

Where One Stands: Shipwreck, Perspective, and Chivalric Fiction

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When Hans Blumenberg dissects the shipwreck scene in *Shipwreck with Spectator*, he underscores, among the various elements composing the narration of shipwreck, the figure of the spectator, one that is of course etymologically linked to theory (*theoria* deriving from *theoros*, spectator), and thus he simultaneously establishes a series of conditions for the articulation between narration and philosophical speculation within a particular scene in fiction. Blumenberg's analysis, however, does not reveal that shipwreck itself is not always the main focus of the texts he studies, not in the way it is in the shipwreck stories that from the sixteenth century onwards populated the imagination in terms of conquest, epic desire, piracy, commerce, and so on. Scenes of shipwreck are elsewhere inserted within a larger narrative framework that, without making shipwreck the main event, makes it an inherent part of the narrative structure. This use can be traced from epic ancestors in the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* and through a variety of medieval genres to the spectacular emergence of shipwreck as the subject itself of narrative in renaissance literature, its importance to be gauged not only in terms of the independence the scene gradually gains, but also relative to its context of production.

In what follows, partly because of the space constraints of an article, I am interested not so much in tracing the multiple mutations and increasing importance of shipwreck in narration so much as in a case study concerned specifically with the shifts in the positions or points of view established in Blumenberg's study. This will allow me to formulate a wider hypothesis regarding the place of philosophy and the points of view it finds itself embodied in within the space of fiction during the transition from the medieval into the modern in Hispanic literatures. Within this corpus, the identification of the spectator of shipwreck with the position of philosophy, as pointed out by Blumenberg, seems evident as soon as one thinks of Baltasar Gracián's 1651 *El Criticón*. But this distant, affectively unavailable philosophical stance of the spectator of shipwreck does not come into being from nowhere purely as Gracián's invention. Instead of being the result of an authorial intervention from the outside, as it were, the point of view of philosophy as one relying on the safety of shore is the result of a variety of generic exercises that redefine the available positions in relation to the prominence given to the event of shipwreck within narration. The displacements, relocations and distancing of subject and event –adventure as shipwreck– within chivalric fiction are suggestive of ways of pondering the shifting relation between philosophy and literature in early modern literature.

I thus propose to consider the shifting emphasis on the location of positions in regard to the event within fiction, allowing Gracián to serve as the ending frame of my

discussion. For the beginning, I find an eloquent contrast to this position of the spectator of shipwreck in the knight of chivalric fiction, the figure of a militant philosophy in search of its event in the future past of adventure, a figure which had sustained the stance of the philosopher for centuries but which, by the end of the sixteenth, had exhausted its drive.¹ The displacement of the philosophical subject, from the embodied figure of the knight who achieves adventure to the stance of the spectator who from the safety of the shore looks upon shipwreck, is a change that can also be articulated as one from considering the merits of “valor,” “courage,” or “daring” to privileging those of “irony,” “self-awareness,” or “distancing,” a shift that can be studied in its disintegration and reintegration within Spanish books of chivalry.

Ventures

As the enormously popular reformulation of the Arthurian paradigm, Spanish books of chivalry built within their structure the quest for adventure. The numerous continuations and the increased anxiety to upend the extremes of the marvelous were some of the genre’s most criticized stock elements, if perhaps also some of its most loved, and imitated, traits. The spectacularization of the marvelous in books of chivalry, as Anna Bognolo has studied, is the result of a variety of elements, among them the stabilization of courtly culture, increased control over knightly behavior, a change in sign of the knight from warrior to courtier. But this trend also contaminates the notion itself of adventure, which comes to be understood as a spectacle in its own right by the end of the century.

Chivalric fiction, from the *Libro del caballero Zifar* to its first printed and most exemplary of texts in the *Amadís de Gaula*, had introduced the element of maritime danger in the construction of adventure. Amadís’ amphibious destiny made the maritime adventures of the knight not a sign of conversion, as they had been in the last Arthurian reworkings in French, but novel variations of land-bound adventures, multiplying islands within the geographical world of chivalry as one of so many footholds in the unstable sea.² The intrusion of maritime adventures shows, on one hand the influence of travel literatures from Mandeville to Marco Polo, while later iterations of the genre bear the mark of chronicles and *relaciones* from the New World. On the other, the treading of these new territories carried with it the long set of meanings triggered by associations with the sea.

From the Bible, the middle ages took the story of Noah to be a figure of shipwreck and thus the allegorical edifice of salvation was built upon the elements of the ark,

¹ See my “On the Subject of Fiction: Islands and the Emergence of the Novel” for the relation between chivalric adventure and the event and the knight as the subject of philosophy in the thought of Alain Badiou.

² The characterization of “amphibious destiny” is Avallé-Arce’s. For insular elaborations in Arthurian romance see chapter 2 of my forthcoming book *Archipelagoes: Insular Fictions from Chivalric Romance to the Novel*.

producing a contradiction in which the flood is synonymous with the shipwreck of the world and the survival of the chosen ones. On the other hand, the idea of the *peregrinatio vitae* led to the metaphor of travel to use shipwreck as a sign of condemnation, which linked to the general suspicion of sea travel and the moral dangers ascribed to it, articulated even a legal figure for shipwreck in a moral sense: to be sent on a shoddy boat upon the waters left the last judgment –that of shipwreck or survival– up to God. “Shipwreck is a trial on the altar of faith,” writes Blackmore in reference to Alfonso X’s and Berceo’s accounts of shipwreck (20), an association which gave way to a long series of metaphors that brought the space of the body and that of the ship together in the journey of life, as a journey over the sea, already present in Augustine. Extreme territories thus were linked to an extreme morality to be determined by the divine, later named Fortuna, or Providence. In any case, sea travel was to be given a moral sign, and the events that took place upon the sea were to take on this tinge, whereby shipwreck was to be identified with condemnation.

From antiquity, the association between sea travel and politics, where the state as ship was the dominating symbol, permeated the narration of shipwreck. This partly informs the association of shipwreck narratives with epic in the renaissance, whether one considers Alonso López Pinciano’s affirmation that shipwreck is a subject appropriate to heroic narration, or conversely, Blackmore’s analysis of shipwreck as the counterpoint of empire’s discourse in the high renaissance colonial moment (145). Finally, in the background but never really out of sight, we find economics, of course, as the suspicions associated with merchants and commercial ventures in general inform the configuration of the narration of shipwreck. Of special interest to me here are the associations between merchants and philosophers that enable us to triangulate a continued relation of confrontation between the position of the philosopher –a land-bound figure– and the sea (Hénaff 771).

The ocean’s relation to the law was not, however, entirely left up to God. In most ecclesiastic archives in Castile, notes Antonio Ubieta Arteta, a copy of a document regulating the barbaric “right to shipwreck” is kept, drafted by Alfonso VIII in 1180. The document regulates the rights of those sailing near or disembarking on Castilian coasts, sailors and merchants who had not up to these point enjoyed any guarantees, a phenomenon that has been studied in relation to the hostility to foreigners in the middle ages. Until then, anything that came with and from the sea belonged to whoever found it, enticing piracy and looting (131).³

As the hero of books of chivalry took to sea, a point of view emerged whereupon the philosopher within the knight figure, reluctant to embark, began to rehearse ways of staying on land. This point of view was explored through a variety of characters, more or less related to the protagonist, in the form of messenger ladies or witnesses who relate events to the court, or more elaborately, hermits, chroniclers with the task

³ This legislation is also taken up by the *Fuero Real* (Libro IV, ley I, tít. XXIV) and the *Partidas* (V, ley VII, tít. IX), among others.

of writing up a story in the making. Narrators slowly take over this function unapologetically, imposing an authoritative position, a named perspective from which to draw conclusions from the events unfolding in words before our eyes.

One way of separating these position shifts between knight and the spectator of shipwreck is the consideration of the different casts of characters that articulate the narration of shipwreck at different moments in this evolving process. In the shipwreck narratives analyzed by Blackmore as produced by a *mélange* of authorized and unauthorized voices, the cast is composed of pilot, crew, the drowned, the survivor, the spectator; but above all, the protagonist is the ship itself, its parts producing all sorts of metaphors and associations with individual and collective bodies, though not usually a named protagonist (9-19). The narrations in fact are titled after the ship, for the ship has become not only character, but protagonist, and its symbolic death the event of narration. By contrast, in books of chivalry the protagonist gives his name not only to a character, but to the book, to an entire series and a genealogy that is constantly remembered and commemorated. Next to him stand his men –not necessarily part of the sailing-crew–, the pilot of the ship, and often a chronicler-character, separate from but whose voice is often confused with the narrator who occupies an unnamed, almost god-like perspective on events.

Shipwreck narratives, especially tied to historiography, and thus in peculiar tension with epic, as Blackmore shows, might seem but the elaboration of a token scene in books of chivalry. In order to highlight the shift in emphasis of the position of philosophy, I will briefly examine how shipwreck is narrated in two cases in historiography so as to highlight how a shift in emphasis has an effect not only on the narration itself of shipwreck, but on its interpretation as well, all the while remaining in dialogue with Blumenberg's particular take on the scene. Then, I will turn to a chivalric narration of shipwreck with authorial ties to historiography but that remains solidly within fiction.

Contingency

When one April day of 1528 Giovan Battista saw the ship he was on sink, he did not imagine his name and his misfortune would be time and again rewritten under other names in other centuries, nor that his own story would be kept by the fragile memory of an archive. Luigi Avonto found four centuries later in the Archivo General de Indias, in Seville, a *relación*, in Spanish, of the shipwreck of 1528. The protagonists, Juan Bautista, from Genoa, and many other sailors of a Spanish ship were surprised by a tempest near the islets known as the Banco de la Serrana, which is part of the islands of San Andrés, Providencia, Santa Catalina and the isles and banks of Rocardor, Quitasueño, Bajo Nuevo and Serranilla (97).

Bautista's *relación* narrates a historical event that is simultaneously a personal experience, told in the first person. He is the witness of his own survival, he is survivor and narrator of his misadventure. The story was divulged repeatedly until it

came to be part of Book L of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo's *Historia General y Natural de las Indias*, a separable set of narratives known as the *Libro de infortunios y naufragios*. Shipwreck, as formula within the historiography of the period, in Oviedo's collection refers to events of the Antilles and Central American area from 1513 to 1548.

Already in 1932, Enrique de Gandía pointed out that chapter XIV of Oviedo's Book L contains a story that, had it been told in its entirety, would have been even more fascinating than that of Robinson Crusoe's. The story is introduced in this way by the chronicler:

De un caso admirable de un marinero veneciano que estuvo en una isla perdido dos años, e otro genovés ocho años; e cómo se juntaron en una isla éstos e otros perdidos; e cómo quedaron al cabo solos el veneciano y el genovés; e cómo después los sacó dios de aquel trabajo. (Avonto 97)

[Of an admirable case of a Venetian sailor who was lost on an island for two years, and another Genoese eight years, and how they met upon an island these and other lost ones, and how they ended up alone the Venetian and the Genoese and how God delivered them from it.]

González de Oviedo emphasizes here the initial loneliness of those shipwrecked, their reunion and renewed loneliness. He was not, as I anticipated, the only one to set to writing a story he had merely heard of. The episode of Pedro Serrano, perhaps one of the most famous of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *Comentarios reales*, narrates the same shipwreck. The episode is announced in chapter VII of Book I of the first part of *Comentarios* in the following way:

La isla Serrana, que está en el viaje de Cartagena a la Habana, se llamó así por un español llamado Pedro Serrano cuyo navío se perdió cerca de ella (y él solo escapó nadando –ue era grandísimo nadador– llegó a aquella isla, que es despoblada, inhabitable, sin agua ni leña, donde vivió siete años con industria y buena maña que tuvo para tener leña y agua y sacar fuego: es un caso historial de gran admiración, quizá lo diremos en otra parte), de cuyo nombre llamaron la Serrana aquella isla y Serranilla a otra que está cerca de ella, por diferenciar una de otra. (*Comentarios reales* 23)

[Serrana Island, on the journey from Cartagena to Havana, was thus called by a Spaniard called Pedro Serrano whose ship was lost near it (and he himself escaped swimming –for he was a great swimmer– and arrived on that island which is empty, uninhabitable, without water or wood, where he lived seven years with industry and skill he had to have wood and water and get fire: it is a historical case of great admiration, we might tell of it

elsewhere), of whose name they called the island Serrana and Serranilla another one close by, to differentiate them.]

The fragment summarizes the story, focuses on one survivor, and anticipates three important elaborations on, or critical differences from, Oviedo's version, that will be developed in the narration of shipwreck as it becomes independent of context: 1) survival through individual merit, 2) the conditions of shipwreck and the survivor's skill, and 3) the episode's historicity as inscribed in toponymy.⁴

There is a common emphasis in both historians on experience as crucial to shipwreck. Inca Garcilaso comes back to experience throughout the entire first book of the *Comentarios* as a mode of preparing or anticipating the Serrano episode, and Avonto had characterized Bautista's original narration as a "survival manual based on lived experience," a characterization that can be extrapolated as a fundamental trait of shipwreck narrative. That is, the shipwreck episode on Serrana island is exemplary at its core, not only in the sense of *exempla*, but in a more modern, prescriptive, liberal and individual notion of self-fashioning.

The narration of the Serrano shipwreck is not that of a testimonial I, but that of a third person narrator. Of the narrator's omniscience, Enrique Pupo-Walker will point out the episode's "fabulated" nature, linking fiction and historiography through this narrative position. For now, what I would like to consider from this historian's shipwreck scene is the establishment of a distance from the lived experience to the narration, which literally takes shape in the form of a third person, as the acquisition of a perspective.⁵ This perspective is visually rendered in the distance of the island where the shipwrecked finds safety from the continent, which remains inaccessible, surrounded by dangerous banks. The survivor is he who obtains experience within the episode, while the narrator, taking distance from the story, obtains a perspective which we have linked to that of a spectator; outside the narration, the reader in turn exercises a perspective upon the writing of history itself, becoming as it were a theorist of historiography. If the survivor can bring his experience back to the continent, the narrator observes his misfortune, happy to have avoided risk, and from outside, the reader contemplates a problematic writing.

⁴ I have not been able to consult an article, which I imagine elaborates on these associations, by Domingo Ledezma, "Los infortunios de Pedro Serrano: Huellas historiográficas de un relato de naufragio," in *Renacimiento Mestizo*, edited by José Antonio Mazzoti and Ignacio Arellano (Madrid: Biblioteca Indiana, Iberoamericana / Vervuert, listed as forthcoming 2009). For a more traditional approach to shipwreck in colonial historiography, see Pablo Emilio Pérez-Mallaína, *El hombre frente al mar: Naufragios en la Carrera de Indias durante los siglos XVI y XVII* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 1996).

⁵ A text that in the beginning seems a historical account of linear causality, now presents itself as a writing "that is busy with itself, apparently predisposed to internal glossing; that is, to a sort of reflexive construction that turns discourse as such in object of the narrative process, transferring it to the front of the work (Pupo-Walker, *Historia, creación y profecía* 98)

Boundaries

Shipwreck, however imperative in the period's discursive realities, is not unilaterally linked to historiography. The shipwreck metaphor has been one of the most effective formulas for the presentation of life as journey. Hans Robert Curtius points out that the comparison between composing a work of literature and sea travel was commonplace already among Roman poets, with examples in Ovid, Virgil, Propertius, etc., resulting in identifications between poet and sailor, work and ship, a journey not exempt of running into shoals or storms ("Metaphorics" 128-29). While typical of poetry at first, nautical metaphors also rapidly sailed into prose and kept a safe place in the medieval literary imagination and beyond, with celebrated examples in Dante,⁶ *Lazarillo de Tormes*,⁷ and *Orlando furioso*,⁸ to cite but some.

The ocean as natural frontier, as limit to human activity, takes on a number of negative characteristics: it is a space without law, one of insanity, foolishness and failure. It is, however, the essential space of criticism, as that which opposes or which makes possible the sighting of what is on land (Blumenberg 8, 9). This critical function is obtained through both distancing and the crossing of a limit, which produces two possible positions: that of the spectator of shipwreck, as a theoretical position, and that of the shipwrecked, spectator of the lost land, as a critical position. Danger takes the shape of shipwreck seen as a response to that suspicion underlying all sea travel: that it is an act of frivolity, if not of blasphemy, parallel to an offense against the unviolability of land and the mandate not to alter the natural relation between ocean and territory.⁹ If for the ancient world the mere desire of sea travel was

⁶ "Dante begins the second book of the *Convivio* with nautical metaphors "...*proemialmente ragionando... lo tempo chiama e domanda la mia nave uscir di porto; perchè, drizzato l'artimone de la ragione a l'ora del mio desiderio, entro in pelago...*" As a practiced stylist, Dante freshens up the worn metaphor: instead of an ordinary sail, he uses a mizzensail ("artimone"). He is using the metaphor then, because it was traditional in introductions." (129).

⁷ "[P]orque consideren los que heredaron nobles estados cuán poco se les debe, pues fortuna fue con ellos parcial, y cuánto más hicieron los que, siéndoles contraria con fuerza y maña remando salieron a buen puerto" (96-97), which elaborates on the medieval tradition of using nautical metaphors in introductions. See note 6.

⁸ "Si mis cartas marinas no me engañan, muy pronto descubriré el puerto, y podré cumplir en la playa los votos que he hecho á la que me ha guiado al través de tan anchurosos mares, donde más de una vez he temido no volver con mi barco entero, ó quedar errante para siempre. Pero ya me parece ver la tierra: sí, sí, ya la veo, y distingo perfectamente la playa" (canto 46, stanza 1, 787). [I, if my chart deceives me not, shall now/ In little time behold the neighbouring shore; /So hope withal to pay my promised vow / To one, so long my guide through that wide roar / Of waters, where I feared, with troubled brow, / To scathe my bark or wander evermore. / But now, methinks – yea, now I see the land; / I see the friendly port its arms expand. Trans. by William Stewart Rose].

⁹ For Horace, when the sea strikes the ship it is only to protect an "original" division which the journey seeks to erase or transgress. It is he as well who introduces the "ship of state" in political rhetoric, with the ensuing interpretation by Quintilian of the tempest of civil war. Horace compares the transgression

in itself considered a form of trespassing at a spiritual or experiential level, Curtius documents this desire as a transgression that is also literary, pertaining to a peculiar genre distribution: “The epic poet voyages over the open sea in a great ship, the lyric poet on a river in a small boat. Horace makes Phoebus warn him [of the dangers the ocean presents for small boats]” (*Odes*, IV, xv, 1-4)” (128). Shipwreck works thus not only at the level of content, but as a structural metaphor in tune with nautical metaphors inherited from antiquity. To a reflection about the plot, linked to content, shipwreck in other words adds a second, structural reflection, related to composition.

The risk of shipwreck, however, does not cancel out the critical desire inherent in those who take to sea travel, for shipwreck, seen by the survivor, can also become the figure of a philosophical experience (Blumenberg 12). The metaphor takes on new value from a new element: the survivor. The novel position of survivor would gain force through that of the spectator thanks to what seems to be a built-in relation to philosophy, from Vitruvius to Diogenes, where what is rescued from shipwreck is not something coming from outside but from within, as a result of bringing oneself to survival and overcoming. The constellation shipwreck-survivor-spectator thus forces the awareness of where one stands. This awareness, I would argue, is where fiction is situated.

Bearings

Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo’s chivalric incursion with *Claribalte*, first published in Valencia in 1519 and sometimes called the first American novel, noted by many as a curious and infantile diversion of a young chronicler, is most famous because of its own author’s rabid condemnation of books of chivalry, including his own, first in his *Historia de las Indias* (book VI, ch. VIII, fol 63v) and then in the *Quincuagenas de la nobleza de España* (Real Academia de la Historia, 1880, 481).¹⁰ Oviedo’s best known role as historiographer is here especially productive in dialogue with Blackmore’s analysis of shipwreck narrative as counterhistoriography, and as author of chivalric fiction in a period slightly anteceding the explosion of shipwreck narrative, in determining the role of fiction in the articulation of discursive alternatives to epic and historiography.

In chapter LIX of *Claribalte*, the fortunate protagonist, after being named legitimate heir to the Empire of Constantinople, heads back to England to inform his wife and in-laws of the great news. Eight ships and ten galleys are prepared to accompany him on the journey, and wise men and savvy pilots guide his way. They leave the islands of the Archipelago, the Cyclades, enter the Mediterranean, and as they breach the Strait of Gibraltar to enter the Ocean, high and tempestuous waves and

to that of Prometheus’ theft of fire, and with Daedalus’ attempt to violate another forbidden medium, air. The only appropriate element for humanity is thus earth (Blumenberg 11-12).

¹⁰ See María José Rodilla’s summary of comments on *Claribalte* in the introduction to her edition of the book, especially 9-13.

storms separate the fleet. Some of the ships manage to reach the coasts of Africa, while other galleys are lost at sea, never to be seen again. The Knight of Fortune is taken further out into the sea, forced to run into “vna de las yslas perdidas que agora llaman de Cabouerde y tomó puerto en la Ysla del Fuego. Y quando allí pararon, ya la naue ni lleuaua gauia ni árbol ni cosa sana y fazía mucha agua por baxo. Auía que era partido de Constantinopla, quando llegó a este punto, quarenta días [one of those lost islands now called of Cape Verde, and took port on Fire Island. When they landed there, the ship had no topsail nor mast nor healthy thing in it, and it was beginning to sink. From his departure from Constantinople to this point, forty days had passed]” (*Claribalte* 261). Grounded, safe, *Claribalte*, the Knight of Fortune, and his men disembark on an uninhabited and inhospitable island where, from the effects of shipwreck or the little sustenance they find, most die within three months. Their stay there is characterized as a penance for those who survive, and the Knight of Fortune determines that it is better to die among people than to be lost and alone. Repairing the ship as best they can, they set sail and stumble upon pirates within two days, who take the Knight and five surviving men prisoner. One of the pirates takes the Knight and one of the men as booty, but the other sailor dies, and the Knight of Fortune is left alone. Nevertheless, the Knight, in all these troubles, has fortunately not lost the two magic rings the necromantics have given him, nor the ones given to him by his lady, nor his sword, and after fifty days at sea they arrive in Finisterre, in Spain. There, one day, due to the trust the pirates have placed in him and their ignorance of his stature, he is allowed to take a trip to shore with other pirates, manages to distance himself from them, and flees.

Of the other ships, only four survive, most lost or taken prisoner wherever they arrive. These four arrive on the Canarian Archipelago, resting for two months on Gran Canaria. After the ships are repaired, two of the ships are sent to Constantinople in search of the Knight, and the Admiral with two others sets sail for England, arriving in Dover, from where they travel to London. The Knight will not come to the court until many chapters later, until his men dispose a crew to search for him in every harbor of the island, and Litardo, the Admiral, will find him walking by himself on the coasts of Southampton (*Antona*), dressed in plain sailor’s clothes, recovering to make his way to his lady in London.

The narration of shipwreck in Oviedo’s chivalric fiction stands in the transition from the topos in Byzantine romance, where the event is quite literally a pretext, the goal being the deliverance of the protagonists to this or that shore, to the shipwreck as main event of later texts. Here, Oviedo begins to build on certain details that will become important elaborations in themselves as the scene becomes more important. In consonance with all of Oviedo’s narration, there is first a taste for geographical detail, for the precision of toponymy, where it seems that Oviedo brings a map up to date, one whose legends show older names, known by the narrator and his audience to be different. The islands where the Knight of Fortune arrives were before lost, and they now bear a name –and a history of discovery and colonization. Oviedo details the state

of the ship as it runs aground on Fire Island, and logs in the number of days spent at sea. Once disembarked, Oviedo remarks on the effects of the sea, of disease and malnutrition, but also on the lack of population on the island, anticipating what will become the motif of shipwreck on a deserted island. Without elaborating on what it is that marks the Knight not only as a survivor but also as a leader, other than saying that “como era de gran corazón y nascido para grandes cosas” [as he was of a great heart and born to great things] (*Claribalte* 261), Oviedo merely remarks on this individual aspect of the self that will characterize Pedro Serrano or Robinson Crusoe later on as industriousness and exploration of self. There is not in Oviedo, however, a development of an awareness of self, no process of discovery that delivers the Knight as a new man, no rebirth. Community is crucial to knighthood, and it is what motivates the Knight first to repair the ship and leave the island, even if to die among people, and what demoralizes him later as he fails to find it. Solitude strikes the Knight as his last companion, a captive of pirates like himself, dies. At is at this point that shipwreck as an event of chivalric fiction shows its most striking differences from later narrations. For Serrano, or Crusoe, shipwreck is what brings them out of anonymity; shipwreck gives them a name, makes them someone worth of remembrance. By contrast, in the case of a protagonist of chivalric fiction, shipwreck is what enables anonymity. Similar to Odysseus or Apollonius, the Knight of Fortune will lose outward signs of identity, clothes, status. However, he will use this loss of identity to trick the pirates into his trust, allowing them to think that he is *not* worth more than they can make out from his appearance alone. Anonymity, in a way, makes wit or skill possible. Conversely, later shipwreck survivors will carve themselves a name out of this skill that guarantees their survival. Confirming this need for community, which overrides a discovery of self, is the encounter with Litardo, his Admiral, who recognizes the Knight, and thus links the adventure of shipwreck with the space of the court:

Salía el almirante passeándose por la costa de la mar solo, sin compañía de persona ninguna, mas muy acompañado de cuydado y tristeza y con mucha causa, porque no sabía de su señor ni lo que auía de hazer dessí. Y acaso vido passar vn mançebo de muy buena dispusición vestido como marinero y parecióle tan bien que puso mucho los ojos en él, y figurósele que lleuaua meneo de persona para más quel ábito que lleuaua. Y llamóle a alta boz porque passó algo apartado dél y díxole: –¡Ah, señor! ¡Nos apartéys de los griegos!” (*Claribalte* 279)

[The admiral was out, taking a walk by the coast by himself, without company of any person but with him were care and sadness, and it was granted, for he had no news of his lord, nor of what he was to do of himself. And he might have seen a young man well disposed dressed as a sailor, and he seemed so gracious he set his eyes on him, and he figured he

moved as a person of higher dress than he wore. And he called him loudly, for he was a bit away and said: –Oh, lord! Keep us away¹¹ from the Greeks!]

Litardo is the human connection between the two worlds that merge in the Knight at this point, and the Knight needs to be identified as the Knight of Fortune again, which comes about with Litardo's call. This is quite literally an ideological interpellation, one that brings the protagonist back to the world of England and his life at court. The encounter is illustrated in the engraving that heads the chapter, in which the two men embrace upon a shore, the background showing a ship and a city as figures of the two identities that now are one in making up the Knight. The chapter goes on to say that the men embrace, then sit on this liminal space to share the story of their shipwreck and deliverance, and Litardo fills the Knight in on the events that have now added to his identity in the court: his wife has been saved by an unknown knight from a terrible accusation, and he has fathered a son. This scene of recognition is what completes the adventure, not ending simply with the shipwreck or the survival of the Knight, but in the telling of a story and the reintegration within a continued identity. Shipwreck is not an opportunity to find identity, but to prove it.

The characters of Oviedo's chivalric shipwreck scene are basic, including a crew, a pilot, and a well-known knight protagonist who will be the survivor. This shipwreck, however, while it holds pathos for the ships lost, the drowned men, and those held captive in unknown lands, duplicates the tension not by elaborating on the point of view from land, but by separating the knight from his main ties to a community, his admiral. The separation takes the narrative to the troubles of the knight, which begin to detail elements that will become crucial to subsequent shipwreck narratives. The trouble of the admiral will not focus on his own survival, but on finding his lord, and the encounter, the reunion of identities on the liminal space of the shore, where the stories interlace again, is what illuminates the transition from the figure of the militant knight of adventure to the figure of the spectator. In this space of the shore, Knight and Admiral meet and share their stories. The shore here stages the exchange of experience that shipwreck has granted the survivors and at the same time highlights the distance in the safety of land required for the narration of shipwreck. The text moves, interestingly, between the narrator and the dialogue of the protagonists, between a first person account and an omniscient narrator. Here, community recognizes the Knight and calls out to him, embraces him, and they trade experiences and perspectives. Their embrace, depicted in the engraving, can also be read as one of farewell: we will not see the militant knight go back to the court, but the Admiral, who has looked at where he stands, on land, will be the one to deliver the news of this newfound perspective.

¹¹ I am unsure of the translation, the Spanish is unclear.

Shipwreck is present from the first of Spanish books of chivalry to some of the very last books of the genre. *Tirant lo blanc* listed shipwreck as one of the equalizing misfortunes of mankind: “Y pues es acostumbra da cosa a los hombres, por grandes señores que sean, ser presos en batalla, en mar o en tierra, o padecer naufragio, assí como agora la fortuna a ti a traydo, si virtuoso eres no te debes desconsolar, que puesto que la fortuna te aya traydo aquí, no debes desesperar de la misericordia quel gran Dios que todo el mundo gobierna.” (IV, 11) [And it is common to all men, regardless of their grandness, to be taken prisoner in battle, at sea or on land, or to suffer shipwreck, as fortune has now brought you here, if you are virtuous you must not be disheartened, for even if fortune has brought you here, you must not despair of the grace of the great God who governs all.] Joaquín Romero de Cepeda enumerated shipwreck as one of the adventures of his protagonist in his much later *La historia de Rosián de Castilla* (1586). The news of Rosián de Castilla’s (mis)fortunes are related to the princess summarily:

Mas según lo que entiendo, para lo que soy aquí venido es para dezir lo que le aconteció después de partido de esta tierra. Lo qual según yo dél mismo supe, en la Insula de Candia, es esto. El se partió del puerto de Lucasán con algunos caualleros desta ysla para el Nueuo Reyno, y en la mar padecieron grandíssimo naufragio y tormenta, de manera que haziéndose la nao mil pedaços él solo salió con su cauallo y armas, y algunos caualleros con él con solos sus vestidos. Los demás que con él en la nao yuan fueron ahogados. De allí, passando treynta días grandes trabajos de hambre y sed y de temor de infinitos leones, ossos, tigres y otras muchas bestias fieras que ay en aquella Ysla Desierta, llegaron a la Prouincia del Reposo, donde rescibieron grande alegría de ver la sabia gente de aquella prouincia y la manera de sus costumbres. (133)

[But as I understand it, I have come here to tell what happened to him after leaving this land. What I heard from him myself, in the Island of Candia, is this. He left the port of Lucasan with some knights of this island for the New Kingdom, and at sea suffered a great shipwreck and storm, so that the ship was torn in a thousand pieces and only he came out of it with his horse and arms, and some knights with him with only their clothes. The others that were in the ship with him were drowned. From there, after thirty days of hunger and thirst and fear of infinite lions, bears, tigers and many other fierce beast upon that Desert Island, they arrived to the Province of Rest, where they filled with joy to see the wise people of that land and their way of life.]

It is almost inevitable to focus on the interruptions of history and historiography in the narration of this chivalric fiction. However, the text undermines this temptation

through an allegorized geography that points to earlier connotations of shipwreck, those found in Alfonso X, in Berceo, and, in close proximity, in Fray Luis de León's Christian nautical imagery.¹² But in chivalric fiction, even in those shipwrecks narrated by Oviedo, the chronicler of the New World who saw the entirety of the Indies as a sea of secrets,¹³ shipwreck remains part of the adventure of the knight. It is the knight who carries the agency and survives shipwreck, completes the adventure, reintegrates it into the itineraries of life, the main event of narrative fiction.

Shipwreck as an evolving scene within the thrust of Spanish chivalric fiction does not yet present in Oviedo a separation between subject, event and the position of spectator, which he himself will present in his historiography. While many of the characteristics noted by Blumenberg in ancient philosophers and medieval interpretations of the sea and its misfortunes are certainly present in shipwreck scenes in books of chivalry, the specific positioning of philosophy upon the safety of shore has not yet been accomplished. While there are many other shipwreck scenes in chivalric fiction (and, especially *threats* of shipwreck that drive pilots and knights to find a safe port as quickly as possible, regardless of the danger that awaits on land), *Claribalte*, in a peculiar relation to its author's concern with historiography, shows evidence of a displacement of the location of theory towards the shore along with the anticipation of details that will become structural to the shipwreck narrative. In *Claribalte*, to go back once more to the idea that philosophy is not a taking of a position but an awareness of where one stands or gazes from, one can consider the Knight and see how he embodies the two forms of philosophy I suggested in the beginning of this article within himself. While he is the militant knight who achieves the adventure of shipwreck, the Knight is also bound to the littoral until he is found by his community, a recognition that will make it possible for him to exercise the point of view from the safety of land that the narration of shipwreck and the reintegration into community requires. The Knight of Fortune takes his point of view with him, but he can only exercise awareness of his position when disembarked, safely, solidly, on land.

As Oviedo himself, years later, revisits the steps in the narration of shipwreck in his moralized representation of shipwreck scenes in the *Libro de los Infortunios y Naufragios (Book of the Misfortunes and Shipwrecks)*, published as part of the *Historia general de las Indias* in Seville in 1535, his intimacy with historiography pushes fiction into a different role, one, at times, disavowed or more often, disguised as the description of reality. In the narration of history, one where books of chivalry have no more a place, ships will become protagonists, and the event, tragic and ephemeral, will be lost to the waves.

¹² See Susan Hill Connor, "Maritime Imagery in the Poetry of Fray Luis de León."

¹³ The expression is taken from Merrim (58-100, quoted in 84).

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