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**STRAWBERRY NOSE:  
WHAT CAN A TRANSLATOR DO WITH NAMES  
LIKE THIS ONE? SOME CONSIDERATIONS RELATED  
TO THE TRANSLATION INTO SPANISH  
OF THE UNICORN**

María Luisa DAÑOBEITIA  
Universidad de Granada

When Robert Graves claimed that English poetic education should, really, begin with a poem known as *The Song of Amergin* he was, of course, talking about poetry; and he could be right. When such a statement seems to be equally applicable to fictional narrative we begin to encounter problems, the more so, when the public seems to be enchanted with novels that are full of riddles. Since we are going to deal in this paper with the translation into Spanish, and for that matter into any other language, of an English novel written by Iris Murdoch, *The Unicorn*, and since the novel is a riddle<sup>1</sup>, we would like to enquire whether translators, not to say readers, should be included in Graves's asseverations. We are prompted to ask ourselves the question because the novel's thematic nucleus is so much grounded on myth that unless a considerable number of points are clarified to the reader, many things will probably look to him hazy and thus difficult to comprehend.

Novels such as *The Unicorn*, *A Maggot*, and *Grimus* to name only three, are cunningly based upon ancient poetical myths and thus themes; myths that

offer Iris Murdoch the possibility of playing literary games; games which can be disturbing because their ultimate meaning may elude more than one reader. Often enough one word, or the name of one character, has different layers of meaning which derive from the hermetic, semiotic and functional bifurcations inherent in the myth or myths which directly or indirectly are evoked by that word or by that name.

When we look at this novel with an analytical mind we discover that we are confronted with a conundrum. Naturally, the conundrum is part of a literary game, but of such magnitude and with so many unrelated and related pieces that the novel embraces too many components and too many riddles which, often enough, are not easy to solve. This type of hermetic literary game is fashionable among many modern writers. Yet these writers unawares make the average reader feel both a little uncomfortable and slightly incompetent because of the hermetic nature of their novels<sup>2</sup>. Some readers may feel uneasy while trying their hardest to comprehend the novel—not the plot, but the novel's theme. The reader who wants to reach the core of the novel but does not know where the pieces have come from is unlikely to react in the same way as one who knows their origins. The latter may tend to be more annoyed than puzzled, or may feel very impressed by the way in which the pieces have been put together.

The myth-based novel is the product of knowledge. Writers like Murdoch are not playing a game of chance. All is well controlled. They may talk about the character's freedom and detachment but in fact they know exactly what they are doing. Although this could be a joke on the writer's part the fact is that, at the end of *The Unicorn*, Hannah seems to be part of what Amergin is connected to; she is the flood that kills. She is a wonder, that is to say, the unicorn. She is both Até and the queen of the stag, symbolized by Gaze. She cannot be separated from the salmon and she is concerned with the power of the wind. Everything in this novel gives the impression of "peer[ing] from the unhewn dolmen arch" (Graves 1977: 13)<sup>3</sup>. Hannah's story derives, in part, from the myth of the dying god; a myth that Murdoch uses to embrace both Paganism and Christianity. There are too many elements pertaining to this myth to be able to overlook it. We have a Fisher King, a figure pertaining to the myth of the Grail, a salmon, a male that must die, although his death becomes futile because Denis walks away with both the fish and the dog. Deep down what Murdoch is trying to say is that there is no value in religion because there is too much form in it, and its underlying philosophy is that of Até, that is to say suffering. The endless chain of suffering must be broken because the pattern is too restrictive. But how? She is not the only writer who delves into religious themes. Murdoch tries to break the pattern by giving her reader a formless pattern. However, the underlying force is the pattern, and thus regardless of contingency and formlessness, unless she moves away from myth the pattern cannot be broken.

However, some writers, when asked about influences will plead ignorance. They do not like to be asked about sources or even about the thematic nucleus of the novel. They seem to forget the critic's duty. A duty which, as Northrop Frye states, has nothing to do with value judgment but with the analysis of both structure and theme, as he understands them<sup>3</sup>. Consequently, the influences of both previous traditions, ideas and the like have to be considered by a serious critic to see how they function in the construction of the theme. However, very few writers like to discuss what lies behind their themes in the form of sources and influences. Some will talk about both objectivity and detachment. This is difficult to accept. If the issue of possible sources is pushed forward, the writers of the myth-based novel will try to avoid it by asserting many things, among them that they should not be taken seriously because they like to tease their reader. And here they could be right<sup>4</sup>.

Whether they are teasing or not, the truth is that they are offering problematical novels; and if most readers, when dealing with the original work, feel as if they were confronted with a riddle, with something that eludes commonplace knowledge, we wonder how would they feel if they were reading a translation of it? Obviously, more than one thing could happen. To find out the reactions and interpretations of readers when approaching a translation of this type of novel could be an interesting piece of research beyond the scope of this paper.

In some cases the reader cannot really perceive the existence of riddles because they have been lost in the translation. For some readers this event could mean missing the fun inherent in the act of unriddling. Let us not forget that society has been induced, more and more, into playing games. A quick look at any T.V. programme will serve to verify this. Others may feel comfortable at this loss. After all, their minds are possibly not being challenged as they would be were they reading the original. In some cases the translator may offer a version so as to render the reading of the novel comprehensible regardless of whether he has to present the reader with something which is not fully identical with the text of departure. This, in certain cases, and with certain readers, should not be bemoaned, because the act of discovering what lies at the heart of the story can be both exasperating and depressing since the task is very difficult for an average reader. Thus, to have a translator interpreting for the reader ambiguous and difficult passages could be a welcome act, even if such action may pass unperceived by the reader.

What a translator must do in this type of novel is a problem. The reader's attitude and thus reaction towards ambiguity cannot be predicted; they depend not only upon the type of reader but upon external factors that may affect the impact that the novel has on the reader. The reader's reaction is not easy to predict or forecast. However, we do know a curious fact: the Murdochian novel is seldom abandoned by the reader, for with the hope of making sense of the events, they keep on reading till the very end.

So far we have been talking, in a rather broad sense, about problems caused by the myth-based novel, the difficult novel. These are obstacles which the present writer has considered in much detail over several years of study. However, that issue is not the purpose of this paper. Here we are concerned with what we will define as the duty of the translator. The translator, when fully aware of the problems inherent in a novel of this kind, must not take the easiest road, that of offering a simplified version of the original. When the translator elaborates on the foregoing "simplified version" he will have to depend on his personal experience on reading the novel, and this is what he should not do because he would be relying on a very intimate way of solving obstacles in order to offer a coherent and a non-problematical novel to his reader. His obligation is that of providing his readers with as many ideas or concepts as possible related to the interpretation of the novel based, of course, on a deep and exhaustive study of the work in question. With this, perhaps, the sense of helplessness caused by a problematic novel could be attenuated.

Our experience in the last few years has proved that a novel like *The Unicorn* tends to fascinate young readers—not older ones. Most of our students will claim that they like it; that they have to keep on reading. However, they cannot go beyond that. The dilemma comes later, when question upon question is formulated by the bewildered and fascinated student. They want to know the message, the meaning behind the gothic-like structure of the plot. They want to know what the characters represent, and especially Hannah. They wish to know the significance of the unicorn, as presented in this novel. They need to go beyond the outer structure in order to get right into the main or basic idea governing the pattern of the thematic development of the story. This in itself says enough. The novel is a problematic novel.

We are not going to claim that we have solved the riddle posed by the novel's theme, although we are more and more convinced that its thematic nucleus is no other than myth making. We do not have all the answers. What we have is a number of instruments which have been manipulated by the author, no more, and all of them point directly towards the process of myth making. When the questions are formulated all we do is to offer the student both the instruments and its original meaning. The rest is their job. They have to put the pieces together as well as they can.

To put the pieces together must be the translator's duty while informing his readers about the significance of the pieces. What the reader does with the instruments should not be the translator's primary concern. After all he did not write the novel, and thus he is dealing with somebody else's tools. Certainly, the reader may or may not use them, but the chances are that most readers, or at least enough of them, will be glad to have at their disposal as many tools as possible in order to understand the primary mechanism that governs both the structure and the thematic development of the story.

A translator of a Murdochian novel must offer his readers explanations about what is difficult to understand. Very few translators are willing to do so, and therefore we cannot help worrying about the lack of explanatory footnoting so common in many translations. Consequently, with the hope of offering some of the correlatives inherent in a few codes, we are going to consider the semiotic, hermetic and functional bifurcations innate in the names of some of the characters in *The Unicorn*. This consideration should illustrate some of the difficulties to be faced by a translator if he dares to undertake the task of translating this novel. These are problems that will require of the translator an uncommon knowledge, the type of knowledge that could be expected only from a specialist in literary analysis.

The name of the central character of the novel is Hannah; an enigmatic creature who serves to give the title to the novel<sup>5</sup>. To have a clear picture of Hannah is difficult, and the first time Miss Taylor tries to depict her in a letter to her boyfriend she seems to be unsure of how to do it: "Mrs. Crean-Smith is youngish and beautiful and spiritual-looking in a rather fey way" (TU 27). The description of Hannah, filtered through Marian Taylor's apprehension of her, is rather elusive; something to be expected because, as she says, at Gaze everything happens to be "a sort of," "more or less," and in a "rather" whatever "way." She is right. The language she uses to describe Hannah fits admirably well with the general tenor of the novel. She is not young but "youngish," She is "spiritual-looking," but not like a Madonna or a saint, but in "a rather fey way."

The sentence quoted, at first sight, may look simple but when it comes to its translation, it is not an easy one. For a Spanish translator the problematic word is "fey," for there are various possibilities for its translation. On looking at the *Collins English Language Dictionary* we can read that "someone who is fey behaves in a vague, strange, and silly way. Used of people's ideas and behaviour." This is fine, but if we look at the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* we shall find something else: "fey, (arch. dial.), fated to die, dying." A Spanish person may look at a bilingual dictionary (*Vox, Diccionario*), and there he will be given something that is quite close to that of the *Oxford Dictionary*: "Fey, adj. (esc.), que ha de morir, moribundo."

The translator, perhaps a little desperate, could take a look at the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, the unabridged edition, and there he will discover other possibilities besides the ones already mentioned. For example, "1 Brit. Dial. doomed, fated to die. 2 Chiefly Scot. appearing to be under a spell; marked by an apprehension; elves, fairies and other fey creatures. 4 Being in unnatural high spirits, as were formerly thought to precede death." To decide which one of these options could be the right one is a difficult task; and so there may be other options apart from using a dictionary: consulting a native speaker.

Curiously enough, two native speakers were quite surprised by the meaning of "doomed to die," and for them the correct word could be that of

"úmda," that is to say "shy" in Spanish. In addition to this the next opinion was that of somebody who looks harmless and is actually rather crafty. With this we could not solve the problem. A third consultation gave us the meaning of someone who is not but seems to belong to the land of faerie. When we asked the first two informants how would they translate the quotation into Spanish they could not do it.

In view of the theme of the novel and of constant allusions to the land of the dolmen and to the land of the Celtic Other-World besides many other lands, we were inclined to think that the last option could be the correct one. Consequently, we could translate the word "fey" as "criatura sobrenatural." When we mentioned, for a second time, the problems caused by this word to our first two informants, they could not see them, for according to them any average well-educated English-speaking person would think in terms of somebody who is a little timid. In spite of this, when asked again to try to translate this quotation, the results were the same: they could not see a proper way of transferring the text into Spanish.

This was not the reaction of our third informant, who was less confident about the meaning of this word and more inclined to see in it a greater variety of meanings. After considering who the writer is, he thought that we should pay attention to what most critics accept as right regarding the writer: that "Iris Murdoch tends to employ stock fairy tale, mythic and gothic devices and transform them into literary correlatives of [her] philosophical vision of life" (Kuehl 1969: 346). With this in mind we felt that, on the surface, there was not much choice left. We thought that the narrator, through Miss Taylor, was hinting at the type of lady described by C. S. Lewis in his work *The Discarded Image*:

With the "Fairy Damsels" of our third Miltonic passage we reach a kind of Fairy who is more important for the reader of medieval literature and less familiar to modern imagination. And it demands from us the most difficult response. The Fairy Damsels are "met in forest wide." Met is the important word. The encounter is not accidental, they have come to find us, and their intentions are usually (not always) amorous. They are the *fées* of French Romance, the *fays* of our own, the *fate* of the Italians. . . . These High Fairies display a combination of characteristics which we do not easily digest. On the one hand, whenever they are described we are struck by their hard, bright, and vividly material splendour. We may begin, not with a real Fairy, but with one who merely looked as though he came "of fairie," from the fairy realm<sup>6</sup>.

English writers and English readers seem to be quite familiar with this type of lady. We can hardly say the same thing about Spanish readers. We have to explain, again and again, to our students, that fairies are not what they think they are, and that for this very same reason, in faerie tales, the adjective "good" is used to qualify a fairy in order to distinguish her from a malevolent one.

Hannah, in view of the way she kills Gerald, could be as the narrator indicates, a killer-lady of the type of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*. She could also be a "sort of goddess," to use Murdoch's language, of the type presented by Yeats in *The Wanderings of Oisín*. She could be more dangerous than that, evil, similar to the creatures presented in Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire*. Regardless of how we look at the problem, we are predisposed to think that readers who are familiar enough with the literary development of creatures who belong, or appear to belong, to the land of faerie, will see in the word "fey" a signal indicating danger. A code that offers more than one way of encoding it. By being the killer-lady, Hannah becomes a number of other things which, at the same time, are not altogether unrelated. Once more we are confronted with a problem which derives from information: data that will be more available to English readers than to Spanish ones. An English reader who knows enough about history will recall that after the accession of James I to the throne, fairies were considered to be fallen angels. This information will hardly be familiar to a Spanish reader, and so we are confronted not only with problems related to language and literary tradition, but to culture and history.

With the word "fey" we have a faint glimpse into the clever usage of language attained by Murdoch. The word "fey," when evaluating the manner in which Hannah kills herself, covers the meaning of "doomed to die." This layer of meaning could be expected, for more often than not the killer-lady belongs to the land of Death, and thus she embodies a form of death. Fey meaning "doomed to die" takes full force from the fact that she is not a free person, but someone who has been living, already for seven years, within the walls of Gaze because she has tried to kill her husband. Thus, in a way, she is already a dead person. She looks harmless and she is capable of killing. When we are told that Denis Nolan is in the habit of taking into her room little creatures such as "snakes" and "bats" a certain amount of distrust is aroused in the reader. With this distrust Hannah's possible baseness comes to the surface for, generally speaking, these kinds of beasts belong to a world of witchcraft and thus demonology.

Her first name is Hannah; and according to Peter J. Conradi, Hannah "is a riddling palindrome" (1986: 122). Obviously, Murdoch expects us to disentangle it. Such a task would induce us to do several things. We could begin connecting her name with that of the mother of the Virgin Mary. This connection is not apparent till the reader perceives the existence of an anagram in her name, that of Christ's name. To associate her name with that of the Virgin Mary is something that for certain readers is rather distressing because Hannah has not known her husband, in the Biblical sense of the word, for seven years, and what is even worse, Hannah has been unfaithful to her husband while he has been engaged in homosexual practices. Disturbing or not, the reader has to accept it. In case of doubt he needs only to consider the name that has been given to one

ve female characters in the novel; a character that appears as a peripheral Elizabeth.

Elizabeth, according to Effingham, makes witty commentaries about love<sup>7</sup>, and Elizabeth, according to St. Luke's Gospel, is the mother of St. the Baptist and the cousin of the Virgin Mary. To complete the picture, the girl that is hired to take care of Hannah is Marian, who later on in the novel is called by Gerald Maid Marian. In the name of Marian, as in the name of Leah, we have multiple layers of meaning related to the main theme of the novel. If we understand it correctly, which is that of reenactment of myth. A few examples of how these layers of meaning derive from a single name will serve to illustrate our point:

Mr. E. M. Parr writes to me [Mr. Graves] that *An* is Sumerian for "Heaven" and that in his view the Goddess Athena was another Anna, namely Ath-enna, an inversion of Anatha, *alias* Neith of Lybia; also that *Ma* is a shortening of the Sumerian *Ama*, "mother," and that Mar-ri means the fruitful mother from *rim*, "to bear a child." Mari was the name of the goddess on whose account the Egyptians of 1000 B.C. called Cyprus "Ay-mary," and who ruled at Mari on the Euphrates (a city sacked by Hammurabi in 1800 B.C.) and at Amari in Minoan Crete. So Ma-ri-enna is "the fruitful mother of heaven," *alias* Miriam, Marian or Mariandyné, the "leaping Myrrhine" of Troy, and Marianne: a word of triple power. But the basic word is *Anna*, which confers divinity on mere parturition and which also seems to form part of Arianrhod's name. (Graves 1977: 371)

Bearing in mind this quotation, what becomes evident is the fact that Anna can function as a surrogate figure of Hannah, in one and many of her symbolic aspects. This is not a coincidence, and here, as in many other cases, Murdoch shows a prodigious knowledge of mythic material which she uses to her great advantage.

Murdoch is not an exception. James Joyce playfully celebrates Anna's centrality in his *Anna Livia Plurabelle*. Indeed if one needs a single, simple, evocative name for the Great Goddess, Anna is the best choice. The idea that Anna is the best choice is a deliberate one hardly needs questioning<sup>8</sup>. The same must be true for Murdoch, for her world is fully populated by characters whose names derive either from Anna or Mary. The implications inherent in such names serve to connect Anna to figures pertaining to the mythical world of the dying god, or to the king, in this case Peter, Hannah's husband.

Many modern writers tend to make ample usage of this myth. Although it is a while to see this aspect in Joyce's *Ulysses*, more than one critic has seen it in this light. In Murdoch's case the influence is very obvious. The myth, as I have stated, the making of new myths by means of the elaboration of old ones

seems to be the one that acts as the centripetal force that not only unifies but governs other myths, becoming thus variations of a single unit. This is a code that falls back on both the concept of death and suffering: endless suffering which somehow cannot be exorcized from society, for it forms part of a heritage upon which our Western civilization rests.

When confronted in this novel with the names of the female characters, the reader may feel as if he were being manipulated by the primitive idea that the more numerous the poetic meanings that could be concentrated in a sacred name, the greater its power. Hannah has power over the reader. Hannah has been equated by Max with the unicorn, with Circe, and with Penelope, to name only three. The equations, if one looks closely into the deep structure of the novel, can be almost endless. We would like to add that Hannah can be equated with the Morrigan, among others, although this connection is more implicit than explicit. Furthermore, Hannah's name, when bearing in mind the double "n" in the middle, has five letters. The possibility of counting the double "n" as a single letter is supported by the fact that her double barrelled surname has two lots of five letters. Five is a number that is sacred to Venus besides being a magical female number<sup>9</sup>. And 15 is a number that is sacred to Innana. It is not a coincidence that Criseyde's name, when looking at the value of letters in the *Secretum Secretorum*, is equal to 15<sup>10</sup>. To enhance the picture, the name of the female gaoler of Hannah is Violet Ever-Creech, and although we are not going to deal here with the conundrum inherent in her name, we would like to indicate that violets sprang from the blood of Attis, a dying god who was the beloved of Cybele.

There is a fifth woman living at Riders, whose name is Alice. The other spelling of Alice is Alys, who is "the goddess of the sepulchral island of Alysamps" (Graves 1977: 396). Furthermore, "the Somersetshire witches called their God Robin, and 'Robin's son of Art' was the Devil of Dame Alice Kyteler, the famous early fourteenth-century witch of Kilkenny, who used sometimes to take the form of a black dog" (Graves 1977: 396). A dog is given to Denis Nolan by Alice at the end of the novel. There are other literary echoes such as those of Alice in Wonderland. Thus, what we have is a pentad of females whose names are very important for the elaboration on or interpretation of old myths and its consequences.

Considering what has been so far discussed, the reader can hardly be surprised upon learning that Hannah's "second name is an anagram of Christ Mean or Christ Name" (Conradi 1986: 122). In the case of her first name we wonder how many Protestant readers or Spanish, or Jews know that the Virgin's mother was Saint Anne and therefore how many readers would so easily connect her name to Anne, Mary's mother. With "Ana," the translator could preserve the sacredness of the name. But both things would mean little if

her last name could not be decoded. Perhaps a translator with a penchant for games would play his own private little game looking for names that could offer the riddle to a Spanish reader.

To do this we must depart from a set of vowels and consonants that would yield something like "Nombre de Cristo" ("Christ's name"). There are several ways of playing with the set of vowels and consonants forming "Nombre de Cristo." We could come up with something like Mrs. Bremno Crosti or Mrs. Trisco Bronme, for example. The anagram could be preserved, but what do we do with the different layers of meaning inherent in "Smith," which are so important for the thematic development of the novel? Indeed, there is nothing to be done. There is no way to preserve both the anagram and the layers of meaning inherent in the second part of her family name.

As usual with Murdoch, there is something which is not only clever but devious in her choice. With Crean-Smith, apart from Christ's anagram, we have been presented with correlatives that lead straight into pagan deities and thus to elements which are antagonistic to Christianity. Smith serves to connect Hannah with beings who belong to both fire festivals and smith-craft. Also, it promotes Hannah to the position of wife to Vulcan and Hephaestus: "In Italy Vulcan was said to be lame and to walk with the help of high-heeled gold shoes, because he was identified with Hephaestus, a Pelasgian deity from Lemnos, who like Talus was hurled down from a height" (Graves 1977: 331). We cannot divorce Hannah from figures such as the ones mentioned in this quotation. Nothing is casual about this, since the names are part of a complex picture composed by a dense net which slowly catches, as if it were a game, the novel's theme.

Hannah is part of it all: of a world from poetic myth, of a pagan past and of a world that derives its philosophy from the Judeo-Christian tradition. With this in mind, how can a Spanish reader get to the meanings inherent in Hannah's name? And the more so when its full significance derives from the meanings innate in the names of the other female characters! The truth is that most likely he cannot do so. We know this for a fact. Most of our students of English, upon reading the novel, cannot see much in her first name and even less her last name. There are good reasons for this. Works such as *The Golden Bough* are almost unknown in Spain. Spanish students, unlike English students, have not been brought up in a culture in which the *waste land* is a primary symbol. Even if *The White Goddess* appears to be a popular book, what is well known is its title, for, and precisely due to a lack of background knowledge, very few students can go beyond the first ten pages.

Cultural factors do play an important role in any given tradition. *The Unicorn* is fully impregnated in a cultural heritage that can be found not only in the medieval romances but even in pre-Romantics such as Blake<sup>11</sup>. We are aware of the fact that we are talking about elements which derive, in part, from a

Hellenic and Judeo-Christian tradition. However, the point is that in England—not to say Canada for that matter—these facts have been treated, by certain writers, in ways which are almost alien to many Spanish readers.

This may be difficult to believe, but so far not one single Spanish student of mine has been able to see much in the fact that Peter is a crippled person. Hannah's husband is a maimed being, and maimed precisely because Hannah has "hurled him down from a height." The name has been well selected, for in Hannah we have phonetic echoes of Maia, Vulcan's wife, who is a rather malevolent creature. The point is very important. The question lies in how the translator can preserve it all. "Crean," at the same time, leads the reader into Cromn-Cruaich, an ancient Irish god of the race of the Fomore, to whom sacrifices were offered in the time of the dolmen<sup>12</sup>.

There are further connections; and so many that they would bring further confusion into the issue at hand, the translation of this novel. Notwithstanding, one more example will not hurt. When Effingham arrives at Riders, Alice has created upon his bed a figure made out of shells. He looks at it and ponders, recollecting the idea of a woman who has been made out of flowers. A woman made out of flowers that can be connected to Hannah appears in *The Mabinogion* (Radice 1979). The cause of this creation is Arianrhod, and Hannah's name is part of Arianrhod's name (Graves 1977: 371). The point will be better understood if we keep in mind that Blodeuedd, the flower maiden, kills her husband in a bathtub, which again confronts us with a recurrent theme in Iris Murdoch's novels, death by water. For example, in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*<sup>13</sup> Hilda's husband dies in a swimming-pool. In *The Sea, The Sea* the young boy Titus drowns in the sea. In *The Philosopher's Pupil* the tormented philosopher, again, suffers death by water. There are more cases of this type of death, but these three will serve to illustrate our point. What is important is to realize that Peter, Hannah's husband, besides being maimed, at the end of the novel has to die by water.

In *The Unicorn* death by water acquires the same symbolic idea as that embodied in the death by water of Blodeuedd's husband; death caused by a treacherous and unfaithful wife.

So far we have been dealing with the names of female characters, and especially with that of Hannah. And if we think that there are problems when translating this name, we have further obstacles when it comes to the other four female figures.

There are many mysterious characters in *The Unicorn*, but perhaps the most intriguing one—apart from Gerald—is Denis Nolan, a sort of Fisher King. His name is as much of a riddle as that of Hannah, although in this case it takes a little longer to realize what lies behind his name. Denis, very much like Hannah,

belongs to the race of the "fey." Our first glimpse of him is as elusive as that of Hannah:

By the passing glow Marian saw a shortish man about her own height who was holding a large tin bowl. He had the dark hair and blue eyes of the region. Indeed Marian saw, as he turned towards her, before the lamp passed, sapphire blue eyes. (TU 22)

This passage should not offer difficulties to the translator. Nevertheless, he must pay attention to the emphatic "indeed" and to the colour of his eyes, for the colour of his eyes relates, directly or indirectly, to the meanings that may be attached to his name. "Indeed" indicates the possibility of doubting the fact that his eyes are "sapphire" blue. And so, under no circumstances must the translator omit "indeed" because this leads the reader into various roads related to his role within the novel's thematic development.

One of the implications is very obvious for an English reader. Peter, Hannah's husband, left Gerald Scottow because he "fell in love with an American boy called Sandy Shapiro" (TU 111). There is an overt imilarity between "sapphire" and "Shapiro," although one is a homosexual and the other a man who keeps himself a virgin. One of the clues to the understanding of Denis Nolan lies in the colour of his eyes. Ezekiel indicates that sapphire is the colour of God's throne, and in the Talmudic tradition the Mosaic laws were carved in lapis lazuli. With this in mind we expect Nolan to be a perfect creature, and in a way he is.

In order to be Hannah's faithful servant he needs to be chaste<sup>14</sup>. This seems to be the point behind his purity, contrasting with Peter's love for Shapiro. However, as the theme of the novel unfolds, one has the feeling that it is the very opposite, since Denis's chastity seems to derive from Hannah's enforced chastity. On the surface nothing is more appropriate to keep his chastity than to use the power of a sapphire, a stone that has been obliquely mentioned by means of the colour of his eyes, because this stone, according to many lapidaries, is thought to be good for preserving oneself chaste. The twist or irony lies in the fact that nothing can keep Denis Nolan chaste other than Hannah's chastity. Once Hannah is possessed by Gerald, sexuality is awoken in almost everybody in the story as if they were extensions of Hannah's transgression.

In *De proprietatibus rerum*, written by Bartholomaeus Anglicus, we can read the following:

And alle auctours accordy in yis poynt and meney yat ye saphire is a precious stone yat louey chastite. yerfore lest ye effecte yerof be ylette in eny wise by his vnclennesse yat him berey, hit nedey yat him yat him berey lyue chaste as yis sawe meney: 'But he yat him berey semey most chaste'<sup>15</sup>.

Information that is similar to this can be found in *The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus*. With this information it will not be difficult to see Denis, at a symbolical level, as the carrier of this stone, since the stone is part of him. The contingency derives from the futility inherent in being the stone's carrier, a fact that is not fully expected by the reader. Consequently, the translator has to be careful and translate with the greatest accuracy this passage, for it relates to the significance of his name. To translate "sapphire blue" by "deep blue" or "dark blue" would be a serious mistake.

There are other correlatives that link the colour of Denis's eyes to his name. In his first name, Denis, we have the Pseudo-Dionysius, the great advocate of the concept of unknowing to reach God. This concept, up to a point, seems to govern Denis's life. His personal evaluation of Hannah is based on faith rather than knowledge. One of the most illustrative works of this concept of knowing through unknowing can be found in *The Cloud of Unknowing*, written in the late fourteenth century<sup>16</sup>. To recall the existence of this work is important, for although the reader may not know about the Pseudo-Dionysius, he may know, if he is well read, something about the basic idea behind this medieval work so that he will be able to connect Denis with this principle. To do so is not easy, however; Murdoch's demands on her readers are very high. Some readers may or may not see much relevance in Denis's first name but the writer seems to expect of him to see both the relevance and the futility of this connection.

With Denis's name we have been presented with elements which link Hannah to Denis or vice versa. We have a Christian link, but we must not forget the pagan correlatives innate in Dionysus. In addition to this, we have St. Denys, who was beheaded. St. Denys's myth may lead the reader into the original problem of the novel's theme: the creation of new myths. This theme prompts the reader to question how and when the myth began; and, what is most important, if there is any possibility of erasing the myth. There is a remarkable similarity between the way in which both Denys and Osiris were dismembered. This is a fact that has not escaped the critics:

Thus [Osiris'] heart was at Athribis, his backbone at Busiris, his neck at Lelapolis, and his head at Memphis. As often happens in such cases, some of his divine limbs were miraculously multiplied. His head, for example, was at Abydos as well as at Memphis, and his legs, which are remarkably numerous, would have sufficed for several ordinary mortals. In this respect, however, Osiris was nothing to St. Denys, of whom no less than seven heads, all equally genuine, are extant. (Frazer 1971: 481-2).

This connection prompts the reader to consider the severed head of St. Denys, an important theme for Murdoch whose significance comes to the surface with full force in her novel *A Severed Head*<sup>17</sup>. In addition to St. Denys, Dionysius and



Dionysus, we have another figure to consider, Giordano Bruno, known as the Nola; and Bruno, when studying the works of Hermes Trismegistus, arrived at a very different conclusion from that of Dionysius. For the Nola the best way of apprehending God could be found in a return to what he saw as the font of the true origin of religion, the Egyptian religion. Here the tension that characterizes the novel based on the struggle between old myths and modern ones is well expounded because Denis's surname is Nolanæ similar to the Nola. Murdoch, in part, uses the Nola as a model for Denis, while leaving Denis with nothing other than the possibility of being the only and sole container of the ingredients of the myth.

The concatenations innate in the name of Denis Nolan are amazing. He is also the keeper of the fish, that is, the Fisher King, and thus the custodian of the Grail. And the Grail, if Denis is its custodian, has to be no other than Hannah, wherefore another dimension emerges to be attached to the myth or myths embodied in the person of Hannah. Hannah proves to be the conscious instrument that gives life to the myth or myths with the idea of becoming something behind the ordinary, something beyond the human level. This something must be accepted and even worshipped by the ones who need myths to keep themselves alive because they are empty, rejecting thus their own reality and so the formlessness inherent in the act of existing.

There is more to Denis Nolan than this. He is the singer, and in his last name there is a pun with No-lan[d]. Most certainly the pun will be lost in the translation, and we have reasonable doubts about the possibility of having readers who, when reading the translation, will be capable of elucidating so many levels of significance. To this we should like to add that the task of the translator is rendered very difficult by the fact that even the thematic nucleus of the novel is difficult to elucidate. In this case, we are afraid that the only solution is that of a solid introduction to the novel. Some more information should be added by means of notes, the translator's notes.

If so far we have been considering problems and the difficulties inherent in their solution, the worst, or part of the worst, comes with the name of the goldfish that Denis looks after. In our first encounter with Denis we saw him carrying a tin bowl in which he had a goldfish. The name of this little fish is Strawberry Nose, obviously another riddle. We could begin the unriddling task with the fact that because it is a goldfish we can associate it with certain myths concerning the perils of the soul. These myths can be extended to Hannah, and possibly to her husband, Peter.

There are many stories of persons or creatures who cannot be killed because their souls are hidden in the stomach of a salmon or a goldfish. One of the best-known is that of Bidasari (Frazer 1930: 147-8), whose soul resides within the stomach of a goldfish that lives in a pool. Again the reader, and the

translator, could question the validity of this connection, and, once more, there is enough evidence in the novel's theme to prove that the connection is correct. The novel begins when a cycle of seven years is about to end, an event which causes the return of the salmon that has been absent during these years. The salmon, like the goldfish in the story of Bidasari, is the container of Curoi's soul. And he, like Blodeuedd's husband, is killed by the instigation of his own wife, Blathnat:

There was in a Spring on the side of the side of Sliab Miss a salmon which appeared only at the end of seven years, and in the belly of the salmon was a golden ball, and in the ball was Curoi's soul, and only his own sword could cut the ball. Cuchulain carried out the necessary measures, and Curoi died crying no secret to women. (Loomis 1967: 14)

With the salmon's return we have gone back to the original theme, that of Hannah, as a mythic creature, who at the end of a term causes the death of her husband. By keeping in mind the implications inherent in the salmon<sup>18</sup> it is natural to deduce that somebody's soul resides within the belly of the goldfish. The question is, whose? The unriddling of the fish's name does not throw enough light onto the problem.

We could begin the task of elucidating the significance of this name with "strawberry." This is not the first time that Murdoch employs strawberries to suggest something or somebody related to a mystical being, good or evil, and thus to religion. In *The Time of the Angels* Pattie's dress has been described in the following terms:

The whitish cotton smock bulkily tucked up to the elbows, which she wears over her jumper and skirt patterned with red strawberries. (Murdoch 1983: 7)

The connection could prove to be rather interesting considering the theme of this novel, fallen angels, and its possible relationship with the "fey"-world of Gaze, since fairies were taken to be fallen angels. In *The Time of the Angels* Murdoch has been more emphatic about the colour of the strawberries, which is red; and this hue, according to Frazer in his work *Folklore in the Old Testament*, must be linked to Adam and Eve because Adam was formed with red clay.

The concept of creation could be expanded, for in the making of the flower maiden, according to Taliesin, raspberries were used. On the other hand, if we separate the name into its three components, "straw" plus "berry" plus "nose," what we have is loaded with meaning. The straw is an element related to Hannah's anagram, for the straw is the stem of the grain, after drying and threshing. Here we have an oblique, not to say perverse reference to the dying god. As it is well known, straw is used to cover trees and the like in order to protect them from harm, and a straw-man is burned, in many countries, throughout Europe, signifying the death of the old spirit of the corn.



With the berry we have similar problems, since it is an element that leads us directly to Maid Marian and the May Festivals. May was the month of enforced chastity, something that even Ovid took seriously in his *De Fasti* when it came to his daughter's marriage. In addition to this, May is the time of the year in which the hawthorn blossoms and therefore May is the month of the hawthorn. This tree is sacred to female divinities for its berries are white, during the month of May, red, and eventually black. In "nose" we have a pun that proves to be most relevant for, according to Max, Hannah's imprisonment relates to Até, that is to say, to the type of suffering that is passed onto others, becoming thus a psychological trap that is most dangerous and difficult to avoid.

With "nose" we are moving into a world of lust, eros, traps and thus fairies. This becomes evident when we realize that in the word "nose" we have an important meaning related to both a deadly trap, or slip knot for the hanged man<sup>19</sup>. The lace or the "noose" can be taken as the instrument that binds, in other words, as Venus's trap. The word "nose" relates to snares, entrapments, quarries, victims and executioners. All this correlates to game playing, the type of game that only death can end, since the concept of a noose or a lace cannot be separated from courtly love; and one of the many masks that Hannah puts on is that of the ideal lady to be worshipped by Effingham. By now the problem inherent in the translation of "Strawberry Nose" will be more than apparent. From a linguistic point of view, the dilemma cannot be resolved, for although the pun innate in "nose" may be detected by a Spanish reader with knowledge of Italian or Latin, with "strawberry" there is nothing to be done: nothing other than to insert a note clarifying the bifurcations of meaning inherent in the name of the goldfish. Details of this nature cannot be part of a general introduction, regardless of how extensive the translator tries to make it. These are details that cannot be overlooked for they are part of the structural meaning which renders the thematic nucleus of the novel both poetic and complex.

Something similar to this could happen with Maid Marian, for although many Spanish readers, we believe, are familiar enough with the figure of Robin Hood, we wonder how many of them are so acquainted with Maid Marian. Probably very few. For some critics Robin Hood is a historical character married to a girl called Matilda and whose name was changed into Maid Marian. She was both the Queen of Misrule in the May Festivals and unfaithful to Robin Hood. For others, Robin Hood belongs to the realm of myth:

A recent investigator of the legend, and a very able one, denies to Robin Hood any traceable historical origin. One theory is that he was from the beginning, and that he is in fact a mythological figure, whose name but faintly disguises either Woden in the aspect of a vegetation deity, or a minor wooded spirit, Hode, who also survives in the Hodeken of German legend<sup>20</sup>.

With the correlatives inherent in Robin Hood, again, we have been presented with contradictory facts. Gaze belongs to a waste land and so hardly any trees can be seen there. By having neither trees nor vegetation, the figure of Maid Marian is out of place. Marian, at Gaze, may have been the Queen of Misrule, but under no circumstances the bride of a minor wood spirit since there are no trees in Gaze's land. The bride of a Fool or scapegoat would make more sense if we think in terms of her sexual union with Denis Nolan, the fool, the sublime fool of Hannah's game, and this probably the one who wears the "hood."

There are more hermetic and semiotic bifurcations than the ones mentioned here. Perhaps two more considerations pertaining to the world of Maid Marian will serve to close our argument related to the linguistic impossibilities posed by the translation of this novel. There is no way of translating *The Unicorn* without facing the inevitability of a tremendous loss. Exactness solves very little with a novel of this kind. To know as much as possible about Maid Marian is useful for it serves to throw light on the novel's theme. This cannot be expected from a Spanish reader. An English reader can link Marian to Heracles or Dionysus because "He [Heracles or Dionysus] performs an annual green marriage with the queen of the woods, a sort of Maid-Marian" (Graves 1977: 125). Marian, as the narrator suggests with the use of "a sort of," can be both Marian and a "sort of" Maid-Marian. The point takes full force when Denis Nolan ends up losing his virginity with Maid Marian, thus giving further significance to his first name, Denis. We can see this, but how can a translator convey this to a Spanish reader, since much of the meaning of the novel's theme derives from codes inherent in the language, and the language is English?

Denis's relationship with Marian embodies no more than one of the Murdochian characteristic twists upon which the theme of the novel takes shape. To miss this kind of twist is a sad business, for by bypassing it the reader, unaware of it, cannot evaluate the methods used by the writer: methods which constitute systems that are repetitive enough for they can be found not only in this novel, but in all of Murdoch's other works. Iris Murdoch, once she manages to strike the right key, does so again and again. The problem is that the same key does not always produce the same sound, and so we are faced with the element of contingency. We recognize the key but we cannot always foresee its sound. The reader must become familiar with variations for they are pieces that go into the making of her fabric, the Murdochian world.

One of the ways in which some of the pieces of the total fabric are helpful for discovering the colour of the fabric is that of unearthing the implications cognate to the names of her characters. We should include objects, the objects which form the setting of a given character, as Hannah with her mirrors, pampas grass, dry honesty and the like. Names, objects, physical actions and the like become like set pieces within Murdoch's literary world. The pieces become familiar and full of meaning as the reader becomes more and more accustomed

to Murdoch's land. This can hardly be the case with a Spanish reader. Very few will read more than two of her novels, and none of them has had, so far, the chance of following her literary development, becoming thus familiar with her world. Her world, we believe, cannot be perceived with enough clarity when depicted in a language other than her own. In another language it can be at best a counterfeit, nothing more.

Iris Murdoch is clever when it comes to the allocation of the pieces in order to create a whole unit, that is to say, a novel with a theme. She is fascinated and probably intrigued by figures such as Giordano Bruno, and so much so that even one of her novels has been titled after him, *Bruno's Dream*. Bruno is an almost peripheral character, the emblem of death—one of her favourite topics—surrounded by life, which is no more than the struggle to be alive, knowing that one exists.

Murdoch is fond of using many things in her works such as soiled clothing, children who become orphans at a very early stage in their lives, cluttered rooms, people dying—especially of cancer, Polish refugees, ornaments on mantelpieces, ladies connected to the Bloomsbury Group, homosexuals, death by water, the sea, twins, brother and sister, people who are half Jewish, kidnapping and the like. This sounds simple, but if we keep in mind that each one of the mentioned codes does have a specific meaning within Murdoch's world, we have to understand the implications inherent, shall we say, in the name of the dog that has been kidnapped, for the act of kidnapping the dog may take on a different meaning from novel to novel. Even certain names having apparently a mystical import appear, again and again, in her novels. The problem is that the name, apart from having similar correlatives, can function differently according to the novel's theme. Anna in *Nuns and Soldiers* is a good person, the Murdochian saint or Mystic, while Hannah is mysticism corrupted. Hannah, trying to live according to the myth inherent in her name, becomes nothing, a myth. Anna rejects the implications connate with her name and so she moves towards goodness.

Murdoch's land is full of ladies called Anna or Mary and full of gentlemen whose names are those of Peter, James, or Gerald. This penchant for certain names derives, in great part, from her heavy usage of elements pertaining to a land of poetic myth; from her obsession with religious elements, from her lack of faith in human nature and from her notion of good and evil. In addition to this, we must consider Murdoch's interest in anthropology and its problems when applicable to our own time. Furthermore, we must not forget her philosophical understanding of both existence and humanity.

Many are the literary devices used by Murdoch; tools which she cleverly uses in order to create a puzzling, exasperating, dark and unique world. A world that is humorous but bleak. There is nothing wrong with the type of literary

devices that Murdoch uses. They can cause problems but an educated English reader may guess some of her sources. The problem emerges, and with tremendous force, when one is trying to convey her peculiar world in a language other than her own. The dilemma is a serious one and there is no theory related to the craft of translation capable of solving it. Not even the most advanced computer can do it.

Whether we like it or not, to render Murdoch's universe into a different language cannot be done. We don't presume to have discovered anything new. We have tried to translate a number of passages and, as far as translation goes, there is nothing wrong with them. However, knowing what is in the text of departure and what is in the text of arrival, we have to admit that the problem is greater than we could foresee at the beginning, and with it the greater our sense of failure.

There is only one way out of this problem, that of a good introduction to the novel, and footnotes to clarify difficult points such as the ones we have mentioned here. To know the fish's name, if we keep the original name, would mean nothing to a Spanish reader. By giving its equivalent in Spanish, "Nariz de Fresa," we are solving nothing and we know it. Murdoch is an English writer playing with all the possibilities inherent in the language she is using. Thus, one way or other, unless we resort to introduction and to notes the reader will be doomed to be a reader *manqué* even if he wishes to be a more or less active one, playing his own game with Murdoch's literary game<sup>21</sup>.

## NOTES

1. Iris Murdoch, *The Unicorn* (1977; rpt. London: Triad Panther, 1984). As far as we are aware, the novel has not been translated into Spanish. In fact, considering the number of novels written by Iris Murdoch, very few have been translated into Spanish. We have asked a number of booksellers about the impact of Iris Murdoch's novels upon Spanish readers, and according to them it is unimportant. We have asked some readers—not young readers—what they thought of *El Principe Negro* (*The Black Prince*) and the general answer was: a strange and weird novel. Probably this response is based on cultural problems. The attitude of the younger reader is not quite the same. They like Murdoch's novels. Their attitude will be discussed later; however, the young reader's reaction is one of insecurity: many reported that they were not sure whether they understood, for example, *The Unicorn*.

2. Here we are not using the word "average" in a derogatory way. By "average" we mean the reader who approaches a novel with the aim of entertaining himself or herself and thus not with the idea of analyzing it. We are aware of the origins of the novel and of its main purpose, that of amusing not an elite but a wide range of public.

3. Frye 1970, 1973. As time goes on we are more inclined to think that literary criticism, as Frye states, cannot be confined to theory but to both understanding of the theme and how the theme has been structured.

4. A writer who skilfully tries to avoid both critics and commentators is John Fowles. When asked about his themes he claims, again and again, that he must not be taken too seriously because he likes to tease his reader. He insisted on this point when a student of mine interviewed him during his conferences at Zaragoza. In Iris Murdoch's case it is easy to realize that her theories, at times, do not seem to fit in with her fictional world. Fully aware of this, she does not only tease her readers, but herself, as the writer.

5. The novel's title is significant enough. But there is more to the unicorn than the symbol of Christ. To begin with, it is considered to be a male: a wrathful creature that could only be appeased if its head rests on the lap of a virgin. The inversion makes sense, for after all the only virginal creature is Denis Nolan. Moreover, since the unicorn is a mythical creature, so must Hannah be. Thus, there is nothing in Hannah to be taken seriously either by the reader or by her attendants for she belongs to the realm of fiction. See T. H. White (1954).

6. Lewis 1971: 130-31. For further information on this topic see Arrowsmith and Moore (1984); Paracelso (1983).

7. We never see Elizabeth. However, she is mentioned by the narrator a number of times. She is concerned about courtly love because she fears that Effingham is not really in love with Hannah but in love with the idea of purity inherent in loving a woman in this fashion.

8. A good study of the literary impact of Frazer's *Golden Bough* on Joyce's *Ulysses* can be found in the last chapter of Vickery (1976).

9. I wish to thank Dr. Patricia Appleton who, when writing to me, brought to my attention the numerological implication inherent in Hannah's last name. In addition to this she told me that there is a town in Somerset called Evercreech, which means yew tree. Her information is very important when taken in conjunction with the layers of meaning inherent in Violet's name.

10. For the meaning of both number 5 and number 15 see my article "The Swallowe, the Egle and the Bor of Troilus and Criseyde's Oneiric World" (forthcoming).

11. As Frye (1970) indicates, Blake could foresee the myth of the dying god with a tremendous lucidity before Frazer produced *The Golden Bough*. Furthermore, he could see the "White Goddess" Cybeles as the one who orders the killing of Attis; a killing which involves much sadism and thus joy.

12. See Arbois de Jubanville (n.d.: 73-77).

13. Murdoch 1986: 423-4. In this novel the bad character's name is Morgan; and Morgan prompts the reader to think about the malevolent Morrigan and thus death.

14. The importance of Denis's chastity is immense. In my 1989 article I discuss the relevance of Denis's virginity in the episode of Hannah's hair cutting.

15. Trevisa 1975: 871. The information given by Albertus Magnus (1973: 48) is very similar. If a Spanish reader happens to consult the most common lapidary, that of Alfonso X, he will miss this point, for this stone "es la piedra a que dicen cemeiz, que quiere decir en Caldeo llorador, porque el que la trae consigo tiene deseo de llorar y es triste" (1968: 58). However, the information is very useful because Denis Nolan is a sad

person. Denis is the person who loves Hannah best, so that our last picture of him is that of sadness.

16. Pseudo-Dionysius was a Christian who never moved beyond the boundaries of orthodoxy. "The hymns of Orpheus and the ancient Magi are not different from the cabalistic Arcana and from the Orthodox tradition. What Orpheus calls gods, Denis [that is, Pseudo-Dionysius] calls Powers, and the Cabalists call numerations" (Yates 1964: 139). We have chosen this specific quotation because Denis, in a way, functions as an Orphic figure, since he is the one who sings, and what is even more, the one who manages with his singing to disturb Hannah. The main conception of God, according to Dionysius, can be summarized with the following quotation: "God, says Dionysius, is above Bonitas, above Essentia, above Vita, above Veritas, above all his other names, so that in a sense he has no name" (Yates 1964: 125). This view was not rejected by the Fathers of the Church. "For example the English fourteenth-century *Cloud of Unknowing*, in which the anonymous author following *The Ild Divinity* of Denis, puts himself under a cloud of unknowing within which, with a blind stirring of love, he reaches forth towards Deus Absconditus" (Yates 1964: 124). We cannot say the name of the Nola who took a very unorthodox posture to both Hermes and *The Hymns of Orpheus* while "announcing himself as one who has had an experience of a kind now repressed" (Yates 1964: 279). See *The Cloud of Unknowing and Other Works* (Radice 1980: 51-198).

17. "In ancient Irish poetry the skulls of men freshly killed were called "the mast of the morrigan," that is to say, of the Fate Goddess Anna in the guise of a sow" (Graves 1977: 375). In a way Hannah is another version of Honor Klein in *A Severed Head*. A number of comments related to the study of *A Severed Head* serve to cast some light onto both the significance of the unicorn and the role played by Morgan le Fay and thus of Morgan in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*. The theme of the severed head can be linked to the beheading game as presented in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and thus to courtly love. Alice P. Kenny, "The Mythic History of a Severed Head, *Modern Fiction Studies* 394-5.

18. In the salmon we have many layers of meaning. Salmon in Celtic and Nordic mythology represents something similar to the raven, namely wisdom and the knowledge of the future. See Von Franz (1980: 212-13). The return of the salmon, after seven years, is significant because "from the Scottish witch-ballad of *True Thomas*, it appears that seven years was the normal term for the Queen of Elphaine's consort to reign, and the Scottish witch cult had close affinities with Primitive Thessalian religion" (Graves 197: 128).

19. "One important meaning of Laccio is the OED Italian Laccio, and Spanish American Lasso, ultimately from Latin Laqueus of which the principal meaning is noose. But specifically a noose (i.e. with some kind of knot, usually a running one) is often intended. In Italian, the primary meanings of laccio are noose, slip-knot" (Hicatt 1970: 119).

20. Chambers 1978, 1: 175. Theories related to the historical aspect of Robin Hood were written after Chambers wrote these two volumes. Generally speaking, Robin Hood belongs to both worlds, that of history and that of myth. This could explain Murdoch's interest in the oblique allusion to his person by means of Miss Taylor.

21. We do not wish to give the idea that we have solved the problems inherent in the correct reading of *The Unicorn*. We feel, like most critics, that this is a very difficult novel. "*The Unicorn* has received a great deal of critical attention (the best essay on it is still A. S. Byatt's excellent analysis in *Degrees of Freedom*, 1965), but remains a mysterious and, I think deliberately, puzzling book" (Dipple 1982: 266).

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