

RESEARCH

<http://doi.org/10.15198/seeci.2021.54.e632>

Received: 24/02/2020 --- Accepted: 17/12/2020 --- Published: 12/04/2021

**ENLIGHTENMENT AND ROMANTICISM DIALECTICS IN *EL ROBINSON URBANO*'S ANTONIO MUÑOZ MOLINA
JOURNALISTIC ARTICLES**

**DIALÉCTICA ILUSTRACIÓN Y ROMANTICISMO EN LOS
ARTÍCULOS PERIODÍSTICOS DE *EL ROBINSON URBANO*, DE
ANTONIO MUÑOZ MOLINA**

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How to cite the article:

Ruiz Rico, M. (2020). Enlightenment and Romanticism Dialectics in El Robinson urbano's Antonio Muñoz Molina journalistic articles. *Revista de Comunicación de la SEECI*, 54, 55-78. <https://doi.org/10.15198/seeci.2021.54.e632>

ABSTRACT

Introduction: *The Urban Robinson* appeared in 1984. It was the first work published by Antonio Muñoz Molina. As such, it contains the key elements of the initial work of the author. Those elements are the foundation for his later production. **Methodology:** This work analyses *The Urban Robinson* under the dialectic between the Enlightenment and Romanticism, which offers a perspective from which to read the years and tensions of the Spanish democratic transition as a historical period, as well as the relations between journalism (exercised in freedom again) and literature. To make this analysis, this article uses a bibliography on journalism and literature, on the one hand, and, on the other, on Enlightenment and Romanticism, as well as on Postmodernism as a post-Romantic period. **Discussion:** *The Urban Robinson* is presented, in the first years of Spanish democracy, as a defense of reason and the Enlightenment project, although it also reports its risks and excesses. Among them, the social control by the State, the market or technology, the devastation of the historical heritage of the cities, the alienation of the individual, the return of superstitions and nationalist *folklorism*, intellectual snobbery, or the hegemony of the productivist morality. **Conclusion:** All these are elements typical of the romantic criticism of the Enlightenment, which find in the pages of a local progressive newspaper, in the Granada of the Transition, and Muñoz Molina's pen, a framework of genuine and singular manifestation and expression.

KEYWORDS: Literary Journalism - column - Enlightenment - Romanticism - Spanish Transition - Antonio Muñoz Molina.

RESUMEN

El Robinson urbano apareció en 1984 y es la primera obra publicada por Antonio Muñoz Molina. En tanto que *opera prima*, contiene los elementos clave de la obra inicial del autor jiennense, que harán de cimiento a su producción posterior. **Metodología:** En este trabajo se analiza dicho título bajo la dialéctica entre la Ilustración y el Romanticismo, que ofrece una óptica desde la que leer los años y las tensiones de la Transición democrática española como período histórico, así como las relaciones entre el periodismo (ejercido en libertad de nuevo) y la literatura. Para hacer este análisis, se emplea bibliografía, por un lado, sobre el periodismo y la literatura y, por otro, sobre la Ilustración y el Romanticismo, así como sobre la Posmodernidad como etapa posromántica. **Discusión:** *El Robinson urbano* se presenta, en los primeros años de la democracia española, como una defensa de la razón y del proyecto ilustrado, aunque también es una denuncia de sus riesgos y excesos. Entre ellos, el control social por el Estado, el mercado o la tecnología, la devastación de patrimonio histórico de las ciudades, la alienación del individuo, el regreso de las supersticiones y del folklorismo nacionalista, el esnobismo intelectual o la hegemonía de la moral productivista. **Conclusión:** Todos ellos son elementos propios de la crítica romántica a la Ilustración, que encuentran en las páginas de un periódico local progresista, en la Granada de la Transición y en la pluma de Muñoz Molina un marco de manifestación y expresión genuino y singular.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Periodismo literario - articulismo - Ilustración - Romanticismo - Transición española - Antonio Muñoz Molina.

DIALÉTICA ILUSTRAÇÃO E ROMANTISMO NOS ARTIGOS PERIODÍSTICOS DO *EL ROBINSON URBANO*, DE ANTONIO MUÑOZ MOLINA

RESUMO:

El Robinson urbano apareceu em 1984 e é a primeira obra publicada por Antonio Muñoz Molina. Enquanto *opera prima*, contém os elementos chave da obra inicial do autor de Jaén (Espanha), que será a base da sua produção posterior. **Metodologia:** Neste trabalho se analisa este trabalho usando a dialética entre a Ilustração e o Romanticismo, que oferece uma ótica onde se permite ler os anos e as tensões da Transição democrática espanhola como período histórico, assim como as relações entre o jornalismo (exercido em liberdade de novo) e a literatura. Para fazer esta análise, foi usado bibliografia, por um lado, sobre o jornalismo e a literatura e, pelo outro, sobre a Ilustração e o Romanticismo, assim como sobre a Pós Modernidade como etapa pós romântica. **Discussão:** *El Robinson urbano* se apresenta, nos primeiros anos da democracia espanhola, como uma defesa da razão e do projeto ilustrado, porém também é uma denúncia dos seus riscos e excessos. Dentro deles, o controle social pelo Estado, o mercado ou a tecnologia, a devastação de patrimônio histórico das cidades, a alienação do indivíduo, o retorno das superstições e do folclore nacionalista, o esnobismo intelectual ou a hegemonia da moral produtivista.

Conclusão: Todos eles são elementos próprios da crítica romântica à ilustração, que encontram nas páginas de um jornal local progressista, na granada da transição e na caneta de Muñoz Molina um marco de manifestação e expressão genuíno e singular.

PALAVRAS CHAVE: Jornalismo literário; Articulismo; Ilustração; Romantismo; Transição Espanhola; Antonio Muñoz Molina.

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1. INTRODUCTION

El Robinson Urbano's article collection, of Antonio Muñoz Molina, was published for the first time in 1984 in Granada by the Selene publishing house in a desktop publishing of its author, who at that time was an officer of the City Council's Culture Delegation. This was the first work published by the Úbeda writer, in the end, one of the most prominent voices of the generation that emerged immediately after the Transition (understanding it as the period between 1975 and 1982) and, of Spanish letters of late 20th and early 21st century.

With two exceptions ¹, the articles included in the said volume of *El Robinson Urbano* had been published between Friday, May 7th, 1982 (the second number that the newspaper put out on the street) and Friday, April 8th, 1983 in the *Diario de Granada* and under the same heading: *El Robinson Urbano*. This was a newly created newspaper with a progressive ideology² that appeared in the city amid Transition. In total, there were 41 articles published under this heading in the local newspaper from Granada.

In a more or less casual way, as he has explained (Muñoz Molina, 2011), the author began to publish his *robinsonian* articles once a week (in general, every Friday). He was still an unpublished writer: in those years he was working on the draft of what would later become his first novel, *Beatus Ille*.

Selene's 1984 compilation book would later be reissued by Seix Barral after a visit to the city by Pere Gimferrer. This editorial seal allowed the author to expand the

¹ The last article of his, published on Saturday, July 2nd, 1983 in *Diario de Granada*, "*Saluda a Alejandría que se aleja*", was included in the book despite not having appeared under the heading *El Robinson Urbano*. However, Muñoz Molina added it into Selene's collection together with "*Todos los fuegos el fuego*", which the writer had also published in that period in the magazine *Olvidos de Granada*.

² Its first director and the one who allowed Muñoz Molina to write in the newspaper, Antonio Ramos Espejo, says (Ruiz Rico, 2012, pp. 580-581): "Almost a century later we felt we were heirs of the *Defensor de Granada*, founded by Luis Seco de Lucena in June 1880 (we left in May 1982). *El Defensor* ended up seized at the beginning of 1936 and his then director, Constantino Ruiz Carnero, shot, as well as his friend Federico García Lorca".

framework of dissemination from the purely local to an already national scale. Seix Barral later published *Beatus Ille*, a title that began the author's novelistic career.

But Muñoz Molina did not only published articles during his collaboration with *Diario de Granada* but also news, interviews, reports, literary criticism, etc³, thus forging a fruitful journalistic collaboration during those two years, 1982 and 1983. The first thing he published, moreover, was not a column for *El Robinson Urbano* but rather an article on local issues and current affairs. This happened the day the newspaper began its operation, May 6th, 1982. The article was titled "*Los carteles del Corpus: persistencia en el error*" and he signed it under the pseudonym Alberto Neira: "I was worried about the vulgar sound of my name, which did not seem literary to me", explained the author (Ruiz Rico, 2012, p. 515).

Finally, the signature, the name of Antonio Muñoz Molina, was born for the Spanish letters the next day, in the pages of a newspaper, with the first article of *El Robinson Urbano* series, in the second issue of *Diario de Granada*, a newspaper of progressive ideology that had been born for the new Granada of the recovered democracy in those years of the Spanish Transition.

The article appeared on page 11 and was titled "*Primer manual*" (in the later edition in book format, Muñoz Molina would change the title to "*Escuela de robinsones*", in a clear allusion to the title of the homonymous novel by Jules Verne). This column supposes, therefore, the journalistic and literary baptism of Antonio Muñoz Molina, and it does so in the last blows of the Spanish Transition (the Statute of Autonomy of Andalusia had not yet been approved, nor had this community even celebrated its first regional elections) and in the city where Franco's repression had reached one of its maximum symbols with the murder of Federico García Lorca in the first months of the Civil War.

Muñoz Molina can be considered, in this way, one of the first names to emerge from the literary generation of the post-Transition, that is, from the Spanish literature of democracy. Muñoz Molina is embedded in the generation just before, that new batch of authors that had connected with a new audience in the first stage of openness, democracy, and freedom unknown for four decades. José Carlos Mainer (2009, p. 68) has traced a brief tour of the names that compose it, beginning in 1975 with the publication of *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta*, with which Eduardo Mendoza (born in 1943) opens "the new narrative of action and fantasy". Juan José Millás (1946) "wrote the first story that reflected the moral voids of the new era" in *Visión del ahogado* (1977); José María Guelbenzu (1944) gave shape in *El río de la luna* (1981) "to the bankruptcy of ideals after 1968; Luis Mateo Díez (1942) created new provincial customs in *Las estaciones provinciales* (1982); José María Merino (1940) "came of age to identity crisis novels" with *La orilla oscura* (1985); Javier Marías (1951) "reinvented a psychological novel (arbitrary, light, ironic, and at the same

³ The complete journalistic work of these first two years in Granada has been collected in the doctoral thesis *El Robinson Urbano. Soporte periodístico y literario en la obra de Antonio Muñoz Molina* (Ruiz Rico, 2012).

time disturbing) in *El hombre sentimental*'. Marías's novel is already from 1986, precisely the year in which Muñoz Molina made his novel debut with *Beatus Ille*. The author of *Úbeda*, therefore, enters the history of Spanish literature through the same door that the immediately preceding generation had opened.

Since the publication of his first title, *El Robinson Urbano*, and his first novel, *Beatus Ille*, a constant has been going through Muñoz Molina's work: throughout all these years, he will be publishing novels, essays, and articles with the same dedication, all as part of the same literary work, as he has stated (in Ruiz Rico, 2012, p. 153):

A series of articles has a double life: the first, at the moment of its immediate publication, and the second already filtered by time, when it loses the status of novelty and may or may not reveal its ability to last. Carefully selecting the articles that one considers worth putting together in a book is a literary task, even if they are books that do not attract too many people. [...] I do not consider by any means that all of mine pass the test of time. But, in the set of my books, I believe that the volumes of articles are as representative of who I am and of my work as the novels.

The originality of this work is given, in part, by the very context in which Muñoz Molina's voice emerges as a writer; a dual context: the historical one, on the one hand (namely: the Granada of the Spanish Transition), and, on the other, the material type, that is, the pages of a newspaper (which is also a new appearance, precisely because there is again freedom and democracy in Spain after the end of Francoism).

The study of the articles of *El Robinson Urbano* aims to be a contribution to the study of this generation of writers of Spanish literature (a generation that arises, in a very specific and defining historical moment) but also a basis from which to address the relationships between journalism and literature. But, and this is perhaps the most decisive thing, the study of *El Robinson's* articles will offer an analysis of the first keys on which the later work of one of the most outstanding writers of current Spanish literature will emerge and settle. All this, moreover, on a poorly studied work by the Jaen author. The first doctoral thesis on this title was defended in 2012 at the University of Seville and there are hardly any studies⁴ on it despite, as we defend, its already mentioned triple importance.

Finally, within the various approaches that could be applied to the study of *El Robinson Urbano*, this article will use the dialectic between the Enlightenment and Romanticism that beats both within these articles and, perhaps for that very reason and how it will be explained later, in the very historical stage of the Transition and

⁴ Before the doctoral thesis, a book was published (Ruiz Rico, 2011) that analyzed certain aspects of *El Robinson Urbano*. As a consequence of said doctoral thesis, an article was published (Ruiz Rico, 2013) in the journal *Ámbitos* focused, in this case, on this title by Muñoz Molina as an example of literary journalism in the Spanish Transition.

the immediate post-Transition (starting, as we say, in 1982). It is also about a dialectic that gives rise to others of an internal nature and that form the backbone of the work, namely: city-country, night-day, freedom-dictatorship, Robinson-Apollodorus, myth-reality, poetry-prose, seeing-writing, interior-exterior, feminine and masculine, journalism-literature, thinking-acting, interior travel-exterior travel, and so on.

This is also a novel approach in the study of Muñoz Molina's work. The use of this prism will yield results that not only seek to become part of the corpus of articles, essays, and books on the author's work but could also provide a different approach and a new and genuine light on other titles of the author of *El jinete polaco*, thus opening up a new avenue for future research.

2. OBJECTIVES

This work starts with the main objective of highlighting the importance of the dialectic between the Enlightenment and Romanticism in the *opera prima* of Antonio Muñoz Molina. It is *El Robinson Urbano*, one of the least studied works of the author. On the other hand, the work of the writer from Úbeda has been analyzed from a multitude of points of view and approaches, however, the tensions between both cultural currents are a contribution that we consider new and that provides very enriching results in the research and consideration of the journalistic and literary universe of Muñoz Molina.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this research, a wide bibliography has been used on the two great themes on which it transits, namely: the Enlightenment and Romanticism. Likewise, the original articles published by Muñoz Molina in *Diario de Granada* in 1982 and 1983 under the heading *El Robinson Urbano* have been used for the analysis. The collection of articles published by the author himself in Granada a year later, in 1984, includes a selection (not the entirety) of them with certain modifications (especially of the most local and current aspects of the city itself) and adjustments.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1. The Enlightenment and the concept of progress in democratic societies

The basis of the discussion in this article is the relationship and tensions between the approaches of the Enlightenment and the subsequent attack it received from Romanticism and how this tension, this *dialectic*, is transferred in successive stages of history. One of these stages is the Transition and the first years of the consolidated Spanish democracy, which led to the recovery of democracy and freedom after more than 30 years of Franco's dictatorship. *El Robinson Urbano* bears witness to these tensions. On the one hand, the work celebrates the arrival of freedom and is a hymn to progress; on the other, it denounces its excesses or

deviations and is a warning about putting the ultimate enlightened ideal at risk: the emancipation of man and the creation of a system of real freedom and social justice. Precisely, as will be seen, the same keys that sustained the reaction of Romanticism to the Enlightenment.

Kant defines the Enlightenment as (2004, p. 33) "the event by which man leaves the minority of age. He is guilty of it. The minority of age is based on the inability to use one's own understanding, without the direction of another [...] *Sapere aude!* Have the courage to use your own understanding! Here is the motto of the Enlightenment". The Enlightenment was born in Europe in the 18th century as the great modernizing project of the human being. As Cassirer warns, it does not come out of nowhere but has its background (1993, p. 17) in "the literary-spiritual movement of the Renaissance" of the 15th century, the religious reform of the 16th century, and a century later, "the triumph of Cartesian philosophy [that] completely changes the whole image of the world".

The enlightened project has as its primary objective the emancipation of the human being. And in a scenario of freedom, Kant argues, "the public can enlighten itself [...] even, it is almost inevitable".

This link between freedom and reason inexorably leads to the idea of progress, which defines the enlightened project so much. In this way, Cassirer (1993, p. 18) points out that "the spiritual life of the [18th] century [...] is caught in a powerful movement that carries it forward". He adds (1993, p. 19), there is hardly any century "so deeply impregnated [...] [and] moved with such enthusiasm by the idea of spiritual progress as the Age of Enlightenment".

To such an extent this is so that Kant assures (2004, p. 37) that "the original determination [of human nature] consists, precisely, in that progress", that is to say, he specifies (2004, p. 36), in "expanding their knowledge" and "promoting enlightenment".

The lever of progress is reason. "When the 18th century wants to designate this force [of the spirit that lights the flame of progress] it appeals to the noun *reason* [...] The 18th century is saturated with the belief of the unity and invariability of reason," argues Cassirer (1993, p. 20).

But appealing to reason is not just an appeal in a vacuum; It implies a complete paradigm shift that, in turn, leads to the explosion of scientific positivism that the West will experience from that moment on. Cassirer (1993, p. 21) exposes this change of radical turn: "The philosophy of the 18th century takes as a model not Descartes but Newton. Not an initial hypothesis from which a complete philosophical system that encompasses everything is deduced, step by step"

From now on, the German philosopher continues (1993, p. 22), we act in the following way: "Not starting from any starting point, arbitrarily of course, of a *hypothesis*, to then fully develop the implicit conclusions in it [...] A truly *univocal*

starting point cannot be provided by abstraction and physical *definition*, but only by experience and observation”.

"Faced with this system spirit [of the previous philosophy, typical of Descartes] a new alliance between the *positive* and the *rational* spirit is now proclaimed," and in this scheme, reason "is made to unfold little by little from the progressive knowledge of events", says Cassirer (1993, p. 23).

This user manual will assume the reason and scientific positivism will be applied to all fields with blindness as if it were an infallible magic formula. Even to legislations, as Kant warns: "The mindset of a Head of State who favors this freedom goes even further and understands that, when it comes to *legislation*, it is not dangerous to allow subjects to make *public* use of their own reason and publicly expose to the world their thoughts regarding a more perfect conception of that legislation which can include a frank criticism of the existing one" (2004, p. 39).

This link between freedom, reason, progress, and democracy was immediately described by Tocqueville himself, who in his *Democracy in America* wrote that (2017, p. 107) "the idea of progress and the possible unlimited perfection of the human species [is] typical of democratic periods”.

However, as Adorno and Horkheimer warn, this has its counterparts (1998, p. 59): "The Enlightenment, in the broadest sense of ever-progressing thought, has always pursued the goal of freeing men from fear and make them lords [...] The program of the Enlightenment was the disenchantment of the world. It tried to dissolve myths and overthrow imagination through science". *Overthrow imagination*: it is against that, as it will be seen, against what the romantics will cry out, against the oppressive and dehumanizing roller of positivist reason, of enlightened reason brought to its paroxysm, as if it were a new religion.

The romantic reaction against the Enlightenment is a genuine phenomenon of Modernity. Romanticism was the first questioning of the Enlightenment. But it has not been the only one to the point that this debate has continued to this day in various ways, as will be analyzed later. In fact, as Innerarity (1989, p. 13) has stated, "contemporary philosophy has become a reflection on Modernity”.

A work like *El Robinson Urbano*, so anchored in the enlightened parameters, on the one hand, and such an heir, at the same time, of the Romantic aesthetic, on the other, offers an unmatched framework for the analysis of this Enlightenment-Romanticism dialectic, which is, in no small measure and as it has been defended, a reflection on the Enlightenment and Modernity themselves. A debate, as Innerarity argues, present and fundamental in the philosophy of our days, and as Tocqueville has warned, typical of the reflection on the idea of inherent progress in democratic societies and periods. It is not by chance, therefore, that this reflection appears so present in *El Robinson Urbano*, which saw the light in the middle of the Spanish Transition.

3.2. The Transition and the dialectic between the Enlightenment and Romanticism

As Isaiah Berlin (2000) has described, among others, Romanticism is a philosophical and artistic trend that emerged in the 18th century as a reaction against the Enlightenment. But what did the Enlightenment entail and why attack the Kantian project? Berlin (2000, p. 44-45) assures that

The particular twist that the Enlightenment gave [to the rationalist tradition of Europe] consisted in pointing out that the answers could not be obtained by many of the traditional means followed so far [...] The answer cannot be obtained by revelation, since men's different revelations seem to contradict each other. It cannot be reached by tradition, since it has been shown that tradition is often misleading and false. It cannot be obtained by dogma, by the individual introspection of men belonging to a privileged group, since too many impostors have usurped this function; and so on. There is only one way to discover these answers, and is thanks to the correct use of reason, deductively as in the mathematical sciences, inductively as in the natural sciences. This is the only way by which answers can be obtained [...] And there is no reason why such answers, which have produced successful results in the world of physics and chemistry, after all, cannot be equally applicable to those fields, much more problematic, of politics, ethics, and aesthetics.

The enlightened project, which founds Modernity, is a project of the liberation of man, of the emancipation of the individual, and affirmation of objective knowledge as a tool for the scientific and moral progress of humanity. The proposal consisted of abandoning superstition and embracing reason to create a society based on objective, scientific analysis, which would lead to a solidary society based on social justice and freedom, since the world was a community of equal human beings, forcibly twinned, and nature, the house, the environment, which had to be tamed and accommodated to the human being. Against this background, the idea of *progress* arises and with those wickers, a new society would have to be built and history would advance towards an end where the human being would be liberated, emancipated.

For this reason, the 18th century is more a century of essays and journalism (modern newspapers emerge, in fact, to a large extent, also driven by technical advances) than of romantic fiction and lyrical poetry. In Spain: Feijoo, Jovellanos, Cadalso, Meléndez Valdés, Larra, Alberto Lista, Blanco White, etc. Poetry is going to be moral and educational (Iriarte, Samaniego).

But the enlightened wave reaches the absolute conviction that "what Newton had achieved in the field of physics could, with certainty, also be applied to the field of ethics and politics" (Berlin, 2000, p. 46), and it is precisely against this that the romantics react with unusual violence.

The enlightened proposal of the 18th century, and the previous centuries, continues Berlin (2000, p. 154), "was that there was a nature of things, a *rerum*

natura, a structure of the world. For the romantics, this was absolutely false. There could not be a structure in the world since that would imprison us, suffocate us". These objective scientific rules, applied to human beings and society "can become a dreadful burden, fearsome chains and tyrannies that subject us to all kinds of conceptions towards which neither the present nor our own will is inclined [...] Any general theory [...] is a fatal form of despotism that claims to possess an objective validity that is above individual choice", says Berlin (2000, p. 190).

Perhaps for this reason, "in Novalis we read that nature has been 'denigrated to the condition [...] of a uniform machine", adds Rüdiger Safranski (2018, p. 175). This author (2018, p. 174), in fact, recalls that the romantics condemned "the disenchantment of the world because of rationalization." In this way, "the areas of life and work are increasingly organized according to the form of an 'instrumental rationality.' The rational and the instrumental together are condemned in what Weber calls the *steel cage* of modernity".

Safranski, along the lines of Berlin, maintains (2018, p. 175) that the romantics denounced that "the mysterious twilight has given way [because of the enlightened postulates] to an artificial light of day [...] This 'gray light' of the current Enlightenment was produced for the romantics not only in their heads but also in social reality, which they experienced as an increasingly regulated and uniform mechanism".

To the bourgeois and enlightened conception of art as a utility, the romantics oppose a metaphysics of art (Safranski, 2018, p. 177-178), so that if the utilitarianism of the enlightened aesthetic appealed to objectivity and realism, Romanticism responds with art that nurtures and proclaims the wonderful, the prodigious, the eccentric, the irrational (Safranski, 2018, p. 179), so that romantics feel dread and oppression at the perfection of geometric shapes (Safranski, 2018, p. 182) when an enlightened person would have felt harmony, stability, and peace.

Romanticism is a critique of the dehumanization and moral involution that technology and science would impose on human beings and society, a matter of enormous importance at this time for the current *network society*: digital, globalized, and hyperconnected. This issue has been repeatedly raised by the romantics (not only in the 18th century, but also in the 19th, with Baudelaire in *Las flores del mal*, in a pessimistic sense, and Victor Hugo with *Les miserables*, in an optimistic sense), and Postmodernity brought it back in the 20th century with the resounding experience of Auschwitz: to what extent has scientific progress, the advancement of science, and technology, brought or can bring moral progress, have supposed or can suppose the attainment of the *new man*, of the *new and perfect society*? Or what is a perfect society and if that perfection would leave room for the expression of the human. At the end of the day, it is to rephrase in other terms the old dilemma between freedom and order, or, as it is most often posed today, freedom and security, the eternal tension (probably unsolvable) between the Apollonian and the Dionysian, to put it in Nietzschean terms.

This is the dialectical axis between the Enlightenment and Romanticism and it is an axis that impregnates Postmodernity itself, conceived as the period that begins after the first end of Modernity symbolized, as we have indicated, in Auschwitz. Despite this tragic experience, Antonio Muñoz Molina, far from considering Modernity and the Enlightenment as definitively failed projects, clearly vindicates in *El Robinson urbano*, his *opera prima*, the Enlightenment, that is, reason over superstition and, with this, aesthetic realism, that is, the narration of memory and everyday life to testify (in a clear link with the exercise of journalism as a factual story, as non-fiction), the realism of the great classic novel of the 19th century, of Flaubert, Dickens, Eliot, Galdós, Clarín, Tolstoi, Proust, and Mann as perhaps its last heirs.

In the case of the author of *El jinete polaco*, this claim is more than logical: the Enlightenment, the republican ideal, the modern project, had exceptionally set itself in Spain since its first attempt with the liberal Constitution of Cadiz of 1812. The Spanish Transition, the years in which Muñoz Molina was born as an author, are the fulfillment of that enlightened ideal. *El Robinson Urbano*, nestled in this historical setting, is a defense of enlightened ideals and Modernity, but also a warning of its risks and threats. That is to say, again an update of the dialectic between the Enlightenment and Romanticism, the prism that will be applied to the study of these articles.

4. RESULTS

It was Kant, in his work *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, of 1764, who anticipated the romantic feeling by addressing the emotion of the sublime in contrast to that of the beautiful. As the Prussian philosopher observes (2011, p. 4-5):

The emotion in both is nice but in a very different way. The sight of a mountain whose snow-capped peaks rise above the clouds, the description of a raging storm [...] produce pleasure, but linked to terror; instead, the contemplation of flowery meadows, valleys with undulating streams, covered with grazing herds; the description of the Elysee or Homer's painting of the belt of Venus also cause a pleasant sensation, but happy and smiling [...] The night is sublime, the day is beautiful [...] The sublime is, in turn, of a different nature. The accompanying feeling is sometimes one of a certain horror or melancholy.

This beautiful-sublime dialectic will also be typical of the romantic stage as a response, above all, to the annihilation of the mysterious in the natural world by scientific-technical development. In general terms, the Enlightenment advocates the beautiful, the day; Romanticism the sublime, the night. The rational, the diaphanous, the rectilinear, is beautiful; the magical, the irrational, the mysterious, the curved, is sublime. Again, the Apollonian and the Dionysian.

Faced with fanaticism and the threats of reason and blind positivism, the romantics, says Berlin (2000, p. 33-34), promoted "a great return to emotionalism, which [gave rise to] a sudden interest in the primitive and the remote—for the

remote in time and space— that manifested a longing for the infinite”. And there arises nostalgia and paranoia. The first, explains Berlin (2000, p. 142), “is based on the fact that we try to understand the infinite, but it is immeasurable, which is why nothing we do will give us satisfaction”. As for the second, paranoia, it is linked to infinity, especially history and self-consciousness. Berlin assures (2000, p. 145):

There is something behind it, in the dark depths of the unconscious or of history; there is something, however, that we cannot reach and that frustrates our dearest desires. Sometimes it is conceived as a certain hostile and indifferent nature; other times, like the lessons of history [...] This paranoia, manifests itself in multiple ways, some crueler than others. It is revealed, for example, in the search for all kinds of conspiracies in history. Men are beginning to suspect that perhaps history is driven by forces over which they have no control [...] Practically, he conceives it as a kind of huge and ironic Aristophanic force that mocks poor human beings, who try to build their little homes on the slope of what they understand to be a green and flowery mountain, but which is actually the great volcano of human history.

To begin with, this idea of infinity is clearly and centrally present in *El Robinson Urbano* in different ways, especially in the characters and the setting where the action takes place. On the one hand, Robinson and Apollodorus are eternal characters, they travel through time since immemorial times in such a way that *El Robinson Urbano* describes his adventures in the Granada of the Transition (which is also, perhaps because of that, the mythical Granada of the Alhambra) but they will disappear and go to another city where they will again undertake other future and timeless adventures.

There is also the city, the Granada-myth, eternal, therefore, the Granada in which “you always have to look for the most curved distance between two points” (“*El extranjero de sí mismo*”). As immediate references, is the city-labyrinth of Borges, is Baudelaire's *Spleen of Paris* (absolute reference of this work by Muñoz Molina), and the odysseic city of Leopold Bloom in Joyce's *Ulysses*, already cited as a reference from the inaugural article of this series (“*Primer manual*”):

“Joyce had to come [...] to give a definitive shape to the labyrinth and the urban Robinson's profile. Ulysses, the first castaway and pilgrim of whom we have memory, no longer seeks his impossible Ithaca in the Mediterranean islands —stripped of all mystery or adventure by tourist cruises— but in the sad streets of Dublin. Ulises picks his nose while he looks at the shop windows. Ulises hardly does anything: he just looks, walks, murmurs, greets someone he knows, pure gaze without will or purpose”.

In this quote, on the one hand, a clear reaction of romantic inspiration is observed in the complaint of the loss of the mystery of the Mediterranean by tourist cruises, an issue that will be recurrent throughout these articles and that is continuously countered by a call to travel and urban adventure, precisely two elements that are also clearly romantic, as Safranski (2018, p. 193) argues, which even alludes to “the great misgivings”. Muñoz Molina, without going any further, appeals to “that arduous pilgrimage that most likely will never end” (“*Juego de las conmemoraciones*”). On

the other hand, the aesthetic and ethical pillar of *El Robinson* is expressed as a diaphanous commandment: a robinson, the modern Ulises, is, Muñoz Molina writes, "pure gaze".

Again, a figure that has its roots in Romanticism, namely: the romantic voyeur (Safranski, 2018, p. 201) as a key character in the romantic and odysseic city, in this case, the Granada of the Transition, the ambivalent Granada that intersects in two simultaneous planes the mythical city and the present and luminous city of the recovered democracy, where "people write and paint, make music, imagine newspapers, and begin to use freedom", as they say in "*Septiembre escueto y rosa*".

The city-labyrinth is an attack on the rectilinear of the Enlightenment. The romantics, Safranski breaks down (2018, p. 182), criticize that "what is straight and measured, although externally spacious, has the paradoxical effect of provoking a feeling of narrowness" so that, this author continues (2018, p. 182)

the "'infinite oscillations' of life" are extolled. The intricate, also the dark, attracts, as long as it allows digressions and ramblings, as long as it is open to surprises and allows "exciting confusion". For this same reason, the labyrinthine medieval city is praised and natural gardens are preferred to the well-paced French park.

Already in "*Primer manual*", as we have seen, the city is spoken of as an "urban labyrinth" and of the new urban adventure: "the pleasure, absolutely unprecedented until then, of touring the city without going anywhere and without having another company than one's own voice in conscience". For this reason, it is denounced in the said article that "if one walks calmly and aimlessly through some American cities, one is a suspect for the police." This is another example of the Enlightenment-Romanticism dialectic as it recovers one of the romantic criticisms of the Enlightenment: the myth of human control, which today would be the denunciation of the *big brother* that modern cities are becoming (due to the digital technologies and computer advances), although they were made for emancipation: "The air of the city [makes us] free, a medieval saying went," Muñoz Molina writes in that "*Primer manual*".

This labyrinthine city appeals to the eternal adventure of walking through it, through its streets, the best method of discovering it: letting yourself go aimlessly. That is to say, the character of Robinson as opposed to Apollodorus, who is the character of recollection, of the room, of thought (Enlightenment) versus action and adventure (Romanticism) that Robinson represents. Although the act of looking, contemplative observation is clearly Enlightenment heritage (Berlin, 2000, p. 123).

But Robinson is also the *flâneur* described by Walter Benjamin as the anonymous inhabitant of the modern city, who knows it with his eyes and walking through it, making his own adventure with the walk, an adventure that is similar to writing: "The city revives in this warm and promising September like a blank piece of paper" ("*Septiembre escueto y rosa*"). In this way, walking, seeing, and writing is the same thing: it is knowledge through action and observation.

As Benjamin (2005, p. 447) writes: "Máxima del *flâneur*: in our standardized world, you have to go on the ground and thoroughly; strangeness and surprise, the most surprising exoticism, are very close", so, he assures that the city appears as "the fulfillment of the old human dream of the labyrinth. To that reality, without knowing it, the *flâneur* consecrates itself". (2005, p. 434).

The walk and the gaze appeal to that romantic and modern self, an expression of free and irrational subjectivity in the face of the oppression of an objective geometry of Enlightened inspiration (in the pessimistic version of the Enlightenment), it is the self that wanders through the city and discovers it by looking at it, it is the *voyeur*, the spy: "Robinson spies: he would like to have a thousand open eyes to receive all the things that the city has to offer in one swoop", Muñoz Molina writes in "*Primer manual*".

That gaze leads to writing, and writing leads to the café, to the Robinson's refuge, a refuge not secluded (like Apollodorus's mysterious and almost monastic apartment) but nestled in the very heart of the city. The cafe is *El Suizo* in *El Robinson Urbano*, where Robinson and Apollodorus often meet, and that cafe is the place where the birth of modern literature and journalism takes place, as Martí Monterde (2007, p. 273) has exposed:

The cafe was the writer's work cabinet [...] throughout the 19th century, but the 20th century added the character of refuge of which the window would be a guarantor and a viewpoint at the same time. The *flâneur's* return to the café was uneasy, and the glass, transparent but solid, will be the ultimate distance, the essential distance that the individual will be able to maintain to avoid its dissolution into nothingness at all.

Again, that modern literature that Muñoz Molina claims in "*Primer manual*": a "modern literature, seized by the moment, whose natural space was the hurried pages of newspapers", writes the author of *Úbeda*. The cafe, the bar, *El Suizo*, in the Robinsonian Granada, is the link between the city and the writer, the journalist, the *chronicler*, as Muñoz Molina says, and that connection is made through a clear bond: the window. Again, another romantic element, as Safranski (2018, p. 192) points out, that attachment (which connects with melancholy and adventure) to reality

the preference is shown through the window [...] the one who longs, looks through the window and hears the songs of the walkers about the trips that lead to a distance [...] The windows open their gaze to open windows, to images that lead to the unpredictable [...] [and it] calls to get going.

The inhabitants of the cafe (daytime) or the bar (nighttime), "look at the street like immobile fish behind the aquarium glass, because in those bars [...] the neon tubes and the walls painted in a funeral green give the air an aquatic sadness", writes Muñoz Molina ("*El vino de Los héroes*").

The contemplation of the infinite reality that is never covered with the gaze was for the romantics (Safranski, 2018, p. 193) an invitation to travel ("*Invitación al*

Viaje' is one of the articles from the Robinsonian series titled) since it announces a mystery and adventures to be pursued. Safranski (2018, p. 193) writes: "[It is about the] traditional motive of the great journeys and deviations, which begins with Odysseus and the legend of the Argonauts and reaches the modern age through the stories of madmen in the Middle Ages and the Flying Dutchman. From them, the romantics extract the journey without arrival or goal, the endless journey".

The wanderer, who is sometimes in the pages of *El Robinson Urbano* also the madman, the wacko, the urban sleepwalkers, appeals not so much to the walker, the *flâneur* as to the figure of the excluded, the barbarian (as ironically said in "*La feria de los bárbaros*"), the *clochard*, the beggar, according to the dialectic (*flâneur-clochard*) established by Benjamin in his analysis of the modern city, which is labyrinthine and urbanely erotic, but also industrial and demystifying. There are dozens of references to the clochard in *El Robinson Urbano*, as in the articles "*Capital de la locura*", "*El vino de los héroes*", or in the "*Primer manual*" itself, in which the "man, the crowd, the lazy, the madman, the traveling musician, the boy who plays the trumpet [...] the blind man who shouts [...] the comedian with the clown's tongue and the hirsute Mormon".

But, returning to the concept of travel, Robinson is, not in vain, described as a "perpetual flying Dutchman" ("*Septiembre escueto y rosa*") which, when he steps on the streets of Granada, it "revives, in this warm and promising September, like a blank paper". Robinson is always "ready to lose himself in a walk on the *wild side*, on the wild or dangerous side that promises so much" ("*Breviario de impostores*").

The trip, the adventure, is the antidote to flee from boredom, something that also connects with the very heart of the romantics. They saw geometrized space and time [as] the specter of a bad Enlightenment" (Safranski, 2018, p. 182). So "the discomfort for normality [of a perfect and objectively organized life] is concentrated in the fear of boredom" (Safranski, 2018, p. 182). With romantics, says Safranski (2018, p. 183) "boredom appears as the great theme of Modernity [...] This 'boredom' can even create 'horror', which Kant calls *horror vacui*".

El Robinson Urbano is practically an essay on this subject and, not in vain, the work has as its model and key reference Baudelaire and his *Spleen de Paris*. For this reason, Muñoz Molina writes ("*Septiembre escueto y rosa*") that in "the cafes and squares [...] there is the stimulating indication of an adventure whose first signs are shaping the image of a new city that is slowly opening up again", and contrasts this with the "warfare flashes in the thicket of boredom" and calls for freedom from the "no less gloomy designs of the official gazettes".

Boredom, therefore, appears in *El Robinson Urbano* as a consequence, on the one hand, of the oppression of the modern city (failure, therefore, of the enlightened project of liberation), especially reflected in the organization of capitalist work, which implies a work that does not humanize and that does not leave time for personal fulfillment (along the lines, among others, by Richard Sennett, 2006). On the other hand, as a consequence of boredom in the face of the mechanization of the city, it

already appears demystified and without magic; it has lost its aura because it is organized without charm, like a factory, like a technical mechanism.

For this reason, the Robinsons, one reads in "*Primer manual*", "those crazy people who walk around Granada, absorbed in their pilgrimage, are frowned upon by the authorities." The modern city that promised to be a factory for free men has ended up being a place of dehumanization and alienation, hence Muñoz Molina writes that, in the end, "the city's bitter hero [is the one who is assaulted] by the coming of the night lying in the armchair of a sordid office" ("Manhattan Transfer"). And when the night is over, as a moment of adventure and liberation from the chains of the day, the urban robinson "meekly pulls off his mask in front of the mirror and then brushes his teeth and sets the alarm clock that will return him to the boredom of the accepted simulations. This is how Robinson surrenders over and over again" ("*Breviario de impostores*").

Urban alienation occurs, as we say, in a specific space in which it reaches its correlate: the city without aura, without charm, with a technical geometry that leaves no space for the human, which crushes the being and its realization: "When one is born for the night and the city, every wall draws the shape of a cell and every hour is a nightmare of clocks that burst at dawn amid dreams" ("*La trampa en el espejo*"). Faced with this oppressive situation, "let's see who can or knows, who dares to erase the number of his identity card from his forehead" ("*Breviario de impostores*"), in a clear denunciation of the *great brother* of the modern city, absolutely current right now.

Given this, Muñoz Molina claims with writing a city that appears as a scene of adventures, often maritime ones: "Each sidewalk unexpectedly turns for Robinson into the beach of the country of the Feacios" ("*Vindicación de la rodilla femenina*"). "Granada is a great Alexandria that welcomes us all in its squares", is written in "*Primer manual*". "*El Suizo*, like the promenade in the living room, is an island" ("*Elogio de El Suizo*"). In "*Un busto en el salón*", it is stated that "the Robinsons from Granada need from time to time to arrive at some island in the form of a public garden". Or, in "*Los niños terribles*", the double duality of Granada is raised: "City or jungle".

There is, however, an uncompromising defense in *El Robinson Urbano* of the original and genuine values of the Enlightenment as a defense of reason and as a liberating project for the human being and for the sake of achieving a righteous society. For this reason, despite the vindication of the night as a space of freedom, of romantic mystery, of adventures, and expression of the true self in the face of the mere digits of an identity card, it is celebrated that "there are men born for the day" ("*La trampa en el espejo*"), and in "*Las mañanas, el centro, la serenidad*", what begins with an attack on utilitarian morality (which has turned the free citizen into a slave of production, with no free time for to be fulfilled, in a city that has become a factory) ends up being a song to the light, to reason, to moderation, and the calm of the mornings as a space of freedom, serenity, and roots, in the face of the exaltation of the sublime night, defended more as a game, therefore:

At nine o'clock in the morning, with my hands in my pockets or with an attentive gaze, I practice the minority pleasure of not going anywhere [...] It is about doing nothing, obeying the steps indicated by chance and the plot of the streets, surrendering to the smell of damp grass, surprised when crossing some gardens [...] [Robinson] loses himself in the labyrinth of white columns illuminated at their top by an other-worldly light, and when he returns to the street the daylight dazzles him, inviting him to continue his pilgrimage [...] At nine o'clock in the morning, the exercise of laziness acquires the merit of a positive act, of a private rebellion [...] And so, just as there are work breakfasts, you have to invent pleasure breakfasts and make love appointments not in evenings, so discredited by literature and postcards, but in the first and sweetest hour of the day, in such a way that getting up early is not a punishment but an obligation of happiness [...] Literature, which has always exalted the prestige of the night, only very rarely has dealt with the modest joys that mornings bring [...] [Borges wrote that] "at that time I was looking for sunsets, suburbs, misery, now I look for mornings, downtown, and serenity".

The light of the Enlightenment appears vindicated in the face of the romantic night, which is, in *El Robinson Urbano*, the light of democracy in the face of the long night of Franco's dictatorship. It is "the cowardly night of ferocious tyrannies", as described in "*Escrito en las paredes*"; the night where despite everything, the said article continues, there are people who take "into their own hands the freedom to say what cannot be silenced, knowing that it is likely that two handcuffs or a gunshot will break the cry they were writing".

The night, in this way, is no longer the romantic scene of adventures and transformation, but the threat of the day, evil, guilt, such as the one that the city harbors for the crime of Lorca, as described in "*El ángel exterminador*", where the spirit of the distinguished poet from Granada is spoken of, precisely, not as a light that leans over Granada but as a shadow that "returns and appears again and again".

Faced with that night and those shadows, the light of democracy that makes a city livable and breathable. "Fortunately, we have the day left," says Muñoz Molina, not in vain, in "*Primer manual*" because not only the air of the city makes free men, as it is said in this article, but also its light, which is the light of democracy and the free city. Of course, with the arrival of democracy as the achievement of enlightened values, the end of the story is not happily consummated.

For this reason, Muñoz Molina also warns of the vagaries and the return to superstition and folklore; this, in part, led by a certain nationalism of the land, so linked to a misunderstood Romanticism (Safranski, 2018, p. 165-166). On the return to folklore, there are several resounding examples. In "*Granada contra Graná o qué hizo Hegel por Málaga*", Muñoz Molina contrasts Granada "which in the space of a few centuries has given the world's imagination landscapes and memorable names", to that other city, Graná, described as

the provincial estate (not a closed paradise but a suffocating greenhouse) where all mediocrity has its seat in the Parnassus of vernacular essences and is surrendered to the cultural and thick cult of the jayuya, the poor man's potatoes, and the *chisterazo de a Toma* as sacred signs of what was previously called peculiar idiosyncrasy and today receives the name, already liturgical, of *signs of identity*.

This description is followed by the criticism, also directed by the left, which should represent reason and universal, enlightened culture, that "all the old local pork meat [...] returns, revived mummy, to incarnate in a stew of roots and antiques that a certain cultural left, supplies us like silly soup to remedy so many years of destitution". It is the criticism, as it is written in said article, to the "slipper nationalists" and the vain and alchemist attempts to "recover the scattered ashes of the Andalusian Being", to the point that "being born in Andalusia is no longer a coincidence or a disgrace, but a rare metaphysical privilege".

Muñoz Molina, in said article, uncovers the two keys to his ethics and his literary aesthetics: "in every city and the universe is encrypted", so that in the local microcosm there is also the universal, but not in the folkloric swelling of the traditional local traits; on the other hand, it is written in this article, "no one has the obligation to be a prophet in his land, but an artist must always be a pilgrim in his land."

This criticism is added to certain symptoms that the author detects of the failure of the enlightened ideals. It is in this sense that he warns of the "holy rejoicing of the irrational and miraculous" (in "*Razón de amor*") or the fanaticism of football as a pseudo-religion (in "*Instrucciones para sobrevivir a los mundiales*").

Against this, there is the resounding defense of reason and, as the work of reason, the modern city that makes free men and humanizes. "Any brief victory of reason becomes a miraculous event," he writes in "*Elogio de El Suizo*". For this reason, there is in this article a fierce criticism of the destruction of heritage as mutilation of memory (a city is "the long memory of itself", it is said) and charges against "the heroes of the pick-ax." Hence, in "*Las mañanas, el centro, la serenidad*" it is celebrated that "when streets are closed to traffic to impose on them the forgotten delight of walking calmly", and in "*Un busto para el salón*" it is praised that "with the Transition [...] not only have some uniforms changed, albeit very slowly, but municipal fashion has once again slipped towards green".

After so many gray and dark years, the green and light of the Transition arrive, inserted, like Spanish democracy itself, in the tensions, excesses, and successes of the approaches of Romanticism and the Enlightenment.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The newspaper articles of *El Robinson Urbano* represent the literary and journalistic baptism of Antonio Muñoz Molina. They appeared in the local newspaper

Diario de Granada in 1982 and 1983; a book that included a selection of them was edited by the author himself a year later. *El Robinson Urbano*, therefore, offers the basis for the study of the fundamental features of the original work of who would become one of the fundamental voices of contemporary Spanish-language literature.

The dialectic between the Enlightenment and Romanticism offers a unique prism for the analysis of these newspaper articles. In the first place, due to the specific historical context itself, the Granada of the Democratic Transition and the freedom recovered after the decades of Franco's dictatorship.

Secondly, because of the broader historical framework of the West, Postmodernity (after Auschwitz as the absolute symbol of the first failure of Modernity, just as the romantic critique of the Enlightenment warned).

Third, due to the literary and journalistic tradition explicitly declared by the author in these texts, his baptism for Letters: modernity and Baudelaire's *spleen*, Joyce's wandering Ulysses, De Quincey's artificial paradises, journalistic romanticism, and Larra's testimony, Borges's labyrinth-city.

But also because of the themes (of romantic inspiration, as analyzed following Berlin and Safranski) that Muñoz Molina addresses in these articles: the urban adventure (Verne, romantic travel literature, etc.), making poetry out of reality, praise the modern city as a factory of freedom but also warn of the oppression that a city can exercise (if it becomes a factory, a golden cage: annihilation of the self, alienation), the mystery of the night, the night as liberation, the praise of the light of reason, and the emancipation of the self in the face of the night of dictatorship and superstition, but also the terror that beats behind the normality of the geometric light of day, the archetypes of the *flâneur* and the *clochard* as central characters of the modern city (Benjamin), the critique of the folklore of the terroir and postcard against the vindication of the artist of the microcosm anchored in his intimate community, the Literature of the romantic self and its link with articulism and, hence, with modern journalism. Both spheres, modern literature and journalism, also made their appearance in the 18th and 19th centuries in a common setting: the cafe (Martí Monterde).

The cafe, as a refuge for the writer in the very heart of the city, advocates for the gaze and it calls for action: writing and travel (the urban adventure). This is the name given to the exercise of the *literature of reality* anchored at the moment, in the now, which, as Muñoz Molina writes in *El Robinson Urbano*, finds its ideal support in the hurried pages of newspapers. One of the objectives of this writing is to tell the city, the everyday, to recompose the fragmentation of the city and the urban individual and weave a common thread, a story, a unifying narrative. And writing it for the record, to record it all now that the city, the world, and its inhabitants are moving faster than ever.

This exercise of recomposing is also linked to memory. A city, Muñoz Molina writes in these articles, is the "long memory of itself". This return to the past is also

romantically inspired; an incorrect interpretation of this was what ended up leading to crude romantic folklore (Safranski, 2018, p. 328) and fabricates what Vattimo (1990, p. 123) calls the *myth of origin* (as opposed to the myth of progress) that, in the end, has been the basis of many postmodern nationalisms, as a version of political romanticism, so criticized by authors such as Safranski (2018, p. 324, 325, 353) and by Muñoz Molina himself, as has been described.

Both the literature of reality and the literature of memory are the axes through which all the subsequent work of the Úbeda writer travels, whose last titles, in fact, return directly to the root established in the articles of *El Robinson Urbano: Sefarad* (2001), *El viento de la luna* (2006), *Como la sombra que se va* (2014), *Un andar solitario entre la gente* (2018). Practically the rest of his works would belong to the branch of memory literature, but especially *Beatus Ille* (1986), *El jinete polaco* (1991), and *La noche de los tiempos* (2009).

As a suggestion for future research, it would be necessary to analyze the work of Muñoz Molina under the prism of the dialectic between the Enlightenment and Romanticism. This article serves as the first modest stone that makes the initial base of this possible line of research.

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