, Natesan's own grandfather, namely Arulparanandha Swamigal.[50]

After his return from America, Ramanathan decided to apply himself to works of philanthropy. He was particularly worried about what he considered the deleterious impact of Western influences on the youth of the island. Although Ramanathan was not antagonistic to the work of Christian missionaries in the island (on the contrary, he often joined forces with them and even eulogized their educational work), he deplored the hypocrisy and the attitude of intolerance they showed towards the other religious traditions in the island. The Christian schools run by the missionaries dominated the educational system in the island and were the most important recipient of the government grants as well;[51] the missionaries had the monopoly of education in Jaffna and the instruction they provided was particularly injurious to boys and girls coming from a Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim background. Ramanathan sought to protect and promote the Tamil and Sinhalese languages and literatures, calling particular attention to the necessity of safeguarding the national traditions and values from the infiltration of

[48] Mascaró was informed about Natesan's death through the Rev. Father Paul Joseph Jeevaratnam, rector of St. Patrick College, in a letter the Catholic priest wrote to him on 10th March 1965. Mascaró used to pay occasional visits to St. Patrick College while he was living in Jaffna. The college, founded in 1850, still exists. The letter is in HMC.
[49] HMC.
[50] See footnote 20.
[51] Richard de Silva 231.

Western ways of life, responsible for the denationalization of the Ceylonese people.[52] Ramanathan believed that only through educational work could he expect to counteract in an effective way the proselytizing process in which Christian schools and missionaries were involved. Thus, the establishment of colleges, in which traditional religious instruction was regarded as a vital component of the youth's education, became one of Ramanathan's major priorities after his retirement from politics. Although these educational institutions could help to promote the recovery of national pride, they neither fomented political activities aimed at destabilizing the placid political life of Ceylon, nor brought about the formation of political organizations designed to overthrow of the colonial regime.[53] Vythilingam states in his biography of Ramanathan: "Not content with the negative role of arresting this tide of proselytization, he chose to play a positive and more constructive role, that of building or causing to be built throughout the country a net-work of schools and colleges with a predominantly nationalistic background, where the nation's children could pursue their studies without detriment to their religious beliefs or their cultural traditions."[54] With this lofty aim in mind, Ramanathan took the initiative of establishing the first college for the higher education of Hindu girls in Jaffna, the Ramanathan College, built in Chunnakam and opened in 1913. The study of Tamil language and literature was deemed indispensable by Ramanathan, and it was given special attention in the school curriculum, but the college also provided instruction in English. Missionary organizations and English schools were regarded as "the nurseries of the an-

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[52] Vythilingam, vol. 1, 487.

[53] Politics in Ceylon were characterized by an overwhelming conservatism (I have already stated how in the last years of his life, Ramanathan became increasingly conservative in his political views, even opposing important constitutional reforms). Apart from the important Temperance Movement (led by the Buddhist leader Anagarika Dharmapala), which was particularly active in 1903-1905 and 1911-1914, and not totally devoid of political overtones, the political activities in the island were scarce and negligible. As the historian K. M. de Silva clarifies in *A History of Sri Lanka*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Penguin, 2005) 476, "the first 'radical' and 'nationalist' political association to be formed in Sri Lanka with a political programme which was overtly and defiantly opposed to the continuation of British rule on the island" was the Young Lanka League, founded in 1915. Even the Ceylon National Congress was dominated by conservative politicians who were reluctant to back constitutional reforms, much to the dismay of brother Arunachalam, its first president.

[54] Vythilingam, vol. 1, 259. Ponnambalam's

glicization process,"[55] but it should be noted that the anglicized lifestyle of the members of the upper classes, that is, those who could afford to send their children to the fee-levying and elite English schools, did not completely estrange them from their native cultural background and the traditional values embraced by the people at large.

It was a petition made by some Hindu parents who were disappointed with the education given to their children in English schools that prompted Ramanathan to consider the establishment of a college for boys. Though he did not condemn Western learning, Ramanathan was particularly worried about the moral laxity of young people and their pursuit of material things, which he associated with Western cultural influences. In his pamphlet "The Aim of the Students at Parameshwara College," he stresses that the college "was founded to bring inexpensively within the reach of Tamil boys the blessings of a sound education, which combines the best of British learning with the wisdom of the Sages of India and the classics of its literature in Tamil and Sanskrit, in order that every boy (...) who unthinkingly apes the costumes and manners of foreigners may be made to establish himself and his people on the ideals and practices which have come down to us from ancient times, most suitable to our needs and to the conditions of the land of our birth."[56] It is not surprising that Ramanathan was suspicious of the implementation of a democratic electoral system in Ceylon, because it was foreign to the island's social and religious configuration, which he wanted to preserve. Ramanathan does not say what he means by "the best of British learning," but it can be simply a reference to English language and literature, the subjects that Mascaró taught at Parameshwara. The founder's goal was to inspire religious cohesion, instil confidence in the rich cultural past of the island and counteract the European spiritual colonization carried out by Christian missions. Mascaró's views in *Ideals of Education in Modern Ceylon*, which I will examine in the next section, are very similar to those that Ramanathan expresses in the pamphlet. Mascaró's

[55] K. M. de Silva 419.
[56] Cited in Vythilingam, vol. 2, 462-63.

main point is that the English system of education is detrimental to the Ceylonese since it inculcates alien ideas and habits in the young people of the island. However, Mascaró's lecture addresses the problems of only a section of the student population that had access to education. Parameshwara College was built in 1921 on the outskirts of Jaffna. In the 1970's, more than forty years after Mascaró left Ceylon, the Jaffna Campus of the University of Sri Lanka was established in the premises of the Ramanathan's old college for Hindu boys; later in that decade, the Jaffna Campus became the University of Jaffna.

IDEALS OF EDUCATION IN MODERN CEYLON

In his foreword to Mascaró's lecture, S. Natesan observes appreciatively: "Mr. Mascaró states clearly and incisively the problem of education in Ceylon. No unbiased reader can fail to see the justice of his criticism."[57] Mascaró decries the educational system imposed on the island as "a *colonial* system of education," characterized by "its stiffness and mechanical working, with a ridiculous system of examinations that has nothing to do with the real educational interests of the [Ceylonese] people."[58] He compares this unsuitable colonial education to a "terrible machine [that] has frightened away the soul of the island," and adds, although in rather inflated terms, that "Lanka has lost her soul."[59] Yet, one should not expect too much of Mascaró's apparently harsh words against the "colonial" authorities. In fact, he was not interested in the nationalist cause and he did not approve of political confrontation against British colonial rule in the island. Moreover, he did not envision the history of Ceylon without what he regarded as the legitimate and valuable presence of Europeans. Mascaró also fails to take account of two important facts in his lecture. The first concerns the political and social prestige of Christian missionaries, who enjoyed the support and protection of the colonial admini-

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[57] Juan Mascaró, *Ideals of Education in Modern Ceylon*, fwd. N. Natesan (Jaffna: St. Joseph's Catholic P, 1931) n. pag.
[58] Mascaró, *Ideals* 4.
[59] Mascaró, *Ideals* 5.

stration. They were the principal beneficiaries of the grant-in-aid school system and had their own organization, the influential Ceylon Educational Association. Needless to say, those who belonged to the island's major religions (Hindus and Buddhists) protested vehemently against the government's partiality towards missionaries.[60] The second is related to the impoverished vernacular schools. Though they instructed pupils in the local languages and prepared them to use their rudimentary skills within their own communities, vernacular schools did not receive much economic help, were poorly equipped and run by unqualified teachers.[61] They provided instruction to the masses, did not levy fees and their number was considerably superior to the number of the prosperous English schools.[62] Mascaró does not discuss the flaws of the educational system in Ceylon, which he could not have known in depth.[63] He writes about the type of education that was provided by English schools, but pays no attention to those students (in fact, the majority of them) who did not have the financial means to enjoy the boon of an English education, only accessible to the children of affluent upper-class families. The curriculum of English schools prepared students for clerical work in which English was the required language, but it also uprooted them from their own cultural background. The distinction between English and vernacular schools, which Mascaró overlooked, is particularly important because one has the impression, after reading *Ideals of Education*, that the whole school-going population of the island was educated at English schools and this is not true.

The educational system in Ceylon and the bureaucratic needs of the colonial government helped to maintain the hegemonic position of a Western-oriented and English-educated elite that assimilated many of the values and ideas introduced by its European colonizers. As

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[60] Swarna Jayaweera, "Education Policy in the Early Twentieth Century," *History of Ceylon*, ed. K. M. de Silva, vol. 3 (Peradeniya: U of Ceylon P, 1973) 464-65. It is important to highlight that most of the education in Jaffna was under the control of Christian missionary institutions.

[61] Jayaweera 465-67.

[62] For instance, in 1930, one year before Mascaró started to teach at Parameshwara College, there were 260 English schools as against 3533 vernacular schools (Jayaweera 467).

[63] Mascaró could never go into details in a lecture that would not last longer than forty minutes to read. He states in the preface that "This paper is to be regarded, primarily, as an attempt to express an *attitude of mind*. Its limits did not allow me to follow the slow way of persuasion and go into lengthy discussions about details" (Mascaró, *Ideals* n. pag.).

Swarna Jayaweera writes, "educational programmes promoted imperial loyalties and sought to limit the spread of religious, cultural and political nationalism."[64] Education, he adds, "was never consciously used to prepare the Ceylonese for self-government."[65] In his words:

> The education system cut across communal and caste barriers but did not, therefore, really promote social integration. The dual track of English and vernacular schools created "two nations" not merely in political aspirations but also in their total value-orientation. The elitist schools as the agents of acculturation transmitted the Public schools attitudes and social class bias dominant in contemporary British upper and middle class society, as well as the customs and consumption patterns of this society inclusive of such inappropriate symbols as gloves and stockings.[66]

Apart from charging fees and operating in the official language, the English-medium schools (split into elementary and secondary) modelled their curriculum and organization on those of British Grammar and Public Schools and focused on literary and business studies instead of providing a more useful, though more expensive, technical or scientific education.[67] Mascaró does not analyse all the political implications of the educational system, but he is sensitive to the impact of English-schools as "agents of acculturation." He refers to the "builders" of the educational "machine" "made in England," whose achievement was "a curious type of young man whose only ambition in life is to be a little screw of the still larger Government machine, who ignores or despises the glories of ancient India, the mother of his country, who imagines that he is educated because he knows a little English or has passed some curious exams, who despises the language of his own mother and of his ancestors, and whose ambition in life is limited to a modest number of rupees received every month, and to a coat and a pair of trousers."[68] Mascaró also deplores "the narrow and iron limitations of a system of foreign exams" (the Cambridge Local Examinations perhaps) that "fetter the minds" of students, and suggests the introduction of a more interesting and appropriate programme of study that "will liberate the best in them so that they may attain skilfulness in action, ability in thought and intensity

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[64] Jayaweera 473.
[65] Jayaweera 473.
[66] Jayaweera 474.
[67] K. M. de Silva 512.
[68] Mascaró, *Ideals* 4-5.

of emotions to be expressed in their own language in songs set to their own music."[69] As far as "some more concrete facts" are concerned, Mascaró writes:

> In the prospectus of some of the colleges of the island I read that boarders will have to bring so many pair of trousers, boots, socks, etc., all the paraphernalia of an English school boy in some English school, on which the Ceylon College is modelled. That means that the Europeans in Ceylon did not pay in these Colleges the slightest regard to the national dress of the people. The European has not only refused to assimilate himself to a mode of dressing that is obviously more rational than his own, but he has done his best to induce the Ceylonese to imitate his dress, and manners and actions.[70]

The curriculum devised by English-schools to prepare students "to pass [the] system of exams intended for boys of another world" is criticized by Mascaró, because the boy who attends these schools is not taught the history of the world, the "history of Art and Literature and of the great ideas that have moved vast masses of humanity." Instead, Mascaró continues, the pupil "is asked to study the limited history of a country situated thousands of miles away, as if that country was the only country in the world worth knowing something of," while "of his own history and the history of India, the boy is taught practically nothing."[71] He also finds fault with the section of the Cambridge Local Examinations which is intended especially for the students of the island. Boys are asked to study Tamil and Sinhalese grammar and to translate from Tamil and Sinhalese into English and *vice-versa* in their examinations, but they are not tested on "*original* composition in Sinhalese and Tamil, the very essence of [their] education in [their] mother language."[72] In order to mitigate the consequences of European educational policies, Mascaró suggests the creation of societies dedicated to the study of the literature, art and civilization of India and Ceylon, the writing of essays, novels and poetical works in Sinhalese and Tamil, the staging of plays in these two languages, "the practical boycotting of vulgar pictures in cinemas," as well as the publication of "a really good daily paper at Colombo and Jaffna simultaneously in Sinhalese and Tamil." But above all, there must be "an

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[69] Mascaró, *Ideals* 6-7.
[70] Mascaró, *Ideals* 7.
[71] Mascaró, *Ideals* 8.
[72] Mascaró, *Ideals* 9-10.

overpowering enthusiasm and the most resolute determination" on the part of the Ceylonese people to retrieve "the lost soul of the island."[73] In short, Mascaró accepted the view that cultural denationalization was the outcome of Western interference, which threatened local languages and traditions.[74] Only Buddhist and Hindu organizations could provide, as Jayaweera points out, "a corrective by the national ethos of their schools and the importance given to the local languages and culture in the curriculum of these institutions."[75] As a Hindu college, Parameshwara could offer a cultural nationalist alternative to the English schools of the island.

Mascaró's criticisms are correct, but he does not attempt to look deeper into the political situation brought about by British colonial rule. Although he is not totally wrong when he states that "The real solution of the problem lies in the hands of the Ceylonese,"[76] Mascaró fails to acknowledge that the real problem was first engendered by European themselves (first Portuguese, then Dutch and finally British), and disregards the dramatic reconfiguration that colonized societies experienced through the imposition of foreign policies. In his article "The National Question in Juan Mascaró,"[77] Gregori Mir tries to equate Mascaró's opposition to and his arguments against the colonial system of education in Ceylon with nationalist politics and with the pro-independence movements that were striving to achieve self-determination in the British colonies. However, I think Mir is mistaken in his interpretation of Mascaró's paper. He claims, for example, that Mascaró's espousal of a system of education based on the linguistic and cultural needs of the Ceylonese people indicates that Mascaró's "stance was on the side of all those who in the Hindustani continent wished the same, namely, to become in-

[73] Mascaró, *Ideals* 14.
[74] In his foreword, Natesan emphasizes: "No thinking man can belittle the value of English language and Western science; but at the same time no Ceylonese can afford to be blind to the fact that the neglect of Sinhalese and Tamil, of Sanskrit and Pali, has made many of the English-educated people aliens in their own land" (Mascaró, *Ideals* n. pag.).
[75] Jayaweera 474.
[76] Mascaró, *Ideals* 15.
[77] Gregori Mir, "La Qüestió Nacional en Juan Mascaró," *Juan Mascaró i Fornés (1897-1987)*, ed. Gonçal López and Antoni Mas, Homenatges 1 (Palma: Universitat de les Illes Balears, 1997) 161-167.

dependent from Great Britain."[78] Elsewhere, Mir quotes Mascaró[79] and asserts that "one had to be very bold to say these things and to side with the nationalisms of Ceylon in those days when Great Britain was trying to counteract, by any means possible, the emancipation process in those colonial domains."[80] But nowhere in the lecture does Mascaró write that he sides with the nationalist movements. On the contrary, he believes that an educational system specially designed to suit the needs of the people of Ceylon "will produce original men, not inferior in action to the other people of the British Empire," and "that, instead of making people proud to have an English education will be a system that will make the English proud of having helped the Ceylonese in finding their national soul."[81] As can be seen, though Mascaró is in favour of an educational system that reflects the distinctive cultural and linguistic values of the Ceylonese, he does not contest the colonial mission of the British. Actually, as the above statement suggests, he seems to imply that the Ceylonese were dormant till the arrival of the British, who awakened them from their cultural and historical torpor. But he is more explicit when he touches upon "a very practical problem" and asks this question: "Would the English interests in Ceylon, or the interests of the missionary orders, lose something by a scheme of national education, absolutely suited in its spiritual, artistic, intellectual and material aspects to the interests of the people of the island?" Mascaró's answer is: "I sincerely think that they would not suffer."[82] These remarks are particularly problematic. It is not only the fact that he condones British colonialism[83] and accepts without demur the idea that British interests in the

[78] Mir, "La Qüestió Nacional" 161.
[79] "The seeds of the national mind come from the past, and when the glorious past of a country is forgotten the struggling mind of the modern pupil is hovering in indecision and cannot find means of expression" (Mascaró, *Ideals* 11).
[80] Mir, "La Qüestió Nacional" 164. Gregori Mir expresses the same views in a later essay: "Juan Mascaró: Mundialització i Identitat Nacional," *Sobre Nacionalisme i Nacionalistes a Mallorca* (Palma: Moll, 2006) 155-56
[81] Mascaró, *Ideals* 7.
[82] Mascaró, *Ideals* 12.
[83] In *Ideals* 1, Mascaró says that the "happiness of the inhabitants of Ceylon and also of the small group of Europeans that are enjoying the hospitality of this beautiful island" depends on the solution to the problem of education. It is highly likely that the Europeans that Mascaró mentions are civil servants working for the colonial government and also Christian missionaries. However, the Europeans living in Ceylon were not "simply" enjoying the hospitality of the Ceylonese, but were actively involved in the colonial project.

island are legitimate (an idea reiterated in "Impressions of Ceylon," as I shall note in the next section). It is undeniable that the type of education that Mascaró defends and wants for Ceylon would seriously threaten the interests of British rulers and European missionaries. British colonial administrators necessitated a class of Western-educated Ceylonese who could communicate in English and act as mediators between the rulers and the ruled. A nationalist education could also imperil British sovereignty in the island because it could give rise to political nationalism. For their part, Christian missionaries would not ungrudgingly accept the hegemony of the local religious traditions.

Gregori Mir is right to underline that Mascaró was not interested in the theoretical aspects of nationalist politics. The Mallorcan historian explains that Mascaró was influenced by the German-inspired nationalist trends dominant in Catalonia and Mallorca, which followed those postulated by the philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803). Hence Mascaró's profound interest in language and culture, considered the highest expression of one's national identity.[84] Nevertheless, the fact that Mascaró was not, as Mir argues, "an historian and much less a political thinker,"[85] does not mean that his views are devoid of political implications. In *Ideals of Education*, he disparages the "narrow nationalism often taught in European schools,"[86] and advocates an education that eschews "the European type, rather aggressive to foreign countries and to foreign ways of thinking."[87] This brings to light not only Mascaró's hostility towards the extremist nationalist movements that developed in Europe in the 1920s, but also towards those in the British colonies. His distaste of harmful and aggressive forms of nationalism[88] might well be related to an imperialist agenda. In her account of David Lloyd's

[84] Mir, "La Qüestió Nacional" 164.
[85] Mir, "La Qüestió Nacional" 166.
[86] Mascaró, *Ideals* 5.
[87] Mascaró, *Ideals* 12.
[88] In "La Qüestió Nacional" 165, Mir mentions that Mascaró became particularly critical of nationalism after the Spanish Civil War. The military victory of General Franco in Spain – whose supporters described themselves as "nationalists" – and the rise of Fascism and Nazism in Europe were events that added considerably to Mascaró's aversion to radical forms of nationalist politics.

"Nationalisms against the State,"[89] Leela Gandhi stresses that "The selective and current bias of Western anti-nationalism (...) emerges out of a historically deep-seated metropolitan antipathy toward anti-colonial movements in the third world."[90] In brief, instead of siding with the pro-independence nationalist movements in Ceylon, Mascaró was more inclined to justify European rule in the island, even though he disagreed with the way in which colonizers modelled the educational system in Ceylon on British lines.

"IMPRESSIONS OF CEYLON"[91]

On 15th March 1933, two months after his return from Ceylon, Mascaró delivered his talk on in his impressions of Ceylon to the Anglo-Spanish Society in the Athenaeum Club of Barcelona.[92] Mascaró is more circumspect in the statements he makes and never affirms, as in the letter to Whalley-Tooker, that he deems Europe superior to Asia "in thought, emotion and action, and also in spirituality." Several months had passed and Mascaró felt much more at ease describing and commenting on what he had seen in the island. He was certainly less depressed too, living comfortably as a university lecturer in the city of Barcelona. However, his attitude remains basically the same: he is primarily concerned with highlighting the differences between Ceylon and Europe. Thus he is able to assert the moral, intellectual and spiritual

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[89] The full title of Lloyd's article is: "Nationalisms against the State: Towards a Critique of the Anti-nationalist Prejudice," *Reexamining and Renewing the Philippine Progressive Vision* (Quezon City, Philippines: Forum for Philippine Alternatives, 1993).

[90] Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory* 103. I am not suggesting that Mascaró did not support the independence of colonized countries: he did. Yet, one should not make much of this point. For instance, he backed India's independence, but only when Britain could no longer withstand that country's demands for self-rule, and as long as India cooperated with Britain and did not engage in "subversive" acts of nationalism. In one of his talks for the BBC ("Inglaterra y la India"), he talks ironically and disapprovingly about the Indian radical leader and Gandhi's opponent in the Indian National Congress, Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945). He also argues that Britain helped India to achieve unity and stability "without the danger of civil wars, in peace, without anarchy and tyranny, and without the fear that some self-acclaimed 'saviour' of India such as Chandra Bose stands up and reduces her to the slavery of his 'saving' tyranny" (AGCM).

May 1944

[91] "Impressions of Ceylon" is a twelve-page long, compactly written text in Mascaró's small, but perfectly legible handwriting. As all the pages of Mascaró's manuscript are numbered, I will provide the page numbers when citing from the talk. The manuscript is in AGCM.

[92] The Spanish paper from Barcelona *La Vanguardia* published a lengthy summary of Mascaró's lecture on 17th March 1933. When Mascaró finished his talk, the journalist writes, "Mascaró was much applauded and congratulated by the distinguished English and Spanish audience which filled up the venue of the Athenaeum in Barcelona" (AGCM).

superiority of Europe over Asia. "Impressions of Ceylon" contains some statements that reveal Mascaró's condescending attitude towards the people of Ceylon. The comments Mascaró makes about what he saw in the island are made, as expected, from the vantage point of the dominant European culture to which he belonged. With a bird's eye view, he talks about and diagnoses the shortcomings of the Ceylonese, such as their distressing poverty or their lack of humanity. The Hindu Brahmins, he writes, do not "contribute much to the spiritual upliftment of the people," the system of castes is "a stumbling block to the spiritual progress and understanding amongst the people of the island" and Buddhism "seems also suited to more primitive conditions of life."[93] Nevertheless, he is oblivious of the economic, political and religious changes the island went through as a result of European colonialism, and how these changes shaped in an irreversible way the lives of people. Mascaró's talk is a personal account of his stay in Ceylon, but his opinions are not exclusively his: European writers, travellers, missionaries and colonial administrators have often portrayed non-Western civilizations and religions in derogatory terms. Their representations of the people they met were used ideologically to propagate the benefits of European colonization as an historical necessity that would improve the lives of those who had been conquered (the so-called "civilizing mission").

Mascaró begins his lecture by telling his Catalan and English audience that "We shall travel in imagination to a beautiful island far away (...). We shall be in a very warm climate and we shall live for an hour in surroundings very different from our own. Ceylon is for us a strange land, the mysterious East has many surprises in store for us and we must go there ready to receive many surprises."[94] In the next paragraph, Mascaró describes his journey: the Mediterranean, Egypt, the Suez Canal and finally:

> (...) the vast ocean. The gigantic fabric of an Orient liner moves towards the East. It is January but the heat becomes more and more intense. We discard winter clothing as we are arriving to the land of perpetual summer. Here they say some eight months of the year are hot and four months still hotter.

[93] Mascaró, "Impressions" 9-10.
[94] Mascaró, "Impressions" 1.

> We may go there with a mind filled with romantic associations from the books we have read. Poetical visions are in store for us and also earthly everyday impressions.
> The first reaction was one of joy and exaltation. There is a dazzling radiance of the sun, a contrast of light and shade I have not seen more intense anywhere else. The large flowers hang on trees in the month of January with their brilliant colours in the bright sun light.[95]

Nonetheless, "the contrast comes," the "romantic associations" fade away, and the traveller is confronted with the restless activity of human beings: "Dark thin people flock to the inoffensive visitor and they wake him up to sad realities." Mascaró is particularly impressed by "the rickshaw people, the human being used as an animal or a machine to carry another human being," and by the street sellers with their "unattractive faces" and "curious goods," who relentlessly harass the passers-by. He cannot comprehend the local people's indifference to what he and other Europeans living in the island regard as a social injustice:

> I met a few Europeans, not many, who felt my own sad impression at seeing a thin sickly-looking man pulling a cart up a hill where some fat person was comfortably seated smoking a cigar. But I do not remember having heard any Ceylonese objecting to the rickshaw. Both the higher and lower native people consider it quite natural. Is it a lack of feeling of equality, or just the reverse of a feeling of equality, of not thinking of the difference between carrying a load on one's shoulders and pulling a man in a two-wheeled cart?[96]

He notices that "the squalor of poor people one meets all over Ceylon is bound to leave a very depressing impression on any sensitive visitor."[97] As far as the buildings in Colombo are concerned, Mascaró's opinion is that "there is nothing striking" about them. Only Ramanathan's Hindu temple, "concealed in the bazaar near the sea amongst old dirty walls," and "very little visited by tourists and unknown by many European residents of Colombo," deserves special attention, though it was "not yet quite finished." Mascaró met and talked to the architect, "an old Tamil of South India with an intelligent and dignified face," but he is "puzzled" when the architect begins to quote "Sanskrit verses saying how a column should be built, as if a deviation of the written laws of building had been a mortal sin!"[98]

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[95] Mascaró, "Impressions" 2-3.
[96] Mascaró, "Impressions" 3-4.
[97] Mascaró, "Impressions" 5.
[98] Mascaró, "Impressions" 4. The name of the Hindu temple is Sri Ponnambalam Vaneswaram Kovil. It is located to the north-east of the Colombo Fort. The bazaar Mascaró mentions must be Pettah, the main market district of Colombo and today one of the busiest parts of the city.

Mascaró also informs his listeners about the poverty-stricken and badly-treated Indian migrant workers recruited to work in the island's plantations. "Let us not forget," he declares, "that about a million and a half Indian labourers are working in Ceylon, chiefly in the tea estates of up-country. Their poor wages only allow them (...) poor meals. They generally owe a little money to their Indian supervisor or kangany who brought them and as their only source of livelihood are the miserable wages obtained in the tea estates, their lot is a sad one."[99] As in the example above, the British (plantation owners?) are seen as more compassionate than their wealthy Ceylonese counterparts: "I have met many well-to-do natives who seem to be blind to the miserable conditions of these people. Or they may consider it due to British exploitation, forgetting that the English are very often much kinder to their native servants and labourers than the Ceylonese are."[100] Actually, Mascaró does not hesitate to place himself on the side of the British; he denies that they have exploited the inhabitants of Ceylon and justifies their interest in the island as the natural outcome of "enterprise and work:"

> It is very incorrect to say that the English are in Ceylon to exploit the people. They are there mainly for historical, national and economic reasons and the English capitalist simply tries to obtain the largest possible interest of his capital just as the capitalist in every country does amongst his own people. The fact that the British control the shopping and banking of Ceylon, the railways and perhaps 75% of the wealth of the island is simply due to their enterprise and work. The Portuguese went to Ceylon in the 16th century simply because the Ceylonese did not go to Portugal and Europe has gone to Asia because Asia has not come to Europe.[101]

I do not intend to challenge or argue against what Mascaró writes. But one should not ignore the battles that the people of Ceylon fought against their European intruders. Colonialism in Ceylon meant – as in other African and Asian countries – territorial acquisitions and exploitation of peoples and natural resources.[102] One wonders to what extent the English audience that listened enthusiastically to the lecture in the Athenaeum of Barcelona prevented him from ex-

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[99] Mascaró, "Impressions" 5. The "kangānies" were the "capable but unscrupulous" Indian mediators responsible for recruiting labourers from South-Indian villages (K. M. de Silva 350).
[100] Mascaró, "Impressions" 5-6.
[101] Mascaró, "Impressions" 6.
[102] Mascaró was not totally unaware of these facts. In the manuscript, the word "conquered" in the sentence "the Portuguese conquered Ceylon in the 16th century" is crossed out. Above it, Mascaró wrote the less problematic and softer "went to."

pressing less favourable views about British colonialism, though it is very unlikely that these would be severe had the audience been constituted only by Spanish or Catalan listeners. British "enterprise and work" is more accurately assessed by Richard de Silva in these terms:

> The British derived considerable economic benefits from the colony through their control of commerce and trade. British investors in Sri Lankan plantations made large profits while the living conditions of the plantation workers remained abysmal. British neglect of domestic agriculture is a factor that aroused criticism from nationalist leaders for many years. At the end of British rule Sri Lanka was left dependent on foreign sources for a very large proportion of its basic food requirements and after independence Sri Lankan governments have had to invest considerable resources to correct this imbalance.[103]

As an outsider – he was neither a British citizen nor a civil servant working for the colonial administration in Ceylon – Mascaró's attitude towards colonialism could have been less acquiescent and more critical. In the first decades of the twentieth century, there were already individuals and political associations of the left campaigning for changes in the government's colonial policies. They started to denounce the economic exploitation natives were subject to and demanded that the Colonial Office should work for the welfare of colonized peoples, protect their rights and improve their living conditions through economic and social reforms. I do not think that Mascaró was familiar with the work of political activists who opposed militaristic, racist and aggressive forms of imperial rule. But as a pacifist who believed in the primacy of dialogue and in the maintenance of good relationships between Britain and India, Mascaró was ideologically close to those who supported imperial trusteeship. The advocates of trusteeship imperialism believed in the moral and material progress of the colonies, and claimed that Britain had the obligation to share its democratic institutions with its overseas territories. Britain would eventually grant self-rule to the colonies, but the transfer of power was a process; it had to be done progressively through the introduction of reforms (the gradual extension of the right to vote, for instance).[104] Hence the unwillingness of metropolitan anti-imperialists to ne-

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[103] Richard de Silva 13.

[104] As Nicholas Owen observes in "Critics of Empire in Britain," *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, ed. Judith M. Brown and William Roger Louis, vol. 4 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999) 208, "there could not be shortcuts to political maturity." Owen's article offers a very good discussion of anti-imperialist groups and movements in Great Britain during the period 1918-1964.

gotiate with nationalist movements which endorsed more radical forms of anti-colonial resistance. The paternalism of imperial trusteeship is plain to see: decision-making continued to be in the hands of the enlightened white race; people from the colonies were unprepared to govern themselves. The passage below shows Mascaró's paternalistic attitudes towards the people of Ceylon, and recalls the position taken by many British anti-imperialists:[105]

> Would Ceylon be a happier place if the Ceylonese had absolute home-rule? Leaving aside the possibility of a foreign invasion, the lack of real understanding between the Hindu and Ceylonese communities and the fact that real home-rule depends on many economic and cultural factors, I sincerely believe that a good understanding between the English and the Ceylonese can be of mutual advantage. It seems that the Ceylonese who is rather individualistic can learn a good deal from the spirit of honesty and sacrifice for the community that is found amongst the true English people. A political experiment is being carried on in Ceylon under the new constitution. Elections took place in 1931 and all men and women of age were allowed the vote. But in Ceylon much more than in Europe the representatives of the people do not represent the political thoughts of unthinking masses.
> (...)
> One must thus distinguish between the idealistic point of view in the political and the practical possibilities.[106]

As in *Ideals of Education*, Mascaró does not doubt that the British have a constructive role to play in Ceylon. He avoids the use of such terms as "rule," "conquest" or "colony" and instead employs the seemingly neutral "good understanding" and "mutual advantage" to denote what is in fact the unequal (power) relationship between Ceylon and England. Thus, "leaving aside the possibility of a foreign invasion,"[107] the tension between the Tamil and Sinhalese communities, and other "economic and cultural factors" which Mascaró does not specify, British rule over Ceylon is still justified because it is advantageous to both countries. The British invest in the plantations and make large profits, while the Ceylonese benefit from the rule of law ("the new constitution") that the British introduced in the island. Even though they control most of the wealth of Ceylon, the British are morally superior to the "individualistic" Ceylonese, who can get a lot out of "the spirit of honesty and sacrifice for the community" of their rulers. With

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[105] I am not suggesting that Mascaró's ideas coincided with those of contemporary British anti-imperialists. My aim is to underline the dominant paternalism towards colonized peoples, even from those who were sympathetic to the victims of European imperial power.
[106] Mascaró, "Impressions" 6-7.
[107] Mascaró wrote "Japanese invasion" first in the manuscript, but there is a line drawn across it.

its "unthinking masses," Ceylon is not yet ready for home-rule, and this is why the British are needed, at least till the Ceylonese acquire the political discernment that prevails amongst their European counterparts.[108] Despite all this, Mascaró finds unacceptable that "however educated a Ceylonese may be," he cannot become a member of the English club. He thinks that "the non-admission is purely racial," and asks: "Is there a solution for this racial problem? Can the white and the brown races meet on absolutely friendly terms?"[109] Curiously, Mascaró's words are less ambiguous and more in accordance with the economic and psychological factors that drove the European nations to exploit Asian and African countries at this point of the talk. In his words, the racial problem "is complicated by the fact that the *white race is ruling*, and the *white man* feels instinctively that he belongs to a *superior race*. This feeling may be due to ignorance, to the *pride of power*, or to a knowledge of historical facts."[110] He condemns the racial discrimination in Ceylon and he even seems to doubt the claims of European superiority, which "may be due to ignorance." But he would never back the more radical critics of Empire who viewed colonialism as deeply exploitative of colonized peoples, who demanded immediate transfer of power to the colonies, and to whom national independence did not depend on the paternalistic approval and political support of European colonizing nations, but on liberation movements.[111]

RETURN TO EUROPE

Something serious must have happened that made Mascaró's stay in Jaffna no longer endurable or no longer possible. From what I could gather from the letters I read, either Mascaró was sacked from his job as English teacher at Parameshwara College or he was forced to

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[108] This is how I interpret the passage. Mascaró also cites a case of corruption and bribery in the Ceylonese parliament which "throws doubts as to whether Ceylon is ready for self-government" ("Impressions" 8).
[109] Mascaró, "Impressions" 7-8.
[110] Mascaró, Impressions 8. The words in italics are mine. I do not know what Mascaró means by "a knowledge of historical facts." But I guess the expression might refer, for example, to the knowledge Europeans have about their past military victories and their success in conquering others' lands.
[111] Owen 197-98.

resign because he had acted in an inappropriate or reckless way within the college premises. Millicent's letters do not throw much light on the matter, but they are the only ones available. Writing on 25th May 1932, she tells Mascaró:

> So sorry to hear about your troubles and uncertainty. I am afraid Jaffna is not suitable for you. I have heard nothing from Lady R. or Mr. Natesan so have no clue to their views. Do you think that the visit of the Cambridge person or your experiments in hypnotism have anything to do with the position?
> Of course you did not contract as Miss Carleton did. When you went out you only intended to stay a short time; she was nearly to stay 5 years. Sir P. R.'s death made all the difference I fear to the available funds of the college.
> I hope that you will soon get an offer of something in England or Spain. We are on the look out for you. The sooner you leave Jaffna the better is my view, if only some post can be found over here.[112]

Mascaró never broaches the issue of why he had to leave Ceylon in the diary-letters he wrote to his friend (probably Miss Carleton) on his way back to Europe.[113] According to Millicent, it was Mascaró's lack of tact that led to the circumstances in which he found himself, since he was not able to "distinguish between (...) a man's private life and public responsibilities."[114] It is useless to try to find more explanations for what happened. I think it will be more pertinent to look at some passages from the letters Mascaró wrote aboard the "Katori Maru." The letters disclose Mascaró's feelings, hopes, and states of mind; these are intercepted with descriptions of the journey, the people he met on board and those he met ashore in the places where the ship was anchored: Aden, Suez, Port Said, Naples and Marseilles. While the "Katori Maru" is moored in the Yemenite port of Aden (it is the sixth day of navigation), Mascaró confides to his friend in Ceylon: "These last few days I have not been very well. I consider them as part of my stay in Parameshwara!" A few paragraphs later, his words bring to mind

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[112] HMC. "Lady R." was Ramanathan's widowed wife. Miss Carleton must have also been a teacher (at Ramanathan College for girls?). She seems to have been friends with Mascaró. In another letter, dated 20th July 1932, Millicent comments: "I am so sorry that your time in Ceylon is not happier. Only one letter has reached me from Lady R. From it I gather that the visit of Ms. H. is the main trouble. Why did she not stay at the Rest House in Jaffna or accept Lady R.'s invitation? As an Englishwoman older than you, she must have known that staying with you in a Boys' College, with not even a woman servant, was fatal to your prospects! Of course she wants you to be obliged to return to Europe and she has only too well succeeded." I was not able not find the identity of "Ms. H."

[113] On 14th January 1933, he refers to his friend's "poor Tamil students," and two days later he tells her that "I suppose you are immersed by now in your school activities." I deduce from Mascaró's words that his addressee could well have been Miss Carleton. The diary-letters are in HMC, but these are only the drafts.

[114] HMC. Letter written on 17th August 1932.

his letter to Whalley-Tooker: "I am nearly convinced that there is more humanism in Europe than in the East."[115] He is anxious to return to Europe and see the Mediterranean of his youth again. Sailing in the "tranquil blue waters" of the Suez Canal, Mascaró feels almost at home. They give him "an inexpressibly joy" and he experiences "the freedom that beauty gives, that radiant beauty of nature in the place of my birth," because those waters are the waters that "so often gave rest to my eyes." The "white sea-gulls flying gracefully behind the ship," the "vast stretches of sand reaching the mountains far away," the "little spots of green around graceful villas," or "a small white camel moving unconcernedly on the sands," are like "the lines of a great poem, the vast poem of nature."[116] When he reaches Naples, he exclaims:

> Europe at last! The day is rainy and gray but the sun shines in my heart and joy overflows my soul. I see European faces, so many of them. They are all, all European. (...) The waters of the Mediterranean speak to me the radiant words of the Odyssey and the noble words of Virgil; the air of Naples brings me echoes of beauty and joy; the language I hear is the beautiful language in which Dante sung; the colour of the south is the same colour seen by Raphael and Leonardo."[117]

Mascaró writes that the crossing from Naples to Marseilles was very agitated, that he felt unwell and did not have anything to eat until he arrived at the hotel. After two years of discomfort, he can finally enjoy the simple amenities which he never found in Jaffna:

> When I met the kind and polite expressions of white people here (it seemed so delightfully strange to see everybody looking white), when I was led into my clean little room with hot and cold water and cosy bed, I realized I had escaped from a place I think is called "Parameshwara" and the infernal regions of an Asiatic ship. Do you know what I did instinctively? I fell down on my knees and my heart rose in gratitude, to whom? To God, Fate, Destiny?
> I had the first hot bath after two years, the first meal served by the white hands of a most polite though dignified waiter, the first feeling of being amongst kind people: because people in Europe are far more kind than people in the East, whatever their drawbacks may be.[118]

When he is strolling through the Arab quarter in Port Said, Mascaró wonders how "such filthy houses and streets" can exist "under the clean air and radiant sun-light." He looks at "dozens and dozens" of dirty children "playing on the dusty streets filled with rubbish and

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[115] 10th January 1933.
[116] 16th January 1933.
[117] 20th January 1933.
[118] 23rd January 1933

refuse," and at the large he-goats "tied at the doors of houses increasing the dirt." He writes that "Even Jaffna is a Paradise of cleanliness compared with that," and asks: "What is the use of these clouds of dirty children and grown-up peoples? Why are they on this earth to lead a poor animal life? What is the object of this birth and growth and death of thousands of human people whose lives are not even as clean and interesting as that of the birds in the air or the fishes at sea?"[119] Just like these Arabs, the street-vendors, the exploited and compliant "rick-shaw people" and the "dark thin people who flock to the inoffensive visitor"[120] in Ceylon do not have any individuality; they are an undistinguishable mass of people with no personal attributes. This dehumanization of non-Western peoples was a widespread tendency peculiar to the colonial situation. In his essay "Marrakech" (1939), George Orwell argues that the people of that Moroccan city have lost their humanity because their appalling misery and lugubrious existence makes them ideologically invisible to Europeans blinded by dominant colonial imperatives and ideals: "when you see how the people live, and still more how easily they die, it is always difficult to believe that you are walking among human beings. All colonial empires are in reality founded upon that fact."[121] Unlike the Ceylonese and the Egyptian Arabs of Port Said, the clean and healthy-looking people who walk in the streets of Marseilles possess (or are made to possess) distinctive features; their lives are human lives:

> After lunch I amused myself for a while looking down the street and seeing the stream of people passing by in the cold air like busy ants moving to and fro in procession. I saw a bowler hat moving and under it a little round funny face belonging to a short stumpy middle-aged man; I saw a red nose and the owner of it walking briskly and stooping a little due to the cold; now and then a round belly appeared in the distance and its possessor came waddling along on the icy pavement; some courageous walker-by with lifted head and martial walk as if saying to the people: "You must know that I defy the cold;" a little red poppy nearly floating in the air, some graceful French girl with her pretty little face

[119] 17th January 1933. In Mascaró's view, "The only consolation, though a sad one, is that one sees very charming faces of nearly white children, and faces of grown-up people endowed with a nobility never found amongst the black Tamils."

[120] Mascaró, "Impressions" 3.

[121] George Orwell, "Marrakech," *George Orwell: Essays*, introd. Bernard Crick (London: Penguin, 2000) 30. It is worth citing what Orwell says next: "The people have brown faces – besides, there are so many of them! Are they really the same flesh as yourself? Do they even have names? Or are they merely a kind of undifferentiated brown stuff, about as individual as bees or coral insects?"

> and red dress giving colour and fire to the grey day. And the human steam passed on and on, each with an individuality never found in the East.[122]

Like the early European Orientalists, who tended to look down on contemporary India and sought an unadulterated version of that country in an ancient past, Mascaró also clung to the past, to an idealized India (and Ceylon) that could never force upon him the less attractive reality of those he had mistakenly idealized. It is not surprising to read these words in one of the letters Mascaró wrote on board the Japanese ship:

> I feel Europe so near. Jaffna seems already so far away. It is already a little effort to remember my life there. I feel a little more sympathy for the poor Tamils. Their immense inferiority seems so more apparent from here. And their political situation compared with the freedom of the Japanese or even Chinese seems so degrading. But the Sanskrit verses ring in my ears with even more intensity than they did in the East. They come as faraway echoes of songs of times long past.[123]

When Mascaró decries the "immense inferiority" and the political backwardness of the "poor Tamils," he is in fact validating and rationalizing European colonialism and British rule over Ceylon because of the – in his view – dismal "political situation" in which people live. In one of her letters to Mascaró, Millicent Mackenzie remarks that "You have probably had enough of India, your future lies in the West, but it was necessary for you to have some experience in the East."[124] According to the German Orientalist Max Müller, to whom I will devote a few paragraphs in the next chapter, contemporary India did not have anything to offer to the student of Sanskrit literature and hence it was pointless to travel there. Probably, Mascaró had not read Müller before he accepted the invitation from Ponnambalam Ramanathan. But the time he spent in Ceylon must have taught him that Europe was the veritable centre of culture and of an ethical and rational religion. As it will become clear in the third and fourth chapters, Mascaró's English version of the Gita (one of the "songs of times long past") accommodates the source text to the reader of the target text. Although he was convinced that he was communicating the "spirit" of the original message to his Western (that is, English-speaking)

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[122] 23rd January 1933.
[123] 15th January 1933.
[124] HMC. 20th January 1932.

audience, as an interpreter and translator, Mascaró could not divest himself of his own Eurocentric prejudices and historically conditioned beliefs. Texts inevitably lose part of their cultural and religious specificity when they are translated and transplanted into a different and – in the case of Mascaró's translation – hegemonic European culture which was responsible for the material colonization of the country from which those texts came from.

MASCARÓ AND THE ORIENTALISTS

INTRODUCTION

Notwithstanding their different areas of interest and scholarly pursuits, the early Orientalists assigned a seminal role to the literary and sacred works of India's classical civilization. British Orientalists such as William Jones (1746-1794), the founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784, Charles Wilkins (1749-1836), the first European translator of the Gita (1785), and Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1765-1837), whose pioneering work on the ancient Vedas would be later praised by the German Sanskritist Max Müller (1823-1900), had a high regard for India's ancient past, but they looked at modern Indians as an indolent and decadent race apathetic to its own history and cultural heritage. Other scholars – James Prinsep (1799-1840), for example – evinced an antiquarian interest in epigraphs and archeological sites, thus contributing to changing the course of the early Indological investigations, which had tended to focus on religious and literary texts. The Orientalists idealized and glorified India's classical age, but ignored contemporary eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Indian society and religion, which were, in their view, in urgent need of regeneration. As Ashis Nandy writes:

> The civilized India was in the bygone past; now it was dead and 'museumized'. The present India, the argument went, was only nominally related to its history; it was India only to the extent it was a senile, decrepit version of her once-youthful, creative self. As a popular myth would have it, Max Müller, for all his pioneering work in Indology and love for India, forbade his students to visit India; to him the India that was living was not the true India and the India that was true had to be but dead.[1]

The importance attributed to ancient written sources can be seen in Colebrooke's comparative method of historical study. According to O. P. Kejariwal, Colebrooke studied contemporary Indian society "by seeking the origins of the customs, rites and rituals in the ancient texts, and assessing how far contemporary behaviour conformed to them."[2] In "On the Religious Ceremonies of the Hindus" (1798), the English Orientalist declares that the doctrines contained in the Vedas are consistent with monotheism, and that "modern Hindus seem to misunderstand

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[1] Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, Oxford India Paperbacks (1983; New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1988) 17.

[2] O. P. Kejariwal, *The Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Discovery of India's Past: 1784-1838*, Oxford India Paperbacks (1988; New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1999) 79.

their numerous texts" because they worship more than one deity and do not consider the unity of the Godhead.[3] In the preface to *A Code of Gentoo Laws* (1776), a compilation and translation from the old Hindu law code "dharmaśāstra," Nathaniel Brassey Halhed comments that from his translation "may be formed a precise idea of the customs and manners of these people."[4] Halhed assumes that the behaviour of eighteenth-century Indians is regulated by social and sacred laws composed several centuries before Christ. As Cohn says, "Indian society was seen as a set of rules which every Hindu followed."[5] Unlike Colebrooke, who concedes there is change and variation within Indian society, Halhed's idea of India is that of a static and unchanging society.

One of the most remarkable figures of British Orientalism was Sir William Jones, and it is necessary that I write a few words about his views on eighteenth-century Indian society. Although he preferred to highlight the cultural resemblances between civilizations rather than their differences – the reason, as S. N. Mukherjee points out, "why he purposely played down the cruelties of Nadir Shah, and had no sympathy for the notion that despotism was peculiar to the Oriental nature"[6] – he would never agree to the idea that modern India was comparable to modern Europe. In the "Third Anniversary Discourse" (delivered on 2nd February 1786), Jones points out: "By India, in short, I mean that whole extent of country, in which the primitive religion and languages of the Hindus prevail at this day with more or less of their ancient purity (...)."[7] Nonetheless, Jones's fascination with a past Indian golden age prompted him to affirm, rather inconsistently with the passage just quoted, that "how degenerate and abased so ever the Hindus may now appear, that in some early age they were splendid in arts and arms,

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[3] Quoted in David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernization, 1773-1835* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1969) 41.
[4] Quoted in Bernard S. Cohn, *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*, Oxford India Paperbacks (1987; New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2004) 142.
[5] Cohn, *Anthropologist* 143.
[6] S. N. Mukherjee, *Sir William Jones: A Study in Eighteenth-century Attitudes to Asia*, 2nd ed. (London: Sagam, 1987) 38-39.
[7] P. J. Marshall, ed., *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century*, The European Understanding of India (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1970) 249.

happy in government; wise in legislation, and eminent in various knowledge."[8] He comments as well that "their civil history beyond the middle of the nineteenth century from the present time is involved in a cloud of fables." The belief that India experienced a social, cultural and political downfall and became corrupted is very problematic because it postulates a stratified view of human societies that is founded upon notions of human and material progress that actually promote European colonial expansion. As Thomas R. Metcalf elucidates: "Above all, through a theory of 'decline' that complemented Britain's own 'progress,' the history of India was made to accommodate not just the existence of the Raj, but a course of historical development that made the imposition of British rule its necessary culmination."[9] Jones appears to make a distinction – although a tenuous one – between "religion and languages," which have remained unchanged, and "arts," "government" and "knowledge," which have become adulterated. Interestingly, in a letter to a friend, Jones not only writes boastfully about his knowledge of Sanskrit, but also implies that the Brahmins he meets in India have not changed since they received the visit of Greek philosophers, and thus that, unlike the extinct classical Greek society, ancient India could still be studied in the eighteenth century: "Need I say what exquisite pleasure I receive from conversing easily with that class of men who conversed with Pythagoras, Thales and Solon but with this advantage over the Grecian travellers that I had no need of an interpreter."[10] In any case, it is not difficult to discover the paradox: Indian people possess some primordial characteristics (that is, they are corrupt by nature), but it is also possible that they became degenerated at some stage in their history.

The study, translation and edition of India's literary and sacred works encouraged the textual view of a society that was widely diverse. According to Bernard S. Cohn, the produc-

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[8] Marshall 251. Jones's lecture (also known as "On the Hindus") is one of his most important ones. He mentions for the first time his linguistic theory that Sanskrit, Greek and Latin proceeded from a common source which no longer existed.

[9] Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, The New Cambridge History of India (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 67.

[10] Cited in Mukherjee 107.

tion of texts (grammars, dictionaries, class books, translations, etc) "began the establishment of discursive formation, defined an epistemological space, created a discourse (Orientalism), and had the effect of converting Indian forms of knowledge into European objects."[11] Though actively engaged in intellectual work, British Orientalists were also civil servants of the East-India Company. Their work was therefore developed in conjunction with the colonial project, which would not have been possible without the production and accumulation of knowledge about Indian history, languages and sacred books. The conquest of India was not confined to the acquisition of territory; it also entailed the appropriation of an unfamiliar "epistemological space," which the British believed could be explored and conquered "through translation: establishing correspondences could make the unknown and the strange knowable."[12] Translation contributed to the creation of a textualized, and hence a more manageable and amenable India; it was not a disinterested pursuit of dilettanti, but a practical necessity imposed by the political and administrative requirements of colonialism. According to Tejaswini Niranjana, the proliferation of translations helped to reinforce the expediency and desirability of colonial rule, since it was only through European renderings of corrupt native texts that Indians could learn about their laws and sacred books, now purified and made available through the work of Orientalists. Translation allowed Western Orientalists and colonialists to represent and construct their Indian subjects. Niranjana emphasizes: "In creating coherent and transparent texts and subjects, translation participates – across a range of discourses – in the *fixing* of colonized cultures, making them seem static and unchanging rather than historically constructed."[13] In one of his essays, Cohn uses the word "objectification" to describe the attitudes of Indian

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[11] Bernard S. Cohn, "The Command of Language and the Language of Command," *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, Princeton Studies in Culture / Power / History (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996) 21.

[12] Cohn, "Command" 53.

[13] Tejaswini Niranjana, "Translation, Colonialism and the Rise of English," *Economic and Political Weekly* 25 (1990): 773. Arthur A. MacDonell (1854-1930) wrote in his *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (1899; New Delhi: Manoharlal, 1972) vii that "owing to the remarkable continuity of Indian culture, the religious and social institutions of modern India are constantly illustrated by those of the past."

intellectuals in the nineteenth and twentieth-century who "have objectified their culture (...), made it into a 'thing' (...) [seen] it an entity."[14] The "objectification" of India owes much to Warren Hastings (1732-1818), the first Governor of Bengal and an enthusiastic patron of the Orientalists. In 1772, he decided to administer Hindu law to Hindus and Muslim law to Muslims, but this decision, Cohn writes, "wholly transcended its origins:"[15] it made the Sanskritic element of Indian civilization the principal object of study of Orientalists, and determined the course of action taken by the colonial rulers and many of the ruled. Whether they were aware of it or not, Europeans altered the culture they tried to understand. The result was that, "What had been fluid, complex, even unstructured, became fixed, objective and tangible."[16] The reliability of European translations and accounts of Indian society was never questioned: reality was transparent and translated texts provided accurate versions of the colonial subject. Thus, Jones's assertion in the "Tenth Anniversary Discourse" (1798) – that the "laws of the natives preclude even the idea of political freedom" – "colludes with or enables," according to Niranjana, "the construction of a teleological and hierarchical model of cultures which places Europe at the pinnacle of civilisation."[17] It was this teleological reading of history, sanctioned by philosophers such as Hegel (1770-1831), which ultimately conferred legitimacy upon the occupation of other lands by European countries.[18]

Mascaró's views on India and Indians must be traced back to the first European Orientalists. As Cohn says, early Orientalist constructions of India transcended the political and social context in which they were first formulated and had a lasting impact not only on Indians, but also on later generations of scholars. In Thomas R. Metcalf's words, "the scholarship

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[14] Cohn, *Anthropologist* 229. The title of Cohn's essay (pp. 225-54) is "The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South India."
[15] Cohn, *Anthropologist* 46.
[16] Cohn, *Anthropologist* 46.
[17] Niranjana, "Translation" 775.
[18] As the German thinker remarks: "The English, or rather the East India Company, are the lords of the land; for it is the necessary fate of Asiatic Empires to be subjected to Europeans; and China will, some day or other, be obliged to submit to this fate." The passage is taken from Georg W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree, Great Books in Philosophy (Amherst: Prometheus, 1991) 142-43.

of the Hastings era was informed by assumptions whose consequences were to shape all subsequent British understanding of India."[19] Metcalf's words are, in my opinion, entirely applicable to other Asian and African contexts. Contemporary understanding of non-Western civilizations formerly colonized by European countries is still accompanied by racial prejudices, cultural stereotypes, Eurocentric views and condescending attitudes. These can be more easily and also comfortably associated, in a postcolonial, multicultural world, dominated by liberal democracies, with the past. In fact, Western biases emerged out of the first contacts between Europeans and Asian and African peoples, but they did not disappear with the demise of colonial empires. Mascaró was a translator, just like Jones, Colebrooke, Halhed and other nineteenth- and twentieth century European Orientalists, scholars and writers who published their works when colonialism was taken for granted. Though a Catalan by birth, Mascaró employed the language of a colonizing nation in his writings, and his translations of the Gita, the Upanishads and the Dhammapada (published by a major English publisher) also played a part in the circulation of hegemonic colonial discourses about non-Western peoples and texts. The political and cultural implications of the early Orientalist translations in the construction of an Indian identity, which I succinctly sketched in this section, must not be overlooked. One can argue that European knowledge about Asian cultures and sacred books challenged the mainstream Eurocentric views, and that several writers and philosophers even showed admiration for the native traditions and customs of foreign peoples. Nonetheless, Europe and Christianity continued to be the centre of the earth. As Kejariwal underlines:

> In spite of the outward looking view of the European intelligentsia, there was one limitation in their writings (...). It was that even while writing about alien peoples and civilizations, their point of view remained European. It was Europe and Christianity that weighed on their minds even as they wrote about the newly-discovered lands, peoples and cultures.[20]

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[19] Metcalf 10.

[20] Kejariwal 26. I disagree with Kejariwal when he declares on page 28 that William Jones was the "first scholar to have looked at the east without a western bias." Kejariwal tries to make a distinction between the Eurocentric concerns of the French philosophers of the Enlightenment (Voltaire, for example), who used their knowledge of Eastern texts to criticize Western mores, institutions, and the Christian religion, and the more serious and impar-

As I will elaborate later, Mascaró's life-long admiration for the Gita did not prevent him from interpreting and translating the Sanskrit sacred text from a European (Christian) perspective. Past biases are not easily eradicated and they are in fact part of the perspective brought from one's own cultural background. Aditya Malik contends that the "*transcultural* project of understanding" non-Western civilizations "is irrevocably anchored in a long-standing, ongoing process of projecting, mirroring, confronting, eluding, denying, asserting – in short – fabricating the self and its other." Though diametrically opposed to Europe, India could only become intelligible through the adoption of Western epistemological categories that were, as very often they still are, thought to be universally valid. According to Malik, Western scholars reveal "a tendency (...) to explain that which is alien through a framework which itself is alien to the 'object' that demands making sense of."[21]

I would like to end this section with an example that corroborates what has been said so far. Gaya Charan Tripathi writes that European scholars such as the German-French polymath Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) still adhered to "the views of certain Indologists of the earlier generations."[22] In the opinion of these scholars, Indian religions (especially Hinduism) are not compatible with worldly pursuits, since Hindus are first and foremost concerned with their own salvation and do not regard the material world as real. But as this author stresses, "A normal Hindu (...) is in no way less practical and in no way less involved in the material world than the follower of any other religion."[23] Schweitzer was also criticized by the Indian philosopher and politician Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975) because he referred to the life-denying character of Indian thought in his book *Die Weltanschauung der Indischen Den-*

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tial investigations conducted by Jones and other Orientalists. However, Jones was also part of the European intelligentsia and, as I have tried to argue in this section – with the help of Bernard S. Cohn, Tejaswini Niranjana and Thomas R. Metcalf – Orientalists also looked at India from a European point of view.

[21] Aditya Malik, "Hinduism or Three-Thousand-Three-Hundred-and-Six Ways to Invoke a Construct," *Hinduism Reconsidered*, ed. Günther-Dietz Sontheimer and Hermann Kulke (1997; New Delhi: Manohar, 2001) 12.

[22] Gaya Charan Tripathi, "Hinduism Through Western Glasses: A Critique of Some Western Views on Hinduism," *Hinduism Reconsidered*, ed. Günther-Dietz Sontheimer and Hermann Kulke (1997; New Delhi: Manohar, 2001) 124.

[23] Tripathi 125.

ker.[24] Schweitzer, "whose knowledge of India is based on books,"[25] discerns two different attitudes to life; he designates the first (Western and Christian) as "world and life affirmation" and the second (Indian) as "world and life negation."[26] The former accepts life and its problems and lays emphasis on ethics, while the latter looks at life as an illusion and declares the futility of all action. Though Radhakrishnan tries to defend Hindu thought, which he equated with his own version of the Advaita branch of Vedānta philosophy, from the criticisms made by European and Christian authors, he is right when he questions the "geographical contrast" that underlies Schweitzer's sweeping distinction between what the German writer regards as two irreconcilable world views.[27] In reality, the still widely common idea that Indians are innately spiritual (this can be considered another instance of what Cohn calls "objectification") is untenable. The Indian scholar and poet A. K. Ramanujan draws attention to the fact that "Contrary to the notion that Indians are 'spiritual', they are really 'material minded'. They are materialists, believers in substance: there is a continuity, a constant flow (the etymology of *saṁsāra*!) of substance from context to object, from non-self to self (if you prefer) – in eating, breathing, sex, sensation, perception, thought, art, or religious experience."[28] As I shall discuss later in this chapter, Mascaró also deemed spirituality the essential, defining characteristic not only of India but also of Asia in general.

INDIA AND EUROPE

In Mascaró's view, Indians' indifference towards European literature, music and classical languages, and European and British neglect of India's ancient classical literature were the principal obstacles to mutual understanding between India and Europe. This cultural anta-

[24] The book was published in London in 1936 with the title *Indian Thought and Its Development*.
[25] S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, Oxford India Paperbacks (1940; New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1989) 75.
[26] Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions* 65.
[27] Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions* 65.
[28] A. K. Ramanujan, "Is There an Indian Way of Thinking? An Informal Essay," *India Through Hindu Categories*, ed. McKim Marriott (New Delhi: Sage, 1990) 52.

gonism between Europe and India is a theme that comes up frequently in Mascaró's writings of the early 1940s, a period during which India was deeply involved in negotiating its independence from England. Nonetheless, Mascaró's focus on cultural reconciliation suggests a tendency to deflect attention from or circumvent the colonial predicament and the disruptive violence of European colonization of non-Western countries. He never alludes to the imposition of a foreign colonial rule in India as a likely source of the rift between India and Britain. In a memorandum on Indian students at English universities, Mascaró comments that "They do not become acquainted with the best of European literature, art and religion; but their chief interest is in European politics wherein they can easily find selfishness and insincerity: Europe at its worst."[29] The memorandum was written in 1939 or 1940 (I was not able to find its exact date), at a time when Mascaró was trying to secure support for his work of friendship and union with Indian students in Cambridge.[30] This project, whose "object was to interest them [Indians] in the spiritual values of their culture, and thus to counteract materialism and political bitterness with all their evils"[31] did not succeed in its goals. Mascaró also thought about taking residence in India, where he believed he could continue his work of friendship with Indians, but he was forced to stay in England due to the outbreak of the Second World War. I stated in the preceding section that Mascaró feared the rise of nationalism in Ceylon,

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[29] HMC. In a letter to the Catholic theologian and philosopher Raimon Panikkar, dated 28th July 1950, Mascaró has this to say about Indians in general, and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Surendranath Dasgupta in particular: "They do not know a word of Latin in India. Actually, they do not know almost anything about Europe, but science and mechanics. I have never seen an Indian who felt Beethoven, or Leonardo, or who could read Cervantes or Dante, not to mention Ramon Llull! On the other hand, I have known learned Europeans who are interested in India, but their interest is in dead things. There is a lot to do in order to form a nucleus of students who can actually be ambassadors of the cultures of Europe and Asia in the lands of Asia and Europe. Dasgupta, the great Indian scholar, said to me frankly that Beethoven is noise to him! And Radhakrishnan – I will always remember it – with a satanic pride talked to me about Latin with a despicable contempt: needless to say, he does not know a word!" (AGCM). Writing to the Catalan prehistorian and archaeologist Pere Bosch i Gimpera (1891-1974) four days later (on 1st August 1950), he mentions again the two Indian scholars' ignorance of Latin and Greek and their dislike of Beethoven, and gives one more example: "The other day Dasgupta was telling me that Spain did not have a great art. I mentioned him Velázquez, and he did not even know the name!" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 78).

[30] HMC. Mascaró sent a copy of the memorandum to the Foreign Office, which in turn forwarded it to the Office of the High Commissioner for India through the India Office, but he never received any reply. Even without any support, Mascaró started to work on his own with some Indian students who were living in Cambridge.

[31] HMC. Letter to the Right Honourable R. A. Butler, M. P., the Foreign Office, written on 16th July 1940.

which he associated with European politics. Mascaró's words in the memorandum seem to imply that Indians might emulate European nations with fierce nationalist agendas, and hence campaign for their country's independence through less diplomatic means. This is why, I think, Mascaró prefers and insists on literary and artistic values as a means to prevent the "political bitterness" which was certainly felt by many Indians. Needless to say, this can be a form of silencing their poli tical protest against foreign rule. It is worth pointing out, however, that in *Ideals of Education*, Mascaró does not censure the Ceylonese people for being unresponsive to European literature and art. On the contrary, in 1931, he defended an education that should take into account the linguistic and literary traditions of Ceylon, and even repudiated the teaching of Latin in Sri Lankan schools, which he described as "ridiculous."[32]

One wonders why Indians should, as Mascaró tells Panikkar (footnote 29), learn Latin and read European writers such as Dante, Cervantes and even the Mallorcan medieval mystic Ramon Llull, and why they should not be interested in science and other branches of knowledge. Is science only a prerogative of European peoples? When Mascaró argues that Indians should learn Latin, read Dante and listen to Beethoven, he seems to have formed the idea that they are naturally inclined to appreciate literary and artistic creations, both Indian and European. Therefore, in their native Indian context, they would theoretically choose the fifteenth-century Hindi poet and saint Kabīr instead of economics, and the eighth -century Advaita philosopher Śaṇkara instead of politics. Such a way of thinking perpetuates paternalistic attitudes towards and stereotypical views of Indians; for instance, that they ignore worldly affairs and should dedicate themselves to what – according to Europeans – is or seems to be intrinsically Indian. In a way that recalls eighteenth-century Orientalist approaches to Indian society and culture, Mascaró states in his memorandum that traditional Indian students should "keep the best of their own great past as an inspiration to their inner life," and help their fellow col-

[32] Mascaró, *Ideals* 11.

leagues, "who at present believe that in the adoption of Western culture and political methods lies the salvation of India," (...) "to realize that the greatest contribution they can make to the world is to develop an original Indian mind that receives life from their country's virtues and past culture." Whereas William Jones thought that Indians had been unable to maintain their ancient customs and traditions, Mascaró thinks that they are too much under the influence of Western science and politics, and no longer care about "their own great past." Mascaró seeks genuine Indians who have not yet assimilated the disruptive elements of Western civilization, which Mascaró seems to have primarily associated with nationalist politics. Yet, as I will discuss later when analysing Mascaró's talk "Hindu Classics for English Readers," he also and contradictorily believed that Sanskrit works could help to understand modern Indians, which signifies that he looked at Indians as both capable of change and changeless. "Where have all the natives gone?" is the title of a chapter in Chinese scholar Rey Chow's book *Writing Diaspora*,[33] which she uses to express the sense of loss felt by Western Orientalists and anthropologists who bemoan the disappearance of their beloved object of study: ancient non-Western civilizations. She refers to "the familiarly ironic scenarios of anthropology, in which Western anthropologists are uneasy at seeing 'natives' who have gone 'civilized' or who, like the anthropologists themselves, have taken up the active task of shaping their own culture."[34] Chow chose anthropology to illustrate her point about contemporary scholars, but these do not need to be necessarily anthropologists. Ironic is also the fact that scholars who study ancient civilizations want the native to act as the representative of his or her culture, and blame him or her for not being sufficiently different and authentic.[35] Chow's words are relevant and help to explain Mascaró's fascination with India's ancient past and his efforts to win back Westernized Indians to their original cultural heritage, while simultaneously dismissing more pressing po-

[33] Rey Chow, *Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies*, Arts and Politics of the Everyday (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993) 27-54.
[34] Chow 28.
[35] On page 187 (notes section), Chow states: "One criticism that sinologists deeply invested in the culture of ancient China often make about contemporary Chinese people is that they are too "Westernized."

litical issues. Going back to the memorandum, I wonder if Mascaró was not disappointed to see Indians "shaping their own culture" by "political methods" which would soon turn India into a fully independent democratic nation.

Although I did not come across any reference in Mascaró's writings to the concept of "political modernity," I want to argue that Mascaró could be actually calling it into question. It is beyond the scope of this short section to consider the difficult and complex issue of "political modernity." Suffice to say that the term is usually employed to describe the new social and political order – based on the Enlightenment ideals of equality, justice and freedom – that emerged in the aftermath of the French Revolution. The basic and crucial point I wish to underline is that European Enlightenment thought did not remain within the borders of Europe, but became global over time and was appropriated and transformed by (and not simply transplanted into) colonized countries such as India. Writing about such concepts as the state, citizenship, democracy, equality before law, individual rights, social justice or scientific rationality, the Bengali scholar Dipesh Chakrabarty highlights:

> These concepts entail an unavoidable – and in a sense indispensable – universal and secular vision of the human. The European colonizer of the nineteenth century both preached this Enlightenment humanism at the colonized and at the same time denied it in practice. But the vision has been powerful in its effects. It has historically provided a strong foundation on which to erect – both in Europe and outside – critiques of socially unjust practices. Marxist and liberal thought are legatees of this intellectual heritage. This heritage is now global.[36]

The global politics of imperialism, the outcome of European colonial rule, increased the mobility and circulation not only of peoples but also of ideas, and made possible exchanges between the metropolitan centre and the colonial periphery. The critique of colonialism, for example, sprang from the realization that the universal themes that had been promulgated by the European Enlightenment were inconsistent with the colonization of foreign peoples. Mascaró seems, though he does not state it explicitly, to reject modernity in India because it was turn-

[36] Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Idea of Provincializing Europe," introduction, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton Studies in Culture / Power / History (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000) 4.

ing Indians into secular, materialistic and politically active people. Modernity could thus be thought as undermining the cultural relationships between India and Europe, since it destabilized the fixed and stable roles that Mascaró assigned to them, that is to say, while India was spiritual, Europe was materialistic (I will return to this subject in the last section of the chapter). On 9th October 1943, Mascaró wrote a letter to the editor of the *Times Literary Supplement* giving his opinion about the simplified form of English known as "Basic English." The contents of the letter are not relevant in the present context, but I would like to draw attention to the following passage in which Mascaró argues that:

> "(...) if Europe wants to know Asia better, Europe must also know more of the great creations of the literatures of Asia. Perhaps some of the tragic misunderstandings between this country and India have been due to the fact that whilst a few million Indians know English, very few Englishmen know the culture of India as reflected in its chief language and literature. How many can read the simple language of the Bhagavad-Gita in the original?[37]

Unfortunately, Mascaró does not illustrate with any example from history what he regards as "tragic misunderstandings." The incident known as the Amritsar Massacre, in which a peaceful, though illegal demonstration of dissatisfied Indians was viciously suppressed by the notorious General Reginald Dyer on 13th April 1919 (Mascaró was 21 years old and had just terminated his contract with the British Consulate in Palma when the killing took place in India) can be considered a "tragic misunderstanding," but could the colonialist's ability to read Sanskrit have prevented it? It would be unfair to doubt the sincerity of Mascaró's words, but the cultural and linguistic exchange that he idealistically envisaged can be actually viewed as legitimizing the long history of British colonialism in India. India's growing demands for self-rule during the 1930s and 1940s, and the Indian nationalist movement, which most likely the

[37] HMC. It is worth comparing what Mascaró writes in his letter to the English newspaper with what he had said ten years before in his talk on "Impressions of Ceylon" (pp. 10-11): "I believe that *a knowledge of Sanskrit and Pali* would be an excellent help for all cultured Europeans who go to Ceylon either in Government Service or as missionaries. The careful reading of a few *books on ancient Indian culture* might be of great help to even Europeans who go there for (...) [the sentence was left incomplete]. The real bond of sympathy and understanding amongst different countries or races lies in their mutual knowledge of each other's languages, art and literatures. Anyone who knows some of *the great writings of ancient India* will be interested in the present state of Indian culture and in the possible contributions she may make to the world." The words in italics are mine.

Indian students whom Mascaró met in Cambridge were supporting, were much more urgent issues than Beethoven, Dante or the ancient Vedas. As I will show in the next section, instead of helping to improve the cultural relations between England and India, the study of Sanskrit works by English readers, and the study of European literature by Indians, trivializes and diverts attention from "the tragic misunderstandings" between India and England.

"HINDU CLASSICS FOR ENGLISH READERS"

Mascaró's idea of India did not differ from that of the early Orientalists and the paper he presented at the India Society Joint Meeting with the Royal Society of Literature on 17th March 1944, with the title "Hindu Classics for English Readers," shows exactly that.[38] After advocating the study of Latin and Greek and of the English classics (Shakespeare and the Authorized Version) as "a true sign of civilization in individuals and in nations," Mascaró notes: "Although Greece, Rome and Palestine are the fountains of European civilization, we cannot ignore the fact that the spirit of man shone beyond those lands of our culture."[39] He refers as well to the prejudice that English people in general have felt for the spiritual values and literary works of India's ancient civilization, and expresses his conviction that "even political relations between countries must be affected by cultural understanding and sympathy," because in "India there is the oldest culture within the British Empire, and the best of this culture must become more widely loved and known."[40] Knowledge of India's sacred works can even impart a fresh vitality to Christians who waver in their faith; as Mascaró emphasizes, the spiritual visions of India "can awaken in us that sense of the spiritual that a dull Christian routine may have deadened in us, and we can return to the Eternity of Christianity with fresh life and

[38] Mascaró's talk was published later in *Essays by Divers Hands: Being the Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom*, ed. Marquess of Crewe, vol. 22, New Ser. (London: Humphrey; Oxford UP, 1945) 86-97. It was also published in the Royal Indian Society's journal *Indian Art and Letters* 19 (1945): 71-9.
[39] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 87.
[40] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 88.

deeper faith."[41] Inseparable from these issues – which one might be inclined to thrust aside as banal and inconsequential (which they are not) – is the date and the political context in which Mascaró's talk was given. I want to argue that the tense political situation that had been created by Britain's reluctance to grant independence to India while the Second World War was still underway is latent in the lecture, even though Mascaró does not make a single allusion to the contemporary political situation throughout his paper. Hence, Mascaró's talk is not unexpectedly built on the premise that "In the Indian and English Classics readers in England and in India will find those human and spiritual values which are the most solid foundation of sympathy and understanding. And on that sympathy and understanding great issues for their good may depend."[42] According to Mascaró, the "Hindu Classics" could provide an impetus towards "a greater sense of justice for individuals and nations [which] is a hopeful sign of our times."[43] I am not so much interested in questioning whether Mascaró's ideas about intercultural understanding could be conducive to a "greater sense of justice" or not, as in the complicity between those ideas and the political environment at which they were directed. But before coming to that, I would like to make a few observations about Max Müller's well-known work *India: What Can It Teach Us?* because some of the German scholar's notions about India and Indians recur in Mascaró's 1944 paper. My intention is to highlight how Mascaró's opinions overlap with those of former European Orientalists, particularly with their interpretation of India's past and its relation to contemporary Indians.

Müller's book consists of a series of lectures on India which were given at the University of Cambridge in 1882. In the first lecture, which gives the title to the book, Müller points out that his chief intention is to change the attitude of the candidates for the Indian Civil Service towards Sanskrit language and literature. He asks why the civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome have received considerable attention in Europe, while Sanskrit, Indian philosophy,

[41] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 88.
[42] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 96.
[43] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 96.

poetry and art are more often than not dismissed as not worthy of study. Müller also observes that the name of India does not leave people indifferent in countries like Germany, France or Italy, but the same does not happen in England. In Müller's own country, for example, interest in India inspired the German poet and Orientalist Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866) to write *Die Weisheit des Brahmanen* (*The Wisdom of the Brahmin*), which the German scholar looks upon as "one of the most beautiful poems in the German language (...), more rich in thought and more perfect in form than even Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan*."[44] As far as Sanskrit literature is concerned, Müller does not have doubts that if it is "studied only in the right spirit, [it] is full of human interests, full of lessons which even Greek could never teach us, a subject worthy to occupy the leisure, and more than the leisure, of every Indian Civil servant; (...)."[45] As I have shown, Mascaró also agreed with Müller in this point. But what I find particularly problematic in both texts (that is, in Mascaró's paper and in Müller's lectures) is the fact that their authors do not make any clear distinction between past and present, ancient and modern Indians. Müller's arguments are flawed because he merges past and present incoherently, and because what he says in one lecture is later contradicted in the next. He starts by emphasizing the usefulness and convenience of studying India's ancient literature, which is, as he declares without any hesitation, "certainly the best means of making any young man who has to spend five-and-twenty years of his life in India, feel at home among the Indians, as a fellow-worker among fellow-workers, and not as an alien among aliens."[46] The idea that knowledge of Sanskrit literature could promote a carefree camaraderie between rulers and ruled is not convinc-

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[44] Max Müller, *India: What Can it Teach Us?* (1883; New Delhi: Indigo-Cosmo, 2003) 4. This was also a topic that did not pass unnoticed by Mascaró. He was aware that European writers and poets had not shared the scholars' enthusiasm for Sanskrit literature. On page 93 of "Hindu Classics," he states that "Whilst English and other European scholars have done an amazing amount of work for the last hundred and fifty years in editing the Sanskrit texts and working at them, the more amazing since the workers have been so few, very few men of letters have been attracted to the literature of that language." Mascaró and Müller are right. The impact of the English translations of Sanskrit literary and sacred writings was much more significant in the literature of Germany and of the United States of America than of England. I find it strange that Mascaró never refers to Ralph Waldo Emerson or Henry David Thoreau in his writings. Yet, these two American writers were considerably influenced by the sacred books of India. I will return to Emerson in the next chapter.

[45] Müller, *India* 5.

[46] Müller, *India* 6.

ing (to say the least). And the same is true about the assumption that literary works composed two thousand years before Müller was born could facilitate the integration of civil servants in Indian society. Underlying Müller's textual bias is the prevalent Orientalist belief that Indian society did not change. But civil servants, Müller continues a few paragraphs down, must not imagine that the human beings they meet in the streets, in "the bazaars or in the courts of justice, or in so called native society"[47] will teach them lessons. Müller is not wrong: the majority of Indians were not versed in the only literature that he considered worth studying. But if this is so, how can the Vedas (Müller's favourite ancient sacred texts), for instance, help civil servants to live among the Indians? This is Müller's puzzling explanation:

> Let me therefore explain at once to my friends who may have lived in India for years, as civil servants, or officers, or missionaries, or merchants, and who ought to know a great deal more of that country than one who has never set foot on the soil of Āryāvarta, that we are speaking of two very different Indias. *I am thinking chiefly of India, such as it was a thousand, two thousand, it may be three thousand years ago; they think of India of to-day.* And again, when thinking of the India of to-day, they remember chiefly the India of Calcutta, Bombay, or Madras, the India of the towns. I look to the India of the village communities, the true India of the Indians.[48]

It is not difficult to detect the paradox in Müller's lecture. First, he refers to modern India, but he immediately shifts his attention to ancient India. One wonders how civil servants can feel at home among three-thousand-year-old Indians. Müller seems to have forgotten what he had stated before: that Indians were colleagues of the English candidates for the Indian Civil Service, and hence their contemporaries. Nineteenth-century India and ancient India are undistinguishable and Sanskrit is as important to those whose principal function is to rule India as it was to the Brahmin priests of Vedic times.

In his third lecture (titled "Human Interest of Sanskrit Literature"), Müller once again contradicts himself. In the passage just quoted, he looks at the village communities as the true India, but in this lecture he argues – denying what he had said earlier – that the historian has nothing to learn from those Indians who live in the villages and who ignore their own mag-

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[47] Müller, *India* 7.
[48] Müller, *India* 7. The italics are mine.

nificent literary and philosophical past. The German author discriminates between what he regards as "a high road (...), a high mountain-path of literature (...), [which has] been trodden by a few solitary wanderers only," and the "turmoil of the plain," the villages where Indians live anonymously and dejectedly.[49] The "solitary wanderers," whom Müller labels "the true representatives of India"[50] are the ones that deserve the historian and scholar's attention:

> Do not let us be deceived. The true history of the world must always be the history of the few; and as we measure the Himālaya by the height of Mount Everest, we must take the true measure of India from the poets of the Veda, the sages of the Upanishads, the founders of the Vedānta and Sānkhya philosophies, and the authors of the oldest law-books, and not from the millions who are born and die in their villages, and who have never for one moment been roused out of their drowsy dream of life.[51]

Like Müller and other European Orientalists before him, Mascaró associated India with a remote, prominently spiritual civilization, the place where Kālidāsa's plays, the *Hitopadeśa*, the Gita or the Upanishads had been composed. Even the "great scientific minds" of India (Mascaró gives the example of Pāṇini, the grammarian of the Sanskrit language) had directed their "powers of observation" to the "inner world rather than to the outer world."[52] Paradoxically, though Mascaró declares at the end of the lecture that "A modern Renaissance is now taking place in Asia (...), an imitation of the attitude of life of man in the West absorbed in applied science and economics, in politics and social reform,"[53] he can still say that "The Hindu classics come from the soul of ancient India, and the India of olden times still survives to-day."[54] This India of "olden times" (the archaic word "olden" turns India into a even more inaccessible civilization, though Mascaró writes that it still continues to exist) is the India that is most convenient to preserve, an India that is not engaged in seditious acts of defiance that can disrupt the established order, a spiritual and charming India that repudiates violence and which

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[49] Müller, *India* 84.
[50] Müller, *India* 84.
[51] Müller, *India* 84. Apparently, this passage does not seem to be addressed to the candidates for the Indian Civil Service, but to "the historian of the human race" and "to the student of the human mind" (Müller's words). Nevertheless, as the whole course of lectures was, as Müller highlights in the beginning of his first lecture, intended for the civil servants, I presume that Müller had still the latter in mind when he delivered his third lecture.
[52] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 88.
[53] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 96.
[54] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 89.

has something edifying to teach to the European nations which had been brutally fighting for four years. The desire or necessity to construct India as an old and peaceful civilization where the "inner world" had been the main concern of its sages and philosophers could contribute to the mutual understanding and peaceful cooperation that were so much needed. Mascaró says:

> There are many treasures of English literature and life and thought that are not known in India as they should be. Many Indian students come here to study science or economics, medicine or law; but far too few to study the best of the soul of this lovely island to return afterwards to India as teachers and messengers of goodwill. In perhaps an even more unfortunate way many go from this country to India for business, in the civil service, and for missionary or military work; but very few go there to study the best of India's past and present and then return here as teachers and messengers of goodwill.[55]

Mascaró also devotes a few paragraphs of "Hindu Classics" to the subject of translation. In his opinion, English translations of Sanskrit works lack literary qualities and he gives the example of the Victorian writer and translator of the Gita Sir Edwin Arnold, whose poems could not even "find a little corner" in Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's classic *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.[56] Mascaró cites the translation of some Upanishads made by W. B. Yeats and the Indian monk Shri Purohit Swami (published by Faber in 1937 with the title *The Ten Principal Upanishads*), as well as the English poet and scholar Laurence Binyon's paraphrase of Kālidāsa's play *Śakuntalā*, but there are not passages in these and in other English versions of the Sanskrit classics that could, in Mascaró's view, be included in Quiller-Couch's anthology or in *The Oxford Book of English Prose*. Even the translations made by scholars can be unsatisfactory because they aim at accuracy, at conveying the literal meaning of words, and are not conceived as "literary work[s] of creation," which is not in any case the scholars' "own field of activity."[57] Though he asserts that no pains should be spared to produce scholarly versions of the Sanskrit classics, Mascaró is wary of the application of scholarly methods to the translation of works that possess literary, poetical and spiritual value. The principal task of translation is to transmit the meaning of the original and express it in a plain and clear language that

[55] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 89.
[56] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 92.
[57] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 93-94.

makes the text accessible to English readers. Thus, if the translator cannot emulate the work of the translators of the King James Bible – which Mascaró regarded as the supreme creation of the Renaissance in England – he or she should at least attempt to render Sanskrit literature in a "fine simple language" that appeals "to readers whose interest is to widen their horizon of culture."[58] Mascaró concedes that "cribs" may have some value to students of the language of the original," but to those who are not acquainted with India's ancient language, they "will give a very distorted impression" of the original, and may even prejudice readers against the spiritual and literary values of India.[59] As I will explain in more detail in the fourth chapter, Mascaró's version of the Gita tries to avoid arousing the prejudice of the readers to which it is intended by domesticating the contents of the Sanskrit text, that is, by turning it into a less unfamiliar and (apparently) more transparent work. What I basically want to say at this point in connection with Mascaró's cursory discussion of translation, is that his version of the Gita is distorted in order to offer English readers a clearer (or less distorted in terms of the reader's own cultural background) "impression" of the foreign text. The main problem is that readers will assess the foreign culture positively and without bias only if the translated text does not look strange to them. This means that the prejudice is not actually eradicated; only that readers in the target language will not become aware of the cultural differences that separate them from the culture where the text was written and will read it as if it belonged to their own culture and hence without bias.

In "Hindu Classics," Mascaró broaches again the subject of Indians' disregard for the literary and cultural traditions of their country. He states that there are Indians (though maybe not all) who only study science, economics and politics, but who are "unfortunately ignorant

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[58] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 94.

[59] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 94. Mascaró does not state if the "cribs" are the paraphrases of writers such as Arnold and Binyon, or the close translations of scholars. Yet, I think Mascaró uses the term to refer to more literal (scholarly) translations of Sanskrit literature because in the next paragraph he cites and compares a passage from the "Kaṭha" Upanishad translated by Müller and another one from the "Bṛhadāraṇyaka" Upanishad rendered by Arthur A. MacDonell with his own versions published in *Himalayas of the Soul: Translations from the Sanskrit of the Principal Upanishads*, The Wisdom of the East Series (London: Murray, 1938).

of the spiritual and human values of their own traditions, even out of sympathy with them."[60] In a patronizing tone, of which he is interestingly aware, Mascaró comments: "To approach them with a knowledge of their own traditions may not be the way to please them; but however westernized a modern Indian may be, the foundations of his personality were laid in a distant past and a knowledge of his classics may help us to understand him."[61] There are two problems with Mascaró's Orientalist project of (re)familiarizing (modern) Indians with their own past culture. The first is that Mascaró assumes that Indians require the help of European translators and scholars in order to learn about their own history. The European becomes the upholder of Indian ancient culture, which is no longer taken seriously by Indians themselves. The second is the widespread Orientalist notion of India's historical stagnation, which can be inferred from Mascaró's assertion that Sanskrit works composed in a "distant past" may shed light upon the character of modern Indians. In the same paragraph where the passage above is taken from, Mascaró states: "an anthology of fine translations for English readers is urgently wanted to help those who are working in this country for a better understanding with India."[62] It is plausible that he also viewed the publication of "fine" English translations as a means to counteract Indians' indifference towards their own cultural values. The translations of "Hindu Classics," undertaken by Westerners more competent and knowledgeable than many Indians converted to Western science and politics, could not only foster a peaceful political dialogue between England and India, but also restore modern Indians' interest in the Sanskrit classics. Instead of helping to promote political understanding through cultural exchange, the colonialist's language is used to maintain English cultural and political hegemony over India and perpetuate stereotypical images of Indians as politically inert people who still think as their an-

[60] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 96. I am aware of the difficulty in dealing with such vague expressions as "Indian traditions." Indian culture is extremely rich and diverse and both its religious and cultural "traditions" were profoundly shaped by European influences. It is impossible to know what Mascaró means when he mentions them in his lecture. Did he want Indians to practice yoga, to study Indian Sufism, to devote more time to the religions in which they were brought up, or simply to read the Sanskrit literary and sacred texts he refers to in his paper?
[61] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 96.
[62] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 96.

cient counterparts. As it will become clear in the last paragraphs of the section, European initiatives such as Mascaró's talk on the "Hindu Classics for English Readers," sponsored by the India Society and the Royal Society of Literature, are embedded in a particular and very concrete political and historical situation that determines what the speaker and the chairman must and must not say. Translation plays an important role because though it is viewed as a neutral activity, it is actually charged with political significance.

The chairman who introduced the topic of Mascaró's talk to the public was the writer, former colonial officer and member of the Indian Education System Sir Henry Sharpe (1869-1954). According to him, Mascaró's lecture has more than a literary interest. He mentions the critical remarks made by the famous Victorian historian Lord Acton on nationalist doctrines founded on racial grounds – which, he adds, are "truer to-day than in his time" – and also the "bitter fruit of excessive nationalism" that has torn the world apart. As would be expected, Sir Henry Sharpe commends all the cultural efforts that "may break down isolation, promote understanding, and create some form of integration among different communities,"[63] but evades other and more urgent and complex issues that would certainly cause an undesirable embarrassment and uneasiness in a public meeting that was meant to promote cross-cultural understanding between colonizers and colonized. After extolling Mascaró's attempt at bringing the classics of India into the attention of readers in England, he says: "Such an idea is particularly opportune at a time when India is on the threshold of independence, when the more drastic political ties are being loosened, and it is desirable to strengthen other ties which may preserve those traditions which have grown up between Great Britain and India and that connexion between the two countries which Providence has decreed and which, I believe, have benefited both in the past and will, I hope, continue to benefit them in the future."[64] Sharpe's primary objective is to divert attention from "the more drastic political ties [that] are being loos-

[63] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 86.
[64] Mascaró, "Hindu Classics" 86.

ened," what Mascaró terms the "tragic misunderstandings" between England and India in his letter to the *Times Literary Supplement*.[65] It is not unlikely that he had in mind the intensification of India's struggle for independence or the "bitter," but justifiable Indian nationalism that was, as I shall point out shortly, wreaking havoc in 1942. The focus on the cultural and literary exchanges (the "other ties") could thus keep out of sight the origin of the deterioration of the relationships between England and India during the Second World War. The fact that the contacts between the two countries (a euphemism for British sovereignty over India) are ascribed to an abstract and benevolent entity (God or "Providence") confirms Sharpe's point of view: it turns colonialism into England's duty towards Indians, who should not have been so aggressively committed to their national struggle, but more mindful of the benefits brought to them by British colonization. However, one must be wary of the so-called "blessings of British rule" in India, such as the unification of the country, the legal codification, the use of the English language, the public works or the social reforms. As Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf emphasize, many British and Indian critics realized at the time "the dark side of these changes, among them racism, militarism, and the economic exploitation that was part of the colonial relationship."[66]

The same diversion strategy is adopted by the President of the Royal Society of Literature, the English statesman and writer Robert Crewe-Milnes (1858-1945), the first marquess of Crewe. Crewe-Milnes was appointed Secretary of State for India in September 1911 and presided over the Delhi durbar of 1911, when George V became the first monarch to visit India. He was awarded the title of marquess for his efforts in the organization and the success

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[65] The verb "loosen" can be slightly ambiguous in this context. Sharpe could have used it in order to convey two distinct ideas about the "drastic political ties" between Great Britain and India: that they were becoming less severe, or that they were being let loose, that is, had worsened. I am inclined to favour the latter interpretation because the political situation before the end of the war had not yet been totally stabilized, though it is also possible that Sir Henry Sharpe was optimistic and felt more confident about the future relationships between England and India after what had happened in the Indian civil disobedience movement. When Mascaró delivered his talk in March 1944, Gandhi was still being held in prison, though he would be later freed in May of that year.

[66] Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, 2nd ed., Cambridge Concise Histories (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006) 93.

of the imperial ceremony.[67] In his introduction to *Essays by Divers Hands*, he says that Mascaró's persuasive paper has a distinct bearing on contemporary Indian problems, as well as on "our duty in attempting the solution of some of them." He describes Mascaró as "essentially practical in holding that in the uncharted years which will follow the creation of a new form of Government in India, one invaluable element in establishing an understanding between India and other component parts of the Empire will be the setting aside of purely political issues in favour of the pursuit of a common culture, embracing everything of the past and the present that offers to the mind or soul the treasures of beauty and truth."[68] The first marquess of Crewe is even less subtle than Sir Henry Sharp when he overtly proposes "the setting aside of purely political issues" in the future relationships between India, Great Britain and other British overseas territories. Sir Henry Sharp, the marquess of Crewe and Mascaró are unanimous in their positions: at a crucial moment, when Indians are struggling to achieve independence from England, the most important bonds that need to be strengthened and extended in the future are those that transcend the political sphere. The (more contentious) "political issues" are replaced by "the treasures of beauty and truth" (Mascaró's "Hindu Classics"), which they all regard as vital in maintaining the cultural relationships between Britain and India. Their disinterested search for literary knowledge betrays their political commitment to an established order in which the hegemonic role of the Empire as universal mediator remains undisputed. I believe that their opinions reflect or are conditioned by two important historical incidents that took place one and two years before Mascaró presented his paper: the first is the "Quit India" movement and the second is the great Bengal Famine.

It is not my intention to examine these historical episodes in depth here. It suffices to say that they were profoundly disrupting and were the cause of serious diplomatic problems

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[67] Davids, John, "Milnes, Robert Offley Ashburton Crewe-, marquess of Crewe (1858-1945)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford UP), online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Jan. 2008, 28 Feb. 2009 <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk:80/view/article/32628>.

[68] Page viii of *Essays by Divers Hands*.

between Great Britain and India, and that lectures such as "Hindu Classics for English Readers" did not simply advocate the study of the Indian classical literature, but had political aims as well. India's compulsory involvement in the Second World War (it was the viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow, who declared India at war with Germany on 3rd September 1939) and financial contribution to it did not please the Indian National Congress, even though Jawaharlal Nehru was of the opinion that India should participate in the struggle against fascism. Yet, the Congress leaders insisted in the immediate transfer of power while the war was still being waged in Europe, a demand that Britain did not want to fulfil. When the "Quit India" movement took place in the summer of 1942, Britain was beleaguered: France had fallen to the Nazis in July 1940 and the Japanese occupation of Singapore and Burma in 1942 had worsened the war situation in Asia. Granting independence to India, Britain's most important and richest colonial possession, could undermine the war effort; yet, Indians did not want more delays. An act of insubordination, the "Quit India" movement became the biggest civilian uprising since the Great Mutiny of 1857. As Barbara and Thomas Metcalf underline:

> Unlike the earlier Gandhian campaigns of 1920-2 and 1930-2, that of August 1942 was not a disciplined movement of civil disobedience. Rather, from the start, in part because the Congress leadership were peremptorily jailed, the movement erupted into uncoordinated violence, as low-level leaders, students, and other activists took matters into their own hands. Within days this August 'rising' had become the gravest threat to British rule in India since the revolt of 1857. The mystique of Gandhian non-violence has often obscured the unique character of this upheaval.[69]

The uprising was led by various groups of disgruntled Indians (factory workers, peasants and students) and was extremely violent. The revolt started in the city of Bombay and it involved strikes, attacks on police stations, destruction of government buildings and communications networks, but it was severely suppressed by the British. However, it did not produce the desired result: the British would still remain in India for another five years. The Congress leaders who had been imprisoned in 1942 would not be released until the end of the war. In 1943, a new catastrophe took place: Bengal went through a chaotic situation due to a deficient dis-

[69] Metcalf and Metcalf 205-6.

tribution of rice which cost the lives of some two million people. The great famine in Bengal was triggered by the Japanese invasion of Assam in 1942, but the situation further deteriorated after the government decided to divert grain from the countryside to the city in order to supply the military personnel and the restless inhabitants of Calcutta with food.[70] Ignoring the contemporary history of Asian peoples and the rising nationalist and anti-colonialist sentiments in India and in other countries such as China, Mascaró's Orientalist presuppositions led him to form stereotypical ideas about East and West.

MASCARÓ'S BBC TALKS

On 13th September 1943, Mascaró was invited by the BBC Spanish Programme Assistant to give a talk for the BBC Spanish listeners. Mascaró accepted and ended up giving more than one talk in the two following years. The Senior Talks Assistant suggested to Mascaró that he prepare talks on India or other Asian countries, but though he was given the opportunity to develop his own subjects, the scripts had first to be read and approved by the censors.[71] In these talks, Mascaró makes sweeping statements about cultures and even whole continents; he portrays Asian nations as essentially spiritual and contrasts them with Europe, where materialism is the dominant ethos. Mascaró was by no means unaware of the rich and uplifting spiritual traditions that had flourished in Europe. His diaries, notebooks and letters are replete with allusions to the works of European Christian writers, and the introductions he wrote to his translations of the Gita, the Upanishads and the Dhammapada contain several citations from the writings of the Spanish mystics.[72] Cultural stereotyping can be conducive to a relativism that precludes the possibility of comparison between authors who belong to different continents, backgrounds and religious traditions, since they are seen as fundamentally and irreconcilably different. It is odd that, in spite of his high regard for the King James

[70] Metcalf and Metcalf 209.
[71] The letters sent by the BBC talks assistants to Mascaró are in AGCM.
[72] Mascaró's introductions will be dealt with in the last chapter of the thesis.

Bible, and his keen interest in Christian mysticism and English romantic poetry, for instance, Mascaró should have endorsed in his BBC talks a rigid and narrow approach that establishes a dichotomy between East and West. Fred Dallmayr's words are instructive:

> Western thought, one can hardly forget, has been deeply marked by Christian spirituality, and the Protestant Reformation as well as Enlightenment thought cannot be understood in abstraction from these Christian-spiritual roots. One need also recall that Hegel talked of the centrality of spirit in history, manifest in the steadily unfolding march of the "world spirit." On the other side, one cannot ignore the nonspiritualistic or materialistic strand in Indian thought: one of the oldest schools of philosophical materialism was founded before the time of Buddha by Bṛhaspati and his disciple Cārvāka.[73]

Even in respect to the various schools of Indian philosophy, Mascaró did not hesitate to ascribe primacy to Advaita Vedānta and to the central doctrine of the identity of the individual self ("ātman") and the Ultimate Reality or Absolute ("Brahman"), which summed up not only the teachings of the Upanishads, but also of all Indian philosophies and religions. Writing to his friend the Catalan economist and politician Carles Pi i Sunyer (1888-1971) on 15th January 1941, Mascaró writes that he "does not know any summary of the religious, poetical and philosophical trends of the eternal India," but thinks "that all are lost in the infinite sea of two verses: 'yas tu sarvāṇi bhūtāni ātmanyevānupaśyati / sarvabhūteṣu cātmānaṁ tato na vijugupsate' «He who sees all things in his Spirit and his Spirit in all things, feels the peace of Eternity» (*Īśa Upanishad*, 6)."[74] The underlying unity behind the multiplicity of things and individual beings was an idea that attracted Mascaró. I have more things to say about the philosophical school of Vedānta and Mascaró in subsequent chapters.

Mascaró's BBC talks cannot be analysed outside their specific historical context. The Second World War, the nationalist movement in India and the Japanese imperialistic expansion in South-East Asia (Japan had embarked on a course of open warfare between 1931 and 1945) impelled Mascaró to form stereotypical characterizations of Eastern and Western na-

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[73] Fred Dallmayr, "Western Thought and Indian Thought: Comments on Ramanujan," *Philosophy East and West* 44 (1994): 530.

[74] Francesc Vilanova, ed., *Carles Pi i Sunyer-Juan Mascaró: Correspondència (1939-1951)*, Biblioteca Carles Pi i Sunyer (Barcelona: Fundació Carles Pi i Sunyer, 1994) 30. Mascaró's English translation of the Sanskrit verse is slightly different, but more accurate: "Who sees all beings in his own Self, and his own Self in all beings, loses all fear" (*Himalayas* 25).

tions. The role played by the BBC as an agent of propaganda in the inter-war period must not be underestimated. Mascaró could not have been conscious of it, but he also became an instrument of the official British propaganda since the BBC was actively involved in the formation of the public opinion both at home and abroad. As Eric Hobsbawm stresses: "In the Second World War, with its endless demand for news, radio came into its own as a political instrument and as a medium of information."[75] In his talk "China and the War in Asia I" (24th June 1945[76]), Mascaró says:

> China and India have characteristics in common: they are essentially peaceful nations, both possess ancient culture, religion and wisdom, which are theirs, their own; and only a few centuries ago their applied science, utilitarian, was not inferior to that of our Europe. But China and India have not possessed the utilitarian sense of life, that is the strength and at the same time the danger of Europe. For three thousand years India has had a sense of life which we could call spiritual. There is in its idealism a cosmic greatness, but it has often lacked the realism of Europe. China has not lacked the realistic sense of life; however, a sense of peaceful calmness, contemplative and joyful has imprisoned it too much in a concept of aesthetic beauty.[77]

Mascaró's talks for the BBC have a conspicuous political message and I will show later how this description of China and India as "essentially peaceful" is due partly to the fact that these two Asian nations were not Britain's enemies in World War II. As far as Japan is concerned, Mascaró does not hesitate to condemn its belligerent attitude and the fierce nationalism of its militarist regime. No serious historian of India and China today would depict India as a civilization with a spiritual sense of life "for three thousands of years," or declare that certain psychological traits of the Chinese people had stalled China's scientific development. In the next paragraph, he uses the vague term "spirit" to stress more general differences between Europe and India and China: "We could say that the spirit of China is human happiness, simple and tranquil, the spirit of India is life in the Eternity, and the spirit of Europe is action, struggle and control of nature and its secrets."[78] Yet, after having said this, Mascaró enumerates sev-

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[75] Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes* 196.
[76] This is the date that is written in the original typescript, but I do not know if it actually corresponds to the date in which the talk was broadcast in the BBC. The same happens with the other talks quoted in this section.
[77] Page 2. All the drafts of Mascaró's BBC talks and those in which he participated are in AGCM.
[78] Page 3.

eral important Chinese discoveries (printing, the magnetic compass and gunpowder) without apparently realizing that Chinese people had employed the magnetic compass in order to circumvent the obstacles created by nature and that they did not certainly view it as an object of aesthetic attention. In the last part of the talk, Mascaró quotes approvingly these words of the French Jesuit scholar and translator Léon Wieger (1856-1933) concerning China: "The aspect of China has changed a lot since the establishment of the Republic in 1912. But what about its ideas? Behind the modernization of some Americanized Chinese young people, the people of China think as they thought thousands of years ago."[79]

Mascaró begins the second part of "China and the War in Asia" (26th June 1945) as follows: "Europe is action. Asia is contemplation. The ideal of Europe is to discover through work; that of Asia is to discover through repose. Europe is Marta. Asia is Mary. The two can serve the Lord."[80] He gives an epigrammatic summary of the "ideas that have formed the soul of China" ("han formado el alma de la China"); these ideas or "spiritual forces,"[81] as he also calls them, can be traced back to Confucius, Lao-Tzu and Buddha. This penchant to turn cultures into homogenous and fixed units, in which religion is the key historical component, recalls the outdated views of the British historian Arnold J. Toynbee (1889-1975), author of the massive multi-volume work *A Study of History*. In his words, the precepts of studying history "should be to relegate economic and political history to a subordinate plane and give religious history the primacy. For religion, after all, is the serious business of the human race."[82] However, Mascaró was conversant with the upheavals, and the political and social transformations that China had gone through since the first Republican Revolution of 1911, which had overthrown the Qing or Manchu (as it is also known) dynasty. In "China and the War in Asia III" (8th July 1945), for instance, he gives substantial attention to the contemporary situation in

[79] Page 6. The quotation is from Wieger's book *Textes Philosophiques*, published in China in 1930.
[80] Page 1. There is a Catalan version of this talk in Gonçal Lopéz and Antoni Mas, eds., *Juan Mascaró i Fornés (1897-1987)* (Palma de Mallorca: Universitat de les Illes Balears, 1997) 57-59.
[81] "Fuerzas espirituales" (page 6).
[82] Arnold J. Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial* (London: Oxford UP, 1948) 94.

China: he mentions Sun Yat-sen, the first president of the Republic of China and a co-founder of the Kuomintang (or Chinese Nationalist Party), as well as the military leader Chiang Kai-shek, who waged a civil war against the Chinese Communist Party. In 1937, the Communist Party and the Kuomintang signed an agreement for a joint war of resistance against Japan. A few years later, Nationalists and Communists ended their cooperation and after World War II, they started a second civil war, won by the People's Liberation Army in 1949.[83] Referring to the Communist forces engaged in battle against the Japanese, Mascaró observes: "Sometimes fighting tooth and nail in order to seize the rifles of the Japanese, with old-fashioned, hand-made bombs, with gunpowder and dynamite made in the villages, the heroic guerrillas of Ye-nan [the Communist capital] have challenged vast Japanese armies, disbanding and dividing them, dodging them, avoiding great battles, their guerrilla warfare always triumphant."[84] Although he was acquainted with China's recent history, Mascaró did not see any contradiction in his use of terms such as "character,"[85] "spirit" or "soul," which presupposed the existence of some changeless and homogeneous Chinese society.

On 4th October 1942, Mascaró participated in a "spontaneous discussion" with the title "The Problem of India" ("El Problema de la India") for the BBC. During the conversation, one of the participants (an Argentinean journalist named Fusoni) expresses doubts about India's ability to solve the domestic problems which, he argues, derive from the differing views and the private interests of particular groups inside the country. Mascaró finds a justification for the unstable situation in India, and in his reply to Fusoni, to whom "Indians do not want to make any sacrifice" ("no quieren hacer ningun sacrificio"),[86] he says: "The spirit of a part of India tends to go to extremes; it is all or nothing. It is idealist, and one must find a harmony between the idealism of India and the realism of Great Britain, in the interest of all, of the al-

[83] I have relied on the chronology "125 Years of Chinese Revolution" given in Edgar Snow's classic account of the birth of Chinese Communism *Red Star over China*, rev. and enl. ed. (1938; New York: Grove, 1968) 19-32.
[84] Page 6 of "China and the War in Asia III."
[85] Page 5 of "China and the War in Asia I."
[86] Page 3.

lies and of the future world."[87] From Mascaró's point of view, Britain and India should collaborate with each other and they would be able to arrive at a peaceful consensus regarding India's independence. The Brazilian Cavalcanti[88] points at the commercial exploitation of India by the East India Company, says that "Indians are the victims" ("los indios son las víctimas") and that the "spiritual or administrative initiative – or the two if it is possible – to resolve the problem of Indians" ("la iniciativa espiritual o administrativa – o las dos si es posible – para resolver los problemas de los indios") should be taken by the British. Mascaró has a different opinion and highlights the (paternal) role of Britain, which introduced democratic values and political freedom in India (he employs the Spanish word "sembrar," that is, "to sow"). In his words, "no other country would have probably allowed India to have the freedom it has had during the last thirty years for preparing the democratic elements."[89] Britain's duty is to civilize underdeveloped countries such as India; though they are spiritually evolved, they are politically inferior to enlightened Western nations. They cannot become independent when they request it, but only when their European rulers consider them mature enough to govern themselves. As Mascaró points out in "England and India" ("Inglaterra y la India"):[90] "One [England] is physically small, but historically and politically important, the other [India] is physically and spiritually immense, but politically small. It is almost certain that there is more political consciousness in the forty-five million people of Great Britain than in the four-hundred million people of India. And political harmony and wisdom is a very serious thing that cannot be achieved in one day."[91] Whereas Sir Henry Sharpe evokes "Providence" to justify British (legitimate) occupation of India, Mascaró talks about "fate" in a BBC talk that was broadcast just a few months after he delivered his lecture on the "Hindu Classics" for the Royal Society

[87] Page 3.
[88] Cavalcanti could well be the Brazilian cinema director Alberto de Almeida Cavalcanti (1897-1982), who was at that time living and working in London. He directed the wartime thriller and British propaganda film *Went the Day Well?* (1942).
[89] Page 4.
[90] At the top of the typescript of this talk Mascaró wrote: "Recording on 31st May 1944."
[91] Page 2.

of Literature: "Fate has brought together the history of this island with the continent of India, and I believe that the history of the future will judge it as a union for the good of both parties. We cannot change the past."[92] Mascaró thought in terms of a synthesis of the spiritual and the temporal, of Indian idealism and British political culture. As he points out:

> (...) England and India represent two great human values. England is the great country of action. Its values are concrete, they are the result of the active experience, not only in the political field, but also in the moral. (...) The sense of the concrete good and of kindness is very high in England. If English thought is real, of action in time, the thought of India is ideal, of contemplation in Eternity. (...)
> The practical wisdom of England and the spiritual vision of India, the field of action of England and the field of contemplation of India are the two fields of activity of the soul. Only with the harmony of those two activities can we improve ourselves and prepare ourselves to become better citizens of a better world.[93]

Mascaró could have been introduced to the popular Orientalist dichotomies "England versus India" and "West versus East" through the works of Swami Vivekananda.[94] The Bengali writer sought to counter Western hegemony in Asia and as Tapan Raychaudhuri emphasizes, "earn for India the status of the revered teacher and thus restructure the relationship of dominance and subjection"[95] through what he considered was India's greatest contribution to the world: its spirituality. Vivekananda's "cultural self-assertion was one powerful element in

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[92] Page 4 of "England and India."

[93] Pages 5-6 of "England and India." In a letter to an Indian prince he met in Cambridge in 1941, Mascaró says: "India has suffered much and Great Britain goes through the purification of suffering. Let them both forget mistakes and arise and work in union. Both countries have in them the finest elements of the East and West; and they both can help each other and help in the construction of a better world" (Vilanova 126-27). Nonetheless, he also knew that during World War II India's material and human resources were more important to England than India's spirituality. On page 1 of "England and India," Mascaró says that "More than two million Indian troops, all of them voluntary, have been recruited for the fight in the cause of England and its allies. The economic and manpower contribution of India has been huge."

[94] Writing to the Indian scholar Ramakrishna Rao on 2nd March 1975, Mascaró observes: "I consider your *Ontology of Vedanta* as your best work. It has a concentration which I should have liked on your work on the Gita, thus reducing it to three or four lectures or chapters. As to the problem of style, I like very much the writings of Vivekananda. He uses short clear sentences, and those are effective although they take sometimes a long time to write" (HMC). I found volume one of *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (1923), *Jnana Yoga* (1937), *Raja Yoga* (1942), and also a 1937 copy of *The Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna* (Vivekananda's teacher) in Mascaró's personal library. Mascaró participated in the celebrations of the centenary of Vivekananda's birth (1863) and was the chairman of a public meeting held at the University of Cambridge on 21st February 1963. The archaeologist Frank Raymond Allchin and Swami Anayananda of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, London, were the speakers. In the news and reports section of the journal *Vedanta for East and West* of July-August and September-October 1963 (a special number dedicated to the centenary of Vivekananda's birth), there is a brief reference to the meeting in which Mascaró took part as chairman (pp. 250-51).

[95] Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Europe Reconsidered: Perceptions of the West in Nineteenth-Century Bengal*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2002) 255.

much of what he said and did,"[96] and it must be interpreted as a reaction against the injustices of colonial rule and the disparaging observations made by Christian missionaries, colonizers and Orientalists concerning Hinduism. While Mascaró tended to accentuate the political lessons India had received from England, Vivekananda highlighted India's spiritual conquest of the "West." In the opinion of Paul J. Will, "There is a distinct possibility that the theme of the East's spirituality and the West's materialism, which became a hallmark of the Swami's later speeches, was born in Chicago through exposure to other speakers."[97] Will stresses that Vivekananda was not the first to see a contrast between East and West, but he nevertheless thinks that his speeches and writings gave the theme a wider currency. In 1905, Ponnambalam Ramanathan was invited to give a lecture at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences in New York, and the title he chose for his talk was "The Spirit of the East Contrasted with the Spirit of the West."[98] When Vivekananda travelled to the American continent in 1893, he was motivated by an earnest desire to inform materialistic Western people about India's spirituality, but he also wanted India to take practical knowledge from Western countries. Vivekananda's cultural stereotyping is still quite common in the prosperous and capitalist societies of Europe and North America. For instance, in the 1960s, when Mascaró published his two major translations from the Sanskrit, many young people sought peaceful (or "spiritual") solutions to the political problems of their own materialistic and technologically advanced societies in the religious traditions of Asian countries.[99] In a speech about the Bengali mystic Ramakrishna Paramahamsa given in New York, Vivekananda says:

> (...) as man is acting on two planes, the spiritual and the material, waves of adjustment come on both planes. On the one side, of the adjustment on the material plane, Europe has mainly been the basis during modern times, and of the adjustment on the other, the spiritual plane, Asia has been the basis throughout the history of the world. (...) it is fitting that, whenever there is a spiritual adjustment, it should come from the Orient. It is

[96] Raychaudhuri 246.
[97] Paul J. Will, "Swami Vivekananda and Cultural Stereotyping," *East-West Encounters in Philosophy and Religion*, ed. Ninian Smart and B. Srinivasa Murthy (London: Sangam, 1997) 380.
[98] Vythilingam, vol. 1, 523. There is a copy of Ramanathan's lecture in Mascaró's personal library.
[99] I will return to this topic in the last chapter of the thesis.

> also fitting that when the Oriental wants to learn about machine-making, he should sit at the feet of the Occidental and learn from him. When the Occidental wants to learn about the spirit, about God, about the soul, about the meaning and the mystery of this universe, he must sit at the feet of the Orient to learn.[100]

The idea of two "planes" (a material and a spiritual one), the assignment of the spiritual plane to Asia and of the material plane to Europe, and also the theme of an exchange of knowledge between East and West which could fix their natural deficiencies show that Mascaró's views on Europe and Asia come very close to those of Ramakrishna's favourite disciple.

As I have already signalled, radio became an important vehicle for the propagation of political ideas in the twentieth century. I want to argue that the use of the concepts of "East" and "West" was also part of the British wartime propaganda. In Mascaró's BBC talks, Britain and its allies represent the ideals of democracy and freedom, while Germans and Japanese are portrayed as the villains. In "China and the War in Asia I," for example, Mascaró comments on England's military victories in Europe and in South-East Asia: "those who think that because the English do not glorify militarism they cannot fight as well as the Prussian and Japanese militarists, they should ask the Japanese in Burma, or travel to hell to ask Hitler or Mussolini about it."[101] Mascaró had to characterize in broad terms whole nations in order to contrast and draw the ideologically required distinctions between them. When Mascaró gave his BBC talks, Japan was on the side of the German Nazi regime and waging a fierce war against Great Britain, the United States and China. The question that arises from this fact is not difficult to formulate: "how can one justify Asian spirituality when an Asian nation has acquired enormous material and military power which enables it to invade and conquer other Asian nations (some of which were under British rule) and even challenge Western powers? Japan began an important process of modernization after the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and this course of action led not only to the rapid growth of Japanese industries and to the scientific and tech-

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[100] Stephen Hay, ed., *Sources of Indian Tradition*, 2nd ed., vol 2: Modern India and Pakistan (New York: Columbia UP, 1988) 75.
[101] Page 4.

nological development of the country, but also to its militarization. Japan could not therefore conform to the ideals that constituted the essence of other peaceful and spiritual Asian nations as Mascaró envisaged them. In the talk "Asia and Japan" ("Asia y el Japon"), broadcast in the summer of 1944,[102] he says that "The sun of the Japanese flag is not the spiritual sun of Asia. It is not the sun of light and life that prophets and poets, sages and seers saw in Palestine and Arabia, in Persia and in India, and in the humane and pacific China."[103] Unlike Japan, China had not launched attacks or seized European colonies. In fact, Mascaró could have described China as a humane and pacific nation because Western powers thought that China could help them defeat Japan, which had occupied many of their overseas territories. In the 1968 preface to the revised edition of *Red Star over China*, Edgar Snow argues that one of the reasons why his book won sympathetic attention was "because it was a time when the Western powers, *in self-interest*, (...) dreamed of a new nationalism that would keep Japan so bogged down that she would never be able to turn upon the Western colonies – her true objectives."[104]

In its very attempt to emulate the European colonial powers (the only European nation that Mascaró associates with Japan is, however, Hitler's Germany), Japan abandoned and betrayed the timeless spiritual ideals of Asia, which Mascaró saw as the hallmark of other Asian countries. Mascaró concludes his talk "Asia and Japan" with these words: "It is not Japan that represents politically the supreme values of Asia. For this reason, our sympathies are with the pacific and eternal China and India. It is not the militaristic, materialistic and aggressive spirit of Germany and Japan that will bring about harmony between Europe and Asia, international justice and human harmony which all men of goodwill yearn for."[105] Though Japan's ruthless occupation of Chinese Manchuria and other parts of Asia was unwarranted, I detect in Mas-

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[102] On 11th July 1944, the BBC Spanish editor wrote a letter to Mascaró suggesting a talk "on Japan and the Far East especially in relation to its occupation of the Philippines." He also urges Mascaró to have the script ready for "next week" (AGCM).
[103] Page 1.
[104] Snow 16. The italics are mine.
[105] Page 6.

caró's words a veiled antagonism towards (non-Western) nations which managed to acquire – even if they employed it in ways that were extremely hurtful to other nations – economic and military power that allowed them to vie with their European counterparts. For the first time in history, an Asian nation that had not been subjected to European colonization (even the "pacific" and "eternal" China had suffered humiliations from Western powers such as Britain[106]) decided to shape its own destiny and challenge the centuries-old European hegemony in Asia. Nonetheless, unlike the colonialism practised by the European powers, the "imperialist Japanese ambition is satanic" ("la ambición japonesa imperialista es satánica").[107] Japan was punished in an inhumane way for its involvement in the war when the United States dropped two nuclear bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Mascaró's talk "China and the War on Asia III" was broadcast less than one month before that tragic episode forced a debilitated Japan to surrender. But most of the colonized countries had no reasons to celebrate the end of a military conflict that should have also led to their liberation. Mascaró's criticism of the left-wing Indian nationalist Subhas Chandra Bose – who even dared to seek Japanese support for Indian independence[108] – in his talk "England and India"[109] shows that the radical, but nevertheless legitimate, nationalist movements in the colonies were looked upon with suspicion in Europe. The idea of a coming together of Western materialism and Eastern spirituality was a utopian ideal that bolstered and strengthened the stereotypical representations of Asian countries as peaceful, gentle and contemplative, that is, as passive observers of actions undertaken by their European rulers. However, in the 1950s and 1960s, many Asian and African colonies would stand up successfully against the Western colonial powers, forcing Europeans to realize that they were no longer (as they had never been) the major historical agents.

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[106] The Opium Wars are a case in point. Although Chinese authorities forbade the smuggling of opium into their territory, the British government forced China to legalize the importation of the narcotic, which was produced in India (Toynbee 74 and 94-96). The Chinese Communist Party launched a campaign against the consumption of opium during the civil war in the districts that were under the control of the Red Army.
[107] Page 3 of "China and the War in Asia I."
[108] Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes* 216.
[109] I have already introduced this subject in the previous chapter.

In the introduction he wrote to his translation of *The Bhagavad Gita* (1962), the subject of the next two chapters of this work, Mascaró cites the last stanza of John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820), which he characterizes as personifying the Greek ideal, and a passage from one of William Wordsworth's most well-known poems "Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey" (1798), which he identifies with "the spirit of India." The external, "silent form" of Keats's classical vase – its "marble men and maidens overwrought," its "forest branches" and "trodden weed" – symbolize the Greek or European attraction towards the exterior reality of physical beauty. The idealism of Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" is used as an illustration of India's spirituality, because the poem evokes "something far more deeply interfused" than the worldly "Attic shapes" that adorn the Grecian urn of Keats' ode. Mascaró resorts again to the binary oppositions that were common in his talks for the BBC twenty years earlier. As he writes:

> "Greece and India give us complementary views of the world. In the Greek temple we find the clear perfection of beauty: in the Indian temple we find the sublime sense of Infinity. Greece gives us the joy of eternal beauty in the outer world; and India gives us the joy of the Infinite in the inner world."[110]

The interesting and somehow inexplicable thing is that, as I mentioned before, Mascaró's introductions to his translations contain several passages from the works of Western (Christian) writers and mystics. The West is also, or at least partially, spiritual; and Indians are not constantly interacting with some invisible and spiritual "presence" (Wordsworth's term) that underlies all the earthly forms. But the dichotomy "East versus West" (or "us versus them") had a long currency and could not be easily wiped out, since it had functioned as an integral part of the relationships between European travellers, colonizers and Orientalists, and the peoples they met, conquered and studied. It was simply taken for granted.

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[110] Juan Mascaró, trans., *The Bhagavad Gita*, additional introd. Simon Brodbeck, Penguin Classics (1962; London: Penguin, 2003) xxxiv.

THE UNIVERSAL GITA

INTRODUCTION

Since its first translation into English in 1785, the Gita has grabbed the attention of scholars of Indian studies, writers and readers in general, and its popularity has withstood the passage of time. The text has also functioned as a concise and highly accessible work to those (the so-called "seekers") who search for answers to their often ill-defined spiritual cravings in the religious traditions of the East.[1] Many readers have interpreted the Gita according to their own philosophical, religious or political leanings and have build into it a world-view they already had and which they want to see confirmed in one of their favourite Sanskrit works. The existence of different approaches to the Gita is a testimony to the rich and variegated insights that the text is able to provide in multiple and diverse contexts. However, some of these approaches take hardly any notice of such historical and contextual elements as the Gita's date of composition, its much-debated philosophical and religious setting, or the view that it is a composite work that attempts to reconcile or fuse different schools of Indian thought within a framework of loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa (an "avatāra" of the Hindu god Viṣṇu). Likewise, the Gita's defence of the need to observe the moral duties that pertain to one's "dharma" or "svadharma," or its endorsement of the caste system by which Vedic texts categorized society are dismissed as extraneous to the text. Readers who want to unravel the allegorical and symbolic meanings of the text or explore its contemporary political and ethical significance do not usually regard the context in which the Gita was written as particularly important. Eric J. Sharpe, the English scholar of religious studies, noticed the Gita's immense popularity in Europe and in the United States of America, and in 1985 he wrote an interesting monograph on the Western approaches to the Gita bearing the suggestive title of *The Universal Gītā*.[2] Sharpe's principal aim is to show how the contents of Gita have been frequently uprooted from their Indian

[1] The quest for alternative forms of spirituality was particularly prominent during the counter-culture movement of the 1960s. I will write more about the counter-culture movement in the last chapter of the thesis.

[2] The full title of Eric J. Sharpe's book is *The Universal Gītā: Western Images of the Bhagavad Gītā* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1985). My understanding of the Gita as a religious text susceptible of being read and interpreted in different ways owes much to Sharpe's work.

context and applied to a variety of situations which are related to the particular affiliations of its Western and Indian readers: Romantic, Orientalist, Theosophical, Indian nationalistic, etc. In the next paragraphs of the introduction, I will try to summarize some of the major trends in the interpretation of the Gita and refer to some of their most well-known exponents and interpreters, before moving into a more thorough appraisal of Mascaró's long and intense relationship with his favourite sacred scripture.

The American poet Ralph W. Emerson (1803-1882) provides an illuminating example of an approach that totally disregards the historical, social or philosophical background of the Gita. Needless to say, Emerson was not the first Western writer to draw inspiration from the sacred texts of India, but I have decided to single him out as my first example because he was extremely receptive to the influence of Indian thought and wisdom, which he construed as not distinct from his own philosophical theories. His writings (and also those of his friend David H. Thoreau) contain many references to and quotations from English as well as French translations and versions of Sanskrit works. The Gita thrilled the American Transcendentalist because it was one of the Hindu works he had looked at that expressed and validated his idea of the unity of all things and his spiritual vision of an absolute, all-pervading cosmic principle or entity which he called the "Over-Soul." In 1831, Emerson encountered an account of the Gita in the French philosopher Victor Cousin's *Cours de Philosophie*, but he only read Wilkins's 1785 translation of the Gita in 1845. Emerson looked upon the Gita not as an academic might have done, but as a dilettante with eclectic tastes; historical and scholarly considerations (for example, the Indian context of "Brahmans" and "Kṣatriyas" which places the Gita within the vast epic background of the *Mahābhārata*) were totally irrelevant to him. There are not many explicit allusions to the Gita in Emerson's journals, since the book that had the greater impact on the American poet was the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (a collection of stories, legends and myths translated into English by the scholar Horace Hayman Wilson in 1840), but it is worth citing what

Emerson wrote about the Gita in one of them: "It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spake to us, nothing small or unworthy but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us. Let us not now go back and apply a minute criticism to it, but cherish the venerable oracle."[3] Emerson ascribes universal human and philosophical significance to the Gita and objects to a close and historically contextualized reading of the Hindu text. Mascaró never refers to Emerson in his letters, diaries or notebooks, but he would have certainly agreed with the famous author of "Brahma." Sharpe argues that the tendency to decontextualize the Gita – prevalent amongst nineteenth-century Romantic writers of a mystical temperament – is still quite common. As he writes:

> In the light of the transcendental vision, the Gita was Hindu only incidentally, and what it might have meant to India the Transcendentalists scarcely knew, nor did they care. This essentially Romantic view of India and the Gita has persisted ever since in persons of a certain cast of mind, to the despair of the professional Orientalist. It was never to do the Gita much harm. But, by cutting its Hindu roots and transplanting it into far different soil, it was ultimately to make of it a scripture different from anything India has previously known.[4]

A distinct approach from that of the American Transcendentalists, but one which also tended to undervalue scholarly work on the Gita was that of the theosophists. The number of translations, studies and commentaries on the Gita that have been produced from a theosophical perspective is extensive. My purpose is not to probe into the esoteric doctrines and teachings which the theosophists sought to locate in ancient scriptures such as the Gita, but simply to underline the allegorical views which dominated the theosophical readings of that text. According to the theosophists, the battle that takes place in the Gita and forms its background is not a real or physical battle, but a battle between the higher and the lower elements that constitute the individual; Arjuna is thus everyman, the human being who, overwhelmed by inner doubts, attempts to ascend to a superior state of spiritual excellence. William Q. Judge (1851-

[3] Quoted in Russell B. Goodman, "East-West Philosophy in Nineteenth-Century America: Emerson and Hinduism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 51 (1990): 644-45.
[4] Sharpe, *Gītā* 26.

1896), one of the co-founders of the Theosophical Society, stresses the inner and psychological meaning of the Gita, plays down the importance of historical facts, and devalues the work of European scholars who focus on the literal meaning.[5] One of the most prominent figures of the Theosophical Movement – also known for having participated actively in the struggle for India's independence – was Annie Besant (1847-1933). In 1905, she gave four lectures on the Gita at the Theosophical Society in Adyar (near Chennai), published the following year with the title *Hints on the Study of the Bhagavad Gitā*. Besant claims that the message of the Gita goes beyond the dialogue between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa, since "To speak of the *Gitā* is to speak of the history of the world, of its vast complexity, of the web of desires, thoughts, and actions that make up the evolving story of humankind; (...)."[6] In Besant's view, all sacred scriptures have a double meaning: a historical and an allegorical one. She describes the historical meaning as "the working out of the plan of the Logos (...)," and also "the story of the evolution of a world-Logos;" the inner meaning or allegory is "the perennial meaning, repeated ever over and over again in each person."[7] The allegorical meaning that is present in the individual self reflects the larger historical meaning ("the Great Unveiling," as Besant calls it). Furthermore, the Gita as history unveils the important role India has to play in the world as model and saviour. The lesson of the Gita as allegory lies in the conflict between "the lower manas, the unfolding mind symbolized by Arjuna, and Kāma, the passional nature symbolized by the relatives, headed by Duryodhana embodying all the ties of the past."[8] The lower "manas" is beset by doubts and fears, and vacillates, but in the end it reaches union with the Supreme and realizes the Self within. I have mentioned Judge and Besant because they were two very influential theosophists, but it must be said that other figures of the theosophical movement such as

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[5] Ronald W. Neufeldt, "A Lesson in Allegory: Theosophical Interpretations of the Bhagavadgita," *Modern Indian Interpreters of the Bhagavadgita*, ed. Robert N. Minor (New York: State U of New York P, 1986) 23.
[6] Annie Besant, *Hints on the Study of the Bhagavadgitā*, rev. 2nd ed. (1906; Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 2001) 1.
[7] Besant 8.
[8] Besant 36.

Subba Row and Charles Johnston also coincided in their reading of the Gita as an essentially allegorical work with a universal message. Yet, as Ronald W. Neufeldt points out, there were differences "in the level of sophistication or detail in the use of the allegorical method."[9]

Sharpe says that the Gita was originally mediated to Gandhi by members of the Theosophical Society; Gandhi, he writes, "was entirely open to Theosophical influence: namely, in respect of the allegorical method."[10] This is not incorrect, but Gandhi – to whom the Sanskrit text was "the chief religious work"[11] – was more concerned with the ethical message of the Gita than with the allegorical interpretations of the theosophists. He was also influenced by Edward Maitland (the founder of the Esoteric Christian Union) and by his Jain friend Rajchandra Rajivbhai.[12] The Gita was to Gandhi a practical scripture, a manual of right conduct; it contributed significantly to shaping his approach to politics, but he was not the only Indian activist to read into the Gita a message relevant to the political struggle against British colonialism. More radical members of the Indian intelligentsia such as Gangadhar Tilak or Aurobindo Ghose were involved in political activities that aimed at overthrowing the British from India through violent means. They viewed the Gita as a political treatise, turned it into a religious symbol, and elevated it to the position of national scripture (this militant phase in which the Gita was used as a political weapon in the more aggressive campaigns of Indian nationalists did not last long though[13]). There were also Indians who did not share Gandhi or Tilak's enthusiasm for the Gita. Socialists dismissed the belief in karma and the caste system as inimical to the social and economical development of India. The Gita's sanction of a social order based on caste and its teaching of non-attachment to the fruits of one's actions belonged to a remote past of India's history and could never be reconciled with the socialist ideals of

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[9] Neufeldt 31.
[10] Sharpe 116.
[11] Mahatma Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 34 (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1969) 90.
[12] J. T. F. Jordens, "Gandhi and the Bhagavadgita," *Modern Indian Interpreters of the Bhagavadgita*, ed. Robert N. Minor (New York: State U of New York P, 1986) 105-109.
[13] Sharpe 82.

equality and progress. The social stratification which the Gita advocates (a controversial aspect that European readers with a taste for the allegorical method have failed to contemplate) was held responsible for the situation in which the destitute of India lived, those who were at the bottom of the social hierarchy and could not rebel against the rigid social structure of traditional Hinduism. The Gita was regarded as a backward-looking sacred scripture, an obstacle to the progress and democratization of India. In *The Role of the Bhagavad Gita in Indian History* (1975), Prem Nath Bazaz asserts that the teachings of the Gita have helped "only to subvert human progress and nourish social evils," and insists that India should turn to science instead and bring the influence of Brahmanism in Hindu society to an end.[14]

Gandhi's appreciation of the Gita differed from the views of those I mentioned in the previous paragraph. He could never be in agreement with the bellicose stance of Gangadhar Tilak, who treated the Gita as a manual for "Kṣatriyas" which justified the use of violence in a just cause, while the arguments of the socialists could not convince him of the necessity to replace religious values with the discoveries of science and technology. In Gandhi's view, the meaning of the Gita could not be established by meticulous textual analysis or by studying its intricate metaphysics. These were not to the point because the meaning of the Gita lay somewhere else, namely in one's ability to apply its teachings to everyday life. As Gandhi declares, "Only he can interpret the Gita correctly who tries to follow its teaching in practice, and the correctness of the interpretation will be in proportion to his success in living according to the teaching."[15] It is experience and not history that defines the merit and authority of a scriptural text or "śāstra."[16] Thus, the ethical teachings are of the utmost importance, and they even sur-

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[14] Sharpe 163-64.

[15] Gandhi, vol. 34, 89.

[16] This experience of ethical striving plays the same part in Gandhi's hermeneutics as transcendental contemplation plays for Emerson, or esoteric insight for Besant: it takes the Gita out of the historical context of its composition, out of the established philosophical traditions or lineages ("saṃpradāya") that have commented on it, and out of the Orientalist's study, and gives the interpreter in question (in this case Gandhi) a privileged position.

pass reason as the main test of the validity of a sacred work.[17] Gandhi did not believe that the Gita endorsed warfare or the use of violence, since "truth," as he defined it, could not be conceived without the ethics of non-violence ("ahiṃsā").[18] This signifies that the Gita cannot be associated with a battle in which human beings are slaughtered. In his article "Meaning of the Gita," Gandhi writes that the subject-matter of the Gita "is simply the realization of *Brahman* and the means thereto; the battle is only the occasion for its teachings."[19] Gandhi also recognized the role of allegory, since it allowed him to put forward his arguments against a martial interpretation of the Gita: Duryodhana and his followers represent the satanic impulses in the human being, while Arjuna and those who fight on his side symbolize the yearning for God; the scene of the battle is our own body and "Kṛṣṇa" is the Lord dwelling in the heart of every human being.[20] The meaning of the Gita does not and cannot lie in a literal reading of the text, since it "lands one in a sea of contradictions. The letter truly killeth, the spirit giveth life."[21] Gandhi also contended that the last nineteen stanzas of the second chapter conveyed the essence of the Gita and were the key to its understanding. He claimed that those stanzas "contain the essence of dharma. They embody the highest knowledge. The principles enunciated in them are immutable. The intellect, too, is active in them in the highest degree, but it is intellect disciplined to high purpose. The knowledge they contain is the fruit of experience."[22] In these nineteen stanzas, "Kṛṣṇa" tells Arjuna how he can distinguish the man of steady wisdom ("sthita-prajña"). Arjuna's charioteer characterizes this man as composed and serene; he has achieved equanimity, is able to control his senses and experiences non-attachment. These are the human qualities that Gandhi thinks lead to self-realization and which form the essence of religion. Gandhi does not give much importance to the figure of "Kṛṣṇa" as an incarnation

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[17] Jordens 91-2.
[18] Mahatma Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 28 (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1968) 317.
[19] Gandhi, vol. 28, 318.
[20] Gandhi, vol. 28, 320.
[21] Mahatma Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 26 (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1967) 289.
[22] Gandhi, vol. 28, 316.

of God and as a divine being, and sees "bhakti" (devotion) as only a means to attain the ultimate goal, which is also the chief aim of religion: self-realization, equanimity, self-control.[23]

I would like to conclude this introductory section with the constructive insights of two scholars of religious studies: Wilfred Cantwell Smith and Gerald James Larson. In addition to Eric J. Sharpe, Smith and Larson have also made clear to me the expediency of treating religious texts from an historical perspective. According to Smith, the study of a sacred scripture (Smith writes about the Bible, but his arguments are also valid in the context of the Gita) entails more than an understanding of its historical background and of the religious text *per se*.[24] The meaning of a sacred text is inseparable from the roles it plays within human societies and as Smith states, it is very important "to see the Bible not merely as a set of ancient documents or even as a first- and second-century product but as a third-century and twelfth-century and nineteenth-century and contemporary agent."[25] Larson analyses the Gita from a cross-cultural perspective.[26] He draws attention to the different contexts in which the Gita has been read and points out that the mixed interpretations the text has elicited are historically mediated through a complex set of social, political and economical forces. These are related to British imperialism and its effects on Indian society and culture, to the work of European scholars and Orientalists, to the emergence of a Western-educated Indian intelligentsia or to the impact of Christian missions. In Larson's view, "an important step in any adequate assessment of the nature of the *Gītā* is to recognize that it is *not* simply a self-contained 'object' of study. What it is is inseparable from its appropriation, or what amounts to the same thing; what it is is inseparable from what it becomes in contextual transformation."[27] The interpreter must also take account of the fact that his or her reading of the Gita is formulated and occurs in an "environ-

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[23] Jordens 104.
[24] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "The Study of Religion and the Study of the Bible," *Rethinking Scripture: Essays from a Comparative Perspective*, ed. Miriam Levering (New York: State U of New York P, 1989).
[25] Smith 22.
[26] Gerald James Larson, "The *Bhagavad Gītā* as Cross-Cultural Process: Toward an Analysis of the Social Locations of a Religious Text," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 43 (1975): 651-69.
[27] Larson 667. These words are perfectly applicable in the context of (cross-cultural) translation.

mental context" that represents only one instance of "a dynamic cultural-historical process."[28] In brief, the Gita has been read and interpreted from diverse perspectives and in the preceding paragraphs I discussed some of them. As far as Mascaró's work is concerned, I consider Larson's insights particularly pertinent and instructive. Mascaró could never be a solitary reader of the Gita, unaffected by the long, convoluted and fascinating history of the text as a "cross-cultural process." The Gita which Mascaró stumbled upon when he was still living in his native Mallorca was not the original Hindu Gita, the "smṛti-text" of the great *Mahābhārata*. His reading of the Gita was mediated through the works of past European scholars (Paul Deussen, for instance) and the writings of English-speaking and Spanish theosophists. Besides, the Bible (the New Testament, to be more precise) also provided Mascaró (the same is true of Gandhi) a Christian ethical framework for dealing with the Sanskrit text.

MASCARÓ'S GITA AND SCHOLARSHIP

Mascaró read and meditated upon the Gita almost every day of his life and his enthusiasm for it never dwindled. I came across many references to the Gita in Mascaró's personal writings.[29] These are just a few examples: "The Gita is a lamp to lighten our minds;"[30] "My love for my Gita will never fail. In ever-burning faith and joy I will live in my Gita;"[31] "The Gita deserves to be engraved in gold;"[32] "Just read the last verses of Ch. 12 and 14 of the Gita. Am I fully conscious of their greatness? Am I *living* those verses?";[33] "How grateful should I be that heaven led me to love the Gita early in life. It may have been my salvation. I *always* loved the Gita although my love was lacking at first of a deep understanding;"[34] "The great

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[28] Larson 668.
[29] This is particularly noticeable after he translated the whole text of the Gita and after it came out as a Penguin Classic in 1962.
[30] HMC. 5th February 1947 (diary).
[31] 23rd May 1967 (diary).
[32] 20th October 1969 (notebook).
[33] 24th March 1970 (notebook).
[34] 14th January 1975 (notebook). The words in italics are underlined in Mascaró's notebooks.

words of the Gita have been the joy of my life. How they gave me life when a boy! And later on they went with me on my path of life during all the years past."[35] Nevertheless, there are scarcely any references to the Gita in Mascaró's Catalan and Spanish letters. I suppose this is because his work on the Gita was mostly undertaken in England and developed in a language that was not his own.[36] This is probably why most of Mascaró's references to the Gita occur in his private notebooks and diaries, all of them written in English. In the diary entry of 23rd January 1962, Mascaró gives a brief account of his long personal relationship with the Gita:

> This moment should be one of the greatest moments of my life: I have received a postal parcel from Penguins containing several copies of my Bhagavad Gita. How far away are the memories of this poem of joy and wonder! Readings by the clear blue sea on the white sand of a beach in Mallorca, by a cup of coffee after a meal in our flat, even read to Lluisa who has been dead so long ago. Cambridge and Ceylon, Barcelona and the Wye Valley, Comberton near Cambridge again, my first translation of some verses of Chapter XI about 1935 which led to Cranmer-Byng asking me to translate the Upanishads. My translation began in the Wye Valley about the summer of 1942, nearly 20 years ago. A verse read at mother's funeral service. Chapter II printed in 1943; on Wednesday June 12th 1957 Cohen came and asked me to do the Gita for Penguins, after three years of more work the Introduction was finished on Christmas Day 1960. Then the printing and now this morning of January 23rd 1962 I had a parcel which I am now going to open: it contains a few copies of my printed Gita: joy, joy, joy![37]

According to Mascaró, the Gita should not be examined solely from a scholarly point of view. Scholars were interested in the historical and contextual aspects of the Gita, but Mascaró was concerned with its contemporary relevance. The Gita offered a timeless message which could even lead to a transformation of mentalities in a world threatened with an atomic arms race.[38] Writing to Professor John Brough on 10th October 1957, Mascaró states:[39]

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[35] 1st July 1975 (notebook).

[36] On 11th January 1972, Mascaró writes to the Catalan surgeon and writer Josep Trueta (1897-1977), author of the important *The Spirit of Catalonia* (1946): "The Bhagavad Gita has been the great love of my life, and it will be, spiritually, the farewell of love on my death" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 257).

[37] I was not able to find out the identity of the Mallorcan Lluisa. Mascaró's "mother" was Millicent Mackenzie, who died in December 1942. Mascaró was so attached to her that he used to call her "mother." More than a year before the passage was written (on 18th December 1960), Mascaró had noted down in his diary: "A very foggy night. Great joy. This evening, about 6:30, I have finished my Introduction to the Bhagavad Gita. I am glad it is on an 18th day as the Gita has 18 chapters and I have taken 18 years to do the translation which I began in 1942. I should record one day the story of my Gita. How I began to read it when a boy in Mallorca; how I began to read it a little in Sanskrit in 1923: and how it has been the friend of my life."

[38] Although Mascaró regarded the Gita as a text that transcended its contextual origin and religious foundations, he would never agree with certain readings of that scripture. In his writings, he completely overlooks to mention what the Gita symbolized to the Indian national movement, and though he was aware of what the Gita meant to

> I began to read the Gita over thirty years ago in a poor Spanish translation done from the English, and it led me to do Sanskrit and English at Cambridge. I cannot say, of course, that I know the Gita well, but it has been the book which has been most in my mind during my life. Its message of wisdom and love seems to me to be above time, and in these days of atom bombs it may be wanted more than ever. (...)
> In my translation I aim at giving my living impressions of the original. Only in so far as old ideas can live again in us they interest me: the task of collecting dead ideas of the past, however very interesting for historical purposes, is a task for which I am not qualified. I used to discuss this problem with Das Gupta, as I saw him once a week for five years in Cambridge. Of course his great work is important, but in my humble way I am interested in the life which we can find in the written word.[40]

The key word in this passage and in the passages from the notebooks and diaries cited above is "life," as well as "live" and "living" which are associated with it. The word "life" signifies different things depending on the context in which it occurs, but in Mascaró's case it is inseparable from the concept of "experience." The Gita, as I have shown above, could address the "same questions" which intrigued a nineteenth-century American writer from Massachusetts; and for Gandhi, the meaning of the Gita derived from the experiential dimension of its teachings, which could only be grasped by readers who were able to put them into practice.[41] In his introduction to the Gita, Mascaró says that "the value of a spiritual scripture is its value to us here and now, and the real problem is *how to translate its light into life*."[42] The image is interesting; translation is not only a scholarly activity which requires linguistic proficiency and

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Gandhi, Gangadhar Tilak's interpretation would be obnoxious to him. An interpretation of the Gita that refused to acknowledge the text's message as a message of peace and goodwill would be irreconcilable with Mascaró's pacifist views. This will become clearer in the next section.

[39] John Brough (1917-1984) was a Sanskrit scholar and university lecturer born in Scotland. He was the author of various articles on Sanskrit literature and linguistics. His *Poems from the Sanskrit* were published in 1968 in the Penguin Classic series.

[40] HMC. It was John Brough who suggested Mascaró as a translator of the Gita to John Michael Cohen (1903-1989), E. V. Rieu's Penguin Classics assistant and translator of Spanish and Russian literature. It is worth citing what Mascaró states in the beginning of his letter to the Sanskrit scholar: "Last June, Mr. J. M. Cohen asked me if I might be interested to translate the Bhagavad Gita for the Penguin Classics. I agreed and only this morning I have received their signed Agreement. (...) When I asked Mr. Cohen who had mentioned my name to him, he told me that you had suggested it, and that he had also heard about me from Mr. Watkins, the Publisher. Now I want to thank you, Professor Brough, and thank you most sincerely, for having so kindly thought about me in connection with this work."

[41] Mahatma Gandhi was not the only Indian national figure to highlight the importance of experience in religion. Famous Neo-Hindu apologists such as Swami Vivekananda or Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan represented Hinduism as a universal religion based upon experience and insight and therefore superior to other religions (Christianity was often the target of their apologetics). Mascaró was also very much attracted to this experiential approach to religion, which he found not only in the writings of Vivekananda and Radhakrishnan, but also in the pioneering work on the subject, namely William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, published in 1902 (Mascaró had a copy of James's book in his personal library).

[42] Mascaró, *Gita* xlviii. The italics are mine.

rigorous rendering of words and expressions, but an individual quest for meaning as well, the capacity to render the contents of a text composed in a remote past intelligible and applicable to one's present life, an attempt to reach the "light" that transcends the culturally bound concepts or "written words," since, as Mascaró writes, "spiritual experience is the only source of true spiritual faith."[43] The term "life" stands, I suggest, for the language into which the text is translated, the recipient of the "light" that only the original can shed. Yet, as it will be seen in the next section, the "light" that one finds in the Gita might not be the "light" that it actually sheds in its original religious context. Actually, Mascaró takes for granted the transparency of the Gita and his interpretation of it, unmindful of the manipulative powers of the translator.

The scholar-translator might find the ideas expounded by Mascaró and other "Romantic" interpreters of the Gita debatable (in the next chapter, I will discuss the reaction of a distinguished English scholar to Mascaró's version of the Gita). In his letter to Professor Brough, Mascaró mentions the great Indian scholar Surendranath Dasgupta (1887-1952), with whom he used to consult on subjects related to Sanskrit literature and Indian thought when the latter was living in Cambridge in the late 1940s.[44] In the passage cited above, Mascaró claims that the message of the Gita seems to him to be "above time" and that he is not qualified to collect "dead ideas of the past," but this does not signify that he showed indifference for the work of scholars (the word "dead," as apposed to "life," might indeed have a pejorative or ironic connotation, but there is no reason to think that Mascaró used it in that sense). Another prominent scholar for whom Mascaró had a great respect and a personal admiration was Edward J. Thomas (1869-1958), author of several important books on Buddhist history (*The History of*

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[43] Mascaró, *Gita* li.

[44] On 4th September 1947, Mascaró tells the Mallorcan poet and essayist Miquel Ferrà (1885-1947): "Now I am a great friend of Prof. Dasgupta, who has been living in Cambridge for two years with his wife. The poor man is in bed with a heart hypertrophy. I have seen him almost every week. He is one of the most remarkable scholars of the world and the greatest of modern India. I am astonished to see how much he knows about Indian things and how little I know!" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 124). Writing to the Spanish writer and politican Salvador de Madariaga (1886-1978) on 17th December 1945, Mascaró points out that Dasgupta often talks to him in Sanskrit ("Me charla con frecuencia en sánscrito") (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 213).

Buddhist Thought and *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History* are two of his most well-known works) and also a translator of the Gita (his *The Song of the Lord: Bhagavadgita* came out in 1931 in the Wisdom of the East Series).[45] In Mascaró's Catalan and Spanish letters, the human qualities of the Buddhist scholar are very often extolled and his boundless knowledge always underscored. Nonetheless, the differences that separated the Indian and English scholars from the Mallorcan translator were substantial; Mascaró's writings and publications cannot be weighed against the scholarly output of Dasgupta or Thomas. It was not the difference in productivity and in scholarly talents though that distressed Mascaró. Writing to his Indian friend Lakshmi Dhar on 8th April 1968,[46] Mascaró confides:

> It took me a long time to discover that all the time I devoted to Dr. Thomas and to Prof. Dasgupta was time lost. They were scholars, great scholars, but they lacked the spiritual and poetical imagination; and in their pride of learning they failed to see my real value, and they never gave me a word of real encouragement. And I foolishly had endless patience with them, and lost my time. But all good work has its reward: let us never, never, be weary of good work.[47]

This is not entirely true since Mascaró received help from Dasgupta[48] and he never complains in his letters about any lack of encouragement from his knowledgeable English friend.[49] Yet, despite Mascaró's slight contradictions and mixed feelings, he could not bow to what he per-

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[45] As a gesture of friendship, Edward J. Thomas left the royalties of his books to Mascaró before he died.

[46] I was not able to find much about the life and work of Lakshmi Dhar. He was a lecturer in Hindi at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the 1940s and seems to have been a very good friend of Mascaró. In a letter he wrote to Mascaró, dated 29th May 1967, Dhar states that he looks after the training in Hindi of government officials in the state of Mysore (HMC). Dhar, who attended the talk that Mascaró delivered at the Royal Society of Literature in 1944 is mentioned on page 97 of *Essays by Divers Hands*.

[47] HMC. On 10th September 1948 (twenty years before the letter to Dhar was written), Mascaró had recorded in his diary: "After a weary morning spent reading unprofitable translations from Buddhist books I came upon the Dhammapada this evening. It was like coming from darkness into light. How intolerably dull is my dear Dr. E. J. T.! His Buddhism is indeed like a 'log'! Sad, very sad" (HMC).

[48] For instance, in a letter to Josep Trueta dated 15th March 1950, Mascaró, who was at that time working on the *Yoga Sūtra* of Patañjali, states that he is lucky to have the help of the author of *A History of Indian Philosophy* ("Tinc la sort de tenir l'ajuda del Prof. Dasgupta, l'autor de l'obra monumental 'History of Indian Philosophy'") (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 249).

[49] Writing to the his good friend the Catalan philosopher Joaquim Xirau i Palau (1895-1946) on 30th July 1942, Mascaró says: "Every time I see him [Dr. Thomas], my admiration increases. He is already 74 years old and it is painful to think that one day I will not have his help and light." (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 275). In another letter to Xirau, written on 11th February 1943, he states that "Next to Mrs. Mackenzie, [Dr. Thomas] is probably my best friend in this country. He is always ready to help with his knowledge." (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 284). Edward J. Thomas wrote the foreword to *Himalayas of the Soul* (1938), Mascaró's first major publication in English. There he writes that the Upanishads seem to him "to have been admirably expressed and transmuted into English by Mr. Mascaró" (Mascaró, *Himalayas* 11-12).

ceived as the scholars' lack of personal involvement with the texts they studied and their interest in linguistic, contextual and historical issues. It is not thus surprising to read the following comment made by the Mallorcan translator on 18th August 1941: "The Sanskrit scholars of the Romantic epoch and those who came after were idealists, but the present ones are scientific men of erudition with souls of dictionary and 'cross-word puzzles'."[50] Still more illuminating are the words Mascaró wrote to Xirau one year later on 30th July 1942:

> An old manuscript about love would interest the Sanskrit professor, but what love is does not interest him at all! It is the realistic or better still, materialistic eruditism of so many scholars. It is the psychological materialism that destroys values, or a lifeless traditional dogmatism which still dominates many churches, without perfume and colour, without poetry, that is, without spiritual life. It still has a little of social life, and a lot of economical life! But it cannot satisfy my spirit which yearns more and more for eternal things.[51]

The unavoidable question raised by this passage is, I think, why Mascaró regards the work of scholars – their "materialistic eruditism" or dogmatic attitudes – as detrimental to the cultivation of spiritual values. I will attempt to offer an answer. In a thought-provoking article, the American scholar Sheldon Pollock analyses how Indian studies were at the service of National Socialism in Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945, and how the combination of "science" and an intense cultural-nationalist quest for identity "endowed German Indology with its specific power and significance."[52] Particularly relevant for the arguments I am trying to put forward is Pollock's mention of *Wissenschaft* (that is, "the pursuit of knowledge," "scholarship," or "science"), as well as of the positivist ideals, the value-free analysis and the scientific, objective scholarship that were promoted by competent German scholars who were nevertheless directly or indirectly involved in the propagation of National Socialist ideals. These scholars, claiming to use scientific methods in their investigations, ended up proclaiming the superior-

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[50] Letter to Joaquim Xirau (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 268).

[51] In Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 275. I have translated the Catalan word "eruditisme" for "eruditism" because "erudition" does not convey the meaning that Mascaró attributes to "eruditisme," which he uses in a derogatory way.

[52] Sheldon Pollock, "Deep Orientalism? Notes on Sanskrit and Power beyond the Raj," *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, South Asia Seminar Ser. (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1993) 84.

ity of the so-called "Aryan race" (the outcome of the application of such theories is too well-known).[53] Mascaró was aware that the "pursuit of knowledge" that stirred some Sanskrit professors could be in fact harmful and this is why he decries the "realistic eruditism" (a kind of *Wissenschaft*) that went hand in hand with materialism and dogmatism. I am not at all implying that an objective study or analysis of a cultural artefact such as the Gita should not be encouraged and that a subjective or biased reading is more humane and thus more ethically desirable, as if the latter was not accountable for careless ambiguities and tragic misconceptions. I mention this because Mascaró's expressions of genuine enthusiasm seem sometimes to underestimate the efforts of scholars engaged in academic work. Indeed, if Mascaró's aim, as he writes to Professor John Brough, is to give his "living impressions of the original," there are not many chances that the Gita will be interpreted from a detached and neutral standpoint.[54] Nevertheless, my intention is simply to draw attention to Mascaró's position and to show that his less than flattering remarks on the work of contemporary scholars were not groundless or unjustifiable, but highly pertinent. German scholars who published their works during the National Socialist period could perfectly well be the target of Mascaró's criticism: the passages from Mascaró's letters quoted above, it is worth pointing out, were written in 1941 and 1942 respectively.[55] The incidents that took place in Germany were not isolated phenomena. In fact, many of the atrocities perpetrated in the twentieth century were the work of skilful scientists and politicians with unquestionable intellectual talents who were guided by their alleged "ob-

[53] One of the principal aims of Pollock's article is to highlight the illusory character of a scholarship that denies its own relativism and that claims to be objective. As Pollock maintains, "objectivity is bounded by subjectivity; and (...) the only form of it that can appear value-free is the one that conforms fully to the dominant ideology, which alone remains, in the absence of critique, invisible as ideology" (Pollock 96).

[54] This is not, as I shall show later, totally true because Mascaró's living impressions were also culturally bound.

[55] The eminent German Indologist Jakob Wilhelm Hauer, Professor of Religions at Tubingen, is a case in point. In 1934, he published a book on the Gita with the title *Eine indo-arische Metaphysik des Kampfes und der Tat*. He says that the Gita is an "Aryan" text, and celebrates the "Kṣatriya" ideal and the martial temperament of the Indo-Germanic "race" (Sharpe 126-32). Despite the racialism of much German Indology, scholars continued to believe that their investigations aimed at finding the objective truth. Even though Mascaró's approach to sacred scriptures such as the Gita is never solidly grounded on sophisticated scholarship, his work and goal deserve, I think, when contrasted with the German Indology that was practiced in the period 1933-1945, only praise. It is worth mentioning that there is a copy (in German) of Hauer's work in Mascaró's library. This is not unexpected and confirms that Mascaró was familiar with the work of scholars working in Nazi Germany.

jectivity." The American physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967) is a case in point. His love for the Gita is well-known, but his reading of the text is in stark contrast with Mascaró's. A gifted and dedicated scientist with a rudimentary knowledge of Sanskrit, Oppenheimer was actively involved in the development of the nuclear weapon that cost the lives of thousands of men, women and children. James A. Hijiya comments that "To reinforce his determination to build the bomb, Oppenheimer used the Gita."[56] He thought about Gita 11.12 ("If the light of a thousand suns suddenly rose in the sky, that splendour might be compared to the radiance of the Supreme Spirit"[57]) when he beheld the glowing "splendour" of the first nuclear explosion on 16th July 1945. Like the hero of the Gita, who fought because it was his duty to fight, the steely-minded and firm Oppenheimer believed that he was also fulfilling his duty to his nation (without any attachment to the consequences of his actions). Yet, he was not totally free from desire (the enemy of Arjuna in the Gita) when he exulted over the devastation caused by the nuclear bomb in the city of Hiroshima.[58] Mascaró never mentions the American scientist in his writings, but when he condemns the prevailing rationalism and dogmatism, and the materialistic world-view "without perfume and colour, without poetry," he could well be condemning the scientific ruthlessness of men like Oppenheimer.

It was not as a scholar writing for an academic journal that Mascaró translated chapter eleven of the Gita into Catalan in 1935. This was not only Mascaró's first translation from the Sanskrit but also – a fact that is not less significant – the first rendering of a Sanskrit text into Catalan.[59] Mascaró's translation was published in the important Mallorcan journal *La Nostra Terra* ("Our Homeland").[60] Mascaró would return to the Gita in 1942, but this time in a lan-

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[56] James A. Hijiya, "The 'Gita' of J. Robert Oppenheimer," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 144 (2000): 129.
[57] Mascaró, *Gita* 53.
[58] Hijiya 154-55.
[59] Two Spanish translations of the Gita had come out in 1896. One of these was the "poor Spanish translation" that Mascaró mentions in his letter to Professor John Brough.
[60] Juan Mascaró, "Bhagavadgita: El Poema del Senyor," *La Nostra Terra* 93-94 (1935): 422-28. The journal *La Nostra Terra* was established in Palma in 1928. In *Cultura i Vida a Mallorca entre la Guerra i la Postguerra*

guage that was not his own. He worked on his English version of the Sanskrit text from 1942 till 1960, but he was sometimes forced to interrupt his work due to other assignments he had in hand, such as his anthology of sacred texts *Lamps of Fire*,[61] or his edition of Keats's poetry, published in Mallorca, *Poems by John Keats: A Selection and Introduction by J. Mascaró*.[62] Mascaró noted down his translation of the Gita in several notebooks before he sent the typed and final version to Penguins twenty years later. The first notebook contains the translation of chapter one (plus the first eight verses of chapter two), and also some of Mascaró's notes to works that had already been published on the Gita, most of them translations.[63] I encountered references to these works: K. T. Telang's version of the Gita for the "Sacred Books of the East series" (1882), Charles Johnston's *The Bhagavad Gita: The Songs of the Master* (1908), W. Douglas P. Hill's *The Bhagavadgita* (1927), Étienne Lamotte's *Notes sur la Bhagavad-gita* (1929), Edward J. Thomas's the *Song of the Lord*, as well as D. S. Sarma's *Lectures on the Bhagavad Gita: With an English Translation of the Gita* (1937).[64] Mascaró's next translation was chapter two of the Gita (1943), published by Curwen Press, a small publisher based in Cambridge.[65] On 28th August 1954, Mascaró was invited to give a talk on the Gita at the

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(1930-1950), Biblioteca Serra D'Or (Barcelona: L'Abadia de Montserrat, 1978) 61-62, the Mallorcan historian and writer Josep Massot i Muntaner points out that since its first appearance, *La Nostra Terra* "was destined to become the most interesting periodic publication of all time in Majorca" ("estava destinada a esdevenir la publicació periòdica més interessant de tots els temps a Mallorca"). It published articles on literature, art and science, as well as translations of foreign authors. It also played a very important role in the Catalan literary and cultural revival. The Spanish Civil War would nevertheless put an end to its publication in July 1936.

[61] Juan Mascaró, ed., *Lamps of Fire: From the Scriptures and Wisdom of the World* (Palma de Mallorca: Moll, 1958).

[62] Juan Mascaró, ed., *Poems by John Keats: A Selection and Introduction*, Exemplaria Mundi (Palma de Mallorca: Moll, 1955).

[63] The first date to appear in the notebook is 22nd May 1942. Nonetheless, it seems that Mascaró started to work on the Gita only a few months later (on 8th August). The last date to come up in the notebook is 4th November 1942. All the notebooks are in HMC.

[64] Needless to say, Mascaró read other translations of the Gita apart from those he mentions in his notebooks. He owed a large number of editions and translations of the Gita. The most curious version of the Gita I came upon in Mascaró's personal library was a translation in Esperanto made by the famous Brazilian Esperantist of Czech origin Francisco Valdomiro Lorenz (1872-1957), who was also actively involved in Spiritualism.

[65] Juan Mascaró, trans., *Bhagavad-Gita, The Divine Song: Chapter II, The Path of Wisdom* (Cambridge: Curwen Press, 1943). Mascaró's translation was published (one year later) as "Bhagavad-Gita: The Path of Wisdom" in the journal *Indian Art and Letters* 18 (1944): 80-84.

Royal Castle of Het Oude Loo in Apeldoorn, Holland,[66] and in 1962, his Gita is finally published in the Penguin Classics series.[67] Mascaró is never exact about the year in which he first came upon a copy of the Gita in Mallorca and he often gives contradictory information on the subject. I think that he gained access to the Gita through the work of certain Spanish theosophists who had introduced into Spain the esoteric writings and teachings of Madam Blavatsky and her disciples, as well as the translations of sacred texts and other works on Eastern religions written by English theosophists.[68] Gregori Mir points out that in Barcelona the interest in India was not only cultural and theosophical, and that nationalist issues could also be on the agenda of Catalan intellectuals, since the Theosophical Movement, headed by Annie Besant, helped to further the ideals of the nationalist movement in India both within and outside the Indian continent.[69] Although Mascaró never took theosophical ideas seriously, the allegorical interpretation of the Gita that he always endorsed can be traced back to his early readings of theosophical literature.

Mascaró was at least acquainted with the work of two important Catalan theosophists: Josep Roviralta Borrell and Ramón Maynadé. Writing to Maria Solà de Sellarés on 28th No-

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[66] Juan Mascaró, *A Star from the East: An Appreciation of the Bhagavad Gita*, fwd. Hugh I'Anson Fausset (Barnet: Stellar Press, 1954). This lecture includes Mascaró's version of chapter six of the Gita.

[67] In 1970, a hard-back copy of *The Bhagavad Gita* was published by Rider. The translation and the introduction were based on the sixth Penguin impression of 1969, but Mascaró added a new preface to it: Juan Mascaró, *The Bhagavad Gita* (London: Rider-Hutchinson, 1970).

[68] As far as the origin of the Theosophical Movement in Span is concerned, I was fortunate to find an interesting essay by Jordi Pomés Vives of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona titled "Diálogo Oriente-Occidente en la España de finales del siglo XIX. El primer teosofismo español (1888-1906): un movimiento religioso heterodoxo bien integrado en los movimientos sociales de su época," *Història Moderna i Contemporània* 4 (2006): 55-73, 5 Nov. 2007 <http://seneca.uab.es/hmic/2006/index.html>.

[69] Gregori Mir, "Aproximació a la Vida i Obra de Juan Mascaró," introduction, *Correspondència* (vol. 1) 17-18. Mir situates Mascaró within the larger context of the Spanish and Catalan history before and after the Civil War. He emphasizes, for example, that Mascaró told him more than once that what attracted him to the "Catalanism" was that its "struggle" was essentially cultural and pacific as the nationalism in India (Mir does not mention it, but Mascaró had almost certainly in mind the Indian nationalism as represented by Mahatma Gandhi). Mir also refers to the visit that Jawaharlal Nehru paid to the nationalist leader and President of the "Generalitat de Catalunya" (Government of Catalonia), Lluís Companys, during the Spanish Civil War. It is worth pointing out that in 1931 (and this is another instance of the interest in Indian culture and politics that arose in Catalonia and Mallorca in the first decades of the twentieth century) Josep Sureda i Blanes (1890-1984), a chemist and writer from Mallorca, wrote an article on Gandhi for *La Nostra Terra*. Sureda, with whom Mascaró corresponded (there are two letters from Sureda to Mascaró in Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 236-237), writes about the influence of the Gita on the Indian politician in his article (*La Nostra Terra* 39 (1931): 99-100). I am indebted to Gregori Mir for drawing my attention to this interesting article.

vember 1966, he states: "As far as the edition of the *Gita* by Roviralta Borrell is concerned, I remember having read it when I was about 15 years old, and also another one made by a gentleman from Barcelona who knew a little Sanskrit. I saw him once, but I do not remember his name now."[70] According to Jordi Pomés Vives, the Spanish theosophists were linguistically very well prepared ("preparadísimos"),[71] but Mascaró is much more reserved in his appreciation of their linguistic talents. Writing to Maria Solà, he confides that after he looked at Roviralta's manuscripts, he had to conclude that he knew very little Sanskrit ("en sabia ben poc de sànscrit!"). Nevertheless, Mascaró concedes that the translator of the Gita into Spanish, who was also a translator of Shakespeare, could not do much more in his dull and insipid Castilian ("Però va fer el que pogué en un castellà ben fat, insípid").[72] It was not only as an author of translations and articles for theosophical journals that Roviralta gained his reputation. He was one of the presidents of the theosophical branch of Barcelona,[73] and the principal theosophical leader in Barcelona at least till the 1910s.[74] Ramón Maynadé was also an important figure of the Spanish theosophical scene. A prolific writer who had written more than 150 books by 1927, he was the founder of the publishing house "Biblioteca Orientalista," and of the bookshop "La Librería Orientalista," located in Barcelona.[75] There are three works by Maynadé in Mascaró's library: *La Teosofía y su Obra* (1912), *La Mansedumbre: Cualidad de Cualidades* (1912) and *Labor de Servicio en la Orden de la Estrella de Oriente* (1913).[76] Apart from the work of these two Spanish theosophists, Mascaró was also familiar with Besant and Bhaga-

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[70] Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 217. Maria Solà de Sellarés was a Catalan expatriate who became a university lecturer in South America, where she settled down in 1939. The linguist and scholar José Alemany Bolufer also published a translation of the Gita in 1896, the year in which Roviralta's version came out (Vives 68). I wonder if the "gentleman from Barcelona" that Mascaró refers to in his letter was Alemany Bolufer.

[71] Vives 61.

[72] Mascaró, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 224. The letter to Maria Solá was written on 20th April 1972.

[73] Vives 57.

[74] Vives 60.

[75] Vives 60.

[76] In a letter to a friend, Mascaró refers to a "D. Ramón," whom I suspect might be the theosophist Ramón Maynadé. He writes: "More than two weeks have passed since I spoke to D. Ramón about my work on Hatha Yoga. He mentioned to me the convenience of translating it" ("Hace mas de 2 semanas hablando con D. Ramón de mi obra de Hatha Yoga me indicó la conveniencia de traducirla"). The letter, written on 25th November 1920, was in Gregori Mir's house in Mallorca when I read it on 19th September 2005.

van Das's translation of the Gita (1905), for example, and with the writings of Charles Johnston and William Q. Judge.[77] This does not mean that he subscribed to their views or accepted them uncritically.[78] It seems undeniable to me that without the cultural and political transformations that took place in Spain in the first decades of the twentieth century, Mascaró would hardly have thought about travelling to England to study Sanskrit. In fact, one of Vives's arguments is that the Oriental renaissance in Spain was instigated by the Theosophical Movement. All the circumstances were propitious and must have certainly kindled Mascaró's interest in the sacred scriptures of India and especially in the Gita, which had been so widely studied by theosophists themselves. Finally, it must be noted that the fascist and conservative regime of General Franco would put an end to the public activities of those who were associated with the Theosophical Movement, many of whom professed liberal ideas and progressive political views that were irreconcilable with the conservative, right-wing ideology of the new regime. It is not thus surprising that Mascaró should have decided to settle down in England when the war started in Spain.

THE CHRISTIAN ETHICS OF THE GITA

The students of the Gita cited in the first section eschewed literal interpretations and seized the Sanskrit text with the aim of articulating and expounding their theories and world-views. Mascaró attempted the same. For example, in his introductions, Mascaró endeavoured to confer universal validity on the Sanskrit and Pali texts he translated by placing them along-

[77] In Mascaró's library, I found an edition of *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali: An Interpretation by William Q. Judge*, originally published by the Theosophical Publishing Society in 1889.

[78] Writing to Maria Solá on 12th May 1972, he states: "(...) Annie Besant, to whom I paid a visit in London two years before she died, confused me with questions and answers of a vulgar occultism. (...) Her value was political and social, but it was neither, I think, a literary value, nor a value of erudition and poetry. Where there is no value of poetry, there is not great spiritual value, since the great spiritual values are *at least* values of beauty and love, that is to say, values of poetry. There are interesting things in what I have just mentioned: theosophy, occultism, astrology, etc, but in the lowest levels there are great dangers for young and old people who do not have critical sense, the critical sense that can distinguish gold from brass, the true and good poetry from the shallow imitation, faith from fanaticism, the highly creative imagination from the small, insignificant and disorientating, fictitious, and chimerical, a destructive fantasy of all the great spiritual values that are always high poetry (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 227-28).

side other (mainly European) literary and Christian texts.[79] Nevertheless, this universality is a seeming universality, since Mascaró relocates the Gita, the Upanishads and the Dhammapada in his own particular socio-religious context.[80] Thus, Sanskrit literature is portrayed as essentially romantic because India had always been equated with idealism and spirituality, and also because Romantic writers were Mascaró's own favourite writers. As he writes: "Sanskrit literature is, on the whole, a romantic literature interwoven with idealism and practical wisdom, and with a passionate longing for spiritual vision."[81] Although Mascaró suggests a connection between the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita, the Indian reality, whether ancient or modern, is for the most part ignored. Mascaró devotes a few paragraphs to explaining the historical and literary context of the battle that opposes Arjuna against his relatives, but these explanations are immediately superseded by his assertion that the Gita, unlike the *Mahābhārata*, in which it is incorporated, should be read as a symbolic work.[82] In this section and in the next, I will examine the ethical or moral value which Mascaró attributed to the Gita and how it figured in his assessment of Indian spirituality. I am not suggesting that the Gita is devoid of a moral base or code, but only that this is culturally specific. In a moral system such as the one found in "dharma" literature, morality is hierarchical, and what is right for one class of persons is not right for another. One should not privilege a moral system that has the same rules for all, and assume that only such a system can be called "moral." In the Gita, Surendranath Dasgupta clarifies, actions are not good or bad in themselves, since "it is only our desires and attachments which make the actions produce their bad effects with reference to us, and which render them sinful for us." The killing of kinsmen in the battle-field should not make Arjuna dejected because, as Dasgupta emphasizes, "If actions are performed from a sense of obedi-

[79] This does not mean that Mascaró considered the Gita and the other texts he translated less important than the works of the Western writers he cites throughout his introductions. However, I am very much aware that readers with a scholarly interest in Sanskrit literature or Indian thought might feel inclined to think that the Gita and the other texts he translated are in the background and rarely at the centre of Mascaró's introductions.
[80] I have more to say about this topic in the last chapter of the thesis.
[81] Mascaró, *Gita* xxxiv.
[82] Mascaró, *Gita* xlvi-xlvii.

ence to scriptural commands, caste-duties or duties of customary morality, then such actions, in spite of their bad consequences, would not be regarded as bad."[83] By focusing on the allegorical meaning of the Gita, Mascaró is able to filter the contents of the text through his own lenses and highlight the spiritual values (love, for instance) that the text communicated to him. In short, the interpretation of texts is not a detached, disinterested process. Yet, Mascaró believed that his "spiritual insight" could uncover the essence or inner meaning of the Gita. This "spiritual insight" is never instinctive or arbitrary, but context-bound and embedded in a specific cultural, religious or philosophical tradition.

As far as the allegorical meaning of he Gita is concerned, Mascaró is keen on proving that the Gita does not and cannot depict a real war. In his introduction, Mascaró highlights the spiritual or inner meaning of the text and undervalues the material event of the physical battle. The adjective "spiritual" occurs quite a few times in expressions such as "spiritual purposes," "spiritual interpretation," "spiritual symbols," "spiritual meaning," "spiritual reader" and also "spiritual poem."[84] Whether Mascaró was aware of it or not, his assessment of the Gita raises questions of a complex nature that can be traced back to the early Christian era, when biblical exegesis was an activity of enormous significance. Thus, I suggest that the two main types of biblical interpretation ("the "literal" and the "allegorical") that coexisted in the first Christian centuries, the relationship between the Old Testament and the New, and particularly the well-known words of Saint Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:6 ("the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life") underlie, though tacitly, Mascaró's introduction.[85] I am not claiming though that Mascaró had in mind patristic exegesis when he wrote the introduction to the Gita, but it is worth consider-

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[83] Surendranath Dasgupta, "The Philosophy of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*," *A History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 2 (1922; Delhi: Motilal, 1975) 522-23.
[84] Mascaró, *Gita* xlvii-xlviii.
[85] It is not my intention to examine these and other questions related to the complex and also fascinating history of biblical exegesis. First, I am not competent to discuss the subject with scholarly rigour and secondly, it seems pointless to write about Mascaró's introduction with the early Christian writings in mind. The introduction that Mascaró wrote is quite plain; however, it seems obvious to me, and this is what I want to stress in this section, that Mascaró's reading of the New Testament shaped and interfered in his reading of the Gita.

ing how the words of the Saint Paul might have informed his understanding of the text, since three years later he quotes them in his introduction to the Upanishads[86] and Gandhi (as I have already shown) resorts to them as well in order to justify his own allegorical interpretation of the Gita. The principal question lies however in the appropriateness of using 2 Corinthians 3:6 as a text that can shed light upon the meaning of an ancient Indian text such as the Gita. It will be useful to consider the words of Paul in the context in which they were employed. The early Christian exegetes were interested in demonstrating how the material events of the Old Testament foreshadowed the spiritual truths revealed by Christ in the New. As Sandra M. Schneiders points out: "The problem of how the Christian is to interpret the Old Testament in light of the New and the New Testament against the background of the Old was the central hermeneutical problem of the Christian use of Scripture during the first half of the Christian era."[87] This was the main purpose of spiritual exegesis and it is found not only in the writings of the Fathers but also in the Gospels and in the apostolic writings. 2 Corinthians 3:6-16 was only one of several passages in the New Testament (Hebrews 10:1 is another important one[88]) that helped the early theologians to work out their theory of exegesis,[89] which was based on allegory and symbolism. The "letter" was the literal sense, the law of the Old Testament as it was interpreted by the Jews, but only by the aid of the spirit could the underlying meaning of the Old Testament be grasped. For the ancient Christian interpreters, the spiritual sense was the true meaning of the sacred scripture, which was regarded as the word of God. But not all

[86] "The ritual of adoration in the *Vedas*, when men felt the glory of this world and prayed for light, must in time have become the routine of prayers of darkness for the riches of this world. We find in the *Upanishads* a reaction against external religion; and when ideas of the *Vedas* are accepted they are given a spiritual interpretation. It is the permanent struggle between the letter that kills and the spirit that gives life." In Juan Mascaró, trans., *The Upanishads*, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin) 12. This passage shows that Mascaró thought of the relationship between the Vedas and the Upanishads in terms of the interpretation that the apostle Saint Paul gave to the Old and New Testaments. In the rest of the paragraph, I will discuss, though succinctly, the approach to biblical interpretation known as "spiritual exegesis."

[87] Sandra M. Schneiders, "Scripture and Spirituality," *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*, ed. Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff in collaboration with Jean Leclercq, vol. 16, World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest (London: Routledge, 1985) 4.

[88] "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things (...)."

[89] Henri Crouzel, "Spiritual Exegesis," *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner (London: Burns, 1975) 128.

readers were prepared to fathom God's message in the Bible and spiritual exegesis was only possible when the interpreter and believer was the recipient of divine illumination; otherwise, the biblical text could not be deciphered correctly and its transcendent and figurative meaning understood.[90]

Mascaró often drew parallels between the Gita and the Gospels. In his lecture *A Star from the East: An Appreciation of the Bhagavad Gita,* he writes that "It is interesting to consider the different ways how the gospels of Christianity and the gospel of the Bhagavad Gita deliver their spiritual message."[91] Though it is often described as the "New Testament" of the Hindus, the Gita is not on a par with the most important sacred text of Christianity (actually, it does not even have the status of "śruti" or sacred scripture; only the Veda is "śruti" and the Gita belongs to "smṛti"). Yet, these considerations did not prevent Mascaró from drawing his analogies between Gita 6.31 and John 14:15-16, Gita 9.31 and John 6:35, Gita 3.30 and 9.27 and 1 Corinthians 10:31, and finally between Gita 2.41 and 4.40 and Luke 9:62.[92] In order to justify his allegorical reading of the Gita, Mascaró draws on one of the main themes of Jesus' message in the Gospels: the "Kingdom of God" (Luke 17:20-21, for example). He comments: "it is obvious that the war in the *Bhagavad Gita* has a symbolic meaning. (...) We find in the *Gita* that there is going to be a great battle for the rule of a Kingdom; and how can we doubt that this is the Kingdom of Heaven, the kingdom of the soul?" The words that Mascaró writes next have a distinctive theosophical flavour: "Are we going to allow the forces of light in us or the forces of darkness to win? And yet, how easy not to fight, and to find reasons to with-

[90] Crouzel 128-29 and Schneiders 6 and 17.

[91] The title itself contains a reference to Mathew 2:1-12. The "Star from the East" is the star that guided the wise men to Bethlehem (Jesus' birthplace). In his foreword to the lecture, the writer Hugh I'Anson Fausset states that "One of the revealing virtues of his [Mascaró's] address lies in the comparisons which he draws so suggestively and inevitably between the sayings of Krishna and of Christ, sayings which sprang from the same eternal fount." I cannot provide page numbers because Mascaró's printed talk does not have pagination.

[92] In the first two examples, Mascaró does not mention which words of Jesus he has in mind when he writes that "the voice of Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita sounds like the voice of Jesus." Yet, in Mascaró's version, Gita 6.31 and 9.31 resemble (in a conspicuous way, I would say) the passages from the Gospel of John I quoted. Mascaró would later include some of these parallels between the words of Jesus and those of Krishna in his introduction to the Gita (Mascaró, *Gita* lv and lviii).

draw from the battle! In the *Bhagavad Gita* Arjuna becomes the soul of man and Krishna the charioteer of the soul."[93] Interestingly, Mascaró had recorded very similar ideas in a notebook entry dated 15th March 1960: "The Pandava thoughts and emotions fight against the Kaurava thoughts and emotions. A vast army of inner consciousness ready to fight with another army of consciousness;" (...) "The Song of God describes the battle for inner peace, for the conquest of the inner kingdom. On the brutal fact of a physical crucifixion Christianity finds the mystery of the Universe. On the disturbance of a physical battle the Gita finds the path that leads to inner victory."[94] Inside one of the several copies of the King James Bible which belonged to Mascaró, I read the following words: "Read these books poetically and they are full of supernatural splendour. Read them literally and we shall find superstitious littleness." Below this inscription there was Mascaró's signature and also the date when he had written it: 17th October 1963. The Book of Psalms, which Mascaró greatly enjoyed and admired, offers an illuminating example that can account for Mascaró's unwillingness to concede that fighting or violent actions could be portrayed in sacred scriptures (I will return to this topic in the next paragraphs). If the Psalms are read literally, what often emerges is an avenging and ruthless God. But the Christian cannot read them in such a way, since they would be at odds with the (in general) conciliatory teachings of Jesus; hence the importance attached to the spiritual or allegorical reading of the Old Testament (and also of the New). Mascaró's symbolic interpretation of the Gita was to a large extent inspired by the Christian scriptures, particularly the Gospels and the letters of Saint Paul. It must be mentioned as well that Mascaró was an avid

[93] Mascaró, *Gita* xlvi-xlvii. It is worth quoting what Mascaró wrote in the introduction to his Catalan translation of the Gita in 1935. In his words (Mascaró, "Bhagavadgita: El Poema del Senyor" 422-23): "It is obvious that the poem can have a symbolic meaning. Arjuna is the yearning soul that loses confidence in the struggle against the passions and the obstacles of the mystic life, and Krishna is the divine Spirit that cheers up the dejected soul and gives it the heroic courage that will lead her to the regions of the supreme peace after the victory. (...) The problems that Arjuna puts forward are the eternal problems of the human spirit, which from time to time feels the yearning for the Supreme Spirit."

[94] HMC. Whereas Mascaró sees the Gita as symbolic or allegorical and is not interested in it as history, the New Testament and Christian theology see the crucifixion as both symbolic and historical. On 27th May 1973, Mascaró was still reading the Gita and the Gospels from the same point of view: "How great is the Gita! Perhaps the greatest spiritual book of man, when the frame-work of a historical setting is forgotten and only the pure spirit is seen. The same with the Gospels" (Mascaró's notebook in HMC).

reader of the Bible and had a profound knowledge of the King James Version. I will give one more example and will afterwards look at Mascaró's use of the word "reason," which helped him to justify his non-literal reading of the Gita.

The allegorical method that Mascaró heartily endorsed also indicates that the Catalan translator was able to eschew scholarly interpretations, historical details or linguistic considerations related to the text, since these would constitute a stumbling block in the realization of the "spiritual meaning" of the Gita and prevent the universal application of its teachings. But there is a problem: Mascaró's tendency to universalize the contents of the Gita turns out to be contradictory because he relies on specific Christian sacred scriptures in order to elucidate the meaning and value of a text from a different religious tradition. Writing to his friend Phiroz Mehta on 4th September 1957, Mascaró states: [95]

> I have been reading just now, – in fact I interrupted this writing to read it – what you say on Pg. 263 of your book on the fight of Arjuna. It seems clear that the story of the Mahabharata described at first a real physical war. Then all kinds of symbolism was [sic] added to it. If a writer wanted to build a chapel of his own in the cathedral of the Bharata he had to accept the central fact of a civil war. This is what the Gita does. And this is of course the contradiction that a mere scholar will find in the Gita. That the doctrine of "love your enemies" is the central doctrine of the Gita seems to me certain: the doctrine of "caste duties," warrior, etc. is at the circumference not at the centre. Only the centre is OM and is for ever. The rest belongs to times that pass away. But it is a problem which I have to solve for my future work.[96]

The problem that Mascaró mentions in the letter was solved, a few years later, in his Penguin introduction, where he highlights that: "If we want to understand the spiritual meaning of the *Bhagavad Gita*, we had better forget everything concerning the Great battle of the *Mahabharata* or the story of Krishna and Arjuna in the vast epic. A spiritual reader of the *Gita* will find in it the great spiritual struggle of a human soul. (...) Scholars differ as to the date of the

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[95] Phiroz D. Mehta (1902-1994) was an Indian-born writer and scholar of Parsi parentage. He was brought up in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he probably met Mascaró. He was the author of several books on Indian religions. The book that Mascaró refers to is *Early Indian Religious Thought: an Introduction and Essay* (1956), the first written by the Indian scholar. Mehta's second work was published in 1976 with the title *The Heart of Religion* (Mascaró had a copy of this book in his personal library). Mehta cites Mascaró's name in the acknowledgements section of *The Heart of Religion* and quotes Mascaró's translation of chapter eleven of *The Bhagavad Gita* on pages 100-104 of his book.

[96] HMC.

Bhagavad Gita; but as the roots of this great poem are in Eternity the date of its revelation in time is of little spiritual importance."[97] Mascaró's letter to Mehta must be read alongside this quotation from his introduction to the Gita. But first, I would like to make a few observations on Mascaró's letter to Mehta, since his ideas do not seem to be well articulated. They are also amenable to criticism, but this does not signify that Mascaró is not consistent, even when he makes light of certain themes that are clearly stated in the Gita. For example, when he alludes to the contradiction that "a mere scholar" will find in the Gita, Mascaró assumes or seems to imply that the scholar believes or accepts (as he does) that the meaning of the Gita lies in its supposedly allegorical meaning and that the fact that he or she cannot reconcile the "spiritual message" of the text with the war which provides the setting for the dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna originates that contradiction. Hence, in order to get through this contradiction one must go beyond the idea that the Gita depicts a civil war and embrace the view that what the Gita is in fact trying to convey ("the centre" or "Om") is the Christian "doctrine of 'love your enemies'" that Jesus proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Mathew (5:44). The scholar will find this "contradiction," but not Mascaró, the "spiritual reader," who seems to be "certain" about what the message of the Gita is. The reader must thus "forget everything concerning the Great battle" that occurs in the epic and focus instead on the Gita's universal message that "is for ever," and ignore "the date of its revelation in time." As can be seen, the letter and the excerpt from the introduction are almost interchangeable.

The second problem has to do with Mascaró's attitude towards caste. Indian socialists would have certainly wished to accept as true the fact that caste was "at the circumference not at the centre" of the Gita, had that idea been articulated in the text, but that was not the case. Mascaró's claim is debatable and it might even suggest that he regarded the Gospels as superior to the Gita (unless the Gita is read as some of the events described in the Gospels have to

[97] Mascaró, *Gita* xlviii.

be). Mascaró did not misinterpret or failed to comprehend one of the main themes of the Gita. He knew, for example, that in Gita 4.13 Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that "The four orders of men arose from me, in justice to their natures and their works. Know that this work was mine, though I am beyond work, in Eternity."[98] Arjuna's predicament is that by engaging in war, he will disrupt the social structure and bring about a fatal mixing of castes; but Kṛṣṇa informs him that he must take into consideration his own caste duties as a "Kṣatriya," and that he must not turn away from the battle and overlook his own fate.[99] It must be underlined that Kṛṣṇa is not continuously drawing Arjuna's attention to the "cāturvarṇyam" or four-caste system; that the battle with its antecedents and aftermath are part of the *Mahābhārata*, not of the text that is more widely known as the Gita; and that the subject of devotion ("bhakti") to Kṛṣṇa is the principal thrust of the text. Yet, the fight in the Gita cannot be simply dismissed, so much so that Tilak, as I have already pointed out in the first section, was inspired by it when the independence of his own country was at stake.[100] The idea that the Gita sanctions war and most probably some of the arguments that Kṛṣṇa uses in order to convince the downcast Arjuna that it is sensible to take the life of his enemies, who are his own relatives (Gita 2.11-38), could not leave Mascaró indifferent. In the next paragraphs, I will show in more detail how the translation of certain words and passages in the Gita was slightly modified by Mascaró so that a less bellicose and more attractive image of the Gita could be passed on to his readers.

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[98] Mascaró, *Gita* 23. Indeed, the maintenance of "the law of righteousness" is the principal purpose of Krishna's incarnation (Gita 4.7). Other passages could be cited. In Gita 3.35, for instance, Krishna says: "And do thy duty, even if it be humble, rather than another's, even if it be great. To die in one's duty is life: to live in another's is death." These words are repeated at the end of the Gita in 18.47 (Mascaró, *Gita* 20 and 83 respectively).

[99] Gita 1.41-43 and 2.31-37.

[100] A more recent example of an interpretation of the Gita that was based on radical political ideas can be found in Nathuram Vinayak Godse (1910-1949), the man who murdered Mahatma Gandhi on 30th January 1948. Like Gandhi and other Indian nationalists, Nathuram had a great admiration for the Gita and thought he was fulfilling his duty when he killed the famous Indian politician. According to Nathuram's brother in Nathuram Godse, *Why I Assassinated Mahatma Gandhi? And the Events, the Accused and the Epilogue by Gopal Godse* (Parkashan: Delhi, 1993) 138, he died in the gallows with a copy of the Gita in his hand and a "Vande Mātaram," the opening lines of the poem and song by the Bengali writer Bankimchandra Chatterji (1838-1894), in his lips. "Vande Mataram" (or "Bande Mātaram" in Chatterji's Bengali-influenced Sanskrit) signifies "I revere the Mother." The words became a nationalist war cry in the early twentieth century. Julius Lipner explains the significance of the hymn as a national symbol in the introduction to his translation of Chatterji's novel *Ānandamaṭh, or the Sacred Brotherhood* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005) 74-83.

Some of the views put forward by Mascaró in his introduction to the Gita had already been adumbrated in *A Star from the East*. For example, it is in this talk that he first assigns a special place to "reason," a mental faculty that aims at solving "contradictions." According to Mascaró, "The place given to reason in the Gita is very high, since reason is the touchstone of our ideas. One of the most interesting doctrines implied in the Gita, and one that should greatly appeal to the modern mind, is that *we are not to do what the Gita says if at any time it contradicts our higher reason.* It not only says 'Come unto me as a refuge', 18.66; but it also says 'Go and take refuge in reason', 2.49, meaning thereby that the light of the highest reason is also the light of God."[101] Likewise, in his introduction, he stresses: "The importance given to reason in the *Bhagavad Gita* is very great. Arjuna is told that he must seek salvation in reason, 2.49. And the first condition for a man to be worthy of God is that his reason should be pure – 18.51 and 18.57."[102] Mascaró's translation of 2.49 in the Penguin Gita differs slightly from the translation that appears in *A Star from the East*. The word "śaraṇa," which means "shelter," or "refuge,"[103] is rendered as "salvation," and the word "wisdom" is added with the purpose, it seems, of highlighting a quality of reason ("Seek salvation in the wisdom of reason").[104] I would like to make a pause and consider Mascaró's translation of "buddhi" (I will resume the subject of the warfare in the Gita and Mascaró's moral appraisal of it afterwards).

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[101] Mascaró, *Star* n. pag. The italics are mine. Later in the lecture, Mascaró declares: "The path of the Gita is the middle way (...). On one side of the middle way we have the path of the fanatic, and on the other the path of the man who doubts. They are wide paths: it is easy to fall into fanaticism or into indifference. (...) It is easy to be a man who doubts and has no faith, or to be a fanatic who has no doubts at all. A faith that allows the full play of reason, that indeed tells us that we must take refuge in reason as much as in God, is rare. This is the faith of the Bhagavad Gita."

[102] Mascaró, *Gita* lii.

[103] Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary: Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages*, new ed., greatly enlarged and improved with the collaboration of E. Leumann and C. Cappeller and other scholars (1899; Motilal: Delhi, 2002) 1057. The meanings of the Sanskrit words cited hereafter are all taken from Monier-Williams' dictionary.

[104] Mascaró, *Gita* 13. The word "salvation" brings to mind Christian soteriology. Salvation depends on the belief that Jesus Christ died in the cross for the atonement of men and women's sins. In Romans 6:23, it is written that "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Likewise, the noun "salvation" and the verb "to save" are also used by the apostle Saint Paul in, for example, Romans 10:9-10 and 10:13 ("For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"). Yet, Mascaró might have used the word "salvation" in the sense that those who act according to their reason are saved, that is, protected from suffering, attachment or fear and not in the sense that they will win eternal life after death.

In most cases, the term "buddhi" is translated by "reason,"[105] but Mascaró also translates it as "wisdom,"[106] "mind,"[107] "thought,"[108] "intelligence,"[109] and "vision"[110] as well.[111] Mascaró's translations of "buddhi" are all acceptable, but the word "reason" cannot fully and adequately express the meaning of "buddhi" in verse 2.49 of the Gita. It is not my intention to go through the history of the word "buddhi" and examine its place in the Gita (in the Sāṃkhya system, it is the first evolute to come out of material nature or "prakṛti"). It suffices to say that "buddhi" is a cognitive and psychic faculty which can be more appropriately translated as "intellect" or "intelligence." Though it is subject to confusion (Gita 3.2), and also to desire and anger as the senses and the mind (Gita 3.40), "buddhi" can help the devotee or yogin to attain equanimity and overcome attachment to the sense objects when it is steady (Gita 5.20) and purified (Gita 18.51). This serene and unruffled state can be attained through "buddhi-yoga," the training or discipline of "buddhi" (Gita 2.49); the yogin who practices this yoga is "buddhi-yukto" (Gita 2.50-51), and sees action in non-action and non-action in action (Gita 4.18). Those who possess a stable "buddhi" are also better equipped to devote themselves to and commune unswervingly with God (Gita 10.10, 12.8 and 18.57). "Reason" cannot encompass these meanings of the word "buddhi" in the Gita. Mascaró has three ideas in mind when he links verses 2.49 and 18.66 together. First, that belief in God must be based on a sound reason and must not degen-

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[105] Gita 2.49, 2.63, 3.40, 3.42, 5.11, 5.20, 5.28, 6.21, 6.25, 7.4, 18.49, 18.51, 18.57.
[106] Gita 2.39, 2.50, 2.65, 2.66, 6.43, 18.30, 18.31, 18.32.
[107] Gita 2.52-53, 3.2, 18.57.
[108] Gita 2.41, 5.17.
[109] Gita 7.10.
[110] Gita 3.1.
[111] Mascaró also translates "prajñā" (2.54, 2.57-58, 2.61, 2.68) and "jñāna" (in most of the verses in which this word occurs) as "wisdom." This might lead to confusion, since the two Sanskrit words ("buddhi" and "jñāna") are not clearly differentiated (verses 5.16-17 are particularly problematic in this respect). "Jñāna" is translated by "vision" (7.15-20 and 13.17, for example) and "knowledge" (18.20-21) too. However, in verse 2.39 ("This is the wisdom of Sankhya ..."), "buddhi" can be translated by "wisdom." This is how Śaṅkara interprets the word and Zaehner, following the Indian philosopher, also translates "buddhi" as "wisdom" in R. C. Zaehner, trans., *The Bhagavad-Gītā: With a Commentary Based on the Original Sources* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1969) 139. In W. J. Johnson, trans., *The Bhagavad Gita*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994) 10, "buddhi" is translated by "intelligence." Zaehner and Johnson's are the two other translations of the Gita that I have used in my thesis. I chose Zaehner's because it is a scholarly edition with plenty of annotations and also quotations from other Sanskrit works, and Johnson's because it was published in the popular Oxford World's Classics series and is accessible to the general reader with little or no previous knowledge of Sanskrit literature.

erate into fanaticism; as he highlights: "Reason is the faculty given to man to distinguish true emotion from false emotionalism, faith from fanaticism, imagination from fancy, a true vision from a visionary illusion."[112] Secondly, that reason plays a very important role in the interpretation of scriptures, since it is the faculty that dissipates the contradictions that, according to Mascaró, oppose the reader's own moral expectations and convictions. And lastly, that reason is a mental tool that helps to establish the "spiritual" or non-literal meaning of sacred texts. Mascaró justifies his use of the word "reason" with a quote, not from the apostles (as it would probably be expected), but from the Indian philosopher Śaṅkara's commentary on the Gita: "Spiritual experience is the only source of true spiritual faith, *and this must never contradict reason*, or as Shankara, *c.* AD 788-820, says in his commentary to the *Bhagavad Gita*: 'If a hundred scriptures should declare that fire is cold or that it is dark, we would suppose that they intend quite a different meaning from the apparent one!'"[113]

Mascaró conceived of the war in the Gita as the inner war that all human beings wage against their internal enemies. Arjuna's war is a just and righteous war, but not in Mascaró's sense.[114] In verse 2.31, Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to think about his duty; this is Arjuna's "svadharma" and the war that he must fight is called "dharmya yuddha," a lawful or righteous war

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[112] Mascaró, *Gita* lii.

[113] Mascaró, *Gita* li. The words in italic ("and … reason") are mine. It must be stated that Śaṅkara is not writing about the Gita, though this is the impression the reader will almost certainly get from Mascaró's paragraph. The passage cited by Mascaró is taken from Śaṅkara's remarks on verse 18.66 of the Gita, but the Indian philosopher is writing about the Vedic texts (that is, "śruti"), and their validity in relation to the enlightened person who has achieved knowledge of "Brahman." Śaṅkara refers to "śruti," but there is no reference to the word in the passage that Mascaró cites. The edition and translation of Śaṅkara's commentary on the Gita that Mascaró used was that of Alladi Mahadeva Sastri, originally published in 1897. In Alladi Mahadeva Sastri, trans., *The Bhagavad Gita: With the Commentary of Sri Sankaracharya* (Madras: Samata, 1979) 513, Śaṅkara comments: "A hundred srutis may declare that fire is cold or that it is dark; still they posses no authority in the matter. If sruti should at all declare that fire is cold or that it is dark, we would still suppose that it intends quite a different meaning from the apparent one." Thus, Mascaró omitted the word "śruti" and replaced it for the more comprehensive "scriptures," changing the meaning of the philosopher's words in order to make them compatible with his view that there is a meaning that transcends the (contradictory) "letter" of the scriptures. Mascaró's dating of Śaṅkara was generally accepted at that time, but there is little ground for it now. Modern scholars generally put him around 700.

[114] In his preface to his 1970 edition of the Gita, Mascaró reiterates his allegorical reading of the Gita. He writes that "The beginning of the Bhagavad Gita is the beginning of a great battle, the battle of life. It is the battle for a kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven, and Arjuna, the soul of man, feels too weak to fight the battle. Man can fight external enemies; but can he fight his inner enemies, his fears and doubts, his weakness and desires, his greed and his anger, his lust of possession, his darkness of mind?" Mascaró, *Gita* (London: Rider-Hutchinson) 13.

(as far as Arjuna's warrior caste is concerned). "Dharmya" signifies not only "legal" and "legitimate," but also "righteous" and "virtuous." The Sanskrit text has also the word "dharmya" in the expression "dharmyaṃ saṃgrāmam" (Gita 2.33), the lawful fight that is in accordance with Arjuna's "svadharma." In the context of the Gita the word "righteous" means a morally desirable action when this action conforms to one's place in the established social hierarchy. As far as Mascaró is concerned, he would never subscribe to the idea that the wars described in sacred scriptures were actually real wars, or that the "true spiritual seers" assented to such acts of violence as those that Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to perform (see quotation below). Writing to the great Mallorcan entrepreneur Juan March i Ordinas (1880-1962) on 14th December 1954 (just a few months after he gave his talk *A Star from the East* in the Netherlands), Mascaró spells out what he means by a "righteous war:" "There cannot be peace between men and nations because the spirit of intelligent collaboration, and of the great moral values of men, is not yet superior to that of wars and negative fights. And so much war that needs to be done! War on poverty, on disease, on ignorance. So much positive and creative war which men can and could do! And so much time and energies wasted in destructive and negative wars and fights!"[115] The Spanish Civil War had left its scars in Mascaró's memory, and apart from that there was the Second World War, which was still being waged when Mascaró's translation of chapter two of the Gita came out in 1943. "How to reconcile the Gita with all these horrifying and disturbing episodes in world history, which reason and "the great spiritual values of man" had failed to avert?" must have been Mascaró's question when he started to work on his English version of the Gita in 1942. Strange though it may seem, the answer was in the Gita itself. As Mascaró writes in his introduction:

> The war imagery is even used by Krishna in the poem when at the end of Chapter 3 he says: "Be a warrior and kill desire, the powerful enemy of the soul"; and again at the end of Chapter 4: "Kill therefore with the sword of wisdom the doubt born of ignorance that

[115] The letter to Juan March i Ordinas was first published by Maimó in *Els Múltiples Espais* 100, but it can also be found in Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 237.

> lies in thy heart." How could the treachery, robbery, and butchery of the war be reconciled with the spiritual vision and love of the *Bhagavad Gita*? How could we reconcile it with the Spirit of the *Gita*, and of all true spiritual seers, as expressed in those words of Krishna? "And when a man sees that the God in himself is the same God in all that is, he hurts not himself by hurting others: then he goes indeed to the highest Path" 13.28.[116]

THE ETHICS OF "TAT TVAM ASI"

The excerpt I have just cited is very important because Mascaró viewed verse 13.28 as a corroboration of the ethical (Christian) message he read into the Gita. In this last section of the chapter, I want to look closely at Gita 13.28 and also at the well-known Upanishadic passage "tat tvam asi," with which it was often associated. First, I must say that I am particularly indebted to Paul Hacker's article on the history of the ethical meaning attributed to "tat tvam asi" and to Gita 13.28: "Schopenhauer and Hindu Ethics."[117] Although I did not refer to it earlier, I kept Hacker's paper in mind throughout the previous section. It is not my aim to scrutinize all the philological and historical arguments that Hacker uses in order to explain why it is not logically tenable to interpret the Gita verse and the Upanishadic phrase as providing a basis for ethics. Some will be mentioned, but others will have to be considerably simplified and even left out. Hacker argues that it was Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) who introduced an ethical dimension in "tat tvam asi" and in Gita 13.27-28 as well (Mascaró was not the first to construe the verse as an inducement to act in an ethical manner). According to Schopenhauer, ethical action originates in the immediate recognition that the "will to live" is present in every living creature. I realize that my "will-to-live" does not differ from that of other beings and as a result I will act unselfishly towards them; I will be impelled to behave towards all creatures as I behave towards myself, since my individual self (that is, the "will-to-live") is in fact identical with the self of every sentient being: to inflict harm on someone would be equivalent to inflict harm on oneself. Schopenhauer believed this idea had been articulated in the "tat tvam

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[116] Mascaró, *Gita* xlviii.

[117] Paul Hacker, "Schopenhauer and Hindu Ethics," *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta*, ed. Wilhelm Halbfass (New York: State U of New York P, 1995) 273-318.

asi" ("you are that") of the "Chāndogya" Upanishad, but as Hacker clarifies, that formula conveys, in the Indian philosophical school of Vedānta, a "radical monism of consciousness and a purely intellectual program of salvation;" indeed, he adds that "Vedāntic monism (...) has explicitly banished all volition and all action to the realm of the unreal."[118]

Gita 13.27-28 is the most relevant passage in the present context, and it will therefore be helpful to provide a more literal and accurate translation of those two verses, which Mascaró adapted to suit his own purposes. Hacker's translation is good enough: "He who sees that the highest Lord dwells alike in all beings, not perishing when they perish, is the one who sees. For, seeing the Lord dwelling alike in all, he does not harm the self by the self, so he goes to the highest goal."[119] Hacker examines texts in which expressions parallel to "he does not harm the self by the self" occur and attempts to demonstrate that the German Sanskrit scholar Paul Deussen (1845-1919), an admirer of Schopenhauer's philosophy, is misled when he takes the "highest Lord" to mean Schopenhauer's "will" and interprets Gita 13.28 as Schopenhauer interprets "tat tvam asi." For example, in Gita 6.20 it is stated that the person whose thought is held back ("cittaṃ niruddham") by the practice of yoga ("yoga-sevayā"), and who "sees the self by the self," will find contentment.[120] The expression "the self by the self" is common in the Gita, and as Hacker elucidates, it is formed by the accusative ("ātmānam") or nominative ("ātmā") of the word "ātman" and its instrumental ("ātmanā")" or locative ("ātmani"). As in Gita 6.20, the verb "to see" ("dṛś") also appears in verse 6.30, when Krishna addresses Arjuna thus: "For him who sees me in everything and everything in me, I am not destroyed (or lost), and he is not destroyed (or lost) for me."[121] As far as the Sanskrit verb "hiṃs" (harm, destroy, kill) in verse 13.28 is concerned, Hacker cites 16.21 as a parallel text; here the annihilation of

[118] Hacker, "Schopenhauer" 277.
[119] Hacker, "Schopenhauer" 273-74. Zaehner and Johnson's translations of 13.27-28 are very similar to this one.
[120] These translations of verse 6.20 are not supplied by Hacker in his article; he just translates the second part of 6.20 (Hacker, "Schopenhauer" 280-81): "In 6, 20cd the true yoga (6, 23) is described: 'Where, seeing the self by the self, he finds contentment in the self'." I thought it would be pertinent to mention the first part of the verse.
[121] This is Hacker's translation of the verse (Hacker, "Schopenhauer" 281).

the self is the result of yielding to desire, anger and greed. In addition to these passages from the Gita, Hacker detects verses akin to 13.28 in the "Īśā" Upanishad (Mascaró, as I shall explain later, also associates "Īśā" 6 to the ethics of "tat tvam asi"). The word "Lord," for example, is common to both "Īśā" 1 ("Everything here which moves in the world is to be clothed with the Lord") and Gita 13.27-2; in "Īśā" 3, those who "kill the self" go to "demonic worlds" ("asuryā lokā"), while in Gita 16.21 it is the "triple gate of hell" (desire, anger and greed) that leads to the destruction of the self. Moreover, a parallel to "Īśā" 1's injunction "do not covet anyone's goods" can be found in the word "greed" of 16.21. The killing of the self, in 18.27-28, takes place when the self cannot see the unity of God dwelling in all beings; in "Īśā" 6-7, the unity ("ekatvam") consists in seeing the self in all beings and all beings in the self. According to Hacker, the comparison of Gita 13.27-28 with analogous passages in other sacred texts indicates that those two verses could not have been used in the ethical sense of Schopenhauer and Deussen. He thus asks if these acts of seeing (seeing the self in or by the self, and seeing the Lord everywhere) must be interpreted instead as referring to a state of "contemplative bliss," in which the extinction of greed is regarded as a prerequisite for the attainment of mystical insight.[122] Nevertheless, the German scholar does not fail to comment on those passages that contain a theological basis for ethics in the Gita; yet, since these passages are cited neither in Mascaró's introductions nor in his other writings, I think it is unnecessary to give an account of them here.[123] In short, "tat tvam asi" does not express an identity of my will with that of another human being (the foundation of ethics according to Schopenhauer); it refers instead to the identity or union of the individual self with the Absolute or universal principle. "He does not harm the self by the self" does not denote two selves, but the self that harms itself (by itself) when it is incapable of seeing the Lord that dwells in all beings. When the self

[122] Hacker, "Schopenhauer" 281-82.
[123] Hacker also finds corroboration to his thesis in chapter 12 of the *Laws of Manu* and in the interpretations of Indian commentators such as Śaṅkara (Hacker, "Schopenhauer" 284-86). However, I hope that my summary of Hacker's essay on the "tat tvam asi" ethics is clear enough.

is not harmed, the yogin is able to reach a state of profound calm beyond dualities; he considers everything (either pleasant or unpleasant) with an equal mind and fears nothing, since the Lord is everywhere.[124]

Mascaró's translation of Gita 13.28 owes much to Schopenhauer and Deussen's reading of the Upanishadic formula "tat tvam asi," but unlike the two German intellectuals, he explicitly renders the instrumental singular "ātmanā" as "others," and repeats the verb "hiṃs" in his English version with the intention of reinforcing and giving more emphasis to the supposedly ethical content of the verse, which has only one form of "hiṃs" (the third person singular "hinasti"): "he hurts not himself by hurting others." In this way, he also avoids explaining (in a footnote, for instance) the more or less elaborate logic behind Schopenhauer and Deussen's arguments: their interpretation of the verse cannot be grasped straight away by simply reading a word-by-word translation of the enigmatic "ātmanā'tmānam." Deussen argues his case and justifies the ethical principles contained in "the great formula" as follows:

> (...) the highest and purest morality is the immediate consequence of the Vedānta. The Gospels fix quite correctly as the highest law of morality: "love your neighbors as yourselves." But why should I do so, since by the order of nature I feel pain and pleasure only in myself, not in my neighbor? The answer is not in the Bible ... but it is in the Veda, is in the great formula "*tat tvam asi*," which give in three words metaphysics and morals altogether. You shall love your neighbor as yourselves, because you are your neighbor, and mere illusion makes you believe that your neighbour is something different from yourselves. Or in the words of the Bhagavadgita: he, who knows himself in everything and everything in himself, will not injure himself by himself, *na hinasti ātmanā ātmānam*. This is the sum and tenor of all morality, and this is the standpoint of a man knowing himself as Brahman. (...)[125]

Mascaró calls this "the law of spiritual gravitation." In his introduction to the Upanishads, he mentions Deussen and his theory about the Gita and the Upanishads, which was also espoused by famous Indian writers and intellectuals such as Vivekananda and Radhakrishnan:

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[124] The appendix that Zaehner attaches to his translation of the Gita offers an additional and interesting example. He incorporates verses 13.27-28 in the subject heading he designates as "Sameness-and-Indifference – Beyond Duality and Ego" (Zaehner 437). Zaehner, like Hacker before him (Hacker, "Schopenhauer" 310-11), also questions the validity of the American Sanskritist Franklin Edgerton's views on Gita 13.28 (Zaehner 348). Edgerton, whose translation of the Gita came out in 1944, followed the interpretation that Schopenhauer and Deussen gave to verse 13.28.

[125] Cited in Hacker, "Schopenhauer" 296. This quotation is taken from Deussen's lecture "The Philosophy of the Vedānta," delivered before the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society on 25th February 1883.

> (...) in the full spirit of the *Upanishads* the Gita says in words sublime:
>
> > He who sees that the Lord of all is ever the same in all that is, immortal in the field of mortality – he sees the truth.
> > And when a man sees that the God in himself is the same God in all that is, he hurts not himself by hurting others: then he goes indeed to the highest path. XIII. 27.28
>
> In this way, as Paul Deussen says, the doctrine of the *Upanishads* explains and complements the doctrine of the Gospels, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". Why? Because our Atman, our higher Self, dwells in us and dwells in our neighbour: if we love our neighbour, we love the God who is in us all and in whom we all are; and if we hurt our neighbour, in thought or in words or in deeds, we hurt ourselves, we hurt our soul: this is the law of spiritual gravitation.[126]

It is worth considering the textual context in which the passage occurs, since a few paragraphs before Mascaró asks the question: "What is love?"[127] He finds the answer in Lao Tzu, but also in an exquisite sentence by Ramon Llull (I have more to say about this Mallorcan writer in the last chapter of the thesis): "Love is that which places the free in bondage and to those in bondage gives freedom." He refers to the Gita as "a gospel of love"[128] and then writes the passage I have just cited. Besides, when he links Gita 13.27-28 with "the full spirit of the *Upanishads*," he is certainly thinking of the formula "tat tvam asi" of the "Chāndogya" Upanishad. Writing to his friend Juan Francesc March[129] on 30th August 1948, he states that the wisdom of India is encapsulated in the words "tat tvam asi,"[130] which he interprets in this way:

> That is to say, that which is highest in us, our pure soul, responds to that which is highest in the Universe. And what is that? LOVE. The fact that we feel the pure love of God and feel love for the great and beautiful things tell us that this love comes from a LOVE that is God. "L'amor che move il sole a l'altre stelle" of Dante. The power of love within our heart, which takes us towards the beautiful poetry and towards work that is well-done, is the power of poetry that created the universe, is the Tat Tvam Asi.[131]

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[126] Mascaró, *Upanishads* 31. I only came across one book by Paul Deussen in Mascaró's library: his *Sixty Upanishads of the Veda*. This book was Deussen's translation of his own selection of sixty Upanishads (there is not a standard canon of sixty Upanishads). It got well-known (at least by title) to the English-reading literary public from being cited in T. S. Eliot's notes to *The Waste Land*. I cannot say with any degree of certainty where Mascaró first read about the ethics of "tat tvam asi," but S. Radhakrishnan's *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* could have been his source of information. Radhakrishnan quotes Deussen's theory as evidence against Albert Schweitzer's claim in *Indian Thought and Its Development* that Hindu thought is not concerned with action and ethical issues. An excerpt from Deussen's Bombay talk is cited on pages 101-02 of Radhakrishnan's book.

[127] Mascaró, *Upanishads* 29.

[128] Mascaró, *Upanishads* 30.

[129] Juan Francesc March is a Catholic priest and writer. He was born in Mascaró's hometown Santa Margalida in 1927. He was living in the Monastery of la Real (in the outskirts of Palma) when I met him in April 2006.

[130] "La saviesa de l'Índia se resumeix en les paraules: TAT TUAM ASI: Això tu ets." In Juan Francesc March, ed., *Cartes d'Un Mestre a Un Amic* (Palma de Mallorca: El Tall, 1993) 29-30.

[131] March 30. The translation of Dante's line is: "The love that moves the sun and the other stars."

It is not completely clear what Mascaró identifies with "tat" and with "tvam," but I will argue that, while "tat tvam asi" corresponds in Schopenhauer to the theory that the realization of the "will to live" gives rise to ethical conduct, in Mascaró it corresponds to love. "Tat" is love in capital letters ("LOVE") and "tvam" is the "pure soul" that feels love or simply "love" (either within the soul or within the heart). If the passage cited hints at any type of identity, then it is the following: the human soul identifies itself with LOVE, whilst human beings realize that they are actually identical since they all owe their existence to God or LOVE (as the sun and stars of Dante, for instance) and are consequently not distinct in their essence. Therefore, the idea that I harm myself when I harm others – because my very nature is identical with the inner self of those around me – can be inferred from Mascaró's words without any logical difficulty. Mascaró also attaches a practical value to "tat tvam asi" when he refers to "work well-done" ("obres ben fetes" in the original Catalan); it is love that inspires human beings to take action and work cannot be done without a volitional impulse. Nevertheless, this relationship, which necessarily involves a subject, who experiences love, and his or her object ("beautiful poetry" or "work well-done") implies duality and this is incompatible with "tat tvam asi" and some of the Gita verses I discussed earlier. Finally, I would like to consider Mascaró's interpretation of "Īśā" Upanishad 6, since it also derives, in all probability, from Deussen's comments on "tat tvam asi" and Gita 13.27-28. I will first give Hacker's own version of the "Īśā" verse: "But he who sees all beings in the Self (or 'in himself') and the Self (or 'himself') in all beings, he does not shrink from them."[132] And this is Mascaró's translation: "He that sees all things in his Spirit and his Spirit in all things feels the peace of Eternity."[133] The first part of the verse is very similar to Hacker's translation, but the second part is not as authoritative as the German scholar's. Mascaró explains the meaning of the "Īśā" 6 in these terms: "This is

[132] Hacker, "Schopenhauer" 281. As Hacker explains, "them" must refer to the "dark, demonic worlds" ("asuryā lokā") of "Īśā" 3 (Hacker, "Schopenhauer" 311).
[133] Vilanova 30. I have already cited this "Īśā" verse in the previous chapter, but in a different context.

the Love that makes us forget our little personality, and through which we rediscover it, with all its greatness, in the essence of all beings: it is the Love in the heart of all beings which we feel in our own heart and for that reason we understand them."[134] The logic behind this reasoning is not difficult to grasp either: if my personality can be found in the essence of all beings, it follows that if I injure other people, I will also injure my very self, because all selves are bound together. Love is the bond, the supreme element that brings human beings together; if there is love in the heart of all beings, I will love them as I love my very self.

In brief, the passages and translations that I have quoted and looked at in this and the previous section disclose some of Mascaró's Eurocentric presuppositions about the Gita. The Mallorcan translator was not a passive interpreter of the Sanskrit text, just as past and present translators and readers are not passive interpreters of texts. Mascaró's reading of the Gita was not unique and this is why I tried to locate and study it within a broader historical and hermeneutical context. Mascaró's attempt to transform the Gita into a familiar and acceptable text, not only to himself but also to his audience (mostly European and American readers who did not have a scholarly interest in Sanskrit literature and Indian religions, but who could identify the main classics of Western literature), deserves praise, because it rescued the Gita from the exclusive domain and control of scholars (Emerson had done a similar kind of thing in nineteenth-century America). As I shall examine in more detail in the next chapter, his attempt to adjust the contents of the Gita to the cultural conditions and concerns of contemporary readers was not groundless and idiosyncratic, although the Sanskrit work suffered inevitable cultural mutations. Yet, translators do not make their versions of foreign texts in a cultural vacuum, and do not always abide by grammatical rules when they translate works composed outside their own cultural and religious milieu.

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[134] Vilanova 30.

THE PENGUIN CLASSICS TRANSLATION

INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter, I sought to demonstrate how the parallels that Mascaró drew between the Gita and the Gospels could be traced back to the spiritual exegesis of the Christian antiquity, and how he read into the Gita ethical values that were distinct from those sanctioned by the Sanskrit text. In his attempt to universalize the message and contents of the Gita, Mascaró actually impregnates the text with English-language values drawn from a religious context with which his English-speaking readers were already quite familiar. In other words, his interpretative choices answer to a receiving cultural situation that determines the translation process in its various cultural and discursive dimensions. In this chapter, I would like to expand some of the ideas that were already, though in a less theoretical perspective and from a different point of view, examined in the previous chapter. It should be pointed out first that, as the translation scholar Lawrence Venuti indicates, "translation inevitably domesticates foreign texts, inscribing them with linguistic and cultural values that are intelligible to specific domestic constituencies."[1] Mascaró's translation domesticates the Gita and denudes the original text of some of its cultural specificity. Mascaró looked upon the process of translating between languages that belonged to different cultural and religious contexts in the same way he thought of his introductions for the Penguin Classics series: in both cases, it is the pursuit of similarities that prevails, while differences are underestimated and suppressed. His principal strategy consisted in moving the foreign text closer to the English reader (his version of Gita 13.28 is a case in point) and forcing (though this could well be an unconscious practice) the

[1] Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London: Routledge, 1998) 67. Venuti argues that domestication is unavoidable and even necessary "if the foreign text is to become intelligible and interesting to domestic readers" (Venuti, *Scandals* 114). The choice of a foreign text for translation is not value-free either, because it answers to domestic (often imperialistic) interests. The large number of versions of the Gita that have been published since 1785 reflect the interests of readers who belong to dominant (colonizing) European cultures. As Mahasweta Sengupta highlights, "the translator selects and rewrites only those texts that conform to the target culture's 'image' of the source culture; the rewriting often involves intense manipulation and simplification for the sake of gaining recognition in and by the metropole." This passage is taken from Sengupta's "Translation as Manipulation: the Power of Images and the Images of Power" in *Between Languages and Cultures: Translation and Cross-Cultural Texts*, ed. Anuradha Dingwaney and Carol Maier, Pittsburgh Ser. in Composition, Literacy, and Culture (Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1995) 160.

original text to yield to the peculiarities of the receiving culture in which it will be read. Yet, I am not suggesting that Mascaró's translations should be dismissed as inaccurate because they do not often preserve the foreignness of the source language text.[2] It is therefore pointless to describe Mascaró's linguistic inaccuracies and deviations as errors or mistakes, as if his version of the Gita was constituted by nothing else than a collection of isolated sentences that are evaluated according to what they retain or do not retain of the original text. This approach to translated texts, based upon the transfer of linguistic meaning and lexicographic equivalence, has been displaced by a more recent and engaging translation theory that considers translation a product that cannot be divorced from the social and cultural circumstances of its production and reception. Susan Bassnett stresses that some of the "common threads that link the many diverse ways in which translation has been studied over the past two decades are an emphasis on diversity, a rejection of the old terminology of translation as faithlessness and betrayal of an original" or "the foregrounding of the manipulative powers of the translator."[3] The goal of this section is not to correct or improve Mascaró's translation of the Gita, but to comprehend it. Bassnett's words are informative: "The purpose of translation theory is to reach an understanding of the processes in the act of translation and, not, as is so commonly misunderstood, to provide a set of norms for effecting the perfect translation."[4] The work of scholars such as Lawrence Venuti and Susan Bassnett has helped me to interpret and make sense of Mascaró's translation. From them I have learned that translation always takes place in a cultural context, that it is not an activity that happens in a vacuum, and that clearly there are culturally determined factors that condition what people translate, how and why.

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[2] It is beyond the scope of this chapter (and it is not my aim either) to study the three translations that Mascaró produced for Penguin Classics and his earlier versions of the Gita and the Upanishads. Yet, in theoretical terms what I have to say about Mascaró's version of the Gita can also be applied to his other translations, namely *The Upanishads* and *The Dhammapada*. Mascaró's translations could in fact be the theme of a whole thesis.

[3] Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, 3rd ed., New Accents (London: Routledge, 2002) 10.

[4] Bassnett 43. The field known as translation studies is a vast one. It has also grown considerably in the last two or three decades and the number of books and articles that deal with translation theory and practice is impressive. I had therefore to select my readings very carefully; otherwise, I would be forced to exceed the number of pages that I decided to assign to this chapter.

The impulse to translate, though at bottom a benevolent one (the desire to share a text which the translator values with readers who cannot gain access to it in its original language), also involves the appropriation of a foreign text that will fulfil domestic purposes and this is particularly true when a large audience is expected.[5] Thus, the impact of a translation depends on the social and cultural conditions under which it is produced and read, and these can have a decisive influence on the translator's textual and interpretative choices. Translation fosters the construction of cultural identities and fashions images of foreign cultures that consolidate, challenge or disrupt the prevailing values of the receiving culture.[6] As Venuti writes, "Translation is not an untroubled communication of a foreign text, but an interpretation that is always limited by its address to specific audiences and by the cultural or institutional situations where the translated text is intended to circulate and function."[7] The role played by the translator needs to be highlighted as well, since the reception and production of texts is mediated through his or her own personal history, beliefs, values and goals; these will inform the translator's interpretation of the world and impinge on the translation process itself. Ian Mason explains that "Consciously or subconsciously, text users bring their own assumptions, predispositions, and general world-view to bear on their processing of text at all levels."[8] The translator's temperament and the society in which the translation project is developed can affect to a great extent the cross-cultural understanding, especially when the foreign text emanates from a non-Western culture. The question that André Lefevere puts is an extremely valid one: "can

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[5] I have in mind the hugely popular Penguin Classics series. I will deal with the Penguin Classics and Mascaró's translation of the Gita in the next section.

[6] In the colonial context, this situation can become even more complex. Tejaswini Niranjana, for instance, refers to the symbolic power exerted by English translations of Indian texts. She points out that the "educated" Indians who received an English education chose to have access to their own past "through the translations and histories circulating through colonial discourse." These translations, which were considered authoritative, often conveyed stereotypical and also discriminatory images of India that became naturalized. The quotation is from Niranjana's *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1992) 31.

[7] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008) 14.

[8] Ian Mason, "Discourse, Ideology and Translation," *Language, Discourse and Translation in the West and the Middle East,* ed. Robert de Beaugrande, Abdullah Shunnaq and Mohamed Helmy Heliel, Benjamins Translation Library, vol. 7 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1994) 23.

culture A ever really understand culture B on that culture's (i.e. B's) own terms?"[9] In this author's viewpoint, the pressing task of the translator engaged in translating "the other" "is the gradual elimination, in translating between cultures, of the category of *analogy*, as pernicious as it is, initially, necessary."[10] Through analogy, the foreign, unfamiliar text is made to reproduce and assimilate the cultural features that belong to the code system of the target language. The goal of understanding other cultures can consequently be undermined since what is apparently a kindly endeavour on the translator's part (towards his or her own culture and society) turns out to be an imperialistic attitude towards former colonized cultures.

A translation addresses readers who share cultural values and a historical context that differ from those in which the text was initially conceived. The readers, however, expect that the book they read in translation should be read as fluently as a work published in their own language. The most common tendency is to seek translations whose meaning is plain, which are readable and intelligible, which are immediately accessible to readers. In the 1960s, when Mascaró's translation of the Gita came out, J. M. Cohen called attention to the fact that "our own age, in its scientific devotion to simplicity and accuracy, demands plain versions which sacrifice sound to sense, and verbal idiosyncrasy to the narrative virtues."[11] However, when a translation possesses a domestic range of cultural and linguistic references, when its emphasis is on an unconstrained and fluent communication that avoids polysemy, archaism or obscure syntactical forms that demand the reader's attention, and when it resorts to a familiar lexicon, simple syntax and lexical consistency, such a translation creates the illusion of transparency; that is to say, that the translated text corresponds in fact to the original, that it is an impartial and successful reproduction of the author's thoughts and intended meaning. The figure of the translator is eliminated and his or her manipulation of the text's message is never questioned;

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[9] André Lefevere, "Composing the Other," *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*, ed. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, Translation Studies Ser. (London: Routledge, 1999) 77.
[10] Lefevere 78.
[11] J. M. Cohen, *English Translators and Translations*, Writers and Their Work (London: Longmans, 1962) 10.

this conceals the domestication to which translated texts, which are (always) imbued with the language values of the receiving culture, are subject. Venuti argues (and hence the title of his book *The Translator's Invisibility*) that such a strategy hides the role of the translator in shaping the translation. Venuti does not want translation to be seen as a subordinate activity under the illusion of transparency; the reason for this is that the emphasis on transparency not only masks the differences between source and the target languages (the translated text must look as if it was untranslated), but lowers the very status of translation, regarded as a minor or invisible activity that does not elicit critical reflection. A fluent and transparent translation will also tend to sever the foreign text from the linguistic and cultural milieu in which it was conceived; as Venuti says, "the foreign text will reach the widest possible domestic audience, but will (...) undergo an extensive domestication, an inscription with cultural and political values that currently prevail in the domestic situation (...)."[12]

A passage from one of Mascaró's letters to Professor John Brough might help to clarify what I have just said about fluency in translation. According to Mascaró, his translation of the Gita:

> (...) should be read first as English literature; but I do welcome afterwards a close study of the translation, comparing it most carefully with previous translations, of which there must be about forty in English alone. My aim was a work of pure English without notes or intellectual commentary; and a translation into our present world of thought and ideas which have a value beyond a mere historical value. This was a long, a very long, and laborious task, but a work of love done with all my soul.[13]

Mascaró regards his version of the Gita first and foremost as a work in the English language, and only "afterwards" does he "welcome" a comparative study which would certainly call attention to his translation as a translation and not as a piece of original work. When Mascaró writes that his "aim was a work of pure English," he seems to suggest the idea that his translation is perfectly transparent, that the translated text – which always suffers domesticating revisions – can in fact pass for the original work. Moreover, the absence of "notes or intellectual

[12] Venuti, *Scandals* 127.
[13] HMC. This letter, already cited in the previous chapter, was written on 11th December 1964.

commentary," which would, for instance, account for the difficulties in rendering the Gita into English, does not only give the impression that the (translated) work is easy to understand and does not require profound study, but reinforces the reader's idea that the text is not translated. Mascaró endorses thus domesticating practices, but to accuse him of willingly or artfully altering the contents of the original Sanskrit text is, I think, unfair. Although a scholarly edition, Zaehner's translation of the Gita, which was also published in the 1960s, is not devoid of domesticating strategies.[14] Mascaró would most probably refuse to acknowledge the presence of domesticating practices in his translation: his belief that the "spirit" of a foreign text could be conveyed in translation (I will discuss this topic shortly) is not compatible with the view that sees translation as an activity governed by specific cultural and linguistic factors that are responsible for the domestication of the foreign text. Nevertheless, he seems to be aware of such practices when he argues that his aim was "a translation into our present world of thought and ideas which have a value beyond a mere historical value." The last part of Mascaró's sentence ("which ... value") gainsays what is said in the first part ("a translation ... world"): the "present world" cannot be envisaged outside a particular historical context. But this contradiction should not be thought of as merely a contradiction. As I shall argue in the next section, Mascaró's "present world" is a distinctive one: his domestication of the Gita diverged in some aspects from the domesticating approach that was adopted by the Penguin Classics, the groundbreaking literary series in the use of transparent discourse. What should be noted at this point though is that Mascaró's words seem to substantiate the view that the translation of a foreign work also depends on current social and cultural conditions. He has, however, constructed his sentence with characteristic care, for the plural verb "have" indicates that "of" has to be taken

[14] Two interesting examples come to mind: Zaehner's translation of "buddhi" as "soul" and of "buddhi-yoga" as "spiritual exercise." Zaehner explains that he took "the liberty of translating *buddhi* as 'soul', for in the Christian tradition it is the soul that is the responsible element in man" (Zaehner 142), and asserts that "'spiritual exercise' recalls the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola – the *yoga* of the Jesuits" (Zaehner 146). These examples show that the religious vocabulary employed by Zaehner domesticates the contents of the Gita. The translator introduces into the original text references which are specific to his own religious background, namely Roman Catholicism. Such a translation could eventually attract readers who shared the translator's own religious point of view.

with "translation," not with "present world." The sentence could have been punctuated as "a translation, into our present world, of thought and ideas (...)." Arguably, therefore, there is no contradiction, although there is a questionable notion of translation and of the way ideas work. Mascaró seems to think that, though the Gita is expressed in ways that belong to ancient Indian culture, its meaning (or "spirit") can be separated from these ways of expression, and re-expressed in terms of contemporary English culture. Any meaning peculiar to ancient Indian culture would have thus "mere historical value."

No matter how foreignizing a translation is, it always depends on the language values that predominate in the receiving culture. Friedrich Schleiermacher's foreignizing theory of translation is a case in point. In his lecture "On the Different Methods of Translating" (1813), the German philosopher and theologian (1768-1834) states that "Either the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him."[15] In the first method, the translator aims to draw the reader to his own position, that is to say, he endeavours to impart to the reader an impression similar to the one he received from the foreign text thanks to his knowledge of the language. In the second method, the translator leads the author to the reader and presents the foreign text as it would be had its author originally written it in the language spoken by the readers of the translation. According to Schleiermacher, who gives preference to the first method, a translation must communicate the linguistic peculiarities of the foreign text, it must signal the differences between source and target cultures, since the "reader is always to remain aware that the author lived in another world and wrote in another tongue."[16] Although Schleiermacher offers an appealing alternative to domesticating translations which underscores cultural differences, his translation theory is problematic. Schleier-

[15] Friedrich Schleiermacher, "On the Different Methods of Translating," *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004) 49.
[16] Schleiermacher 60.

macher enlisted his foreignizing strategy in a domesticating project with a fierce nationalist agenda and bourgeois cultural elitism: translations of foreign literatures were thought to improve and enrich the German language, challenge the French intellectual and cultural hegemony and help German culture to achieve global domination. Venuti explores these and other aspects of Schleiermacher's lecture on translation in the third chapter of *The Translator's Invisibility*, and I can only refer briefly to them here. The principal goal of this paragraph is not to discuss the various problems that Schleiermacher's theory raises, but simply to highlight two contrasting translation theories and the countries where they have been mostly cultivated. The foreignizing theory emerged in Germany during the classical and romantic periods, while the domesticating theory has been mainly promoted in the English-speaking world. Unlike Schleiermacher, for instance, British translation theorist Alexander Fraser Tytler (1747-1813), author of *Essay on the Principles of Translation* (1791), and the diplomat and translator John Hookham Frere (1769-1846) advocated fluent strategies and privileged a translation practice that aimed to go beyond the historical, linguistic and cultural differences between the source- and target-language texts. In the words of Frere, "the language of translation ought (...) to be a pure, impalpable and invisible element, the medium of thought and feeling (...); it ought never to attract attention to itself; *hence all phrases that are remarkable in themselves, either as old or new; all importations from foreign languages and quotations, are as far as possible to be avoided.*"[17] Though such an approach appears well-intentioned, democratic and broad-minded, it covers up the inescapable domesticating adjustments the translator makes in his or her translation. For instance, as a rule, Mascaró's version of the Gita, which can be described as transparent, employs a familiar lexicon, and introduces concepts and references that do not exist in the original text. These not only domesticate the translation, but enable it to look as if untranslated: the reader will not come across unfamiliar expressions, ideas or names and will

[17] Cited in Venuti, *Translator's Invisibility* 65. The italics are mine.

not interrogate their foreign origin and, consequently, realize that what he or she is reading is actually a translated version of an ancient Indian work. Such a translation betrays the foreign work, but the translator will please the readers, without running "the risk of appearing to be a foreigner, a traitor in the eyes of his kin."[18]

Mascaró's translation practice adheres to the same principle on which the theories of Frere and Tytler rest, and which Venuti considers to be central to the history of fluent translation, namely "liberal humanism, subjectivity seen as at once self-determining and determined by human nature, individualistic yet generic, transcending cultural difference, social conflict, and historical change to represent 'every shade of the human character'."[19] This liberal humanism is founded on a contradiction: it oscillates between the possibility of an autonomous and creative individual self and the notion of universal human qualities. Tytler, for example, believed in an individualist aesthetics ("correct taste") and in a constant human nature simultaneously: the translator was viewed as a special being, capable of a sympathetic identification with the foreign author (in fact, transparent discourse was a corollary of the translator's ability to see into the original text); yet, his or her translation should also attempt to disguise the cultural differences and stress underlying universal truths. Mascaró bases his translation practice on the Apostle Paul's words (quoted in the previous chapter) that "the letter kills, but the spirit gives life," but he writes that he has "followed *my own light*," and that he hopes he has been "true to the Spirit of the original and *to myself*."[20] In a letter to the director of the "National Translation Center" at Austin (in Texas), written on 25th May 1969, Mascaró mentions his efforts to identify himself mentally with the author: "I try to go as deeply as I can into the spirit of the original, and live in imagination the inner life of the writer."[21] This spiritual em-

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[18] Antoine Berman, *The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany*, trans. S. Heyvaert, Intersections: Philosophy and Critical Theory (New York: State U of New York P, 1992) 3.
[19] Venuti, *Translator's Invisibility* 67. The words between the single quotation marks are from Frere's work.
[20] Mascaró, "A Note on the Translation," *Gita* lxiii-lxiv. The italics are mine.
[21] HMC. He states in the same letter that he tries "to translate the original into as pure and clear English as I can without notes or explanations, and I never give the work for publication until I feel that I have done my best.

pathy signifies the possibility of a direct and unmediated access to the core truth of the text, a truth which the translator holds within himself or herself. The materiality of the text, the particularities of the source-language context are disregarded. As the French translator and scholar Antoine Berman says: "Poser que le but de la traduction est la captation du sens, c'est détacher celui-ci de sa lettre, de son corps mortel, de sa gangue terrestre. C'est saisir l'universal et laisser le particulier."[22] The translator lives within a particular social, religious and cultural context from which it is impossible to extricate himself or herself. Consequently, it must not be imagined that the translator is able to capture the "spirit" of the text and rise above the particular environment in which his or her work is produced. The antecedents of the Pauline dichotomy "spirit versus letter" can be traced back to the philosophy of Plato, to the Greek philosopher's opposition between soul and body. In translation, the "spirit" becomes an autonomous entity which can be detached from the letter of the text, from its "physical body," from its "gangue terrestre" ("ore") as Berman writes, and be incarnated in the material body of the target-language text. The "spirit" is the fundamental truth that can pass from language to language, the metaphysical core or substance that can be communicated in spite of the multiple languages that estrange human beings from each other and create misunderstandings. In this mystical union between the translator/interpreter and the writer or the "spirit" of the text, the ability of the translator acquires an almost supernatural dimension, since he or she knows, not the natural, corporeal languages of everyday life, but the "Language:" nothing can henceforth impede communication and, it must be added as well, cross-cultural understanding. A famous passage from the Bible illustrates this point: inspired by the Holy Ghost that descended upon them, the Apostles started to speak "with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."[23]

This may mean translating a verse up to twenty times before I am satisfied, as I mention on pg. 38 of my translation of the Bhagavad Gita. This may happen in the more prosaic parts of the work: *the final word may of course come in a flash of inner lightning*." The italics are mine.

[22] Antoine Berman, *La Traduction et la Lettre ou L'Auberge du Lointain*, L'Ordre Philosophique (Paris: Seuil, 1999) 34.

[23] The Acts of the Apostles 2:4.

From that time onward, they were able to spread God's message and thus reach every people through their knowledge of other languages.[24]

As a final point, I would like to add that Mascaro's translation can in fact be described as ethnocentric. Berman defines such a translation in this way : "qui ramène tout à sa propre culture, à ses normes et valeurs, et considère ce qui est situé en dehors de celle-ci – l'Étranger – comme négatif ou tout juste bon à être annexé, adapté, pour accroître la richesse de cette culture."[25] Berman's definition is valuable, but I think it is futile to criticize Mascaró on account of the ethnocentrism (or eurocentrism) of his translations; he certainly did not view the foreign (the Gita or the Upanishads) as "negative," or good just to be annexed or adapted, as Berman somehow depreciatively points out. However, there is no doubt that Mascaró's translation of the Gita exemplifies what the Penguin Classics editor, E. V. Rieu, designates as "the principle of equivalent effect."[26] Eugene Nida's concept of a "dynamic-equivalence translation" is based upon Rieu's principle; it "aims at complete naturalness of expression, and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture; it does not insist that he understand the cultural patterns of the source-language context in order to comprehend the message."[27] This translation strategy is related to Schleiermacher's second method of translating, because the translator will try to translate the foreign text as the original author would have written it had he spoken the language of the translator. Such a transla-

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[24] In another passage from the letter he addressed to the director of the "National Translation Center," Mascaró appeals both to the particular and the universal in language, opposing what is historically conditioned to what is changeless or perennial. He emphasizes that "The task of the modern translator is to do the work in the language of his own time, but using all those permanent values in the language which belong to all time, until the days unknown to us when the whole structure of the language may have changed, and a truly new language has been born." In the next two sections of this chapter, it will became clear that Mascaró's translation – unlike, for instance, E. V. Rieu's translation of Homer's *Odyssey* – uses a lexicon and a syntactical construction that do not belong to his own time; moreover, the "permanent values in the language" to which Mascaró refers do not exist: language is in constant flow and change and it is always historically specific.

[25] Berman, *Traduction* 29.

[26] E. V. Rieu and J. B. Phillips, "Translating the Gospels: A Discussion between Dr. E. V. Rieu and the Rev. J. B. Phillips," *Bible Translator* 6 (1955): 153.

[27] Eugene Nida, "Principles of Correspondence," *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004) 156. Unlike the translation of dynamic equivalence, the formal-equivalence translation is source-oriented, it is designed to reveal as much as possible of the form and content of the original text.

tion will diverge noticeably from the original and can become a different text altogether, ideally suited to the receiving culture.[28] The principle of "equivalent effect" or "dynamic equivalence" is concerned with the sense, with the "spirit," and not with the letter: that is why it requires an extraordinary leap of the imagination to be able to produce a version of the ancient Gospels that gives modern readers the same effect that the original had on its first (Christian) audiences.[29] The linguistic and cultural differences are elided and humanity is regarded as an essence that never changes: it was this idea of universality that animated the missionary impetus of the Apostles, as the biblical passage cited above shows. The Penguin Classics series adopted the principle championed by Rieu in his translations of ancient Greek literature and it is to them that I now turn my attention.[30]

THE PENGUIN CLASSICS AND THE KING JAMES BIBLE

According to Walter Benjamin, "Art (...) posits man's physical and spiritual existence, but in none of its works is it concerned with his response. No poem is intended for the reader, no picture for the beholder, no symphony for the listener."[31] Benjamin's paper on "The Task of the Translator" was published in 1924, twenty-two years before E. V. Rieu's translation of Homer's *Odyssey* (1946) inaugurated the famous and pioneering series of Classics. European society had gone through great transformations and upheavals since the publication of Ben-

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[28] Schleiermacher writes convincingly that "each person produces originally only in his mother tongue and (...) the question of how he would have written his works in another tongue ought not even to be raised" (Schleiermacher 57).

[29] Rieu and Phillips 153.

[30] The only essay that deals with Mascaró's translation of the Gita was written by the Catalan Sanskritist Òscar Pujol and can be found in *Juan Mascaró i Fornés (1897-1987)*, ed. Gonçal López and Antoni Mas, Homenatges 1 (Palma: Universitat de les Illes Balears, 1997) 197-206 (the title of the essay is "El Concepte de Traducció en Joan Mascaró," that is, "Juan Mascaró's Concept of Translation"). I did not quote from it before because Pujol, in my view, does not analyse in a critical way the problems that Mascaró's translation of the Gita raises. He fails to question, for instance, the theoretical appropriateness of the essentialist approach "spirit versus letter" advocated by Mascaró and never discusses the political implications that Mascaró's domesticating strategies can have both in the foreign and in the receiving culture, though he acknowledges them. However, I totally agree with him when he states on page 199 that we must take into consideration the reason that led Mascaró to prepare his translations since many of the criticisms that have been made ignore their aims.

[31] Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator: An Introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*," *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999) 70.

jamin's essay and the economical and social conditions under which people lived and worked were no longer the same: in the 1950s and 1960s, the relationship between publishers, translators and readers was a different one too. Unlike Benjamin, who dismissed the idea that the reader or spectator could have a privileged access to the object of art and establish a unique relationship with it, Rieu's main purpose was to attract the reader, to please him or her. As he says, "in choosing a classic for translation my own first question has not been, '*Ought* people to read it?' but 'Will it *please* them?'"[32] Through his reader-oriented "principle of equivalent effect," Rieu and his Penguin Classics series tried to make the classics accessible to the widest possible audience: he decided to translate Homer into English prose because the epic form in ancient Greece could be considered equivalent to the modern European tradition of telling stories in prose. One of Rieu's readers writes about the "real experience" she has had reading his translation of the *Odyssey* and adds that it has not only shortened the distance between the ancient Greek people and herself, "but, strangely enough, has given me the feeling that I can find my own place in the life sequence thus."[33] Readers enjoyed the Penguin Classics series because they produced highly accessible, fluent and intelligible translations that were written in accordance with contemporary English-language values: plain style, clear syntax, familiar lexicon, etc. A fluent translation like Rieu's *Odyssey* creates the illusion of transparency and invites the reader to identify himself or herself with the characters in the epic narrative. The reader does not need to possess the theoretical detachment that Walter Benjamin recommends, since the Penguin Classics translations are designed precisely to facilitate his or her comprehension of the foreign text. The reader becomes thus an influential element in any evaluation of the translation project itself. As J. M. Cohen writes, modern translators:

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[32] E. V. Rieu, "Classics in Translation," *The Reader's Guide*, ed. William Emrys Williams (London: Penguin, 1960) 97.

[33] The letter from Harriet D. Adams (the reader's name) to E. V. Rieu was written on 8th April 1950 and is cited in Steve Hare, ed., *Penguin Portrait: Allen Lane and the Penguin Editors, 1935-1970* (London: Penguin, 1995) 188.

> (...) strive to satisfy the vastly increased public which has remained at school till the age of 18, or has taken university courses in non-linguistic subjects and cannot consequently be expected to be primarily concerned with literature. The new translator, therefore, aims to make everything plain, though without the use of footnotes since conditions of reading have radically changed and the young person of today is generally reading in far less comfortable surroundings than his father or grandfather. (...) Little can be demanded of him except his attention. Knowledge, standards of comparison, Classical background: all must be supplied by the translator in his choice of words or in the briefest of introductions.[34]

Eugene Nida also pays substantial attention to the reader; in a "dynamic-equivalence translation," the translator's focus of attention is directed towards the receiving cultural situation and the needs of the prospective audiences. Yet, it is not only the response of readers that conditions the translator's interpretation; the attitude of the publisher and the opinions of the reviewers have also their influence on the translator's decisions and choices. Translations address the needs of specific cultural constituencies and the prevalence of domesticating or foreignizing translations can be implemented by editors, publishers and reviewers. In a letter to the scholar of comparative religion Geoffrey Parrinder, in which he defends his translation of the Gita against Parrinder's criticisms, Mascaró states: "I could not give you a literal translation of the Gita because neither I, nor my Publishers nor, I am sure, the vast majority of readers wanted one. This work has been done several times;" and "I am very sorry that I could not do what you wanted me to do. I tried to do, and I did try very, very hard to do what Professor Arnold Toynbee and the reviewer in the Times Literary Supplement say I have done."[35] Writing to Mascaró on 29th May 1957, Rieu's assistant at Penguins J. M. Cohen says that the talk "A Star from the East" gave him "all the right feelings: personally, because the Gita has just that meaning to me (...); and secondly because that kind of understanding is the one thing that makes a new version worth while."[36] Mascaró's reading of the Gita coincided therefore

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[34] Cohen 33.

[35] HMC. One more example: "I am very sorry that I could not please you, but if I had pleased you I might have displeased those whom I wanted to please." The letter was written on 24th July 1962. Parrinder reviewed Mascaró's translation of the Gita in the *World Faiths* (June 1962), the journal published by the World Congress of Faiths. I will write more about Parrinder's review and Mascaró's rejoinder in the next two sections.

[36] HMC. Cohen adds: "I think it will sell quite freely, partly on the general reputation of the series, and partly (principally, I think) on the book's value, which is generally obscured in bad translations."

with the ideas that the Penguin editors had envisaged for their series of classics: there was a shared intention and a fruitful collaboration ensued. Mascaró was free to translate in his own way and to write the introduction he wanted without any pressure from the Penguin editors.[37] His Gita was the first translation from the Sanskrit to be published in the Penguin Classics: it quickly became a popular translation, the publisher made considerable profits with the number of copies sold (the translation was still in print till very recently), and Mascaró was, needless to say, extremely pleased with the fact that his Gita was widely read.[38]

It must not be assumed that Rieu's ideas about translation were devotedly followed by later translators. I cannot elaborate on this issue more systematically because it is beyond the scope of this section to examine, even briefly, the personal styles of the translators (Rieu included) that produced translations for the Penguin Classics series when Rieu was chief editor, and contrast their translation methods and principles. Translators were free to make their own personal choices and their translations did not obey a fixed or predetermined scheme. As the editors of *The Translator's Art* (the book contains a collection of articles written by some of the most well-known Penguin translators) highlight, the translators' ideas about their personal experiences of translating "are as varied as the languages and authors they discuss."[39] What I particularly want to emphasize is that the Penguin translations – for instance, Robert Graves's translation of Suetonius's *The Twelve Caesars* (1957) and Trevor J. Saunders's translation of Plato's *Laws* (1970) – employed fluent strategies that assimilated the foreign text to domestic

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[37] On 30th January 1961, Mascaró wrote a letter to Rieu expressing his wish to publish a selection of the Upanishads in the Penguin Classics series. On 21st of February, he sent a detailed scheme of the project. On 30th May 1961, Rieu replies to Mascaró: "You will be glad to hear that we approve your scheme for a book of translations from the Upanishads, extending to some 200 pages, plus introduction." In the words of William Radice in *The Translator's Art: Essays in Honour of Betty Radice*, ed. William Radice and Barbara Reynolds (London: Penguin, 1987) 13, Rieu had "a free hand in the commissioning and supervision of further translations" after the publication of his *Odyssey* in 1946.

[38] The first edition of Mascaró's translation of Gita (1962) sold 560923 copies. The second one (1995) – a low-priced classic text published to celebrate Penguin Classics' 60th anniversary – sold 78832 copies. The third and last one (issued in 2003 with an additional introduction by Simon Brodbeck) sold 68142. I am grateful to Rachel Love, Editorial Co-ordinator, Penguin Classics and Reference, who kindly sent me these figures in an e-mail on 24th November 2008. Ms. Love informed me that the 2003 edition went out of print in January 2008, but that an additional August 2008 printing was made to supply the US market.

[39] Radice and Reynolds 7.

cultural values. As regards Graves's translation, the English writer inserted and chose English expressions that equated Julius Caesar's sexual leanings, which are not explicitly described as homosexual in the Latin text, with perversion and dictatorial ambitions.[40] According to Saunders, a translation "should read as little as possible like a translation" and the translator's style must be determined by the attention that the foreign text receives in the culture into which it will be translated and the attributes of the intended audience.[41] He concedes that his translation of the Greek word "xenos" ("stranger" or "foreigner") as "sir" and "gentlemen" (for the plural "xenoi") and of "kerdos kai rastonen" ("profit and ease") as "cakes and ale" (a Shakespearean expression) cannot be considered technically accurate; yet, he had decided to attract readers and did not mind to abandon accuracy for readability.[42] It must also be mentioned that Betty Radice, who was editor of the Penguin Classics from 1964 until her death in 1985 (she became Rieu's assistant editor in 1959), introduced changes in the editorial criteria. Radice and Reynolds state that Rieu preferred "deliberately unspecialized" introductions and that his purpose was to reach the general reader (scholarly annotations were therefore ruled out of the series). Betty Radice, on the contrary, was in favour of more scholarly reliable translations of the classics, which could be used in schools and university courses and meet the expectations of more demanding and educated readers with a keener interest in literary and aesthetic values.[43] When Mascaró's *The Bhagavadgita* came out in 1962, a new cycle was about to start in the management of the Penguin Classics series. It was a period of transition – not always pacific – that affected the ageing founder of the Classics series, who once confessed to Mascaró that he had "survived the winter only to fall into terrible trouble with Penguins, where youth

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[40] Venuti, *Translator's Invisibility* 27 and 28, Venuti argues that Graves's translation "is not just slanted against Caesar, but homophobic" and that this homophobia participated in a postwar attitude that associated "homosexuality with a fear of totalitarian government, communism, and political subversion through espionage."
[41] Trevor J. Saunders, "The Penguinification of Plato," *The Translator's Art: Essays in Honour of Betty Radice*, ed. William Radice and Barbara Reynolds (London: Penguin, 1987) 155 and 157.
[42] Saunders 158.
[43] Radice and Reynolds 21-22.

is trying to thrust out age (me, 76)."[44] After Rieu's retirement, Mascaró worked together with Betty Radice, who still supervised his translation of the Upanishads and later of the Dhammapada (Mascaró's last work in the Penguin Classics). As far as the examples of Graves and Saunders are concerned, they demonstrate that domesticating strategies must not be defined simply in terms of faithfulness or betrayal of the original text, and that notions of fidelity and accuracy depend on several factors such as the purpose of the publication or the type of readers the translator wants to address.

Admittedly, the reader of Mascaró's Gita will not fail to notice the frequent use of archaic pronouns, old-fashioned expressions and unusual syntactic structures, which are reminiscent of the biblical diction but which have nothing to do with the modern English spoken or written in Mascaró's own time and which Rieu had recommended for his series of Classics. The first time J. M. Cohen wrote to Mascaró (24th May 1957), he stressed that the translation of the Gita shall be "written in contemporary English."[45] Mascaró did not follow the editor's instructions. His translation of Gita 18.58 is a case in point: "If thy soul finds rest in me, thou shalt overcome all dangers by my grace; but if thy thoughts are on thyself, and thou wilt not listen, thou shalt perish."[46] It can be argued that examples such as these indicate a foreignizing tendency in Mascaró's translation of the Gita and that my arguments are inconsistent, because I have already characterized it as domesticating. I claimed that a transparent translation inscribes the foreign text with cultural and linguistic values dominant in the receiving culture: archaisms and an obsolete word order were no longer a conventional practice or a prevailing feature of the twentieth-century English language. With its archaic forms, Mascaró's translation attracts attention to itself, and the reader is reminded that what he or she is actually read-

[44] HMC. Rieu's letter to Mascaró was written on 6th May 1963. Three days later, he writes again to Mascaró: "I fought my battle yesterday at Penguins with resounding success. You will have me with you as your editor for some time yet." Rieu died in 1972.
[45] HMC.
[46] Mascaró, *Gita* 84. "If thy soul finds rest in me (...)" is an allusion to Mathew 11:28: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." In Johnson *Gita* 80, for instance, the passage is translated as "For thinking on me (...)."

ing is a translation and not the original text itself. Their use can also be regarded as a foreignizing strategy because they signify the historical and cultural remoteness, as well as the solemnity of the dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and his disciple. Mascaró's Gita might not thus create the impression of transparency, and this is especially true when it is compared to fluent translations, such as those issued in the Penguin Classics (Rieu's, for instance). Venuti underlines the fact that foreignizing translations include those translations that question the values of the target culture and deviate from the current stylistic norms that prevail in the receiving culture, that is, from the transparent discourse that is immediately intelligible and used in the majority of the translation projects.[47] Foreignization is historically determined and culturally specific; it is a dissident practice precisely because it differs and departs from the cultural norms which are most widespread, and not because it adheres faithfully to the source-language text or is a staunch reproduction of it.[48] The archaisms and the syntactical inversions in Mascaró's translation can be viewed as a trait of a deviant (foreignizing) practice; however, as I shall examine later, the domesticating tendencies are much more pronounced. Besides, Mascaró's translation of the Gita did not challenge – as Ezra Pound's version of "The Seafarer" did (I am not implying that the work of both translators is comparable in terms of output or purpose) – the linguistic and cultural norms that dominated in the English-speaking context. The majority of the archaisms found in Mascaró's Gita come from the King James Bible (also known as the Authorized Version and published in 1611), one of Mascaró's favourite literary works.[49] This does not mean that the biblical reference, expression or word that Mascaró chooses to borrow from the King James Bible is always suitable and that it can impart the exact meaning of the

[47] In *Translator's Invisibility*, Venuti describes the following translations as foreignizing: Francis W. Newman's translation of the *Iliad* (1856), Ezra Pound's translations of "The Seafarer" (1912) and of Guido Cavalcanti's poetry (1932), Paul Blackburn's translations of troubadour poetry (1958), and Louis and Celia Zukofsky's translation of Catullus' poetry (1969).

[48] Venuti, *Translator's Invisibility* 29-30, 125 and 232.

[49] Patrick Moorsom (one of Mascaró's former students) said in a letter that he could "remember your quoting of the Bible, and your saying that you wanted the English of the 'Bhagavad Gita' to rival the purity of language of the Bible (HMC)." The letter is not dated, but I guess it must have been written two or three years after the publication of the Gita because Patrick refers to the forthcoming publication of the Upanishads.

original Sanskrit. In fact, the biblical importation often simplifies or reduces to a more intelligible form the sense of the foreign (Sanskrit) verse with its technical terminology; sometimes it seems fairly appropriate as, for example, in Mascaró's translation of Gita 17.8 (I will return to this later). But there is no doubt that some of Mascaró's choices generate a domesticating effect, which is particularly manifest when allusions to the Judeo-Christian monotheism substitute terms that are specific to the Indian religious traditions.

In "A Note on the Translation," Mascaró juxtaposes two biblical passages from three different translations of the Bible, namely, the Authorized Version, James Moffatt's Old Testament (1924-25) and the Revised Version (1881-85). Moffatt's Isaiah 30:15 does not appeal to him because it lacks the spiritual suggestiveness of its counterpart in the King James Bible, whilst the rendition of Psalm 102:7 in the Revised Version[50] fails to capture the musical quality of the older version.[51] Even though the symbolic value and the literary prestige of the Authorized Version were still considerable, the emergence and proliferation of new translations in plain and modern English threatened to displace the 1611 Bible, often regarded, alongside the works of Shakespeare, as "one of the most foundational influences on the development of the modern English language."[52] I want to argue that Mascaró's decision to adopt the diction of the King James Bible in his translation of the Gita stems partly from the fact that the older Bible was losing ground due of the publication of revised, modern-speech, as well as simplified or easy-to-read versions that dropped the redundant words and expressions typical of sixteenth-century English.[53] He wanted somehow to preserve what was disappearing, and hence his poor opinion of translations that made use of modern English; he belonged to an extensive list of enthusiastic admirers of the Authorized Version, who, in David Norton's words, "seem

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[50] This was an attempt to combine modern scholarship with the language of the King James Bible.
[51] Mascaró, *Gita* lxiv.
[52] Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How it Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture* (New York: Anchor, 2001) 253.
[53] Bruce M. Metzger, *The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001) 99-116 and 163-74. The King James Bible retained much of the language of the earlier, sixteenth-century translations.

to vie to produce the most resounding and memorable praise of the KJB."[54] Mascaró was also influenced by Matthew Arnold's views on translation. In his third lecture of "On Translating Homer" (1861), the Victorian scholar and poet points out that the Bible (he meant the King James Bible) "is undoubtedly the grand mine of diction for the translator of Homer; and, if he knows how to discriminate truly between what will suit him and what will not, the Bible may afford him also invaluable lessons of style."[55] Mascaró followed Arnold's advice, but applied it to a Sanskrit text. In Victorian times, the literary qualities of the King James Version were highly commended; thus, to imitate its diction could well be a dominant practice, not a dissident one. In the 1960s, it was an anachronism because that Bible no longer occupied the canonical place it had occupied in former centuries. In 1944 (two years after he started to translate the Gita into English), Mascaró wrote an article for the *Cambridge Review* against Basic English.[56] Denouncing what he viewed as the linguistic coarseness of the Basic English Bible (he refers to Moffatt's translation of John 1:3 disapprovingly as well), Mascaró says that "the 'emotional' man (...) feels pain when he sees the Authorized Version coldly dissected by the Basic translation, and its beauty destroyed."[57] Mascaró's predilection for the archaic forms of the seventeenth-century Bible can be deemed a domesticating practice, given that the translator was responding to a situation (the emergence of novel and up-to-date versions of the Bible) that had originated in the target-language culture, that is, in the English-speaking countries where his work would circulate. Be that as it may, though Mascaró departed from what J. M. Cohen had told him to do, his translation caught the attention of contemporary readers.

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[54] David Norton, *A History of the English Bible as Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000) 299. Norton calls this excessive reverence for the Authorized Version "AVolatry."

[55] Matthew Arnold, *On the Classical Tradition*, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1960) 156. There are two editions of Arnold's essays in Mascaró's personal library. Mascaró underlined this same passage in one of his copies.

[56] Basic English is a simplified form of English and an international auxiliary language devised by Charles Kay Ogden (1889-1957). It uses a limited number of words (less than one thousand) and reduces the English verbs to eighteen. The Basic English Bible was produced from the original languages by Professor Samuel Henry Hooke (1874-1868): the New Testament came out in 1941 and the whole Bible in 1949.

[57] Juan Mascaró, "Simple English or Basic English," *Cambridge Review* 65 (1944): 285.

DOMESTICATING EXAMPLES IN MASCARÓ'S GITA

One of the most obvious domesticating choices in Mascaró's translation of the Gita is the absence - in the majority of the Sanskrit verses where they occur – of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna's epithets.[58] Mascaró no doubt thought that it would be beside the point to maintain the culture-specific epithets of the two protagonists of the Gita in a translation meant to reach and appeal to the widest possible (non-specialist) audience. Accordingly, Arjuna's epithets – for example, "Kaunteya" ("Son of Kunti"), "Dhanaṃjaya" ("Conqueror of Wealth"), "Pāṇḍava" ("Son of Pandu"), "Mahābāhu" ("Long-armed"), and "Bharataśreṣṭha" ("the Best of Bharatas") – and Kṛṣṇa's – such as "Vāsudeva" ("Son of Vāsudeva," Kṛṣṇa's father), "Madhusūdana" ("Slayer of the Demon Madhu") or "Hṛṣīkeśa" ("Master of the Senses") – are left out or replaced by the already familiar names of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna.[59] Mascaró should not be criticized for what can be hastily considered careless omissions caused by the translator's negligence. However, Geoffrey Parrinder did not fail to denounce Mascaró's rendering of Kṛṣṇa's epithet in verse 2.1, which he regarded as an idiosyncratic choice (Mascaró had translated "Madhusūdana" as "the Spirit of Krishna"). He observes as well that "Mr. Mascaró makes no attempt to explain the many names that occur, particularly in the first chapter, and the reader is plunged into this strange atmosphere without any help at understanding its setting."[60] Although these criticisms are not unwarranted, Parrinder does not take into account the aim of the Penguin Classics series: historical or contextual questions that tended to mystify the reader were usually circumvented (Parrinder thinks that they have the opposite effect, namely, they assist the reader and

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[58] I say "obvious," but it must not be assumed that Mascaró's readers were able to identify at once the omissions made by the translator. It would be "obvious" for those who were familiar with other translations of the Gita or knew the original Sanskrit text. In the beginning, readers of the Penguin Classics were not university students.

[59] More epithets occur in the Gita than those I have quoted and some of them occur more than once throughout the text. In Gita 11.36, the epithet "Hṛṣīkeśa" is replaced simply by "God" in Mascaró's translation, and in verse 18.62, instead of the epithet "Bhārata," there is the phrase "victorious man." There are rare exceptions: for instance, Kṛṣṇa's epithet "Janārdana" appears (unexpectedly) in Mascaró's translation of Gita 1.36. Johnson maintains the epithets and translates some of them (in verses 6.35 and 17.12, for example), but only once (in an endnote) does he refer to "Vāsudeva" (Gita 7.19) as one of the many epithets of Kṛṣṇa (Johnson, *Gita* 85). Zaehner overlooks most of the Sanskrit epithets in his translation of the Gita.

[60] Geoffrey Parrinder, rev. of *The Bhagavad Gita*, trans. J. Mascaró, *World Faiths* 53 June 1962: 27.

prevent confusion). Besides, as I wrote in the previous chapter, the allegorical reading championed by Mascaró rendered such background details secondary and even superfluous. Indeed, he justifies his translation of Kṛṣṇa's epithet as follows: "When at the beginning of Chapter II I translated 'Then arose the Spirit of Krishna,' instead of a clumsy translation using the word Madhusudana with a little note at the bottom of the page, I felt that the Krishna of the Second Chapter is not the Krishna of the Mahabharata in the first chapter. I wrote 'Spirit' with a capital letter. In the first chapter Krishna is the charioteer of Arjuna in a battle for an earthly kingdom; in the Second Chapter Krishna is God, the friend of the soul of man in the battle for salvation."[61] Mascaró's deletion of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna's epithets can be compared to the scholar J. B. Phillips's decision to leave out the genealogical details from his version of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, since the modern reader, in his opinion, was not conversant with Jewish names.[62] According to Phillips, even though it is "important for the modern reader to realize that the genealogy of Jesus went back right through Jewish history, the actual list of names as such [is] not important to them."[63] Mascaró's response to Parrinder's unfavourable comments is worth citing, because there is an evident parallel between his approach to the Gita and Phillips's view about the unnecessary translation of Jesus' lineage. Mascaró's ironic reference to the genealogy of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew can hardly be, I think, a coincidence:[64]

> When I read a spiritual scripture, and I have read a few, I try to find its spiritual message. When in the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mathew I find that "Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor", I am not interested to know who Zorobabel was, even as I should not be interested to know who Sanjaya was if I read the Bhagavad Gita for the first time. The context tells us that Sanjaya was someone who was singing the poem to Dhrita-rashtra, and I explained who this king was in page 21 of my introduction. (...) I cannot be interested in Zorobabel, because I know that if I was interested in Zorobabel more, I might be interested in Jesus less.

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[61] I have already given the details of Mascaró's letter to Parrinder in the previous section (footnote 35).
[62] Phillips began his translation work with the twenty-one epistles of the New Testament (published as *Letters to Young Churches: A Translation of the New Testament Epistles* in 1947). His *The Gospels Translated into Modern English* was issued in 1952 and *The Book of Revelation: A New Translation of the Apocalypse* in 1956. All his translations were later collected in one volume entitled *The New Testament in Modern English* (published in 1958 and revised by the author in 1972).
[63] Rieu and Phillips 159.
[64] I found Phillips's *Letters to Young Churches* and *The Gospels Translated into Modern English* in Mascaró's personal library.

Rieu's (domesticating) "principle of equivalent effect" governs Mascaró's translation choices in the two examples I will examine in the next two paragraphs. The first is related to what I pointed out in the previous section regarding Mascaró's version of Gita 13.28: the intrusion of Christian ethics, through which the European translator widens (though this can be an unpremeditated practice) the cultural and religious scope of the Gita, transforming the text into a more interesting and congenial work to a target audience familiar with the New Testament. Mascaró's strategy, which corresponds to Friedrich Schleiermacher's second method of translating, serves the reader, but has a pitfall: it disregards the contextual and cultural differences that separate the Gospels from the Sanskrit text. His versions of Gita 5.18, 6.32, 12.18, 14.25 and 18.54 are interesting instances of this. The Sanskrit text in verse 5.18 states verbatim that those who are wise or who know ("paṇḍitāḥ") see the same thing ("sama-darśinaḥ") in a learned and modest Brahmin, as in a cow or an elephant, or even in a dog or an outcast. Mascaró, nevertheless, inserts the word "love" and translates the sentence as "With the same evenness of love they behold a Brahmin, etc."[65] In 6.32, it is said that the best yogin sees the same thing ("samaṃ paśyati") everywhere, whether it is pleasurable or painful. In Mascaró's translation, the greatest yogin realizes that "the pleasure and pain of others is his own pleasure and pain."[66] In Gita 12.18, Kṛṣṇa informs Arjuna that he loves the man who is the same to friend and enemy ("samaḥ śatrau ca mitre"), but Mascaró renders the Sanskrit thus: "the man whose love is the same for his enemies or his friends."[67] In the case of Gita 14.25, this verse declares that the yogin does not discriminate between friendly and rival factions ("tulyaḥ mitrāri-pakṣayaḥ"), but Mascaró introduces the word "love" in the verse and the yogin is said to

[65] Mascaró, *Gita* 29. Actually, the word "sama" does not mean "same;" it means "equal." Thus, the wise do not see cows and elephants as the same, but they see them equally, i.e. without differentiation of value. "Love" is Mascaró's importation, but in saying "evenness" and seeing this as a matter of evaluation, and not identity, he is accurate. But in 6.32, 12.18 and 18.54 he is not.

[66] Mascaró, *Gita* 34.

[67] Mascaró, *Gita* 61. Gita 12.4 could be added. Mascaró translates "sama-buddhayaḥ" – which Zaehner renders as "equal-minded" (Zaehner 325) and Johnson as "equally minded" (Johnson, *Gita* 55) – as "same loving mind" (Mascaró, *Gita* 59).

have "the same love for enemies or friends."[68] Similarly, in 18.54, the word "love" appears in "samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu" (literally "the same towards all creatures"), and the Sanskrit expression is paraphrased as "His love is one for all creation."[69] It is not my aim to elaborate on the meaning of these verses in the context of the Gita or in the context of Indian philosophy, and describe how the principle of "love your enemies" influenced Mascaró's reading of the Gita (this topic has already been analysed in the third section of the preceding chapter). I just want to call attention to the manipulative powers of translators and highlight how, even when they show the best of intentions, even when they profess to admire the texts they translate, translators can still convey and construct images of non-Western cultures that conform to or harmonize with the values and the world-view accepted by their readers in the receiving culture.

My second example is not less interesting: it corroborates Mascaró's literary and textual bias, a subject to which I will return in the next chapter of the thesis. This textual attitude domesticates the Gita whenever Mascaró introduces the word "scriptures," which etymologically derives from the Latin verb "scribere" ("to write"), to render expressions that signify the Veda, sacred knowledge which was transmitted vocally. The first example occurs in 2.52 and 2.53. The original Sanskrit (in Gita 2.52) refers to "śrotavyasya" (the gerundive or participle of necessity of the verb "śru," which signifies "to hear" or "to listen to") and to "śrutasya" (of "śruta"). Literally, the two expressions (both are in the genitive singular) mean "what is to be heard" and "what has been heard" respectively. Nonetheless, Mascaró renders the sentence as "scriptures of times past and still to come."[70] In 2.53, the phrase "śruti-vipratipannā" ("dissenting from the Veda or sacred tradition") is translated by Mascaró as "wavering in the contradictions of many scriptures."[71] The textualization of the Vedas is also manifest in Gita 6.44, 16.1 and 17.15. In verse 6.44, a reference to "the Veda" ("śabda-brahma") is replaced by the

[68] Mascaró, *Gita* 68.
[69] Mascaró, *Gita* 84.
[70] Mascaró, *Gita* 14.
[71] Mascaró, *Gita* 14.

phrase "the words of books"[72] ("śabda" comes from the verb "śabd," which means "to make a noise or sound," "to call"); in 16.1, "svādhyāyaḥ" ("the recitation of the Veda to oneself") is rendered as the "study of the scriptures."[73] As to the words "svādhyāya-abhyasanam" in Gita 17.15, Mascaró translates them as "the reading of sacred books,"[74] instead of the more literal "the practice of Vedic recitation." Mascaró is not totally wrong when he resorts to "scripture" and "book" to render phrases that refer to the verbal or oral transmission of sacred knowledge. But as Julius Lipner, who prefers to write about "the *voice* of scripture in the context of Hinduism," explains, "'scripture' in its most authoritative form is what has been heard and transmitted orally, not what has been written."[75] The examples cited in this paragraph reveal how the adjustments introduced by Mascaró in his translation turned the Gita into a more pertinent sacred scripture to his intended English readers, who had been born and brought up in societies in which access to books and other written materials such as journals or magazines was – unlike what happened in societies with strong oral traditions – simply taken for granted.

Some of the chief domesticating additions occur when Mascaró uses the archaic diction of the Authorized Version and inserts biblical terms and expressions, which derive from the Judeo-Christian tradition, in his translation of the Gita. Although some grammatical and lexical choices can in fact confer a foreignizing flavour to the translation, others clearly domesticate the original text. I will begin with some of the most conspicuous ones, namely, the archaic second person personal (and possessive) forms, verbal endings and adverbs that were at odds with the instructions Cohen had given Mascaró regarding his translation of the Gita.[76]

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[72] Mascaró, *Gita* 35.
[73] Mascaró, *Gita* 73.
[74] Mascaró, *Gita* 77.
[75] Julius Lipner, *Hindus: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Library of Religious Beliefs and Practices (London: Routledge, 1994) 25.
[76] It is important to point out that the obsolete English forms found in the King James Bible were already falling out of use in standard everyday English speech. Alistair McGrath argues (*In the Beginning* 269) that these forms were retained because over the years 1539-1604, translators were forbidden to depart from the texts of previous translations of the Bible, and this, he adds, over a period "in which the English language itself underwent a considerable change and development."

These, as I explained above, can be viewed as foreignizing, dissident elements in the English translation, since they differed from the English diction adopted by other Penguin translators. For example: "thou hast run" (2.35); "why dost thou enjoin upon me" (3.1); "thou shalt have" (7.1); "thou wert" (4.36) and "thou art" (10.16); "thou knowest thyself" (10.15) and "If thou thinkest" (11.4); "if thou wilt not fight" (18.59); "thine enemies" (2.36); "thereon" (6.11), "therein" (6.22); "wherein" (10.16); etc. Most of the verbal forms come up countless times in the King James Version; the only exceptions are the subjunctive form of the verb "to be" in "thou wert" (five occurrences), and "thou thinkest" (nine occurrences), always used in questions (inverted word order "thinkest thou").[77] Mascaró thought that even the most out-of-date forms were valuable and could transmit the historical remoteness of the dialogue. Syntactical inversions and some archaic syntactical structures can also convey the idea of an old poetical formality and are not uncommon too in Mascaró's Gita. For instance: "their wisdom is unto them a sun" (5.16); "not in them do the wise find joy" (5.22); "men who do evil seek not me" (7.15); "remember thou me" (8.7); "love thou me" (9.33); "thou never canst see me" (11.8); "if even this thou art not able to do" (12.11); "Though he is in the body, not his is the work of the body" (13.31); "those in delusion see him not" (15.10); or "he kills him not" (18.17). The archaic expression "for ever and ever" (a strengthened form of "for ever" that is very frequent in the books of the Old Testament) is used to render the Sanskrit "na vinaśyati" ("it is not destroyed") in 8.20,[78] and "satatam" ("always") in 9.14 (it appears in 2.12 as well). The preposition "unto," in such syntactical constructions as "be gracious unto me" (11.31 and 11.44), or "come unto me" (7.23, 8.5, 8.14, 9.25, 11.54 or 18.68), is very frequent in the King James Bible, where it follows verbs like "to say," "to give," and also "to come." The phrase "gracious

[77] My knowledge of the King James Bible is shallow and it would be impossible to write this and the next paragraph without the help of *BibleGateway.com* (<http://www.BibleGateway.com>), a useful website with a keyword search option that allowed me easy access to all the chapters and verses of the Authorized Version.

[78] The context is important here. The verse refers literally to a state of being ("bhāvaḥ") beyond the unmanifest that is not destroyed when all other beings are destroyed ("yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu na vinaśyati"). Mascaró says that it "remains for ever and ever" (Mascaró, *Gita* 41).

unto me" is not that common, but the same cannot be said of "come unto me," which occurs several times in the seventeenth-century Bible. In Mascaró's Gita, "come unto me" translates "yānti mām api" ("they go to me alone") in verse 7.23, "aham sulabhaḥ" ("I am easily available") in 8.14, or the infinitive "praveṣṭum ("to be entered into") in 11.54.[79]

Another curious case of biblical borrowing can be found in the first part of Gita 11.36, which Mascaró renders as "It is right, O God, that peoples sing thy praises, and that they are glad and rejoice in thee." It resembles, in its cadence and terminology, several passages from the Psalms in the King James Bible; Psalm 9.2 ("I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High") is a case in point. The term "jagat" ("world") is translated as "peoples"; "sing" seems to replace "is delighted" ("prahṛṣyati") and "thy praises" the instrumental "by your glory" ("tava prakīrtyā"); "they are glad and rejoice in thee" is apparently used to translate "anurajyate" ("is pleased by").[80] 8.22, "In him all things have their life, and from him all things have come" ("yasyāntaḥsthāni bhūtāni yena sarvam idaṃ tatam") has the (biblical) flavour of Colossians 1:17, where it is stated that "he is before all things, and by him all things consist".[81] Gita 6.31, 9.31 and 18.65 reproduce the tone and the rhythm of John 3:15 and Romans 9.9. Mascaró renders the second part of verse 9.31 as "For this is my word of promise, that he who loves me shall not perish," which stands for the Sanskrit "pratijānīhi, na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati" (literally: "Understand that no devotee of mine is lost"). John 3:15 says: "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life; Romans 9:9: "For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son." Verse 17.8 describes the foods preferred by the pure ones ("sāttvika-priyāḥ"), and says that they are "hṛdyāḥ" ("pleasing or dear to the heart"). In Mascaró's Gita, this food "makes glad the heart

[79] The Sanskrit phrases in verses 8.5 ("madbhavāṃ yāti"), 9.25 ("yānti madyājino 'pi mām"), and 18.68 ("mām evaiṣyati"), which are almost identical with those in verse 7.23, could also be given as examples.
[80] The use of two near-synonymous words like "be glad and rejoice" is typical of biblical Hebrew, especially in the Psalms. "Sing" is also very common in the Bible in the context of praise or joy.
[81] "(All) beings exist within it; by it all this (the whole universe) is spread" is a literal translation of the Sanskrit. "Yasya" ("it" or "him") refers to the supreme person ("puruṣaḥ paraḥ"), mentioned in the first part of the verse; in the context of Paul's epistle, "him" refers to Christ.

of man," and it is an entirely legitimate translation, though the sentence is a direct borrowing from Psalm 104:15, which contains a reference to "wine that maketh glad the heart of man." Finally, in 18.73, the "Thy will be done" of the Lord's Prayer is appropriated by Mascaró in order to translate "kariṣye vacanaṃ tava" ("I shall do as you say"). Examples such as the last two do not modify the core message of the Sanskrit text, even if they when are reminiscent of the biblical language; and even if they come close to a paraphrase (11.36, for instance), they do not twist the original to such an extent that it is not longer recognizable in the translation.

However, there are passages in Mascaró's translation that create domesticating effects, since they impart a significant theistic and Judeo-Christian dimension to the original text. The substitution of the word "God" for "Brahman" (an instance of Eugene Nida's concept of "dynamic-equivalence translation") is particularly interesting. The word "Brahman" is a complex and multifaceted term and there is no need look at it in depth here. In the Gita, it is often used (in 2.72, 5.19-20, 5.24-26, 6.27-28, 6.38 or 18.53-54) to refer to the state of consciousness of the liberated person, in which there is no desire and ignorance, and rebirth has come to an end. It is in this sense that I want to look at the word "Brahman" in Mascaró's translation, since in most of those verses, Mascaró either replaces the word "Brahman" with "God," or appends a few more words in the translation that let the reader know that (in a Western or Christian context) this condition of overwhelming bliss of those who are "brahmaṇi sthitāh" ("established in Brahman") – can actually be equated with the mystical union of the soul with God. For instance, in 5.19, the sentence "nirdoṣaṃ samaṃ brahma" ("Brahman is devoid of blemish and the same in all") becomes "God is pure and ever one," and "brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ" is translated as "ever one they are in God." In 5.26, "brahma-nirvāṇam" is rendered as "the peace of God," instead of the more rigorous "nirvana of Brahman."[82] In 6.28, "feels the infinite joy of union with God" translates "brahma-saṃsparśam atyantaṃ sukham aśnute" ("attains boundless joy,

[82] The expression "peace of God" occurs two times in the King James Bible: the first in Philippians 4:7 and the second in Colossians 3:15.

the touch of Brahman") and in 6.38, "vimūḍho brahmaṇaḥ pathi" ("uncertain on the path of Brahman") becomes "not having found the path of God." In 2.72, 5.24, 6.27 and 18.53-54, Mascaró retains the term "Brahman" in his translation, but adds "God" immediately after. For example, in verse 5.24, it is stated that the "Yogin attains the Nirvana of Brahman" ("brahma-nirvāṇam adhigacchati") and that – after a colon, as if to give emphasis to what had just been said – "he is one with God and goes unto God." "He is one with God" seems to translate the expression "brahma-bhūtaḥ," and "goes unto God" "brahma-nirvāṇam adhigacchati," already translated literally as "attains the Nirvana of Brahman." Couched in the language of Western spirituality (the writings of the German philosopher and mystic Meister Eckhart on the soul's oneness with God come to mind), Mascaró's translation of the Gita acquires a theistic quality that is absent from the Sanskrit verses I have just cited.

It would be impossible (it would also go beyond the aim of this section) to give a concise summary of the scriptural and theological meaning of Mascaró's linguistic choices. Only the most relevant passages will be (succinctly, though) described and examined. In the Gospels of Matthew 12:32, Mark 10:30 and Luke 18:30, the phrase "the world to come" is uttered by Jesus in connection with the life after death. In Matthew 12:32, it is said that "whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." In Mascaró's Gita, "neither in (...) to come" can be found, with minor variations, in 4.31, 4.40, 6.40 and 17.28. It renders "naiveha nāmutra" ("neither here nor in the other world") in 6.40, or "na ca tat pretya no iha" ("it is nothing, either here or hereafter," that is, with reference to the idea that the performance of ritual acts form a treasury of merit which protect one in this life or after death) in 17.28. There is no need to be punctilious and contest Mascaró's translation choices: "the world to come" is not incorrect, but the less knowledgeable reader might assume that "the hereafter" or "the other world" in the Gita is not indistin-

guishable from the "world to come" mentioned in the Gospels. The various allusions to "eternal" and "eternal life" also reinforce this idea: in 8.23, "eternal life" renders "anāvṛtti" ("that does not turn back or return"), but the Sanskrit word is employed in the context of the yogin who achieves – in Mascaró's translation – the "highest End supreme" ("avyakto 'vyaktāt" or "akṣaraḥ"), the utmost spiritual state where Krishna's dwelling-place or "dhāma" is (8.21).[83] A Sanskritist or a historian of religions can feel justified in questioning the appropriateness of "the world to come" in an English translation of the Gita, since that phrase and "eternal life" have more do to with the doctrine of salvation in the Christian religion than with the idea of liberation from the cycle of recurring births (the achievement of "mokṣa") that is conveyed, for example, by the word "anyaḥ" ("the other world") in 4.31.[84]

Analogous arguments can also be brought forward regarding the biblical idiom "fountain of life" (Gita 7.5), and its cognates in 7.8 ("I am the taste of living waters"), 12.20 ("waters of Everlasting Life") and 14.27 ("the never-failing fountain of everlasting life"). According to Evelyn Underhill, "The fountain [of "Life" or of "Living Waters"] is of course a symbol which is frequent in Christian literature and art."[85] This is an obscure topic though: there are several scriptural passages that refer to "fountains" and "living waters,"[86] as well as illustrations (in medieval manuscripts) and paintings which are called "The Fountain of Life", but their relationship is not entirely clear. In the early Christian centuries, the "Fountain of Living

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[83] Interestingly, the expression "eternal life" appears side by side with "the world to come" in Mark 10:30. Thus: "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." In his introduction (Mascaró, *Gita* lx) Mascaró observes that "In the battle of the *Bhagavad Gita* there is a great symbol of hope: that he who has good will and strives is never lost, and that in the battle for eternal life there can never be a defeat unless we run away from the battle."

[84] According to the Indian scholar and philosopher Rāmānuja (Zaehner 194).

[85] Evelyn Underhill, "The Fountain of Life: An Iconographical Study," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 17 (1910) 100.

[86] For instance, in Song of Songs 4:15, Jeremiah 2:13 and 17:13 or Zechariah 14:8. In the New Testament, "living" (i.e. spring) water symbolizes the "Spirit." John 4 is a case in point. The passage describes the meeting between Jesus and the Samaritan woman near Jacob's well. In verse 14, Jesus tells the woman that he who drinks the water he gives him, "shall never thirst" because it "shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." There is no word corresponding to "living" in Gita 7.8 (it is a biblical importation). The verse just says "waters" in "I am the taste in the waters" ("raso 'ham apsu"), the locative plural form of the feminine noun "ap," which appears only in the plural.

Water" represented "a type of baptism or regeneration," but gradually, due to the popular devotion to the Precious Blood, as Underhill argues, "it became transformed (...) into the fountain or laver filled with the Blood of Christ."[87] In the paintings that Underhill examines in her article, such as the Flemish painter Lucas Horenbault's *The Fountain of Life*, the blood of the wounded Christ that flows into the fountain represents the theological doctrine of "Grace:" it is through the Precious Blood (a symbol of "Grace" in Catholic theology) that the souls of the faithful can wash away their sins and be cleansed. Therefore, instead of carrying his English readers abroad, Mascaró's biblical lexicon could direct them to their own and already familiar religious background. I do not think Mascaró's choices were made arbitrarily; his translation of verse 12.20 shows this clearly. The "waters of Everlasting Life" (I will consider "the fountain of life" verse in the next section) is an ingenious biblical importation and thus a domestication of the original text. Krishna addresses Arjuna and says that he cherishes those devotees who attend faithfully to his immortal nectar of righteousness ("dharmy-āmṛtam idaṃ paryupāsate śraddadhānā"). The word "amṛtam" in "dharmy-āmṛtam" signifies "nectar or ambrosia that confers immortality." It is not difficult to determine the association that Mascaró probably formed in his mind when he was translating the verse: the expression "the waters of everlasting life"[88] could almost ideally render what I would like to describe as the "salvific liquidity" of "amṛtam." The meaning of the word "amṛtam" in the context of the Gita (another example of Eugene Nida and Rieu's principle) could be considered equivalent to the meaning of the word "water" in the Christian biblical and pictorial context. I could quote other examples from Mascaró's translation, but I think I have made my point clear. In the next section, I will

[87] Underhill 100. I do not think that Mascaró was familiar with the pictorial representations of "The Fountain of Life." It is much more likely that he took special note of the scriptural passages I cited in the previous footnote.

[88] Mascaró renders the whole verse as: "But even dearer to me are those who have faith and love, and who have me as their End Supreme: those who hear my words of Truth, and who come to the waters of Everlasting life." "Love," as elsewhere, is a favourite word of Mascaró, but here "have (...) love" translates "bhaktā." The words "those who hear my words of Truth" seem to translate or replace the adverb "yathā-uktam" ("as mentioned before"), which refers to the righteous ("dharmya") words of "Truth" already spoken by Krishna. Thus, by changing the order of the phrases, Mascaró deprives the verse – which repeats the refrain "he is dear," but makes it plural ("te priyāḥ") and adds "atīva" ("extremely") – of its climax.

show how even some of the university-educated reviewers who read the Gita in the Penguins Classics were favourable to Mascaró's domesticating practices.

REVIEWS AND REVIEWERS OF MASCARÓ'S GITA

Though Mascaró and Geoffrey Parrinder (1910-2005) were always cordial in the few letters they exchanged, the English scholar's review could have been interpreted by Mascaró – who had started his translation work on the Gita when he was still living and teaching in the city of Barcelona in the 1930s – as particularly unsympathetic and even malicious. The three-page letter that Mascaró sent to Parrinder was his reply to a letter that Parrinder had written to him on 18th July 1962, vindicating, in a much less dismissive tone, some of the observations he had made earlier in his review.[89] A Methodist minister with a missionary career in Africa, Parrinder was, in 1962, a reader in the comparative study of religions at King's College London (he retired in 1977). He was also a prestigious academic and a prolific writer with an already substantial list of publications (his first book came up in 1949) when he reviewed Mascaró's Gita in the *World Faiths*: his scholarly achievements contrasted thus deeply with Mascaró's modest accomplishments.[90] I would like to mention two more criticisms that Parrinder levelled against Mascaró's translation and introduction, and the arguments that Mascaró used to answer Parrinder's hostile review. Parrinder argues (accurately) that Mascaró paraphrases "Kurukṣetra" (in 1.1) when he translates it as "the battle-field of life," and that he "goes on to mention *Sanjaya*, *Pandu*, *Duryodhana*, and similar names, without any explanation." Instead

[89] The three-page letter from which I have been citing is Mascaró's second letter to Parrinder. The first one was forwarded to Parrinder (together with the newspapers cuttings with the favourable reviews of Arnold Toynbee and the reviewer of the *Times Literary Supplement*) by one of the secretaries of the World Congress of Faiths. I was not able to find this letter (Mascaró's first answer to Parrinder's review), but Mascaró must have felt he had more things to say and wrote a second letter on 24th July. Two days later the secretary of the World Congress of Faiths asked Mascaró if he wanted to reply to Parrinder in print. Mascaró agreed: his "Mascaró answers Dr. Parrinder" was published two months later in the September issue of *World Faiths*.

[90] Ursula King, "Geoffrey Parrinder: Academic and Minister with a Passion for World Religions," *Guardian* 5 August 2005, 10 February 2009 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/2005/aug/05/guardianobituaries.religion>. In 1974, Parrinder published his own verse translation of the Gita.

of "an explanatory introduction," Parrinder continues, "we are treated to a long introduction with quotations from Keats, Wordsworth, the Vedas, the Upanishads, Ramakrishna, the Gospels, Amiel, Shakespeare, St. Teresa, and so on."[91] The English reviewer did not concur with Mascaró's universal vision. The "and so on" sounds particularly dismissive, and Mascaró was not indifferent to it: he not only underlined those three words, but showed his discontentment by drawing a big exclamation mark right next to them in his copy of Parrinder's review. According to Parrinder, Mascaró's views are debatable; he states that they do not give "the practical introduction to the themes and personalities of the Gita, which are what Penguin readers need."[92] Mascaró responds to Parrinder's first criticism as follows: "Kuru-kshetra is 'the field of Kuru', (...) but in the Bhagavad Gita it becomes the 'field of life'. The whole of chapter Thirteen is devoted to 'the field' and 'the knower of the field' with suggestions of the spiritual battle that takes place on that field, the field of life. I could not write a long explanation of how the semi-historical meaning in the Mahabharata becomes a spiritual meaning in the part of the epic we call the Bhagavad Gita." With regard to the introduction, Mascaró asserts confidently that: "I hope that my Introduction is not, as you suggest, a mere jumble of quotations from Keats, the Vedas, the Gospels, Amiel 'and so on'. (...) How could I say that all religions are the same, or teach the same thing? But I do believe that even as the spirit of poetry is one, but it reveals itself in different languages and poets, not all of course of the same value, although its endless variety is part of its wonder, in the same way the Spirit of Religion reveals itself in the spiritual scriptures and in the seers of all religions (...)."[93]

The two other reviewers of the Penguin Gita did not assess Mascaró's translation and introduction in terms of their defects, and their opinions were therefore significantly different

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[91] The success of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's translations and commentaries in the same period shows that there was a market for this sort of thing.

[92] Parrinder 27. Parrinder was mistaken. Penguin readers did not need the "practical introduction" he refers to in the review. If they had wanted one, the sales of Mascaró's Gita would not have probably been so high, and the book would not have become so popular. The "practical introduction" that Parrinder suggests would most likely keep Penguin readers away instead of attracting them to the Penguin edition of the Gita.

[93] Mascaró's views on religion will be dealt with in the next and final chapter.

from those of Parrinder. The anonymous reviewer of the *Times Literary Supplement* wrote a favourable, but not totally uncritical appraisal of Mascaró's Gita. He or she observes that "To use simple words, without sacrificing subtleties of meaning is, therefore, one of the chief problems facing a translator," and points out a "pedant" might accuse Mascaró "of poetic licence for expanding here and there the literal meaning of a word or phrase or for avoiding the accepted translation in obeying, as he claims, the spirit of the original." The expression "as he claims" indicates that the critic, notwithstanding his or her overall positive assessment of the Penguin Gita, might not have been wholly convinced by Mascaró's Platonic or Pauline concept of translation. And in the next paragraph, he or she does not refrain from mentioning that Mascaró is "too concerned at times to maintain a scriptural tone, preferring for example, such a phrase as 'the abode of salvation', to 'the state beyond sorrow'" (Mascaró's biblical importation in Gita 17.8 is cited in the review). However, the reviewer describes Mascaró's introduction as "appealing," and argues that the value of the translation "is enhanced by an introduction which sketches suggestively the spiritual background of the *Gita* in the 'Vedas' and 'Upanishads' and explains its setting in the great epic in which it is included (...)."[94] Arnold Toynbee's review differs from Parrinder's as well. The British historian says that Mascaró's translation "is welcome because it is illuminating. It is sensitive and at the same time straightforward. Moreover, Mr. Mascaró, in his preface, has managed to put the Gita in its setting in the history of Indian religion, philosophy and literature."[95] It is clear that the Penguin Classics Gita did not address readers who were already familiar with the text or had already a substantial knowledge of Indian religions, and that Mascaró's introduction provided the essential information that most readers needed. Mascaró's universal vision had also its beneficial effects: how many English-speaking readers in the 1960s, who could not "be expected to be primarily

[94] "The Penguin 'Gita'," rev. of *The Bhagavad Gita*, trans. Juan Mascaró, *Times Literary Supplement* 9 March 1962: 170.
[95] Arnold Toynbee, "Hindu Testament," rev. of *The Bhagavad Gita*, trans. Juan Mascaró, *Observer* 15 April 1962: 29.

concerned with literature,"[96] had ever come upon the name or a passage from the work of the sixteenth-century Spanish mystic St. Peter of Alcántara?[97] The same question can be asked in relation, for instance, to Juan Maragall (1860-1911), the "greatest poet of the Catalan literary Renaissance"[98] (Mascaró cites two lines from his beautiful poem "Les Muntanyes" in his introduction to *The Upanishads*, though he does not state the title of the poem). Who had ever heard of him in the United Kingdom or in the United States apart from university lecturers or translators who worked on Iberian literatures and languages? I do not think I deviate from the truth if I argue that Mascaró's introductions epitomize and can actually be seen as a "microcosm" of the whole Penguin Classics project, in which literary creations from all parts of the world were introduced to readers who were neither scholars nor "pedants."

Though he did not write a review of Mascaró's translation, the American psychiatrist and writer Paul R. Fleischman is an interesting case of a knowledgeable and educated reader who found Mascaró's translations and introductions congenial to his own philosophical outlook. In "Peace is a Personal Encounter: Juan and Kathleen Mascaró," he affirms that he collected many translations of the Gita over the years but found to his amazement that the sacred text from India did not appeal to him as a religious-philosophical work, except in Mascaró's poetic translation.[99] Fleischman describes his first encounter with the Gita under the influence of the American writer Henry D. Thoreau, relates how certain passages in Mascaró's translation caught his attention, and how he decided to write to the translator, whom he thought was "a long-dead Victorian,"[100] when he found a biographical note in his copy of *The Dhammapada*. In his first letter to Mascaró, Fleischman gives a more detailed account of this story and informs Mascaró about his university education and personal interests; he also requests Mas-

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[96] Cohen 33.
[97] Mascaró, *Gita* li-lii.
[98] Mascaró, *Upanishads* 15.
[99] Paul R. Fleischman, "Peace is a Personal Encounter: Juan and Kathleen Mascaró," *Cultivating Inner Peace: Exploring the Psychology, Wisdom, and Poetry of Gandhi, Thoreau, the Buddha, and Others*, 2nd ed. (Seattle: Pariyatti, 2004) 34.
[100] Fleischman 34.

caró to record in a tape some chapters of the Gita, because he wanted to memorize the sound of the Sanskrit text in the translator's own voice.[101] In the winter of 1986, Fleischman passed through London on his way to India and travelled to Cambridge (by taxi from Heathrow and back!) to meet the aged translator of the Gita, who was in poor health at that time. Though a "long-time student of the Gita," Fleischman tells Mascaró that his first impression of the Indian text was negative and that he found it "incomprehensible, and, as a young scientist, superstitious!"[102] Yet, "In a random or bored moment I again picked up that ridiculous old book, cracking it open to an arbitrary page, which happened to be chapter 7, and began to read, J. Mascaró trans., 'But beyond my visible nature is my invisible Spirit. This is the fountain of life whereby this universe has its being. All things have their life in this Life …'. My life took shape. There was more than order to life, and a reason for order …." In Gita 7.5 (the verse that Fleischman cites), Krishna refers to his "prakṛtiḥ parā" or "higher nature," which he distinguishes from his "lower nature" or "(prakṛtiḥ) aparā" (the universe of material phenomena), and informs Arjuna that this "higher nature" is "jīva-bhūtām" ("developed into life") and also that it supports the world ("jagat dhāryate).[103] In 7.6, also cited by Fleischman, instead of the more literal "origin and dissolution" ("prabhavaḥ pralayas tathā"), Mascaró inserted the expression "beginning and end."[104] Mascaró seems to have based his translation of 7.5 and 7.6 on the same biblical passage, namely Revelation 21.6: "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the *beginning and the end.* I will give unto him that is athirst of *the fountain of the water of life* freely."[105] In brief, he attempted to resolve the difficulty of the phrase

[101] The letter was written in the late 1970s. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations in this paragraph are from Fleischman's letter to Mascaró. The letter is in HMC.
[102] In the book, he writes that he found the "old poem superstitious and opaque" (Fleischman 33).
[103] I follow Zaehner, who favours Rāmānuja's interpretation of "jīva-bhūtām," and renders it as "developed into life." He maintains (Zaehner 177-78 and 245-46) that the Sanskrit phrase refers to an "eternal essence" or "conscious matter" that permeates everything that derives from material Nature (primal matter) and not just to the individual self or "ātman."
[104] Mascaró translates the whole verse thus: "All things have their life in this Life, and I am their beginning and end." A closer translation would state that "All beings have these (the two natures) as their source. I am the origin and dissolution of the entire universe."
[105] The words in italics are mine. The words "beginning and end" also occur in Revelation 22:13.

"jīva-bhūtām" with "fountain of life," the source of the totality of individual selves. However, "fountain of life" is foreign to the Gita and as I have shown, it is interpreted differently in its original (biblical) contexts.

As far as Fleischman is concerned, he claims that he came upon those two verses accidentally, but as it will become clear, this claim might be only half-true. In fact, Fleischman is a selective reader of the Gita: the foreignness of the Indian text did not appeal to him; thus, his rejection of the "exotic and unacceptable – such as the description of birth in the next life being determined by the phase of the moon in which the person dies."[106] He notes as well that there are "some archaic religious passages" and asserts that he is not "a believer in the Hindu Gita but a disciple of its poetic affinities."[107] What I am trying to argue is that the Gita, in order to be acceptable, in order that the Western reader could respond positively to its theological worldview, had first to be adapted or purged from those passages that brought to light its very foreignness or the archaisms that belonged to what was "Hindu" and were thus unrelated to the reader's cultural background. It had to look like a familiar text and its words had to be made clear and recognizable: the more familiar "Spirit" replaces the foreign, but more literal "higher nature;" hence "beginning and end," which evokes a very well-known passage from the last book of the Bible. Fleischman was one of the many thousands of readers who identified themselves with Mascaró's religious standpoint and universal vision. Mascaró's allegorical interpretation of the Gita (the belief that the problems that contemporary readers faced in their spiritual life were not different from those that Arjuna had to overcome at "Kurukṣetra") played a significant part as well. Fleischman, to whom Mascaró's introduction to the Dhammapada "mirrored the best of my own mind," shared Mascaró's perennialist approach to certain mystical and literary texts: in his letter, for example, he refers to "other 'Gitas:' St. John of the Cross, Rumi, Kabir, Tagore, Wordsworth, Whitman, etc." However, and paradoxically,

[106] Fleischman 33.
[107] Fleischman 33 and 34.

Mascaró's universal vision (as Fleischman's) is marred by a somehow understated ethnocentrism (both men might not have been aware of it though), because it rejects what belongs exclusively to the Gita. Difference and unfamiliarity would impel the English-speaking reader to look beyond his or her own culture in search of meaning. On the contrary, what one generally designates as "universal" tends to blur and to efface the distinctions that separate the foreign from one's social and religious background: hence, an open-minded appeal to the Gita's universality is the result of underlying Western prejudices which turn the "universal" into an ethnocentric embrace oblivious of the specificity of the "other." Fleischman finishes his letter thus: "In college, after reading Edgerton's translation, I felt grateful for J. Mascaró, trans., because, had I come upon Edgerton's translation only, I would have ended up a psychoanalyst!" Fleischman is very coherent and his words confirm what I have just said: Franklin Edgerton's verbal exactness and literalness would force a scientific-minded and rational psychoanalyst to turn away from an Indian text that Edgerton's own translation had made more noticeably and explicitly foreign, exotic and superstitious (in Fleischman's view).

As I showed in the third section, Mascaró used a vocabulary which, he thought, could facilitate the reader's sympathetic identification with the Gita. The recognizable biblical and theological phrases from the King James Version (more widely known and read in Mascaró's time than it is today) domesticated the Sanskrit text for an English-speaking audience. However, when compared to the diction of other translations in the Penguin Classics series, Mascaró's Gita – with its significant number of archaisms and sentences with inverted word order – could give a foreignizing impression, since it deviated from the Penguin norms. It was not the form ("the letter" of the text), but the function of the Gita in post-Second World War English-speaking countries that really interested Mascaró: attention to the form would confine the Gita to its specific religious and philosophical context, but its truths could be made universal through certain translation choices. Although the King James Bible was Mascaró's model for

his translation of the Gita, one must no forget that, unlike many of the new translations of the Bible, the Gita had never been handled in committee. Many translations of and commentaries on the Gita had been the work of individuals (devotees, theosophists, poets, etc) who had approached it with loving insight, but who did not mind to sacrifice the foreignness of the text and impose their own spiritual, political or intellectual perspective on it. I would like to end this short conclusion with a sentence from Mascaró's reply to Parrinder in the *World Faiths* journal, which recalls Gandhi's view on the Gita. Gandhi had said that only those who could apply the teachings of the Gita to their everyday lives could understand it. According to Mascaró, "Only those who love the Gita can understand the Gita."[108] It was this love or "spiritual insight" that could give readers the essence of the text: scholarly detachment and contextual matters were dispensable.

[108] Juan Mascaró, "Mascaró Answers Dr. Parrinder," *World Faiths* 54 (1962): 21.

MASCARÓ'S WORK IN CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

Fleischman's attempt to harmonize or reconcile the contents of the Gita with his own personal commitments raises important and more wide-ranging questions about the possibility of a constructive exchange of ideas between Western students of Asian religious traditions and those countries that have traditionally been viewed as valuable suppliers of philosophies, values and concepts that the West lacks and wants to understand and assimilate. Nevertheless, as it will become clear throughout this chapter, Western political and cultural hegemony has, on the whole, remained unchallenged. Even those engaged in the study of Asian civilizations have not always been aware of the fact that their enquiries arise from Western-biased motivations and assumptions, and carry disabling prejudices that compromise the cross-cultural dialogue. Not surprisingly, Eastern religious texts have been uprooted from their original milieu and relocated within Western cultural and religious frameworks and deployed to serve, validate or question ideas developed within the Western intellectual tradition. J. J. Clarke underlines the ethnocentric premises that have informed Western interpretations of Asian cultures, and asserts that "scholars have inevitably projected their own interests and prejudices, as well as those of the cultures from which they have sprung, onto the objects of their investigation."[1] Texts are made amenable, relevant and understandable to the modern and Western interpreter, and his or her readership, but it must not been inferred that interpreters have limitless authority or are entitled to pronounce arbitrary and idiosyncratic statements about the texts and the cultures they study. As the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) indicates in *Truth and Method*, "a hermeneutically schooled conscience must be sensitive to the otherness of the text from the beginning."[2] It can be claimed that to some extent Mascaró failed to take notice of the foreignness of the Gita, but the reasons for this cannot be divorced from the

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[1] J. J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter between Asian and Western Thought* (London: Routledge, 1997) 188.

[2] Cited in Georgia Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987) 87. *Truth and Method* is the English title of Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Methode*, first published in 1960.

historical background in which he lived and worked. Mascaró was motivated by the genuine conviction that it would be more fruitful to connect the Gita or the Upanishads to the political problems of his time than to look exclusively at their "otherness;" in his view, similarities and convergences, which not infrequently result in domesticating practices, were more significant than the differences that separated cultures and religions from each other.

In this chapter, I will examine Mascaró's work in relation to what I regard as the well-intentioned, but nevertheless Western-centred search for novel spiritual and political alternatives in the religious traditions of Asia. The dominant idea was that these could revitalize and enrich Western societies, and also counteract the spiritual disintegration, political turmoil and scientific materialism that prevailed in European countries and especially in the United States of America. Many North-American middle-class youths believed that Eastern thought could bring about a transformation of attitudes towards life and society as a whole. This enthusiasm for Eastern spiritual traditions was particularly noticeable in the 1950s and 1960s,[3] but Mascaró was already writing about and assessing the Upanishads in terms of their philosophical relevance and importance to individuals and nations in the late 1930s. Mascaró's concluding remarks in the last paragraphs of his introduction to *Himalayas of the Soul* are a case in point:

> And this message of idealism and of the One behind the many comes to us when matter is thought to be omnipotent, and when the barriers of separation between nation and nation and between man and man are rising higher and higher, when the word idealism is met with scorn by those who declare the gospel of brute force, when intolerance is proclaimed a virtue and when fanaticism is mistaken for faith, when self-interest is declared the rule of international relations, when treasures of the earth are sought far more than treasures in heaven, and when the gospel of liberty and love is abandoned for one of tyranny and hate. To one and all comes this message of sages of olden times who in silence were loving to all. If modern man in his pride showed them the wonders of science, including the means of destruction, they would smile and say: "Great is the power of man, but the Spirit is not this, is not this.[4]

[3] I will return to this topic later in the chapter.

[4] Mascaró, *Himalayas* 21-22. In the last sentence between quotation marks, there is a reference to a famous expression that occurs a few times in the "Bṛhadāraṇyaka" Upanishad: "neti neti," commonly rendered as "not this, not that." "Neti neti" is used to communicate the complete impossibility of describing the self or "ātman," since it is beyond words and cannot be defined. In Mascaró's version (*Himalayas* 121), "He is incomprehensible, for He cannot be comprehended. He is imperishable, for He cannot pass away. He has no bonds of attachment, for He is free; and free from all bonds He is beyond suffering and fear." Those who realize the self become immune to pain and suffering, and nothing evil can happen to them.

The "message of idealism and of the One behind the many" is a reference to one of the chief ideas enunciated in the Upanishads: that there is a single principle or reality behind the multiplicity of forms that pervade the world.[5] This fundamental principle is usually designated as "brahman," which is also the essential core ("ātman" or the "self") of each individual. Brereton cites four reasons why this "integrative vision," as he calls it, was so significant; the third one is the most germane to the topic at hand, since it is connected with the "not this, not that" of the "Bṛhadāraṇyaka" Upanishad that Mascaró cites in the passage above. According to that American scholar:

> (...) the vision of totality (...) required a reevaluation of what one truly is and therefore what is truly consequential. (...) the Upanishads argue that people are really not what they appear to be. They seem to be individuals, vulnerable to suffering and death, subject to their private destinies. That individual self, however, is not the true self. Death cannot affect the true self, nor can anything else, for the self precedes and embraces everything. The person who truly sees the self in this way, therefore, should have neither desire nor fear, for that person knows that no harm can come to the self.[6]

Mascaró discarded a historical reading of the Upanishadic "neti neti," because it was not related to the contemporary, domestic situation in which he lived. The individual who identifies himself or herself with the true self, which can only be expressed negatively in the "neti neti" formula, becomes absolutely stable: attachment or aversion to anything that arises within his or her field of awareness comes to an end. Mascaró hoped that the message of the Upanishads (somehow transmuted into hybrid or Christian terms as "love for all behind the apparent diversity") could bring nations and peoples together, and counteract the scientific mentality and the materialism that threatened to disrupt world unity. Later in his introduction to *The Upanishads* (1965), Mascaró emphasizes: "There is much in the *Upanishads* which belongs to their own time. This has a historical interest, but not the spiritual value that belongs to all times."[7] Needless to say, "the spiritual value that belongs to all times" could have "a historical inter-

[5] Joel Brereton, "The Upanishads," *Approaches to the Asian Classics*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom (New York: Columbia UP, 1990) 118-19.
[6] Brereton 134.
[7] Mascaró, *Upanishads* 45.

est" as well, as the passage from Mascaró's introduction to *Himalayas of the Soul* and his interpretation of "Brahman" in the "Bṛhadāraṇyaka" Upanishad suggests. Yet, the moment was opportune for such a reading of the Upanishads: the Spanish Civil War was causing incalculable devastation in Mascaró's country, the Sino-Japanese War had just began, and a new and more violent European conflict was imminent; it was, as Hobsbawm writes, "The Age of Total War."[8] The message of the "One behind the many" was needed more than ever.

The political situation was hardly ever absent from Mascaró's mind. Indeed, I have already pointed out in the second part of the thesis that underlying Mascaró's sympathetic lecture on the importance of the "Hindu Classics for English Readers" was a tense political crisis that erupted in the middle of World War Two: the British government's negative response to India's demand for independence. The translation of Sanskrit texts was not a disinterested or value-free pursuit; translations, and also other cultural initiatives such as lectures and congresses, which promoted debate about Asian religions, must not be separated from the widespread Western cultural tendency to appropriate and exploit Eastern civilizations for domestic purposes. The presence of concepts and ideas derived from non-Western religious and philosophical traditions in the works of European intellectuals, artists and poets attests to the fact that cultures are permeable to exterior influences and do not remain isolated from one another. Nonetheless, this borrowing, which gives an exotic flavour to Western literary or philosophical creations within a universalistic framework of human interconnectedness, also contributes to the domestication and objectification of Asian cultures. T. S. Eliot's recourse to the Upani-

[8] Hobsbawm, *Extremes* 21-53. It is worth citing two short passages from a letter that Launcelot Cranmer-Byng (1872-1945), the translator, Sinologist and editor of the "Wisdom of the East Series," wrote to Mascaró on 2nd October 1937. The letter shows that Cranmer-Byng favoured taking the Upanishads out of their cultural and religious background and their revaluation in the light of the translator's own personal life. He begins his letter with a reference to Japan's invasion of China: "I have just returned from London where I have attended a meeting to protest, and take action, against Japan. You know what I am feeling and what this horror means to me." He later urges Mascaró to "Be frank with your readers as you have been with me. Tell them how this book [i.e., *Himalayas of the Soul*] was born, out of suffering and exile, not as a means of escape, but as a way of salvation" (HMC). Mascaró did not allude to his "suffering and exile" in the introduction, but the excerpt I cited conveys Mascaró's repudiation of a world order that had failed to preserve the fundamental moral and spiritual values which could have avoided, for instance, the disastrous civil war in Spain.

shads and to one of Buddha's sermons in *The Waste Land* is a case in point. Although a positive and valuable cultural project, the inter-faith dialogue participates in this Western hegemonic sway over other colonized cultures. In fact, it was linked to the European political and economical domination in the world, and was to a large extent a response to a domestic spiritual crisis exacerbated by the two great wars. Later in this section, I will write more about the World Congress of Faiths, the pioneering inter-faith movement founded by the British imperialist Sir Francis Younghusband (1863-1942) in 1936. What needs to be noted at this stage is the fact that non-Western cultures were inevitably reinterpreted and transformed by the European universalizing and imperialistic impetus and gaze.

THE INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE

Before discussing Mascaró's involvement in the inter-faith dialogue, it is important to make a few preliminary comments on the historical and cultural background that created the conditions for the emergence and development of this type of dialogue, since the latter cannot be separated from the contacts established between European peoples and Asian civilizations. Thus, it is important to highlight that without Orientalism, European awareness of other religious traditions, as well as the question of religious diversity and pluralism would not have been possible; though deeply controversial, the European colonial expansion made possible a fertile interpenetration of diverse cultures and religions. Moreover, orientalist activities challenged and disrupted many of the West's ideological assumptions (for example, the belief in the hegemonic status of the Christian religion). In this context, it is worth mentioning (though briefly) the pioneering work done by Max Müller on the comparative study of religion. In his 1870 Royal Institution lectures, issued later under the title *Introduction to the Science of Religion* (1873), the German scholar argues that scientific neutrality must guide the study of the world's religions; espousing the positivist ideas of his time, he refers to a "Science of Relig-

ion" based on "an impartial and truly scientific comparison of all, or at all events, of the most important, religions of mankind (...)."[9] This was a polemical declaration: Müller did not intend to dethrone Christianity, which he regarded as the highest religious expression, and was cautious not to offend the Victorian ecclesiastical establishment, but his comparative method undermined Christian uniqueness: firstly, because the methods of science were applied to the study of Christianity (science, not Christian faith and theology, would dictate the rules); secondly, because a scientific approach calls into question the validity of Christian claims to exclusive truth and salvific power. Müller argued that there was a universal religious instinct – independent of sense and reason – which enabled human beings to apprehend the Transcendent. According to him, there is Religion (a longing after the Infinite, for example), and there are different historical religions, which are subject to evolution and decay: "As there is a faculty of speech, independent of all the historical forms of language, there is a faculty of faith in man, independent of all historical religions."[10] As Peter van der Veer writes:

> This notion of Unity in Diversity inspired a number of modernist religious movements in this period. It was also the guiding idea behind the World Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893. In a lecture given at Oxford in 1894, Müller compared *The Sacred Books of the East*, the famous series of fifty volumes he edited, to the Chicago events as both being "parliaments of religion." Müller's religion was not Christianity in a narrow sense but universal religion, and the science of religion he helped to establish was an integral part of that conception.[11]

The World Parliament of Religions was a seminal and momentous event: Müller described it as "unique" and "unprecedented in the whole history of the world."[12] Indeed, it was the first time in history that representatives of the world's principal religions came together in order to listen to lectures and exchange ideas about their religious traditions in an atmosphere of amity and tolerance (though not yet of religious pluralism). To Müller, the gathering established the

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[9] F. Max Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, Elibron Classics Ser. (1882; N.p.: Adamant, 2005) 26.
[10] Müller, *Science of Religion* 13.
[11] Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001) 111.
[12] "The Parliament of Religions in Chicago, 1893," *The Essential Max Müller: On Language, Mythology, and Religion*, ed. Jon R. Stone (New York: Palgrave, 2002) 346.

important fact that "above and beneath and behind all religions there is one eternal, one universal religion, a religion to which every man, whether black, or white, or yellow, or red, belongs or may belong."[13] The symposium of religions was part of the World's Columbian Exposition, which was held in Chicago in 1892 to commemorate the four-hundredth anniversary of the "discovery" of America by Christopher Columbus: what was on display in the Exposition were, however, the West's material triumphs and technological achievements. The delegates who participated in the religious event sought to foster fraternal ties between the diverse religions and upheld the idea that religions shared a common ground and could rise above the parochial attitudes that had prevailed in the Christian West. Inspired by universalistic ideals of unity and spiritual reconciliation, Charles Carroll Bonney, the Swedenborgian lawyer who conceived the idea of the World Parliament of Religions, underlined in his opening lecture: "This day the sun of a new era of religious peace and progress rises over the world, dispelling the dark clouds of sectarian strife."[14] Nonetheless, the Parliament was tainted by its Protestant bias and missionary thrust, and "a strong dose of Anglo-Saxon triumphalism;"[15] moreover, it failed to take account of Native American religions (the number of delegates from Africa and South America was also insignificant). But it gave a crucial incentive to the comparative and historical study of religion and contributed to the modern inter-faith movement.[16]

The antecedents of these two groundbreaking initiatives ("the world of deeds and the world of words," as Max Müller designates them[17]) can be traced back to the first encounters between Christian missionaries and Asian cultures. These contacts were marred by the proselytising Christian thrust, but they were nevertheless instrumental in bringing cultures and re-

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[13] Müller, "Parliament" 350.
[14] Richard Hughes Seager, ed., *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism: Voices from the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1993) 21.
[15] Seager 7.
[16] Diana L. Eck's "Foreword" to Seager's *Dawn of Religious Pluralism* xiv-xv.
[17] Müller, "Parliament" 349. Müller contrasts the World Parliament of Religions ("the world of deeds") with the fifty volumes of his *Sacred Books of the East* and maintains that "the world of words" (the written records of the religions of the world) "is in some respects more authoritative" than the inter-faith gathering which took place in Chicago. Müller's view reveals the strong literary bias that prevailed in Orientalist studies.

ligions together and giving rise to an unprecedented interest in Asian civilizations. The missionaries were the first scholars to compile grammars and dictionaries, fundamental tools that gave access to the sacred books and the religious ideas of those they attempted to convert to their faith. It is worth mentioning two key figures who played a central role in what was then the still incipient dialogue between Europe and the Chinese and Indian civilizations: the Jesuit missionaries Matteo Ricci and Roberto de Nobili. Ricci did not repudiate or belittle Chinese culture; on the contrary, he dressed like the people with whom he lived, adopted the rites of those he sought to convert, and even tried to accommodate Christian teachings to the religious practices and customs of Chinese people. Father Nobili employed similar strategies in India, but the orthodox ecclesiastical authorities regarded them with apprehension and feared that the Catholic faith was under threat because of the compromising tactics of the missionaries.[18] Oldmeadow declares that the legacy of some missionaries "in promoting a genuine dialogue between West and East and in opening European eyes to the spiritual riches of the East is not one that can be easily waved away," though he also acknowledges the sometimes disastrous consequences of Christian missions.[19] Reverend John Henry Barrows, the Presbyterian minister and chairman of the World Parliament of Religions, linked the origin of the Chicago religious convention to the missionary movement, which the British Empire had helped to establish, and to the work of William Jones, who had paved the way for the comparative study of religion.[20] Actually, the British Empire provided an ideological basis upon which the interfaith movement would be built, as I shall argue later in more detail. A brief reference should also be made to the famous Mughal Emperor of India Akbar, the Great (1542-1605). An eccentric ruler, who attained an almost divine status, Akbar created his own religion, which he labelled "din-i-ilahi" ("divine faith"). Akbar is an important figure because of his willingness

[18] Clarke 41.
[19] Oldmeadow 215-16.
[20] Oldmeadow 31.

to meet and converse with members of other religions (Brahmans, Jains, Sikhs, Confucians, Jesuit priests from Goa, etc), whom he summoned to his court. It can be claimed that he acted in such a magnanimous way in order to obtain political benefits, promote himself as a benign ruler and avoid unrest,[21] but this does not invalidate the point I am trying to put forward. Akbar's example is very interesting and it stands out against the dreadful excesses and religious persecutions that were so frequent in European countries at that time. Indeed, Akbar's diplomatic and liberal gesture challenges the commonly held belief that former colonized peoples owe their political maturity to their European conquerors or to the West's modern democratic values and institutions.

I would like to turn now to the Mallorcan philosopher, theologian and mystic Ramon Llull (c.1233-1316), who was already involved in inter-faith relations with the Muslims and Jews of Mallorca three centuries before the events I mentioned above took place. Llull was a unique figure in the literary and cultural panorama of the medieval Iberian Peninsula; he was one of the most important creators of literary Catalan and the first European writer to employ a Romance vernacular to discuss theological matters. He composed more than 250 works (not all of the same length) on diverse subjects and using different literary forms, "the product," as the scholar and translator Anthony Bonner highlights, of Llull's "feverish energy."[22] I am not competent to make any scholarly comments on Llull's writings, some of which are extremely complex, but I will try to elucidate Llull's efforts at a (still inchoate though) dialogue with Islam and Judaism. Since Mascaró had a profound admiration for Llull and showed interest in the influence of Sufi mysticism on the Mallorcan philosopher, it would be a mistake to leave him out from this section on inter-faith dialogue. In his "The Orient and Ramon Llull" (1934), Mascaró writes about the oriental origin of Llull's tales in *The Book of the Beasts* and asserts

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[21] Martin Forward, *Inter-Religious Dialogue: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001) 24.
[22] Anthony Bonner, ed. and trans., *Doctor Illuminatus: A Ramon Llull Reader*, with a new trans. of *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved* by Eve Bonner, Mythos Ser. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993) 45.

that "The case of the translations of oriental fables is perhaps the most interesting literary migration we know."[23] He also finds certain parallels, as he would do later with other European and Asian writings in the introductions to his Penguin translations, between Llull's *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved*, the classical Roman poet Horace and the Gita. In 1947, the year in which the BBC started its Catalan broadcasting service,[24] Mascaró gave a short talk in his mother tongue with the title "Ramon Lull, Universal Man" for that British radio station.[25] *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved* (or *Llibre d'Amic e d'Amat*) is, in the words of the English scholar Arthur Terry, "the finest of all Llull's spiritual writings and one of the greatest mystical texts of the Middle Ages."[26] The text, which can be read as an independent work, is part of the last book of *Blanquerna*, a didactic novel that narrates the spiritual journey of the protagonist, Blanquerna, who does not fulfil his parents' ambitions for him, refuses to marry, and leaves home in order to devote his entire life to God: he becomes a monk first, then a bishop and finally is elected pope. Nevertheless, it is as a hermit that he finds spiritual fulfilment and writes *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved*, a collection of 366 aphorisms that describe the mystical relationship between lover (the virtuous Christian) and beloved (that is, God).[27] Llull was also, as Mascaró wrote in the script of his talk, "a man of action" ("home d'acció"),[28] and as a man of action, he was keen on converting the "unbelievers" of his native island: in 1276,

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[23] Juan Mascaró, "L'Orient i Ramon Llull," *7th Centenary of Llull's Birth*, spec. issue of *La Nostra Terra* 80-81-82 (1934): 398. On page 397, Mascaró states that "The oriental influences on Ramon Llull are not very well-known. A serious study about them would be hard work, and our homeland has waited 600 years to start the edition of his complete works. Only a study of the complete works, supplemented by the Sanskrit sources and their Arabic translations, as well as the original ones in Arabic will enable us to know someday the oriental influence on Ramon Llull. And thus, his individual work will be seen to stand out more clearly."

[24] Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 230. It was the Catalan expatriate Josep Manyé i Vendrell who, in 1947, organized the Catalan broadcasting in the BBC. Mir published two letters from Mascaró to Manyé and one from Manyé to Mascaró in *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 230-32.

[25] There is a script of "Ramon Llull, Home Universal" in AGCM. Although Mascaró does not elaborate on the subject, he points out that "It is very interesting to compare the doctrine of love in the spiritual life of India that starts with the last Upanishads and flourishes in the sublime Bhagavad Gita, before Christ, and spreads out a few centuries before Ramon Llull, above all with Rāmānuja in the 12th century, with the Sufi doctrine of love which reaches its highest point in Jalalud-Din Rumi of the century of Ramon Llull, who knew about it, as he tells us in *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved*." My translation does not read very fluently, because I have tried to reproduce Mascaró's Catalan syntax with its several pauses and relative clauses.

[26] Arthur Terry, *A Companion to Catalan Literature*, Monografías A (Woodbridge: Tamesis-Boydell, 2003) 16.

[27] This very brief synopsis of *Blanquerna* and *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved* is based on Terry 12-16.

[28] Mascaró, "Ramon Llull, Home Universal."

he founded the monastery of Miramar in Mallorca (one of the first centres for the teaching of oriental languages in Europe) with the intention of training Christian missionaries for work in North Africa and in the Middle East. Be that as it may, the Islamic influences on Llull's work challenge this more combative attitude that aimed at converting non-Christians. Llull learned Arabic, he was conversant with the Koran and Islamic culture, could converse in Arabic with Muslims, and even wrote some of his works in this language (*The Book of Contemplation*, his largest work, was first written in Arabic).[29] In the prologue to *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved*, Blanquerna says that the mystical writings of the Sufis, who had "words of love and brief examples which aroused great devotion in men," inspired him to compose the work.[30]

Llull's humanity and broadmindedness come out more vividly in his *The Book of the Gentile and the Three Wise Men* (*Llibre del Gentil e los Tres Savis*). The story is the following: a pagan, tormented, as Llull writes, by "the thought of death and of the annihilation of his being,"[31] meets a Jew, a Christian and a Muslim (the three wise men of the work's title) in a wood with lovely springs and meadows, and explains to them why he cannot find peace of mind. The wise men decide to do something for the unhappy pagan and tell him about their God and their respective religions. They resolve to start a dialogue in which each one of them will endeavour to prove to the other two and also to the gentile, who wants to know the path that leads to salvation, that his religion is the worthiest of the three. There are a few facts that deserve attention. First, when the three wise men meet outside the city (before they meet the gentile in the forest), Llull writes they "greeted each other in friendly fashion, (...) each inquiring about the other's health (...)"[32] Secondly, before the dialogue starts, they cannot decide who will introduce the debate, since they want "to be polite and give the other the honor

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[29] Bonner 16.
[30] Bonner 189. The most conspicuous Islamic influence on Llull's *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved* has to do with the masculinity of lover and beloved. This masculinity, which "seems to be unique in Christian writing" (Bonner 181), contrasts with the relationship between bride and bridegroom of other mystical writings.
[31] Bonner 87.
[32] Bonner 88.

of beginning."[33] The atmosphere is thus one of great cordiality. Finally, in the epilogue, they gently refuse to hear from the gentile the religion which he has chosen and which he believes to be the true religion. The gentile is, as would be expected, puzzled by their attitude, but they inform him that they would like to discuss the matter another time, and that if he revealed to them which one was the true religion they would not have the pleasure to talk about it again and determine the truth. Bonner emphasizes that this abrupt end "has been the subject of considerable comment."[34] However, the reluctance showed by the wise men can be interpreted – and these are Llull's ideas – in the following way: although they all profess different religions, the Christian, Muslim and Jew do not fail to notice that they all "have one God, one Creator, one Lord," and that they must therefore work together and seek human and spiritual convergence "in one faith, one religion, one sect, one manner of loving and honouring God" for the sake of peace, and eradicate the "difference and contrariety" that keep them apart and is the cause of dissension and enmity.[35] I am not suggesting that Llull was an unbiased observer of religious diversity, and that he treated Islam and Christianity equally. His work must be put in its historical context; actually, his willingness to exchange ideas and debate with members of other religions in a courteous way is also linked to his belief in the superiority of his own religion. But Llull did not simply condemn or deride those who belonged to other religions; he argued in favour of intellectual debate – forced conversion was repudiated – and this is a very positive aspect that counterbalances his less commendable proselytizing ambitions.

In 1938, the year in which his first translation of the Upanishads was published, Mascaró told the Catalan poet Carles Riba (1893-1959) of his intention to render *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved* into English, but this idea was never brought to fruition,[36] and his only

[33] Bonner 92.
[34] Bonner 167.
[35] Bonner 168.
[36] The letter to Riba was written in 1938, but it does not have a date. Mascaró also asks the Catalan poet to send him a copy of Llull's book (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 170). On 28th August 1938, he tells again to Riba: "I have received the *Lover and the Beloved*; I will bind it worthily and I will translate it with love. There is already

achievement consisted in translating eleven verses from Llull's work for his anthology of sacred texts *Lamps of Fire*.[37] On 1st August 1950, Mascaró explains to Bosch i Gimpera: "Under the provisional title of 'Lamps of Fire – From the Scriptures and Wisdom of the World,' I have collected the greatest and most beautiful pages from sacred books and of universal wisdom: the spirit of Ramon Llull lives in my heart a bit!"[38] The reference to the great Mallorcan polymath in this context indicates that Mascaró regarded Llull's tolerant outlook and his engagement with Islam and Judaism as an example of religious tolerance and embryonic inter-faith dialogue. Thus, *Lamps of Fire* were also a contemporary echo of that early dialogic vision – one that was closely related to Mascaró's own place of birth and its history. One must not also overlook the fact that even after the conquest of Mallorca by the Aragonese monarch James I in 1232, a significant number of Muslims (probably one third of the population) remained in the island in more or less harmonious coexistence with Christians and Jews. I think it is not incorrect to say that Mascaró's all-embracing vision beyond "the barriers of separation between nation and nation and between man and man," as he writes in his introduction to *Himalayas of the Soul*, brings to mind Llull's ideas about cross-cultural understanding (it is not a coincidence that Mascaró thought about translating *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved* in the same year that his first translation of the Upanishads came out). Llull and the pluralistic society of thirteenth-century Mallorca can therefore provide not the sole, but a significant explanation for Mascaró's interest in the inter-faith dialogue and even (if one is tempted

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a translation by Allison Peers, not a great thing, just like him and his work. I am thinking about producing a volume that will accompany the *Upanishads*" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 171). Many years later (26th January 1965), Mascaró confided to Francesc Moll: "I have not lost hope entirely of doing some little thing for our language or our letters. If I studied the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* intensively, I could compare it with other Oriental and Western spiritual values and present the work in clear words to non-academic readers, but who can think and feel a bit. I would need to devote myself completely for a few months to our things, from which I am so alienated" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 68). Mascaró was never able to carry out this comparative study.

[37] Mascaró, *Lamps* 112-13.

[38] Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 76.

to extrapolate a little bit) in ancient Indian literature.[39] Moreover, it is also clear that Mascaró was not indifferent to the influence of Sufi mysticism on Llull's work and that he could have drawn inspiration from what Llull hints at in *The Book of the Gentile and the Three Wise Men*, namely that the three major Mediterranean religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) shared a common ground. I must say that I never came across any reference to that work of Llull in Mascaró's writings (which does not mean that he was not acquainted with it), but the connection is not less striking, since the idea behind *Lamps of Fire* is that there is a unity behind diversity. I would like to conclude these paragraphs on Llull with Raimon Pannikar, for whom *The Book of the Gentile and the Three Wise Men* shows that "disagreement among men is a leading evil that must be eradicated, and this is the first task of religion. (...) Ramon is well aware that the official religions have for too long ignored harmony between men, when not in fact themselves promoting religious wars and fights."[40]

THE WORLD CONGRESS OF FAITHS

In the twentieth century, the World Congress of Faiths, as well as other similar initiatives that sought to promote – under a universalistic aegis – not only inter-faith understanding, but also, and often simultaneously, political reconciliation between different nations and peoples (the comparative and historical study of religion and the World Parliament of Religions at the Chicago Exhibition are, one can argue, their nineteenth-century counterparts) represent, in J. J. Clarke's words, "a yearning to unite humankind at a time when on the one hand there continues to be tension and conflict between peoples, yet on the other hand the peoples of the earth are in many respects coming closer together."[41] The inter-faith meetings, which brought

[39] In a letter to Carles Pi i Sunyer (Vilanova 64), written on 21 March 1944, Mascaró declares that he sought to follow the Orientalist tradition of Ramon Llull ("Vaig procurar de seguir la tradició oriental del nostre Ramon Llull," he says) when he delivered his talk on the "Hindu Classics" at the Royal Society of Literature in 1944.
[40] Raimon Panikkar, "Intrareligious Dialogue According to Ramon Llull," *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, rev. ed. (New York: Paulist, 1999) 112.
[41] Clarke 134.

together the more liberal and educated representatives of the world's religions (only recently – that is to say, after the arrival in Great Britain of Indian, Muslim and other immigrants from the former British colonies – did they become more popular and start to involve and include the religious communities themselves), were thought to allay antagonisms and foment world peace. The participants of the World Congress of Faiths, for example, often highlighted that spiritual unity was an essential prerequisite in times of political crises. Oldmeadow says that the inter-faith dialogue was not only concerned with matters of doctrine and spiritual practice, but encompassed "cross-religious responses to problems such as social injustice, political oppression or ecological calamity" as well.[42] The inter-war years witnessed a substantial intensification of inter-faith dialogue. It was a period in history when uncertainty was rife and the unstable political situation did not augur anything good: it was not only the prospect of a new European conflict, but also, and not less significantly, the realization that Europe's rule over its vast overseas domains was no longer an uncontroversial certainty. Fragmentation, division, conflict were the feared consequences and the quest for political and religious unity presented itself as one of the solutions for such daunting problems.

Though it stressed religious issues, the World Congress of Faiths cannot be separated from its political context. Founded in 1936 (the year in which the Spanish Civil War started), it drew inspiration from other inter-faith gatherings that had been organized earlier in the century, most notably, the Religions of Empire conference, held in London in 1924, and the Second Parliament of Religions, which took place in Chicago in 1933 (an imitation of the original Parliament of Religions held forty years before in the same American city).[43] Outside the Anglo-Saxon world, the "Religious League of Mankind" (or "Religiöser Menschheitsbund"), founded in 1921 by the German scholar and theologian Rudolf Otto (1869-1937), and the *Er-*

[42] Oldmeadow 424.
[43] Marcus Braybrooke, *A Wider Vision: A History of the World Congress of Faiths, 1936-1996* (Oneworld: Oxford, 1996) 9-16.

anos seminars, held every summer in a Swiss village from 1933 to 1969, are two other important projects that deserve to be mentioned, since they encouraged cross-religious understanding and the development of comparative religious studies.[44] In Britain, the interest in the inter-faith dialogue, as the name of the 1924 London symposium indicates, must be considered from the perspective of those who, as Braybrooke underlines, "had been schooled in imperial service" and were thus "deeply interested in the various religious beliefs and practices" of the peoples of the British Empire.[45] The Empire was conceived as a joint enterprise in which diverse peoples contributed to the same end. In his message to the Religions of Empire conference, the British Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald (1866-1937) stated: "Many religions and many creeds live in amity within our Empire, each by their different way leading our peoples onward toward some ultimate light."[46] Macdonald's words are in accordance with the principle of "unity in diversity:" the British Empire ensures that a variety of religions and cultures can thrive freely and in peaceful coexistence under the benevolent leadership of a single and more enlightened European nation. Mascaró was not impervious to this romantic and idealistic conception of the British Empire, and his relationship with the founder of the World Congress of Faiths, who believed in a universal divine essence common to all individual religious traditions, can offer an explanation as to why the issue of "unity in diversity" (applied both to the political and the religious realms) was a crucial one to him.

In a letter to Carles Pi i Sunyer (written on 4th February 1942), Mascaró describes Sir Francis Younghusband as follows: "Sir Francis, besides being a great writer (see *Who's who*) and a great man of political action, is a human being whom we do not meet everyday: a Saint. To know him is a gain; and not to know him is a loss."[47] The two men must have known each other relatively well, but I do not think their relationship was an intimate one. I was unable to

[44] Clarke 139-40 and Oldmeadow 100-03.
[45] Braybrooke 176.
[46] Cited in Braybrooke 10.
[47] Vilanova 50.

find out where and when exactly they first met (probably in 1937 or 1938, when Mascaró was already living in England). On 22nd December 1938, Mascaró informs Younghusband: "Mr. Cranmer-Bying, the Editor of the 'Wisdom of the East Series,' strongly advises me to suggest my ideas to you and work in collaboration with the Congress of Faiths."[48] The following year, Mascaró attended the World Congress of Faiths conference in Paris,[49] where he certainly met and talked to Sir Francis. In 1941 (the year of the sixth annual conference in Oxford), Younghusband (perhaps at Mascaró's request) wrote the foreword to *Songs of Man to His God: Selections from One Hundred Psalms*, a work that Mascaró was never able to publish.[50] To portray Younghusband as a "Saint" (with a capital "S") is certainly an exaggeration; even Eileen Younghusband, in a flattering address on her father given to the World Congress of Faiths on 16th November 1965, mentions "his weaknesses, his gaps and his blind spots."[51] Nonetheless, there must be some truth in what Mascaró wrote, since Younghusband was known for his intense love of nature, his kindness towards young people,[52] as well as for his mystical disposition, to which Mascaró would not have been unresponsive. Though Younghusband authored several works on spiritual topics, he only took a serious interest in religion late in his life: the first book he wrote about his religious views (*Within*) came out in 1912. Traditional or conventional religion did not satisfy him and he was critical of orthodox Christianity, in which he had been brought up. He devalued the importance of ritual and dogma and preferred to high-

[48] HMC. Mascaró tells Younghusband that the letters "from such a good critic as I' A. Fausset, and several others I have received from India and England [Tagore's was no doubt the most important of them], encourage me to think that I should work again [his translation of the Upanishads had just been published] at some translation of sacred works of ancient India." He also informs Younghusband that he envisages "a 'Bible' where, next to a selection of the wonders of the Old and New Gospels, some Upa-nishads [sic], the Gita, a few Vedas, and passages of the Buddhist and Islamic sacred Books could find a place." The "Bible" Mascaró refers to would only be published twenty years later under the title *Lamps of Fire*.

[49] Vilanova 9.

[50] Younghusband's foreword and Mascaró's introduction are in HMC. The idea of publishing a selection of the Psalms must have occurred to Mascaró in 1939. He writes down in his diary entry of 12th August 1939: "I have exactly fifteen days free before Friday Sep. 1st. During these days I must write the introduction to Psalms and read them and order them." A letter from the publishing house George Allen and Unwin to Mascaró, dated 8th January 1944 (Mascaró had not yet given up the publication of his work) says: "Whether we shall in fact be able to go ahead with its publication, it is impossible to say as yet" (HMC).

[51] Eileen Younghusband, "My Father as I Knew Him," *World Faiths* 65 (1966): 5.

[52] Younghusband 2-3.

light the transcendent unity of all religions. But Sir Francis was also an imperial explorer and agent and he was even involved in the Great Game (the competition between Russia and Britain for supremacy in Central Asia). David Matless states: "His was a classic British imperialism, not shy of exercising brute power, but more typically presenting itself as paternalist endeavour, helping 'lower' races while furthering Britain's cause against imperial rivals."[53] The contacts that Younghusband established with the adherents of the Asian religions contributed to heighten his sense of a mystical unity binding all human beings. When he was alone in the mountainous countryside the day after leaving Lhasa (in 1903, he had been appointed leader of a difficult mission to Tibet by Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India), Younghusband was seized by an "untellable joy," experienced the "whole world ablaze with the same ineffable bliss that was burning within" himself, and come into contact with "a mighty joy-giving Power" which was at work in all living creatures.[54] The mystical experiences enjoyed by Sir Francis during his lifetime were one of the roots from which the World Congress of Faiths sprang. Hence the fellowship of people of different faiths he envisaged had to be nourished by the realization of a spiritual oneness that would fortify the bonds of friendship between nations and individuals. The purpose of the World Congress of Faiths was neither, as was often incorrectly perceived, to develop a universal or eclectic religion, nor to suppress the uniqueness of each world religion (religious diversity was always respected). But as Braybrooke declares, religion was "interpreted in its wide and universal sense. A sense far transcending its particular expression in any one of the world's faiths and penetrating to that divine essence we believe to be common to them all."[55] In the first meeting of the World Congress of Faiths, conducted at the University College, London, in July 1936, Radhakrishnan, one of the main speakers, minimized the

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[53] David Matless, "Younghusband, Sir Francis Edward (1863-1942)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford UP), online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oct. 2006, 1 June 2009 <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/37084>.

[54] The passages are from Younghusband's *Vital Religion* (1940); they are quoted in Braybrooke 22. The expedition was not successful. The treaty that Younghusband negotiated with the Russians did not favour British interests in the region and he was also held responsible for the massacre of hundreds of Tibetans.

[55] Braybrooke 65. Braybrooke is quoting from the World Congress of Faiths archives.

role played by dogmas and doctrines, often the cause of discord, and stressed the importance of mystical experience and the universal human quest for the Absolute.[56] As Braybrooke explicates, "This view has been widely influential amongst members of the WCF, especially in the early days."[57] I cannot say with absolute certainty what the sources of Mascaró's religious outlook are, but I think that I am not wrong if I argue that he was influenced by ideas such as those endorsed by the founder and the participants of the World Congress of Faiths, some of whom (Radhakrishnan and Surendranath Dasgupta, for instance), he knew personally.[58] This will become clearer in the next section on *Lamps of Fire*, but first I would like to call attention to one of Mascaró's BBC talks, whose title ("Unity in Diversity") could well be the motto of Younghusband's inter-faith congress.

I mentioned above that Mascaró was present at the World Congress of Faiths meeting in Paris. The outbreak of the Second World War did not prevent Younghusband from organizing the Congress conferences. On the contrary, it even stimulated him; it was in times of war and political instability, he believed, that the World Congress of Faiths could work more effectively towards the implementation of international cooperation. The topics of the seminars reflected this concern for world peace: "The Common Spiritual Basis for International Order" was the subject of the 1940 meeting, held at Bedford College, London. The next symposium, which Mascaró attended, took place in 1941 at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, and the area under discussion was: "World Religions and World Order; the Interdependence of Religion and the Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Aspects of the New World Order."[59] The practical aims of the inter-faith dialogue, what Eric J. Sharpe designates as the "eirenic" pursuits of those for whom the field of comparative religion was a means to an end, need to be taken into

[56] From 1936 to 1941, Radhakrishnan held the Spalding Chair of Eastern Religions and Ethics at the University of Oxford. The Spalding Chair, endowed with the intention that Radhakrishnan himself should be the first professor, was an expression of the religious universalism embraced by the World Congress of Faiths.
[57] Braybrooke 43.
[58] Radhakrishnan's preface to Mascaró's translation of the Upanishads was written when the Indian scholar was already living in Oxford (Mascaró, *Himalayas* 9-10).
[59] Braybrooke 52-3.

account.[60] Although Müller, as I have shown above, was a supporter of the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago and did not ignore the problems of living religions, his interests were mainly scholarly and scientific; he sought to discover the truth and did not speak for a particular religion or church; moreover, inter-faith rapprochement was never the main goal of his inquiries. As far as Mascaró is concerned, there is no doubt that the agenda of the inter-faith movements, with their pragmatic focus on human relationships, attracted him. Consequently, bearing in mind what has been written in this section, it is not surprising that Mascaró should have attempted to interpret the problem of Catalonia – in a country dominated by the right-wing and dictatorial government of General Franco – in terms that recall the practical ideals (cultivation of a sense of unity, pursuit of harmony, etc.) that had given rise to the inter-faith conferences. From Mascaró's viewpoint, the solution to the political and cultural vicissitudes that a multicultural Spain was going through lay in the formula "unity in diversity," which he deemed one of the "most profoundly philosophical" problems.[61] It is out of question to consider in detail here the various contexts in which the expression "unity in diversity" has been used. Suffice it to say that the internationalist ideas that started to circulate at the end of the Great War, and which would eventually lead to the establishment of the League of Nations in 1919, were in tune with the principle of "unity in diversity," though that inter-governmental organization was totally ineffective in preventing the outbreak of the Second World War.[62] In England, as I explained above, the concept of "unity in diversity" could epitomize the experience of Empire with its ideals of tolerance, peace, order and religious freedom. Actually, the British Empire was also an ideological fountainhead of Younghusband's World Congress of Faiths, a conference in which representatives of the world religions (many of them practiced

[60] Eric J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History*, 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth, 1986) 252.
[61] Letter to Carles Pi i Sunyer written on 21st June 1943 (Vilanova 61). One more example: a few years later, on 10th February 1949, Mascaró tells the Mallorcan engineer and writer Miquel Forteza i Pinya (1888-1969): "The great problem of unity and variety seems very urgent, more than ever between men" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 144).
[62] Hobsbawm, *Extremes* 34 and 37.

within the British overseas territories) gathered together under the generous and broadminded auspices of liberal Europeans for whom it was necessary to spread the ideals of universal harmony and peaceful coexistence. Yet, the question of who took the initiative and why was not raised; besides, the places where the meetings took place continued to be the powerful European metropolitan centres (London and Paris, for example). It must not be forgotten, however, that there was a different, more democratic and righteous type of "unity in diversity" that was upheld by the colonized and oppressed peoples of the world in their struggle to rise above the divisiveness that still remained in imperialistic and Western notions of "unity in diversity."[63] Mascaró did not distinguish these contradictory views of human and political unity and diversity, and never doubted or called into question the inconsistent ethical standards upon which the British Empire was founded.

As far as the Catalan question is concerned, Mascaró did not separate the political and cultural upheavals that were taking place in Spain in the convoluted decade after the civil war from the international context. In a letter to Carles Pi i Sunyer, dated 6th August 1941, Mascaró writes:

> At the end of June I travelled to Oxford to attend a Congress of different religious beliefs; and I talked for a long time with Madariaga. I found him worried about the Catalan question. He believes that some Catalans in London have secret negotiations with elements of the English Government, without getting in touch with the other Spanish elements. It is the obsession of the separatism. I told him that the absolutely separatist group does not represent Catalonia; but, needless to say, you know this better than I.
> In my opinion, the problem is above all about culture and tolerance and living together. In times of union of peoples, the future is one of unions and not separations; but at the same time, of more freedom. It is the great task of the Universe: variety within the unity. I think that the separatist sense of the groups of Catalonia and the Basque Country is due to the national Spanish decadence. (...) Wales and Scotland live together in the greatness of the British Empire, and Ireland has its independence but preserves the advantages of the Empire. Obviously the national Spanish emotion cannot be created by sheer force, if it is not felt. In that case, noble tolerance and coexistence. I cannot judge the political matter: my work has been a modest cultural work; (...) it is important that the Castilian and Catalan speakers, who are aware of the great cultural and spiritual problem of our peoples, agree with each other in harmony and good-will.[64]

[63] Zillah Eisenstein, *Against Empire: Feminisms, Racism, and the West* (London: Zed, 2004) 96-113. In India, intellectuals and politicians such as Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose explored more inclusivist and democratic ideas about "unity in diversity."
[64] Vilanova 41-2.

It is particularly interesting to notice that Mascaró mentions his talk with the Galician intellectual Salvador de Madariaga on the Catalan question in a letter which starts with a reference to the World Congress of Faiths. Mascaró could have met Madariaga in Oxford by chance; if he had not met him, one can argue, he would not have brought up the subject of Spain and Catalonia. But the presence of the two topics in the same letter is, I think, meaningful and must not be dismissed. Nevertheless, and more importantly, the letter brings into focus Mascaró's view on the issue of unity and variety, which he deemed as much an (inter-) religious, as a national and international "task:" he did not simply confine it to the domestic problems of Spain. The problem, Mir comments, transcended "the internal order of political societies." Besides, it is important to keep in mind, when looking at Mascaró's talk for the BBC "Unity in Diversity," that Mascaró "reflected on the problem primarily from a cultural point of view."[65] The debate over the Catalan national identity and the political independence of Catalonia is still going on and it is very unlikely it will end soon. Leaving aside such a complex and controversial topic, I shift my attention to Mascaró's talk "Unity in Diversity" ("Unidad en la Diversidad") broadcast in January 1944. Though Mascaró was totally against the single and indivisible Spain that Franco wanted to create, he did not champion the idea, as his suspicion of Catalan and Basque separatist groups in the passage quoted above shows, of a politically independent nation-state named "Catalonia." He thought of Spain as a synthesis of three great cultures that "still lie at the bottom of its soul" ("reposan aún en el fondo de su alma"):[66] Rome, Islam and Christianity. The rich linguistic and literary heritage of the various peoples of Spain constitutes its variety; but, as it will be seen, what exactly comprises the unity that Mascaró perceives in Spain is not completely clear. The internal harmony seems to be achieved through the tolerant recognition of all the Iberian languages as Spanish languages; as Mascaró says: "The Catalan language is

[65] Mir, "Mundialització" 157.
[66] Juan Mascaró, "Unidad en la Diversidad," *Juan Mascaró i Fornés (1897-1987)*, ed. Gonçal López and Antoni Mas, Homenatges 1 (Palma: Universitat de les Illes Balears, 1997) 43.

as Spanish as the Castilian language (...)" and "Every Spaniard who does not want to accept Catalan as a Spanish language is not a centralist, no, *he is a separatist*, as well as the Catalan who does not love Don Quijote and does not accept his glorious language as an intimate part of his cultural heritage."[67] Hence the Iberian writers he cites in the talk – Llull, Juan Maragall and Juan Alcover (Catalan); Cervantes and Luis de León (Castilian); and also Gil Vicente and Camões (Portuguese) – are Spanish writers.

The importance that Mascaró ascribed to the linguistic problem in Spain is historically linked to the concept of "Volksgeist," which has been, according to Josep R. Llobera, "an unremitting feature in the history of the Catalan discourse on nationalism."[68] Language, alongside other historical factors such as art, literature, law or thought, was a crucial empirical constituent of the "Volksgeist" or "national spirit." This notion of "Volksgeist," originally formulated by Herder and other German philosophers, "was used – particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century – to further the economic, spiritual and political needs of the Catalan people, threatened by the impositions of the Spanish state."[69] In the twentieth century, Catalonia's linguistic and cultural freedom (its political severance from Castile was, needless to say, out of question) was dramatically thwarted by Franco's authoritarian regime, in which the diverse national cultures or regions of the Iberian Peninsula were subject to an uncompromising uniformity enforced by a Castilian-controlled Spanish state. Mascaró was right to accentuate the language question because the 1940s and 1950s were years of intense and brutal suppression of linguistic liberty in the Catalan-speaking regions of Spain. In fact, Franco's repressive policies could not be further away from the principle of "unity in diversity" that Mascaró described in his talk; as he emphasizes, "All harmony is unity and variety. Unity is not monotonous unification, neither is variety discordant anarchy. Unity is not the mere sum of parts, but

[67] Mascaró, "Unidad" 43-4.
[68] Josep R. Llobera, "The Idea of *Volksgeist* in the Formation of Catalan Nationalist Ideology," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 6 (1983): 332.
[69] Llobera 341.

that invisible something that unites the parts in a whole and seems to give them life. Variety is not the mere anarchy of independent parts, but the liberty of unities, which voluntarily create superior unities."[70] Mascaró does not explain what he means by "that invisible something" but the context suggests that the phrase might express the feeling of belonging to a certain place, which has to be peacefully shared by different peoples, that is, the spontaneous, unforced "national Spanish emotion" ("l'emoció nacional espanyola") that he mentions in his letter to Carles Pi. Mascaró did not equate Spain with Castile, and though he was never radical in his political views about the Spanish state (he thought of himself as a Spanish citizen), he never renounced his cultural Catalanism.[71] Catalonia was itself a unity, but also a part of a larger unity which was both plural and one. However, the Spanish (Castilian-controlled) state had not yet realized the "unity in diversity" that other countries and larger political unities had already, in Mascaró's point of view, realized: "The political problem of unity in diversity has been solved by countries that are models of moderation and good sense such as Switzerland and Belgium, and it is being solved by the great British Empire. It is the great problem of India, and it is finally the ideal problem of international coexistence. It is yet to be solved in Spain."[72]

To sum up, Mascaró's anthology *Lamps of Fire* and the introductions he wrote for his Penguin translations – the topics of the next two sections – must be interpreted against a particular historical, cultural and political background that takes account of several important circumstances, namely: the rise of interest in the comparative study of religion and the attention given to the inter-faith movement as a means to achieve global understanding; Mallorca's tolerant tradition of inter-faith dialogue, and the influence of Islamic spirituality on Ramon Llull, one of the most quoted writers in Mascaró's Catalan and Spanish letters; the efforts of politicians and international organizations to restore solidarity and world unity after the First World

[70] Mascaró, "Unidad" 44.
[71] Writing to the Mallorcan priest and historian Josep Massot i Muntaner in 1977 (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 269), Mascaró states: "my cultural Catalanism was, and is absolute" ("el meu catalanisme cultural era, i és absolut").
[72] Mascaró, "Unidad" 45.

War; the civil war and the caudillo's "monotonous unification" (in Mascaró's own words) of Spain; and finally, Mascaró's participation (shortly after he settled down in what was then the greatest European imperial nation) in the inter-faith meetings organized by Younghusband.

LAMPS OF FIRE

Mascaró began to gather materials for his anthology of sacred and wisdom texts in July 1948, but the book came out in 1958. This first and limited edition of two hundred copies – published in Palma de Mallorca by Francesc Moll – was produced by hand on linen paper and was financially supported by Mascaró's close friend Rafael Griera (1908-1982), to whom the anthology was dedicated. The importance of *Lamps of Fire* to Mascaró should not be underrated; it represented a significant achievement,[73] even though the anthology was not the editorial success that Mascaró and Methuen (the publisher) had (I think rather ingenuously) anticipated.[74] Writing to John Cullen, one of the principal directors of Methuen, Mascaró states: "Although I have no doubts about the value of the book – it is not my book after all! – I am of course very sorry and amazed at the amazingly small sales."[75] Mascaró's amazement was also shared by the publisher, who had "hoped that the book would make its own way."[76] In fact, the failure to sell copies of *Lamps of Fire* is hardly surprising, because similar works had already been published,[77] though Mascaró claimed that his was a different type of anthology (I

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[73] In a letter to Francesc Moll, written on 7th September 1949, Mascaró observes: "My Anthology with the best pages of spiritual value from sacred books and thinkers is already finished: task of years done in one year. I need an introduction, but it will only take a few days. It is a work that I greatly esteem and in which I have put all my soul. I hope to see it printed one day as I want" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 294).

[74] Juan Mascaró, *Lamps of Fire: From the Scriptures and Wisdom of the World* (London: Methuen, 1961). This was the English edition of Mascaró's Mallorcan anthology.

[75] HMC. The letter was written on 21st November 1963.

[76] HMC. Cullen's letter to Mascaró written on 26th May 1965. Seven years after the publication of the anthology (on 25th April 1968), Cullen was still deploring the small amount of sales: "Sales of *Lamps of Fire* have indeed been disappointing. I don't know why, because it seems to meet the needs of so many people."

[77] The most influential and well-known anthology of sacred and other spiritual texts was probably Aldous Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy* (first published in 1944 and still in print). I did not find Huxley's book in Mascaró's personal library, but I came across other anthologies, namely: *The Testament of Man: An Anthology of the Spirit*, ed. Arthur Stanley (London: Gollancz:1936); *Wisdom is One: Being a Collection from the Sayings and Writings of some of the Masters and Their Followers, collated to show the fundamental identity of all veritable*

will discuss one more reason that helps to explain the difficulty in selling copies of *Lamps of Fire* later in the section).[78] The anthology was, nevertheless, well received by critics. The limited edition was reviewed by an anonymous critic (most likely by or with the assistance of Mascaró's friend, the writer Hugh I'Anson Fausset) in the *Times Literary Supplement* on 20th March 1959. When the anthology appeared in its English edition in 1961, it was reviewed in the *Sunday Telegraph* on 9th April 1961 by Kathleen de Beaumont in the *World Faiths* in June. In March 1962, the book was again reviewed in the Anglo-Indian theosophical journal *The Aryan Path* by Sidney Spencer, author of *Mysticism in World Religion* (1963). Kathleen de Beaumont was an active member of the World Congress of Faiths, who had been involved in the setting up of the Cambridge branch in the early 1950s; and like Younghusband, she had a wide sympathy for the world religions.[79] In her review of *Lamps of Fire*, she cites Mascaró himself as saying that "'I am sure that Sir Francis would consider this work as a sort of Bible for the W.C.F.'"[80] In order to promote his anthology, Mascaró tried to get the support of UNESCO. The first person he got in touch with was the High Commissioner for India in London, Mrs. Vijaya Laksmi Pandit,[81] whom he had met in April 1961. He asked her to do something for his work with UNESCO because he thought that UNESCO could acquire copies of *Lamps of Fire*, and offer them to libraries in different countries or to schools as prizes. Mascaró was not, however, looking forward to receiving material rewards from the sales. In a letter to Mrs.

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teachings (London: Dakers, 1947); *The Pocket World Bible*, ed. Robert O. Ballou (London: Routledge, 1948); *A Year of Grace: Passages chosen and arranged to express a mood about God and man*, selected by Victor Gollancz (London: Gollancz, 1950); *One in All: An Anthology of Religion from the Sacred Scriptures of the Living Faiths*, comp. by Edith B. Schnapper and with an introd. by Baron Erik Palmstierna, Wisdom of the East Series (London: Murray, 1952); and *Thoughts for Meditation: A Way to Recovery from Within*, selected by N. Gangulee and with a pref. by T. S. Eliot (London: Faber, s.d.).

[78] In a letter to Bosch i Gimpera, dated 1st August 1950, Mascaró quotes a passage from a letter he had sent to a publisher, where he explains that: "I have tried to present in a moderate compass the finest utterances of man of all times on his eternal problems and spiritual aspirations. While not emphasizing one religion at the expense of the others, I have not pandered to any modern mystical theory or view. My aim has been to combine the deepest spiritual value with the highest literary quality. The grouping of the passages is also an important feature of the book; and in both respects I hope it will be found very different from similar selections" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 77).

[79] Braybrooke 136-7.

[80] Kathleen de Beaumont, rev. of *Lamps of Fire: From the Scriptures and Wisdom of the World*, chosen by Juan Mascaró, *World Faiths* June 1961: 13.

[81] Vijaya Laksmi Pandit was the sister of Jawaharlal Nehru and the aunt of Indira Gandhi.

Pandit, he says that he would give UNESCO his royalties of the copies; this would be, he underlines, his "small material contribution."[82] Mascaró also wrote to UNESCO, but this important world organization could neither sponsor the anthology, nor purchase copies of the book. The only positive result of Mascaró's (not completely futile) endeavours was a brief notice of *Lamps of Fire* that UNESCO published in its information bulletin *Orient-Occident* in 1963.[83] Mascaró's attempt to engage the support of UNESCO – a United Nations agency which promotes international cooperation – shows that he genuinely believed that his book had practical ends and could help to improve the relationships between the different peoples of the world. As he says: "The pages of *Lamps of Fire* take us high above the irate sea of our world and the dark national mists. In them we find a universal spiritual sense: the beauty, kindness and truth of eternal things; and in them the white man and the black, the European and Asian, the atheist and the fanatic can find something humane, universal, infinite. I do not believe that there is any man who is infinitely bad or ignorant: the seed of goodness and truth is in all of us."[84]

Mascaró's *Lamps of Fire* is structured in four sections. The name of the first section is "The Spirit of Religion," and it includes passages from all the major religious traditions of the world, namely: Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Jainism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. I must point out first that the concept of "religion" – used widely as a cross-cultural category – has been subjected to critical scrutiny and several scholars have called into question its validity and relevance when it is applied to non-Western cultures.[85] Mascaró preferred, however, to think in terms of an underlying and uni-

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[82] HMC. Letter to Her Excellency Mrs. Vijaya Laksmi Pandit, written on 20th July 1961.

[83] This brief notice was written by Milton Rosenthal, Secretary of the Literature Section in the Division of Arts and Letters of UNESCO.

[84] Letter to Bosch i Gimpera (dated 1st August 1950) in Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 77. Pragmatic considerations were always important to Mascaró. On 27th April 1958, he informs Francesc Moll: "(...) let's see if we see *Lamps of Fire* giving light within the darkness of our world, since we lack the radiance of eternal words" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 21). Mascaró expresses the same wish to his Mallorcan friend two years later on 25th May 1961: "Let's see if the light of these lamps illuminates a little the darkness of our times, which is really necessary" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 50).

[85] The religion known as "Hinduism," Richard King elucidates, is a modern Western construction created by the colonial and Judaeo-Christian presuppositions of European Orientalists and their tendency to focus on the writ-

versal spiritual reality that was common to all religious traditions, but which was experienced differently in each one of them. The passages from sacred texts in *Lamps of Fire* are expressions of a universal human response to the Absolute or to an Ultimate Reality: hence the all-embracing "The Spirit of Religion."[86] The formula "unity in diversity" sheds light upon Mascaró's religious outlook: although religions offer diverse perspectives on "the Real" and have their own institutional and doctrinal differences, they all converge to one centre and are paths to the same ineffable truth.[87] However, as I shall argue later, when contextual factors are ignored and formal distinctions seen as irrelevant or redundant – since the excerpts from sacred texts are uprooted from their original textual and cultural background and made to conform to an *a priori* notion of transcendence – misconceptions are likely to occur. As far as the other parts of the anthology are concerned, which Mascaró entitled "Light," "Love" and "Life" respectively, these comprise passages from scriptural texts and also from the writings of European and Asian thinkers, poets and mystics, which Mascaró juxtaposes in order to show their essential oneness. The two most widely cited works are the Chinese classic *Tao Te Ching* and

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ten works of Indian culture as the locus of religion. King provides a clear and informative summary of the modern ideological construction of the concepts of "world religion" and "Hinduism" in his *Orientalism and Religion* 64-72 and 96-111.

[86] Mascaró employed the phrase "the Spirit of Religion" in his answer to Geoffrey Parrinder's review of the Gita (see previous chapter). He writes, and I quote him again, that "the Spirit of Religion reveals itself in the spiritual scriptures and in the seers of all religions." Mascaró expresses the same ideas in a letter he wrote to Carles Pi in 1949, and also in his introduction to the Dhammapada. He says to his Catalan friend: "(...) the strong and absolute impression that my works have given me is that there is a spiritual experience that changes according to the conditions and times. We could say that it is like poetry: the sense of poetry is essentially one (...), but it is expressed in different languages and periods in many ways. We cannot say that the poetical values of all poems are the same; but we can say that there is poetry in them. Similarly, the spiritual values of the diverse religions are not the same; but there is in them, in all of them, the sense of God" (Vilanova 96-97). In *The Dhammapada: The Path of Perfection*, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 1973) 14, Mascaró states: "We know that there are great poems composed in languages past and present, that those poems are poetry, but that the spirit of poetry is one. We know there are many sacred books and that there are different religions, but if we read the sacred books carefully and spiritually, we see that the highest in them, their most spiritual and moral elements, is one."

[87] Mascaró seems to have adopted a pluralistic approach to religion. I cannot discuss this topic in a detailed way, because Mascaró did not write any systematic account of his religious views; yet, I do not think I am wrong if I claim that he would have agreed with John Hick (the most important exponent of religious pluralism) when the latter asserts in *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004) 235-36 that the great world faiths "constitute different ways of experiencing, conceiving and living in relation to an ultimate divine Reality which transcends all our varied visions of it." In *An Idealist View of Life*, 2nd ed. (London: Unwin, 1937) 119, S. Radhakrishnan, whose views on religion must have certainly influenced Mascaró, says that "(...) every religion is a response to a divine condescension that has uplifted us. The different traditions are like so many languages in which the simple facts of religion are expressed. Speech may vary but the spirit is the same." I borrowed the phrase "the Real" from Hick's work.

the Bible, while John of the Cross (1542-1591), Mascaró's favourite Christian poet and mystic, is the most often quoted writer. An important feature of book (highlighted by Kathleen de Beaumont in her review) is that Mascaró was responsible for the translations of the passages in Sanskrit and Pali, as well as of those in Catalan (Llull) and Italian (Dante). The renderings of *Tao Te Ching* were made by Mascaró himself using the available translations in English.[88] The tendency to textualize religions and to leave out, as the editor of *The Pocket World Bible* writes quite complacently, the "mere stories, history, and the descriptions of ceremonial rites, which do not in themselves contribute to the knowledge of religious faith,"[89] should not pass unnoticed, and I will return to this topic in the next paragraph. Any selection, as any anthology, entails a very personal choice, a compromise between inclusion and omission, and *Lamps of Fire* illustrates Mascaró's individual preferences. Hence "Buddhism" is compressed into a few passages from the Dhammapada, a text that belongs to the scriptural canon of the oldest Buddhist school (Theravada), while the Sermon on the Mount, an important but by no means the most representative text of the Christian tradition, is placed in the section "Christianity."[90] In short, Mascaró ascribes primacy to sacred texts, but this attitude, which has been dominant in the West, precludes the possibility of other, non-literary – oral, perfomative or ritualistic – forms of religious expression. In a letter to his friend Peter Whigham,[91] dated 13th July 1949, Mascaró recommends:

> (...) the best way to know something of a religion is to read some of its sacred books, and meet people who are good and piously devoted to that religion. A laborious job; but it can be shortened by reading well and many times a few short books. You can get a good idea of Judaism by reading fifty Psalms, of Christianity by reading the Gospel of St. Mathew and St. John, of Hinduism by reading my selections from the Upanishads, and the Gita, of Islam by reading the Koran and so on. Anyone who reads my anthology well, would have material for meditation for a life time and for many lives![92]

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[88] One of Mascaró's versions of the *Tao Te Ching* was made into a song by the English musician George Harrison, member of the Beatles. I will give more details about Mascaró's involvement with the Beatles and Harrison in particular in the last section.
[89] Robert O. Ballou, ed., *The Pocket World Bible* (London: Routledge, 1948) 10.
[90] Mascaró, *Lamps* 23-26 and 38-42.
[91] Peter Whigham was an English translator, poet and university lecturer. His translation of the *Poems of Catullus* was published in the Penguin Classics series in 1966.
[92] HMC.

The importance assigned to the printed word derives significantly from the orientalist tradition and its privileging of literary sources over the unwritten traditions and the local religious beliefs and practices of the diverse and multifaceted Indian communities.[93] "The East," as Peter van der Veer says, "had to be textually represented in correct texts and correct translations as in Max Müller's *Sacred Books of the East*."[94] Though, as I have already shown, he had his own reservations about the linguistic and historical interests of scholars, Mascaró was nonetheless indebted to and influenced by their text-based approach to Indian religious traditions.[95] Orientalist scholarship, founded on Western intellectual practices, provides, I think, a convincing explanation for Mascaró's penchant for literary modes of expression. His literary bias proceeds from modern Western conceptions of religion, in particular from the Protestant Reformation in Europe and the emphasis it laid on sacred scriptures. The individual was encouraged to read the Bible (church and priest were no longer considered fundamental to one's salvation) and to establish a personal relationship with God. The growing number of people who started to have access to printed texts and books from the sixteenth century onwards also gave a strong impulse to this Western text-oriented approach. The result was that other, very often more valuable and not less interesting, forms of human experience and cultural interaction which were predominant among non-literate peoples in other parts of the world were systematically overlooked. European Orientalists tended to regard oral forms of communication as unreliable and to bestow authority on literary materials and sacred scriptures (which were scarce and only accessible to the priestly caste, a small minority of the Indian population), "a presumption that a great religion, as opposed to a set of superstitions, ought to be a religion of

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[93] Rosane Rocher, "British Orientalism in the Eighteenth Century: The Dialectics of Knowledge and Government," *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1993) 241-42.

[94] Veer 119.

[95] Commenting on the Upanishads, Mascaró writes: "These compositions are as much above the mere archaeological curiosity of some scholars as light is above its definition. Scholarship is necessary to bring us the fruits of ancient wisdom, but only an elevation of thought and emotion can help us to enjoy them and transform them into life" (Mascaró, *Upanishads* 11).

the book – or of many books."[96] By locating religion in the more stable, autonomous world of the text, Mascaró turns religion into a subjective, private experience. As Richard King argues, the ideas and ideals transmitted in written texts "can no longer be firmly tied to their authorial context since, as Roland Barthes has shown, the meaning that one finds in a text is also a product of the reader and the interpretations he or she places upon it."[97] "Religion" – a more apt word would be "spirituality" (interestingly, people now tend to refer to "spirituality" more often than they did in Mascaró's time, restricting the term "religion" to what they do not normally approve of) – becomes a personal quest for meaning and truth in sacred writings and in the religious works of mystics and saints. In Mascaró's words: "Let the words of the Gita and the spiritual words of the Bible be your life, and the end of the journey is achieved."[98]

The title of Mascaró's anthology is taken from "The Living Flame of Love" (in Spanish, "Llama de Amor Viva"), a poetical work with a long commentary by John of the Cross.[99] This means that Mascaró employed a phrase coined by a sixteenth-century Spanish mystic as the title of a book in which excerpts from sacred, literary and philosophical works of different historical periods and cultural backgrounds are brought together. This approach is questionable, not only because the passages are cut off from their original textual context, but also because the association of the title with John of the Cross's poetry imparts a Christian and mystical dimension into the anthology that is absent from many of the passages selected by Mascaró (the quotations from the works of Plato, Aristotle or Marcus Aurelius are a case in point). Moreover, in his preface to the anthology, Mascaró writes as if the passages in *Lamps of Fire* had universal validity and meaningfulness, the outcome of an assumption that one can understand what someone is saying without needing to know the cultural context from which it de-

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[96] Rocher 235.
[97] King, *Orientalism and Religion* 65.
[98] Juan Mascaró, *The Creation of Faith*, ed. William Radice (Mallorca: Moll, 1993) 272. Other passages in *The Creation of Faith* express this idea. For example: "The poetry of religion is the truth of religion. If religion goes, poetry remains" (Mascaró, *Creation* 92).
[99] The passage from "The Living Flame of Love" is quoted in *Lamps of Fire* 119-20.

rives.[100] Hence such phrases as "the soul of man," "the prayer of man for light," "the mind of man," "the struggle of man for the Highest" and "the spirit of man,"[101] which Mascaró uses in order to stress the universality of the human religious impulse. However, when he writes that though "some shine more and some shine less," all passages "merge into that vast lamp called by St. John of the Cross 'the lamp of being of God',"[102] Mascaró takes no account of the important fact that such a sweeping claim about the existence of a transcendent intelligent Being is not compatible with Buddhism or with the *Tao Te Ching*. In his attempt to universalize sacred and philosophical passages that do not belong to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, Mascaró domesticates their message (I shall return to this subject when discussing Mascaró's introductions in the next section). Consequently, the view that the historical religions share a common core or essence (the basis for intercultural dialogue and world peace) is spoiled by Mascaró's Eurocentric premises: Europe and Christianity continue to be the point of departure, the sovereign centre from which ideas concerning political and religious unity emanate. Mascaró had the power to decide what was universal and what was not; actually, one is tempted to ask why there is not a single reference to African religions in *Lamps of Fire* when it was the universal "soul" and "spirit of man" which Mascaró had in mind). Mascaró's concept of universality is flawed because of its prominent European and Christian provenance: it cannot therefore encompass or embrace other (non-Christian) forms of religious expression.[103] I am not implying that Mascaró was intentionally conveying his Eurocentric views. In fact, there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his well-meaning universalistic outlook: he did not doubt that his anthology could become an instrument for the promotion of peace (the letters he wrote to Nehru's

[100] Mascaró's Penguin introductions rest upon the same assumption.
[101] Mascaró, *Lamps* 9-10. One can hardly fail to notice Mascaró's gender-biased expressions. Mascaró included several passages from the writings of St. Teresa of Ávila (1515-1582) in *Lamps of Fire*. Yet, she is the only female mystic and writer cited in the whole anthology.
[102] Mascaró, *Lamps* 9.
[103] In her *Against Empire*, Zillah Eisenstein writes convincingly about the contradictions that surround the term "universality" when its is used from a strictly Western point of view, and highlights the very often silenced and forgotten, but not less significant contribution made by other peoples of the world (Africans and Asians, for instance) to the development of universal civil liberties.

sister and to UNESCO confirm this). However, it is also true that Mascaró was – most probably unwittingly – endorsing the long and rarely contested history of European cultural, political and religious hegemony (the result of exploitative colonialist practices) over other parts of the world.

In a letter to the Russian scholar Michel Alexeev,[104] Mascaró writes that the passages in *Lamps of Fire* "seem to me to have a great value, independent of churches and religions as political or national organizations."[105] This is an idea to which he often refers in his personal writings. On 18th May 1962, Mascaró tells his friend Irving Ribner[106] that:

> In spite of deep love for spiritual things, as my *Lamps of Fire* and my Gita I hope prove it, I think that churches and theologies can do a lot of harm. In fact my work is my protest against them! When we see bishops defending atom bombs and popes not condemning them, and the vast forces of selfish self-interest ruling this fair world, the words of the Psalms come to my mind "What is man?"[107]

Above temporal religious institutions and (often divisive) sectarian theologies, there was, according to Mascaró, a "Centre of Light and Love which is also a Centre of Life."[108] The passages in *Lamps of Fire* embody, as I have already stated, this unblemished "Centre," impervious to the faults and transgressions perpetrated by unscrupulous religious leaders. Actually, many (roughly speaking) liberal people between the two world wars were anxious to invoke religion without allying themselves to creeds and hierarchies, particularly when the links between Fascist ideologies and conservative Catholicism became apparent: it went with the desire for world peace and support of the League of Nations. They tried to fulfill their spiritual yearnings outside conventional religious organizations, rejecting external practices and interpreting religion in its wide and universal sense (Sir Francis and the early founders and partic-

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[104] Michel Alexeev (I was unable to find more details about his life and work) was a member of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. Mascaró met him in Dr. Theodore Redpath's rooms at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was awarded an honorary degree by Oxford University in 1963. Theodore Redpath (1913-1997) was an English literature scholar and lecturer.

[105] Letter written on 2nd July 1963. I found a carbon copy of this letter by chance inside one of Mascaró's books.

[106] Irving Ribner was an English Shakespearian scholar and editor. *Patterns in Shakespearian Tragedy* and *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* are two of his most important books. I could not find the year in which he was born and I do not know when he died.

[107] HMC.

[108] Letter to Mrs. Vijaya Laksmi Pandit in HMC.

ipants of the World Congress of Faiths championed this view, as I have already shown). The letters Mascaró wrote to the Russian academic and to Irving Ribner remind one of the Catholic Church's complicity with the nationalist rebels and the dictatorship of Franco. During the Spanish Civil War, the clergy backed the insurgent troops, blessed the flags of the Nationalist forces, adopted the fascist salute and some priests even joined in the Nationalist ranks.[109] Besides, the multiple executions ordered by the Nationalists were never condemned by the Vatican, and the recently elected Pope Pius XII even congratulated the victorious Spanish general with a message beginning "With immense joy."[110] Mascaró's protest against churches reveals his disillusionment with organized religions, but he was not the only one to bewail the discrepancies between the spiritually uplifting writings of saints and mystics and the deeds of contemporary religious leaders. In *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, Radhakrishnan calls for the rebirth of religion and points out that "We are satisfied that religion is compatible with militarism and imperialism, with mass murders and the crushing of human decencies. Organized religions bless our arms and comfort us with the belief that our policies are just and inevitable. In every age, religion adjusted itself to the follies and cruelties of men."[111] "The Spirit of Religion" corresponds to the essence or the vital part of religion, which is the source of the moral and spiritual values contained in the perennial teachings of the world religions. The different beliefs and dogmas that divide religious communities, and also the distinct forms of worship practiced by the adherents of organized religions can lead to disagreements and even conflict. They are therefore dispensable because they do not impart the truth, which is where all that is good, beautiful and perfect resides. The goal of the individual is to realize that there is something deeper and more real than the phenomenal world – and which is variously experienced and interpreted according to the different historical traditions – and connect his or her

[109] Paul Preston, *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War* (London: Fontana, 1996) 158.
[110] Cited in Preston 160.
[111] Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions* 111.

transient and imperfect life with what John Hick designates as "the Real." His or hers is a solitary search in which the wise and profound words of the seers, poets and thinkers, who have already attained the ultimate vision of truth, play a crucial part. As Mascaró writes:

> You can have true religion without sacraments or public worship, and have both without clergymen; just as you can have clergymen and sacraments without true religion.
>
> External worship can have a dramatic, artistic and spiritual value, and may be a collective means of strengthening our faith; but we can have inner true religion without sacraments or public worship (...).
>
> Leave theologies alone: they are intellectual explanations, like grammar or dictionary to living poetry. They are an effort to square the circle. The circle of Truth.
>
> We adore Him or This with the whole of our soul. Many names have been given to the Highest by men at different ages and places: those names express the highest visions of man on this earth.
>
> We must find the common inner spiritual elements in religions and humanism that unite all men because they are common to all; and realize that there are also in religions external elements that divide men, and consider them as unessential. To see that there is a oneness of this universe, and of the life of all men, independent of the divisions of 'only on God, Allah' and 'yes, but in three Persons'.[112]

I wrote in the beginning of the section that there is one more reason that might account for the small sales of *Lamps of Fire*. Mascaró started to work on his book in 1948, the year in which Ceylon, the British colony where he had stayed in the early 1930s, became an independent nation (India had achieved independence the year before). When Methuen published the anthology in 1961, several Asian and African countries had already gained independence, and others were still struggling to achieve self-rule. Ghana, for example, was the first sub-Saharan African nation to be granted independence in 1957. The imperialist project of "unity in diversity" was being challenged by nationalist movements in Africa and Asia, and could no longer be taken for granted as it had been in the 1930s, when Mascaró had thought for the first time about his "Bible" for Younghusband's World Congress of Faiths. In the 1950s and 1960s, the countries that had once been colonized were striving to fashion their own individual identities after years and years of European encroachment: the universalism advocated by European co-

[112] HMC. These passages were recorded by Mascaró in his notebooks on 30th May 1968, 22nd March 1969, 16th January 1974, 22nd January 1974, and 9th December 1974 respectively.

lonialists had left deep wounds in their history and their main purpose was to achieve economic and political emancipation from European colonizing nations. Besides, educated English-speaking readers had probably come to realize that in a post-colonial world, cultural diversity was more important than an enforced unity founded on flawed European notions of universality. Actually, anthologies such as *Lamps of Fire* propagated the idea of European hegemonic control over the religious traditions of other colonized nations. Robert O. Ballou and Mascaró never asked themselves whether the followers of Asian religions shared their views about the secondariness of the external elements of Buddhism; on the contrary, they assumed that those religions could be accommodated into their universalistic scheme. J. J. Clarke is right when he asserts that "universalisms of all sorts have come to be viewed as part of the 'totalising' discourse of Western cultural imperialism and hence tending to suppress cultural differences."[113] Mascaró's universalistic attitude – undoubtedly generous and well-intentioned in its practical concerns (the purpose of *Lamps of Fire* was to counteract "the dark national mists"[114] which impeded world unity) – homogenizes disparate religious and philosophical traditions.

THE PENGUIN INTRODUCTIONS

It is not my intention in this section to rewrite Mascaró's introductions and provide the "correct" views and interpretation of the texts in rigorous scholarly fashion. I mention this because I am responsive to the fact that some of Mascaró's ideas are not tenable and that his introductions lack the scholarly precision and intellectual profundity of such carefully annotated editions as R. C. Zaehner's *The Bhagavad-Gītā*. Nonetheless, one should not assume that because Mascaró domesticates the Sanskrit and Pali texts by drawing analogies between writers and texts that belong to different historical periods and religious traditions, and does not elucidate the meaning of foreign concepts such as "Brahman" and "nirvāṇa" – on the contrary, he

[113] Clarke 138.
[114] Letter to Bosch i Gimpera already cited.

tends to disregard the cultural and linguistic context from where they come from and equates them with the more widely known Christian ones – he is intellectually inept and does not possess the critical acumen and objectivity of scholars. It is true that Mascaró was not as brilliant an interpreter of the Gita as his Indian friend Surendranath Dasgupta and even Zaehner, but this is far less important than the fact that Mascaró's temperament and personal leanings never predisposed him to become a scholar or academic. He believed that the capacity to feel and learn from works of literature and sacred scriptures and the knowledge acquired through personal experience were superior to objective thought, linguistic competence and analytical precision. In a letter to J. B. Trend, Mascaró criticizes the Cambridge Professor for writing in his *The Civilization of Spain* (1944) that John of the Cross had "little to say" when compared with the poet Luis de Léon, a contemporary of the Spanish mystic. As Mascaró states, "Of all men who have written on this earth John of the Cross may be one of those who have said most."[115] The excerpt from Mascaró's letter to Trend that I am about to quote is one of most (if not the most) interesting, eloquent and illuminating statements made by Mascaró regarding his views on the relationship between a subjective, empathic and life-changing experience of poetry and the dull scholarship of critics like Trend.[116] After the sentence just cited, Mascaró continues:

> This I know not with my scholarship or learning, but with the whole of my soul and my life. How could I explain to you what I mean? I would have to write a long essay, print it,

[115] Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 128. The letter was written on 1st September 1947. John Brande Trend (1887-1958) was Emeritus Professor of Spanish and Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge University.

[116] It is important to point out that Mascaró did not have a high regard for contemporary literary currents. He did not enjoy Modernist poetry very much, for example, and considered most of the poetry written by contemporary English and Spanish poets artificial and cerebral. His favourite poets lived in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Shakespeare, Henry Vaughan, John of the Cross, etc.) and in the nineteenth (the Romantics Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley, or the Spanish Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, for instance). According to Mascaró, poetry should be an expression of the artist's inner feelings; bookish knowledge and too much learning were not essential and could even be detrimental. In a letter to the Mallorcan poet and translator of Latin literature Miguel Dolç i Dolç (1912-1994), written on 12th January 1950, Mascaró states: "True poetry comes from the soul, from the whole soul, not from the brain: it is not the brain at the service of the soul, as it was with all great poetry, but the soul at the service of the brain [as it is with contemporary poetry]. (...) The poet must read, but above all he must read directly: nature, men, God. This is what he can give us: his visions. When the poet becomes a poet of poets, it is a sign of weakness, of decay. I am not saying that the poet should not read: without great thoughts and emotions there is no great poetry, since the great poet epitomizes the whole culture of his time, and at the same time creates and is the source of the supreme culture; however, he should not shut himself up among books, but should always turn to the great Book where we find the miracle and the mystery of things" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 108-9). Several other passages from Mascaró's letters and writings could be quoted alongside this one.

> and send it to you and I doubt whether I could convince you! Let me just say a few words. It is impossible to explain to many scholars what poetry is. You know this is true. They all feel something, but this something is not poetry! We can only feel poetry through our own poetry, and this varies in people, but good judges generally agree. (...) Now, we can only judge of a spiritual experience with reference to our own spiritual experience. This would lead to the writing of a book, not of a few sentences in a friendly letter. On the whole, I would say that some men of all times and religions, and of no religion, have had deep spiritual experience, some have had some experience, and some have had none. What this experience is may vary in people; but on the whole I think that it is poetry and moral vision seen in a living whole. It is most certainly not "morality touched with emotion," although this may be still a good definition of that peculiar form of Church of England Christianity that "suits the English well," according to the Bishop of York! No, my dear Professor Trend, I am sure that the spiritual experience is something much deeper. It includes light and life and love of a new quality. Now, John of the Cross has said more about this life than anyone I know of the writers of the East and West, and all that he had to say he said it in a few pages of Spanish poetry. But of this I am sure: that unless some of the light and fire of the "lámparas de fuego" ["lamps of fire"] has touched our hearts and illumined our souls we simply cannot have the sort of experience that these poems can give us. Of course, the proper reading of the poems would give something of the experience; but we shall never read the poems with the necessary sympathy and understanding unless the poetry of spiritual life has been shining in us, however feebly. (...) In fact I feel that we want to approach his poems not with our critical literary faculties alone; but also with our spiritual experience and this is a problem of life, not of written words. (...) nowhere I find anything written on John of the Cross that can satisfy my poetry and my very humble spiritual experience. Only the poems and prose of John of the Cross can do it; (...)[117]

If detached, disinterested scholarship is the primary criterion, Mascaró could have asked, what is it that distinguishes a Sanskrit scholar or a literary critic from scientists and physicists who do not need to be emotionally involved with and feel what they are studying? Both the nuclear scientist, who is able to construct a sophisticated and devastating atomic bomb, and the meticulous Sanskritist who traces the etymology of a verb for his dictionary are interested in the truth, but there is another (higher and more authentic) truth that springs from one's subjective feelings and metaphysical intuitions, even if this other truth cannot be objectively tested and established.[118] But there is a quandary: if Mascaró is guided by his personal beliefs and inner

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[117] Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 128-29.

[118] Jorge Guillén (1893-1984), one of the most important Spanish poets of the twentieth century, realized – after reading Mascaró's introductions – that they could not be appraised in terms of their scholarly depth and also that accuracy could not be the guiding factor when it comes to determine the truth of Mascaró's ideas and assertions. This is how he refers to Mascaró (the short passages are taken from the letters that Guillén wrote to Mascaró on 3rd June 1975, 9th June 1975 and 27th June 1976): "You are admirably coherent. Your words are always an intense expression of the *spirit*;" "You can bring together, fuse – and from within, – not by mere erudition, the religious feeling, the profane and sacred poetry, the joy of the spirit, the moral conscience;" "There is nothing more coherent than your spirit, which is not rationally systematic, but spiritually faithful to its deepest impulse" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 185, 186, 189). Mascaró met Guillén in 1930, when the latter was teaching Spanish at

convictions, if he does not take into account the differences that exist between texts, cultures and religions and turns away from the more rigorous methods of scholars (even if they are not infallible or completely objective), it will be difficult to arrive at a consensus about what, for example, the Upanishads, the Gita or the poetry of St. John of the Cross in fact say, since they can be interpreted in a variety of ways by readers, and consequently, there will be no guarantee that two or more people will ever agree on the meaning of the same text.

Mascaró believed that works of literature and religious texts could be read, understood and appreciated without the theoretical insights and the analytic tools of scholars. He writes in one of his introductions:

> Just as the living words of Shakespeare are far above all the books that critics or scholars have written or may ever write on Shakespeare – critics have to write books on poets but poets do not write poems on critics – the living words of sacred books are infinitely above those of their commentators: the words of the *Upanishads* are far above those of the writers on Yoga. Analysis is of course necessary, since by analysis we 'observe, collect and classify,' in fact we become clearly conscious of what may be a vague general impression; but we can only analyse by making abstractions, and we must ever return to life.[119]

What Mascaró is basically arguing here is that one can have blind visions of works of art, that is to say, that a supposedly unadulterated reading of the "living words" of the Upanishads (the "return to life") is possible: there is thus no need to have recourse to the distorting theoretical lenses of critics or Indian philosophers. Actually, he seems to imply that he is capable of feeling the "living words of sacred books" just as he feels the poems of John of the Cross, but this idea is debatable. Mascaró uses his intellect and he is also a "critic" and "commentator", even though he views scholarship as a secondary activity and underestimates the importance of linguistic and contextual issues when he discusses the Gita, the Upanishads or the Dhammapada. One's spiritual experience is not unmediated and what one considers innate cannot be separa-

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the University of Oxford. They exchanged letters when Mascaró was teaching at the University of Barcelona and Guillén was at the University of Seville. Guillén left Spain in 1938, when the war in Spain was still being waged, and the two men did not exchange letters for more than twenty years. Mascaró got in touch again with Guillén in the 1960s. In 1961, he sent him a copy of *Lamps of Fire* and of *The Bhagavad Gita* in 1962, the year in which it came out. *The Upanishads* were sent later in 1975. Guillén enjoyed Mascaró's translations and introductions and always praised them highly in his letters.

[119] Mascaró, *Upanishads* 36.

ted from the dominant social and cultural conventions, literary and philosophical influences or one's own upbringing and education (even one's experiences are inevitably changed by interpretation and analysis). Mascaró's reading of the Gita, as I have argued in the middle chapters, is not the outcome of pure insight and inner, undiluted knowledge or intuition: there is interpretation and analysis of the Gita when Mascaró utilizes Christian terms that domesticate the Sanskrit work, though he thinks that he follows the "spirit" of the original, and is thus able to have special access to the essence of the text. From this point of view, the poet Jorge Guillén is misled when he characterizes Mascaró as "spiritually faithful to his deepest impulse" ("espiritualmente fiel a su más hondo impulso" in the original Spanish), since Mascaró's "deepest impulse" is not a spontaneous or independent impulse unaffected by contextual factors. In the next paragraph, I will give an example that shows that Mascaró analysed the Sanskrit texts he translated and that his approach is not value-free and "spiritually neutral," but biased. However, it should also be noted that Mascaró's introductions are extremely sympathetic readings of texts which to Mascaró could only be comprehended when the reader felt and internalized the truth of what they said and was able to experience it. Hence his or her reading of the text cannot be assessed in terms of whether it is right or wrong, accurate or inaccurate. Convinced that the writings of the mystics and poets he cites constitute first-hand accounts of their subjective spiritual experiences, Mascaró suggests to the reader of his Penguin translations that he or she should place experience above theory and life above scholarship. As he says, "A seeker of the Truth of life will seek the Truth of Being and of Love, since a single flash of this Truth gives us faith far stronger than life. This faith is confirmed by the words of sacred books, by the life of those whose life was a book of life, and by the inner whisperings of our soul."[120]

[120] Mascaró, *Upanishads* 43. There are other passages in the introductions that highlight the importance of direct experience. For example: "In the infinite struggle of man to know this world and the universe around him, and also to know the mind that allows him to think, he comes before the simple fact that life is above thought: when he sees a fruit he can think about the fruit, but in the end he must eat it if he wants to know its taste: the pleasure and nourishment he may get from eating the fruit is not an act of thought" (Mascaró, *Upanishads* 15).

In his introductions to the Gita and the Upanishads, Mascaró employs the terminology and ideas derived from the Vedānta, the most well-known and influential Indian philosophical school ("darśana") in the West. Vedānta signifies "end of the Vedas" and stands for the teachings of the Upanishads, the final Vedic texts; its main concern is the acquisition of metaphysical knowledge or "jñāna-kāṇḍa." The *Vedānta Sūtra* (a work attributed to Bādarāyaṇa) is the earliest extant attempt to outline in a systematic way the doctrines of the Upanishads and constitutes, alongside the Upanishads and the Gita, one of the principal texts of the Vedānta. According to the *Vedānta Sūtra*, the central subject of the Upanishads is the correlation between "ātman" or individual self and the absolute "Brahman" or ultimate Self. There are three main schools of thought within the Vedānta: the Advaita (non-dual) Vedānta, commonly associated with the philosopher Śaṇkarācārya (eighth century); the Viśiṣtādvaita ("the non-duality of that which is qualified") Vedānta of Rāmānuja (eleventh and twelfth centuries), with its characteristic Vaiṣṇava devotionalism; and the Dvaita, Dualist Vedānta of Madhva (1238-1317), theistic like the Viśiṣtādvaita and worshipping Viṣṇu as the highest God. The Advaita Vedānta has often taken precedence over the two other schools and Mascaró, like so many other Europeans and Americans, was not impervious to its influence. The school claims that reality is ultimately one (or non-dual) and that the individual self is not essentially different from the Great Self. It also asserts that the phenomenal, objective world is not real, that empirical existence is illusory ("māyā"), and that only "Brahman," the universal ground of all being, is real. The Advaita philosophy of Śaṇkara is encapsulated in certain key phrases which occur in the early Upanishads and are known as the "great sayings" ("mahāvākya"). "That is you" ("tat tvam asi") is the most well-known, but "I am Brahman" ("aham brahmāsmi") and "this ātman is Brahman" ("ayam ātmā brahma") are two other important axioms.[121] According to Mascaró, the identity of "ātman" with "Brahman" is the essential message of the Upanishads. As he writes:

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[121] This very brief synopsis of the Vedānta school is based on Richard King, *Indian Philosophy: An introduction*

> From nature outside in the *Vedas*, man goes in the *Upanishads* into his own inner nature; and from the many he goes to the One. We find in the *Upanishads* the great questions of man, and their answer is summed up in two words: BRAHMAN and ATMAN. They are two names for one TRUTH, and the two are ONE and the same. The truth of the universe is BRAHMAN: our own inner Truth is ATMAN. (...)
> Around this central idea we have all the questions and answers, the stories, the great thoughts and, above all, the wonderful poetry of the *Upanishads*.[122]

He even refers to "saccidānanda," the expression with which Advaitins designate the realization of "brahman": "(...) the nearest conception of Brahman we can have is to say that it is a state of consciousness beyond time when SAT, CIT, and, ANANDA, Being and Consciousness and Joy are ONE."[123] Mascaró's interpretation of the Gita is also based upon this Advaita formula: "*Jñana* is the centre of the *Upanishads*, the means of reaching Brahman. The *Gita* also places the man of Jñana, the man of Light, above all men: he is in God. The three manifestations of Brahman revealed in Jñana are very present in the *Gita*: *Sat*, *Cit*, and *Ananda*: Being, Consciousness, and Joy."[124] In short, Mascaró did not tackle the Upanishads and the Gita from a neutral point of view; one could say (using Mascaro's own terms) that he did not simply eat the fruit, but thought about it as well.[125] Actually, he was influenced by the popular non-dualistic tradition of the Vedānta school when he wrote his introductions.[126] However, I do not think Mascaró became acquainted with the school of Vedānta through the works of

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to Hindu and Buddhist Thought (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999): 53-57.

[122] Mascaró, *Gita* xxxviii. A few pages down, Mascaró states that "The essence of the *Upanishads* is summed up in the words "TAT TVAM ASI", "That thou art." Salvation is communion with Truth: "SATYAM EVA JAYATE," says the *Mundaka Upanishad*, "Truth is victory," to find truth is to conquer. The joy of the infinite is ever with us, but we do not know this truth. (...) True knowledge of the Self does not lead to salvation: it is salvation" (Mascaró, *Gita* xli). In the introduction to the Upanishads, Mascaró reiterates: "The central vision of the *Upanishads* is Brahman, and although Brahman is beyond thoughts and words, he can be felt by each one of us as Atman, as our own being" (Mascaró, *Upanishads* 24).

[123] Mascaró, *Gita* xl. Eliot Deutsch writes in *Advaita Vedānta: A Philosophical Reconstruction* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1969) 9 that these terms "are not so much qualifying attributes of Brahman as they are the terms that express the apprehension of Brahman by man. *Saccidānanda* is a symbol of Brahman as formulated by the mind interpreting the Brahman-experience."

[124] Mascaró, *Gita* liii. The importance of "jñāna" in the Gita is also highlighted in the introduction to the Upanishads (Mascaró, *Upanishads* 30): "The path of the *Upanishads* is essentially the path of Light, the consciousness of Brahman which is far beyond all mental consciousness. This has been considered in the *Upanishads* the highest path and even in the *Bhagavad Gita* which is a gospel of love, and of works of love, the JÑĀNĪ, the man of vision, is placed above all men, because as Krishna says, 'The man of vision and I are one,' '*Jñānī tv Ātma eva me matam*'."

[125] Mascaró, *Upanishads* 15.

[126] Although he was influenced by the Advaita Vedānta philosophy, Mascaró would never accept Śaṇkara's theory that the world of multiplicity is an illusion ("māyā").

Śaṇkara; it is more likely that he learned about it first through Vivekananda and Radhakrishnan, two of its greatest modern exponents. It is to a large extent due to these two Indian intellectuals that the Vedānta school has often been equated, misleadingly though, with the whole of Hinduism. In his *The Hindu View of Life*, Radhakrishnan goes even further and emphasizes that "Vedānta is not a religion, but religion itself in its most universal and deepest significance."[127] This modern concept of Vedānta (usually called "neo-Vedānta" or "neo-Hinduism") is not the Vedānta of the early Indian Advaitins, but incorporates elements that are extraneous to it (nationalist ideals, Christian ethics, European philosophy, etc).[128]

Mascaró's main purpose in the introductions is to underscore the transcendent unity of all spiritual utterances in which there is the realization of a higher level of reality.[129] He points out in the introduction the Gita: "If we read the scriptures and books of wisdom of the world, if we consider the many spiritual experiences recorded in the writings of the past, we find one spiritual faith, and this faith is based on a vision of Truth."[130] This "vision of Truth" surpasses and in fact eclipses contextual, geographical and historical boundaries: sacred scriptures such as the Gita or the Upanishads cannot be simply relegated to their original cultural settings, but must be correlated with other sacred, as well as secular literary forms in which there is a realization of a communion with what lies beyond the world of senses and of everyday perceptions. For example, after quoting a passage from the diary of Henri-Frédéric Amiel (1821-1881), in

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[127] Quoted in King, *Orientalism and Religion* 135. Interestingly, Mascaró's views on the Vedānta seem to match those of the Indian philosopher. As he argues, "The *Upanishad* doctrine is not a religion of the many; but rather the Spirit behind all religions is their [i.e., the Upanishads'] central theme repeated in such a wonderful variety of ways" (Mascaró, *Upanishads* 11-12).

[128] I cannot discuss in detail here what distinguishes traditional Vedānta from neo-Vedānta, but it is worth mentioning a very interesting and informative essay on the subject by Paul Hacker, titled "Aspects of Neo-Hinduism as Contrasted with Surviving Traditional Hinduism," *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedānta*, ed. Wilhelm Halbfass (New York: State U of New York P, 1995) 229-55.

[129] "(...) besides a material view of the universe that in the end reduces all to matter, or electrons, or energy, and our brain to a machine (...); and which reduces consciousness to an energy merely emanating from the brain (...); and which reduces the universe to a universe of quantity and intellectual abstractions where in the end all things are dust and fall into dust and death, we have a universe of spiritual radiance from which this universe of matter is only a reflection, a world of Spirit so much more wonderful to the soul than the physical universe is to the mind, the universe of eternal beauty which has been felt by all the greatest seers and poets and spiritual men of all times (...)" (Mascaró, *Upanishads* 17).

[130] Mascaró, *Gita* lxi.

which the Swiss writer gives an account of a moment of contemplative bliss that he had in the morning of the 2nd January 1880, Mascaró states:

> This sense of Being is the sense of Brahman. From experiences similar to that described by Amiel, but of course infinitely greater, come the poems of St John of the Cross, the greatest spiritual poems of all time. In his aphorisms he says: "In order to be All, do not desire to be anything. In order to know All, do not desire to know anything. In order to find the joy of All, do not desire to enjoy anything." "To be," "to know," and "to find joy," correspond to the SAT, CIT, ANANDA, "Being, Consciousness, and Joy" of the *Upanishads*.[131]

William Wordsworth (1770-1850), the staunch lover of nature, also felt the "Brahman" of the Upanishads, but through lone communion with the natural world, which the English poet regarded as a source of wisdom and the child's sacred teacher. The poet's life is allied to all life in nature (even to inanimate things), and he realizes that his own being is an intimate part of a living whole. As Mascaró writes:

> Wordsworth felt the Brahman of the *Upanishads*. That is why he can write in the first edition of *The Prelude*:
>
> > I felt the sentiment of Being spread
> > O'er all that moves, and all that seemeth still,
> > ... Wonder not
> > If such my transports were; for in all things now
> > I saw one life and felt that it was joy.
>
> This is the pure spirit of the *Upanishads*. (...)[132]

What is particularly interesting about these two passages is not so much the fact that they tend to undervalue the various cultural and socio-religious differences that exist between the writings of Advaitins, Romantic poets and Christian mystics, but the dominant place assigned to "Brahman" and to "saccidānanda" as well. That is to say, "Brahman" seems to be or designate, to borrow Hick's phrase again, "the Real," the divine Absolute that underlies the experiences of all mystics, regardless of their origin and religious background. Needless to say, this gain-

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[131] Mascaró, *Gita* liv. Amiel's "sense of Being" produces a profound joy and tranquillity; the agitation of desire, fear, grief and anxiety is extinguished and an inner harmony can be felt. "The soul," Amiel writes, "is then pure being and no longer feels its separation from the whole. It is conscious of the universal life, and at that moment is a centre of communion with God. (...) Perhaps only the Yogis and Sufis have known in its depth this condition of simple happiness which combines the joys of being and non-being, which is neither reflection nor will, and which is beyond the moral and intellectual life: a return to oneness, to fullness of things, the *πλήρωμα*, the vision of Plotinus and Proclus, the glad expectation of Nirvana" (cited in Mascaró, *Gita* liv).

[132] Mascaró, *Upanishads* 26.

says what I argued in the previous section on *Lamps of Fire* but, more importantly, it also demonstrates that Mascaró assimilated a certain "neo-Vedānta" outlook that identified Vedānta with religion itself. This attitude denotes, not the (seemingly) religious pluralism that Mascaró endorses in *Lamps of Fire* and in the letter he sent to Geoffrey Parrinder, but a religious inclusivism that singles out the Vedantic "Brahman" as the primary, underlying reality behind other forms of mystical, religious and even poetical experience.[133] Mascaró claims that "Truth is one,"[134] but this "truth" is "his" truth; not a decontextualized truth only available to those who can fathom the essence of things, but a concrete truth that is closely linked to the cultural and political context in which he lived, thought and wrote. Mascaró's religious stance reflects the universalizing tendencies of European and Christian thought, but the influence of the Vedānta school, so prominent in the West, must also be taken into account.

Similar tendency can be found in Mascaró's translation and presentation of the Dhammapada. The doctrine of "no-abiding-self" ("anātman" in Sanskrit or "anattā" in Pali) was one of Buddha's main teachings. Unlike the various brahmanical traditions (Vedānta, for instance), Buddhism repudiates the belief in a permanent entity or essential, unchanging self ("ātman") that passes from life to life. As Richard King observes, "There is no persisting-self throughout this series of lives however, merely a succession of causally conditioned, mental and physical processes that persist for as long as full enlightenment (*bodhi/nirvāṇa*) remains unattained."[135] Each individual being is made up of five "skandhas" or aggregates that condition how human beings perceive and respond to all experience, but these cannot qualify as the self. The notion

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[133] Writing to Salvador de Madariaga on 19th July 1966, Mascaró comments: "As you can see on page 25 of the Introduction I cite one of Guillén's verses. It is very interesting that the essence of the poetry, *the great poetry* of Guillén, is the essence of the *Upanishads*: the difference and the relationship between 'being' and 'becoming.' How the Truth found in poetry is One! And how well our great poet Guillén says: 'Does history always screech? / I in the silences abide'" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 225). "Becoming" translates the Spanish verb "estar," which indicates transitory conditions; whereas "ser," which I have rendered as "being," suggests permanency or essence.

[134] Mascaró, *Upanishads* 23. He explains the axiom thus: "The path of Truth may not be a path of parallel lines but a path that follows one circle: by going to the right and climbing the circle, or by going to the left and climbing the circle we are bound to meet at the top, although we started in apparently contrary directions."

[135] King, *Indian Philosophy* 79.

of a personal self is thus a false impression and an illusion; it is attachment to this unreal self in constant flux that encourages all forms of egoism and causes suffering ("duḥkha"). The relevance of this fundamental Buddhist doctrine is obscured by the Judaeo-Christian presuppositions that govern Mascaró's reading of the Buddhist Theravada text. Mascaró identifies several convergences between the writings of St. John of the Cross, the sayings of Jesus, the Gita and the four noble truths of Buddhism, but these texts (he quotes passages from other sources, but these are the most relevant in the present context) postulate the existence of either the self of the brahmanical schools or the Christian "soul." However, if the rejection of the notion of a substantial self or "ātman" is related to the historical and religious milieu in which Buddhism emerged, the same cannot be said about the existence or non-existence of what in the West's philosophical and Christian traditions is called a "soul." Expressions such as "eternal life" and "Eternity" are foreign to Buddhism as well: the Buddhist goal of "nirvāṇa" puts an end to the continuous cycle of rebirths, but the desire for "eternal life" would signify incessant suffering, since it involves attachment to one's imaginary self. Despite this, Mascaró declares:

> Prince Gotama leaves his palace by night and goes into the Unknown. (...)
> It is the night of Saint John of the Cross, 1542-91, when in one of the most sublime poems of all literature he tells us that the soul "aflame with longings of love" leaves her home in deep darkness, in a night of silence, and goes for her great adventure "with no light nor guide, except the Light that was burning in my heart."
>
> Sin otra luz y guía,
> Sino la que en el corazón ardía.
>
> Buddha left for the great adventure of all men who long for life and 'having put his hand to the plough' he never looked back. His spiritual struggle lasted for six long years until at last, in despair, he sat under the Bodhi tree with the heroic determination either to die or to find eternal life.[136]

Even more conspicuous is Mascaró's version of Dhammapada 82, which he quotes in the introduction. The Pali text states: "yathā' pi rahado gambhīro vippasanno anāvilo / evaṃ dham-

[136] Mascaró *Dhammapada* 13-14. It is also worth quoting this passage: "It is in the second of his great truths that Buddha makes his deep spiritual and psychological contribution to the problem of man: the cause that man suffers under the transient, under things that pass away, is that he clings to the transient, he craves for things that pass away, thus forgetting the ever-present Eternal in him. A few men in all times have longed for Eternity and have attained Eternity, but only a few" (Mascaró, *Dhammapada* 22).

māni sutvāna vippasīdanti paṇḍitā" ("Even as a deep lake / Is very clear and undisturbed, / So do the wise become calm, / Having heard the words of dhamma").[137] Mascaró's translation is similar, but he unwarrantedly introduces the word "soul" where there is only "paṇḍitā" ("wise ones") in the original: "Even as a lake that is pure and peaceful and deep so becomes *the soul* of the wiseman when he hears the words of DHAMMA."[138] The translation makes the stanza inconsistent with the Buddhist teaching of "no-abiding self," but this allows Mascaró to bring the Dhammapada closer to his English readers. As in his 1962 translation of the Gita, Mascaró purges a sacred text from an Asian religion of its foreignness, of what distinguishes it from a text that belongs to the Christian tradition.

A characteristic of the universalism that Mascaró endorses is that it ignores terminology: terms such as "nirvāṇa," "Brahman," "Kingdom of God" or "Tao" are just external labels or symbols that stand for an underlying reality that can take on a variety of forms; they are in fact interchangeable. Hence "Brahman" or "Tao" can be as significant to the European (Christian) reader as "Kingdom of God;" he or she can invoke them without feeling that they are unfamiliar, foreign words with context-bound meanings. As Mascaró stresses:

> The Spirit of the *Upanishads* is the Spirit of the Universe. Brahman, God himself, is their underlying spirit. The Christian must feel that Brahman is God, and the Hindu must feel that God is Brahman. Unless a feeling of reverence independent of the barriers of names can be felt for the ineffable, the saying of the *Upanishads* is true: "Words are weariness," the same idea expressed by the prophet that "Of making many books there is no end."[139]

In the name of a "feeling of reverence," which recalls the commendable ideals of twentieth-century inter-faith conferences, distinctions between religions are undervalued, while the be-

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[137] Carter, John Ross, and Mahinda Palihawadana, trans., *The Dhammapada* (New York: Oxford UP, 1987) 166.
[138] Mascaró, *Dhammapada* 33 and 46. The italics are mine.
[139] Mascaró, *Upanishads* 11. "Words are weariness" is a phrase from the "Bṛhadāraṇyaka" Upanishad (Mascaró, *Upanishads* 142). The words of the prophet are from Ecclesiastes 12:12. In the introduction to the Dhammapada, Mascaró refers to "an awakening [that] is heard from many spiritual seers:" "(...) behind man's visions of something infinite in the finite and of something eternal in things that pass away that make possible his creations of art and poetry and all the discoveries of science, there is the great awakening into the law of Dharma, the eternal Nirvana, the Kingdom of heaven" (Mascaró, *Dhammapada* 10). On page 17 of the same work, he states: "It is in moments of Being when man has found THAT beyond words and thought and has called it Brahman, Atman, Elohim, God, Nirvana, Tao, Allah, or OM which according to the *Upanishads* includes all names, and other sacred words."

lief in their transcendent unity is highlighted. But this universalism might suggest that cultural and religious diversity is the source of irreconcilable divergences and is likely to trigger disagreement, since languages can only express the ineffable, which lies beyond human discourse and reason, in culturally specific ways and concrete situations. However, as I have been arguing in the last three chapters, though Mascaró plays down the importance of words, his writings show that he was bound to them, that he could not extricate himself from their power and that he relied on concepts and ideas which influenced his reading of the Sanskrit and Pali texts he translated into English. Mascaró's translations prove that the "barriers of names" cannot be easily surmounted and that what he calls the "ineffable" is not a neutral designation. In short, the belief that the same truth resides at the core of all religions can undermine the very notion of "unity in diversity," since it domesticates the foreign and prevents variety from expressing itself.

THE COUNTER-CULTURE

Before I bring this chapter to a close, it is important to explore some links between the cultural and political climate of the 1960s and Mascaró's views on contemporary society. It is out of the question to attempt even a sketchy historical summary of the political events, social unrest and cultural transformations that took place in that vibrant decade. Suffice it to say that a disaffected and defiant young North-American generation – the children of affluent middle-class families born in the post-war period – started to challenge the traditional values that had governed the lives of their parents (ambition, self-sacrifice, individualism, etc), as well as the mainstream moral and social codes and the established behaviour patterns. This generational conflict is known as "counter-culture," a term coined by the American social theorist Theodor Roszak in his book *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society*

and Its Youthful Opposition.[140] In America, the disaffiliated young people rose above the monotonous apathy of their parents and became politically involved, condemning the conflict in Vietnam in anti-war demonstrations and protesting against the nuclear arms race, an alarming situation prompted by the Cold War. Also linked with the counter-culture of the sixties are the important achievements of the black, feminist and gay liberation movements in their struggle against racial prejudice and the white, male-dominated American society. All this is of the utmost significance, but what I particularly want to stress in this section is the counter-culture's antagonism towards the prevalent technical and industrial values and the triumphs of modern science, as well as its opposition to conventional politics. This means that both advanced capitalist nations and socialist regimes were criticized because they were all strongly committed to industrial expansion and technological and material progress. The solution to society's problems, such as war, militarism, the nuclear threat or racial oppression, had to be sought within the individual person himself or herself: political dissent or the old left-wing ideologies were not enough to bring about social change. As Roszak puts it, the "discerning few" know where "the New Jerusalem begins: not at the level of class, party, or institution, but rather at the non-intellective level of the personality from which these political and social forms issue. They see (...) that building the good society is not primarily a social, but a psychic task."[141] Instead of the scientific objectivity and expertise of technicians and engineers, who allegedly ensure society's correct functioning and its efficient organization,[142] what is required is "the white-hot experience of authentic vision that might transform our lives and, in so doing, set us at war-like odds with the dominant culture. To achieve such a shattering transformation of the personality *one* poem by Blake, *one* canvas by Rembrandt, *one* Buddhist sutra might be enough ...

[140] The book was first published in 1968, but it was reissued in 1995 with a new introduction by Roszak himself. It has been my main source of information on the counter-cultural movement.
[141] Roszak 49.
[142] This is what is meant by "technocracy," a concept that can be briefly defined as a regime of experts who control and supervise all facets of society and decide what needs to be done when problems occur. It was against the technocratic system that counter-culture youths rose in protest, as the title of Roszak's book indicates.

were we but opened to the power of the word, the image, the presence before us."[143] In a word, only the visionary imagination of poets, artists and mystics could offer a truly humane alternative to the rational stiffness of social scientists and politicians, and counter the positivistic, materialistic ideals upon which the technocratic society was founded.

Mascaró's letters and the introductions he wrote to the Penguin Classics do not contain any overt reference to the American counter-cultural movement and one should be careful not to make hasty comparisons between Mascaró and, for example, the "hippies" just because his two most popular works came out in the 1960s. However, there are some (obvious) parallels: Mascaró's disillusionment with traditional politics, the priority he assigned to the individual's inner spiritual life as a crucial element in social change or his scepticism about the triumph of scientific knowledge are themes associated with the young people's critique of contemporary society. Yet, though he was aware of racial prejudice and social injustices, Mascaró seems to have completely ignored the civil rights and feminist movements. I did not find any reference to Martin Luther King in his writings, despite the fact that the civil rights leader had been inspired by the non-violent approach to political activism of Mohandas Gandhi, for whom Mascaró had a great respect. As far as the consumption of artificial chemical agents is concerned – a widespread practice in the 1960s – Mascaró would have no doubt disapproved of it. Those who advocated the use of psychedelic drugs believed that these could induce mystical states

[143] Roszak 257. In his 1957 letter to Professor John Brough, already cited in a previous chapter, Mascaró asserts that "in these days of atom bombs [the Gita] may be wanted more than ever," were people – one could add – but opened to its transforming power. It is worth mentioning two short passages from two letters that Mascaró wrote in the 1940s, since they are imbued with a counter-cultural flavour that is reminiscent of Roszak's words written more than twenty years later. In the first letter, to Joaquim Xirau and written on 11th February 1943, he affirms: "It is the great poetical thought that gives us visions of the truth of the universe, not the scientific thought, which only gives us partial truths that the creative poetical thought synthesizes" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 284). On 26th May 1947, Mascaró tells Josep Trueta that what "separates the platonic thought from the modern scientific one" is that "Plato talks about 'the vision of truth,' the Eternal Truth," whereas "The man of science wants to measure, he does not trust visions, and wants to measure as objectively as he can." Mascaró did not, however, condemn all scientific knowledge. In the postscript of his letter to Trueta, he mentions a "paradox" that makes him feel sad: "some men of science work to lengthen life: while other men of science work with the same enthusiasm to shorten it! And the 500 million pounds are not used in biology, but in atomic bombs and in the science of death!" (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 246). "Science of death" is my translation of "moriologia," a word invented by Mascaró which could be rendered as "mortalogy." Mascaró uses the word "moriologia" to contrast it with the important and friendly biology ("biologia").

of consciousness analogous to those described in the mystical traditions. Mascaró would have dismissed such a claim as absurd; the psychedelic experience, he would have argued, cannot stand comparison with the genuine visions (the "lamps of fire") of saints and mystics. In fact, many agreed that these counterfeit, drug-induced experiences could help scientists to gain access to the hidden layers of consciousness which mystics had already fathomed. Science could thus throw light upon what happens to mystics when they experience visions, but such an approach turns mystical experiences into psychological or chemical phenomena and fails to take into consideration the lofty and uplifting qualities that distinguish authentic mystical states or experiences. Even though Mascaró was never interested in the psychedelic drug culture of the 1960s, there are passages in his introduction to the Upanishads that can be regarded as veiled criticisms of the contemporary fascination with psychic processes produced by mind-altering drugs. However, instead of decrying the consumption of hallucinogens and other psychotropic agents such as LSD or mescaline, Mascaró deprecates such vain and self-centered pursuits as "thought-transmission or thought-reading." As Mascaró argues, any interest in hypnotism and other "psychological experiments," as

> in Yoga, in miracles or psychic powers, not based on that humbleness of the soul which is the beginning and the end of all true spiritual light and love is at its best something of scientific interest, and at its worst it is that pride and desire for power which are the surest signs of spiritual darkness.
> (...)
> But supposing that after this experiment [of thought-transmission] we could attain all the psychic powers promised in Yoga, does this mean that we have advanced a single step on the spiritual path? Of course not. We have learnt something of amazing psychological interest; but we have not advanced on the path of love. We may even have gone backwards if the slightest pride or self-satisfaction has infected our mind.
> Those who rely on physical miracles to prove the truth of spiritual things forget the ever-present miracle of the universe and of our lives. The lover of the physical miracle is in fact a materialist: instead of making material things spiritual, as the poet or the spiritual man does, he simply makes spiritual things material, and this is the source of idolatry and superstition.[144]

[144] Mascaró, *Upanishads* 39-40. Roszak argues that if the extensive use of psychedelic drugs could turn society – as some propagandists in the 1960s defended – into an earthly paradise of "love, gentleness, innocence, freedom," that would signify that "the behavioural technicians [had] been right from the start," and that "we are the bundle of electrochemical circuitry (...) and not persons at all who have it in our own nature to achieve enlightenment by native ingenuity and a deal of hard growing" (Roszak 177). Mascaró would have undoubtedly agreed with Roszak.

There are other aspects of the counter-culture for which Mascaró did not show any interest. I am thinking, for instance, of the youth's lifestyle of sexual promiscuity, their dressing codes and musical tastes, or their communal experiments outside conventional society. On the other hand, the observation he makes in his introduction to the Upanishads – that "A material view of the universe seems therefore quite possible, so much so that we might call it the general view of modern man, ruled by a modern mechanism based on scientific materialism"[145] – would not have left a young North-American reader who was contesting the scientific world-view prevalent in capitalist as well as socialist societies indifferent; indeed, he would not have failed to find the sixty-eight years old translator's remark consistent with his or her own ideas. The most terrifying consequence of this "scientific materialism" was a full-scale nuclear war. In a letter to Bosch i Gimpera, dated 30th October 1952, Mascaró notes that two most powerful industrial nations in the world are only concerned with material progress:

> Americans need not feel they are a great nation: they lack many things! God help them, since they have animal strength, and atomic bombs! A few days ago I went to see a film: the first I had seen in the past 12 years! It was made by the Soviets. It had good photography, but the temperament of the film, the ideal, was American: it looked like a film from the United States! The whole film was about the glorification of *material* progress. There was in it the ideal of study, and a sense of art's beauty that was perhaps superior to that of the Americans; but the ideal is one of material progress.[146]

In 1941, he was already writing about his belief "in the necessity of a spiritual, broad, humane basis of all culture; and not in a scientific, limited basis, closed in any kind of religious or political fanaticism," and emphasizing that "Nazis and communists, or narrow-minded Catholics, take control of the school whenever they can. They have a clear ideology. They have their fanaticism."[147] That Mascaró should have thought in these terms in the early 1940s is not surprising since, as Roszak states, "The period of upheaval we conventionally called 'the sixties' is

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[145] Mascaró, *Upanishads* 16.
[146] Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 87.
[147] Letter to Salvador de Madariaga written on 12th May 1941 (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 200).

more appropriately seen within a broader setting that stretches from 1942 to 1972."[148] Writing to his friend Dhar on 21st June 1967, Mascaró expresses his disillusionment with international organizations, and suggests that social change can only be achieved through individual effort and not through political means, because of the selfish ambitions of nations:

> At present all people sitting and talking at the United Nations, except perhaps U Thant, are in the cage of established ideas, they are in what we call the Establishment. If any of them spoke to the world from a high, noble, sincere point of view he would be dismissed at once by his own Government; and they might think that he had gone mad. He is as the servant of a Government policy, and this is always selfish: it is never based on moral or spiritual values. A few persons in the world have achieved great moral values; but a tribe, or nation, has never achieved them. The herd is much worse than the individual members of the herds.[149]

In the same year he sent this letter to Dhar, he tells Miquel Forteza that "The great problem of man on earth and above all in our times, is a spiritual problem."[150] Changing society entails an inner change that transcends secular politics and passing ideologies whether of a right- or left-wing persuasion: the words from the Gita, the Upanishads or the passages from *Lamps of Fire* could well be an alternative to the "established ideas" of stubborn nations: "only human sympathy and comprehension, which lead us to justice, can solve racial and social problems that are human problems. Plus, there are the great economic problems. *Wars begin and end in the hearts and thoughts of men*: this is the lesson that the saints and sages of 'Lamps of Fire' give us."[151] All the passages that I have cited in this section – in the main text and in the footnotes – make clear that Mascaró's views cannot be divorced from the political and cultural transfor-

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[148] Roszak xi.

[149] HMC. U Thant (1909-1974) was a Burmese diplomat and the third general-secretary of the United Nations from 1961 till 1971. He strongly opposed the Vietnam War and criticized the United States of America publicly. He also called for the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa. There is a copy of *View from the UN*, Thant's memories published posthumously in 1978, in Mascaró's personal library. In another letter to Dhar, written just a few days before (on 12th June 1967), Mascaró comments that "Humanity is spending about 30% at least of its financial and human energies in preparing instruments of murder in war, or in wars. Practically not one penny is spent by Governments on peace" (HMC).

[150] Letter written on 23rd February 1967 (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 1, 154). In the introduction to the Gita, he observes that "The true progress of man on earth is the progress of an inner vision," and questions: "We have a progress in science, but is it in harmony with spiritual progress? We want a scientific progress, but do we want a moral progress?" (Mascaró, *Gita* lx).

[151] Letter to Francesc Moll written on 16th January 1957 (Mir, *Correspondència*, vol. 2, 8). The italics are mine. Gregori Mir, who knew Mascaró personally, writes that "Mascaró used to say that 'we cannot change the whole world, but we can change our inner world,' words," he claims, "that could very well describe the counter-culturalism" (Mir, "Mundialització" 144).

mations that took place during the period that Roszak describes as "conventionally called 'the sixties'," and which I succinctly outlined in the beginning of the section. I agree with Gregori Mir when he says that "the success of [Mascaró's] translations of the spiritual classics of India is to a considerable extent explained by that [the counter-cultural] movement," but that "it was the counter-culturalism that found him and (...) not him who went in search of it, among other reasons because I do not think that many of the characteristics of that movement aroused his interest."[152] I would just like to call attention to the role played by the Penguin Classics in the 1960s, which Gregori Mir ignores. It must not be forgotten that Mascaró's 1962 translation of the Gita was the first Sanskrit text to be included in the Penguin Classics series. The impact of the Asian religious and mystical traditions on the West did not pass unnoticed by that English publishing house, which was sensitive to the likes and dislikes of its English-speaking readers. What I am suggesting is that publishers exploit particular cultural situations which they see as highly advantageous: increase in sales and profits are matters of no small importance. Writing to Mascaró on 7th February 1969, Betty Radice (Mascaró's editor) states:

> I was looking again at the list of your suggestions for further Indian literature and see you are working on the DHAMMAPADA, part of which I have read in your *Lamps of Fire*. We have been asked several times for this: *the Americans clamour for Indian literature*. Would you like to have a contract for it from Penguin Books? I am sure it would readily be accepted. And what about selections from the Vedas? There again, I know what you translated in *Lamps of Fire*, and that Tao is a book we should like in the Classics.[153]

In the years following the Second World War, many Eastern religious traditions were in ascendency. The interest in Japanese Zen, Tibetan Buddhism and Hinduism became an integral part of the counter-cultural movement, but the doctrines and philosophical principles of these Asian belief systems were often simplified to suit the mood of their uncritical young followers. The dissenting youth assumed that "turning East" was the ideal antidote to the dominant logical scientificism and the excessive rationalism of their own, affluent and developed materialistic societies. Zen meditation or mantra chanting were deemed more important than

[152] Mir, "Mundialització" 145-46.
[153] HMC. The words in italics are mine.

the secular political activism of past generations. Mention should be made of the prolific English writer Alan Watts (1915-1973), the main person responsible for the popularization of Zen Buddhism in the United States, and of Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997) and Jack Kerouac (1922-1969), the two major figures of the "Beat Generation" literary movement who sought inspiration in Asian religions.[154] Some of their writings bear titles that clearly indicate Eastern influences: Ginsberg's "Sunflower Sutra" (1955) and "Wichita Vortex Sutra" (1966), or Kerouac's novel *The Dharma Bums* (1958), for example. Within the popular musical tradition, the incorporation of Indian musical elements and religious motifs was also noteworthy. David R. Reck argues that "Indian music was a central ingredient in the 1960's magical mythical mix which combined Indian religion and culture and objects with hallucinogenic drugs."[155] The Beatles, the most well-known and influential rock band in the world, also made use of Indian themes, rhythms and instruments in several of their songs. A student of the renowned Indian musician, composer and sitar player Ravi Shankar, George Harrison (1943-2001) was the member of the Liverpool quartet who developed the most earnest interest in Indian musical and philosophical traditions, and it was this fact that drew Mascaró and the Beatle together after they first met in a London television studio. Though Mascaró did not attribute much importance to his encounter with Harrison and John Lennon, he did not consider it entirely irrelevant either.[156] On 29th September 1967, the two star musicians were the guests of the journalist David Frost on the live late night television show *The Frost Report*. The topic of this particular edition was Transcendental Meditation and it included a taped segment of an interview with the world-famous Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1917-2008) which had been filmed earlier the same day at Heathrow

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[154] In "Mundialització" 143, Mir declares that he did not find any book by Watts, Ginsberg and Kerouac in Mascaró's library. I did not come across any work by Ginsberg and Kerouac, but I did find two books by Watts: *The Spirit of Zen: a Way of Life, Work, and Art in the Far East* (1936) and *The Supreme Identity: an Essay on Oriental Metaphysic and the Christian Religion* (1950). *The Spirit of Zen* (Watts' first book) came out in the "Wisdom of the East Series," the same series in which Mascaró's *Himalayas* would be published two years later.

[155] David R. Reck, "Beatles Orientalis: Influences from Asia in a Popular Song Tradition," *Asian Music* 16 (1985): 94.

[156] Mir "Mundialització" 142.

Airport.[157] In the invited studio audience was Mascaró, whom Reck describes, mistakenly, as "a Sanskrit scholar at Cambridge University." But the most important is that Mascaró left the studio "impressed both by the sincerity of the two young Beatles and by their grasp of the Indian philosophy."[158] The following month, Mascaró sent a letter to Harrison and some books as well.[159] On 16th November, he wrote to him again enclosing a copy of *Lamps of Fire* in the letter. Mascaró suggested to Harrison that he might consider putting a poem from the *Tao Te Ching* to music, particularly one titled "The Inner Light."[160] Harrison agreed with the suggestion: his song "The Inner Light," recorded in Bombay in January 1968, was released as the B-side of the single "Lady Madonna."[161] It is worth quoting here:

> Without going out of my door
> I can know all things on earth.
> Without looking out of my window
> I can know the ways of heaven.
>
> For the farther one travels
> The less one knows.
>
> The sage therefore
> Arrives without travelling,
> Sees all without looking,
> Does all without doing.[162]

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[157] It is beside the point to give an account of the Beatles' controversial involvement with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Yet, I think it is at least important to mention that it was George Harrison's wife, the English model Pattie Harrison, who introduced the group to the Maharishi's Spiritual Regeneration Movement. One month before David Frost's show, the Beatles – encouraged by Pattie – had attended a talk by the Maharishi at London's Hilton Hotel. After the talk, they held a private meeting with the Maharishi and decided to become members of his Spiritual Regeneration Movement. This is how the Beatles' brief relationship with the Indian guru started.

[158] Reck 113.

[159] Writing to Mascaró on 20th October 1967, Harrison states: "I would like to thank you for the books that you sent, and I hope to be able to study them in the near future, and also to have a serious talk with you, when time permits. I also believe the "Frost Television Show" was trivial in many respects, however, was of great importance to the trivial minded people who watch television" (AGCM). Unfortunately, Mascaró did not leave carbon copies of his letters to Harrison and it is impossible to know which books he actually sent to the Beatle.

[160] Reck 113-14. These are the first lines of Harrison's reply to Mascaró: "Thank you once more for your beautiful book *Lamps of Fire*. I think there are plenty of new songs lyrics to be got from it" (AGCM). Harrison's letter to Mascaró does not have a date.

[161] On 25th January 1968, Harrison informs Mascaró: "I am pleased to tell you that I have recorded the music to our song "The Inner Light," and I will let you have a copy later when it has all been completed" (AGCM).

[162] Mascaró, *Lamps* 66 and *Dhammapada* 24. I think that Mascaró's citation from the *Tao Te Ching* in his introduction to the Dhammapada is partly due to the fact that the poem had already become popular as one of Harrison's best songs. In Reck's opinion, "The Inner Light" is "perhaps the most sophisticated, and certainly the most delicately exquisite of the [Beatles'] Indian songs" (Reck 114).

Harrison's song is important because it evokes or epitomizes the mood of the counter-culture. The Beatles had also realized that in order to build a more harmonious society one had first to change one's mind. In his song "Revolution 1," Lennon urges his revolutionary-minded interlocutor: "You better free your mind instead."[163] The meditative silence of the calm sage who stays indoors could be a more fruitful philosophical attitude than political fervour and revolutionary activism. I think that even though he did not belong to Harrison and Lennon's generation, Mascaró would have shared some of the central concerns and views of the participants in the counter-cultural movement.

[163] Cited in Reck 120.

CONCLUSION

A doctoral thesis should correct, broaden and refine the student's initial point of view. I remember that when I started to read Mascaró's correspondence and to do research at Harris-Manchester College, I regarded Mascaró as an outsider, an Orientalist born and reared in a small Catalan-speaking island in the Mediterranean whose work was not tainted by any interest other than the purely literary and aesthetic. The letter in which Mascaró states that Europe is superior to Asia ("even" in spirituality) was inconsistent with the image I had of him, but it made me more sensitive to the political and cultural context in which he carried out his work as a translator of the Gita and the Upanishads. To a certain extent, the discovery of this letter marked a turning point in my research. Later, when I gained more familiarity with Mascaró's writings, I realized that though he insisted on the universal nature of truth, his views and remarks on non-Christian religious traditions and texts remained anchored in (dominant) European/Christian values and were not, as he thought, grounded in first-hand human or spiritual experience. My analysis of his translation of the Gita makes this plain, I think. Though flimsy, my knowledge of poststructuralism, the philosophical movement which I briefly described in the introduction, helped me to identify the limitations of Mascaró's universalistic discourse. I am not judging or condemning Mascaró, but merely saying that he was not free from personal biases and inclinations. Even Zaehner, whose edition of the Gita is incomparably more scholarly than Mascaró's, left his personal imprint in his version of the Sanskrit text.

The essays and letters Mascaró wrote in Ceylon also show that he was not a detached observer of the political situation in that British colony, the second to become an independent nation. Unlike what my Mallorcan friend Gregori Mir suggests in one of his essays, Mascaró was not a critic of the British Empire and did not seem to sympathize with indigenous nationalist movements. The main subject of discussion in the first chapter was, however, the educational system in Ceylon in the early twentieth century and Mascaró's assessment of it. In the second chapter, I tried to situate Mascaró within the historical tradition of Orientalism, which

I traced back to the ground breaking work of William Jones. I compared the ideas of the German scholar Max Müller about contemporary India with those of Mascaró and arrived at the conclusion that they did not differ significantly. I also contextualized in their historical setting Mascaró's talks for the BBC Spanish service and claimed that Mascaró's characterization of Europe and Asia in dichotomous terms ("materialism versus spirituality," for instance) could serve the propaganda efforts of the British Government in its ideological campaign against its war enemies, namely Japan and Germany. In the third chapter, I shifted my attention to a different topic and I talked about Mascaró's attitude towards scholars and their bland objectivity, which he questioned. I argued that his views were not unjustified if one considers the "scholarly" practices in Nazi Germany or the "objective" rigour of scientists like J. Robert Oppenheimer, who was also, like Mascaró, a great admirer of the Gita. I also noted the influence of Christian exegesis and the "tat tvam asi" ethics on his interpretation of the Gita. In the fourth chapter, I made a linguistic and semantic analysis of Mascaró's translation of the Gita drawing upon the work of Lawrence Venuti, Antoine Berman and other translation theorists. In the final and longest chapter of the thesis, I described how Mascaró became involved in the interfaith dialogue and explained how his religious outlook and political posture were in harmony with the principle of universal reconciliation that was promulgated by the League of Nations and other religious organizations at the end of the First World War.

My thesis is to some extent atypical. No one these days would write a doctoral thesis about a particular author with the words "life" and "work" in the title. Unlike Mut Garcia, my colleague in Mallorca, it was never my intention to show that Mascaró was this or that. I have not tried to seek an answer to a particular question or problem, but I have shed light upon the life and times of a Mallorcan expatriate in Britain who loved the Gita and whose translations were probably read by millions of English-speaking readers. I decided (and I often wonder if I could have taken a different path five years ago) to write a comprehensive critical overview

of Mascaró's life and work. I do not think I could have simply made up my mind about a very specific PhD topic before reading most of Mascaró's letters and all his published and unpublished works, or acquiring a tolerable knowledge of Orientalism and Indian philosophy. I was aware of the risks I was running as I did my research. I often felt that I was plunging into unknown territory and I tried to anticipate the likely weak points of my work as I had planned it: superficiality, lack of thematic connections between chapters and excess of information. Inescapably, I had to introduce and write about a variety of subjects: the British Empire, the life of Sir P. Ramanathan, nineteenth- and twentieth-century interpretations of the Gita, Vedānta and neo-Hinduism, the Spanish Civil War, Ramon Llull and the inter-faith dialogue in Mallorca, the counter-culture movement and even George Harrison. My thesis can function thus as a bridge or a starting point for further research. Nonetheless, I sometimes think that I could have been more self-disciplined and focused on one or two questions instead of dealing with almost every aspect of Mascaró's life. My task would have been probably easier if I had, for instance, written about Mascaró's two translations from the Sanskrit, compared them and discussed their place in the Penguin Classics series. But, in that case, I would have to improve my knowledge of Sanskrit, as well as of translation theory. Translation studies is one of the most fascinating areas in the humanities, and the history of Penguin Books, particularly the first ten or fifteen years after Rieu conceived the idea of creating his series of classics, is crucial to understanding the formation of the reading tastes and habits of readers in Britain. Mascaró's translations introduced many British readers to the ancient literature of India and must have stimulated many others to study Sanskrit literature or Indian religions at the university. The Gita and the Upanishads have already been replaced by more scholarly translations in the same series, but these cannot have the same impact that Mascaró's had back in the 1960s. Several essays and short studies can still be written on Mascaró, but mine and Mut Garcia's will most likely remain the only two (lengthy) works devoted to this translator from Mallorca.

Gonçal López Nadal told me once that Mascaró had left some of his manuscripts and letters to his biographer and close friend Juan Maimó. Mut Garcia utilized some of these primary sources in his doctoral thesis, but I decided not to include them in mine. I would like to take a look at them, but I do not know when that will be possible. Maimó is dead, but López Nadal said to me that his wife was still alive (or at least she was two years ago). Eighty years have passed since Mascaró first travelled to Ceylon and 23 since his death. His English letters have not yet been published, and it is probably too late now to publish them in England, since Mascaró's Penguin translations will sooner or later disappear from the shelves of bookshops (unless, of course, Penguin Books decides to reprint them again) and younger people will opt for more recent, up-to-date editions. However, in Mallorca and Catalonia, Mascaró's English letters (to Rieu, Parrinder, John Brough and other less-known figures) would be, I think, well-received. In fact, two years ago, I suggested to the Mallorcan publisher Moll that I could prepare an edition of these letters and write a preface or an introduction to them if someone was willing to render them into Catalan. The person in charge of the publishing house – one of the sons of the Mallorcan linguistic and Mascaró's great friend Francesc Moll – thought this was a timely and interesting idea. Now that Mascaró's papers in Harris-Manchester College have been put in order and catalogued, and I am familiar with most of his correspondence in English, I believe that a volume with his complete English letters would be the ideal accompaniment to Mir's excellent edition of Mascaró's Catalan and Spanish letters.

APPENDIX:

CATALAN AND SPANISH PASSAGES

1. COLONIALISM AND EDUCATION IN CEYLON

Page 30 [Footnote 9]: "El seu amor al Bhagavad Gita continua i sent, cor endins, els valors espirituals i humans d'Orient i a la recerca del ideal orientalista, el pròxim curs es dirigeix a l'Illa de Ceilan i el nomenen "Vice-Principal" i Director d'Estudis d'Anglès al Parameshvara College (...)."

Pages 30-31 [Footnote 10]: "Després d'haver aconseguit el seu gran anhel de relació amb la cultura univer-sitària se li presentà l'ocasió d'esbrinar les tradicions espirituals de l'Índia i gaudit alhora de la bellesa de la vida."

Page 31 [Footnote 11]: "El meu ideal de cultura es va anar formant a poc a poc, però llegir i escriure només varen ser els precepts d'una lectura molt més important: perquè per llegir el llibre de la vida és necesari comprende els llibres dels homes."

Page 31 [Footnote 13]: "Mascaró acceptà la proposta tot il·lusionat. (...) A bord del transatlàntic anglès Orones, realitzà el viatge a la recerca de l'ideal orientalista."

Page 31 [Footnote 14]: "És interessant, però de moment no tenc aquí camp per desenvolupar les meves activitats com o voldria i miraré de venir a Espanya o anar a Anglaterra."

Pages 31-32 [Footnote 15]: "Veient-se impossibilitat per desplegar una vida cultural com desitjava, estava desanimat i tornà a llegir unes obres d'hipnotisme;" "I ben mirat ell tenia necessitat d'una auto-suggestió positiva, ja que el col.legi tenia problemes econòmics, es trobava molt tot sol i enfora d'una gran cultura;" "A la plana 39 i 40 de la Introducció als meus *Upanishads* vaig parlar una mica de l' Hipnotisme, i transmissió de pensamant. Però no en vaig parlar superficialment. Sense dir-ho en públic, és clar, jo vaig pensar que jo havid practicat hipnotisme a Ceilán i també a Barcelona, i que jo havia practicat la transmissió de pensament amb èxit absolut."

Page 32 [Footnote 16]: "Mascaró es trobava entotsolat, no tenia homes de la seva talla per canviar idees i, a part de l'ambient, tampoc el clima no li era massa favorable. Home mediterrani i acostumat als aires nòrdics, la calorosa proximitat de l'Ecuador, l'obligà a vestir-se com els del país: la vesta blanca tan característica dels hindús."

Pages 48-49 [Footnote 78]: "Per extensió, el seu posicionament era al costat de tots els qui en el continent indostànic pretenien el mateix, és a dir, independitzarse de la Gran Bretanya."

Page 49 [Footnote 80]: "S'havia de ser molt valent per dir aquestes coses i posar-se al costat dels nationalismes de Ceilan en uns anys en què la Gran Bretanya intentava contrarestar, amb tots els mitjans possibles, el procés independentista en aquells dominis colonials."

Page 50 [Footnote 85]: "J. Mascaró no era, ni mai no ho va pretendre, un historiador i molt menys un teòric de la politica (...)."

Page 51 [Footnote 90]: "(...) sin peligro de guerras civiles, en paz, sin anarquía ni tiranía, y sin miedo a que algún pretendido 'salvador' de la India como Chandra Bose se levante y la reduzca a la esclavitud de su tiranía 'salvadora'."

Page 51 [Footnote 92]: "Terminada la bellísima disertación, el profesor señor Mascaró fue muy aplaudido y felicitado por el distinguido auditorio que llenaba el salón de actos del Ateneo Barcelonés."

2. MASCARÓ AND THE ORIENTALISTS

Page 72 [Footnote 29]: "Llatí no en saben ni una paraula a l'India. En realitat, no saben gairebé res d'Europa, sinó és ciència i mecànica. Mai he vist un Indi que senti Beethoven, o Leonardo, o pugui llegir Cervantes o Dante, i no parlem de Ramon Llull! Per altra banda, els erudits europeus que he

conegut interessats en l'India, llur interés és de coses mortes. Hi ha molt a fer per formar un nucli d'estudiants que vertaderament poguéssin ésser ambaixadors de les cultures d'Europa i Asia en terres d'Asia i Europa. Dasgupta, el formidable erudit de l'India, me diu francament que Beethoven li sembla un soroll! I Radhakrishnan, sempre me recordarà, amb un orgull satànic me parlava del llatí amb un despreci despreciable: no hi ha que dir que no en sap una paraula!"; "L'altre dia Dasgupta me deia que a Espanya no hi havia un gran art. Li anomeno Velázquez, i no sabia ni el nom!"

Page 91 [Footnote 74]: "No conec cap resum dels corrents religiosos, poètics i filosòfics de l'Índia eterna, però crec que totes se perden dins el mar infinit de dos versos: 'yas tu sarvāṇi bhūtāni ātmany-evānupaśyati / sarvabhūteṣu cātmānaṁ tato na vijugupsate' «Aquell que veu totes les coses en son Esperit i el seu Esperit en totes les coses, sent la pau d'Eternitat» (*Īśa Upanishad*, 6)."

Pages 91-92 [Footnote 77]: "La China y la India tienen características comunes: son esencialmente naciones pacíficas, las dos poseen cultura, religión y sabiduría milenarias, suyas, propias; y hasta hace muy pocos siglos su ciencia aplicada, utilitaria, no era inferior a la de nuestra Europa. Pero China y la India no han poseído el sentido utilitario de la vida que es la fuerza y a la vez el peligro de Europa. La India ha tenido durante tres mil años un sentido de la vida que podríamos llamar espiritual. Hay en su idealismo una cósmica grandeza, pero le ha faltado con frecuencia el realismo de Europa. A la China no le ha faltado el sentido realista de la vida; pero un sentido de calma pacífica, contemplativa y alegre la ha encerrado demasiado en un concepto de belleza estética."

Page 92 [Footnote 78]: "Podríamos decir que el espíritu de China es felicidad humana, sencilla y tranquila, el espíritu de la India es vida en la Eternidad, y el espíritu de Europa es acción, es de lucha y conquista de la naturaleza y de sus secretos."

Page 92 [Footnote 79]: "El aspecto the la China ha cambiado mucho desde su República en 1912. Pero y sus ideas? Debajo de la modernización de algunos jóvenes chinos americanizados, el pueblo Chino piensa como hace miles de años."

Pages 92-93 [Footnote 80]: "Europa es acción. Asia es contemplación. El ideal de Europa es descubrir trabajando: el de Asia es descubrir reposando. Europa es Marta. Asia es María. Las dos pueden servir al Señor."

Pages 93-94 [Footnote 84]: "Con fusiles quitados a veces à los japoneses en lucha a brazo partido, con bombas de mano fabricadas a la antigua, con pólvora y dinamita fabricada en los pueblos, las guerrillas heroicas de Yenan han hecho frente a vastos ejércitos japoneses, desbaratándoles, dividiéndoles, escurriéndose de ellos, evitando grandes batallas, pero siempre venciendo en luchas de guerrilla."

Page 94 [Footnote 87]: "El espíritu de una parte de la India tiende a extremos, o todo o nada. Es idealista, y hay que procurar una armonía del idealismo de la India con el realismo de la Gran Bretaña, en bien de todos, de los aliados y del mundo futuro."

Page 95 [Footnote 89]: "Tal vez ningun otro país hubiera permitido a la India tener la libertad que ha tenido durante los últimos treinta años para preparar los elementos democráticos."

Page 95 [Footnote 91]: "El uno físicamente pequeño, pero histórica and políticamente grande, el otro físicamente grande y espiritualmente inmenso, pero políticamente pequeño. Es casi seguro que hay más conciencia política entre los 45 millones de habitantes de la Gran Bretaña que no entre los 400 millones de la India. Y la armonía y sabiduría política es cosa muy seria y que no se consigue en un dia."

Page 95 [Footnote 92]: "El destino ha unido la historia de esta isla con la del continente de la India, y esta unión creo que la historia de futuro juzgará como una unión para el mutuo bien. No podemos cambiar el pasado."

Page 95 [Footnote 93]: "Inglaterra y la India representan dos grandes valores humanos. Inglaterra es el gran país de acción. Sus valores son concretos, resultado de la experiencia activa, tanto en el campo político como en el moral. (...) El sentido del bien concreto, y de la bondad son muy altos en Inglaterra. Si el pensamiento inglés es real, de acción en el tiempo, el pensamiento de la India es ideal, de contemplación en la Eternidad. (...) La sabiduría práctica de Inglaterra y la visión espiritual de la India, el campo de acción de Inglaterra y el campo de contemplación de la India, son los dos campos de actividad de la alma. Sólo con la armonía de esas dos actividades nos podemos mejorar a nosotros mismos y prepararnos para ser mejores ciudadanos de un mundo mejor."

Page 96 [Footnote 93]: "La India ha reclutado mas de dos millones de tropas, todas voluntarias, en la lucha por la causa de Inglaterra y de sus aliados. Su contribución económica y de mano de obra es enorme."

Page 98 [Footnote 101]: "Y el que piense que porque los ingleses no glorifican el militarismo no pueden luchar tan bien como los militaristas prusianos o japoneses que lo pregunte a los japoneses en Birmania, o que vaya al infierno a preguntarlo a Hitler o Mussolini."

Page 98 [Footnote 103]: "El sol de la bandera del Japón no es el sol espiritual de Asia. No es el sol de luz y vida que vieron profetas y poetas, sabios y videntes, en Palestina y Arabia, en Persia y en la India, y en la China humana y pacífica."

Page 99 [Footnote 105]: "No es el Japón quien representa políticamente los valores supremos de Asia. Por esto nuestras simpatías están con la China y la India pacíficas y eternas. No es el espíritu milita-

rista, materialista y agresivo de Alemania y del Japón que va a conducir a la armonía de Europa y Asia, a la justicia internacional y armonía humana que anhelan todos los hombres de buena voluntad."

3. THE UNIVERSAL GITA

Page 111 [Footnote 36]: "El Bhagavad Gita ha estat el gran amor de la meva vida, i serà, espiritualment, l'adéu d'amor de ma mort."

Page 113: [Footnote 44]: "Ara som molt amic del Prof. Dasgupta que viu a Cambridge fa dos anys amb la seva esposa. El pobre, al llit amb una hipertròfia del cor. L'he vist gairebé totes les setmanes. És un dels erudits més formidables del món i él més gran de l'Índia moderna. M'espanta veure el molt que ell sap de coses de l'Índia i el poc que jo en sé!"

Page 114 [Footnote 49]: "Cada vegada que el veig augmenta la meva admiració. Ja té 74 anys i amb dolor sent que un dia no tindré la seva ajuda i llum;" "Després de Mrs. Mackenzie és tal vegada el meu amic més bo d'aquesta terra. Sempre disposat a ajudar amb els seus coneixements."

Page 115 [Footnote 50]: "Els 'scholars' sànskrits del temps romàntic i després foren idealistes, però els d'ara són erudits científics amb ànima de diccionari i de 'cross-word puzzles'."

Page 115 [Footnote 51]: "Un manuscrit antic sobre l'amor interessaria al professor de Sànskrit, però el que és l'amor no li interessa gens! És l'eruditisme realista o més ben dit materialista de tants d'erudits. És el materialisme psicològic destructor de valors, o un dogmatisme tradicional mort que encara domina moltes esglésies, sense perfum ni color, ni poesia, és a dir sens vida espiritual. Encara li queda una mica de vida social, i bastant de vida econòmica!, però no pot mai satisfer el meu esperit més que mai anhelant de coses eternes."

Page 120 [Footnote 70]: "Referent a la publicació del *Gita* de Roviralta Borrell me recorda haver-la llegida quan jo tenia uns 15 ans, com també una altra feta d'un senyor de Barcelona que coneixia una mica de sànscrit. Una vegada el vaig veure, i ara no me recorda el nom."

Page 121 [Footnote 78]: "(...) Annie Besant que vaig visitar a Londres dos anys abans d'ella morir me va desorientar amb preguntes i respostes que volien ésser ocultisme petit. (...) El valor d'ella era polític i social, peró no era un valor, crec jo, ni literari, ni d'erudició, ni de poesia. Allà a on no hi ha valor de poesia no hi ha valor espiritual gran, ja que els alts valors espirituals, són *almenys* valors de bellesa i d'amor, és a dir valors de poesia. A dins les coses indicades: teosofia, ocultisme, astrologia, etc. hi ha coses interessants però en ells nivells més baixos hi ha perills grans per als joves i el vells que no tinguin el sentit crític, el sentit crític de poder distingir l'or del llautó, la poesia bona i verta-dera de la imitació baixa, la fe, del fanaticisme, l'alta imaginació creadora de la baixa i petita i deso-rientadora, fictícia, quimèrica, fantasia destructora de tots els alts valors espirituals que sempre són alta poesia."

Page 126 [Footnote 93]: "Es evident que el poema pot tenir un sentit simbòlic. Arjuna és l'ànima anhelant que defalleix davant la lluita contra les passions e els obstacles de la via mística, i Krixna és l'Esperit diví que anima l'ànima vacil·lant i li dóna el coratge heroic que la conduirà després de la victòria a les regions de la pau suprema. (...) Els problemes que presenta Arjuna són els problemes eterns de l'esperit humà, que de tant en tant sent l'enyorança de l'Esperit Suprem."

Page 133 [Footnote 115]: "Pau entre homes i nacions no n'hi pot haver perquè l'esperit de col·labo-ració intel·ligent, i dels grans valors morals dels homes, no és encara superior al de les guerres i lluites negatives. I tanta de guerra que hi ha a fer! Guerra a la pobresa, a les malalties, a la ignorància. Tanta guerra positiva i creadora que els homes poden i podrien fer! I tant de temps i energies perdudes en guerres i lluites destructores i negatives!"

Page 139 [Footnote 131]: "És a dir allò que hi ha de més gran en nosaltres, l'ànima nostra pura, respon a allò que hi ha més gran a l'univers. I qué és això? AMOR. El fet de que sentim amor pur de Déu i per les coses grans i belles ens diu que aquest amor ve d'un AMOR, que és Déu. "L'amor che move il sole a l'altre stelle" de Dante. La força d'amor del nostre cor que ens emporta envers la poesia bella i envers les obres ben fetes, és la força de poesia que va crear l'univers, és el Tat Tuam Asi."

Page 140 [Footnote 134]: "És l'Amor que, fent-nos oblidar la nostra petita personalitat, ens fa retrobar-la amb la seva grandesa en l'essència de tots els éssers: és l'Amor en el cor de tots els éssers que sentim en el nostre cor, i aleshores els comprenem."

5. MASCARÓ'S WORK IN CONTEXT

Page 191 [Footnote 23]: "El cas de les traduccions de les faules orientals és tal vegada el més interessant de transmigració literária que coneixem;" "Són poc conegudes les influències orientals en Ramon Lull. Un estudi seriós d'elles seria un treball llarg, i la nostra terra ha esperat 600 anys a començar l'edició de les seves obres completes. Sols un estudi de l'obra completa acompanyada de fonts sànscrites i llurs traduccions aràbigues, i originals aràbics ens podrá permetre algun dia conèixer l'influència oriental en Ramon Lull i aixi es veurà destacar-se més clarament la seva obra individual."

Page 191 [Footnote 25]: "Es molt interessant comparar la doctrina d'amor en la vida espiritual de l'India que comença en els darrers Upanishads i floreix en el sublim Bhagavad Gita, abans de Crist, i que se desplega uns segles abans de Ramon Llull, sobretot en Ramanuja en el segle XII, al mateix temps que la doctrina damor dels "sufies," que culmina en Jalalud-Din Rumi del segle de Ramon Llull, i que ell coneixia, segons ens diu en el 'Llibre d'Amic e Amat'."

Pages 193-194 [Footnote 36]: "He rebut l'*Amic i l'Amat*, el faré relligar dignament i el traduiré amb amor. Hi ha ja una traducció d'Allison Peers, cosa poc fina com ell i la seva obra. Penso fer un

volumet que fará companyia als *Upanihads*;" No he perdut del tot les esperances d'un dia fer alguna coseta per la nostra llengua o les nostres lletres. Si feia un estudi intens del '*Llibre d'Amic e Amat*' el podria comparar a altres valors espirituals de l'orient i de l'occident, i en paraules clares presentar l'obra a lectors no erudits però que pensen i senten una mica. Em caldria dedicar-me de ple uns mesos a les nostres coses de les quals estic tan allunyat."

Page 194 [Footnote 38]: "Sota el títol provisional de "LAMPS OF FIRE – From the Scriptures and Wisdom of the World," he recollit les pàginas més grans i més belles dels llibres sagrats i de saviesa universals: l'esperit de Ramon Llull viu en mon cor un mica."

Page 197 [Footnote 47]: "Sir Francis, endemès d'ésser un gran escriptor (vegi *Who's who*) i un gran home d'acció política, és un ésser que no se troba cada dia: un Sant. Conèixer-lo és guanyar; i no conèixer-lo, perdre'l."

Page 201 [Footnote 61]: "El problema de la unitat i de la seva varietat és dels més profundamente filosòfics;" "El gran problema de la unitat i de la varietat sembla que és urgentíssim, més que mai entre les homes."

Page 202 [Footnote 64]: "A finals de juny vaig anar a Oxford, en un Congrés de vàries creences religioses; i vaig parlar amb En Madariaga llargament. El vaig trobar preocupat per la qüestió catalana. Creu ell que alguns catalans de Londres fan gestions secretes amb elements del Govern anglès, sense posar-se amb contacte amb els altres elements espanyols. És l'obsessió del separatisme. Li vaig dir que el grup absolutament separatista no representa Catalunya; però, naturalment, vostè ho sap millor que jo. Per a mi el problema és sobretot de cultura i tolerància i convivència. En temps d'unió dels pobles, l'avenir és d'unions i no de separacions; però al mateix temps, de més llibertat. És la gran tasca de l'Univers: varietat dintre de la unitat. Crec qeu el sentit separatista dels grups de Catalunya i Bascònia és degut a la decadència nacional espanyola. (...) Gales i Escòcia conviuen en la grandesa de

l'Imperi britànic, i Irlanda té la seva independència però conserva els avantatges de l'Imperi. Naturalment que l'emoció nacional espanyola no se pot crear a la força, si no se sent. En aquest cas, noble tolerància i convivència. Jo no puc jutjar de la cosa política: la meva tasca ha estada una modesta tasca cultural; (...) és important que les persones de parla castellana i catalana que s'adonen del gran problema cultural i espiritual dels nostres pobles, estiguin dacord amb harmonia i bona voluntat."

Page 203 [Footnote 65]: "La qüestió era, pert tant, d'ordre intern de les societats polítiques, però també internacional;" "Joan Mascaró reflexionava el problema fonamentalment des del punt de vista cultural."

Pages 203-204 [Footnote 67]: "Tan español es el idioma catalán como el castellano (...);" "Todo español que no quiera aceptar el catalán como idioma español no es un centralista, no, *es un separatista* , así como lo es el catalán que no ame a Don Quijote y no acepte su idioma glorioso como parte íntima de su patrimonio cultural."

Pages 204-205 [Footnote 70]: "Toda armonia es unidad y variedad. La unidad no es unificación monótona, ni es la variedad anarquía discordante. No es unidad la mera suma de partes, sino aquel algo invisible que une a las partes en un todo y parece darles vida. No es variedad la mera anarquía de partes independientes, sino la libertad de unidades, creadoras voluntariamente de unidades superiores."

Page 205 [Footnote 72]: "El problema político de la unidad en la diversidad lo han ya resuelto países modelos de moderación y buen sentido como Suiza y Bélgica, y lo va resolviendo el gran Imperio Británico. Es el gran problema de la India, y es por fin el problema ideal de convivencia internacional. Está aún por resolver en España."

Page 206 [Footnote 73]: "La meva Antologia de les millors planes dels llibres sagrats i dels pensadors de valor espiritual ja està acabada: feina d'anys feta en un any. Me manca una introducció, però serà cosa de pocs dies. És una obra que estim molt i en la qual he posat tota la meva ànima. Esper la veureu un dia impresa com jo voldria."

Page 208 [Footnote 84]: "Les planes de 'Lamps of Fire' ens porten ben amunt de la mar irada del nostre món, i de les boires nacionals fosques. En elles trobem un sentit espiritual universal: la bellesa, la bondat i la veritat de les coses eternes; i en elles el blanc i ele negre, l'home d'Europa i el d'Àsia, l'ateu i el fanàtic poden trobar alguna cosa humana, universal, infinita. Jo no crec que hi hagi cap home infinitament dolent o ignorant: la llavor del bé i la veritat és en tots;" "(...) a veure si veurem 'Lamps of Fire' donant llum dins la fosca del món nostre, que ja ens manca bé la claror de paraules eternes;" "A veure si la llum d'aquestes llànties il·lumina un poc la fosca dels nostres temps, que és ben necessari."

Page 209 [Footnote 86]: "(...) la impressió forta i absoluta que me donen els meus treballs és que hi ha una experiència espiritual que se transforma segons les condicions i els temps. Podríem dir que és com la poesia: el sentit de poesia és essencialment un (...), però s'expressa en diferents llengües i temps de moltes maneres. No podem dir que els valors poètics de totes les poesies siguin iguals; però sí podem dir que en ells hi ha poesia. De la mateix manera, els valors espirituals de les vàries religions no són iguals; però en ells hi ha, en tots, el sentit de Déu."

Page 218 [Footnote 116]: "La vertadera poesia surt de l'ànima, de tota l'ànima, no del cervell: no és el cervell al servei de l'ànima, co fou tota gran poesia, sinó l'ánima al servei del cervell. (...) El poeta ha de llegir, però sobretot llegir directament: la natura, els homes, Déu. Això és el que ell ens pot donar: ses visions. Quan el poeta esdevé poeta de poetes, senyal de manca de força, de decadència. No vull dir que el poeta no hagi de llegir: sense grans pensaments i emocions no hi ha gran poesia, ja que el gran poeta resumeix tota la cultura del seu temps, i a la vegada crea i és font de la suprema cultura;

però no s'ha de tancar en els llibres, sinó anar sempre al gran Llibre on trobam el miracle i el misteri de les coses."

Page 219 [Footnote 118]: "Es usted de una admirable coherencia. Sus palabras son siempre una intensa expresión de *espíritu*;" Sabe usted juntar, fundir – y desde dentro, – no por mera erudición, el sentimiento religioso, la poesía profana y sagrada, la exaltación del espíritu, la consciencia moral;" Nada más coherente que su espíritu, que no es racionalmente sistemático, pero sí espiritualmente fiel a su más hondo impulso."

Page 226 [Footnote 133]: "Com podeu veure en la plana 25 de la Introducció indic un vers d'En Guillén. És molt interessant que l'essència de la poesia, *la gran poesia* d'En Guillén, és l'essència dels *Upanishads*: la diferència i relació del 'ser' i del 'estar.' Com la Veritat que troba la poesía és Una! I que bé diu el nostre gran poeta Guillén: 'Siempre chirría la historia? Yo a los silencios, me atengo'."

Page 231 [Footnote 143]: "És el gran pensament poètic que ens dóna visions de la veritat de l'univers, no el pensament científic que sols ens dóna veritats parcials que sintetiza el pensament poètic creador;" "Això tal vegada és el que separa el pensament platònic del pensament científic modern: Plató parla de 'la visió de la veritat,' la Veritat Eterna. L'home de ciència vol mesurar, no se fia de les visions, i vol mesurar tan objectivament quant pugui;" "uns homes de ciència treballen per allargar la vida: mentres que altres homes de ciència treballen amb el mateix entusiasme per escurça-la! I els 500 milions de lliures no ajuden a la biologia, sinó a les bombes atòmiques i a la moriologia."

Page 233 [Footnote 146]: "No cal que els americans se sentin un gran poble: els manca molt! Que Déu els ajudi, ja que tenen força animal, i bombes atòmiques! Fa uns dies vaig veure una pel·lícula de cine: la primera des de feia 12 anys! Era dels Soviets. Bones fotografias, però el temperament de la pel·lícula, l'ideal, era americà: semblava una pel·lícula dels Estats Units! Tota ella era la glorificació

del progrés *material* . Hi havia l'ideal d'estudi, i un sentit de bellesa d'art tal vegada superior al dels americans; pero l'ideal és d'un progrés material."

Page 233 [Footnote 147]: "(...) sigo creyendo en la necesidad de una base espiritual, amplia, humana, de toda cultura; y no en una base científica, limitada, encerrada en cualquier fanatismo religioso o político. Nazis y comunistas, o católicos cerrados, se apoderan de la escuela siempre que pueden. Tienen una ideología clara. Tienen su fanatismo."

Page 234 [Footnote 150]: "El gran problema de l'home sobre la terra, i sobretot en els temps nostres, és un problema espiritual."

Page 234 [Footnote 151]: "(...) sols la simpatia i comprensions humanes, que ens duen a la justícia, poden resoldre problemes racials i socials que són humans. I hi ha els grans problemes econòmics. Les guerres comencen i acaben dins els cors i pensaments dels homes: això és la lliçó que ens donen els sants i savis de 'Lamps of Fire';" "Mascaró solia dir que 'no podem canviar tot el món, però podem canviar el nostre món interior,' paraules que molt bé podrien descriure el contraculturalisme."

Page 235 [Footnote 152]: "(...) l'èxit de les seves traduccions del clàssics espirituals de l'Índia en bona part s'explica per aquell moviment;" "(...) va ser el contraculturalisme que el va trobar i (...) no va ser ell que va anar a cerca-lo, entre altres raons perquè no crec que bona part dels continguts d'aquell moviment fossin del seu interès."

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