

**M. Ángeles Díaz Barbado**

*Hasta que vea la tierra*

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Until I see the land

Francisco Jarauta

For the German Classical-Romantic tradition the journey had become the method *par excellence* of learning and writing. This tradition invents or projects itself as the narrative of an experience seen as a discovery or a resonance of the time of the things and the men cast loose in that particular drift to which events are subjected. It matters not if this discovery of the other leads to confusion or to emotion, astonishment, or enthusiasm. It is the journey itself which makes possible the experience and its education, its *Bildung*.

But it is important to point out a shift in attitude between the travellers of Classicism and the Romantics. The former chose the journey to the South, to the Classical world, to Italy. Winckelmann, who dedicated himself to cataloguing the antique collections of Villa Albani, or Goethe, staring out of the window of the Via del Corso in Rome, just as he appears in the Tischbein drawing, could be records of this passion or that confusion. The Romantic travellers chose a different journey. Theirs is a journey towards Nature, which opens like an infinite horizon to the gaze of these new travellers. They assume a new *Naturphilosophie* which the philosophers of Tübingen and Jena would develop during the transition between the centuries. This is the context in which Novalis, Kleist, and, of course, Hölderlin develop their thinking. Opposed to the Classical harmony and balance which Winckelmann would defend in his *Gedanken*, there now appears a world of shadows which moves equally through the natural world as through that of the sentiments, that interior world which the arts interpret, with music and poetry, literature and painting. And that which at first would appear to be a departure from the Classical order, imposes itself as the moment in which a new modernity is born. When in 1818 Caspar David Friedrich paints *Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer*, "The walker against a sea of clouds", he is already expressing that new *Sehnsucht* which shapes not only the sentiment but also the gaze of an art which builds its vision by reimagining man's place in the world.

Always attentive to that age and focussing her work on a dialogue with the principal moments of the Romantic tradition, M. Ángeles Díaz Barbado now addresses one of the most sublime works of that period, the *Winterreise* of Franz Schubert, the series of *Lieder* (songs) based on the poems of Wilhelm Müller. Undoubtedly, she is dealing with a critical moment. Schubert wrote them in the months before his death, which occurred in Vienna in 1828 when he was only 31 years old. The emotion and perplexity of those who listened for the first time to these *Lieder* spoke of the absolute perfection of someone who in his short life had written such memorable compositions. Here, at the gates of his death, his music defied time, calling on silence to form part of his music. The slow tempo of the refrain of the *Adagio* in the *Streichquintett* presages already this musical end, as a silence which identifies with, and which

interprets, the silence of Nature.

In this way, starting with the fourth *Lied*, "Erstarrung", "Freezing", these silent Variations are composed on a single theme, the ferns of the woods. Everything coincides here, the woods as a privileged metaphor of the natural world, the silence which runs through the space of the night and the shadows, the mysterious appearance of the silver ferns which carpet the soil, like the silent guardians of *Erde*, the Earth, as Kleist puts it. And all this is composed from another silence, that of writing. Once more, M. Ángeles Díaz Barbado gives us a lesson of her radical art of poetry. On the black paper the drawing lies suspended in the whites and silvers which accentuate the accent of winter. Always so close to Thomas Bernhard, she shares with him the sentiments of his novel *Frost*, that time which embraces the world in its silence and waiting, showing a form of love for the Earth that is protected now by the guardian ferns.