



ALAN DEYERMOND

Alan David Deyermund

1932–2009

I

ALAN DEYERMOND'S DEATH on 19 September 2009 at the age of 77 brought both bewilderment and grief to friends and colleagues the world over.¹ Those who had known and been enriched by that exuberant concentration of fierce intellectual curiosity, prodigious memory, inexhaustible mental energy, unremitting focus, obstinacy, integrity and kindness, felt his going as a loss of substance in their own lives. Those who knew him as a fellow-Hispanist were aware of the deprivation as something not simply personal but professional and strategic. Even at this distance, it remains

¹The following, especially valuable as sources for this memoir, are cited below in abbreviated form:

Obituaries: Jane Connolly, '“Amigo de sus amigos ... qué seso para discretos”': *In memoriam Alan David Deyermund*, *La Corónica*, 38.1 (Fall, 2009), 6–40 at 7–18 (hereafter: *JC*).

Tributes by David Hook and Ralph Penny at the Queen Mary, University of London memorial service, 29 January 2010 (*QM tributes*).

Joseph T. Snow (with M. R. Menocal and S. G. Armistead), 'Memoir of Alan Deyermund for the Medieval Academy of America' (*MAA Memoir*).

Interviews: by Spanish Embassy cultural staff, 'Galería: Alan David Deyermund', *Donaire*, 8 (June 1997), 93–104 at 100–4 (*Donaire*, 1997).

by Juan Cruz for *El País*, 23 April 2006 (*El País*, 2006).

Online: <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/alan_deyermund/>. Biblioteca Virtual Cervantes commemorative site, edited by Alberto Montaner Frutos. Includes updated (2011) version of Rafael Beltrán, 'Alan Deyermund: tradición y renovación en los estudios medievales hispánicos' (originally 2002) (*BVCervantes*).

<<http://www.alandeyermundinmemoriam.wordpress.com/>> memorial site, edited by Rosanna Cantavella. Contains sixty-five personal tributes (*Cantavella IM*).

hard to disentangle the two effects—not least because so much that we learned from him was about the extent to which the two belonged together.

Hispanic Studies as an academic discipline became fully established in Britain only after the Second World War. Its two outstanding older figures in the medieval field, William J. Entwistle and Ignasi González Llubera, were formed in other specialisms, as Classicist and Hebraist respectively. When, after 1945, those trained primarily as Hispanists came to the fore, the most creative of them—Peter Russell, Brian Tate, Keith Whinnom, Colin Smith—found their role determined to some degree by the precarious condition of medieval studies in Spain itself. For many years it remained a defining, though unsought, function of these diversely gifted scholars to bring to specific historical and literary themes a humanistic breadth for which official Spanish culture under Franco scarcely allowed, and an empirical rigour which it dared not sustain.

Alan Deyermond, a rather younger figure, shared in that work, and in its underlying sense of purpose—as much a matter of scholarly as of political integrity—at a time when Spanish medievalists were recovering that purpose for themselves. The value of his early work to that recovery was quickly recognised: within two years of the first appearance of Alan's *Literary History of Spain: the Middle Ages* (London, 1971), Francisco Rico had organised its publication in Spanish. It would be reprinted nineteen times over the next three decades, a normative and well-loved text ('el Deyermond') for generations of Spanish university students (see e.g. José Luis Pérez López, in *Cantavella IM*). What those students wanted, as Rafael Beltrán identified it, was 'for the social and political changes associated with the end of the dictatorship to be reflected too in radical changes of viewpoint' (*BVCervantes*). They found that in Alan Deyermond's work, not as ideology but as the scholarly remaking of perspectives across the whole domain.

Yet the achievement celebrated in Beltrán's thoughtful eulogy, and reflected in such honours as Alan's Nebrija Prize (1994) and his Corresponding Fellowship of the Royal Spanish Academy (2009), went far beyond that historically apposite contribution. Indeed, it went beyond any service to Spain alone, however just and generous Spaniards were in acknowledging it. For it was Alan Deyermond, more than any other single scholar, who gave medieval Hispanic Studies in Britain, Spain and elsewhere a comprehensive, securely founded disciplinary identity. The impulse towards this was never uniquely his: the medieval chapters (by Brian Tate, Ian Michael, and others) in Russell's *Companion to Spanish Studies* (London, 1973), for example, drew together the findings of many

monographic revisions to an overall effect very like that of the *Literary History* two years before.

Alan Deyermond, though, addressed the task on multiple levels. The fresh approaches and insights of his wide-ranging output made for an inclusive competence, at once defining the field and challenging others at work there. Basic to this was the unique scope of his bibliographical referencing—something he worked especially hard to make available to colleagues. Several major publications—the medieval volumes in *Historia y crítica de la literatura española*, the presentations of medieval Castilian ‘lost literature’, culminating in his Nebrija Prize volume—were projects of that kind.² So was the Grant & Cutler series of *Research Bibliographies and Checklists*—a special concern of his among the publishing ventures launched from Westfield College during his early tenure there.

Another Westfield-based initiative was the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar, which he founded in 1968 and directed for the next thirty years. This became the hub of a remarkable international array of dialogues, exchanges and shared projects—a process begun long before the word ‘networking’ came into general use. Alan, indeed, would have resented that term, with its overtones of deliberate calculation, being applied to interactions stemming from the spontaneous intensity of his own conversations, contacts and commitments. It was this spontaneity and no business plan that sustained, with an energy irresistible to his hosts, his itinerary as conference speaker, invited lecturer, or visiting professor in some fifteen countries worldwide. Yet there were also strategies at work, and Alan, for his part, was perfectly conscious of them.

First, this was someone doing what he did best and loved best, and grateful to have been enabled to do it. From that came the notion of a responsibility to ‘pay forward’: one passed on what one had learned and gave freely what one had been freely given (*Donaire*, 1997, 103; *JC*, 16–17). Through that process, the range of what was or could be known was enhanced, and the field of study changed. A second strategic concern was to reinforce the close engagement with texts, typical of much British scholarship, with more systematic approaches to their contextualisation. For these latter, Alan looked initially to the work of North American Hispanists; later he would explore other sources, not least the flourishing

²A. Deyermond, *Historia y crítica de la literatura española, I: Edad Media* (Barcelona, 1980); *III, Edad Media, Primer suplemento* (Barcelona, 1991); A. Deyermond, ‘The lost literature of medieval Spain: excerpts from a tentative catalogue’, *La Corónica*, 5 (Spring, 1977), 93–100; A. Deyermond, *La literatura perdida de la Edad Media castellana: catálogo y estudio, I: Epica y romances* (Salamanca, 1995).

and newly ambitious medieval scholarship of post-Franco Spain. In so doing, he rendered the discipline in his own country decisively less insular, more professional, less easily contented to rest within its own preferred genre of the revisionist monograph. He was not, and never claimed to be, the only scholar thus engaged. But he worked at it with unique consistency, energy and success.

That general achievement prompts two questions: how was it done? and how deep did its effects go? The answers to the former lie largely within the domain of Alan's life and personality—matters so much *sui generis* that they could all too easily become the whole topic of any memoir. The second question invites an assessment of his work, not only in terms of the virtues it promoted—professionalism, humanistic range and sympathy, empirical grounding—but in its potential to be something more. To have made these qualities normative among scholars—more particularly, British scholars—in his field was perhaps only to have brought them to a place of safety, where it was natural to them to do the best they could conceive of. But did he also equip them to conceive of and to do more, in a world that over the half-century of his working life became, if anything, less secure? To interrogate an output like Alan's in this sense has to appear rash—and might even be felt as impertinent. Not to do so, though, would be impertinence of another order: his claim to that kind of attention is beyond dispute.

II

Several of the obituaries appearing in Spain after Alan's death referred to his 'prototypically English' appearance.³ Such was his image, even among those American colleagues who welcomed him so warmly as one of their own. But it was, in several respects, misleading. The Deyermonds were a Huguenot family, settled since the seventeenth century in the north of Ireland. Alan's more recent ancestors worked as spinners in the linen mills of Belfast; his father, Henry Deyermond, following a familiar route to a wider world, joined the British Army. The early 1930s found him posted to Egypt, and married to Margaret, née Lawson, a primary schoolteacher. It was in Cairo that their son Alan was born on 24 February 1932. No consular record of the birth survives.

³e.g. Juan Cruz, *El País*, 24 Sept. 2009; Manuel Ambrosio Sánchez Sánchez, *El Adelanto de Salamanca*, 14 Oct. 2009.

That flawed documentation was an irony he might have appreciated, as he did other exotic notes associated with his early years: his weaning on buffalo milk, his precocious command of Arabic. A family story told of his being found deep in Arabic conversation with an elderly Egyptian and on being asked who this was, replying: 'Just a friend.' The talent for languages and the natural engagement with a wholly different life are more typical of what Alan was to become than of what the British presence abroad commonly was.

In the late 1930s, however, his father was recalled to England, where the vagaries of military posting decreed for the family a pattern of life the son would look back on as 'so nomadic that I have never been able to give a sensible answer to the question "Where are you from?"'⁴ Travelling by train through Gloucestershire at about this time, the six-year old Alan heard the name of the next station: Cirencester. Forewarned by the story in the *Odyssey* about what sirens were like, he promptly took refuge under the seat. The incident suggests a bright, imaginative, slightly disoriented small boy. Certainly, the family's existence became no more settled or settling with the outbreak of war, in which, from May 1940 onwards, Henry Deyermund held a commission in the Royal Corps of Signals.

It would be easy to see the restless range of Alan's later academic travels as prolonging that nomadic habit. Yet there is also something regretful about his way of recalling it. The depth and stability of his life-long attachments—to his family, his London college, his chosen subject-area—might equally well be seen as consciously redressing its effects. Not that these required redress so far as his education was concerned. As the Cirencester story makes clear, his imagination was even then being constructively fed—almost certainly by his mother, whose prowess as a teacher he would remember with pride (e.g. *El País*, 2006). Most of his Arabic, inevitably, he forgot, but he learned much else. In his eleventh year, now living in Liverpool, he won a place at the prestigious Quarry Bank High School.

The end of the war brought a further displacement. In 1946 the family moved to Jersey. It was in many ways a congenial change. Henry's civilian employment with a firm of leather manufacturers gave them at last something like a fixed location. There was much in the island, too, that could

⁴A. Deyermund, *The 'Libro de Buen Amor' in England: A Tribute to Gerald Gybbon-Monypenny* (Manchester, 2004), p. 5; the Cirencester anecdote is in 'The sirens, the unicorn, and the asp: Sonnets 21, 32, and 26', in *Santillana. A Symposium*, Papers of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar (hereafter PMHRS), 28 (London, 2000), pp. 81–111 at p. 84.

engage Alan's awakening interests: its history, uniquely rooted in a medieval past, its linguistic distinctiveness, and its rich oral folklore all hinted at themes that would matter in his later work. Two features of Victoria College, St Helier, where he completed his secondary schooling, had a more direct impact: unusually for its time, the school gave classes in Spanish, and it had strong links (including a range of scholarships) with Pembroke College, Oxford.

It was on one such award that Alan went up to Pembroke in October 1950. At that time the college was beginning to reshape its traditional intake and academic aspirations towards a more effective modernity. (The Hispanic discipline, with which Alan was to identify so strongly, was going through a not dissimilar moment.) With its 150 or so undergraduates, Pembroke was small enough to remain a friendly place, where individuals could develop in their own ways, free of undue pressures to conform. Several were making their mark at university level; it did not take him long to become one of these.

Initially it happened through student politics. A lively verbal and conceptual wit, a flair for constructing arguments logically, and a tenacious attachment to carrying his point, made him a natural debater. He was quick, too, in mastering the procedural tropes and techniques through which these things could be put to use—a mastery to which anyone attending meetings with Alan in later life could readily attest. He held no office in the Union Society but was prominent in the University Liberal Club, becoming, in his second year, its Secretary and then its President. By contrast with the Liberal Party in the early 1950s, the Club was a thriving concern, with well over a thousand members (many, it is true, drawn more to its social life than to its political agenda). Alan's Liberal allegiance, though, was principled and lifelong—not that either the conviviality or the embattled minority status in wider political terms was uncongenial to him.

For some years, politics remained a serious career option: regarded (rightly) as promising parliamentary material, he was active in the party long after graduation, chairing its Hendon branch from 1959 to 1964. That his payment of party dues became intermittent in later years took little away from his keen interest in electoral matters—his *Who's Who* entry listed psephology as a recreation—or from the energy and urgency of his convictions. Juan Cruz, his *El País* interviewer in 2006, found him outraged by the invasion of Iraq, and deeply troubled by inequalities at home; later, as his obituarist, Cruz described him as 'an English Liberal, keenly alert to world events' (*El País*, 24 Sept. 2009). In that sense the commitment begun in the 1950s scarcely altered.

Still less did another commitment, arising from that same context. Among the members of the Liberal Club was a History undergraduate at St Hugh's, Ann Bracken. Marginally older than Alan, her life in a close-knit extended family of Irish Catholics settled in Manchester gave her a rich human involvement and a down-to-earth stability that his existence had hitherto lacked. They enjoyed the same things and they were serious about the same things, in very much the same ways. They were also a strikingly handsome couple. From their first meeting in 1952 at the age of nineteen, another aspect of Alan's future defined itself once for all.

His professional future took rather longer to shape itself. At first he had found the teaching of modern languages at Oxford indifferent in quality. Like many undergraduates, he was taken aback by how little was done to address the requirement for a 'competent knowledge' of currently spoken language.⁵ His own spoken Spanish, it has to be said, rather reflected that neglect: native-speaker assessments of it ranged from 'unmistakable' to 'peculiar'. For him it was a source of self-deprecating irony, a stimulus to far-fetched tales of people wondering whether Spanish was what he was speaking at all. In practice, he was never less than totally clear in conveying the substance and the subtleties of whatever he wanted to say—but it was very obviously an Englishman who was saying it. (And, he would have added at this point, why not?)

At the outset it was by no means certain that his future would lie with Spanish at all. Pembroke sent him for first-year Spanish tuition to Alberto Jiménez-Fraud, an immensely distinguished intellectual exile, but no natural communicator with his British pupils. Then, in the autumn of 1951, Alan attended a class on Calderón given by a recently appointed lecturer, Robert Pring-Mill. Its blend of rigorous analysis and impassioned engagement with text came as a revelation, and he at once sought out Robert as his tutor.⁶ Peter Russell's *Poema del Cid* lectures, which he also attended in that same term, impressed him with their radical challenge to established views of Spanish epic. A first visit to Spain, on a summer course in Granada in 1952, played its part in giving new focus to his interests. Gradually the project of doing Hispanic research began to form itself in his mind.

⁵ *Handbook to the University of Oxford* (Oxford, 1954), p. 150; for Alan's experience see *El País*, 2006; for comment on his spoken Spanish see Sánchez Sánchez, *El Adelanto de Salamanca*; also Omar García Obregón and Elena Gascón Vera in *Cantavella IM*.

⁶ This outline in *El País*, 2006; see also A. Deyermund, Introduction to "*Mío Cid*" *Studies: "Some Problems of Diplomatic" Fifty Years On*, PMHRS, 42 (London, 2002), p. 9.

The experience of final-year work on medieval literature gave that intention fuller substance. The *Cid*, the *Libro de Buen Amor*, and *Celestina* not only registered with him as the rich literary experiences that they were: they presented themselves—inevitably, given the state of scholarship at the time—as bristling with unsolved problems. Relevantly too, many of these were historical. History was Ann Bracken's subject and the enduringly historicist vein in Alan's thinking owed much to their lifelong conversation (see Hook, *QM tributes*). When he graduated in 1953, with medieval research now clearly in view, he opted for the more specific and defined of the two topics that were offered him: not rhetoric in the *Libro de Buen Amor*, but Petrarch as a source for *Celestina*.

The suggestion came from Peter Russell, appointed earlier that year to the King Alfonso XIII Chair of Spanish Studies, and now Alan's post-graduate supervisor.⁷ Russell very clearly recognised the potential of this new B.Litt. student (it would have been most unlike him not to) yet he did not press him to upgrade his goal to a doctorate. Such a change could have required some piloting through university regulations, and—a more formidable obstacle—might have run counter to Alan's immediate life-plans. Instead, and before seeing him through to a reasonably prompt completion of his B.Litt. (in 1957), Russell encouraged him to publish the first of his findings in an article. 'The index to Petrarch's Latin works as a source of *La Celestina*' appeared at the end of Alan's third research term, in *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 31 (1954), 141–9. Four years passed before he published anything else—the kind of record that might lead today's research assessors to some fairly absurd conclusions. At the time it was enough to get him an Assistant Lectureship at Westfield College, where he began work in 1955. Ann was already teaching at the Henrietta Barnett School in north London. The two were married in March 1957 at Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church. His staunch Anglican loyalties and her family's Catholicism (though she quickly converted) might in those days have created complications; the choice of venue suggests that Alan, typically, was taking the shortest way with these. But both mothers signed the register, and the union was lifelong, close and happy.

So too in its own kind was the engagement with Westfield. The Spanish Department there began in 1955, with John Varey (Lecturer for some

⁷ Alan gave slightly differing accounts of his admission to postgraduate research in *El País*, 2006 and in the introduction that he wrote in 2008 for *Estudios de Alan Deyermond sobre la 'Celestina': in memoriam*, ed. Axayácatl Campos García Rojas and Daniel Gutiérrez Trápaga, *Medievalia*, 40 (Mexico, 2008 (=2010)). In the former he named Robert Pring-Mill as having been his supervisor, but this is not borne out by other evidence.

years before that) as head and Alan, as Assistant Lecturer, his sole colleague. Alan's later claim that 'John spent much of my interview doodling gammas on his notepad' seems suspect: they could just as well have been alphas read sideways by an over-anxious candidate. Relevantly to that, he saw himself as 'an unusually young 23-year-old', in awe of Varey's knowledge and maturity.⁸ Both Varey and Russell had qualities of depth and detachment—massively shaped by extreme, though very different, wartime experience—which could indeed seem daunting to pupils and younger colleagues. This reinforced the authority with which they could and did demand high standards. But it also made them more humanely reflective in their ways of presenting that demand, and it made their recognition the more worth having. Alan was fortunate in his early mentors, and he knew it.

His new post, even so, carried a heavy teaching load: half the classes of a full Single Honours course, whose work had to be mastered at a level to match John Varey's ambition for the new department. It quickly did, with almost forty per cent of Westfield's early graduates taking Firsts, and subsequently Ph.D.s. Their initially tiny numbers grew apace in the early 1960s, as the college admitted its first male students, and again later in the decade, with post-Robbins expansion and the advent of Combined Honours. New appointments from 1958 onwards supported that growth. But Alan's readying himself for the work was an important foundation.

Promotion to Lecturer in 1958 formally ratified how effectively he had done it. The reality, attested in the memories of generations of students, was that of a formidable authority—the profound knowledge base, the unyielding demands for accuracy and documentation ('Have you read the book?')—but also a risk-taking intimacy—jokes, subversive asides, impromptu acting, dialogues with his dog.⁹ The impact was both disconcerting and deeply reassuring. Alan, in admitting students to these contradictions of his own, offered them the status of equals—the respect and support, as well as the obligations. The position of Senior Tutor, which he held from 1967, underlined his crucial role in the department's teaching programme.

⁸A. Deyermund, 'John Varey and Spanish at Westfield', in Charles Davis and Alan Deyermund (eds.), *Golden Age Spanish Literature: Studies in Honour of John Varey* (London, 1991), pp. 11–21 at pp. 13, 15; on the early years of Spanish at Westfield, see pp. 13–16; also Alan Deyermund and Merveena McKendrick, 'John Earl Varey, 1922–1999', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 115, *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows*, I (Oxford, 2002), pp. 385–408 at pp. 389–91.

⁹See the note by Julian Weiss, Louise Haywood and Andrew Beresford in the *Guardian*, 15 Oct. 2009; also Luis González Fernández in *Cantavella IM*.

His command of his subject went well beyond his main medieval concerns. History of language was not his specialism—merely a teaching obligation; yet Oxford in 1961–2 sought him out as Visiting Lecturer to fill a sabbatical gap in that area. The philologist Ralph Penny, coming to a Westfield post in 1966, found in Alan a perceptive reader of his book on the *pasiego* dialect (*QM tributes*). In another domain, his return to publication in 1958 had involved a *Year's Work in Modern Language Studies* report on Portuguese Studies—the first of twenty, over as many years. His first book, *The Petrarchan Sources of 'La Celestina'* (London, 1961), was a rewritten version of his B.Litt. thesis. Its meticulous source-study, directed as much to the manner as to the mere fact of Rojas's Petrarchan borrowings, issued in much well-founded critical comment, notably on unity of authorship. Yet of the sixteen articles which followed it over the next decade, only a couple of early and minor items were concerned with *Celestina*. For the rest, his output, once resumed, grew steadily in range, scale, and authority.

Much of it was stimulated by the demands of teaching. 'The Greeks, the Romans, the astrologers and the meaning of the *Libro de Buen Amor*', *Romance Notes*, 5 (1963), 88–91—the first of several early pieces on a book that would be a lifelong concern—was typical of these origins: succinct and focused on key interpretive issues. So were two short items of 1964–5 on *Lazarillo de Tormes* (one of his post-medieval teaching assignments). A lastingly influential article from this time—'El hombre salvaje en la novela sentimental', *Filología*, 10 (1964), 97–111—applied a wider thematic approach to a genre whose critical profile Alan himself was largely to reshape.

Still more significant for his developing interests were five articles on epic themes. Initially, he was wary of dissenting from Menéndez Pidal's 'neo-traditionalism': in 1964 he still saw epic as 'a national poetry with a unifying function'.¹⁰ The Parry-Lord approach to oral-formulaic epic composition, then much discussed among American colleagues, took a context of oral tradition largely for granted. The article on its possible Spanish applications that Alan contributed to *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* in 1964 might thus have been seen, despite its caveats, as neo-traditionalist in principle. But the book on which he was now working—*Epic Poetry and the Clergy* (London, 1969)—directly challenged Pidal on the date and authorship of the fourteenth-century *Mocedades de Rodrigo*, establishing it as the

¹⁰ A. Deyermond, 'La decadencia de la epopeya española: *Las Mocedades de Rodrigo*', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 1 (1964), 607–17 at 616; see A. Deyermond, 'The singer of tales and mediaeval Spanish epic', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 42 (1965), 1–8.

work of a literate poet (probably a cleric from the diocese of Palencia), and no *juglar*. Respectfully expressed, but firmly grounded in textual and historical evidence, these arguments offered the basis for a critical reappraisal of the Pidalian outlook, more nuanced than others then emerging among British Hispanists, but arguably more effective for that.

Alan, then, was contributing decisively to the other element in John Varey's plans for Westfield: establishing the college as a leading centre of Hispanic research. He was increasingly active too in Ph.D. supervisions: over his working life he would undertake more than thirty of these at Westfield and Queen Mary, and almost as many elsewhere. Helpful ideas from three of his graduate students are acknowledged in the preface to *Epic Poetry and the Clergy* (p. xv). From the outset, too, he was closely involved in publishing ventures stemming from the Westfield Department.¹¹ When Varey and Germán Bleiberg, founding Tamesis Books in 1963, selected an Editorial Board to include 'the most distinguished names' among Hispanists, including Alan in that list was perhaps a decision based on promise, but it was quickly justified by performance as the new series grew. He and Varey would become joint General Editors of the Grant & Cutler *Critical Guides to Spanish Texts*, founded in 1971, as well as of the slightly later *Research Bibliographies* series. Westfield recognised how valuable an asset Alan was, by awarding him a Readership in 1966, and a Personal Chair three years later. Not least among the factors thus acknowledged was the ever-expanding range of his international academic contacts.

The Tamesis imprint had its origins in a conversation between Varey and Bleiberg in a London taxi. The pioneering Spanish Research Seminars at Westfield in the early sixties exploited in similarly creative fashion the fact that London was somewhere through which scholars from all over the world passed. From 1968 onward, Alan's own Medieval Hispanic Research Seminars carried this to a new level. Bringing that about was second nature to him: his innate sociability, his delight in new friends, new ideas, new areas of debate, drew him instinctively in that direction. Visiting Hispanists from overseas were routinely swept into the warm, sometimes chaotic hospitality of the Deyermonds' Hampstead flat.¹² Turning away any such visitor was simply beyond Alan's scope. Yet the spontaneity had

¹¹ On these see Deyermond and McKendrick, 'John Earl Varey', pp. 391–2; also A. Deyermond, J. E. Varey and Charles Davis, *25 años de Tamesis* (London, 1989).

¹² Joseph Snow's account in *Cantavella IM* vividly captures one such moment. See Snow, *MAA Memoir* for Alan's larger purposes; also Lluís Cabré, 'Un medievalista generós' <<http://www.narpan.net/component/content/article/162>>, 27 Sept. 2009. For recollections of the Medieval Seminars (largely from a later period, but the pattern was established early), see *Cantavella IM*, *passim*.

its purposes too. Behind it lay what Lluís Cabré called ‘a strongly practical concern to connect different people and different fields of study’—the commitment defined by Joseph Snow as ‘building a hispanomedieval community’.

From the start, the Medieval Seminars displayed the essential marks of that community. They were strikingly inclusive of different nationalities, opinions, specialisms, and degrees of seniority, and just as strikingly even-handed in their treatment of them all. They gave younger participants especially a sense of being welcomed and valued; they challenged old and young alike with fresh thinking and robust discussion. Among the many who later recalled them with gratitude, two features were mentioned time and again: the meals in local restaurants that followed each meeting, and (beginning, unfortunately, only in 1976) the black notebook where Alan meticulously recorded the names of those attending. His blend of conviviality and system was never so succinctly captured, or exercised to more effective purpose.

His ever-expanding travels completed the pattern. Besides research visits to Spain there were conferences as far afield as the 1967 Modern Language Association (MLAA) meeting in Chicago and the 1968 Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas (AIH) in Mexico. Increasingly, in natural response to all that he was doing in London, there were invited visits to North American universities. Early destinations included Oregon (1967), where Thomas R. Hart was editing *Comparative Literature*, and Madison, Wisconsin (1970), whose array of collaborative projects matched the ambition of his own thinking. Wisconsin were quick to recognise this: in 1972 they invited him back as Visiting Professor, and recruited him, as one of only two overseas scholars, to the Advisory Board of their new Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies imprint.

Alan, by then, was just forty. Various defining circumstances of his personal life had further clarified themselves. His mother had died in 1958; his father, eight years later. The birth in 1972 of his daughter Ruth, and the family’s move to the house in St Albans that would be their home from then on, laid down a pattern as invariant in its way as his affiliation to Westfield. This was how people would remember him: the daily commuter journey that tended to turn into an impromptu seminar for companions and colleagues; the hospitality, as wholeheartedly inclusive as ever, only a little further out of town; the family dogs (with Joe, essentially an urban sophisticate among poodles, dying and replaced successively by the guileless extrovert Toby, and the patient Tom); the delight in Ann’s company and Ruth’s growing up. Though major transformations of

Alan's intellectual and professional life were still to come, they came not as disruptions of that stability, but as developments grounded in it.

Some of the distinctions now accruing to him were predictable. His growing stature within Westfield saw him made Dean of Arts in 1972–4. He was a natural choice as President of the London Medieval Society (1970–4). A founding member and first President (1974–7) of the UK branch of the International Courtly Literature Society (ICLS), he later served as its international President (1977–83). Successive visits to the United States, and a gruelling schedule of invited lectures there—he was, David Hook observes, barely capable of turning down any such invitation—greatly extended the range of American colleagues who valued the man and his work. The visiting professorship at Wisconsin was followed by others at the University of California, Los Angeles (1977) and at Princeton (1978–81)—this last involving alternate semesters teaching there and in Westfield. He was elected a Corresponding Member of the Hispanic Society of America in 1973, and a Corresponding Fellow of the Medieval Academy of America in 1979. By the end of the decade, he was perhaps the best-known British Hispanist on that side of the Atlantic.

On either shore he was among the most liked and most admired. That, indeed, had long been the case: the unique degree to which he was fully within whatever he was doing blended irresistibly with his focused attentiveness to other people's needs (and the assurance that those needs ran parallel with what his would be). In supervisions, conversations, conferences, the pattern was the same: listening, questioning; the flood of new references, new orientations; the incitement to know more. The ordered route to that knowing found prodigal expression in a flurry of throw-away lines, index cards, contact-details. These, as often as not, served as 'reminders to self': for Alan, extending knowledge was essentially shared work.

It was also fun. His conference contributions could entail some hand-to-mouth risk-taking—a challenge he both met and enjoyed. To fill the gap after a plenary speaker at an ICLS meeting unexpectedly withdrew, he expanded his own twenty-minute paper at a night's notice. At another gathering, when a sleep-deprived colleague complained to him at breakfast about the noise of someone typing in the small hours in a nearby room, Alan forbore to explain that he had been finishing the piece he was to deliver that morning. On one occasion he intervened (with his usual incisiveness) to prolong discussion of a preceding paper, and so make time to finish the text of the one with which he was due to follow it. The first incident is reliably chronicled by Professor Snow; the second is a story

told by Alan himself; the third, strenuously denied by him, was witnessed by the present writer.

Alan both relished the imperfectly reliable orality of informal academic interchange, and enjoyed contributing to it himself. To the real absurdities that sometimes lay behind it, he added as little as anyone—most of it by way of conscious self-mockery. For he enjoyed parody of all kinds: the oral epic that he and Tom Hart improvised on a mid-western train journey in the late 1960s; the abstract of a paper by ‘Professor Z. Q. Vogelkopf’ with which he momentarily confused various members of the Société Rencesvals in 1970; the verses lampooning Rojas and Juan Ruiz that got into *Celestinesca*, 15 (1991), 83. It all stemmed from that overflowing energy which made him noisy and tenacious in argument—sometimes from fairly arbitrary positions—and sustained him in his prodigious work-rate.

For this last, innumerable colleagues had cause to be grateful: for drafts and proofs read, for the tireless harvesting of fresh sources and perspectives, for commentary at once unremittingly rigorous and unfailingly supportive. This was how Alan filled his days—at work, at home, on journeys and on holidays. There could be no tension with his own scholarly output, for he saw the two fields of activity as one, or with his family life and friendships, for this was simply the nature of the life he so wholeheartedly shared. As his daughter more directly put it, ‘he never saw work as work’.¹³

That, while true, must seem paradoxical, given the scale of his output from the 1970s onward. That decade was his most active period of book production: the eight titles appearing from 1971 to 1980 largely define his profile as a scholar. Some define it tangentially. His edition of *Apollonius of Tyre: Two Fifteenth-Century Spanish Prose Romances* (Exeter, 1973), meticulously grounded in first-hand field research, is a reminder of how good at that he was. Already attested by *Epic Poetry and the Clergy* and by his 1971 journey with Ian Michael and others to plot the itinerary of the Cid, this was sometimes overshadowed by his massive bibliographical hinterland. The revised edition of his *Celestina* book (Westport, CT, 1975), reflecting dialogue with other critics—notably Stephen Gilman—and a wider range of references, revealed him as strikingly conscientious in such matters. His *Critical Guide to Lazarillo de Tormes* (London, 1975)—a rare but exemplary venture beyond medieval topics—drew, like

¹³Ruth Deyermond, ‘Alan Deyermond: a memoir’, in Andrew M. Beresford, Louise Haywood and Julian Weiss (eds.), *Medieval Hispanic Studies in Memory of Alan Deyermond* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. xiii–xv at p. xiv.

so much of his best work, on classroom teaching. A homage volume for a London colleague, *Medieval Hispanic Studies Presented to Rita Hamilton* (London, 1976) reflected editorial skills no less real for being unobtrusive on the book's surface.

Four other items are more central. Each takes up a predefined project and shapes it to a strategy of Alan's own. His volume in the Ernest Benn *Literary History of Spain* (1971) exploited the freedom of editorial criteria in that series, to contextualise medieval texts in multiple ways: a canonical selection (with original features); a wider European medieval background; a historical and social (rather than nationally mythic) setting; a richly documented listing of critical approaches, embracing recent and even unpublished work. Of the impact all this had in Spain something has been said already. Francisco Rico, besides arranging for its swift publication there, now invited Alan to produce the medieval volume for his *Historia y crítica de la literatura española*. Here, themed essays were to be integrated with up-to-date bibliographies, supported by excerpts from the most important modern criticism on each theme. This format would issue in some impressive coverage, but none as considered or as definitive as that supplied by Alan in 1980. These two works, then, supplied indispensable reference tools for scholars of the whole period, not as mere catalogues but as reasoned evaluations of topic after topic, question after question.

Two more books achieved much the same with reference to important single works. The reprint of Félix Lecoy's long unavailable *Recherches sur le 'Libro de Buen Amor'* (Farnborough, 1974) might, quite acceptably, have been presented with minimal original input. Alan's treatment went far beyond that, reviewing almost 300 items of more recent scholarship in what Raymond Willis (*Hispanic Review*, 44 (1976), 282) called 'an outstanding feat of compressed coverage'. In the volume of '*Mio Cid*' *Studies* (London, 1977), the survey of thirty years of Cidian scholarship was more modest in scale (126 items). But its balanced handling of different kinds of argument defined and vindicated Alan's well-tempered revisionist view of Pidalian critical tradition. His account of emerging alternatives gained in authority thereby.

In the 1970s too, the frequency of his published articles more than doubled to almost four a year. The range of topics covered also broadened, though almost half the items still addressed medieval texts that were central to the canon.¹⁴ Some of their reinterpretations were decisive. 'Some

¹⁴Inevitably, some of the fields in which he made major contributions must escape detailed mention here: oral literature and folklore, and the poets of the *mester de clerecía* are two notable examples.

aspects of parody in the *Libro de Buen Amor*' (in G. B. Gybbon-Monypenny (ed.), *'Libro de Buen Amor' Studies* (London, 1970), pp. 53–78) ranked, in the view of those who came to edit its successor, as the most influential essay in that important volume.¹⁵ Joseph Snow singles out *'Hilado-Cordón-Cadena: symbolic equivalence in La Celestina'* (*Celestinesca*, 1.1 (1977), 6–12), as among the most quoted items published in that journal in over thirty years.¹⁶ Items on the epic—eight of them between 1972 and 1978—include, importantly for Alan's future concerns, a substantial treatment of Spanish epic cycles, and the abstract of a forthcoming conference paper on lost epics.¹⁷ Another essay from about this time defined his growing interest in late medieval romance through what would prove to be the influential notion of 'The lost genre of medieval Spanish literature' (*Hispanic Review*, 43 (1975), 231–59). It was no coincidence that his first efforts at gathering evidence on Spanish 'lost literature', summarised in 'The lost literature of medieval Spain: excerpts from a tentative catalogue' (*La Corónica*, 5.2 (Spring 1977), 93–100), also belonged to the mid-1970s.

Another lasting concern that emerged then was with women's writing. Already in 1972 and 1974 he had given papers on Teresa de Cartagena, leading to an article in the first issue of *Journal of Hispanic Philology* (1976); another on Florencia Pinar followed in *Mester* (1978).¹⁸ The feminist criticism then developing in the United States chimed with this, prompting the appearance, unusually for him, of two non-medieval pieces (co-authored with Beth Miller) on the nineteenth-century Cuban poet, Gertudis Gómez de Avellaneda. But Alan's literary feminism went deeper than any mere alignment with current critical trends. His later work would take in not just

¹⁵ Louise M. Haywood and Louise O. Vasvari (eds.), *A Companion to the 'Libro de Buen Amor'* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 2–3.

¹⁶ Joseph T. Snow, 'Celestinesca y Alan Deyermond', *Celestinesca*, 33 (2009), 13–15 at 14 n.

¹⁷ A. Deyermond, 'Medieval Spanish epic cycles: observations on their formation and development', *Kentucky Romance Quarterly*, 23 (1976), 281–303; A. Deyermond, 'The problem of lost epics: evidence and criteria', *La Corónica*, 7.1 (Fall, 1978), 5–6. Delivered at the MLAA meeting in December 1978, this paper was eventually published in revised form in Brian Powell, Geoffrey West and Dorothy Severin (eds.), *'Al que en buen hora nació': Essays on the Spanish Epic and Ballad in Honour of Colin Smith* (Liverpool, 1996), pp. 27–43.

¹⁸ A. Deyermond, 'El convento de dolencias: the works of Teresa de Cartagena', *Journal of Hispanic Philology*, 1.1 (Autumn 1976), 19–29; A. Deyermond, 'The worm and the partridge: reflections on the poetry of Florencia Pinar', *Mester*, 7 (1978), 3–8. See also A. Deyermond, 'The metamorphosis of Avellaneda's sonnet to Washington', *Symposium*, 33 (1979), 153–70 and A. Deyermond, 'On editing the poetry of Avellaneda', in Luis A. Ramos-García and Nestor A. Lugones (eds.), *Studia Hispanica in Honor of Rodolfo Cardona* (Austin, TX, 1981), pp. 41–55; A. Deyermond, 'Spain's first women writers', in Beth Miller (ed.), *Women in Hispanic Literature: Icons and Fallen Idols* (Berkeley, CA, 1983), pp. 27–52.

‘Spain’s First Women Writers’—his contribution to Miller’s *Women in Hispanic Literature* (Berkeley, CA, and London, 1983)—but the roles and voices assigned to women in medieval Spanish writing, and the social, linguistic and experiential realities underlying these. In this, as in so many matters, he demonstrated the strength of his commitment by encouraging the work of others. In later years, and despite the largely traditional cast of his own theology, he would be a strong supporter of women’s ordination.¹⁹

None of that, perhaps, should come as any surprise, given the central part that Ann and Ruth played in his life. This centrality was decisive in another sense in 1981, when the possibility loomed large that his semestral appointment at Princeton might develop into a full-time position. It did not happen, and though the detail of why it did not come about remained a puzzle to colleagues, his desire (and Ann’s) that their daughter should be educated in England was certainly a factor. The American links that meant so much to Alan were by no means severed: the run of honours and visiting professorships continued, as did the friendships and collaborations that gave them substance. But the American future that many had foreseen for him was not to be. Nor was one particular British future, whose possibility was opened by Peter Russell’s retirement in that same year of 1981. Though Alan was clearly a strong contender, the Oxford Chair of Spanish Studies went to Ian Michael. In 1985, early in Professor Michael’s tenure, an apt sequel saw Oxford award Alan Deyermund its degree of D.Litt. But the decisive practical effect of what happened in 1981 was to cement his attachment to Westfield as a lifelong connection.

Westfield’s life as an independent institution was under some threat in the early 1980s.²⁰ Alan proved a formidable defender of the college’s autonomy, as Dean of Arts for a second time in 1981–4, and as Head of Department after John Varey was elected Principal in 1983. He was an active and loyal Vice-Principal in the difficult years from 1986 to 1989, when Varey himself came to see merger with one of the larger London colleges as the only viable course. Their shared conviction that Queen Mary College would prove the most suitable partner prevailed in 1989, and was borne out in practice thereafter—notably so in the case of Hispanic Studies, whose extended array of talents quickly established it

¹⁹ *JC*, 13 (with more at 13–14 on both his feminism and his Anglicanism); for his dislike of a theology without ‘mystery or miracle’ see the note by Barry Morrison, former chaplain at Westfield, in *The Times*, 28 Oct. 2009.

²⁰ On Westfield in the 1980s see Alan’s outspoken narrative in Deyermund and McKendrick, ‘John Earl Varey’, pp. 393–4; on his own role see Pamela King in *Cantavella IM*; also Penny, *QM tributes*.

among the country's leading departments. Alan's service as Director of Graduate Studies (1987–93), spanning the actual transition, did much to ensure this. He continued that work in a series of similar roles: Chairman of the Queen Mary Westfield (QMW) Centre for Medieval Studies (1991–4 and 1996–7); Director of Modern Language Graduate Studies, QMW (1995–7); Associate Director, University of London Institute of Romance Studies (1991–3). At the heart of this activity were his medieval seminars, enriched now with two important adjuncts: the annual colloquia held from 1989 onwards, and the series of Papers of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar, established in 1995 with Alan as General Editor.

International engagements and honours went on accruing. An early homage volume by North American colleagues appeared in 1986.²¹ He was Lansdowne Visitor at the University of Victoria (1983), and Visiting Professor at Northern Arizona University (1986), Johns Hopkins University (1987), the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (1992) and the Universidade da Coruña (1996). In 1982 the Real Academia de Buenas Letras of Barcelona made him a Corresponding Fellow; in 1985 the Hispanic Society of America admitted him to full membership; in the same year, he was made Socio de Honor of the newly founded Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval. By now Honorary Life President of the ICLS (1983), and a Vice-President of the Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas (1983–9), he served as President of the latter body from 1992 to 1995, and was its Honorary Life President thereafter. He was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1987 and a Fellow of the British Academy in 1988. In 1994 he was awarded the Premio Internacional Elio Antonio de Nebrija, the Spanish state's highest accolade to any foreign scholar; its two other British recipients had been Sir John Elliott and Sir Peter Russell. The first of several honorary degrees, a D.Litt. from Georgetown University, followed in 1995. Two further homage volumes, one from colleagues at large, the other from younger scholars, mainly past or present pupils, were published to mark his retirement in 1997.²²

What such honours most obviously acknowledged was the growing body of Alan's published work. In the seventeen years from 1981 to his retirement he wrote six books of his own, and edited or co-edited a dozen

²¹ John S. Miletich (ed.), *Hispanic Studies in Honor of Alan D. Deyermond: a North American Tribute* (Madison, WI, 1986). (Imprint hereafter cited as HSMS, for publications from Madison and later New York.)

²² Ian Macpherson and Ralph Penny (eds.), *The Medieval Mind: Hispanic Studies in Honour of Alan Deyermond* (London, 1997); Andrew M. Beresford (ed.), '*Quien hubiese tal ventura*': *Medieval Hispanic Studies in Honour of Alan Deyermond* (London, 1997).

more. Besides the range and quality that had long been his, they highlight his sense of being both teacher and learner, indebted for what he knew to colleagues and pupils alike, and with a vision of his own scholarship as fulfilling a service role for others. Much that he wrote in this period of full maturity, illuminating and original as it often was, had as its primary intention the scrupulous updating of themes he had addressed before.

Such was the case with *El 'Cantar de Mio Cid' y la épica medieval española* (Barcelona, 1987), particularly praised by Rafael Beltrán (*BVCervantes*) for its command of recent research, and for the shrewd balance which it maintains between Pidalian critical tradition and the root-and-branch revisionism associated with Colin Smith among others. It was so in another sense with *Tradiciones y puntos de vista en la ficción sentimental* (Mexico, 1993). The five previously published articles brought together there, though wholly diverse in date and origin, provided a notably coherent account of the genre. Their actual texts were largely unrevised, but Alan now provided a bibliographical and critical framework that lent itself to a nuanced questioning of his earlier views on wild men, courtly love, and the ending of *Grisel y Mirabella*. Similarly, though he regretted not rewriting his *Lazarillo de Tormes Critical Guide* for its second edition (London, 1993), his summary updating conveyed a clear image of what 'a Guide written in 1992' (p. 8) would have been like.

On a much larger scale was the *Primer suplemento* (Barcelona, 1991) to his medieval volume in Rico's *Historia y crítica* series—barely a fifth shorter than its original, with a similarly massive input of wide reading and shrewd assessment. The introduction is strikingly open to new perspectives, commending, among others, Colbert Nepaulsingh, Paul Julian Smith, Jauss, Bakhtin, and Alistair Minnis (pp. 3, 11–12). In *La literatura perdida de la Edad Media Castellana, Catálogo y estudio, I* (Salamanca, 1995), published to mark his Nebrija Prize, he stressed the collaborative dimension of his research, and the provisional character of his findings, to the point where one might wonder where exactly his own contribution lay. Yet the book itself supplies the fullest of answers, setting out authoritatively how literature gets lost and can in part be retrieved, and applying this definitively in its treatment of epic. That the section on the ballad is, as it stands, avowedly more tentative does nothing to impair the achievement here. But as Alan acknowledged (*Donaire* 1997, p. 104), the three further volumes that he knew to be necessary were an open-ended commitment—cherished and active certainly, but not in the event fulfilled.

Of service to colleagues in another sense was his work as an editor, increasingly prominent in his publication over these years. Between 1989

and 1997 half a dozen homage or memorial volumes appeared under his name.²³ Among these, John Varey's retirement Festschrift took him, for powerful reasons of personal gratitude, beyond medieval themes. A book of fifteenth-century studies for Peter Russell's eightieth birthday acknowledged another foundational debt. *Saints and their Authors*, dedicated to John K. Walsh, who died while it was in proof (Jane Connolly writes movingly (*JC*, 15) of Alan's efforts to ensure that he saw a pre-publication copy), and the Wisconsin-based homage to Charles Fraker, represent the American dimension of his work. The *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* memorial volume for Keith Whinnom commemorated a powerful intellectual presence among British Hispanists; Alan's introduction to an edited selection of Whinnom's essays on medieval and renaissance themes clarified further how and why his work mattered.

These, and several sets of conference proceedings dating from this time, were jointly edited, but Alan as co-editor could no more accept an inactive role than he could regard his membership of a dozen and more Editorial Boards as merely ornamental.²⁴ For him the common work of scholarship included getting other people's contributions published—and in acceptable form at that. Hence his involvement in revising the Modern Humanities Research Association *MHRA Style Book* for its fourth and fifth editions (London, 1991 and 1996); hence too his tireless annotation and copy-editing of colleagues' efforts. Of further significance for this part of his output was the appearance in 1996–7 of two early volumes edited by him in the QMW Medieval Seminar series. With time, their number would rise to almost a quarter of the series as a whole, but the total activity which Alan, as General Editor, put into enriching his col-

²³ A. Deyermond (ed. with Charles Davis), *Studies in Honour of John Varey* (1991); A. Deyermond (ed. with Jeremy Lawrance), *Letters and Society in Fifteenth-Century Spain: Studies Presented to P. E. Russell on his Eightieth Birthday* (Llangrannog, 1993); A. Deyermond (ed. with Jane E. Connolly and Brian Dutton), *Saints and their Authors: Studies in Medieval Hispanic Hagiography in Honour of John K. Walsh* (Madison, WI, HSMS, 1990); A. Deyermond (ed. with Mercedes Vaquero), *Studies in Medieval Spanish Literature in Honor of Charles F. Fraker* (Madison, WI, HSMS, 1995); A. Deyermond (ed. with Ian Macpherson), *The Age of the Catholic Monarchs 1474–1516: Literary Studies in Memory of Keith Whinnom* (Liverpool, 1989); A. Deyermond (ed. with W. F. Hunter and Joseph T. Snow), *Keith Whinnom: Medieval and Renaissance Spanish Literature: Selected Essays* (Exeter, 1994).

²⁴ He served on the boards of *Bulletin Hispanique*, *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* (later *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*), *Celestinesca*, *Diablotexto*, *Donaire*, *Hispanic Review*, *Iberoromania*, *Journal of Hispanic Philology*, *Journal of Hispanic Research*, *Medievalia*, *Portuguese Studies*, *Quaderni Ibero-Americani*, *Revista de Filología Española* and *Romance Philology*. Among his other board memberships the Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature should be added to the Tamesis, Grant & Cutler, and HSMS series, and to PMHRS, already mentioned.

leagues' work went far beyond this (see Penny, *QM tributes*). He was all the better equipped for it through having quietly mastered just those elements of the emerging new technologies—electronic correspondence and desktop editing—which would make him, as editor, of most use to his authors.

His own work, as represented in some ninety articles from this period, more than ever defies classification. Many were in broadly familiar fields. Twelve are about the epic, with evaluations of recent scholarship, along the lines of his 1987 book, well to the fore. 'A monument for Per Abad' (*Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 62 (1985), 120–6) offered a defining appraisal of C. C. Smith's *Making of the 'Poema de Mio Cid'*; other items considered 'British contributions to the study of the medieval Spanish epic' (*La Corónica*, 15.2 (1987), 197–212), and—jointly with Colin Smith and others—'Ramón Menéndez Pidal twenty-five years on' (*Journal of Hispanic Research*, 2 (1993), 125–42). Particularly influential was 'La sexualidad en la épica medieval española' (*Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, 36, 767–86), which added importantly to the range of women's issues identified by Alan's criticism. That strand in his thinking also supplied topics for several of the dozen articles on *Celestina*, from the interaction there of sexual and social ties (1984) to the potential for a feminist reading (1995).²⁵ Several new pieces on the *Libro de Buen Amor* addressed problems of ambiguity and category-definition—frequent in that work, of course, but indicative too of the kinds of question that were coming to preoccupy Alan at this time.

Regularly, but never quite routinely, he revisited other topics addressed by his earlier writings. The concern with women, overtly present in twelve titles from these years, gained in exactness and subtlety as it engaged with the issue of implied women's voices in sentimental romance, in court lyrics, in the Hebrew-Romance *kharjas*, and in bilingual verse-dialogues.²⁶ Four

²⁵ A. Deyermond, 'Divisiones socio-económicas, nexos sexuales: La sociedad de *Celestina*', *Celestinesca*, 8.2 (1984), 3–10; 'Hacia una lectura feminista de la *Celestina*', in Françoise Maurizi (ed.), *La Célestine: 'Comedia o tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea'* (Caen), pp. 59–86.

²⁶ A. Deyermond, 'The female narrator in sentimental fiction: *Menina e moça* and *Clareo y Florisea*', *Portuguese Studies*, 1 (1985), 47–57; A. Deyermond, 'Sexual initiation in the woman's voice court lyric', in Keith Busby and Erik Kooper (eds.), *Courtly Literature: Culture and Context* (Amsterdam, 1990), pp. 125–58; A. Deyermond, 'The romance *Kharjas* in Hebrew script: woman's song or man's text?', in Isaac Benabu (ed.), *Circa 1492: Proceedings of the Jerusalem Colloquium: Litterae Judaeorum in terra hispanica* (Jerusalem, 1993), pp. 58–78; A. Deyermond, 'Lust in Babel: bilingual man–woman dialogues in the medieval lyric', in Ana Menéndez Collera and Victoriano Roncero López (eds.), *Nunca fue pena mayor: estudios de literatura española en homenaje a Brian Dutton* (Cuenca, 1996), pp. 199–221.

items on the romance genre preceded his 1993 book and three more followed it; Alan was never tempted to suppose that, even in so thoughtful a revision, he had settled all aspects of the topic. Eleven more on lost literature bracketed the 1995 Nebrija Prize volume. Some carried the enquiry into new areas—Portugal; Jewish and *converso* authors;²⁷ others reported on specific genres which might have found a place in the later volumes that he planned.

Other interests once more contend with these. Half a dozen items on Biblical elements in medieval texts anticipate plans, mentioned by him in 1997 (*Donaire* 1997, p. 104), for a book on such influences, and another on the social gospel in medieval Spanish literature. (Neither project was completed, though the new Preface to his *Lazarillo de Tormes* book indicates—p. 7—that parts of the latter were in existence by 1994.) There were more articles on Galician and Portuguese now (mainly extensions in those directions of his earlier concerns), and more on Catalan. These, mainly about *cancionero* poetry, were perhaps stimulated by the QMW department's links with the University of Valencia. They form part of a strikingly high total of fifteen articles on court and *cancionero* verse—a late-developing focus, prolonged into the final years of his work. It did not, however, inhibit his long-standing interest in folklore and orality, reflected still in a smaller clutch of pieces, as well as his Kate Elder Lecture on *Point of View in the Ballad* (London, 1996). In this, with an enterprise that was entirely typical, he applied to traditional balladry a critical model developed by Wayne Booth for analysing eighteenth-century and later fiction.

Also characteristic was the stress on problematic categories in many articles from this phase of his output. Titles that are questioning or paradoxical, or offer binary or other alternative choices, were always common in his work, and now become more so. Two significant clusters of articles illustrate the kinds of issue that now engaged him. One group broadened the concern with genre-boundaries, prominent in his account of the sentimental romance. Now he sought to explore the interplay of sacred history and dramatic presentation in Gómez Manrique's verse Nativity (1992), and more broadly the 'criterios y casos discutibles' associated with the

²⁷ A. Deyermond, 'Lost literature in medieval Portuguese', in Ian Michael and Richard Cardwell (eds.), *Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Honour of Robert Brian Tate* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 1–12; A. Deyermond, 'The lost literature of medieval Portugal: further observations', in T. F. Earle and Nigel Griffin (eds.), *Portuguese, Brazilian and African Studies: Studies Presented to Clive Willis on his Retirement* (Warminster, 1995), pp. 39–49; A. Deyermond, 'Evidence for lost literature by Jews and *Conversos* in medieval Castile and Aragon', *Donaire*, 6 (April 1996), 19–30.

study of early theatre (1994).²⁸ A wider overview of problems of authorship, genre and title in medieval Spanish literature, presented first as a conference paper in 1989, also appeared in 1994. A second cluster addressed issues of bilingualism: fifteenth-century ‘diglosia literaria’; the Hebrew-Romance *kharjas*; ‘The language problem and comparative literature’ (a review-article on Stephen Reckert); and the bilingual man–woman dialogues of medieval lyric.²⁹

These were not the approaches of someone who conceived of medieval Spanish studies as predictable or all of a piece. Yet some things about Alan did lend themselves to that way of seeing him. The sheer variety of what he published made him appear a normative figure across the medieval field at large—an impression enhanced year after productive year. Talks given at over 130 universities (the total at the time of his retirement) in more than a dozen countries made that perception a worldwide one: those who heard him lecture, or talked with him afterwards, seldom forgot the experience. The man so widely and so fondly remembered after his death—in great part the Alan Deyermund of the 1980s and 1990s—was, in Roger Wright’s phrase, a ‘dominant and all-sheltering figure’ (*Cantavella IM*). The warmth of his engagement with a host of younger scholars was bound up with norms and standards on which he was inexorable: accuracy, referencing, acknowledgement of sources, logical rigour. Though he did not, in practice, oversimplify his field of study, he upheld an approach to it whose hallmark was a bracing simplicity.

In personal terms, that simplicity remained grounded in his St Albans home, the base too for Ann’s work as a teacher in local girls’ schools; the place where Ruth grew up, and to which she returned at intervals during and after her university studies. (It brought particular delight to Alan that these began with a degree in English at his old college, Pembroke.) The household also had its shifting population of animals. Toby having died in

²⁸ A. Deyermund, ‘Historia sagrada y técnica dramática en la *Representación del Nacimiento de Nuestro Señor, de Gómez Manrique*’, in R. Beltrán, J. L. Canet, and J. L. Sirera (eds.), *Historias y ficciones: Coloquio sobre la Literatura del Siglo xv* (Valencia, 1992), pp. 291–305; A. Deyermund, ‘Teatro, dramatismo, literatura: criterios y casos discutibles’, in Evangelina Rodríguez Cuadros (ed.), *Cultura y representación en la Edad Media* (Valencia, 1994), 39–56; also A. Deyermund, ‘De las categorías de las letras: problemas de género, autor y título en la literatura medieval española’, in María Isabel Toro Pascua (ed.), *Actas del III Congreso de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval, I* (Salamanca, 1994), pp. 15–39.

²⁹ A. Deyermund, ‘Notas sobre diglosia literaria y autotraducción en el siglo XV hispánico’, in Nelson Cartagena and Christian Schmitt (eds.), *Miscellanea antverpiensia* (Tübingen, 1992), pp. 135–57; Deyermund, ‘The Romance *Kharjas* in Hebrew Script’ (1993); A. Deyermund, ‘The language problem and comparative literature: Stephen Reckert’s *Beyond Chrysanthemums*’, *Portuguese Studies*, 11 (1995), 200–15; Deyermund, ‘Lust in Babel’ (1996).

the late 1980s, Tom was the poodle best remembered by visitors—by students too, for he accompanied Alan to work, and did service in lectures as the Cid's lion. (His death in 2004 was keenly felt as a loss to the whole family.) There were also guinea pigs and goldfish—all treated with the exemplary gentleness which Alan's view of the animal and human worlds decreed. Consistently with that, he became in his early fifties a committed vegetarian, with some skill as a cook, and much zeal as an advocate.

In this last role he was not always gentle. 'Being a vegetarian', he told a refractory waiter in Florida once, 'doesn't mean, that I don't bite' (García Obregón, in *Cantavella IM*). Ham, offered to him inadvertently, could be rejected as 'dead pig'; non-vegetarian colleagues found themselves labelled 'carnivores'. Not that he ever allowed it to limit his hospitality towards them: in this, as in his taking up cigars for a time, when American anti-smoking restrictions became embarrassing to Ann, he enjoyed the paradoxes of performing in character, yet also kept faith with something important to him. That was the pattern, too, with many of those arguments in which he engaged with such combative delight. It also marked the way in which he deprecated, but never set himself to remedy, the wholesale confusion of his departmental office—'like a cross between the District Council dump and the worst sort of Spanish provincial archive'.³⁰ Somewhere at the heart of that chaos of books, notes, drafts, typescripts, offprints, proofs, sherry, teacups, biscuits, and Tom, lay the knowledge and the hospitality that each particular visitor needed. Alan was seldom at a loss to find the means to either.

Anyone so assured, both intellectually and personally, of occupying their own space in the world was bound to seem a lasting and normative presence. In 1985 John Miletich had declared it impossible to imagine Alan retired (*A North American Tribute*, p. 5); it proved no easier for Ian Macpherson and Ralph Penny when the moment came. 'More likely [...] a state of not drawing a British salary than a cessation of teaching and research' was how they put it (*The Medieval Mind*, p. 10), and so it proved. Still based in QMW (though in a rather smaller office), still after thirty years as Director, the central figure in the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar, he was more active than ever in promoting its colloquia and editing its Papers. The college marked his retirement with the title 'Research Professor'—always his preferred description (though he also valued the

³⁰ Alan's own description in a letter relating to his editorship of the British Academy volume, *A Century of British Medieval Studies* (London, 2007). See also Macpherson and Penny, p. vii; *JC*, 12; Ayaxácatl Campos García Rojas in *Cantavella IM*.

Honorary Fellowship, conferred three years later). He had no enthusiasm for being called Emeritus: 'it simply means you've been a professor and aren't actually in gaol' (*El País*, 2006). Though he fought tenaciously to keep 'Westfield' as part of the college's title (see García Obregón, in *Cantavella IM*), he was punctilious in referring to 'Queen Mary, University of London' after losing that battle in 2001. His own sense of continuity found expression in compiling a *Biographical Dictionary* of the Hispanic Studies Department in its first half-century (London, 2005). His attachment was to the reality, not to the form of words.

He was, of course, freer to travel now, and in company with Ann he took full advantage of that. There were visiting appointments in Indiana (1998), at the University of California at Irvine (1998–9), and from 2002 onwards an annual teaching engagement with the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas in Madrid. This last brought in its wake so many shorter visits to instruct or examine doctoral students in Spain that by 2006 he could speak of going there six or seven times in a year.³¹ Commitment on that scale was of a piece with his earlier attempt—exhausting but only seventy per cent successful—to speak personally to all 500 of those present at the AIH Birmingham conference in 1995. It recalled, too, his insistence on meeting younger scholars when he visited La Coruña in 1996, and his request to be given more first-year teaching in the QMW of the early 1990s. It all responded to his belief in 'paying forward'. One indication among many of how the young received that payment was his election in 2004, at the age of seventy-two, as *Socio de Honor* of the Asociación de Jóvenes Investigadores de la Literatura Hispánica.

This was the first in a new cluster of distinctions that came to him in his last years. In 2005 he was made an Honorary Doctor of the University of Valencia—especially gratifying because John Varey, who had died in 1999, had been similarly honoured some years earlier. In 2006, the Sociedad de Estudios Medievales y Renacentistas made him an honorary Fellow. In 2008 the proceedings of the Second International Congress on Juan Ruiz and the *Libro de Buen Amor*, held in Alcalá la Real, were published as a homage volume to him—the fourth in his lifetime. Three months before his death in 2009, the Real Academia Española elected him one of its very few *Académicos Correspondientes*. A further honorary

³¹ *El País*, 2006; see also his recollection of the 1995 conference in *Memoria de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas 1962–2003*, *Boletín de la AIH*, anejo 1, 57; also Mar Campos Souto and Omar García Obregón, both in *Cantavella IM*.

doctorate, awarded that summer by the University of Granada, came too late to be conferred.

As well as past achievement, these awards acknowledged his continuing active scholarship. To some degree the balance of his activity had shifted towards articles and edited books, but there were important exceptions. One was *The 'Libro de Buen Amor' in England* (Manchester, 2004): six original essays on the history of scholarship, often with implications beyond that immediate concern. Another was the selection of Alan's *cancionero* criticism, published by colleagues at the University of Valencia in 2007 to mark his honorary doctorate.³² Though all but one of the fourteen articles had appeared earlier, Alan took a keen interest in the volume and in the translations of his work that were made for it. Similarly, he helped to select the contents for a book of his essays on *Celestina*, planned by colleagues and former pupils in Mexico, and wrote an introduction for it, reflecting on his own output and on Rojas. The book, originally scheduled for 2008, appeared posthumously two years later.

Meanwhile he was editing more volumes of other people's work than ever—over a dozen between 1998 and 2008, mostly in the QMW Research Seminar series. Many were co-edited with younger scholars, but his was always an active part. He took sole editorial charge of tributes to three colleagues who particularly mattered to him: essays in honour of Ian Macpherson and Stephen Reckert, and an assessment after two decades of the work and influence of Keith Whinnom.³³ No less than the day-to-day collaboration in getting details right, the sense of a collective project, grounded in personal loyalties, was integral to his vision of scholarship. The two would come together to memorable effect in the most ambitious of his edited undertakings, *A Century of British Medieval Studies*, published for the British Academy in 2007.

His other singly edited item in the QMW series—*Santillana: A Symposium* (2000)—continued the interest in *cancionero* poetry which was

³²Rafael Beltrán Llavador, José Luis Canet Vallés and Marta Haro Cortés (eds.), *Poesía de cancionero del siglo XV: estudios seleccionados* (Valencia, 2007); for Alan's consultative role see Beltrán in *BVCervantes*; see also A. Deyermond, 'Introducción', in Axayácatl Campos García Rojas and Daniel Gutiérrez Trápaga (eds.), *Estudios de Alan Deyermond sobre la 'Celestina': in memoriam*, *Medievalia*, 40 (Mexico, 2008 (= 2010)), pp. 9–16 at 15 n.

³³A. Deyermond (ed.), '*Cancionero*' *Studies in Honour of Ian Macpherson*, PMHRS, 11 (London, 1998); A. Deyermond (ed.), *One Man's Canon: Five Essays on Medieval Poetry for Stephen Reckert*, PMHRS, 16 (London, 1998); A. Deyermond (ed.), *Keith Whinnom after Twenty Years: His Work and its Influence*, PMHRS, 53 (London, 2011).

by now a well-developed aspect of his work.³⁴ In these final years it almost became the predominant one. The homage to Ian Macpherson (1998) and the co-edited *Studies in Honour of Jane Whetnall* (2007) both shared this focus; the Valencia volume, already mentioned, overtly celebrated it. But the bulk of his later output on *cancionero* themes came in the form of articles—fifteen of them now added to the similar number published before his retirement. As earlier, their topics intersect creatively with others that, over the years, he had made his own: women, lost texts, Biblical and bestiary lore, bilingualism. Non-Castilian poetic traditions are kept well in view, with a wider comparative range taking in James I of Scotland as a point of reference for Santillana, and William Dunbar for Suero de Ribera.³⁵ Though he attempted no work of synthesis in this area or even a significant monograph, his authority within it was assured.

One reason for that was the sustained creativity of these pieces, as of other articles produced in his retirement. Time and again, their analytic focus on seemingly recondite detail leads into a dense and witty argument that will support far-reaching conclusions. That in itself might seem natural in a major scholar's late maturity. The unflagging rate of Alan's production comes as more of a surprise—over eighty articles in twelve years (though some appeared posthumously, and annual totals vary quite widely). And there was virtually no diminution in the range of subjects about which he found things worth saying.

On some he had already written to much purpose. Among articles appearing now were three or four apiece on women, on literary uses of the Bible, on folk-motifs, and on bilingual and translation-related issues. Others explored new instances of lost texts: in Arthurian literature (1997), Hernando de Talavera (1999), and the *cancioneros* (2003).³⁶ There were five late items on the sentimental romance, the genre he had done most to define. Only one of these (from 2000) revisited the matter of genre-boundaries,

³⁴ A. Deyermond (ed.), *Santillana: A Symposium*, PMHRS, 28 (London, HS QMW, 2000); A. Deyermond (ed. with Barry Taylor), *From the 'Cancioneiro da Vaticana' to the 'Cancionero general': Studies in Honour of Jane Whetnall*, PMHRS, 60 (London, 2007); see also Deyermond (ed.), *'Cancionero' Studies in Honour of Ian Macpherson*; and Llavador et al., *Poesía de cancionero del siglo xv*.

³⁵ A. Deyermond, 'On the frontier of sentimental romance: the dream-allegories of James I and Santillana', *La Corónica*, 29.1 (2000), 89–112; A. Deyermond, 'Three ladies in a garden: Suero de Ribera and Dunbar', *Comparative Literature*, 60.1 (2008), 29–44.

³⁶ A. Deyermond, '¿Obras artúricas perdidas en la Castilla medieval?', *Anclajes*, 1 (1997), 95–114; A. Deyermond, 'Las obras perdidas de fray Hernando de Talavera', *Bulletin Hispanique*, 101 (1999), 365–74; A. Deyermond, '¿Una docena de cancioneros perdidos?', *Cancionero General*, 1 (2003), 29–49.

though; a second title (2001) reflecting that sort of concern had to do, rather, with Galician-Portuguese lyric.³⁷ More broadly, both relate to the lasting attraction for him of topics that were paradoxical or problematically framed. Addressing the semantic and ethical problems of editing (2001), or wondering whether it was even possible to write the history of medieval Spanish literature (2004), he was in a sense interrogating his own life's work—something he had long recognised as both challenge and obligation.

Yet new priorities could and did assert themselves even at this stage. His comparative horizons broadened, with items (2001; 2002; 2007) on the *chansons de toile* and Dante.³⁸ A concern with historiography and the broader political dimension of late medieval writing, already active in the 1980s, now prompted nine more pieces, on Juan Manuel (2001), Nebrija (2003), and others, including an exemplary treatment (2009) of the little-known Isabeline poet, Pero Marcuello.³⁹ The title of this last item reflects a characteristic strategy of inserting texts into multiple interpretive frames.

The medieval bestiaries had long supplied one such frame; in his retirement, bestiary lore furnished topics for eleven articles—more than twice the number in his earlier work. The concern seems natural in someone to whom the animal world and its interaction with the human had always mattered. Yet its main focus was on the bestiaries as the 'pseudozoology' of the Middle Ages (his phrase in *El País*, 2006, and in an earlier interview of 8 May 1985). Most of these essays dealt with creatures that

³⁷ A. Deyermond, 'On the frontier of sentimental romance'; A. Deyermond, 'Some problems of gender and genre in the medieval *Cantigas*', in Antonio Cortijo Ocaña, Giorgio Perissinotto, and Harvey L. Sharrer (eds.), *Estudios galegos medievais* (Santa Barbara, CA, 2001), pp. 43–59; see also A. Deyermond, "'Edit"/'editar, "Editor"/'editor, "Edition"/'edición: Semantic and Ethical Problems', *Hispanic Research Journal*, 2 (2001), 77–80; A. Deyermond, '¿Es posible escribir la historia de la literatura medieval española?', *Bulletin Hispanique*, 106 (2004), 17–21.

³⁸ A. Deyermond, 'El tejido en el texto, el texto tejido: las *chansons de toile* y poemas análogos', in Fernando Carmona and Antonia Martínez (eds.), *Géneros literarios e interrelaciones de géneros en la literatura medieval. Estudios Románicos* (Murcia), 11 (1999 (= 2001)), 71–104; A. Deyermond, 'El Alejandro medieval, el Ulises de Dante y la búsqueda de las Antípodas', in Rafael Beltrán (ed.), *Maravillas, peregrinaciones y utopías: literatura de viajes en el mundo románico* (Valencia, 2002), pp. 15–32; A. Deyermond, 'Romance studies 3: Dante', in Deyermond (ed.), *A Century of British Medieval Studies*, pp. 518–23.

³⁹ A. Deyermond, 'Cuéntistica y política en Juan Manuel: *El conde Lucanor*', in Leonardo Funes and José Luis Moure (eds.), *Studia in honorem Germán Orduna* (Alcalá de Henares, 2001), pp. 225–39; A. Deyermond, 'La ideología histórica de Antonio de Nebrija', in Francisco Moreno Hernández *et alii* (eds.), *Lengua, variación y contexto: estudios dedicados a Humberto López Morales* (Madrid, 2003), II, 957–74; A. Deyermond, 'Ideology, liturgy, and image in the *Cancionero* of Pero Marcuello', in David Hook (ed.), *The Spain of the Catholic Monarchs* (Bristol, 2008 (= 2009)), pp. 177–206.

were mythical, or at least, exotic: sirens (2000; 2001); unicorns (2000; 2002); basilisks (2005); lions and tigers (2007).⁴⁰ This was not so much Alan the dog-lover and rescuer of beetles from being trodden underfoot, as the Alan whose sense of inhabiting a very strange world indeed prompted a massive commitment to rendering it familiar. Medieval studies offered him just that debatable ground in which both the strangeness and the hopeful quest of the familiar could remain productively in play.

The medieval works to which he was most consistently drawn were debatable in that and many other senses. In retirement he was active across all these debates: the nine essays on epic themes, the half-dozen on the *Libro de Buen Amor*, and the ten on *Celestina* were in no sense a falling-off. Elements of retrospect and reflection naturally loomed larger now, but this marked no real break with what had gone before. It had long been Alan's habit to revisit and update positions taken in his earlier work; he did so again in 1999, accepting much that more recent scholarship had to say on the date and authorship of *Mocedades de Rodrigo*.

A higher proportion, too, of what he was now writing about the epic involved revaluing what others had achieved. That again had precedents. His co-editing of *Mio Cid Studies* for the fiftieth anniversary in 2002 of Peter Russell's ground-breaking article 'Some problems of diplomatic', and his perceptive introduction to the book, added depth to his earlier accounts of British scholarship on the *Poema*. So did a study of William Entwistle, a major figure from a previous generation.⁴¹ Other contributions, grounded in Alan's breadth of background knowledge, offered fresh perspectives on the poem's structure, and on comparisons with epic elsewhere in Europe.

⁴⁰ A. Deyermond, 'The sirens, the unicorn, and the asp', in *Santillana. A Symposium*, pp. 81–111; A. Deyermond, 'Sirenas del cancionero folklórico y su ascendencia medieval', *Anuario de Letras*, 39 (2001), 163–97; A. Deyermond, 'Medieval Spanish unicorns', in Francisco Gago Jover (ed.), *Two Generations: A Tribute to Lloyd A. Kasten (1905–1999)* (New York, 2002), pp. 55–96; A. Deyermond, 'The royal Basilisk in the *Triunfo de las donas*', in Alan Deyermond and Carmen Parrilla (eds.), *Juan Rodríguez del Padrón: Studies in Honour of Olga Tudorica Impey*, I, PMHRS, 47 (London, 2005), pp. 137–53. A. Deyermond, 'Leones y tigres en la literatura medieval castellana', in Armando López Castro and María Luzdivina Cuesta Torre (eds.), *Actas del XI Congreso de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval* (León, 2007), pp. 41–63.

⁴¹ A. Deyermond, '*Mio Cid* Studies: *'Some Problems of Diplomatic'* Fifty Years On', pp. 7–14; A. Deyermond, 'William J. Entwistle's research on ballad and epic', *Hispanic Research Journal*, 8.3 (2007), 195–209; see also A. Deyermond, 'La estructura del *Cantar de Mio Cid*, comparada con la de otros poemas épicos medievales', in César Hernández Alonso (ed.), *El Cid, poema e historia* (Burgos, 2000), pp. 25–39; A. Deyermond, 'El *Cantar de Mio Cid* y la épica anglosajona', ed. David Hook, in Alberto Montaner Frutos (ed.), *Sonando van sus nuevas allent parte del mar. El «Cantar de Mio Cid» y el mundo de la épica* (Toulouse, 2013), pp. 217–26.

There is achievement of a similar kind in ‘“Was it a vision or a waking dream?” the anomalous Don Amor and Doña Endrina episodes reconsidered’, his essay in the Tamesis *Companion to the ‘Libro de Buen Amor’* (pp. 107–22), with its spiritedly argued reading of these passages as dream-narrative. Elsewhere, reflections on earlier (sometimes much earlier) readers and critics of this most stubbornly elusive of medieval texts promoted insights of their own. That happened in the essays of *The ‘Libro de Buen Amor’ in England* (2004), and again, more ambitiously, in two papers published within a year of that book.⁴² His opening address to the conference held in his honour at Alcalá la Real in 2007 succinctly assessed the value of what he had done on the *Buen Amor* himself: ‘Juan Ruiz: 10 points; Alan: about 2.’ But his insistence on Juan Ruiz’s ‘intentional ambiguity’, and on the multiple strategies that this demanded of his critics, marked this out as the kind of text with which he was in his element. He knew that, and so did his colleagues.

Celestina offered other challenges—those of a work situated on many frontiers, rather than one wilfully at odds with itself. Alan’s fascination with them, dating back to his earliest research, was reflected now in a long list of items, several written in response to a series of anniversaries. His Taylorian Lecture, ‘Readers in, readers of *Celestina*’ had opened the proceedings of a 1999 Oxford symposium, marking the fifth centenary of the *Comedia*. Navigating adroitly the many complexities of its topic, it promoted a more broadly insightful understanding of the work than its title alone might suggest.⁴³ A long-meditated piece, postulating an alternative spiritual biography for Rojas as the author responsible for both versions of *Celestina*, appeared in 2001, in the twenty-fifth anniversary issue of *Celestinesca*. A third major article, showing how the deployment of

⁴² A. Deyermond, ‘La difusión y recepción del *Libro de Buen Amor* desde Juan Ruiz hasta Tomás Antonio Sánchez’, in Francisco Toro Ceballos and Bienvenido Morros (eds.), *Juan Ruiz, Arcipreste de Hita, y el ‘Libro de Buen Amor: Congreso Internacional, 9–11 de mayo del 2002* (Alcalá la Real, 2004), pp. 129–42; A. Deyermond, ‘Tradición y renovación en los estudios sobre el *Libro de buen amor*’, in Carlos Heusch (ed.), *El ‘Libro de buen amor’ de Juan Ruiz, Archiprêtre de Hita* (Paris, 2005), pp. 219–31; see also A. Deyermond, ‘Discursos del congreso’, in Louise Haywood and Francisco Toro Ceballos, *et alii* (eds.), *Juan Ruiz, Arcipreste de Hita y el “Libro de Buen Amor”: II Congreso Internacional. Homenaje a Alan Deyermond* (Alcalá la Real, 2008), pp. 31–8, online at <http://cvc.cervantes.es/literatura/arcipreste_hita/02/deyermond.htm>.

⁴³ A. Deyermond, ‘Readers in, readers of, *Celestina*’, in Ian Michael and David G. Pattison (eds.), *Context, Meaning and Reception of ‘Celestina’: A Fifth Centenary Symposium* (Glasgow, 2000), pp. 13–37; see also A. Deyermond, ‘Fernando de Rojas from 1499 to 1502: born-again Christian?’, *Celestinesca*, 25 (2001), 3–20; A. Deyermond, ‘The imagery of the *Tragicomedia*’, in Juan Carlos Conde (ed.), *Actas del Simposio Internacional: 1502–2002: Five Hundred Years of Fernando de Rojas’ ‘Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea’* (New York, 2007), pp. 149–71.

images in the *Tragicomedia* worked to integrate the text as a whole, was read as a paper at a conference on the fifth centenary of that longer version in 2002, and published five years later.

Introducing the collection of his *Celestina* essays in late 2008, Alan outlined how his approach to Rojas's work had developed: the shift from source-study to broader literary-critical topics; the emergence of religious and socio-political themes; the sense that these are not readily to be separated. Two other pieces, written slightly earlier, reflected his commitment to ponder the value of other scholars' work.⁴⁴ One was a preface setting out the history and circumstances of the book on *Celestina* that Keith Whinnom had projected but never completed (2007). The other, 'Rereading Stephen Gilman's *The Art of "La Celestina"*' (2009), conceded that his own early reading of Gilman had 'seriously underestimated an indispensable book'. It would be hard to think of two *Celestina* scholars more radically opposed than Whinnom and Gilman. It was Alan Deyermond's gift not just to become the valued friend of both, but to learn from them both.

These capabilities worked together at the heart of his scholarly achievement, by turns sustaining it and sustained by it. They did so most obviously in his last major work, *A Century of British Medieval Studies* (2007), the volume he edited for the British Academy Centenary Monographs series.⁴⁵ His proposal for this, submitted in 1998, followed naturally from his reasons for enjoying and valuing membership of the Academy. Its formal structure, bringing together medieval literary scholars with medieval historians, and promoting a yet wider interdisciplinary and comparative scope, responded closely to his vision of his subject-area. He appreciated the opportunities to influence thinking on issues that mattered to him, and to insist on standards and practices that he found important. He contributed vigorously to debates within the Academy (and was not averse to starting them himself). All this increased the number of those who knew him, appreciated his warmth, wit, and energy, and felt able to rely on his insight into what they themselves were doing. His redoubtable record as an editor was widely known, and his proposal was readily accepted.

His aim was to demonstrate (and so strengthen) the interdisciplinary coherence of medieval studies, raising their profile in the Academy, and

⁴⁴ A. Deyermond, 'Preface' to Jeremy Lawrance (ed.), Keith Whinnom, *The Textual History and Authorship of "Celestina"*, PMHRS, 52 (London, 2007), pp. 7–18; A. Deyermond, 'Rereading Stephen Gilman's *The Art of "La Celestina"*', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 86 (2009), 121–32.

⁴⁵ The account of Alan's involvement with this project is largely based on the files of his extensive correspondence relating to it, which Professor David Hook has kindly made available.

suggesting possible lines of development for the coming century. The book, made up of strategically chosen thematic essays, each with its extensive list of works cited, would be like his own *Historia y crítica* volumes, but without the excerpts from other published material. In practice, this model proved hard to achieve. Changes in the list of contributors, which he had thought largely settled by the autumn of 1998, were still going on in 2003. Those who did sign up to the project had widely differing visions of what they were undertaking. Surprised by this at first, Alan soon came to see it as a merit in the emerging volume. But it was not easy to take so relaxed a view of the vagaries of delivery on the part of a handful of authors, or (for different reasons) of the sheer burden of interaction with them all, imposed by his exacting notion of an editor's duties. Not all the arrangements through which he had hoped to simplify the process held. And there were massive external disruptions: a series of office moves in 2000; open-heart surgery in late 2003.

In his copious editorial correspondence all this is greatly outweighed by tactful encouragement, flexibility at a strategic level, and a driven, but always reasoned, demand for consistency in textual matters. The dominant impression is one of detail patiently and purposefully marshalled. Yet the various obstacles had their effect not just on Alan's timetable but on his mood: 'I thought I knew everything about the complexities of editing collective volumes,' he wrote, 'but an interdisciplinary volume with thirty authors is in a class of its own.' And to his *El País* interviewer of April 2006 he described the project (by now in press) as 'a nightmare'.

Yet he was no less sincere when he declared in the volume itself (pp. 4–5) that editing it had been a privilege, and had enriched his life. It had extended the range of his professional friendships, it had taught him much, and it had multiplied the number of books that he wanted to read. To him all these were, in the plainest sense, good things. The hope of extending them to others was a basic reason for believing the book to be important, and for fostering that belief among its co-authors. Its success is of the kind on which it is easy to suggest improvements, in that there are always more things that could have been done, but were not. More realistically, though, it regularly outmatches in its quality the sort of thing that could very well have passed muster as adequate. This is more than an acceptable work of reference; it is a book with elements of vision, argument and character that would not be there if Alan had not been there to create the incentives and the spaces for them.

There are signs, even so, that the space available for his own longer-term projects was under some constraint as this one advanced. A second

volume, 'Lírica y teatro', of his *Literatura perdida* catalogue, which he planned to send to Salamanca for publication in 2004, never appeared; nor did his book on the social gospel in medieval Spanish literature, for which he had by then identified an American publisher. Issues of health, no doubt, had their part in this—most obviously the heart surgery of December 2003. Yet his recovery from that was striking: within six months he was *en route* for a holiday in Gran Canaria (and writing letters about the Academy volume two hours before departure). The experience may have made him rather more selective about which international events he attended: he missed the AIH in Monterrey in August 2004 and, in the spring of 2005, the fiftieth anniversary conference of British and Irish Hispanists in Valencia. But the effect did not last. The drive to do more for the new generation of medievalists in Spain, and the eager welcome offered him there by colleagues of all ages, proved irresistible.

In the spring of 2006 certainly, Juan Cruz, interviewing him for *El País*, found him as robustly committed as ever to his Spanish contacts, to his desire to learn more 'especially from the young', and to completing the *Literatura perdida* project. An ingrained optimism, tempered but not shaken by concerns over the state of the world, sustained him in all three commitments. At this stage and for some time thereafter, he looked set for a serene and productive future. Conferral of his honorary doctorate from the University of Valencia in November 2005, a return trip two years later to help edit the volume linked with this, and the Alcalá la Real *Buen Amor* conference, held in his honour in September 2007, were only the highlights in a continuing series of Spanish and North American visits. Though 2008 was a year of less wide-ranging travel, he was closely involved in January and May in two QMW seminars. Writing in October (*Estudios sobre la 'Celestina'*, p. 15), he looked forward to completing his social gospel book, now framed as a three-part study of the *Poema del Cid*, the *Libro de los gatos*, and *Celestina*.

Indeed, if he had a major anxiety, it concerned not his own health but Ann's. Each of them, characteristically, fretted about how the other would, if faced with them, manage the practicalities of life alone. For the moment, limitations on her mobility were the first to appear. Alan in the last few years of his life was increasingly liable to break away from academic and social involvements to attend to those constraints which, distressfully for them both, were linked with some physical pain. Yet the couple continued, so far as was practicable, the pattern of family activities, and the many contacts with friends that meant so much to them. A holiday in Brittany

with Ann and Ruth in the summer of 2008 passed happily.⁴⁶ In December, though, Alan suffered a series of chest infections. A tendency to bouts of coughing, going back several years, now grew more persistent. The Portuguese scholar Amelia Hutchinson, meeting him in May 2009, was struck by his ‘youthful enthusiasm [...] despite his failing health’. Rafael Beltrán, hearing him lecture in July, found him seriously fatigued, though concern for Ann’s wellbeing was more than ever his first preoccupation. By late August he was treating his recent illness as a thing of the past, and talked confidently with Ruth about resuming work on research projects that he had in hand. But his breathing difficulties had begun to tell on his heart, and a worsening of his condition in the early autumn brought him into Watford General Hospital. He died there on 19 September. Ann died at the year’s end.

III

What made Alan Deyermond an important scholar was never primarily the amount that he published. Yet the figures alone make that aspect difficult to disregard. From bibliographies thus far produced, one can identify 15 original books or pamphlets, 31 books edited, 234 articles or chapters, and 24 bibliographical reports: in total, 304 publications, not counting book-reviews.⁴⁷ Some items might be reassigned between these categories, and the final total will probably need some upward revision, but the orders of magnitude are not in doubt. There can scarcely have been a medieval Hispanist, in Britain, Spain, the USA, or anywhere else over the past half-century, left unaware of Alan’s work; most, given his range of topics, would have found their own ideas affected by it. Most, too, would have been struck by that exemplary work-rate, growing with every decade, and very much higher towards the end than in its earlier phases. If anyone sought a model of commitment, here it was.

⁴⁶Ruth Deyermond, *A Memoir*, p. xiii, recalls him taking work to the beach, as always, together with a Breton–English pocket dictionary. For Alan’s health in the final months of his life see his e-mail to Rip Cohen (reproduced in *Cantavella IM*): Amelia Hutchinson, letter to colleagues on the Mediber mailing list (<lists.ucla.edu/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/mediber>); also Beltrán in *BVCervantes*, and further information in Ruth’s *Memoir*, p. xv.

⁴⁷The fullest bibliographies are those of Connolly (*JC*, 2009), 19–40 and Beltrán, *BVCervantes* (2011); earlier listings in Miletich (*Hispanic Studies in Honor of Alan D. Deyermond*, 1986), pp. 3–13, Macpherson and Penny (*The Medieval Mind*, 1997), pp. xiii–xxii, and *Donaire*, 1997, 94–100 are still of interest.

In all that output, surprisingly, only his first two books were monographs of the kind which he, in his editorial role, encouraged and promoted to such effect. After his mid-thirties Alan wrote no more of these. The *Lazarillo de Tormes* Critical Guide and *El 'Cantar de Mio Cid' y la épica medieval española* (originally a chapter for a multi-authored literary history) were shorter works, primarily for student use. Almost all his remaining books are divided between two categories. From the 1970s to the 1990s, there were the reference-works for the medieval Hispanic discipline: the *Literary History*, the two *Historia y crítica* volumes, and *La literatura perdida*. And there were collected volumes, mostly rather later, of his essays and articles: on sentimental fiction, on the *Libro de Buen Amor*, on *cancionero* verse, and on *Celestina*. The last two had other editors; on many topics, Alan was content to leave a clutch of articles uncollected. These publication strategies, along with his intensive activity in editing other people's work, convey a great deal about how he saw his own contribution to scholarship.

For someone who seemed endowed with such a wealth of reassuring certainties, it was a startlingly provisional view. He did not regard anything that he wrote as definitive, though he strove to make it the best that could be done with the evidence and the insights available. Hence, perhaps, his wariness of the monographic form; hence, certainly, his revised edition of *The Petrarchan Sources of 'La Celestina'* (1975), and the articles of 1977–8 and 1999 which revisited the *Mocedades de Rodrigo*.⁴⁸ The *Lazarillo de Tormes* book also underwent revision, though less than he could have wished. As for the *Literary History*, already 'revised and expanded' for its Spanish appearance in 1973, he was to reflect years later that 'I have to start writing the history of medieval Castilian literature again.'⁴⁹ Though, as Rafael Beltrán noted, he did that all the time: the accumulation of published articles was the most flexible and adaptive way of going about it.

'The scholar whose views remain unchanged,' Alan wrote in 1987, 'has probably not kept up with the subject.'⁵⁰ Keeping up began with an awareness of work already done: here his awe-inspiring bibliographical scope

⁴⁸ A. Deyermond, 'The *Mocedades de Rodrigo* as a test case: problems of methodology', *La Corónica*, 6.2 (1978), 108–12; A. Deyermond, 'La autoría de las *Mocedades de Rodrigo*: un replantamiento', in Matthew Bailey (ed.) *Las Mocedades de Rodrigo: estudios críticos, manuscrito y edición* (London, 1999), pp. 1–16.

⁴⁹ A. Deyermond, 'Ejemplaridad e historia: unas palabras finales', *Diablotexto*, 3 (1996), 245–58; comment in Beltrán, *BVCervantes*; see also *Donaire*, 1997, 104.

⁵⁰ A. Deyermond, 'British contributions to the study of the medieval Spanish epic', *La Corónica*, 15 (Spring 1987), 197–212 at 198.

came into its own. Adapting a maxim that the author of *Lazarillo* took from Pliny, he once declared it ‘well-nigh impossible to find a piece of work that is of no use to some area of research’ (*La literatura perdida* (1995), p. 13). His writing as well as his reading was driven by that belief. Interpretations from which he differed, like Colin Smith’s *Making of the Poema de Mio Cid*, won praise from him for ensuring debate and making a difference to its terms (*Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 62 (1985), 125). A largely sceptical review-article, dealing with a study in numerology, opens with the words: ‘Since my overall verdict on this book [...] must be unfavourable, it is only fair to begin by pointing out its merits’,⁵¹ and spends a quarter of its length on doing that. For him, the field of study was neither a domain to be mastered (though he came closer to mastery than most), nor a competitive arena: it was a place where insights of all kinds could be acknowledged and debated.

Within that process, he made his own work strategically significant, not just by way of original contributions, but by mapping out ‘areas of present and potential research’, identifying resources, and suggesting future lines of enquiry.⁵² He was happy to leave questions unanswered at the end of a paper that was ‘only a preliminary sketch for one part of the picture that will eventually emerge from the work of many scholars’. That was how knowledge grew. Much of his own knowledge grew, as he recognised (e.g. *Tradiciones y puntos de vista en la ficción sentimental* (1993), pp. 12–13), from questions posed by his pupils, or the need to anticipate these. The wider range of scholars whose thinking interacted with his to issue in new knowledge was limited only by the generous scope of his bibliographical horizons and his assimilative energy.

Certainly he made small difference between them all, taking it as axiomatic that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Hispanists, or the very young authors of unpublished Ph.D. theses, could have things to say as pertinent as the work of any currently established eminence. He could recognise and respect eminence: the dozen such figures to whose memory he dedicated the first *Historia y crítica* volume are named, in Jane Connolly’s phrase, as ‘foundational scholars’, making possible the work

⁵¹ A. Deyermond, ‘Review of Henk de Vries, *Materia mirable*’, *Romance Philology*, 32 (1979), 458–68 at 458.

⁵² A. Deyermond, ‘The sermon and its uses in medieval Castilian literature’, *La Corónica*, 8 (Spring 1980), 127–45 at 127; see also A. Deyermond, ‘Patterns of imagery in strophic and non-strophic court love-lyric’, in F. Corriente and A. Sáenz-Badillos (eds.), *Poesía estrófica: Actas del Primer Congreso Internacional sobre Poesía Estrófica Árabe y Hebrea y su Paralelos Romances* (Madrid, 1991), pp. 79–91 at p. 91.

of those that come after (*JC*, 16). Alan's influence too was of that order—not to be registered merely by citing half a dozen names (or many times that number) of like-minded colleagues. The list of 93 authors represented in his three homage volumes of 1986 and 1997 perhaps comes closer. Yet the most striking feature, even there, is the pattern of contributions to *Quien hubiese tal ventura* (1997), the tribute from pupils and postgraduates. Just over half the authors there were attached to universities in Spain; about two-thirds were women. That was the kind of difference Alan made. To name all those individuals whose scope and understanding he enlarged would be a well-nigh impossible task.⁵³

For all the immense encouragement which he offered his contemporaries and his juniors, his good opinion was far from indiscriminate: it had to be earned in terms of his own exacting standards. Yet his vision of scholarship as a common work also had a levelling dimension, applicable to him as to anyone else: what mattered was the community of scholars, working together towards less imperfect understandings (see *Donaire* 1997, 100; also Ruth Deyermond, *A Memoir*, p. xiv). To be usefully and responsibly a part of that was all that he sought, claimed, or recognised.

It was this vision of an international and intergenerational scholarly community that made him so absolute for good practice in his own and others' work. Housman's remark that 'Accuracy is a duty and not a virtue' resonated with him, not as a burden to be imposed on authors, but as a pointer to how readers might be spared trouble (Macpherson and Penny (1997), p. ix; *Donaire* 1997, p. 103; Muntaner Frutos in *BVCervantes*). If their own part in the dialogue was to be sustained, they had to be able to trust what was put before them. If sources were misrepresented, even unwittingly, the ground for trust was undermined. All the more so if relevant matter was passed over—hence that tireless bibliographical prompting. Worse still if what was used went unacknowledged: that offended against obligations binding together the entire body of scholarship. With the theft of ideas he was, a pupil recalled, implacable (García Obregón, in *Cantavella IM*).

To these major exigencies, it is true, he added others that could make involvement with him as editor or pre-publication reader a demanding experience. Of that he was well aware, as also of the reason for it. 'I'm

⁵³ A rather arbitrary list, limited to British names, but giving some hint of the calibre and diversity of those influenced by him, might include Dr Louise Haywood, Professor Dorothy Severin, Dr Jane Whetnall, Dr Martin Duffell, Professor David Hook, Professor Jeremy Lawrance, the late Professor Ian Macpherson, Dr Barry Taylor, and Professor Julian Weiss,

sorry to inflict this on you,' he wrote to a contributor to the British Academy volume, 'I'm not doing it to annoy (like the sneezing little boy in *Alice*). Any seriously edited volume must [...] have consistency of bibliographical style, and the one I'm using for this volume aims at providing the maximum of useful information to readers.' Exacting as this might be, it was far from any self-serving pedantry. And it was easier to take, coming from an editor who was himself willing to match his demands with additional work of his own—work which the recipient of that letter described as 'wonderful in amount and in acuteness'.

Fellow-Hispanists found similar reason to accede to his punctiliousness: many recall, in close association, both the rigour and the generosity of his teaching and example. Besides cohering with his wider view of what scholarship ought to be, his model of professionalism was especially relevant to a discipline in which, when he began work, broad belletristic treatments were a still recent memory in Britain, and politically sponsored incompetence still rife in Spain. Another source of motivation, though, took the matter to a different level. Alan pursued and demanded these standards, he told David Hook, 'so that he could [...] look the St Albans dustmen in the eye and justify the use to which their taxes were being put' (*QM tributes*). The obligations of the scholar were bound up with those of the citizen and the human being.

Alan's manner of insisting on these standards was all his own: his adherence to them, and to strategies of argument built around them, was shared with most major British scholars in his field. To Spaniards and others this could suggest the existence of a 'British school', particularly in studies of the epic—a notion that he vigorously resisted (*La Corónica*, 15 (Spring 1987), 197–9). It did indeed blur the distinctiveness of figures as strongly individual as Russell, Whinnom, Colin Smith, and Alan himself. Yet in another sense it followed naturally enough from their shared premises about the role and nature of textual and documentary evidence, and the logical status of what might be done with it. These seemed to imply a cast of mind which, often disparagingly, and always at some risk of misunderstanding, could be described as 'British empiricism', or even 'positivism'.⁵⁴

⁵⁴The latter, in particular is a decidedly labile term: contrast its use as a condemnatory description in Franco's Spain (see Peter Russell in *Mio Cid Studies* (2002), p. 65) with the nuanced case made out by Beltrán in *BVCervantes* for seeing Alan Deyermond's criticism, within a paradigm derived from Northrop Frye, as 'crítica positivista' (but also as part of a specifically British tradition).

For his part, Alan recalled the Oxford Hispanism of the 1950s as ‘overly positivist’, adding that he himself ‘was never thought to be sound’ (*Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 86 (2009), 122). In later life, certainly, he never fully endorsed Colin Smith’s robust prioritising of written evidence, or Keith Whinnom’s habit of following out a line of logic to whatever disruptive conclusions it might underwrite. (Mitigating this latter tendency was for him a crucial move in making overall sense of Whinnom’s critical legacy.⁵⁵) Yet the non-technical application of logical analysis was wholly typical of his own thinking—witness his quest for clear criteria in ascribing a folkloric or formulaic character to Spanish epic, or his persuasive case against taking potentially different views of the *Libro de Buen Amor* fragment in MS Salamanca University 2497 in sterile either/or opposition.⁵⁶ He was careful at all times to distinguish between the problems of argument in its relation to evidence, and those of argument in its logical relation with itself. He insisted that speculative hypotheses, unavoidable on many medieval topics, must be tested on both counts: ‘trying to ensure that the hypotheses offered are consistent with all of the available evidence, and that they are logically coherent.’⁵⁷ He offered his work on *Mocedades de Rodrigo* as a Popperian falsification of aspects of neo-traditionalist theory, demanding ‘modified, more flexible, [...] more fruitful’ versions.

Various factors helped to keep his own deployment of these approaches flexible and fruitful in practice. His pervasive sense of the historical dimension in medieval literary studies kept more than one kind of evidence in play; of itself, his sheer breadth of reference implied engagement with more than one mode of argument. All this reinforced his lifelong belief that no single methodology could encompass what was to be known about any text. Thus equipped, his version of an empiricist strategy could chart a reasoned middle way through the culture-wars of post-Pidalian epic scholarship, acknowledge the resistance of the *Libro de Buen Amor* to

⁵⁵ See A. Deyermond, ‘Keith Whinnom’s Literary Scholarship’, in A. Deyermond (ed.), *Keith Whinnom: Medieval and Renaissance Spanish Literature* (Exeter, 1994), pp. xi–xxx at pp. xxiii, xxvi, though he also recognised (e.g. p. xx) important caveats introduced by Whinnom himself.

⁵⁶ A. Deyermond (with Margaret Chaplin), ‘Folk-motifs in the medieval Spanish epic’, in *Hispanic Studies in Honor of Edmund de Chasca, Philological Quarterly*, 51 (1972), 36–53 at 40; A. Deyermond, ‘Juglar’s Repertoire or Sermon Notebook? The *Libro de Buen Amor* and a manuscript miscellany’, *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 51 (1974), 217–27 at 226–7.

⁵⁷ A. Deyermond, ‘Medieval Spanish epic cycles’, *Kentucky Romance Quarterly*, 23 (1976), 296; for this approach applied in his 1978 MLAA paper see ‘The problem of lost epics’, in Powell, West and Severin (eds.) (1996), ‘*Al que en buen hora nació*’; see also A. Deyermond, ‘The *Mocedades de Rodrigo* as a test case’, *La Corónica*, 6.2 (1978), 111.

any stable account of its meanings (or even of its composition), and show how social and spiritual concerns in *Celestina* could be read compellingly as one, yet still depend on specific and provisional views about the work's authorship. The same approach enabled him to propose constructive orderings of a score of lesser topics. It allowed him to intervene, sometimes speculatively, in newly emerging areas of scholarly interest: oral-formulaic epic, sermon-studies, late medieval letters, art-history, and the *invenciones* studied by his friend Ian Macpherson. It was adaptable enough to handle image-patterns, figural design, issues of structure, and the inherently 'fuzzy' boundaries of genre (*La Corónica*, 29.1 (Fall, 2000), 89)—to say nothing of lost literature. It answered to the attraction that drew Alan towards lost texts, gapped processes, trace elements, authorial and generic silences, invisible characters, and the imagined 'dark matter' implied by them.⁵⁸ If all that was 'positivism', then the term has to lose most of its restrictive force.

Perhaps not all of it, even so. Alan worked impressively to order, enable, and amplify the growth of knowledge in his chosen field. But did he sufficiently question the terms on which that knowledge qualified as such, or the operations through which it was produced? Or did he, by taking such things for granted, make it easier for medievalists to evade theoretical exposure of their ill-founded sense of autonomous selfhood, their controlling and controlled relations with past and present reality? Did his output and example merely reinforce that 'unexamined common sense' which Professor P. J. Smith, writing in another context, singled out as a besetting limitation of Hispanic Studies in Britain?⁵⁹ 'Unexamined' would be a rash term to apply to Alan's thinking about literature, which he habitually ran past his generously inclusive store of other people's criticism. Demonstrably, again, it was not rare for issues of social responsibility to figure in his work, and they are not framed naively. But his response to literary theory in its more radical forms was often one of impatience.

David Hook relates that impatience to Alan's wide reading and rich cultural hinterland: equipped with these 'he had no need to embrace such dogmas'.⁶⁰ In part it was an instinctive defence of older scholars whose

⁵⁸The image is used in A. Deyermond, 'How many sisters had *Celestina*? The functions of the invisible characters', *Celestinesca*, 21 (1997), 15–29 at 26 to illustrate the power exerted within the fiction by an implied historical and social context.

⁵⁹Paul J. Smith, *Writing in the Margin: Spanish Literature of the Golden Age* (Oxford, 1989), p. 2.

⁶⁰*QM tributes*; see also A. Deyermond, 'Discurso de inauguración', in Aengus M. Ward (ed.), *Actas del XII Congreso de la AIH, I: Medieval y lingüística* (Birmingham, 1998), pp. vii–ix at p. ix; cf. Smith, *Writing in the Margin*, p. 98, and the rejoinder in Deyermond, *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1993), p. 6.

example he valued: hence his complaint to the AIH in 1995 that post-structuralist discourse tended to exaggerate the novelty of current thinking, ‘denying our predecessors the credit due to them’. He also identified there a habit of misrepresenting other scholars’ ideas—specifically, the imputation to them of ‘hidden agendas’. Attempts to assert the presence of unanalysed ideological or other premises could certainly feel like that to those on the receiving end. So could the imputation of naive transparency, as in some comments of P. J. Smith, briskly rebutted in Alan’s revised *Lazarillo de Tormes* book.

A further source of irritation was what he saw as an arbitrary downgrading of the literary text; some critics, he told *Donaire* in 1997, ‘find it more important to keep up with the latest theory than to read the actual texts’. Or they might be led to a reading that was ‘incompatible with the plain meaning of the text’s words’.⁶¹ Fully aware as he was of the many sources of instability in medieval texts (up to and including their actual disappearance), and in their meanings, he did not see these as good reasons for questioning their right to count as evidence. He could be brusquely dismissive of far-reaching theoretical claims (‘It is sometimes said that language is the subject of all literature. I have never understood why anyone should believe this’),⁶² and querulous about the rise of Cultural Studies. This was consistent with his long-ingrained mistrust of all forms of universal explanation—any of which might or might not prove relevant or convincing in some given context. Giving any one of them an automatic primacy, though, would have limited the scope for fresh interpretation that he saw as essential to any working model of scholarship.

These objections were not framed as the ordered refutation of any single theoretical tendency—an exercise that would not have interested Alan very much. All of them, though, defend key aspects of the model of medieval scholarship that he envisaged and practised. That was of urgent interest to him, because he believed that more could be done—more, even, by way of self-questioning—within that model than in any of the alternatives proposed. To the question of whether he was correct in that belief, the volume and quality of his work are indeed relevant, but not decisively so. Of more crucial concern are the range of critical and theoretical

⁶¹ A. Deyermond, ‘Fernando de Rojas from 1499 to 1502’, *Celestinesca*, 25 (2001), 8.

⁶² A. Deyermond, ‘“Confundamus ibi linguam eorum”: some accounts of the Tower of Babel in thirteenth-century Castilian literature’, in Roger Wright and Peter Ricketts (eds.), *Studies on Ibero-Romance Linguistics Dedicated to Ralph Penny* (Newark, DE, 2005), pp. 153–65 at pp. 162–3; A. Deyermond, ‘The books of SEMYR’, *Hispanic Research Journal*, 6 (2005), 179–86 at 179; cf. his comments in *Romance Philology*, 32 (1979), 462–3 on purportedly universal ‘cultural systems’.

practices which his approach could encompass, and the difference which his fellow-scholars felt him to have made to their discipline.

'Alan was always open to new ideas,' writes David Hook, instancing, as so many did, his early responsiveness to feminist critical concerns (*QM tributes*). Various other recently developed theoretical approaches—narratology, figural interpretation, reception theory—found their way into his characteristic repertoire. Still others could be invoked at need: structural anthropology in relation to epic cycles; Freud as a corrective to Jungian views of an image in *Celestina*.⁶³ His sense of possible growing-points in medieval studies, evident in the introductions to both his *Historia y crítica* volumes, was anything but restrictive.

Habitually, though not uncritically, he was disposed to accept and learn from the theories and methodologies out of which other people's insights came. He valued Edmund de Chasca's *Estructura y forma en el Poema de Mio Cid*, without endorsing the Chicago Aristotelianism that informed it ('*Mio Cid*' *Studies* (1977), 33–4). He welcomed and used attempts to apply social and historical perspectives to literary texts, notably Angus Mackay's detailed historical placing of Andalusian frontier ballads.⁶⁴ He was, in any case, convinced that medievalists, by the nature of their discipline, anticipated any so-called 'New Historicism'. His mixed feelings about Marina Scordilis Brownlee's intensely theorised study of Ovid in Spanish fifteenth-century romance were matched by acceptance of Olga Tudorica Impey's use of Bakhtin.⁶⁵ He was equally accepting of Robert Archer's application of cognitive linguistics to metaphor in Ausias March. Writing in 2006 about non-official historiographies, he singled out as especially interesting Esther Gómez Sierra's case for seeing in Leonor López de Córdoba 'the formation of an alternative historical discourse'. These last three are late examples. But they are of a piece with the reminder, in that same interview of 1997 where he complained of literary theory's

⁶³ Deyermond, 'Medieval Spanish epic cycles', p. 289; Deyermond, 'Symbolic equivalence in *La Celestina*', p. 29; see also *Historia y crítica*, II (1991), pp. 1–13.

⁶⁴ See A. Deyermond, "'Álora la bien cercada": structure, image, and point of view in a frontier ballad', in E. Michael Gerli and Harvey L. Sharrer (eds.), *Medieval Hispanic Studies in Honor of Samuel G. Armistead* (Madison, WI, 1992), pp. 97–110 at pp. 97–8; see also *Donaire*, 1997, 103.

⁶⁵ A. Deyermond, *Juan Rodríguez del Padrón*, 'Introduction', pp. 7–15 at p. 12; Deyermond, *From the 'Cancioneiro da Vaticana' to the 'Cancionero General'*, 'Preface', pp. 9–11 at p. 10; A. Deyermond, 'The wrecks of time: the historiography of opposition in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', unpublished typescript (2006), based on a plenary paper, 'Historical Fictions in Medieval Castile', given at the International Medieval Congress, Kalamazoo, May 2006; cf. *Donaire*, 1997, 103.

neglect of actual texts, that ‘some theoretical tendencies have had a strong and profitable influence on medieval studies’.

It was this stance of open and reflective empiricism that enabled those remembering Alan to commemorate him as they did. ‘He always seemed to be the pathfinder’, declared Joseph Snow, ‘writing articles of true consequence on different topics’ (*MAA Memoir*). Jane Connolly saw him as focusing not on any received canon but on ‘all medieval literature, so that we might understand each work and genre as a medieval audience would’ (*JC*, 11). And in case that last phrase should imply a too readily assumed intimacy with medieval otherness, we have Joaquín Ventura Ruiz’s recollection of him as ‘a model of intuition, inspiring us not to rest content with the obvious, but to turn the page and read the other side’ (*Cantavella IM*).

The account which Alan himself gave of how he read medieval texts—not with medieval eyes, but with an awareness of how a medieval reader would have gone about it (*El País*, 2006)—was typically nuanced and cautious about his limitations. As for any less conscious limitation, there may be some clue to that in the stylistic habits to which, as editor, he took strongest exception: the use of ‘if’ for ‘though’; the Germanic-American ‘hopefully’; the recourse to what he called ‘scare quotes’. In such cases he sensed an unmet obligation to give what was said an overt logical status—which might very well be ambiguous but ought, even so, to be made explicit. Such thinking had a responsibility to prove that it was more than equivocation.

An outlook of that kind was clearly unpropitious for those who, seeing the objects and operations of literary studies as inherently unseizable, sought in any broader sense to conduct thought-experiments about them. Indifference to their logical credentials, on the other hand, would scarcely have boded well for the success of such experiments. Not unreasonably then, Alan remained wary of calls for the root-and-branch transformation of his discipline. Certainly, he attempted nothing of the kind himself. Yet the framework for that discipline which he envisaged with such clarity rather facilitated than forestalled any future remaking of it. His contribution and those of pupils and colleagues whom he mentored or inspired gave medieval Hispanic studies a far richer array of possible futures than would have been the case without him. That was the outcome of speculative and questing openness, no less than of rigorously grounded certainties. What Lluís Cabré (‘Un medievalista generós’, 2009) recalls as Alan’s ‘prodigious taxonomic memory’ was matched at every turn by a generous inclusiveness. A further consequence of this was that the community of knowledge and scholarly dialogue was given body as a company of friends.

At times, when its members actually met together, it could be a cheerfully disputatious company—that too was Alan's way. He could be abrasive—as a rule, wittily—when he felt this was called for; he could, often from sheer necessity, order the people needing his attention in a queue, and studiously ignore those whose turn had not yet arrived. Yet his essential kindness, integral to his humanism as to his humanity, never left him. His harshest judgement on a colleague was the remark that 'he has difficulty in recognizing the existence of other people'. That could never have been said of Alan; his influence and his example kept countless others from having it said about them.

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Fellow of the Academy

Note. I have had generous help in preparing this memoir from Professor Jane E. Connolly, outstanding among Alan Deyermond's obituarists and bibliographers, from Professor David Hook, his literary executor, who made available the files from Alan's editorship of *A Century of British Medieval Studies*, and from Professor Joseph Snow, who shared with me many of his own memoirs and memories of Alan. I am also grateful to the editors (Dr Andrew Beresford, Dr Louise Haywood, and Professor Julian Weiss) of *Medieval Hispanic Studies in Memory of Alan Deyermond*, and to Dr Ruth Deyermond herself, for allowing me to see and cite a typescript of the *Memoir* which she wrote for that volume.