

William Godwin and the Spanish Enlightenment

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I. Introduction

The impact of William Godwin's philosophical thought in fields such as politics, economy, education, and ethics was unquestionable among his British contemporaries. His merits were valued on the other side of the English Channel as well. Godwin's *Political Justice* (1793) was read and translated into French by Benjamin Constant soon after its publication – although he never published it – an abridged edition of this same work was published in German in 1803, and *Caleb Williams* appeared in Russian in 1838 (Philp 2013: n.p.). Notwithstanding a not very extensive circulation of his works on the Continent, the presence of the English writer in Spain was, to a certain extent, significant given that his *Political Justice* was carefully read and discussed by Jovellanos, one of the most reputed writers of the period, and by some of his friends; and another of Godwin's treatises, *The Enquirer* (1797), not so well-known as the former, was translated and published in a journal just when the periodical press was increasingly expanding in Spain.

In order to examine Godwin's reception in Spain, recent theories on cultural transfer are of key relevance. This approach obviously concentrates on the mediation and reception of literary works in a foreign culture, though it is based on the assumption “that ‘nations’ or ‘cultural areas’ cannot be modeled as ‘autonomous’ or ‘hermetic’ entities, but rather as dynamically interrelated systems” (Stockhorst 2010: 19). Such an approach is appropriate for the cosmopolitan, enlightened republic of

letters, given the constant networking and shared interests of the writers of this period (7). This particular trait propitiates not only studies in bilateral processes, but also in trilateral or triangular exchanges, as happens in this case, as we shall soon see. Finally, it is important to note that what becomes relevant is not the content of the actual work or object of the transmission process, but the very act of transfer within a certain ideological constellation, such as the particular circumstances of Spain, and by extension of Europe, at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century.

Interestingly, this transnational and dialectical interplay was also what motivated Godwin's deep concern about Spain, its history, its politics, its religion, with allusions to this country in several of his works. These include some of his early minor writings and letters, as well as *Political Justice*, *Life of Chaucer* (1804), and *History of England* (1815); Pérez Rodríguez, 2004). He also set his tragedy *Antonio* (1800) in fifteenth-century Spain. An especially interesting further case in point is Godwin's novel *St Leon: A Tale of the Sixteenth Century* (1799), in which the protagonist visits Spain during his travels. By moving the setting to Spain, the writer creates a "displaced arena" (Saglia 2000: 51) in which to project his anxieties and face the conflicts that might threaten his society. In his Spanish journey in particular, St Leon has to suffer religious intolerance and bigotry. In the novel anything that might happen in Spain is under the omnipresent rule of the Catholic Church and its executive arm, the Holy Inquisition. As happened to St Leon, anyone might be accused and might fall into the hands of this tribunal "which was said to surpass all the tribunals on the face of the earth in activity and vigilance" (2007: 253). Once trapped there, it is impossible to be fairly judged: as St Leon puts it, "The mode of your proceeding [...] is the mockery of a trial. From your fatal bar no man can go forth acquitted. How is a story to be refuted, when hardly and with difficulty you suffer your prisoner to collect the slightest fragments of it?" (2007: 260). He finally declares: "That religion which is supported by such means is viler than atheism. That civilization which has its basis in despotism, is more

worthless and hateful than the state of savages running wild in their woods" (261). This gloomy vision of sixteenth-century Spain is thus a significant instance of what David Howarth has termed "the invention of Spain" (2007) by the British for their own use. Godwin utilizes Spain to reveal and to expose clearly the fatal consequences of religious fanaticism and political despotism, to the point that Spaniards under those circumstances have become "mere shades of men, cold, inert, glaring bodies, which the heaven-born soul has long since deserted" (265).

II. Godwin's *Political Justice*, Jardine and Jovellanos

Curiously enough, Godwin himself was included in the index of forbidden books by the Holy Inquisition, a fact that was probably influential in the scarce allusions to his texts in the works of Spanish authors. The English writer appears in the lists as "Gouduwin (Guilielm), calv.: 1 cl." (Carbonero y Sol 1873: 311), that is, he was banned due to religious causes, for being Calvinist, and he suffered the strongest prohibition, since as a first class author, the totality of his works was forbidden. However, books and their contents could reach Spain by diverse means and escape prohibitions. There is evidence that one of the most illustrious and reputed Spanish writers of the period, Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos (1744-1811), was acquainted with the English author and his most important text, *Political Justice*, as early as 1794 and that he read it in its original English version in 1796 and 1797. This is hardly surprising given that the Spanish writer, intellectual, and politician – he was appointed minister of Grace and Justice in 1797 during the reign of King Charles IV of Spain – was one of the most anglophilic among his contemporaries (Helman 1970: 91-109; Polt 2005; Lara Nieto, 2008. During the last decades of the eighteenth century Jovellanos bought or borrowed more and more books in English as important sources both for his writings, particularly his reports, and for the Institute he founded in Gijón – his native town in the north of Spain – with a reformist aim, mainly committed to the education of the youth in

useful and practical sciences, such as agriculture, mining, and navigation (Helman 1970: 92-93). In this regard, his quite fortuitous acquaintance with Alexander Jardine (1736-1799) in Gijón was crucial.

The English military man and politician was appointed English consul in Corunna – a northern Spanish town and strategic harbor – in 1792, but due to the conflicts between France and Spain, after a hazardous sea journey he and his family finally disembarked in Gijón instead of Corunna on 5 November 1793 (Pérez Berenguel 2005a: 56-59). While Jardine was in the town, he met Jovellanos on 11 November, as the Spanish writer recorded in his diaries (Jovellanos 1994: 477-78). Jardine made a favorable impression on Jovellanos; they discussed the philosophical idea of property, an issue that deeply concerned both of them, and most importantly, the Englishman gave the Spaniard his observations about diverse countries and governments,¹ along with another original work, published that same year, of a friend of his. There is unanimous agreement that this text was William Godwin's *Political Justice* (Polt 2005: n.p.; Jovellanos 1994: 479 4n; Helman 1970: 95). Jardine and Godwin were actually friends and met regularly – from February 1792 until Jardine's departure for Spain – in philosophical gatherings in London, where they shared ideas and opinions with other radical intellectuals such as Thomas Holcroft, Mary Wollstonecraft, Joel Barlow, and James Mackintosh, among others (Pérez Berenguel 2002: 173). However, it is possible that Jardine only gave Jovellanos a summary or extract rather than the whole text (Polt 2005: n.p.), and according to Helman, it could have been Book VIII of *Political Justice*, "Of Property" (1970: 95-96). This is corroborated by the fact that Jovellanos does not mention Godwin's book in his diaries until years later, on 12 June 1796, when he wrote down that a Captain from Luanco, a small village in Asturias, brought him the famous text of Godwin, which would succeed Young in his readings (1956: 375). Two days later he specified that he was reading Godwin's book (1956: 375), and a year later, in May and June 1797, Jovellanos recorded in the entries of three days that he was reading again Godwin's book and most interestingly,

extracting it (1956: 429). Jovellanos's extracts of Godwin's book would have proven priceless in enabling us to appreciate what he thought about Godwin's ideas, but unfortunately these have been lost.²

Since they first met in Gijón, Jovellanos and Jardine started a friendly and frank correspondence lasting more than three years. The information known nowadays about this correspondence comes from Jovellanos's diaries, where he recorded some references about the letters he sent and received. According to these data, Jovellanos interchanged thoughts and ideas with Jardine, but the Englishman also acted as an intermediary, providing the Spaniard with English technical books and instruments, particularly for the students in the Real Instituto in Gijón. From what we know about Jovellanos's correspondence with Jardine, it is quite evident that they discussed Godwin's thoughts. Accordingly, the letters would also be invaluable in ascertaining to what point the English philosopher influenced the Spanish writer, but they, too, have been lost. While Jovellanos's writings and manuscripts are scattered in diverse libraries and archives, eventually the initial drafts of two of his letters to Jardine have been found. Of especial relevance for this study is the manuscript known as "Carta a desconocida persona" (letter to an unknown person) – the addressee of the letter is not mentioned in it – given that Jovellanos reveals certain of his opinions about Godwin. At first the addressee of this letter was thought to be a friend of Jovellanos, Francisco Cabarrús, but finally Polt identified him as Jardine (Polt 1966: n.p.).

According to the records in Jovellanos's diaries, this draft of a letter was written around 21 May 1794, and due to its content is considered one of the most relevant letters of the Spanish writer (Jovellanos 1985: 637, n1). At this moment, Jovellanos, in spite of not being acquainted with Godwin's entire *Political Justice*, describes the system proposed by him as the most perfect possible and accordingly it is towards this system that any society should progress. Moreover, like Godwin, he did not adhere to revolutionary and rebellious movements, but found necessary a sustained progress, a gradual change, specific for each society (Jovellanos 1985: 635-36).³ Among the utopian components taken by

Jovellanos from Godwin's theories, this progressive character of societies and the general and natural tendency toward perfection and happiness are frequently quoted by critics and scholars (Lara Nieto 2008: 191). However, Jovellanos always assessed and assimilated these and other philosophical theories from a critical and independent viewpoint (Helman 1970: 96; Lara Nieto 2008: 72), adapting them to his own personal beliefs and his own circumstances. In the case of Spain in particular, Jovellanos assumed that his country had a longer journey ahead of it than England and that a possible step toward Godwin's perfect system would be a constitution similar to the French one of 1791 (636). The letter refers to other significant issues, such as the abolition of the Spanish Inquisition⁴ and the necessary advancement in education and agriculture, but as far as Godwin is concerned, Jovellanos ends up considering that the English philosopher, instead of creating a theoretical system, should propose a real and feasible improvement (636).

It is obvious from his words in the draft that Jovellanos was reading and gathering information in order to find a model suitable for his country among those constitutional experiences carried out in other countries, such as England, France and North America (Fernández Sarasola 2006: LXIII-LXIV). He did not explain his reasons for considering Godwin's system the best, but some references in his diaries indicate that he and Jardine had discussed this issue in their previous correspondence. Moreover, Jovellanos's remarks about what Jardine told him in his letters might be taken to a certain extent – but obviously as a tentative explanation only – as a reflection of his impressions of Godwin's ideological scheme. Generally speaking, Jovellanos did not agree with Jardine's most radical assertions. Thus, by means of the summaries in his diary records, we know that in a letter dated on 3 June 1794, Jovellanos opposed Jardine's positive view about revolutions (1985: 642). A few days later, he warns Jardine on account of his dangerous friends (644). In the following letter, on 19 June, Jovellanos affirmed that he does not like Jardine's political proposals any more, and even less his religious ideas, which leads him to state that they are a very

long way from one another (645). In spite of this definite assertion, their correspondence continues, and on 6 August Jovellanos insists on one of his basic thoughts and tells Jardine about the necessity of establishing a diapason in the progression of the ideas (1986: 38). The Spaniard seems quite tired of Jardine's repetitive ideas (42) and tells him to distrust freethinkers and other sects (46-47). That same year in September Jovellanos condemns anarchy, considering this system the worst possible, since it stems from corruption (52). From 1795 onwards their epistolary interchange became less and less frequent and Jovellanos exhibited his annoyance regarding Jardine's insistence on dealing with the same topics, which the Spaniard termed as philosophical dreams (200) and obsessions (242) in two letters written in 1796. As previously noted, all these letters disappeared. Polt maintains that they were probably destroyed by Jovellanos himself, since as a consequence of some issues with the Spanish Inquisition and the conflicts between Spain and England at that time, he suspected that his correspondence was being watched (1985: 638, n6) and that therefore the letters might be dangerous and cause him trouble (2005: n.p.).⁵

Jovellanos was a prolific letter-writer who pursued what he regarded as a necessary and productive communication of ideas (1985: 636). Thus, in his letters he shared his assumptions on Godwin's proposal with other friends such as the previously mentioned Francisco Cabarrús (1752-1810), a close and dear friend of Jovellanos's, a financier and politician of French origin and founder of the Banco de San Carlos – the precursor of today's central bank of Spain. In his diaries Jovellanos recorded that on 17 May 1794 he had sent a letter to Cabarrús dealing with the right to property and Godwin's system. He added that he had written a copy in order to dispatch it to Jardine with the purpose of discussing the topic among the three of them by letter (Jovellanos 1985: 633). Unfortunately, as occurred with Jardine's letters, most of Jovellanos's correspondence with Cabarrús has been lost.

Jovellanos's examination and discussion of Godwin's theoretical notions are particularly meaningful since just at this moment he was

completing one of his major political and economic treatises, the *Informe sobre la Ley Agraria* (1794) (Helman 1970: 95), and he explicitly recorded in his diaries that he discussed this text with Jardine in one of his letters in November of the same year (1986: 91). In this report, among many other things, he examines the concept of property and its distribution in society, stating that while waiting for the completion of human progression toward the primitive community of goods, private property is an unjust but necessary evil, qualifying egalitarianism as a chimera (Jovellanos 1795: 51 n1) – thus attacking, in Polt’s opinion, Godwin’s ideal of equality (2005: n.p.). Jovellanos’s reading of Godwin and other radical reformers during the following years, as recorded in his private writings such as diaries and letters, reflects a progressive and deeper adherence to economic liberalism, but, contrary to Godwin, he always intended a practical implementation of his proposals, which motivated some deviations from his primary beliefs (Polt 2005: n.p.).⁶

This analysis of the reception of Godwin’s *Political Justice* in Spain has offered the opportunity of observing how Spanish writers communicated with each other and debated constantly in search of new approaches to those hot issues of the moment involving the improvement of their society. These social networks extended beyond Spanish borders too. Accordingly, some of these thinkers’ aims were grounded on parallel theoretical notions to those sustained by Godwin – i.e., perfectibility, utilitarianism, and moral happiness. However, the innovations and changes that were required to make Spain progress were partially shattered by its particular idiosyncrasies – the weight of tradition, religious inflexibility, and censorship.

III. Godwin’s *The Enquirer*, the *Bibliothèque britannique*, and the *Biblioteca británica*

Given that the efficiency of the Inquisition was not flawless, in 1807 part of another work by Godwin, *The Enquirer*, was published in Spain. Under the title of “El investigador”, a summary of the essays of the first part of this work was issued in the *Biblioteca británica*, a miscellaneous

journal that encompassed excerpts and summaries of diverse British works. As happened frequently in this period in Spain, Godwin's text had to negotiate a longer route to arrive in the Peninsula since it was a second-hand translation from another journal, the *Bibliothèque britannique*, which had been published in French in Geneva.

The publication of the *Biblioteca británica* is related to a greater presence of British texts in Spain at the beginning of the nineteenth century, on account of the increasing admiration toward Britain to the detriment of France caused by the constant conflicts of the period. As already noted, "El investigador" is a translation of a text published in the *Bibliothèque britannique*, an extensive miscellaneous compilation of British texts published in Geneva from 1796 to 1815 that included 144 volumes. This editorial venture was launched and developed by the brothers Marc-Auguste and Charles Pictet and their friend Frédéric Guillaume Maurice; and, as its long title indicates, it encompassed extracts of diverse English works (Bickerton 1986; Bickerton 1999). This collection was published in French, a crucial factor in the significant circulation of the *Bibliothèque britannique* on the continent, with subscriptions in several European countries, such as France, Italy, Spain, Germany or Russia (Bickerton 1986: 391-92). Moreover, the export of the project to other European countries already appeared in the first preface to the collection as one of its main purposes (*Bibliothèque britannique* 1796: Vol. 1, 1) and clearly proves its international aim. The *Bibliothèque britannique* appeared in installments (*cahiers*), which were bound into books grouped around three different subjects: each year three volumes focused on literature, three on sciences and the arts, and one on agriculture (Bickerton 1999: 13). In the present study I examine the volumes devoted to literature, which at that time, as the editors state in the preface to volume thirteen, included education, political economy, travel, fine arts, biography, and imaginative works, among others (*Bibliothèque britannique* 1800: Vol. 13, 4-12).

The two volumes of the Spanish *Biblioteca británica* were published by Pedro María de Olive (1768-1843), a lawyer, journalist, and writer who, taking the opportunity that the expanding genre of the

periodical press gave him, translated and extracted texts from the homonymous one in French, particularly from the section on literature (1807: I, 4)⁷ in order to publish them as a journal. Similar to the Geneva *bibliothèque* – and as usually happened in Spain at that time – this collection saw the light first in installments which afterward were bound and sold as two miscellaneous volumes.⁸ One of the selected texts was Godwin's treatise, a theoretical writing on education completely in line with the main purpose stated by the editor in the preface to the Spanish compilation, which was to aid parents and teachers to instruct youth by means of a collection of selected, varied, and easy texts on diverse matters (1807: I, 4). The preface thus reflects one of the basic ideas in the educational agenda of the period, also shared by Godwin himself: the necessity of a deeper implication of the parents in the education of their children. This assumption was behind the increasing publication of any type of materials helping parents in this task. The latter became in turn a lucrative business. Godwin himself participated in it as a prolific writer and also by means of the foundation of a printing house and bookshop specializing in texts for children and young people (Bottoms 2004, Anderson 2011).

Godwin published *The Enquirer* in 1797 as a collection of essays written in a more tempered and tranquil mood and in the aftermath of the French Revolution, explicitly stating that he was not under the influence of its barbarian consequences (1797: ix-x). He also explains the genesis of the text as "the result of conversations," since "The author has always had a passion for colloquial discussion; and, in the various opportunities that have been afforded him in different scenes of life, the result seemed frequently to be fruitful both of amusement and instruction" (vii). Some instances of his taste for gatherings and conversation have been mentioned previously when referring to Godwin and Jardine's acquaintance in London. Similarly, Jovellanos and most Spanish enlightened intellectuals and writers shared their ideas in gatherings or *tertulias*. These gatherings, besides their social dimension, were forums of political and literary discussion, and the ideal space for a writer to

seek possible patrons and benefactors (Álvarez Barrientos 2006: 90-132). Obviously, conversation about many and diverse topics was their central ingredient, a dialogical interchange which might inspire the participants' writings to the point acknowledged by Godwin in *The Enquirer*.

At this juncture, it is of particular interest to map the circumstances under which this text by Godwin reached a Spanish journal. The Geneva editors had a series of suppliers or correspondents in Britain who dispatched to them recently published materials, books, and journals (Bickerton 1986: 313). By means of summaries, deletions and changes, they created a sort of amalgam (*Bibliothèque britannique* 1797: 4, 5) for each of the compiled texts, which implied a selection of information from the previous selection carried out by their correspondents and by the British journals and magazines. Then, in the Spanish journal, Olive made a final selection, taking what he considered the best pieces (1807: Vol. 1, 3). Obviously, making such decisions is not an innocent task. As Lawrence Venuti put it, such decision making is "always a very selective, densely motivated choice" (2004: 482). In this regard, Umberto Eco explains from his own experience of the translating process, that there are many parties involved, each of them with their particular claims, leading him to describe translation as negotiation (2004: 6). The editors of the *Bibliothèque britannique* reveal some of their motivations and justify their choice by stating the reputation gained by two of Godwin's previous works – *Political Justice* and his novel *Caleb Williams*. They also eulogize the English writer because he stands up for his opinions and ideas with absolute truth and independence, and they finally affirm that Godwin is a good, reasoning philosopher and an interesting writer (1798; Vol. 6, 467-68). The Spanish editor, echoing the Geneva editors, alleges in the introduction to the text that this author is considered of great merit in England and his work is among the most solid examples (1807: Vol. 2, 34).

The version in Olive's collection (1807: Vol. 2, 34-65) includes the 16 essays from the first part of Godwin's *The Enquirer*, all of them summarized, as they appeared in the *Bibliothèque britannique* (1797: Vol.

6, 467-501). Godwin's text is accompanied in the *Biblioteca británica* by some "Observaciones sobre la primera parte de la obra" (Remarks on the first part of the work), which were equally translated from those put forward by the Geneva editors to counteract some of the English writer's opinions. Additionally, essay six, "Of the Study of the Classics", acquires a more relevant role given that it is featured as an independent article later on (1807: Vol. 2, 108-24) and it is translated entirely. This first part of *The Enquirer* concentrates on educational matters, while the second one – which was not translated into Spanish – is of a miscellaneous nature, comprehending essays on diverse topics, such as riches and poverty, servants, posthumous fame, and the last one, "Of English Style", which reviews and assesses various English writers from the previous two centuries.

Given the deep admiration professed by the Geneva editors of the *Bibliothèque britannique* for Godwin and his work, they resolved to award an ampler space to the second part of *The Enquirer* in this collection (1798: Vol. 7, ix). Thus the essays of this part are not summarized and appear in four parts – three in volume seven and the fourth one in volume eight – and all of them have their corresponding remarks and commentaries. This high regard toward the English writer, as well as the great length of the *bibliothèque*, favored the publication of more texts by Godwin. In volume one his first novel, *Caleb Williams* (1794), is advertised; in volume eight the plot and a review of his second novel *St Leon* (1799) is provided; in volume ten a long extract of *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798) can be read; his third novel, *Fleetwood* (1805), is summarized in four parts in volumes 29 and 30; and finally, his *Essay on Sepulchres or, A Proposal for Erecting Some Memorial of the Illustrious Dead in All Ages: on the Spot Where Their Remains Have Been Interred* (1809) is extracted and commented on in volume 45.

The Spanish translation of the first part of *The Enquirer* follows quite faithfully the version in French, except for some brief omissions, usually of short sentences. Nevertheless, the longest and at the same

time the most interesting elision refers to Godwin's opinions on Rousseau and on his educational system. In his treatise Godwin alludes to the Genevan writer in two essays, twelve and fourteen, though in the intermediary text Rousseau is only mentioned in the first one. In essay twelve, "Of Deception and Frankness," Godwin praises Rousseau for his contribution to the educational realm, but then he affirms that his system is based on "a series of tricks, a puppet-show exhibition, of which the master holds the wires, and the scholar is never to suspect in what manner they are moved" (1797: 106). That is, the relationship between teacher and pupil as proposed by Rousseau is based on deception and "in all cases of this sort a plot discovered would be of incalculable mischief" (107).

Considering these negative judgments, it is obvious that, in spite of the great influence of Rousseau's *Emile* upon the writers and philosophers of the period, Godwin among them, the English writer did not coincide with some of his pedagogical theories. Hence, later on, in essay fourteen, "Of the Obtaining of Confidence," he criticizes Rousseau again, this time on the grounds that he proposes "a fictitious equality" to obtain the pupil's confidence, and he therefore rejects Rousseau's method describing it as "a system of incessant hypocrisy and lying" (1797: 120). Nevertheless, both French and Spanish translations omit this last passage. As a consequence, the Spanish readers were not acquainted with Godwin's objections to Rousseau's educational treatise. Among the reasons for this omission self-censorship should be mentioned, since, after the arduous task of translating a text, a cautious translator would provide the adequate and expected text, deprived of any risky or dangerous element (Pajares 2010: 71) that might prevent its publication. In Spain, any publication had to pass a double censorship – that of the Inquisition and of the Government – and Rousseau's works had been prohibited by both of them (Domergue 1981: 45). As already noted, Godwin's works were recorded in the Inquisitorial indexes, yet the fame of these two writers was not comparable in Spain at that time, where reading Rousseau

might entail inquisitorial persecution and condemnation (Domergue 1981: 41-67), while Godwin's *The Enquirer* was actually published with the inscription of its author's name apparently with no problem. Interestingly, both volumes of the *Biblioteca británica* have on their cover the indication that they were published with His Majesty's License, which means that the editor had passed the Government censorship and had a license or permission to publish the text. In fact, as recorded in the Spanish National Archives, Olive had a license to publish another journal entitled *Minerva o El Revisor general* since 1805, as a sequel of another one, *Efemérides de España*.⁹ Concerning the publication under scrutiny here, its editor, Olive, maintained the title of *Minerva* on the top of the cover, which for the purpose of censorship implied that the *Biblioteca británica* had also acquired the corresponding permission to be published.

A pedagogical text like this by Godwin contributed to the ongoing debate on this subject in Spain, where, as in other countries, both progressive and conservative thinkers participated passionately. As happened abroad, the progress and the advancement of the nation were thought to rely to a great extent on the improvement and development of education. Yet *The Enquirer* is less a pedagogical prospectus than a philosophical tool "that may help us make our way through the project of education with a somewhat better sense of direction, provided we learn how to use it" (Handwerk 2011: 118). As mentioned above, Godwin's *The Enquirer* was only partly published in the *Biblioteca británica*, but his key ideas on education are there, starting from his unwavering confidence in the power of education as the solution to the problems of his society and as the best way to attain happiness and virtue (1807: Vol. 2, 34-35). In order to achieve this, he considers crucial a clear judgment and good thinking habits (35). Godwin also draws attention to the necessity of awakening the mind from early childhood, not imbuing it with information but by means of curiosity and observation (36-37). Besides the natural world, a relevant means of awakening children's interest and appetite for knowledge is reading. Contrary to Rousseau

again,¹⁰ Godwin is completely in favor of an early taste for reading, as stated in the title of Essay four (38-39). Unsurprisingly, freedom is also a key contention in this essay: he advocates children's freedom, as well as not isolating them from the world and its possible evils since they have to be prepared to confront them and reject them as such (56). As already observed, he insists on the benefits of dialogue and constructive debates as a means of gaining instruction while being entertaining (47). To sum up, he proposes a system based on freedom, optimism, individualism, and the power of reason, and also on equality. Teacher and pupil are on the same level and work cooperatively, shaping in this way a relationship which avoids despotic attitudes on both parts (41-45). In this way Godwin emphasizes his commitment to an alternative education that is particularly attentive to children's motivations and desires, while the teacher is somewhat relegated to a secondary role as a helper and a supporter in the teaching/learning process.

As Godwin himself admitted in the preface, in *The Enquirer* his ideological standpoint is less radical than in his former writings and makes some concessions, particularly in Essay eight, which refers to public and private education. In spite of not mentioning any official institution, he advocates public education on the principle that it prepares students to get along in society (1807: Vol. 2, 41).¹¹ Another important change perceived in this educational text with respect to previous assumptions refers to the role given in it to emotions,¹² both in the relationship established between teacher and pupil and between parents and children (52), which have to be grounded on frankness and trust. This assumption places Godwin's proposal very much in tune with the previously mentioned current of thought that emphasizes a greater implication of parents in the education of their children.

Interestingly, some of these assumptions were undermined in the Spanish compilation, which translated comments made by the Geneva editors in their *bibliothèque* (1798: Vol. 7, 19-37), though of a much shorter extension (*Biblioteca británica* 1807: 61-65). The compilation in French thus includes remarks of *The Enquirer*, as happened in the

reviews of the treatise published in Britain (Graham 2001: 109-35). The Spanish version, however, reduces its objections to only three. The first remark against Godwin's educational system questions what is considered an excessive freedom accorded to the child, given that he could thus become restless, whimsical, and annoying. Such a child is portrayed as incapable of paying attention to work, of being at leisure, or of enjoying the games suitable for his age. The slightest subjection bothers such a child and even any constraint provoked by nature irritates and exasperates him (1807: Vol. 2, 62). Likewise, the second objection reflects on the scarce plausibility of teaching at contemporary schools those subjects which pleased the children most. As they say, this would be excellent if they could discover the secret of engaging the children, considering that usually the appeal of novelty overcomes laziness, but the latter is again triumphant shortly after novelty diminishes (63). Godwin himself, years later, in *Thoughts of Man* (1831), would admit the difficulty of this task (Handwerk 2011: 109-10). Finally, criticism is leveled at the friendly relationship pursued by Godwin for parents and children, claiming that confidence and trust is complicated between parties when their beliefs and viewpoints cannot coincide due to their different ages. Instead of friendship, parents should take advantage of their superiority, grounded in their knowledge of passion and their child's heart, and in the veneration obtained by a loving care and a good example (65).

Since the *Bibliothèque britannique* was read in a number of European countries, an outline of some general ideas of the Geneva editors of Godwin's *The Enquirer* seems appropriate, given their relevance for assessing the reception of the English author. After acknowledging the difficult task of translating and abridging Godwin's text, they commence by stating some notions about the prejudices with which Godwin's writing was read and discussed at that time (1798: Vol. 7, 20). As general remarks on the whole text, they mention on the one hand the lack of an essential goal in *The Enquirer* due to its disparate structure and Godwin's inclination to paradoxical argumentation (21).

Moving to more specific deficiencies, the Geneva editors disagree with Godwin's definition of "moral," as appears in essay twelve. They argue that it is not sufficient to separate a child from vice by showing him the pernicious consequences, proposing religion as necessary in this case (29). The editors of the *Bibliothèque britannique* also allege some divergences involving the section devoted to the choice of readings, in that the teacher should not give entire freedom to his pupil and should supervise his character and nature in order to recommend those readings that suit him the most by means of friendly directions and reasonable advice (32-35). When dealing with the objections to the last essay in the first part of *The Enquirer*, surprisingly they address severe criticism against Godwin on the grounds that by the content of this essay – and by extension, of the whole text – it is quite clear that it has been created out of resentment, probably caused by badly accepted criticism (36-37).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the novelty of some of Godwin's pedagogical assumptions and prescriptions in *The Enquirer* were bound to be questioned. However, considering the Spanish reformers' pedagogical ideas, their proposals are pretty close to those of the English philosopher, both in their theoretical foundation – happiness, utilitarianism, perfectibility or optimism, among others – and in their practical implementation, which centers mainly on the student's particular needs, reasoning, and experimentation (Negrín Fajardo 2011). Most notably, the publication of *The Enquirer* is inscribed within a general context of deep concern about education in most nations, which logically entails similarities in the propositions. Those in charge of these initiatives were intellectuals with similar interests who read practically the same authors and works, and who, thanks to their contact networks and circles of friends, knew what was being analyzed and discussed, not only in their own country but also in other faraway forums (Esteban 1988). But unlike Godwin, the majority of these reformers put forward more pragmatic proposals with the aim of attaining the improvement and progress of societies enduring a period of crisis.

IV. Conclusion

In a moment in which the notion of traffic expanded and included not only the traffic of goods, but also the traffic of ideas, this study has revealed Godwin's significant presence in Spain, both in qualitative and quantitative terms, and has also explicitly traced the route followed by his works and ideas in reaching the Peninsula. The amelioration of communications among different parts of the continent, however, was challenged by constant convulsions and conflicts at the turn of the nineteenth century, in which at certain moments Spain and Britain were on opposing sides. Yet this analysis has demonstrated that there were people in Spain who, overlooking these adverse circumstances and acting in a provocative and subversive way, turned to any place in their quest for innovative and original ideological instruments in order to fulfill their personal commitment to their society.

Although Britain, France, and Germany usually stand at the core of enlightened cultural interchange, this enquiry has helped bring to the fore specific features of peripheral or lesser-known cultural border-crossing relations. Jovellanos's direct and indirect readings, discussions, and eventually even appropriation of some of Godwin's propositions in *Political Justice* refer clearly to an élitist group of men, who from their leading positions in society and government wanted to introduce changes in order to improve the circumstances of their country, always having in mind the introduction of a new political system – that is, a modern constitution. The enlightened moral duty of intellectuals is also palpable, as is their need to be useful to their fellow citizens, though they were still a minority seeking a different agenda to improve the circumstances of the majority. On the other hand, the translation of *The Enquirer* was also intended to be useful, but with a more accessible and informative aim of offering new ideas for an ample readership, trying thus to introduce the improvements on a smaller scale, starting from the family, by reforming parent-child relationships. Yet the advances needed in Spain in order to achieve modernity had to overcome extremely difficult obstacles. As this analysis has shown, some political

and religious assumptions were profoundly rooted in the Spanish people's consciousness, which, with a long tradition of inflexibility, did not allow room for heterodox positions.

Spanish intellectuals like Jovellanos can be seen as representative of the ongoing process by which enlightened cosmopolitanism and rationalist universalism were losing ground to a nationalist consciousness more in tune with Romanticism, resulting in the fragmentation of Europe into modern nations and states with new requirements, such as new political, economic, and educational systems. One of the consequences of this significant shift is the empowerment of the vernaculars, which propelled the necessity of many more translations to satisfy the demands of a much more extensive readership. This process was possible thanks, among other factors, to the printing press, now a flourishing business, which, by means of cheaper products such as periodicals, disseminated the writings of well-known authors, but also permitted among their miscellaneous contents the arrival of writers such as Godwin, whose radical or at least alternative postulations would have otherwise made his presence on the Spanish ideological scene improbable.

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Notes

¹ Scholars on Jovellanos agree that it corresponds to Jardine's *Letters from Barbary, France, Spain, Portugal, etc. by an English officer* (1788).

² In 1901 Julio Somoza, in an inventory of Jovellanos's works, mentioned a manuscript containing his notes on Godwin's *Political Justice* (1901: 125).

³ The second draft or extract of a letter addressed by Jovellanos to Jardine has been dated 18 October 1794 but it does not mention Godwin. In this shorter extract the Spanish writer vindicates the necessity of combating religious superstition by means of reason and rejects again the violent imposition of political dogmatism that occurred in revolutionary France (De Lorenzo Álvarez 2008: 28).

⁴ Jovellanos tells Jardine about one of his most pressing concerns, that he needed technical books for the education of his students and he regretted that most of them were banned by censorship not because of their content, but on the grounds of the mere religious affiliation of the author. Given these circumstances, he also informs his English friend that he had requested a special license of the General Inquisitor, the Archbishop of Toledo, to keep prohibited books in the library of the Instituto (1985: 642). After being rejected twice, Jovellanos eventually obtained this special permission in April 1798 (Jovellanos 1999: 42-44, n554). Apart from satisfying Jovellanos's technical necessities, Jardine supplied Jovellanos with other reading materials, such as periodicals (Jovellanos 1985: 641) and other books by Jardine's acquaintances, namely Helen Maria Williams's *Letters written in France, in the summer 1790, to a friend in England; containing various anecdotes relative to the French Revolution* (Jovellanos 1986: 65)

⁵ Similarly, Godwin discovered that he was being spied on on account of possible subversive activities (St Clair 1989: 377). Jovellanos also found out that a priest was sent by the Inquisition to inform on the Instituto in Gijón, and particularly about the contents of its library (1999: 432-33).

⁶ At the end of the nineteenth century in a curious treatise, published in 1881 by a Spanish priest, Godwin appears again connected to Jovellanos. This text was published in order to smear the reputation of the Spanish writer, particularly regarding his religious beliefs. The author, Miguel Sánchez, uses Jovellano's statement about the good nature of Godwin's system in the previously mentioned draft of a letter to discredit him. Godwin is thus portrayed as a fanatical atheist, as a materialist, as an enemy of the Monarchy, of property, and even of family and marriage. He adds that by leafing through Godwin's *Political Justice* and *Caleb Williams*, it is clear that his naturalism was even more radical than that of Rousseau and of Diderot (Sánchez 1881: 25).

⁷ Even though the editor never mentions that he has translated the texts and he just says that he has extracted them (*Biblioteca británica* 1807: Vol. 1, 3), it is assumed that he was also the translator.

⁸ The two volumes of the *Biblioteca británica* can be found in the library of the Diputación Provincial of Granada (Spain). I would like to thank its staff for generously sending me a copy of them.

⁹ Spanish National Archive, AHN, Consejos 5568, leg. 44-33. Part of this report can be also found in González Palencia (1936: 64-65).

¹⁰ It must be recalled that Rousseau described reading in his model of negative education as childhood's scourge (1998: 162).

¹¹ Some scholars have emphasized this somewhat timid bid on public education as a consequence of the influence of Mary Wollstonecraft's support of a public, free, and universal education promoted by the Government (Chapell 1978: 359).

¹² Godwin's relationship with Wollstonecraft and his new family circumstances might be also behind this new emotional path in his ideology (Smith 1982: 219). As for Godwin's role as an educator, notwithstanding all these formulations, analyses, and theories on education, he did not consider himself an apt educator in practical terms. Thus, after Wollstonecraft's death and with two small girls in his charge, Godwin confessed to a friend – obviously in a moment of deep distress – that he was "the most unfit person for this office" (qt. in Locke 2010: 149). Years later, her own daughter Mary Shelley corroborated this fact, stating that his father's "strictness and severity of manner made him unsuited to educating" (qtd. In Handwerk 2011: 122, 10).

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