

**LUDWIG TIECK'S UNCONVENTIONAL MEDIATION
BETWEEN CULTURES: A REASSESSMENT OF *HERR VON FUCHS***

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1.- INTRODUCTION

Ludwig Tieck's 1793 *Herr von Fuchs* was the first German version of Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, in spite of which its adapter consciously refrained from offering his contemporaries a literal version of this classical piece of drama but provided them with that type of creative version which, in Goethe's view, appropriates the foreign idea and represents it as its own (1820: 459)¹. Tieck's positive answer to

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1 For the sake of clarity, I am offering a brief synopsis of Jonson's *Volpone* and Tieck's *Herr von Fuchs*, as well as a list of the characters in both plays.

Dramatis Personae

Ben Jonson's *Volpone*

Volpone, a Magnifico
Mosca, his Parasite
Voltore, an Advocate
Corbaccio, an Old Gentleman
Bonario, a young Gentleman
Corvino, a Merchant
Celia, the Merchant's Wife
Peregrine, a Gentleman-traveller
Sir Politic Would-Be, a Knight
Fine Madame Would-Be, the Knight's wife
Servitore, a Servant

Nano, a Dwarf
Androgyno, a Hermaphrodite
Castrone, an Eunuch
Avocatori, four Magistrates
Commandatori, Officers
Notario, the Register
Mercatori, three Merchants
Grege, [a crowd]

Ludwig Tieck's *Herr von Fuchs*

Herr von Fuchs
Fliege, sein Hausfreund
Geyer, ein Advokat
Herr von Krähhfeld, ein alter Edelmann
Karl von Krähhfeld, sein Sohn
Rabe, ein Kaufmann
Louise, dessen Mündel
Birnam, ein Engländer
Murner, ein reisender Gelehrter
Madam Murner
Peter
Friedrich
 —
 —
 —
Vier Richter
Gerichtsdienner
Ein Notar
 —
Stumme Personen

Plot outline of *Volpone*:

Volpone, a wealthy Venetian magnifico without heirs, attracts greedy legacy hunters to his bedside by pretending to be near death. *Corbaccio*, an old man, *Corvino*, a jealous merchant, and *Voltore*, a corrupt lawyer, compete with each other in generosity. *Corbaccio* goes as far as to name *Volpone* his only heir and disinherit his son, *Bonario*,

the challenge that the translation of the most outstanding satirical comedy of the Jacobean period posed to him is best expressed by Jean-Claude Chevalier when he describes the essential task of intercultural translation. He says: “on demande au traducteur de traduire des mots: il répond en traduisant le monde” (1995: 36). The active role that translators ideally take in the double process of linguistic and—above all—cultural transference, is emphasized by Venuti when he acknowledges the need to make the re-writers of translated/adapted texts visible (1995: 6, 25). In his view, a translation should always be studied and practised as “a locus of difference” (1995: 11). It is that difference, prompted by the translation’s political and ideological contexts (Munday 2001: 117-118), which their task as mediators between cultures imposes on them (Katan 1991: 241). As Bassnett and Lefevere point out, few rewritings are innocent because “there is always a history from which a text emerges and into which a text is transposed” (1990: 11).

Tieck may have been led to adapt Jonson’s *Volpone* for late eighteenth-century German readers and spectators because he was persuaded that the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries possessed those universal values whose imitation by German playwrights could greatly enhance the quality and status of their long cherished national drama². As he states in “das deutsche Drama”, Tieck specially valued the sharp wit, multifarious humour and dread of fanaticism and irrationality which, in his view, characterized Elizabethan and Jacobean drama (1852a: 181)³. A close reading of his pre-

whereas Corvino offers the “dying “ man his beautiful wife Celia. Although Bonario attacks *Volpone* when he is about to rape Celia, Voltore persuades the Court of Justice that *Volpone* is innocent, and Bonario and Celia are sent to prison. *Volpone* then plays a trick on the greedy birds of prey, by feigning death and inscribing the name of his servant Mosca in his will. But he finds himself outwitted by his parasite, who does not admit that his master is still alive. *Volpone* is compelled to tell the truth when he finds out that some of the judges have already been persuaded by his witty servant of the possible advantages of Mosca’s being the new magnifico. The play ends in accordance with the principles of poetic justice, so that the guilty characters are sternly punished by the laws, whereas the innocent ones are rewarded. *Volpone*, Mosca, Corbaccio, Corvino and Voltore receive their due, whereas Bonario is given his father’s estate and Celia is sent home to her father, with her dowry trebled. The eccentric English travellers from the subplot—Sir Politic Would-Be and Lady Would-Be— are privately punished by their countryman Peregrine and three merchants.

Brief synopsis of *Herr von Fuchs*:

The greatest deviation from Jonson’s plot is the replacement of Corvino’s wife, Celia, with Rabe’s young ward, Louise, who opposes Rabe’s tyrannical ways and chooses her beloved Karl (Bonario) as her husband. In the end, Bonario receives his father’s estate and Louise is freed from Rabe’s guardianship and declared of age to dispose of her own fortune. The play ends with the triumph of love and generosity as the most effective means of opposing selfish greed. The subplot of Sir Politic Would-Be is replaced with the story of Murner, the “learned” German traveller, his wife, and the Englishman Birnam, who exposes Murner’s folly while pretending to share his selfish views on politics and education. In the end, Murner’s greed and ignorance are punished by his wife, who makes him return home and write what he most detests, a poem.

- 2 The situation that German drama experienced at the time would correspond to those “literary vacuums” that, as Even Zohar explains (1978), are an important source of translation. In 1813, Schleiermacher emphasized the importance of translation for the education of the German people: “Our language [...] can most vigorously flourish and develop its own strength only through extensive contact with the foreign” (1813: 62). Although his stance on the ideal approach to translation did not fully coincide with Tieck’s own, he nevertheless was aware that only a select group of educated readers could fully benefit from his “foreignizing” translations. On the concept of “foreignization” in translation, see Venuti (2009 [2008]: 45ff.). It was that intellectual elite who, in Tieck’s view, could understand—and enjoy—the distancing devices that he favoured in his theatrical adaptations of foreign texts.
- 3 The recent history of France, particularly after the outbreak of the French Revolution, explains why German translators placed the English literary tradition and language above the French heritage. Schleiermacher goes as far as to regret that King Frederick II was not “instructed in English from an early age”, especially since “English was a tongue whose last golden age was then [early nineteenth century] in flower” (1813: 57). It can be easily understood why, after the French Revolution, the king’s long lasting friendship with Voltaire, whose language he had commanded from an early age, was looked upon with suspicion.

Romantic version of *Volpone* leaves no doubt about his conscious recreation of those outstanding features which he found in the original. It is the intention of this paper to make Tieck's valuable task as adapter "visible" to twenty-first century readers.

2.- PREJUDICED ASSESSMENT OF TIECK'S *HERR VON FUCHS*

Criticism of Tieck's 1793 free version of *Volpone* has often suffered from a common prejudice: that Jonson's hypotext cannot be excelled by any hypertextual transformation whatsoever⁴. This is the strongest assumption behind Drews' review of *Herr von Fuchs*' 1959 performance in Bochum⁵, and it likewise informs McPherson's 1973 assessment of Tieck's adaptation⁶. This prejudice is so widespread that David McPherson makes it extensive to most prospective readers of his article "Rough Beast into Tame Fox: the Adaptations of *Volpone*". He says: "My main purpose is not to argue the superiority of the original to [...] any adaptation, since most readers of this journal probably share my assumption that *Jonson's version is undoubtedly superior to the work of his adapters*" (1973: 77. My emphasis). And he adds: "I wish rather to show that there is a common element in the various adaptations down through the years: the main effect has always been the transformation of an extremely unconventional comedy into a *more conventional one*" (idem. My emphasis).

This assertion, which could be shared in relation to George Colman's 1771 adaptation of *Volpone*, probably requires further qualification in the case of Tieck's *Herr von Fuchs*. Although it is true that Colman omitted "many blameable intrusions upon delicacy of idea and expression in the original" because it was "unsuitable to the professed chastity of the age" ("George Colman's Revival of *Volpone*" 1990 [1771]: 516)⁷, the same does not apply to Tieck's free version of *Volpone* that, far from showing subservience to the constraints of his age—or that of Jonson—subtly, but firmly, defies them. However, in McPherson's view, Tieck's version "goes further than Colman's in the effort to tame the fox" because, according to him, it "eliminates the implacable quality not only from the language but also from the plot and characterization" (1973: 80). McPherson regrets that Tieck has built his characters and play according to "the *conventions of the currently popular sentimental drama*" (idem. My emphasis)⁸. He says, in the end, "instead of innocents, we get conventional young lovers" (idem).

4 I am following Gérard Genette's well-known definition of the term *hypotext* in relation to his fourth type of *transtextuality*, which he calls *hypertextuality* (1982: 11-12). To avoid confusion, he makes clear that his employment of the term *hypotext* differs from the meaning attached to it by Mieke Bal (1981). As G. Genette says, "J'entends par [*hypertextualité*] toute relation unissant un texte B (que j'appellerai *hypertexte* à un texte antérieur A (que j'appellerai, bien sûr, *hypotexte*) sur lequel il se greffe d'une manière qui n'est pas celle du commentaire [...] B [...] ne pourrait cependant exister tel que sans A, dont il résulte au terme d'une opération que je qualifierai [...] de transformation." [By *hypertextuality* I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, or course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of a commentary [...] It may yet be of a kind such that text B [...] is unable to exist, as such, without A, from which it originates through a process I shall [...] call transformation] (Trans. Newman & Dobinsky 1997: 5).

5 The play was performed during the *Shakespeare Tage*. It was premiered on 20 April 1959.

6 Both McPherson and Drews would fall within that category of "elite" critics who, in Venuti's view, "are likely to resist the use of innovative translation strategies with canonical texts" (2009 (2008): 49).

7 McPherson (1973: 80) uses this anonymous review to strengthen his point and quotes Noyes's *Ben Jonson*, 91 as his source.

8 Although a certain degree of acculturation (Aaltonen 1996) takes place in Tieck's version of *Volpone*, critics have often misconstrued its true nature.

Wolfgang Drews reaches a similar conclusion in “Ben Jonsons ‘Volpone’ in der zahmen Fassung von Ludwig Tieck”, where he states that “Bei Tieck ist die Gattin [des Kaufmannes] *zum Nutzen der Moral* ein Mündel geworden” [Tieck turned the merchant’s wife into a ward in order to *suit the morality of his own day*] (1959. My emphasis)⁹. According to him, “Der zwanzig-jährige Tieck wollte etwas für die Bühne seiner Zeit tun, er hat *den Dialog, die Charaktere, die Sprache gemildert*” [The twenty-year old Tieck wanted to write something for the stage of his day and *softened the play’s dialogue, character and language*] (idem. My emphasis). He further specifies that “Die Blankverse mit ihren reichen Ornamenten und ihrem zugespitzten Witz wurden in *trockene, gut verständliche Prosa* umgeformt, und die Schurkerei [...] wird *sorgfältig motiviert*” [Its richly ornamented and witty blank verse was turned into simple, dull prose, and the play’s roguery was *painfully motivated*] (idem. My emphasis). Drews does not seem to spot any positive feature in Tieck’s adaptation of the play’s secondary plot either, because, in his view,

An die Stelle der Parodie auf den politisierenden Lord tritt eine *Literatursatire*, spröde und längst *nicht mehr aktuell*. Der schwadronierende Engländer hat sich in einen reisenden deutschen Gelehrten verwandelt, dessen Scherze vergilbt sind wie das Papier, auf dem der Romantiker sie niederschrieb (idem. My emphasis)¹⁰.

He concludes that “Das Spiel hat seinen Reiz und Schmelz verloren” [The play has lost its lustre and appeal] (idem), probably because Tieck “glaubte, seinem Publikum nicht mehr zumuten zu dürfen und fürchtete sich vor dem Schrecken, den Jonson erregen würde” [Tieck thought he could not press his audience too hard and feared that Jonson’s text could startle his audience]. He contrasts that likely reaction with that of Jonson’s contemporary audience which, in his view, was composed of “höfliche Kavaliers” [Courteous gentlemen]¹¹, ready to appreciate Jonson’s “frechen, rüden Spaß” [saucy, shocking wit] (idem).

3.- TIECK’S IDEAL SPECTATORSHIP

Although it is true that Tieck wrote for his contemporaries and therefore updated Jonson’s satiric comedy to suit his needs, a fresh look at his *Herr von Fuchs* casts light on the true nature of his Romantic version of the play, which can never be mistaken for the cheap version of sentimentalized Romanticism that soon became commonplace in Germany. Tieck never yielded to that temptation but systematically denounced the negative effects that superficial sentimentalism could have for contemporary audiences¹². His plays, moreover, were not addressed to prudish, simple-minded and

9 All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

10 [The parody on the politicized lord is replaced with a *literary satire* which is *no longer relevant*. The prating Englishman has become a learned German traveller whose witticisms are as yellowed as the leaves which the Romantic author used to write his play].

11 Drews seems to have forgotten the heterogeneous nature of Jonson’s theatrical audience which did not merely consist of “höfliche Kavaliers”. Tieck, moreover, would later become deeply disappointed by the attitude of English contemporary audiences. As he told Wrinkler in a letter written in 1838, “Es ist mit dem englischen Theater fast doch noch schlimmer wie mit dem unsrigen bestellt [...] Wer besucht in London das Theater? Die Kenner nicht” [After all it may be that the English theater is even worse off than ours [...] Who attends the theater in London? Not the connoisseurs] (Orig. Sächs. Landesbib. Qtd. Zeydel, 1935: 214 and 373).

12 In his *deutsche Drama*, for example, Tieck attacked Iffland and Kotzebue’s popular drama because of their “süßliche Empfindung” and “falsche Moral” [false morality and sweet sensibility] (1852a: 142).

uneducated audiences, but had an ideal spectator in mind who could adopt a critical attitude towards his work¹³. As he explains in “das deutsche Drama”,

Hielten die Besonnenen, Unterrichteten, Wohlmeinenden mehr zusammen, sprächen sie sich mehr aus, schwiegen sie nicht, wenn die Unwissenden schreien und urtheilen, ließen sie, wo es recht ist, Beifall und Tadel vernehmen, so wäre das ächte Publikum ein wahrer Senat des Theaters, in Wirksamkeit und vieles Schlechte würde unmöglich (1852a:174)¹⁴.

However, Tieck was also aware of the difficulty of finding that ideal type of audience and could foresee that many of the ironical hints in his plays could be easily missed, even among the discerning¹⁵. As he pointed out in “das deutsche Drama” (1852a: 179), “Auch die Unterrichteten können wol beim ersten Anblick irren, wenn ein Werk durch Feinheit und Scharfsinn oder vielleicht durch einen seltsamen Humor, große Aufmerksamkeit der Zuschauer fordert” [Even the cultivated can make mistakes at first if the piece proves too demanding because of its sharp irony or rare humour]. Aware of this fact, Tieck prevented his *Herr von Fuchs* from being staged during his lifetime because he realized that the type of audience capable of understanding and enjoying the play was virtually non-existent in Germany at the time. Notwithstanding this fact, he did not refrain from writing his free version of *Volpone* according to his pre-Romantic ideals, in the hope that a sympathetic audience would sometime be able to appreciate it.

Although, as Drews recalls, Tieck was only twenty when he wrote *Herr von Fuchs*, his play is far from immature, and it already contains some of the defining features of Tieck’s most accomplished works¹⁶. As in his well-known *Novellen*, which he wrote between 1820 and 1840, he already resorts to the employment of Romantic irony as an effective means of analysing reality from different perspectives¹⁷. At the same time he makes an intelligent use of metatheatrical devices so as to draw a critical reaction from his audience and prevent their complete identification with what they see on

13 Tieck was clearly addressing a sophisticated type of audience whose “elite” taste, in Bourdieu’s words, would be characterized by “a detached formal appreciation of a cultural object, drawing the boundary between art and life” (Bourdieu 1984. Qtd. Venuti 2009 [2008]: 46).

14 [If only the cultivated, the well-meaning and prudent held together and exchanged their viewpoints with each other; if they did not keep silent when the ignorant raised their voices and displayed their prejudices; if they questioned both censorship and applause, ideal audiences would be the true Senate of the theatre and its best safeguard against abuse].

15 On this aspect, André Lefevere recalls that “once readers began to read translations for information, it followed that different translations had to be made for different groups or with different goals in mind” (1992: 116). He quotes Goethe to illustrate his point: “If you want to influence the masses, a simple translation is always best. Critical translations vying with the original really are of use only for conversations the learned conduct among themselves” (Qtd. Lefevere 1977: 38).

16 It may be interesting to recall Tieck’s own words on the validity of his early literary viewpoint. As he states in the “Vorrede” to his *Kritische Schriften* (1848: VII), “Auch im Fache der Kritik [...] habe ich von Jugend auf einem und demselben Ziele zugestrebt” [Even in the field of criticism have I ever pursued the same end].

17 As Friedrich Schlegel puts it in his “Theory of Fecundity”, “irony is the universal solvent and the synthesis of reflection and phantasy, of harmony and enthusiasm, universality, originality, totality, individuality” (1997 [1799]: 399) [Orig. *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel Ausgabe VIII* 1958-1995: 71].

stage¹⁸. Through the employment of estranging techniques, moreover, Tieck prompts his audience to question widespread assumptions on literature, politics and education¹⁹.

Tieck, however, was aware that his audience was still unprepared for this groundbreaking style, and he could state it when his *gestiefelte Kater*, a farcical playlet inspired by Perrault's *Le Chat Botté*, was staged against his will in 1844. He had composed it in the 1790s favouring the employment of distancing devices, but, although his message was more explicit than in his *Herr von Fuchs*, most of the ironical hints in the play were misunderstood by the select audience who attended the performance²⁰. As he pointed out in his "*der gestiefelte Kater*, von Ludwig Tieck",

Das anschauende Publikum zeigte sich so, wie es mehr oder minder immer ist, und wie es in der Posse geschildert wurde. Als der Vorhang zuletzt fiel, und der Epilog gesprochen werden sollte, entfernten sich fast Alle, und versäumten den notwendigen Schluß, in der Meinung, es sei nun Alles abgethan (1852c: 377)²¹.

4.- TIECK'S *HERR VON FUCHS*: STRUCTURAL COHERENCE

Not only has Tieck systematically resorted to the employment of metatheatrical devices in his *Herr von Fuchs*, but its so-called "conventional" dénouement has also been devised according to Tieck's most deeply ingrained Romantic principles. When bearing in mind the centrality of love for pre-Romantic ideology, the play's happy and romantic tone reveals itself as less conventional than McPherson would lead us to believe. As Beiser points out (1992: 235), the early Romantics were persuaded that "the essential characteristic of humanity is the need to love and be loved", and he adds: "those who become enslaved to the egotistic ethic of modern society [...] become alienated from themselves". In Friedrich Schlegel's view, love is the only force that can succeed in opposing the obsessive search for profit which is transforming free individuals into the slaves of an increasingly industrialized society (1966, 7: 71-72). Love was considered as the most powerful weapon to oppose that overwhelming greed that in *Herr von Fuchs* is portrayed as the origin of despotic rule, both in the private and the public spheres. The emphasis which Tieck places on the presentation of this feeling in his free version of *Volpone*, far from weakening the play's structure—as Drews sustains—further tightens it up. Its importance, however, at no time diminishes the attention devoted to the display of

18 Tieck makes no pretence of stage realism but sets the action in 1793, that is to say, exactly at the time when he rewrote Jonson's comedy. In his adaptation, Fliege and Herr von Fuchs joke about the duration of Herr von Fuchs' illness, which may extend into the following century, since it is already 1793:

Fliege: Gott schenke Ihnen ... [God give you ...]

Herr von Fuchs: Und Gesundheit, um noch lange so krank zu bleiben. [And health, that my present illness lasts long]

Fliege: Daß Sie auch noch im künftigen Jahrhundert. [Even into the next century]

Herr von Fuchs: Wir schreiben schon 1793, es ist nicht mehr sehr lange. [We won't have to wait long. It is 1793 already] (1829: 14)

19 Tieck's selection of important contemporary events—such as the French Revolution—and influential living writers, such as Goethe and Schiller, make it impossible for his German audience to ignore the theatrical—and, therefore, artificial—nature of the play. Its thematic concerns are brought so close to the audience that they cannot abstain from taking sides with what they see.

20 It is worth mentioning that this situation was not new, since Lessing, in his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1767), had emphasized the urgent need of educating theatre-goers as a pre-requisite for the future establishment of a German national drama.

21 [Those attending the performance behaved as they usually do, and exactly as depicted in the farce. When the epilogue was about to be delivered, once the curtain had fallen, almost every one left, in the belief that the play was over, thus missing the important ending]

greed, even though, in Pache's view, "Herr von Fuchs Kernproblem ist, verglichen mit Volpones Lust am Gold, konventionell" [Herr von Fuchs's central problem seems conventional when compared with Volpone's lust for gold] (2007: 331)²². The quotation that Pache chooses to illustrate his point, although apparently convincing, seems less so if duly set within the context of the whole comedy, for Herr von Fuchs's words do not portray a prevailing attitude of his throughout the play but rather a passing mood. Herr von Fuchs's words regarding his infatuation with Louise: "Wenn die verdammte Liebe mir nicht das Leben sauer machte, so wär' ich der glücklichste Mensch [...]" [If this bloody love did not make my life miserable, I would be the happiest man on earth] (2007: 331) cannot be taken too seriously. Greed, moreover, is not restricted to Tieck's main plot, but also lies behind Murner's educational plans for his future kingdom. His zeal to prevent his future subjects' access to education clearly speaks of his will to manipulate uncritical masses who will, ideally, perform manual work for the economic prosperity of his kingdom. These are his plans: "Wer nicht ein Handwerk gelernt hätte, er sei Graf oder Bettler, der käme als ein Landstreicher ins Arbeitshaus. Fabriken und Handwerker sollten floriren, daß es eine Freude wäre" [Whoever had not learned a trade—be it an earl or a beggar—he would be taken for a beggar and sent to a workhouse. It would be a pleasure to see factories and workers flourish] (Tieck 1829: 87).

Tieck's careful attention to the structure of the play encompasses both the main and the secondary plot. Not only does he link them by means of common underlying motifs—such as love and greed—but he also devises their respective dénouements in accordance with the principles of poetic justice. This was a felt need for both plots in Jonson's comedy, so much so that he was compelled to justify the tone of the play's ending in the introductory Epistle to *Volpone*. He said: "And though my catastrophe may, in the strict rigour of comic law, meet with censure, as turning back to my promise; I desire the learned, and charitable critic to have so much faith in me, to think it was done of industry" (Epistle ll.119-123). Jonson was aware that the stern punishment which his comic characters received at the end of the play was too harsh even for a satiric comedy, but, at the same time, he was also aware that his attractive presentation of vice could not be tolerated on stage unless it was conveniently punished at the end. That is probably the reason why he emphasized the importance of the didactic finality of his comedy:

This we were bid to credit from our Poet,
Whose true scope if you would know it,
In all his poems, still, hath been this measure,
To mix *profit* with your *pleasure* (Prologue ll. 5-8. My emphasis)

George Colman's suppression of the sub-plot in his 1771 adaptation of *Volpone* speaks of the play's structural deficiencies. The secondary plot's slight connection with the main line of argument was the reason that led Colman to suppress it. His version thereby gained in economy of action and

²² Pache goes on to praise Zweig's attention to Volpone's lust for gold in his 1926 free version of *Volpone*. Like Forsyth (1981) before him, Pache (2007: 333-334) quotes the well-known song "Das Geld, das Geld regiert die Welt" (1926: 9 and 148) to strengthen his point that Zweig uses avarice as symptomatic of contemporary capitalism. Forsyth had previously referred to Zweig's characters as mere victims of money's powerful manipulation in the following terms: "Zweig makes ... a kind of grammatical inversion; whereas in Jonson man is responsible for being led astray by money, in Zweig money is responsible for leading man astray" (1981: 622).

Closer attention to Zweig's German version, however, reveals that Volpone's most outstanding feature is not greed but sadism (Ribes 2008: 63-70). This is probably the reason why Jules Romains' French version of Zweig's adaptation removes most passages where this feature is prevailing. Although violence did not seem to bother either Austrian or German spectators of Zweig's *eine lieblose Komödie* (Ribes 2007: 69-72), Romains wisely anticipated a different reaction from French audiences, which led him to introduce substantial changes in his 1928 adaptation of Zweig's version (Ribes 2010).

naturalness, particularly with the removal of the closing scene that, in Colman's view, was contrary to dramatic decorum. The grotesque scene where Sir Pol hid under a tortoise shell to flee his assailants was considered unsuitable for late-eighteenth century audiences. Unlike Colman, however, Tieck did not follow the easy path of restricting the action of his free version of *Volpone* to the main line of argument, but consciously developed the secondary plot as well. His development was twofold: on the one hand, he took advantage of the loose thematic connection between both lines of argument, which allowed him greater scope for creativity, and, on the other hand, he did away with superfluous characters, thereby giving the sub-plot greater coherence.

The harsh cynicism of *Volpone's* ending, where there was little hope for improvement in social relationships, is replaced in Tieck's version with a tone of hope, because the play ends with a young couple who give signs of positive change. The greater relevancy that Tieck awards Louise and Karl, as compared with the unattractiveness of Jonson's Celia and Bonario, makes this toneshift possible. Tieck's version ends with the triumph of love and generosity as the most effective means of opposing selfish greed.

Murner's selfish nature is similarly countered at the end of the secondary plot. Instead of having a large tortoise-shell on stage, which was an Early Modern metaphor for the virtuous wife who was silent and never left her house (Wiesner 1993:25), Tieck has Murner's own wife impose those two 'virtues' on her boisterous and despotic husband. Murner undoubtedly deserves this type of punishment because of the wrong use that he has made of his rhetorical powers: instead of pursuing the common good of his future kingdom, he has only looked after his personal interest. It is therefore fitting that he, for once, keeps quiet. By imposing on her husband an immediate return to their home town in Germany, Mme Murner puts a stop to Murner's megalomaniac dreams and safeguards the freedom and well-being of his future state. The punishment that Mme Murner imposes on her husband is also related to Murner's obsessive campaign against literature and culture. Aware that their cultivation may foster an independent spirit among his future subjects, Murner has banned them from his kingdom and declared that only travel books may be written and stored in public libraries. In Murner's view, "Die Reiselektüre gehört zur Aufklärung, zu den Fortschritten des Jahrhunderts" [Travel books are part of the Enlightenment, they belong to the century's progress] (1829: 44). That is why he feels proud of the number of volumes that he has already completed: "Meine Reisebeschreibung, so kurze Zeit ich auch erst hier im Lande bin, ist doch schon einige Bände stark" [My report is already several volumes long, even though I've only been here for a short time] (1829: 38)²³. Mme Murner, however, makes her husband cease writing his book of travels by making him return to Germany. Not happy with that, she asks him to create what he most detests, a poem. Murner tells Birnam, "Ich, der ich von je, laut und öffentlich alle Poeten in der Welt verachtet habe; —mich bringt man dahin, selber Verse zu machen" [I, who have openly despised all poets in the world, I am now made to write poems] (1829: 130). When Birnam becomes acquainted with Murner's domestic punishment, he wittily interprets it as decreed by the Muses themselves for having sinned against them: "[Das ist] eine Strafe für Ihre Sünden gegen die Musen" [That is your punishment for having sinned against the Muses] (idem).

Although Tieck has Mme Murner punish her husband's greed and ignorance, she is not free from either vice. This is precisely the reason why she has asked her husband to write a poem against Herr

23 Tieck is probably parodying Friedrich Nicolai's twelve volume *Beschreibung einer Reise durch Deutschland und die Schweiz*, which he completed between 1783-1796. Tieck may have made this satiric hint at him because Nicolai had often attacked the Early German Romantics (Roetzel 1997: 368).

von Fuchs. Although Murner is not acquainted with this fact, his wife's hopes of inheriting a part of Herr von Fuchs's estate have vanished. That is why she intends to take vengeance on him by means of that poem of derision that her submissive husband has been asked, not only to write, but even to publish. As Murner tells Birnam, "Hier in der Stadt ist ein gewisser Herr von Fuchs gestorben, auf den sie, ich weiß nicht warum, ein tödtlichen Haß geworfen hat. Auf diesen soll ich, armer Mann, ein beißendes Spottgedicht verfertigen, und sowohl einzeln als auch in meiner Reisebeschreibung abdrucken lassen" [A certain Herr von Fuchs has recently died here in town. I don't know why but she has developed a mortal hate for him. Now must I, poor man, write a biting poem on him, and have it published both on its own and together with my book of travels] (1829: 130). As Murner's account reveals, the ending of the secondary plot meets the principle of poetic justice because the type of punishment which both Murner and his wife receive is proportional to their vices. Their lack of self-control and excessive verbosity, moreover, serve as a foil to the chief characters in the main plot.

5.- CHARACTER CONSTRUCTION IN TIECK'S PRE-ROMANTIC VERSION OF *VOLPONE*

Critics have often justified their assessment of Tieck's version as tame by recalling the opinions of relevant contemporary authors such as Schlegel or Coleridge, who highlight the importance of tender feelings in any work of literature. Their opinions, however, cannot be isolated from their ideological stance, which is often far from conventional. Ten Hoor (1935: 341), for example, emphasizes August Schlegel's belief that Jonson's play requires a thorough adaptation because its "sombre close [is] a failure" (Schlegel, A. 1846: 341). He also mentions Coleridge's opinion that "a tale in which there is no goodness of heart [...] is a painful weight on the feelings" (1830: 276). He recalls that Coleridge even suggested that "a most delightful comedy might be produced by making Celia the ward or niece of Corvino, instead of his wife, and Bonario her lover" (idem)²⁴. This substantial change suggested by Coleridge is apparent in Tieck's *Herr von Fuchs* but cannot be considered as the outcome of moral constraints, as Drews (1959) points out when he says that "Bei Tieck ist die Gattin des Kaufmannes *zum Nutzen der Moral* ein Mündel geworden" [Tieck made the merchant's wife into a ward in order to *suit the morality of his day*]. This significant transformation does not prove that the play has been changed into a sentimental and conventional drama. As a matter of fact, gentle feelings play a central role in Friedrich Schlegel's ideal view of humanity. As he says in his essay "On Diotima", this Platonic character "represented an idea of perfected humanity" because it "simultaneously satisfied both [...] *tender feelings* and the high ideas of *reason*" (1997 [1795]: 419. My emphasis). The fact that reason is placed at the same level as tender feelings in the portrayal of Diotima points to a view of women that radically departs from traditional opinion. Schlegel's new type of woman is as distant from the traditional virago, which in Jonson's play corresponds to the character of Lady Pol, as from the conventional submissive wife which is exemplified by Celia. Although Tieck's Mme. Murner retains most features of Jonson's Lady Pol, Louise is as distinct from Lady Pol as she is from Celia. She represents the perfect balance between a noisy parrot (Lady Pol) and a silent angel (Celia).

Whereas Jonson's Celia completely reflects John Cleaver's traditional views on female behaviour, Tieck's Louise behaves in accordance with Schlegel's organic concept of society with its

24 As Zeydel has pointed out, Coleridge was probably hinting at Tieck's recent version of the play, which he might have come across as early as 1798, when he met Tieck in Germany (1935: 216). Coleridge's lecture on this topic dates from 1818, only a year after they met in London and probably talked about the play.

prevailing notion of sexual equality and freedom. Cleaver's advice in 'A Godly Form of Household Government' that "[a wife] *reverence her husband*, [...] *submit herself* and be obedient unto him", that she "be silent, peaceable, patient, studious to appease his choler if he be angry" (1999 [1598]): 82. My emphasis), sharply contrasts with Schlegel's view in 'On Diotima' that "only *independent femininity*, only *tender masculinity* are good and beautiful" (1997 [1795]: 408. My emphasis). Schlegel vehemently expresses the urgent need to reconsider traditional patterns of behaviour in society. He says: "What is uglier than overly florid femininity, what is more repulsive than the exaggerated masculinity that dominates in our customs, our opinions, yes, even in our better art?" (1997 [1795]: 407-408). Schlegel then offers a detailed description of what should be changed:

Among those characteristics [...] that only apply to an exaggerated femininity are perseverance and simplicity. What is understood by these characteristics is nothing other than an absolute *lack of character that receives its moral precepts from another being*. It is precisely the *domineering vehemence of men* and the *selfless devotion of women* that are *exaggerated* and ugly (1997 [1795]: 408. My emphasis).

These words echo Kant's ideas in "Was ist Aufklärung", written twelve years earlier, where he urges both men and women to think for themselves, to come of age. According to Kant, "*Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit* [...] Unmündigkeit ist das Unvermögen, sich seines Verstandes ohne Leitung eines anderen zu bedienen" [Enlightenment is achieved when someone takes a conscious step towards his majority [...] Nobody comes of age who is not able to use his reason without anybody else's guide] (2004 [1784]: 9). Kant then describes how often guardians take special care to deprive their wards of the ability to think for themselves and how often these are led to believe that the obstacles which prevent them from achieving freedom and independence are unsurpassable:

Daß der bei weitem größte Teil der Menschen (darunter *das ganze schöne Geschlecht*) den Schritt zur Mündigkeit außer dem, daß er beschwerlich ist, auch für sehr *gefährlich* halte: dafür sorgen schon jene Vormünder, die die Oberaufsicht über sie gütigst auf sich genommen haben (idem. My emphasis)²⁵.

And he goes on to describe their usual ways:

Nachdem sie ihr *Hausvieh* zuerst *dumm* gemacht haben und sorgfältig verhüteten, daß diese ruhigen Geschöpfe ja *keinen Schritt außer dem Gängelwagen*, darin sie sie einsperreten, wagen durften, so zeigen sie ihnen nachher die *Gefahr*, die ihnen drohet, wenn sie es versuchen, allein zu gehen (idem. My emphasis)²⁶.

But he immediately makes clear that the danger is merely imaginary and urges independent men and women to lead their own lives. He says: "Nun ist diese Gefahr zwar eben so groß nicht, denn sie würden durch einigemal Fallen wohl endlich gehen lernen" [The danger, however, is not so great, since, having fallen several times, they will finally learn to walk](idem).

Jonson's depiction of Celia falls within Kant's first category of mankind, that of those who have been deprived of their own voice, who have been turned into domestic cattle and do not dare venture out of doors. In doing so, he closely follows the common advice of marital conduct books where it is

25 [The step to competence is held to be very *dangerous* by the far greater portion of mankind (and *the entire fair sex*) — quite apart from being arduous— is seen to by those guardians who have kindly assumed superintendence over them] (Lewis White Beck, (ed. and trans.), *Kant on History*. N. York, 1963: 3. Qtd. Soper 2005: 715).

26 [After they (the guardians) have first made their *domestic cattle dumb*, and have made sure that these placid creature will not dare take a single step without the *harness* of the car to which they are tethered, the guardians show them the *dangers* which threaten them if they go alone]

repeatedly stated that “a modest and chaste woman that loveth her husband must also love her house” (Cleaver 1999 [1598]: 81). Jonson sticks to the few exceptional cases when it is acceptable for a woman to go outside: “to come to holy meetings²⁷ [...], to visit such as stand in need²⁸ [...] and, lastly, with her husband, when he shall require it” (Cleaver 1999 [1598]: 81)²⁹. Jonson, similarly, shows the zeal with which Corvino has to prevent his wife from “walking about the streets [or] looking out of the windows, like curled Jezebels” (Smith 1999 [1591]: 83)³⁰. Although Jonson’s satiric portrayal of Corvino partly undermines these widespread beliefs on the ideal behaviour of women, it cannot be ignored that Celia never dares oppose her husband, whether in word or action. She ends up fulfilling the ideal that Smith describes in ‘A Preparation for Marriage’ that “As it becometh [a woman] to *keep home*, so it becometh her to *keep silence*” (1999 [1591]: 83. My emphasis).

Louise, however, falls within Kant’s second category of women, and, accordingly, succeeds in freeing herself from Rabe’s enslaving bonds. Unlike Celia, she goes out for walks and persuades her guardian that they are always too short. When Rabe urges her to go home: “Jetzt sind wir genug spazieren gegangen. Wir wollen wieder ins Haus gehen” [We’ve taken quite a long walk already. Let’s enter the house], she cajolingly replies: “Schon? Es ist so schönes Wetter” [But the weather is so fine! How could we go inside now?] (1829: 45). During her walks she repeatedly glances at her beloved, who usually follows her from a distance. Rabe observes: “Denken Sie, ich habe es nicht bemerkt, wie er Ihnen nachging? Wie Sie ihn von der Seiten ansahen, als Sie thaten, als wenn Sie gegenüber etwas betrachteten?” [Do you think I haven’t noticed how he’s followed you? And how you’ve glanced at him while pretending to look somewhere else?] (1829: 45). When Rabe forbids Louise to think of Karl, she answers back. Rabe says: “So lange ich das Amt habe, sollen Sie nicht an ihn [Karl von Krähfeld] denken ... Ihr seliger Vater hat mich aber wahrhaftig nicht umsonst zu Ihrem Vormund gesetzt” [As long as I can breathe, you won’t even think of him [Karl von Krähfeld] [...] Not in vain has your late father made me into your guardian] (1829: 46). But, instead of keeping quiet, Louise questions Rabe’s authority: “Hat er Ihnen aber zugleich das Recht gegeben, mir grausam zu begegnen?” [Has he also given you the right to handle me roughly?] (idem). Later, when Rabe intends to impose a husband on Louise: “Wenn Sie heirathen wollen, warum denn nicht meinen Mündel, den jungen Herrmann?” [If you wish to marry someone, why not marry my ward, young Herrmann?] (1829: 47), she does not suffer in silence but denounces Rabe’s tyrannical ways: “Ihre Tyrannei, [seine Zudringlichkeit] macht mich unglücklich, so sehr, daß ich nichts so sehnlich wünsche, als den Tag, der mich von Ihrer Herrschaft befreien wird” [Your tyranny [his pressing ways] makes me so unhappy that there is nothing I wish for as eagerly as the day when you no longer hold sway over me] (idem). When Rabe finally presses Louise into comforting Herr von Fuchs, she frustrates his plans. Rabe’s suggestion: “Wenn Sie wollen, kann ja die Ehe ganz geheim gehalten werden [...]—oder auch ganz keine Ehe—” [If you wish, the wedding can be kept secret [...] —or you may just as well not marry at all] (1829: 69) is met with Louise’s open rejection: “Entsetzlicher Mensch! Haben Sie mich an ihn verkauft? [...] Aber es soll Ihnen nicht gelingen” [Hideous man! Have you sold me unto him? [...] But you won’t succeed in your plans] (idem). Her opposition to Rabe’s pressing ways does not diminish when he tries to leave

27 As Celia tells Corvino: “Why, dear sir, when do I make these excuses?/ Or ever stir, abroad, but to the church?/ And that, so seldom [...]” (II.v.45-47).

28 When Corvino asks Celia to visit and “comfort” old Volpone, he describes it as “A pious work, mere chastity” (III.vii.65).

29 Celia is expected to show complete obedience when her husband asks her to join him in his visit to Volpone: “Go, and make thee ready straight,/ In all thy best attire, thy choicest jewels,/ Put ’em all on, and with ’em, thy best looks:/ We are invited to a solemn feast,/ At old Volpone’s” (III.vii.13-17).

30 [2 Kings 9:30]. In II.v.66-68, for example, Corvino forbids Celia to look out of the window: “One knocks./ Away, and be not seen, pain of thy life;/ Not look toward the window: if thou dost [...]”.

her by Herr von Fuchs's side. When Rabe says: "Kommen Sie, ich bitte Sie" [Pray come close] (1829: 71), Louise replies: "In Ewigkeit nicht" [No way] (idem). Rabe's threat of handling her roughly: "Soll man denn Gewalt brauchen?" [Shall I press you into it?] does not intimidate her either, but leads her to defy him: "Ich trotze Ihrer Gewalt" [I defy you!] (idem). When Rabe falls into despair: "O ich möchte mich aufhängen vor Bosheit" [O, I would hang myself out of despair!], Louise holds control of the situation and calmly tells him to relax: "Mäßigen Sie sich" [Calm down] (idem). When she is finally left alone with Herr von Fuchs, and the 'dying' man suddenly recovers his strength: [*Herr von Fuchs der von seinem Stuhl aufspringt und sie umarmt*] [*Herr von Fuchs springs out of his chair and embraces her*] (1829: 73), Louise is not overcome by fear but verbally and physically rejects him. When Herr von Fuchs says: "So hab' ich Dich endlich, schönes Mädchen, nach der ich so lange schmachtete!" [I've got you at last, beautiful maid! I've yearned for you so long!] (idem), she keeps him back: "Hinweg!" [Keep back!] and frees herself from his embraces: [*Louise reißt sich von ihm los*] [*Louise frees herself from his embraces*]. She then leaves the house without anybody's help: [*Sie entflieht durch die Thür im Hintergrunde*] [*She leaves (the house) through the back door*] (idem). It is no wonder that Louise jumps at the opportunity of choosing her own husband when the Court of Justice frees her from Rabe's guardianship. She then offers Karl her own hand without even asking for his formal consent. When Karl inquires about Louise's lot: "Und Louise?" [What is Louise's lot?] (1829: 154) she does not wait for anybody to speak in her stead, but immediately replies: "Ist die Ihrige" [She is yours [forever]] (idem).

The play ends with a happy couple that fulfils Schlegel's pre-Romantic ideal, as expressed in 'On Philosophy: To Dorothea', that "only *gentle masculinity*, only *independent femininity* is proper, true and beautiful" (1997 [1798]: 423-424. My emphasis). This ideal was far from widespread in late-eighteenth century Germany, where, as L. Roetzel points out, "prevailing gender oppositions tended to work along a division of public versus private" (1997: 365). This fact tends to suggest, once more, that the romantic ending of *Herr von Fuchs* is less conventional than some critics have led us to believe. Unlike Celia, who was sent back to her father's house with her dowry trebled, Louise is no longer placed under male jurisdiction but is declared of age to dispose of her own fortune. The judge tells Rabe: "Louise, die in einigen Monaten mündig ist, ist frei; Sie geben ihr sogleich ihr Vermögen heraus" [Louise, who will be of age in a few months, is now set free from your guardianship. Pray return her estate back to her immediately] (1829: 154). Like Louise, Karl receives the estate which his father, old Herr von Krähfeld, had previously bequeathed unto dying Herr von Fuchs, in the hope of becoming his only heir. Karl is thereby made into his father's guardian and gets free access to his fortune before his greedy father passes away. The judge tells Herr von Krähfeld, "Sie haben sich als ein Mann gezeigt, der weder sein Vermögen zu verwalten, noch seinen Sohn zu schätzen weiß: Sie werden künftig unter der Vormundschaft Ihres Sohns stehen" [You have behaved like a man who can neither look after his estate nor after his son. In the future you will be placed under the guardianship of your son] (1829: 153). Tieck's symbolic ending represents the triumph of young love over the greed displayed by the old generation.

The fact that a betrothed woman holds control of her own fortune brings to mind Schlegel's ideal state as described in "On Diotima", where he stresses the importance of "lawfulness and freedom" as its basic constituents. In his outline of that state, Schlegel argues in favour of equality between men and women and asks rhetorically: "What contradicts this more sharply than the separation of marriage and property?" (1997 [1795]: 405). He suggests that this ideal situation will only be possible "when the wise will rule or the rulers will be wise" (idem).

6.- EDUCATION VS. DESPOTISM IN TIECK'S PRE-ROMANTIC SUBPLOT

The equation between rule and wisdom is the leitmotiv of Tieck's secondary plot, where he highlights his pre-Romantic ideal that despotism can only be opposed by means of widespread education. As a matter of fact, most pre-Romantic writers shared the view that the French Revolution had not brought about freedom, equality and liberty to its followers because their standards of education were still too low for such a demanding enterprise. As Schlegel points out in "On Diotima", "Reason tells us that a state in which lawfulness is reached only at the cost of freedom is very imperfect; and experience teaches us that a state must degenerate where public education is not as widespread as freedom" (1997 [1795]: 405). Public education and freedom are precisely the two qualities which Murner der gelehrte wishes to erase from his kingdom. Tieck, however, has carefully articulated Murner's self-assured assertions within the framework of Romantic irony. Murner is at all times accompanied by Birnam, the witty English traveller who systematically pretends to share his extreme viewpoints on politics and education, while, at the same time, uncovers its inner contradictions. The climax of Tieck's Romantic irony is reached at the end of Murner's detailed exposition of his educational programme, where there is no place for education, in spite of which he listlessly concludes that, should his programme be implemented, the Enlightenment would greatly advance in his country: "Die Aufklärung sollte in meinem Staate Riesenschritte thun" (1829: 87). It is obvious that this self-sufficient character ignores Kant's well-known motto: "[Was ist Aufklärung?] *Sapere aude!* Habe Mut, dich deines eigenen Verstandes zu bedienen!" [What is Enlightenment? *Sapere aude!* Have the courage to use your reason! Dare to know!] (2004 [1784]: 9)³¹, which he deemed essential for an enlightened society.

In view of Tieck's masterful command of Romantic irony as a fitting means of addressing contemporary issues, it is difficult to share Drew's opinion that "An die Stelle der Parodie auf den politisierenden Lord tritt eine Literatursatire, spröde und längst *nicht mehr aktuell*" [The parody on the politicized lord is replaced with a *literary satire* which is *no longer relevant*] (1959. My emphasis). As it has already been pointed out, Murner's aesthetic and literary remarks are seldom free from political connotations, which were as meaningful to his contemporary audiences as they are today. It is difficult to imagine how their meaning could be outdated in 1959, when Drews wrote his review on *Herr von Fuchs*. If education was deemed important to oppose despotism in the late-eighteenth century, it undoubtedly continued to be so in post-war Germany.

Drews' contemptuous remark that "Der schwadronierende Engländer hat sich in einen reisenden deutschen Gelehrten verwandelt, dessen *Scherze vergilbt sind* wie das Papier, auf dem der Romantiker sie niederschrieb" [The prating Englishman has become a learned German traveller whose *witticisms are as yellowed* as the leaves which the Romantic author used to write his play]³² cannot be shared

31 Kant follows Horace's advice in his *Epistles* (I, 2 40) and renders it literally in Latin: *Sapere aude!* Horace's reflection on the importance of study for man's moral improvement resounds in Murner's grotesque rejection of education and culture. According to Horace (*Opera* 1994: II, 35-37), "et nō / posces ante diem librum cum lumine, si non/intendes animum studiis et rebus honestis, /invidia vel amore vigil torquebere" [Unless you ask for a book and a lamp before daybreak; unless you devote yourself to fruitful study and honest deeds, envy and ill-will will keep you awake at night] (Trans. Ferri 2001).

32 My emphasis. Tieck was widely aware that second-rate works, such as Iffland's and Kotzebue's soon became outdated. As he points out in "das deutsche Drama", "wie schnell die Gewänder, die in manchen Fabriken gefärbt sind, erbleichen, sehen wir an unsern Iffland und Kotzebue, deren zu leichte Waare jetzt [so] leblos erscheint" [When looking at our Iffland and Kotzebue we realize how quickly those garments which are dyed at some dying-houses fade away. Iffland and Kotzebue's flimsy matter now looks pale](1852a: 142). In view of this, only a superficial reading of *Herr von Fuchs*'s secondary plot can ignore its serious message and long lasting validity.

either because, although some topical allusions could be missed by contemporary spectators, most ironical hints can still be grasped by learned audiences today. Murner's contradictory statements on the French Revolution or the German Enlightenment, for example, do not require encyclopaedic knowledge on the part of theatre-goers. The situation, however, is quite the reverse in the case of Jonson's topical allusions because Sir Politic Would Be often alludes to insignificant events of his day that have been completely forgotten. A quick look at Act II, Scene I, ll. 4-55 may serve to illustrate this fact. Few readers today would be able to make full sense of Sir Pol's allusion to "the fires at Berwick", mentioned in line 36, because they would probably ignore that this exhibition of *aurora borealis* which took place in 1604 was mistaken for a battle. The same would probably apply to "the new star" (l.37) that had appeared on 30 September 1604 and was still visible at the time *Volpone* was written. The situation would be similar with "the three porcpisces seen above the Bridge", which were fresh in the memory of Jonson's audience because they had been recently captured in Westham (19.1.1606). A proper understanding of what Sir Pol meant when he spoke about "Spinola's whale" (l.51) or "Mas Stone" (l.55) would also require more information.

Attention to the assessment that literary critics such as R.G. Noyes or Ten Hoor have made of Tieck's hypertextual transformation of Jonson's subplot leads one to think that a closer analysis of both texts would probably have been advisable. Had this been the case, R.G. Noyes would never have said that "the *underplot* of the Englishmen is *practically the same as in Jonson*" (1928: 112. My emphasis). Neither would Ten Hoor have sustained the opposite opinion, that is to say, that "the *would-be Politic plot is omitted* , while a number of *original scenes* are inserted that have *no relation to Jonson*" (1935: 337. My emphasis).

7.- TIECK'S STYLISTIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN *HERR VON FUCHS*

If attention to the structure of *Herr von Fuchs* has often been full of prejudice and inaccuracies, critical appraisal of the play's stylistic features has similarly suffered from lack of rigour. This is the impression which a reader gets when acquainted with Drews' opinion that "[Jonsons] Blankverse mit ihren reichen Ornamenten und ihrem zugespitzten Witz, wurden in trockene, gut verständliche Prosa umgeformt" [Its richly ornamented and witty blank verse was turned into simple, dull prose] (1959)³³. Drews here makes a simple equation between blank verse and wit. He seems to be suggesting that wit is necessarily linked to verse and cannot be found in prose. At the same time, he seems to be convinced that comic humour can only be conveyed by means of ornamented verse, and never through simple prose. These surprising conclusions make it quite difficult for a reader to pay much heed to his assessment of Tieck's literary style.

Köpke's summary of Tieck's literary features, however, offers a completely different picture of the writer's attention to irony and wit. He says: "Tieck war Dichter [...] des Humors und der scharfen Satire; er war Dichter der maßhaltenden Lebensweisheit und feinen Ironie" [Tieck was the poet [...] of sharp humour and irony; he was the poet of worldly wisdom and fine irony] (1855: VI)³⁴. His opinion

33 In order to make a proper appraisal of Tieck's "simple" style, it may be interesting to recall the features which he admired in Luther's influential translation of the Bible, for, although in his "Anfänge des deutschen Theaters" he highlighted its "Verständlichkeit" [comprehensibility], he also praised its "Reichthum, Wohllaut und Vielseitigkeit" [its richness, melodiousness and variety] (1848 [1817], I: 363).

34 Zeydel's opinion on the writer's most outstanding contribution is close to Köpke's assessment. He says: "Among his assets we find a keen critical insight, an urbane style, a masterly humor, rich imagination, a very sensitive nature, and

is in line with the features that Goethe highlighted in those translators of the “parodistic style” whose aim was to make the foreign text fully meaningful to his countrymen by appropriating it. In Goethe’s view, the most accomplished results of this translating approach usually come from “geistreiche Menschen” [Men of wit] (1820: 460). As a look at Tieck’s *Herr von Fuchs* reveals, his free version of Jonson’s *Volpone* is no exception to this rule.

Tieck’s high esteem of subtle humour, moreover, is not limited to his creative work but is a constant feature of his theoretical treatises. It is evident, for example, in his assessment of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama in “das deutsche Drama”, where he emphasizes his admiration for its “großartiger Verstand, scharfer Witz [und] mannichfaltiger Humor” [Sublime spirit, sharp wit, multifarious humour] (1852a: 181). It is probably no mere coincidence that he also deemed “die besten Kräfte der Poesie, des Witzes und Scharfsinnes” [poetry at its best, sharp wit and irony] as essential for German drama (1852a: 180). It would be surprising if Tieck had not written his *Herr von Fuchs* in line with these principles, even though his humour is not as rough as some critics would have wished. This may be the reason why Pache speaks of Tieck’s “geglättete Sprache [die] die Zeitbezogenheit [des Stückes] unterstreicht” [Tieck’s plain language which mirrors the age at which it was composed] and regrets that “[es] läßt Volpones dämonische Kraft verkümmern” [It reduces Volpone’s demonic strength] (2007 [2004]: 331)³⁵. It looks as if Pache were willing to ignore that Tieck, far from conforming to long established rules, deeply admired the English drama’s defiance of fanaticism and irrationality. In “Vergleichung der Darstellungsweise in England-Frankreich-Deutschland”, he praised its “feste Bestehen aus Wahrheit und Natur, die Freude am großartigen Scherz, die Freiheit der Gesinnung, die sich keinen Convenienzen beugt [...] dieses mit einem ernsten Streben zu einer ächten und tiefsinnigen Kunst” [Its combination of truth and nature, its appreciation of true wit, its freedom of spirit which does not bend to any ideology or interests [...] this constant search for true and genuine art] (1852b: 361).

Fortunately, Tieck’s high contribution as mediator between different cultures and languages has not always suffered from biased criticism³⁶. Shrewd critics such as Thomas Mann have been able to appreciate his richly suggestive style as translator of humorous works from different linguistic, historical and cultural milieux. The author of *der Zauberberg (the Magic Mountain)* shows great admiration for Tieck’s rendering of *El Quijote*, whose subtle humour was particularly akin to his tastes. Mann’s apt remarks on the linguistic excellence of this accomplished translation that Tieck completed in the final years of the eighteenth century, also apply to his free version of *Volpone*: “Wie Tiecks Übersetzung, dieses heiter und reich gebildete Deutsch der klassisch-romantischen Zeit, unsere Sprache auf ihrer glücklichsten Stufe, mich entzückt, kann ich nicht sagen” [I cannot find within myself the words to express how delighted I feel when I read Tieck’s excellent translation. His fine and learned style exhibits the best features of the Classicist and Romantic periods in such a way that our

inexhaustible inventiveness” (1935: 341).

35 Tieck’s avoidance of an inflated style comes as no surprise if one is aware of the thorough linguistic and literary education which he received at Friedrichschwerder Gymnasium in Berlin. Its headmaster, Friedrich Gedike, was wellknown for the emphasis which he placed on the “Reinigkeit und Richtigkeit der Sprache [...] Bildung des Geschmacks und des deutschen Stils, sowie die Kenntniss der neuen deutschen Literatur” [Purity and correctness of the language [...], the shaping of good taste, the achievement of fine literary style and the acquaintance with contemporary German literature]. In Fischer’s words, Friedrich Gedike represented “die spezifische Berlinische Verbindung von Humanismus und Aufklärung” [the combination of Humanism and Enlightenment which was characteristic of Berlin] (Fischer 1926: 31. Qtd. Paulin 1987: 112-113).

36 Drews’ (1959) harsh criticism of Tieck’s version, for example, cannot be set apart from his marked preference for Lambert Schneider’s literal translation of the play, which had just been published, and which, in his opinion, should have been chosen for performance during the *Shakespeare Tage*.

German language reaches its height](1956: 14). Thomas Mann's enthusiastic praise of Tieck's stylistic achievements eloquently shows how far his language was from being "trocken" [dull] or "geglättet" [plain] and is clear proof that *Herr von Fuchs* was one of those "endlessly varying dispositions" (Kermode 1975: 44. Qtd. Venuti 2009 [2008]: 27) which kept Jonson's classical piece of drama alive.

Aware that translations never take place in a vacuum (Bassnett 1998: 93), but "operate a performative, creating meanings and values that often transform the foreign text beneath an illusionistic transparency and reflect interests in the receiving culture" (Venuti 2009 [2008]: 49), the present article has tried to make *Herr von Fuchs's* inscriptions visible, by venturing through the "labyrinth" (Bassnett 1985, 1998) of Tieck's unconventional rendering of *Volpone*³⁷.

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37 Susan Bassnett explains why she finds the term "labyrinth" appropriate to describe the translation of theatre texts: "I still find that the image of the labyrinth is an apt one for this most problematic and neglected area of translation studies research" (1998: 90).

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