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Imperial Orwell

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George Orwell's three accounts of British colonial rule in Burma have been said, not least by the author, to express his revulsion at that regime. While the image given of the British authorities does not offer wholehearted endorsement, many aspects in fact sustain ideas which are central to pro-colonial literature, and go even further, through the portrayal of characters in a manner consistent with racialist and social Darwinist theories. To some extent the causes of this outlook are open to speculation, but certainly a lingering embitterment towards his experiences as a policeman in Burma is evident in his writing, and, above all, a close and honest reading of the texts reveals a side to Orwell that many critics have shown a distinct reluctance to acknowledge. In each of his Burmese stories, although the British are depicted as morally lacking, the indigenous people, including those of mixed race, are resolutely inferior beings: timid, puerile and comical, with a couple of villainous exceptions.

Keywords: colonialism; racial discourse; Burma; policeman; empirical

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Orwell imperial

Los tres relatos de George Orwell sobre el dominio colonial británico en Birmania han sido entendidos como expresión de su repulsa hacia aquel régimen. Aunque la imagen de las autoridades británicas que aparece en ellos no ofrece un respaldo incondicional, otros muchos aspectos contienen ideas que habían sido centrales en la literatura pro-colonial—las cuales se desarrollan aún más, sobre todo mediante la caracterización de personajes de acuerdo con las teorías sociales y raciales darwinistas. Hasta cierto punto, las causas de esta perspectiva pueden ser objeto de alguna especulación, pero sin duda una amargura persistente relacionada con su experiencia como policía en Birmania se evidencia en estos relatos de Orwell y, sobre todo, una lectura minuciosa y honesta revela un lado del autor que muchos críticos se han mostrado reluctantes en reconocer. En cada uno de sus cuentos birmanos, si bien los británicos son retratados como moralmente deficientes, los indígenas, incluso los mestizos, son presentados como seres resueltamente inferiores: tímidos, pueriles y cómicos, con un par de viles excepciones.

Palabras clave: colonialismo; discurso racial; Birmania; policía; empírico

Life sometimes disrupted George Orwell's political beliefs. The novel and two short stories he wrote about Burma[1] are transparent testament to what Eric Arthur Blair experienced in that country. While it is conceivable that he wrote of more than his direct experiences, it is only possible to understand the consistently pejorative view of the indigenous people in these three texts as the result of his time as a colonial policeman, as opposed to being the unalloyed product of a political philosophy.

In "Pacifism and the War," an essay which served as a response to criticisms levied against him in 1942, Orwell wrote that he was "against imperialism because I know something about it from the inside. The whole history of this is to be found in my writings, including a novel (*Burmese Days*)" (Orwell 1968, 228). However, any remotely careful reading of the novel shows a marked ambivalence toward the colonial enterprise as it affected Burma. A number of critics—including Stephen Ingle (1998), Graham Holderness, Brian Loughrey and Nahem Yousef (1998), and Christopher Hitchens (2002)—have been content to take Orwell at his word, as if reluctant to engage fully with some of the implications of the novel and, in the process, ignore many issues which signify a qualified vindication of the British Empire. To view *Burmese Days* as anti-imperialist involves disregarding, for example, the shiftless nature of the Burmese characters and the derisory manner in which Orwell portrays their independence movement, while, in contrast, even some of the feckless British characters suddenly become heroic, and as individuals are capable of dominating crowds of "natives." British racist attitudes also prove to be justified.

These and other examples will be looked at in more detail later, but it is striking that Orwell considered it important to be seen as anti-imperialist despite writing fiction which is frequently at least imitative of adamantly pro-colonial literature. It is evident that his attitude to other experiments of European occupation was conspicuously sympathetic to the local people and so unforgiving of the foreign power. From September 1938 to March of the following year he lived in Morocco (Bowker 2004, 243-248), and he described what he witnessed in the French colony in his essay "Marrakech" (1939). While he was feeding bread to a gazelle, a navvy asked if he could have some; and on another occasion, when it was noticed that the author had cigarettes, he was suddenly surrounded by men pleading for one: "None of these people, I suppose, works less than twelve hours a day, and every one of them looks on a cigarette as a more or less impossible luxury" (Orwell 2002, 122-123). Europeans were blamed for not considering the people whose brown skins blended with the soil and whose lives were

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[1] *Burmese Days* (1934), "A Hanging" (1931) and "Shooting an Elephant" (1936). "A Hanging" first appeared in the *Adelphi* magazine in August 1931 (Orwell having left Burma in 1927), written by "Eric A. Blair" (Stansky and Abrahams 1994b, 162); *Burmese Days* was initially rejected by the left-wing publisher Victor Gollancz—he thought it could have offended some British and Indians and have resulted in libel suits—and Heinemann Cape, but the American group Harper Brothers accepted it after legal advice (Bowker 2004, 155); "Shooting an Elephant," after an enquiry by an editor (Peter Lehmann) gleaned a hesitant suggestion from Orwell of a "sketch," which was encouraged and published in the second edition of *New Writing* in the autumn of 1936 (Stansky and Abrahams 1994a, 146-147).

"an endless, back-breaking struggle to wring a little food out of an eroded soil" (124), but it could not last indefinitely: the sight of a column of Senegalese soldiers with "splendid bodies" made him wonder, "How much longer can we go on kidding these people?" (126-127).

Therefore, rationally or philosophically speaking, he thought this type of political domination was both wrong and unsustainable because it was intolerable to the indigenous population: independence from colonial dominion was inevitable. But his view of Burma was quite different. In *Burmese Days* the nationalist cause is represented by a newspaper of borrowed stories and few readers, whose real purpose is to serve the nefarious ends of the locally dominant criminal (Orwell [1934] 2001, 254-256). Even the possibility of a desire for independence is absent in "A Hanging" and "Shooting an Elephant" and is antithetical to the servile character of the Burmese people as he depicted them. Disparaging portrayals of the Burmese and their trivial political ambitions are a recurring feature of *Burmese Days* and an explanation of the author's conspicuous hostility has to be his five years as an instrument of British rule. By itself, spending such a long time at such a distance from home as a very young man—he began when he was nineteen, almost immediately after leaving school (Bowker 2004, 75)—defending a system he ostensibly opposed, would have been cause enough for lingering enmity, but other factors could plausibly have had an effect.

There were a number of conceivable personal and cultural influences on him from his childhood. Before he travelled there as a young man, Burma specifically and the imperial sub-continent in a more nebulous form were endowed with positive associations. His maternal grandfather fled personal tragedy by moving East and the result was a happy marriage and a prosperous business (Bowker 2004, 7) (like Flory in *Burmese Days*, he worked in the timber trade). As Orwell wrote in his essay "Boys' Weeklies" (1940), he had been an avid reader of comics in childhood and at the time the adventure of colonialism—or as he put it, "at the outpost of Empire the monocled Englishmen are holding the niggers at bay"—was a recurring theme (Orwell 2002, 198-199). According to his obituary of Kipling ("Rudyard Kipling," published in 1942), for Anglo-Indian families like his own, the writer had been "a sort of household god" and, consequently, a dominant influence, whether positively or negatively, on the young Blair (Orwell 2002, 38-39). Another experience which made an impression on the boy was the West End musical *Chu Chin Chow*, which he was taken to see as a reward for passing his Eton Entrance Examination, and which he recalled (in 1940) as a depiction of "droves of women, practically naked and painted to an agreeable walnut-juice tint. It was a never-never land, the 'gorgeous East,' where, as is well-known, everyone has fifty wives and spends his time lying on a divan, eating pomegranates" (Bowker 2004, 48).

The appeal to a boy answerable to the doctrines of British private education must have been about as great as the contrast of the musical's hedonistic appeal to his later life as a colonial policeman. For Blair the incongruity between an image of

an acquiescent population and the frustrating reality of hostility and resistance is illustrated in an incident he experienced and then used, with significant alterations, in *Burmese Days.* In the fictional account, five schoolboys attack the racist Ellis, to rub home their sense of power after the murder of an Anglo-Indian, while, as a policeman, Blair was said to have ended an argument with a Burmese boy by hitting him on the back with a stick (Bowker 2004, 87). Orwell later claimed to have regretted the violence, but the narration of Ellis's encounter gives a resolutely different impression. One very notable feature of the description is Orwell's overt use of racist discourse, something he resorted to at various points in the Burmese tales, but which many critics do not find worthy of much, or indeed any, consideration, and which I will look at below. However, strictly in terms of his experiences informing his fiction, what is conspicuous is both his emotional language and the sudden adoption of Ellis's viewpoint as the narrator's: "Ellis saw them coming, a row of yellow, malicious faces—epicene faces, horribly smooth and young, grinning at him with deliberate insolence . . . The look of their faces, jeering at him like a row of yellow images, was maddening" (Orwell [1934] 2001, 252). This incident ends with Ellis victorious, representative of manly and British virtue, and the idea of regret on the Briton's part is inconceivable, but the emotionally charged, spiteful description of the children, for example with the oxymoronic "horribly smooth and young" faces which were "maddening," is implicitly the result of a personal grievance.

However, critics have been remarkably reticent in acknowledging the presence of these features in Orwell's Burmese stories. I will refer to critics such as Stephen Ingle, Alok Rai and Christopher Hitchens later in the essay, but an impression of views of the works from the year of publication until recent times can be gained from three critiques. *Burmese Days* was first published in the United States, and in 1934, in the *New York Herald Tribune Books* journal, Margaret Carson Hubbard astonishingly wrote that Orwell had written wholly out of sympathy for the natives, and that U Po Kyin (the presiding and devoted villain) and Dr. Veraswami (a steadfastly obsequious Indian) were the only realistic characters (Stansky and Abrahams 1994a, 43). It is, at least, an indication of what some readers at the time expected from such fiction. As recently as 1998 Holderness, Loughrey and Yousaf, in their introductory essay, still believe Burma had made Orwell aware of the dichotomy between those in power and those subject to it, and had led to his rejection of his social and colonial background (1998, 3). Implicitly, for such an experience to be manifest in these stories there should be sympathetic portrayals of Burmese and Indian characters, something that is in fact entirely absent, having instead their wholesale denigration. In a mostly salient assessment Elleke Boehmer recognizes that Orwell's attacks on the institution of the British Empire were markedly ambivalent, for example that the defence of the European Club, a symbol of white social exclusion and supremacy, echoed older tales of imperial valour, but she still holds that "*Burmese Days* signals the closing down of an entire genre of imperial heroics" in spite of the defence's significant role in the novel (Boehmer 2005, 153-

154). When Boehmer mentions "A Hanging," it is notable that she does not find it necessary to go beyond Orwell's evaluation of his own work, that it was unequivocally anti-imperialist (2005, 152). Similarly Holderness, Loughrey and Yousaf are satisfied that Orwell's comparison of the Burmese with the English working class in *The Road to Wigan Pier*—"I wanted to . . . get down among the oppressed, to be one of them and on their side against the tyrants"—elucidates his feelings about Burma and does not need to be challenged (Orwell [1937] 2001, 3).[2]

If Orwell's self-assessment is more useful as a guide to his intentions than as a summary of the resulting stories, the explanation is clear. As Terry Eagleton states, Orwell was a devout empiricist, or, as Eagleton puts it, "he suffered from the empiricist illusion that what was real was what you could smell with your own nose and feel with your own fingers" (2003, 6-9). Orwell's high regard for experience was shown through his decision to work as a hop-picker (Orwell 2000, 224) and live as a tramp (Stansky and Abrahams 1994b, 194) for a couple of weeks at a time, rather than simply asking hop-pickers or tramps to describe their lives. He even decided to have himself arrested as a drunk, methodically consuming whisky and several pints of beer and then looking for a policeman, so that he could discover what life in prison was like. He was disappointed to be released two days later (Orwell 2000, 254). His voluntary exposure to what were at the very least unpleasant circumstances is testament to the primacy that tactile and lived experiences had for him. A cynic could claim that he was seeking vindication for his political opinions, but these exposures also made it possible that he would find something incompatible with his world-view. Even the fact that he could not escape being a "lower-upper-middle class" writer (Orwell [1937] 2001 139) who was only a hop-picker, tramp or prisoner for a short time had value. For his mainly middle-class readers he was their surrogate, witnessing either an alien lifestyle or location (such as a coal mine) from roughly the same perspective they would have had. Biography is then very relevant to the study of Orwell's writing, even if some consider the form "anti-intellectual" (Eagleton 2003, 8). Its use can help to explain those incompatible aspects and, paradoxically, enable a freer analysis as opposed to one that is (presumably) informed by his reputation as a left-wing spokesperson for his generation.

The combination of being a Briton and a policeman in Burma repeatedly put him in opposition to the indigenous people. The effect, as is evident from even not so close an analysis of his writing, was profound, but it was not homogeneous. His three texts about life in Burma show marked differences between them in his depiction of the nature of power and attitudes toward it, determined on racial lines. Some critics have attempted to discern a progress (as if towards a bright post-colonial future) through

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[2] In *The Road to Wigan Pier* Orwell makes clear, through a mixture of heightened sensitivity and blunt honesty, that he found the Burmese to be not "physically repulsive" (including their "distinctive smell"), in contrast to the English "lower class" odour, which he thought nauseating ([1937] 2001, 94-96). He was, nevertheless, prepared to live with the latter in the hope of revealing the hardships they endured with a sympathy he could not achieve for the Burmese.

"A Hanging" ([1931] 2000), *Burmese Days* ([1934] 2001) and "Shooting an Elephant" ([1936] 2000), with, for example, Alok Rai claiming that the change from *Burmese Days* to "Shooting an Elephant" shows "a surprising maturity" (1990, 40). As Rai was justifiably critical of much of the political and racial content of Burmese Days, it follows that in his analysis "pro-colonial" and "childish" are synonymous, and so "Shooting an Elephant," according to his analogy, was "adult" and "anti-colonial." While the image of British dominion is certainly not the same in the later story, some of the underlying attitudes (at least of the narrator) are essentially indistinguishable and, at most, the story is a half-hearted attack on the imperial project.

The aspect of "Shooting an Elephant" that most clearly indicates disillusion with both the idea of empire and the narrator's role (as a policeman) within it is his moral resignation before the crowds. Although he is sure that the elephant no longer poses any danger, he feels that the combination of an expectant crowd and him having a gun means he has to act, and the situation is metonymy for the nature of the Empire: "to trail feebly away, having done nothing . . . The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at" (Orwell {1936} 2000, 503-504). The mystique of white supremacy is deftly exposed as a fallacy, but the overriding impression is of pity for the policeman and, by extension, all other British servants of Empire. It is distinctly incongruous after an opening declaration that "imperialism was an evil thing," and "I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny . . . upon the will of prostrate peoples" (502). However, the incident (as described) shows he feels a form of condescending enmity to the colonial subjects. He makes clear his antipathy to the local population, especially religious figures—"the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts" (502)—but their hostile behaviour is described in not very threatening terms, as petty and cowardly, where indeed "[n]o-one had the guts to raise a riot" (501-502).

The crowd manage to exert control through social awkwardness, but they lack the will or fortitude to use this power autonomously, and, according to the terms of this story, this self-determination is something they do not deserve anyway. If, as a sincere socialist, Orwell believed that politics involved difficult choices and "the more ordinary people were involved in such decisions the less often morally unacceptable decisions will be taken" (Ingle 1998, 243), it was not applicable to the Burmese. The policeman's view of the situation is that it would be wrong to shoot the elephant as it no longer represents any danger and would be a considerable loss to its owner. He shoots it because of what he perceives to be the desire of the crowd. For a tale which is supposed to illustrate the evil of British rule in Asia, the specific problem is "the futility of the white man's dominion in the East" (Orwell {1936} 2000, 504). What he is about to do he considers murder. The problem, therefore, is that the white man, who according to this story is rational and knows best, has to comply with the whim of the crowd—"all happy and excited" (503)—who are unreasonable and only want

ephemeral gratification. As an exemplary story, and from the outset it is said to show how colonialism was a doomed enterprise, the lesson is that the problem with British rule is that they were not actually in control, and the situation would have been much better for all if they had been. Instead, all too often the British felt obliged to follow the misguided ideas of the indigenous population who, to extrapolate, were not capable of running their own country. As Mohammed Sarwar Alam states, Orwell's expressions of anti-imperialism did not preclude patriotism, especially in comparison to the Burmese (2006, 55-62, see especially page 58). The painfully long process of the elephant's death symbolizes its significance and reinforces how mistaken the crowd's wish was, that they have destroyed what is best about their country, or at least a precious natural resource, and instead of remorse, "they had stripped his body almost to the bones by the afternoon" (Orwell [1936] 2000, 505-506).

The state of the nation as depicted in *Burmese Days* also showed the British to be more suited as rulers, despite their obvious shortcomings. What was markedly different to "Shooting an Elephant" was any suggestion that the white men would be cowed into accepting the local consensus. The scarcely plausible Indian admirer of the British, Dr. Veraswami, believes that Burma ruled by the Burmese had been a place of "dirt and torture and ignorance," but since the British took over the transformation is unquestionable: "Look at the whole uprush of modern progress!" (Orwell [1934] 2001, 40-41). In contrast, Flory as a cynic naturally concentrates on the negative effects of the European invasion—disease and exploitation—but admits the possibility of a modernising and civilising influence (40-41). The events that follow support Veraswami's opinion. When the Burmese are the masters they are open to corruption, mendacity and scheming (for example, see page 140); or they are slipshod Indians who are certainly not to be trusted, such as the servants who leave the saddle of the only eligible British woman, Elizabeth, insecurely fastened (193-196). The contrast between the Eastern and Western nationalities reaches its apex when the European Club—"the real seat of the British power" (14)—is attacked by a mob of locals. Flory arrives in the midst of the trouble and, though a part of the crowd could have killed him, "some even tried to make way for him, as a white man" (261). The Military Police Subahdar (the Burmese commander) tells Flory he has been waiting for orders while mayhem has proceeded and the club put in danger, so he, as the Briton, takes control and in a few minutes the crowd is dispersed (261-264). Elleke Boehmer saw the episode as corresponding to those "legends of stalwart white minorities threatened by dark hordes, heroic tales of Rorke's Drift, and Gordon at Khartoum" (2005, 154), while the belief in the automatic deference individual Europeans could expect from multitudes of Asians was fairly widespread in Orwell's time, so that, for example, Leonard Woolf in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) reported how it was understood that during a religious festival attended by thousands of Ceylonese, if he, as one white man, was present there would not be trouble, and he claimed that this proved to be true (Cell 1999, 233-234).

The narratorial depiction of the racial and power relations in the earliest of the Burmese stories, "A Hanging," is the most sober, or freest from the intoxication of colonial and racial discourse. Perhaps one reason for this is that its main explicit subject is capital punishment rather than a critique of imperial hegemony, although this is unavoidably integral to the events: it is expressly about "the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide" (Orwell [1931] 2000, 208). That the life of an Indian will be cut short by British authorities is, in terms of the story, not so significant. Change the nationalities or races of any of the participants and the immorality of the execution would be unaffected. Orwell wrote the story when he was living in Britain and capital punishment was then a contentious issue: the National Campaign for the Abolition of Capital Punishment began in 1925; in 1930 a Parliamentary Select Committee unsuccessfully recommended a period of five years without the death penalty; from 1931 pregnant women could not be executed after giving birth (the punishment was already prohibited during pregnancy); and in 1932 the minimum age for someone to be given this sentence was raised to eighteen (Block and Hostettler 1997, 271). The magnitude and inherent offensiveness of the punishment in the story is illustrated by the British superintendent's relief when it is over—"Well, that's all for this morning, thank god" (Orwell [1931] 2000, 209)—and by the incongruous appearance of a dog, whose normally playful canine behaviour highlights how peculiar or unnatural the human activity is.

The dog also undermines the political hegemony somewhat: as the animal is the only animate being that does not recognize imperial dominion, it is the only independent figure (Orwell [1931] 2000, 208-209). It is one of various features of the story with pro- or anti-imperialist connotations. The political hierarchy, which could be seen as intended to represent all of the British-controlled sub-continent, is made manifest, sometimes subtly and sometimes clumsily. The fawning Dravidian head jailer ("'Yes sir, yes sir,' he bubbled" [208]), the Indian hangman ("greeted us with a servile crouch as we entered" [209]), and a Eurasian jailer ("Kindly take one of my cigarettes, sir. Do you not admire my new silver case, sir? . . . Classy European style" [210]) conform to a comical ingratiating stereotype, but also demonstrate, as far as the story is to be believed, an unquestioning acceptance by the indigenous population of their foreign lords. The inviolability of British authority is also suggested by the superintendent's initial impatience to have the execution finished: "The man ought to have been dead by this time" (208). In other words, adherence to the details of the British schedule is more important than the condemned man's life. The laughter and whisky the servants of Empire enjoy *postmortem* may ostensibly be their means of dealing with their unease, but it is made patently clear that the British and those Asians who serve their regime experience a privileged existence on quite a different plane to the majority of the people.

A correlative of the power dichotomy according to race is Orwell's surprisingly reductive version of Indian and Burmese defining national traits throughout his Burmese fiction. Unlike the variations in attitudes to colonial power between the

stories, the representations of Asian and Eurasian characters are resolutely consistent and pejorative. They also have striking correspondence to, and occasionally exceed, the racial theories of white supremacists of the time, such as those of Lothrop Stoddard (1883-1950).[3] Stoddard was a Harvard academic and a commercially successful writer in the 1920s and 1930s who warned in his book *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy* (1921) of the threat to the white race because of what he saw as the inexorable expansion of other races. The white policeman who feels compelled to obey the irresistible will of the crowd of "yellow faces" (Orwell [1936] 2000, 504) and shoot the elephant is comparable to Stoddard's image of a western political world represented as dykes (the "yellow," "brown" and "red" peoples being "colored tides" [1921, 226]): "The white man, like King Canute, seats himself upon the tidal sands and bids the waves be stayed. He will be lucky if he escapes merely with wet shoes" (235). It is curious that Orwell's racialist use of "yellow" has received little attention from critics (such as Alok Rai) (1990, 40-41), who quote the passage without mention of the homogenous and loaded depiction of the people. The fact that the phrase is only comprehensible within racist discourse—they plainly did not have faces that were the colour of lemons or sunflowers—is congruent with Orwell's fundamentally offensive characterisation of non-Europeans overall, which could be more negative and sweeping than those of Stoddard, the white supremacist.

Stoddard thought that Burma was on the border of "the yellow and brown worlds" (1921, 23). The "diverse racial amalgamation" (54) he saw in much of that general area made generalising about characteristics more difficult, but he acknowledged that Asians were "not inferior" (229), even if they could be described as "by nature less restless, less ambitious and consequently less aggressive than ourselves" (234). With few exceptions, Orwell's Asian characters correspond to the latter definition. In "A Hanging" the subservient attitude of those who work in the prison implies they are complicit with British rule, and even the condemned man shows no explicit objection to his sentence or treatment. When the narrator/policeman feels he is being impelled to shoot the elephant it is a combination of what he feels is the will of the spectators and the force of their numbers, while the crowd are passive to the extent that the only aggressive acts in the story (i.e., those that would cause others harm) are done by the elephant (killing a coolie) and the policeman. In general (with the exception of two conspicuous individuals, to be discussed later), the Indians and Burmese in *Burmese Days* are either content, as with Dr. Veraswami, or not serious—"aggressive" to use Stoddard's description—enough in their discontent to present a serious threat. The crowd that attack the club do so for a spurious reason—a boy has been blinded, but

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[3] This is not, of course, to claim that racialist or social Darwinist theories began in the twentieth century. There were, for example, French writers like Francois Bernier (1625-1688), who divided man into four or five species or races, and Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882), who espoused ideas of polygenesis, that different races had different origins, and that, of the three main races, whites were inherently superior. However, Stoddard clearly has more contemporary relevance to Orwell's writing (James 2008).

because of an incompetent Burmese doctor rather than directly because Ellis hit him (Orwell [1934] 2001, 254)—and Flory and a few sepoys are able to disperse all 2,000 within a few moments (260-264). It is notable that their retreat reinforces their docile image (prey not predatory) and shows them to be utterly homogenous: they fled as "an endless line of young men gracefully leaping through a gap in the hedge like a procession of gazelles" (264).

The relatively easily foiled assault on the British is part of a recurrent theme which dismisses any idea of a nationalist or independence movement as a joke. The *Burmese Patriot* is a newspaper, or "miserable eight-page rag," which is "composed partly of news stolen from the *Rangoon Gazette*, partly weak Nationalist Heroics." The quality of the paper is terrible and, due to a printing error, the final page is black, "as though in mourning for the smallness of the paper's circulation" (5). When the editor is arrested he goes on hunger strike, but relents after six hours (114). Orwell's mocking depiction of Burma's struggle for independence is in marked contrast to Stoddard's analysis and, of course, the actual situation. As a result of their history and potential, Stoddard believed Asians could not be kept within a white hegemony and would become independent (1921, 229). The Burmese nationalist movement began during the 1920s and from 1930-1932, so before Orwell wrote *Burmese Days*, there was frequent rioting and a jungle guerilla rebellion (Myint-U 2002, 246). That Orwell told his publisher, Victor Gollancz, he wanted to call the *Burmese Patriot* the *Burmese Sinn Feiner* ([1934] 2001, v-vi), while inconsistent with one aspect of its representation in the novel, further suggests the writer's marked antipathy to Burmese independence. It is a puzzling choice because of the geographical distance between Burma and Ireland, the use of two non-Burmese languages (English and Gaelic) for a Burmese nationalist newspaper, and the attempt to connect a movement that had just successfully overthrown British rule with one that Orwell wanted to show as risible for trying to do the same. However, linking the two political fights could be expected to provoke a hostile reaction to the Asian cause, by association, from a large proportion of his English readership at the time.

The vision of a local population that shows, at most, token signs of resistance, and is most often (in the three stories) submissive under its colonial masters, includes one manifestly idiosyncratic figure. The central villain of *Burmese Days*, U Po Kyin, is so single-minded in his nefarious ways that he "was too absorbed in intrigue ever to fail through carelessness or ignorance" (Orwell [1934] 2001, 3). Kyin conforms to the stereotype of Oriental villain, a feature of music-hall productions since the nineteenth century and revived in films of the 1930s, most famously with the character Fu Manchu (MacKenzie 1984, 53-54 and 89), but he serves other literary purposes in this novel. Apart from Ellis' squabble with schoolboys and the half-hearted riot, the British police would have little trouble to resolve, and without the constant criminal counter-plot the story would lack the dynamic element of a serious threat to British rule. Above all, though, it indirectly serves Orwell's stated aim of being anti-imperial.

Flory claims that he "always found it difficult to believe that Orientals could be really dangerous" (Orwell [1934] 2001, 259), and his friend Veraswami confirms the concept of inscrutable Eastern malevolence: "Only an Oriental could know him. You, an English gentleman cannot sink your mind to the depth of such ass [*sic*] U Po Kyin" (44). As Flory is presented as an open-minded Briton who has lived in the East for fifteen years (42), beyond adding a veneer of mystery, by extension it is a forlorn task for Westerners to try to maintain law and order in such a place.

Flory's blindness as regards Asian malevolence is, naturally, a danger to the character (as he is living in Asia), and it is consistent with a series of incidents in which racism proves to be more or less perspicacious so that integration between the races is foolhardy. His friendship with the oleaginous Veraswami is, in itself, hard to comprehend. The Indian doctor's passionate Anglophilia—"your civilisation at its very worst iss [*sic*] for us an advance. Gramophones, billycock hats, the *News of the World*—all iss [*sic*] better than the horrible sloth of the Oriental" (41)—is matched by his feelings for Flory—"Ah, Mr. Flory, how very delightful to see you! . . . Ah, my dear friend, how I have been pining for some cultured conversation!" (34). Tellingly, the doctor's reputation precedes him. Before Veraswami appears in the novel, Ellis gives him the soubriquet "Very-slimy" (31), a comment that initially sounds simply puerile and racist, but which becomes fully vindicated by Veraswami's words. Indeed, the suspicion must be that Orwell chose the Indian name to be able to make the joke applicable. Another sign that he wanted Veraswami to look comical is the purportedly phonetic manner in which his speech is written. Orwell complained in his obituary of Rudyard Kipling (1942) that every time one particular soldier appears in one of his stories, he "is always made to speak a sort of stylized cockney, not very broad but all the aitches and final "g's" carefully omitted . . . Kipling ought to have known better" (2002, 402-403), However, what Orwell found unacceptable for Kipling's cockney did not inhibit himself with the Indian doctor, with all the s's doubled whenever he spoke (*is* becomes 'iss' and *as* becomes 'ass'). These imperfections mysteriously disappear after Flory's death, a sign that a comical element would be inappropriate at such a moment, and therefore that Orwell intended Veraswami to look somewhat ridiculous for most of the novel. It is especially strange that he felt it necessary to mock the doctor's pronunciation because, in a review quoted by Christopher Hitchens, Orwell claimed that generally "Indians write and even pronounce English far better than any European race" (2002, 32). Indeed, Hitchens rather mystifyingly believed that *Burmese Days* was "quite advanced for its time" in its attitude to race. Its supposedly progressive outlook was exemplified, for him, by Flory's tolerance of Eurasians (Hitchens 2002, 179), a view that is only sustainable through a very partial reading of the novel.

As he is a zealous advocate of the British Empire, it is natural that Veraswami is passionately eager to join the European Club. For mischievous reasons, U Po Kyin's ambition to do the same is also easy to explain, and what looks like an innocuous wish undermines the local social and political structure. It is again anticipated by Ellis, who

is adamantly opposed to taking "a dear little nigger-boy into this club" (Orwell [1934] 2001, 20). Once the possibility of a non-European joining the European Club becomes known, Kyin schemes to ensure the honour falls to him (144-146). Kyin explains that as Veraswami "is the highest native official in the district" he has to be removed from the running (147), and Kyin is prepared to go to great lengths to achieve his ends—framing the doctor through a prison escape, arranging a riot in which the rioters are given bullet-proof vests which do not actually work (139-143)—in order to enter "that remote, mysterious temple, that holy of holies far harder of entry than Nirvana!" (147-148). When Flory tells Veraswami he will be proposed, "[t]he doctor's emotion caused him almost to choke" (155). The tone is obviously satirical, but the object of the satire is the desperate Oriental and, as representatives of their nations, they are the absolute reverse of nationalists. Even though the two would-be members' motives are morally contrary, their aspirations both require, indeed celebrate, the continuation of British colonial rule.

Flory's only other social hazard is his only other non-British relationship, his Burmese mistress, Ma Hla May, and Kyin is also able to exploit this situation, but in this case the greater intimacy means the consequences are fatal. They are far from a happy couple, and Flory implicitly believes that any sort of close involvement with a Burmese woman is thoroughly unnatural and shameful. He is said to have known many and, when it appears to have spoiled his chances with the attractive English visitor Elizabeth, he sees "an endless procession of Burmese women . . . a full hundred at the least . . . but they had no faces . . . He had dirtied himself beyond redemption and this was his just punishment" (Orwell [1934] 2001, 203). He has been with his most recent Burmese mistress for two years and it has become a source of profound discontent for Flory. In some respects it can be seen as analogous to imperial dominion, but again the pleasure, because of the power supposedly associated with connections to white men, is all on the Burmese side, as is the exploitation—Ma Hla May steals from Flory, pawns his gifts and has a pseudo-secret lover. As a result, she is eager for her and Flory to remain together, while the Briton wants independence. Their relationship is also unhealthy at a human level. Flory is said to be angry after making love, and then treats his companion as a prostitute by telling her to take money from his pocket so that she will leave (see pages 50-54 and 116-117).

The latter was a theme of other writing from Orwell's time in Burma. Two poems ("Romance" and "The Lesser Evil," presumably written in Burma, i.e., between 1922 and 1927) try to make humorous use of the proximity and incongruity of love and money—for example, "Each time she swore she loved me true / She struck [*sic*] me for another ten [rupees]" (Orwell 2000, 92-93)—which suggest that he had quite regular contact with Burmese women as prostitutes. However, in an early draft of the story that would become *Burmese Days*, John Flory is warned about entering a serious relationship with a local woman, symptomatic of official policy that strongly discouraged mixed race partnerships. Burma had had a reputation as "a marvellous place . . . The girls

were cheap and sensuous" (Kelly 1992, 477), which could help to explain why, when rules were introduced to keep British officials from becoming intimate with indigenous people, they were first imposed in Burma, in 1903 (Hyam 1999, 60-61). One plausible reason for such a policy is that the authorities imagined control was partly achieved through an indefinable British aura, and both the partnerships and their progeny would make a white hegemony much more difficult to maintain: some indigenous women (in ongoing relationships) could be viewed locally as having acquired, according to this view, a quasi- official status; and the children of mixed races would blur the distinction between Asian and European.

Nevertheless, Orwell's representation, in particular of the two Eurasians in *Burmese Days*, is so affected it has to be the legacy of more than remembered government dictates. Orwell's depiction was, indeed, in accord with the dogma of racial theorists like Stoddard. He warned that whereas those of similar races may produce children without problems, "[w]here the parent stocks are very diverse . . . the offspring is . . . a walking chaos . . . quite worthless" (Stoddard 1921, 166). In spite of obvious contradictory evidence in life, these and similar ideas had been accepted as scientific truths in the nineteenth century, including the theory that different human races were effectively different species, and so their offspring would be infertile (Young 1995, 8). Again, it is difficult to know how this dogma could endure while being conspicuously undermined on a regular basis in various parts of the world, especially where the slave trade was active. Likewise, the idea that miscegenation led to physical degeneration was believed (5-6), but at the same time "those of mixed race were often invoked as the most beautiful human beings of all" (16).

Orwell's "two Eurasian derelicts" exemplify these alarmist ideas. Their entrance into the novel shows the author's feelings, when they "sidled up to Flory and cornered him like a pair of dogs asking for a game" (Orwell [1934] 2001, 123). They are obsequious, have imperfect English (a serious flaw for Orwell), and the "extraordinary creatures" (125) have to live off the charity of natives. Elizabeth describes them as "thin and weedy and cringing" (126), and Flory says that for conversing with them, he is exceptional (127). The *dénouement* of the novel serves as a compounded condemnation of their existence. When Ma Hla May has humiliated Flory in the church and the Eurasians throw her out, it is described as "perhaps the first useful deed of their lives" (285). The statement is slighting enough by itself, but the fact that it is also about the act of a mixed-race couple being exposed and separated implicitly prevents the possibility of progeny like the two Eurasians. Finally, as the expulsion is too late to have made a significant difference, its usefulness in any sense is puzzling.

Quite incredibly, Orwell had hoped that *Burmese Days* could play its part in fighting racism, and might also be popular in India and Burma. He told his publisher, Victor Gollancz, that he thought it possible the novel might do "a little to mitigate the horrors of the colour war" ([1934] 2001, viii), and he was also concerned that if an Indian or Burmese reader saw a name incorrectly written, "he will naturally be prejudiced

against the book," but with the novel as it was, he believed it could appeal to such readers (Orwell 2000, 379-380 and 388). I think that on both counts his optimism was very much misplaced. His attitudes to race certainly merit more attention and cannot solely be labelled as a product of the time: an obvious comparison, between Orwell's Dr. Veraswami and Forster's Dr. Aziz—from *A Passage to India*, published in 1924, ten years earlier—illustrates that Indians could be represented by British authors as more than shallow caricatures. To whatever extent he was influenced by his upbringing at home and school as well as his time in Burma, the three stories he set there were written in Britain and so they must have been the product of deep-seated feelings, rather than being reactions to immediate experiences. His candour as a writer meant that his philosophical intent could not quench his more visceral impulses.

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Disentangling Emily Dickinson's Riddles and Encoded Voices in "My Life Had Stood—a Loaded Gun" and "I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed"

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Over the last few decades, Emily Dickinson's life and poetry have attracted a great deal of attention in the form of biographies and a myriad of literary criticism. Although I have gone through only a moderate amount of this immense academic corpus, it seems clear that a great number of scholars continue to read her poems as mainly autobiographical. In this essay, through an analysis of "My Life Had Stood—a Loaded Gun" and "I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed" I attempt to demonstrate that Dickinson's poetry is not the product of a self-centered personality, but of contemplation, imagination, and careful artistry.

Keywords: Emily Dickinson; literary criticism; poetry analysis; multiple poetic personae; fictional speakers; contemplation and imagination

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Emily Dickinson: enigmas y voces crípticas en "My Life Had Stood—a Loaded Gun" y "I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed"

En las dos últimas décadas, la vida y la obra de Emily Dickinson han sido objeto de renovado interés en forma de biografías y miríadas de estudios críticos. Aunque no he podido ahondar más que en un moderado porcentaje de este ingente corpus, me resulta evidente que en el mundo académico continúa predominando la tendencia a interpretar la poesía de Dickinson en clave autobiográfica. En este ensayo, a través del análisis de "My Life Had Stood—a Loaded Gun" and "I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed," intento demostrar que lejos de ser reflejo de una mente ensimismada, la poesía de Dickinson halla su camino a través de la contemplación, la imaginación y la preocupación por la forma.

Palabras clave: Emily Dickinson; crítica literaria; análisis del texto poético; sujeto poético; sujeto ficticio; contemplación e imaginación

1. INTRODUCTION

Ever since Emily Dickinson's manuscripts were made available for open access via the internet, hundreds of new studies have been produced in the form of biographies and literary criticism, as well as psychiatry perspectives that attempt to explain her eccentric personality and idiosyncratic use of language.[1] And yet, Dickinson continues to be a mystery. Indeed, her writings (poetry and letters) are so enigmatic, compact, polysemous, metaphorical, and full of allusions and striking imagery that no one can claim to have really deciphered them fully.

What particularly motivated me to undertake a new analysis, and so to add myself to the myriad of authors who have, like me, struggled to put into words the ineffable mental and spiritual experience of delving into Dickinson's work, was the large number of critical readings that still base their analysis on the assumption that the speaker, the "I" of the poems, is Emily Dickinson herself expressing her inner and often tormented feelings. This inevitably leads to attempts to understand the poet through her poems rather than the poems themselves. These approaches do not normally take into account the games of imagination that Dickinson was so fond of:

> Now, my dear friend, let me tell you that the last thoughts are fictions,—vain imaginations to lead astray foolish young women. They are flowers of speech, they both make, and tell deliberate falsehoods… (L 31, to Abiah Root, 29 January 1850),[2]

or her wicked sense of humour:

> [my family is religious]—except me—and address and Eclipse, every morning—whom they call their 'Father' (L 261, to Thomas Higginson, 25 April 1862),

or the several voices she assumed:

> When I state myself, as the Representative of the Verse—it does not mean—me—but a supposed person (L 268, to Thomas Higginson, July 1862).

Each reader has his/her own way of making meaning out of texts according to a complex mix of personal experience, training and sensibility, but I have found that the best way to appreciate and enjoy the richness of Dickinson's poems is to regard them as the fruit of contemplation, imagination and careful craft. Indeed, what transforms anything of the world into poetry is imagination, albeit an imagination that drives its way through careful observation and a conscientious choice of structure, words, sounds and silences.

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[1] Illustrative of this last type of study is Steven Winhusen (2004).

[2] I have used the electronic edition of Emily Dickinson's correspondence (henceforth *EDC*) available at http://archive.emilydickinson.org. For brevity and convenience, references to this edition will include the number assigned to the letter by Thomas H. Johnson (1960) followed by the name of the addressee.

In the following pages, I analyze the poems "My Life Had Stood—a Loaded Gun" (1863, J754) and "I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed" (1861, J214),[3] paying attention to this process, from specific to general, closely examining images, metaphors, double meanings, polysemes, allusions, structures, subjects and, particularly, their speaking voice. Then, only at the end, will I offer a tentative transcendental interpretation.

2. ANALYSIS OF "MY LIFE HAD STOOD—A LOADED GUN"

My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun—
In Corners—till a Day
The Owner passed—identified—
And carried Me away—
And now We roam in Sovereign Woods—
And now We hunt the Doe—
And every time I speak for Him—
The Mountains straight reply—
And do I smile, such cordial light
Upon the Valley glow—
It is as a Vesuvian face
Had let its pleasure through—
And when at Night—Our good Day done—
I guard My Master's Head—
'Tis better than the Eider-Duck's
Deep Pillow—to have shared—
To foe of His—I'm deadly foe—
None stir the second time—
On whom I lay a Yellow Eye—
Or an emphatic Thumb—
Though I than He—may longer live
He longer must—than I—
For I have but the power to kill,
Without—the power to die— (1863, J754)

This poem has elicited a number of quite different interpretations, most of which, as far as I have read, assume that the speaker is Dickinson herself who is comparing her life to a loaded gun. The poem has been regarded as an expression of rage and love, of spiritual restlessness, and of frustration in female writers[4]. Others, like Palmerino

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("Emily Dickinson's 'My Life Had Stood—a Loaded Gun'," see it "as a metaphor for the union and subsequent lifelong relationship between a man and a woman" (Palmerino 2011, 81). However, none of these interpretations explain the flow of images and concepts, the allusions, the shifts of tone, or the sharp, wicked sense of humor so characteristic of the author. Like most critics, I have tried hard to see the 'loaded gun' as an extended metaphor of how Dickinson felt about her existence, but despite these efforts I failed to find any evidence in the poem that sustains such a comparison, particularly in the last stanza. Some scholars solve the equation gun ~ Dickinson by attributing the problem to a flaw in the poet's art: "The last stanza is difficult, tangled and perhaps indicates some confusion in Dickinson's thinking" (Melani 2010). "The characters in the narrative become inconsistent, their roles founded on the sand of an overextended metaphor" (Bonheim 2008, 259).

On the other hand, the 'Owner/Master' has been interpreted metaphorically as, for instance, God, a devil, a lover or poetic inspiration, which are tenors that, in my view, seem to owe more to the reader's imagination than to evidence from the text. Raymond Tripp, for example, uses a very intricate, metaphysical argument to explain the Master as God:

> She speaks of her own death and resurrection as a human being who has died into the higher life but must continue to live this lower one. Therefore, her riddle. Though biologically "I" may live longer than "He," as God "He" "longer must" ["live"] spiritually in spite of early crucifixion. This is so, because as a human being "I" have "but the power to kill" the desire for ordinary living, but do not possess "the power to die" and go directly to heaven. The "power to die" means power over death, that is, to die and live. This power God, of course, does have. He can "die." (Tripp 1989, 293)

Indeed, this religious or metaphysical interpretation is so extended that it has become a kind of recipe for high school and undergraduate students, such as the following example taken from the Dickinson study guide of the popular educational website Sparknotes:

> Dickinson portrays God as a murderous hunter of man in "My Life Had Stood—a Loaded Gun," in which Death goes about gleefully executing people for his divine master. These poems are among the hundreds of verses in which Dickinson portrays God as aloof, cruel, invasive, insensitive, or vindictive (Sparknotes on *Dickinson's Poetry*, 2002)

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excerpts by different authors, some quite well-known such as the poet Addrienne Rich (http://www.english. illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/dickinson/754.htm).

Yet, it seems to me, no single line of the poem, or its imagery, supports an interpretation of the Master as a supernatural being, whether a devil or a god. On the contrary, the Master is shown as a normal human being who needs rest at night (fourth stanza) and who will die someday (sixth stanza), much sooner than the gun.

If we free our reading of the anxiety arising from the need to identify transcendental meanings, and instead assume what is evident, namely that the speaker is none other than the gun and the work is not autobiographical, but just a game of the imagination, the poem becomes explainable from the first to the last line. It is only then that we can attempt the transcendental/metaphorical reading that I leave for the end of this analysis. I would first like to stress that Dickinson enjoyed using a variety of personae:

> I'm so amused at my own ubiquity that I hardly know what to say. . . . First, I arrive from Amherst, then comes a ponderous tome from the learned Halls of Cambridge, and again by strange metamorphosis I'm just from Michigan, and am Mattie and Minnie and Lizzie in one wondering breath—Why, dear Susie, it must'nt scare you if I loom up from Hindoostan, or drop from an Appenine, or peer at you suddenly from the hollow of a tree, calling myself King Charles, Sancho Panza, or Herod, King of the Jews—I suppose it is all the same. (L107, to Susan Dickinson, 12 March 1853)

She also loved to anthropomorphize things and animals. Whether a gun, a butterfly, a serpent, or a hummingbird, everything she touched with her poetry—as a kind of King Midas—was converted into something extraordinary, and into something with a soul. Dickinson used the personal pronouns "she" and "he" to refer to all kinds of creature, from pets to worms, birds, serpents and insects. The following lines show how natural personification was for her: "You ask of my companions Hills—Sir—and the Sundown—and a dog—large as myself, that my father bought me—They are better than Beings—because they know—but do not tell" (L261, to Thomas Higginson, 25 April 1862). Meanwhile, these lines portray her wickedly funny defense of herself for rejecting social interaction: "Of 'shunning Men and Women'—they talk of Hallowed things, aloud—and embarrass my Dog—He and I don't object to them, if they'll exist their side" (L274, to Thomas Higginson, 6 October 1862).

As far as I am aware, very few readings of "My Life had stood…" take into account Dickinson's warning, the playful and trenchant side of her personality, or the fact that poets, like any other writers, are able to not only talk about human emotions that are alien to them, or about the feelings of animals, but can also project feelings onto inanimate objects. The insistence on the autobiographical reading may confirm that "[one] of the most deep-rooted preconceptions about poetry in our culture [is] that it records profound personal emotions and experience" (Furniss 2007, 7).

The interpretation of the poem's first line has been the key to the transcendental reading. Anna Priddy, among many others, sees in it an implicit comparison: "The entire poem is based on the metaphor of the life being a 'Loaded Gun'" (Priddy 2008, 234). This is also the case for Allan Douglas Burns, who considers it to be a love poem in which "[t]he speaker describes herself in the first stanza as a Loaded Gun" (Burns 2002, 103). Both of these scholars see an adverb of comparison hidden, embarrassed behind the skinny dashes: "My Life had stood *as* a Loaded Gun." Yet, in my view, this line, taken in isolation, does not lead us anywhere. Indeed, it seems to me that no careful reading can sustain the tenor/vehicle of Dickinson as the gun. How could we possibly explain then that after working hard in the woods, she can stand by the bed of her master without sleeping, and that she cannot die? Moreover, based on a reading of her letters, it does not make sense to me that Dickinson could identify herself with such a sinister figure, with such an angel of death.

If we shift our thinking a little and respect both the obliged enjambment of the first line with the 'corners' in the second, and the grammatical function of the dashes, which introduce an explanatory (not a comparative) subordinate clause, a new meaning emerges. We can paraphrase these verses and the rest of the stanza as follows: "I, a loaded gun, had spent my life in corners, without a purpose, until a hunter found me and took me out with him." The word 'identified,' which is isolated by dashes, is polysemous. Indeed, it could have one or all of the following meanings: the owner identified the gun as his property; or, following the personification game, he identified himself to her;[5] or he identified with her, meaning that both of them wanted to kill. Who the enigmatic owner stands for is not relevant for my analysis at this point. From the text, we can only deduce that he is a human being (he needs rest) and that he has enemies, whom the gun kills while he is asleep. The language of hunting is shooting; the gun is its phonatory organ. All of the images of the following two stanzas derive from this association.

I imagine the speaker as one of those nineteenth-century shotguns which, when triggered, produces a bright flash (the 'yellow eye') accompanied by a loud roar ('every time I speak for Him—/The Mountains straight reply') and a lot of smoke. These associations, which I develop further below, rely on the metaphoric relation I find between the speaker's eye and voice, and the roaring burst of flame of a gunshot. The power of the images in the second and third stanzas lies partly in the rich symbolism and partly in the long-standing literary tradition of the doe, which may refer, at a first level of meaning, to the female deer or another mammal (rabbit, reindeer, goat, etc.) as the innocent victim of the nefarious sovereign of the wilderness, namely the hunter.[6] The doe is also a symbol of femininity and therefore

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[5] Given the anthropomorphism of the gun and the quasi-erotic relationship it maintains with the hunter, from now on, I will refer to it mostly as "she."

[6] It is worth remembering that hunting with firearms began as the sport of noblemen.

of fertility and life itself. The act of killing is portrayed so hyperbolically that it becomes sacralized as the reversal of creation. It thus converts Nature into a prey.

The gun is pleased to hear the shot reverberate in the mountains, to see its flame glow in the valley and the smoke pouring out of its double barrel. The entire scene is amplified to almost Dantesque proportions in the condensing image that likens the act of shooting to the eruption of an anthropomorphized volcano: "It is as a Vesuvian face / Had let its pleasure through." The image of the 'Vesuvian face' does not connect with the sun, as Burns suggests: "The peculiar image of the sun as a 'Vesuvian face'" (Burns 2002, 103), but with shooting and smoking. The weapon's discharge is likened to an eruption of Vesuvius and, also, through puckish hyperbole, to the striking of a match and the act of smoking. Introduced to America in 1849, the *Vesuvian* was a slow-burning match with a bulb of sulfuric acid at the tip that was used to light cigars outdoors. It is quite possible that Dickinson had the matches in mind, because they were quite popular at the time. She may thus have associated, as I do now, the *jouissance* experienced by the smoker when sucking and expelling a mouthful of smoke with that of the gun when "puffing" the gunpowder and seeing the sudden flare and smoke; an understandable pleasure, if one can get in the shoes of a gun. The polysemy of the word *Vesuvian* does not end there. According to Dickinson's beloved 1844 Webster's dictionary, it also refers to "a mineral found in the vicinity of Vesuvius chiefly composed of silex, magnesium, iron, and aluminum" (Webster 1844, s.v. vesuvian). Dickinson may also have associated the 'Vesuvian face' with the flint-stone (composed mainly of silex) used in firearms to strike fire.

This delving into the meaning of words is not wanton; it is sustained in the passion for words that Dickinson felt. As Lilia Melani points out, "Dickinson was enamoured of language; she enjoyed words for their own sake, as words. One of her amusements was to read Webster's *Dictionary* (1844) and savour words and their definitions" (Melani 2010). Indeed, as Dickinson herself said in one of her poems: "This was a Poet—It is That / Distills amazing sense / From Ordinary Meanings" (1862?, J448). In a letter in which she refers to words, Dickinson said: "I don't know of anything so mighty. There are [those] to which I lift my hat when I see them sitting princelike among their peers on the page. Sometimes I write one, and look at his outlines till he glows as no sapphire" (L 7, to Joseph Lyman, late 1840s?). Following this line of thought, the adjective 'cordial' in the first line of the third stanza better fits the context if taken in its older sense, namely "tending to revive, cheer, or invigorate," rather than the meaning more common today "warmly and genially affable" (Webster 1844, s.v. cordial). Accordingly, the phrase 'cordial light' may be understood as *invigorating* 'light.'

In the fourth stanza, we return to a stillness like that in the first. The gun prefers to stand head up by her owner's bed rather than lie with him. It would be ludicrous for a slender, rigid creature to melt into an embracing, luring shape. The eroticism

of violence does not fit well with the eroticism of a soft bed. However, there is something mystical, quite subversive, in this image of the sinister gun guarding the hunter's sleep, as a guardian angel, ready to shoot whatever enemy appears:

> None stir the second time—
> On whom I lay a Yellow Eye—
> Or an emphatic Thumb—

These lines evoke the uneasy stillness of the night, a stealthy looming bird of prey with yellow eyes and the irrevocability of death. The anthropomorphized gun, the emperor of death, lays her 'emphatic Thumb' on the marauding foe,[7] like one might crush an insect. In my view, to liken this ever-awake killer to Dickinson or to any other human speaker is to stretch the metaphor beyond its limits.

The incongruity of the psychoanalytical and metaphysical approaches unravels in the final stanza. As noted above, this stanza has been regarded as "some confusion in Dickinson's thinking" (Melani 2010) or, for those who take it as a love poem, "an unresolved paradox" that makes it "difficult to map these metaphors back onto an actual relationship between male and female lovers, both of whom are mortal" (Burns 2002, 104). In the interpretation by Anna Priddy (2008, 230), who reads the poem as "a declaration of poetic intent and a paean to poetic power," the explanation of this stanza seems to me to be perhaps even more unlikely:

> If one accepts the premise that poetry is her master, a fitting paraphrase would be, I may outlive my poetic gift, but I pray it is not so; I have the power now to arrest the world with my speech (that is, to kill), but I have not the power to die. And to live without the gift, as most poets would agree, is not to live at all. It is the poem that does not have "the power to die," a testament to Dickinson's belief in the immortality of the word. But the poetic gun does have "the power to kill" others. (Priddy 2008, 204)

I endeavored unsuccessfully to find any supporting evidence for the assumption that this poem is about the power of poetry in any of Dickinson's statements about this craft. Why would we suppose that she considered poetry to be a sinister weapon that kills innocents (the doe) during the day and enemies at night?

Once we accept that the speaker is the gun, and nothing but the gun, the paradox of the final stanza vanishes into an interplay of allusions and parodies. The gun can outlive the Master—even for centuries—but without his breath of life, she (the gun) is condemned to sink into stillness and silence, to the neglectful corners of the beginning of the poem. The paradoxical style of this stanza brings echoes of the

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[7]   The 'emphatic Thumb' may also refer to the Roman Emperors' upturned thumb, as a signal of death, in gladiatorial combat.

metaphysical poets John Donne (1572-1631) and George Herbert (1593-1633), but particularly of Saint Teresa of Avila (1515-1582):

> Vivo sin vivir en mí,
> y tan alta vida espero
> que muero porque no muero.[8] (Manero 1992, 425)

Dickinson's profane and violent poem very cleverly subverts the deep spirituality of the mystic. Without the owner, the hunting gun will suffer spiritual death; she will enter a permanent state of no-self and metaphysical anguish, deprived of her vital function: to kill. To identify Dickinson with the gun would be to ascribe to her the soul of a serial killer who rejoices in killing, first the innocent Doe and then any enemy not of her own, but of her Master. I have also not found any hint in Dickinson's biography that sustains the association of Dickinson with a metaphorical subordinate who happily kills for others. This is instead the task of the soldier. This poem's subtext or controlling metaphor, if any, could only be the American Civil War, which was at its height when Dickinson wrote it. Men all over the country, inflamed with patriotism, went to fight for business or ideals. Hundreds of thousands died, but the firearms remained. The convulsive, violent spirit of the times was really a loaded gun. The poem was thus a sustained irony from the first line to the last.

3. Analysis of "I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed"

> I taste a liquor never brewed—
> From Tankards scooped in Pearl—
> Not all the Vats upon the Rhine
> Yield such an Alcohol!
>
> Inebriate of Air—am I—
> And Debauchee of Dew—
> Reeling—thro' endless summer days—
> From inns of Molten Blue—
>
> When "Landlords" turn the drunken Bee
> Out of the Foxglove's door—
> When Butterflies—renounce their "drams"—
> I shall but drink the more!

---

[8] I live without living in myself, / and in such a way do I hope, / that I die because I do not die (Bilinkoff 1992, 100).

Till Seraphs swing their snowy Hats—
And Saints—to windows run—
To see the little Tippler
Leaning against the—Sun! (1861, J214)

"I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed" has also quite frequently been read as autobiographical. Most critical analyses assume that the speaker is the author (or at least a human "she") talking about the ecstasy that the contemplation of nature produces in her. Raymond G. Malbone, for instance, thinks the speaker "is a person intoxicated with the liquors of nature, rain (from the cumulous clouds), air and dew" (1967, 26), and Deborah Cadman sees the poem as autobiographical, suggesting that the speaker is a daisy, a flower with which Dickinson liked to identify herself: "If the poet identification of herself with the daisy extends to this work, then the subject becomes the natural relation between the daisy and sun throughout the seasons of New England" (1989, 31). Only a few readers, such as Cecil D. Eby and Christopher Benfey disagree with this view and argue that the speaker is a hummingbird, bee, or similar creature (Eby 1965, 517; Benfey 2008, 54). I align myself with the latter position, since a hypothetical human speaker, particularly if that speaker is considered to be a woman, can only account for the meaning of a very few lines of the poem.

Emily Dickinson loved riddles. They were the essence of her poetry: "Tell all the truth, but tell it slant—/ Success in Circuit lies"—(1868, J1129). Some are quite easy to acknowledge as such. For instance:

His bill an auger is,
His head, a cap and frill.
He laboreth at every tree,—
A worm his utmost goal. (1865, J1034)

Others are not so straightforward, as is the case with "I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed." Though apparently a simple poem about nature, a careful reading soon unveils its complexity, in which fact and imagination are as inseparable as the two sides of a coin. Yet it is far from my intention to explain all the metaphors, images, allusions and yokes that give shape and significance to this poem, because, as Christopher Benfey points out, "Dickinson's imagination moves on several tracks" (Benfey 2008, 119), and attempting to track them all would be as futile a task as dissecting a brain to discover Thought.

Let us start then by trying to identify who the speaker is. The poem's first two stanzas are unspecific about this identity, so we can tentatively assume that it is a human being, perhaps a male, since the word 'debauchee' in the second stanza hints at this. Debauchee means "[a] man given to intemperance, or bacchanalian excesses. . . . [A] man habitually lewd" (Webster 1828, s.v. debauchee). Yet this hypothesis is dismantled in the third stanza, where the world of the poem is clearly dimensioned. The drinking buddies (or

competitors) of the speaker are bees and butterflies, and the taverns are foxgloves and blue flowers, a key symbol in Dickinson's poetry. The 'inns of Molten Blue' have often been seen by critics as a metaphor for the sky,[9] but I think that any tubular blue brilliant flower, such as the lily, gentian (shown in Figure 1) or campanula, are more suitable tenors. These flowers' elongated petals form a cavity where the nectar lies concealed, so insects are obliged to go deep inside to take their 'drams.'

Figure 1. "Gentian." © Linda Steider, 2012. [Available online].

The likening of "flower" to 'inn' sheds light on the imagery of the first stanza, making clear that the 'liquor never brewed' cannot be anything other than nectar, which is the beverage *sold* in these peculiar establishments. The speaker, who feeds on it, therefore cannot be a human being, although we are not yet certain about its identity. Why can it continue drinking long after bees and butterflies and why are those two kicked out of the foxglove? The reason may lie in two facts that were surely well known to Dickinson, a careful observer of nature: (1) many flowers close before dusk to protect their pollen, thereby denying insects access to the nectar; (2) long tubular flowers such as the foxglove and the gentian hide their nectar deep within, where it is accessible only to animals with the appropriate morphological *tools*, such as the long narrow beaks of hummingbirds. These insatiable little birds do not have to worry about closing time at the inn.[10] Their beaks, up to 10 cm (4 inches) long, give them immunity against the law.

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[9] This line of interpretation is followed, among many others, by Malbone (1967, 2), Leiter (2007, 121), Schaap (2012, 9), Melani (2010, 1) and Priddy (2008, 73).

[10] They consume more than their own weight in nectar each day; to do so, they must visit hundreds of flowers.

Figure 2. "Inns of Molten Blue." © Gary Ashley, 2007. [Available online].

Once the speaker is identified as a hummingbird, we can try to explain the poem through his eyes. He starts by telling us that the natural liquor ('never brewed') he usually drinks (the frequency is dictated by the present tense of the verb 'taste') is far better than those from the Rhine region, which were wines considered in Dickinson's times to be the greatest in the world. The phrase 'Tankards scooped in pearl' alludes to both the precious quality of the beverage and the scale of the world he is presenting to us (see Figure 2). The exhilarating effect of alcohol works as a controlling metaphor for the images and concepts developed in the poem.

In the first place, it evokes the frenzied flapping of wings as the hummingbirds hover in the air and reel from flower to flower (see Figure 3). The image 'Debauchee of Dew' condenses a lot of information. Structurally, it places us at the onset of the day; semantically, it introduces a sexual dimension, establishing a comparison between a libertine and the hummingbird. The libertine goes from woman to woman; the bird from flower to flower. The dew may represent droplets of water produced by plant transpiration, vaporously suggesting sexual receptiveness. In other poems, Dickinson worked with similar sexual imagery even more explicitly:

I tend my flowers for thee—
Bright absentee!
My Fuchsia's Coral Seams
Rip—while the Sower—dreams—. (1861, J339)

The mocking orgy among flowers, bees, butterflies and hummingbirds goes on throughout the day until the plants (the 'Landlords') close the inns. Only the hummingbird—he 'shall but drink the more!'—continues to be active, reeling from flower to flower until dawn, when, exhausted, he 'leans against the sun.'

Figure 3. "Hummingbird in flight." © Linda Steider, 2012. [Available online].

As I noted formerly, Dickinson was a poet of contemplation and imagination. She interlaced facts and experience with atemporal associations. In "I Taste a Liquor" we can see this process at work, and no doubt its images of drunkenness are rooted in careful observations of nature. Indeed, in her own garden, she may have seen bees and hummingbirds behaving oddly: staggering, bumping clumsily or lacking vitality. On morning walks in the mountains, I myself have seen sparrows get drunk on overripe arbutus berries. They stumble and stagger comically; if you get too close, they try to take flight but soon crash to the ground. Certainly, nowadays, it is well documented that some insects and birds become intoxicated by fermented nectar from flowers and other natural chemicals in the environment.

The poem's final stanza ends with the sun low on the horizon and a winding down of all activity. In the plane of reality, the frenzied speaker from the start of the poem enters into torpor, "a state of lowered body temperature and metabolic activity" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2015, s.v. torpor) assumed by hummingbirds on cool nights (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. "Hummingbird in torpor." © Terry Sohl, 2006. [Available online].

In the plane of imagination, he is presented as a "tippler leaning against the sun," as if against a lamppost (Gibert Maceda 2007, 388). The seraphs and saints introduce a twist that gives new meaning to the innocent scene we have just contemplated. Apparently, they come into the picture just to bless and say goodnight to the little scoundrel, as loving parents do with their naughty children at bedtime. This would round the poem structurally in its temporal and natural sequence, but would leave unfinished the complex atemporal associations and sensory impressions formerly developed. As Maria Teresa Gibert points out: "what is unique here is the subversive aspect that is revealed when the last stanza is compared with the lines that inspired it" (Gibert 2007, 387). Gibert is referring here to the lines of the poem "The Day of Doom" (1662) by Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705), in which sinners contemplate with horror the second coming of Christ:

Sinners awake, their hearts do ake,
trembling their loynes surprizeth;
Amaz'd with fear, by what they hear,
each one of them ariseth.

They rush from Beds with giddy heads,
and to their windows run,
Viewing this light, which shines more bright
then doth the Noon-day Sun.

> Straightway appears (they see't with tears)
> the Son of God most dread;
> Who with his Train comes on amain
> to Judge both Quick and Dead… (Wigglesworth [1662] 1867, 5)

In Dickinson's poem, those who run to the windows are not sinners, but saints; nor is it a blinding light and an angry Jesus that they see, but the little tippler in a torpid state—or sleeping it off—under the peaceful and beautiful light of dusk. This irreverent parody of "The Day of Doom" is paramount, but there is another twist introduced by the word 'saints.' Puritans often referred to themselves as saints, so it is quite probable that Dickinson was equating saints with puritans and therefore with sinners. The seraphs complete this *tableau* of Adoration,[11] waving their hats as in applause and veneration for the little rascal whose frantic diurnal activity still reverberates in our ears. The hummingbird, then, becomes a god; a god born from the pantheistic mind of a poet who used to mock Christian beliefs—

> If God could make a visit—
> Or ever took a Nap—
> So not to see us—but they say
> Himself—a Telescope … (1862, J413)

—and saw the Supernatural only as "the Natural, disclosed" (L 280, to Thomas Higginson 25 February 1863).

4. Final Remarks

The two poems studied here follow a circular pattern, from a restful state to motion and back again to the restful state. The first movement (first stanza) acts as a prologue to the events that are about to unfold. The second movement captures the action through dislocations of language and disconcerting images. The third movement introduces a shift in tone, a glide towards reflection that endows the scene just seen with a dense array of meaning. The poet is not in the picture, but hidden still aside it (as are we when a bird of rare beauty lands on our windowsill), as if afraid to drive away with her presence the ethereal vision that has sprung out from contemplation and imagination.

This circularity connects with one of Dickinson's more puzzling statements: "My business is circumference" (L 268, to Thomas Higginson July 1868). In the sense that I understand it, the circumference is an abstract concept that served her as a tool to organize the products of the mind, the emotional life and the sensory experience. It seems to me that Dickinson's art stems from epiphanies—images, movements,

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[11] Seraphim stand above God's throne singing praises: "Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory" (Isa., 6: 3, *King James Bible* 1611).

words or any other elements that precede conscious and articulated thought—that she struggled laboriously to shape into verse: "While my thought is undressed, I can make the distinction; but when I put them in the gown, they look alike and numb" (L 261, to Thomas Higginson 25 April 1862). The 'gown' she mostly used was the riddle, which, according to Northrop Frye, is "a fusion of sensation and reflection, the use of an object of sense experience to stimulate a mental activity in connection with it . . . The idea of the riddle is descriptive containment; the subject is not described but circumscribed, a circle of words drawn from it" (Frye 1957, 280).

When one tries to unveil the mysteriousness in Dickinson's writing, her devilishly clever use of the riddle makes one feel a paralyzing sense of helplessness. However, although I have polemicized in this essay with a number of Dickinson's scholars, I am indebted to their labors, because they all stimulated, inspired and enriched my perception of the poems here analyzed and, therefore, alleviated my feeling of powerlessness. We humans are all so unique, so different. Yet, at the same time, we are oddly similar. Those of us who love Dickinson's art, no matter how much our interpretations of it may differ, recognize in her fractured writing and eerie imagery something of the sublime as defined by Longinus (the alleged author of *On the Sublime*, written around the second century AD) as that "thought [that], if happily timed, illumines an entire subject with the vividness of a lightning-flash . . . It is natural to us to feel our souls lifted up by the true Sublime, and conceiving a sort of generous exultation to be filled with joy and pride, as though we had ourselves originated the ideas which we read" (Longinus? [213?] 1890, 12). The nature of experience produced in me by her texts cannot be expressed better.

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"Memory Lives Inside Us":
Writing as Memory Traces in *The Secret Staircase*

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The Secret Staircase is the title given to an installation presented by Caroline Isgar and Michèle Roberts at the Foundling Museum of London in 2008, and also to the accompanying book, a collection of Isgar's drawings and Roberts's eighteen narrative pieces, meant as a souvenir of the exhibition. Roberts tells the story of a daughter's recollection of her childhood and her life with her mother on the occasion of the latter's approaching death. Each piece is inspired by an object belonging either to the past or to the experience of the mother's confinement in a hospice. Roberts's contribution to the installation constitutes a memory text in its own right, and suggests that writing is the actual trace that can bring the past to life and the means by which the daughter comes to terms with the mother figure.

Keywords: trace; memory text; Michèle Roberts; mother-daughter bond

. . .

"La memoria vive en nuestro interior":
la escritura como huella de la memoria en *The Secret Staircase*

The Secret Staircase es el título de la exposición presentada por Caroline Isgar y Michèle Roberts en el Foundling Museum de Londres en 2008, y también el del libro que la ilustraba, una colección de los dibujos de Isgar y dieciocho narraciones breves, proyectados como souvenir de la exposición. Roberts cuenta los recuerdos de infancia de una hija junto a su madre con ocasión de la inminente muerte de ésta. Cada texto se inspira en un objeto que pertenece al pasado o a la experiencia de confinamiento en el hospital. La contribución de Roberts constituye en sí misma un texto de la memoria y sugiere que la escritura es la verdadera huella que devuelve el pasado a la vida y el medio por el cual la hija se reconcilia con la figura materna.

Palabras clave: huella; texto de la memoria; Michèle Roberts; vínculo madre-hija

I see it—the past—as an avenue lying behind;
a long ribbon of scenes, emotions.
(Virginia Woolf, "A Sketch of the Past," [1939] 2002: 81)

1. INTRODUCTION

Between April and June 2008, the visual artist Caroline Isgar and the writer Michèle
Roberts exhibited a joint installation entitled *The Secret Staircase* at the Foundling Museum
in London.[1] Isgar and Roberts took their inspiration from a collection belonging to the
museum which consisted in a number of familiar objects left for babies by their mothers
in the hope of their being recognised by their children in later years, and the pair created
both prints and text to accompany them. Isgar's work included drawings reproducing
animal images with a strong oneiric component inspired by folklore and legend, children's
handwriting and woodblocks, whereas Roberts's texts were eighteen short pieces which
evoked a daughter's childhood memories prompted by domestic objects, meant to
help her accept her mother's approaching death. Both types of material worked in the
installation as mnemonic tools to recover the past. In this essay I will focus on Roberts's
literary pieces and argue that they constitute what critics in memory studies have termed
a *memory text*. More specifically, I shall study how her narrative sketches perform memory,
inscribing traces of the past on the blank page creating a memory archive. Each piece
ends with the writer's own version of a nursery rhyme, which connects the child's past
and the adult woman's repressed feelings for her mother at that moment. In this light,
I am also interested in showing how Roberts's composite text fosters the reconciliation
between mother and daughter, separated from one another by a generation gap.

Figure 1. "The Secret Staircase" Exhibition, Foundling Museum, London, 2008. Details.
(Isgar and Roberts 2008). © Caroline Isgar

I contend that *The Secret Staircase* privileges the connection between memory and the emotions, proposing an account of memory as an essential affective capacity, on the one hand. On the other hand, Roberts's text in particular foregrounds the mother-daughter bond, situating the discussion in the context of feminist readings of narrative and memory.

2. HISTORY, MEMORY, WRITING

The past has traditionally been related to the workings of history and memory. History is generally regarded as the public and official record of events that transcend individual lives, whereas memory tends to be associated with the private and personal capacity to reconstruct the past. *The Secret Staircase* explores the dynamics of memory through the forms of art and narrative, and through these traces—drawings and writing—it suggests the existence of a past that never was. From that perspective, and focusing on Roberts's text, I will argue that writing becomes the trace that constructs memory in the absence of a real past. In the next pages I will focus on the key findings in the field of memory studies that support this view.

In *The Past is a Foreign Country* David Lowenthal affirms that the past plays an essential role in processes of identity formation—"[r]emembering the past is crucial for our sense of identity" (1985, 197)—, and that memory contributes to this end by, for example, turning public events into personal experiences, that is, turning history into memory. He explains how the latter takes us back to childhood whereas history refers to a former past. Lowenthal enumerates some of the dimensions of memory that might be potentially useful for this study. Memory links the personal and the communal, and is supported by traces, usually physical remnants of the past that require interpretation (1985, xxii). It is those traces that tend to bridge the gap between past and present. Following R. G. Collingwood's *The Idea of History* (1956), Lowenthal affirms that the past does not exist and that, in spite of relying on memory traces, it can never be relived. At most, it is only partially accessible and knowable, and through recollection, experienced. He is specifically interested in memorial knowledge, in as far as it has a bearing on who we are, on our sense of identity: "The need to use and reuse memorial knowledge, and to forget as well as to recall, force us to select, distil, distort, and transform the past, accommodating things remembered to the needs of the present" (1985, 194). Lowenthal dissects the memory phenomenon and distinguishes between three related concepts: *habit*, *recall* and *mementoes*. All of them can be found in different degrees in Roberts's accompanying text to *The Secret Staircase* and, taking them in the same order, each is gradually more related to the emotions and the affections: "Habit embraces all mental residues of past acts and thoughts, whether or not consciously remembered. Recall, more limited than habitual memory but still pervasive, involves awareness of past occurrences or states of being. Mementoes are cherished recollections purposely salvaged from the greater

mass of things recalled. This hierarchy resembles relics: everything familiar has some connection with the past and can be used to evoke recollection" (1985, 194). These elements of memory are invariably connected, according to Lowenthal, with age and life experience, and have been scrutinised by other critics, like Paul Ricoeur, who similarly distinguishes between *habit* and *memory*. The former refers to the general act of remembering, and the latter to distinct recollections (2004, 24).

From a phenomenological standpoint, Ricoeur comprehensively studies the memory/history dyad in *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004). He begins by offering a philosophical overview of the memory phenomenon, from classical to contemporary approaches. His starting point is that memory is the only link to the past, and argues that there is a compelling relationship between memory and corporeality, on the one hand, and memory and images, on the other. In his view, both positive bodily experiences and ordeals like illness, wounds and physical trauma, leave traces in our memory (2004, 40). Ricoeur's association of memory-image refers back to Plato's *eikōn* and is also inspired by the Derridean rendering of the Platonic presence of the absent, understood as the recollection of what once was (memory) and as the enactment of a reality (image, or else imagination) (2004, 44). He follows Jacques Derrida's models of memory (*Of Grammatology* 1967), who distinguishes between "typographic"—persons, events and objects—, "iconographic"—or the presence of the former in the mind—and "engrammatological" traces—referring to the gap between the present image and the absent original (Krell 1990, 165). Similarly, Ricoeur's approach supports a threefold use of the concept of "trace," namely "trace written on a material support; affection-impression 'in the soul'; corporeal, cerebral, cortical imprint" (2004, 15). Reading closely both Platonic and Aristotelian sources, Ricoeur centres on what constitutes for him the basis of the critical reading of trace: the origin and function of written traces and the relationship between the "impression" of traces and the affections. Reading Plato's *Phaedrus* he makes a distinction between the graphic component of writing and "the eikastic component of the image by virtue of the metaphor of the wax impression" (2004, 13). Ricoeur also describes the imprint of the memory trace on the affections—the Aristotelian *pathos*—by means of which the shock of a particular event is experienced and leaves an indelible mark on our soul. In Ricoeur's view, literature is used to illustrate memory processes, like evocation—*mneme* or "affection," "the unexpected appearance of a memory" (2004, 26)—and recollection—*anamnesis*—or the conscious search for memory traces.

It is Maurice Merleau-Ponty, though, who explicitly relates the notion of trace to bodily sensation, thus underlining the physical dimension of memory. He claims that the body is memory's mediator, in its function as the medium of communicating with time and space (1958, 210). In his view, the body allies with memory in animating the present, and therefore, in bringing the past back to life. In spite of this connection of materiality-perception and time-space, the act of remembering is never complete.

Merleau-Ponty distinguishes between "to perceive" and "to remember," claiming that "[t]o remember is not to bring into the focus of consciousness a self-subsistent picture of the past; it is to thrust deeply into the horizon of the past and take apart step by step the interlocked perspectives until the experiences which it epitomises are as if relived in their temporal setting" (1958, 26). The problem of memory derives from the attempt to distinguish between what is perceived—"the visible" in *Phenomenology of Perception*—and the evocation of memories—which he also refers to as "illusory perception" (1958, 23). He elucidates that there is always a "hollow," "a space where time is made" (Krell 1990, 103)—similar to Derrida's engrammatological trace—that prevents full knowledge of the past. Krell identifies such a liminal space with the body (and perceptions) and writing, each of which determine, but also grant, our access to the past.

John Frow gives a new turn to the memory-trace association in *Time and Commodity Culture* (1997). He reads critically Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire*, or *sites of memory*, and focuses on the modes of memorialisation and the institutions that preserve memory. He includes within this group various places and forms such as "museums, archives, cemeteries, festivals, anniversaries, treaties, depositions, monuments' sanctuaries, fraternal orders" (Frow 1997, 221). In short, he is interested in the "material mediation of memory" (1997, 222) and the methods by which the past can be accessed once memory fades. Writing is often the means of this material instantiation of memory in Frow's view:

> Rather than being an external support or implement in relation to memory, the activity of writing is a kind of memorization itself, or at least is intimately bound up with it. Thus, on the one hand, "the symbolic representations that we call writing are no more than cues or triggers for the memorial 'representations' . . . upon which human cognition is based"; and, on the other, "anything that encodes information in order to stimulate the memory to store or retrieve information is 'writing'." (1997, 224-225)

He argues in favour of an organic and material reading of memory by using the metaphor of the archive—as the place where memory is physically stored—, which further leads him to two other related metaphors: that of the wax writing tablet, or *tabula rasa*, and that of the *thesaurus*, another image for the storage of information. In adopting this model of classic undertones Frow supports the idea that memory is not the actualisation of the physical remnants of the past, but the construction of the past as it is dictated by present conditions and circumstances: "My figure, then, is that of the logic of textuality: a logic of autonomous narrative order and necessity which takes the form of structural symmetry and the reversibility of time" (1997, 228). According to this logic, forgetting—and illusions of memory, if we evoke Merleau-Ponty's terminology above—would be an integral part of the act of memory construction.

Other critics, like Annette Kuhn, have contributed decisively to develop this notion of the narrative or textual nature of memory. She has been concerned in the last few years with what narratives of the past tell us about our lives, but also with what they leave out (Kuhn 1995, 2). She has coined the expression *memory work* to refer to this restitution of the past which finds material support in varied forms such as writing, drawing, sculpting or photography. In *Family Secrets* Kuhn explains that the nature of memory work is analogous to archaeology or detective work in so far as those carrying it out must decipher clues and thus reconstruct the past from the interpretation of traces (1995, 4). In later works she expands on this notion, exploring how it raises doubts and elicits questions about the truthfulness of the past: "Memory work undercuts assumptions about the transparency or the authenticity of what is remembered, taking it not as 'truth' but as evidence of a particular sort: material for interpretation, to be interrogated, mined, for its meanings and its possibilities" (Kuhn 2010, 303). As mentioned above, Kuhn examines the narrative structure of memory, and develops the concept of *memory text*, most useful due to its fragmentary character but also to its complexity and complementarity. Interestingly, she suggests that the memory text refuses the linearity of historical time in favour of a random structure: memory, and it is therefore a form of narration that does not conform to a pattern of causality (2010, 299).

More recently, Astrid Erll has also affirmed that literature is a medium of cultural memory (2011, 144), which takes us back to Ricoeur's association of memory and imagination. He states that genres and literary forms "fulfil a multitude of mnemonic functions, such as the imaginative creation of past life-worlds, the transmission of images of history, the negotiation of competing memories, and the reflection about processes and problems of cultural memory" (2011, 145). Literature works very much like memory, since both form condensed *memory images* through which they create meaning. Both include narrative processes as well: remembering relies on individual, and sometimes collective, narrative accounts that take the past as origin and proceed till the present. In this sense, Ricoeur uses the term "emplotment" to refer to this capacity of narrative to provide intelligibility by means of stories (1982, 31). The same idea could be applied to the nature of memory.

The material act of writing in Michèle Roberts's pieces in *The Secret Staircase*, that is, the inscription of childhood memories on the page, invokes the two senses traditionally associated with memory. Firstly, the written page is taken as a surface on which memory is inscribed, and stands for the metaphors of the wax, the seal or the writing tablet (Ricoeur 2004, 51). Secondly, the whole set of Roberts's sketches plays the function of a thesaurus, or archive, which holds or stores memories. In both cases, memory is called forth by means of metaphors and images, and by physical traces. Roberts's string of quotidian objects in her sketches represent the link between the elusive past that cannot be physically restored and its vestiges or traces in the present, brought to life through other means, like allusion or recodification.

3. Feminism and Memory Studies

Feminism has pioneered in stressing the significance of the recuperation of memory and history for women, both as a collective and as individuals. The purpose of feminist historians and writers has in this respect been similar, reclaiming the importance of memory, both orally and in written form, in representing women's lives in the public and private spheres. An attempt to provide a full picture of the past needs to include women's contributions. Critically speaking Judith Fetterley's image of the *resisting reader* can be used to argue that texts (memory-texts included) need to be interpreted through processes of recodification, figuration and reconstruction (1978). In general terms, this act of resistance defines the concerns of women's studies, and more particularly the work of feminist literary critics, psychoanalysts and historians alike. Thus, for example, reading the work of the historians Margaret Lourie, Domna Stanton and Martha Vicinus, Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith contend that feminist scholarship is a form of "countermemory," in charge of rescuing women's (hi)stories from oblivion and forgetting (2007, 224). Memory is transmitted by a witness whose experience faithfully represents the concerns of feminist criticism, by bridging the gap between the personal and the political, the individual and the collective. Thus, women's studies and memory studies share the belief that the contestation of the past is a necessary step to understanding and accepting the present. I contend that feminist historiography, psychoanalysis and literature gravitate towards the mother figure, represented both in real and fictional terms, in order to explore the role of memory in resituating the past. Memory has been associated with both history and imagination before, Ricoeur's and Frow's notions of memory as archive being the starting point. In its bodily nature, the concern for memory fits successfully in the areas of feminist psychoanalysis—regarding the disavowal of Freudian readings of the mother—, historiography—in relation to the recuperation of historical women and figures of female ancestry—and literature—for example by blurring the distinction between history and story, or by taking women's memoirs as a case in point.

Linda Anderson (1990) uses Toni Morrison's emblematic novel *Beloved* (1987) to illustrate memory's complex web of interrelations. Set against the backdrop of the mid-nineteenth-century historical experience of slavery, this story of a daughter who has been killed by her mother and whose ghost comes physically back to life to join (and eventually destroy) her, faithfully represents the memory-history association at the three levels suggested above:

> History becomes in the novel the series of stories which the characters tell themselves and each other about their lives, stories which move into and out of each other, merge and overlap. Memory reveals the complex formations of history within the characters; how the subject is constituted in and through history. But the process of remembering also highlights the past as not past, not finished, but as continuously reaching into the present and beyond, into the future. (Anderson 1990, 138)

The same reference to *Beloved* is chosen by Marianne Hirsch in *The Mother/Daughter Plot* (1989) to illustrate how the traditional plot of the family romance, inherited from Freud, can be disavowed. Hirsch affirms that *Beloved* underlines the sense of loss as it revises the classic tale of Demeter and Persephone, sequestered by patriarchal culture and forced to comply with the "natural" cycles of growth (1989, 5). Morrison's novel obliterates Beloved's voice but creates another type of discourse, completely material and bodily, which clearly states the presence of the absent. Beloved's grotesque body remains a visible trace of the past as it was not. The whole story is narrated by Beloved's sister, Denver, who is both witness and improvised historian.

Feminist thinkers like Nancy Chodorow (1978), Adrienne Rich (1995), Luce Irigaray (1993) and Julia Kristeva (1980) have argued in different ways that to talk about mother-daughter bonding entails an act of reappraisal of the past, of going back to a preoedipal period, a time previous to the daughter's inscription in the world of patriarchal culture. Hence Rich's and Chodorow's attention paid to the mother-daughter unwritten story, a necessary process in the path to identity formation, or Irigaray's and Kristeva's projects to imagine a pre-symbolic woman's language, which challenges the economy and the imagery of phallogocentric discourse. In the work of feminist critics, the search for traces of the mother is often charged with nostalgia. This concept has been the object of scrutiny of scholars in memory studies, like David Lowenthal in *The Past is a Foreign Country* (1985) and Raphael Samuel in his recent study *Theatres of Memory* (2012), and has often been identified with the postmodern drive to look back, being described as the effect of "an abuse of history," or as a kind of invented tradition which makes up for "a lost sense of continuity with the past" (Radstone 2007, 113). Rita Felski though, studies nostalgia's ties with modernity, specifically as it relates to the search for the maternal and its association with the eternal feminine principle, in the psychoanalytic literature of the period, Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930) and J. J. Bachofen's *Myth, Religion and Mother Right* (1967), being cases in point. In such works women are said to mourn the loss of the mother and to be moved by their nostalgia for a golden past (Felski 1995, 39). In keeping with this psychoanalytic reading of nostalgia, Mary Jacobus proposes a feminist revision of the Freudian principle of mother-right, and also a reassessment of the Lacanian concept of nostalgia, previously always connected with the castration complex and the phallus, and she suggests that nostalgia would entail looking back not only to women's desires but to what women desire differently (Jacobus 1987, 138). Understanding nostalgia as "a regret for a lost past that occurs as a result of a present view of that past moment" (136), she sees that feminist psychoanalysis and fiction are both responsible for the interrogation of memory texts which often reproduce forgotten or repressed mother figures and myths.

The topic of trauma can be also scrutinised from a gendered perspective in the context of memory work. Cathy Caruth describes the etymology of the term as a body pathology that has latterly been applied to a wound of the mind (Caruth 1996, 3).

Trauma becomes a fundamental concept in memory studies, since it serves "not simply . . . as record of the past" but further as a register of "an experience that is not yet fully owned" (Caruth 1991, 417). In Caruth's view, traumatic recollections mean much more than simple memory and might indeed enliven or re-enact a past that has never been fully experienced. Traumatic symptoms include amnesia and entail an unconscious recall which far exceeds willed memory, and usually manifests in the form of flashback. The critic explains how traumatic memories give full force to "a history that literally *has no place*, neither in the past, in which it was not fully experienced, nor in the present, in which its precise images and enactments are not fully understood" (1991, 419). Most tellingly, trauma involves reconciliation, often by means of verbalization through narratives that state the repressed knowledge of the past. This effort makes clear, on the one hand, the fluidity of the capacity to remember and the impulse to forget and, on the other, the blurring of the boundaries between the reality of the past and the fiction of memory. Caruth reminds us as well of the way in which one's own trauma may foster the connection with the trauma of another, "the voice of the other" as she puts it (1996, 8). The universalising character of the traumatic experience extrapolates individual experience to a communal understanding of history.

As companion pieces to Caroline Isgar's drawings and prints, Roberts's texts in *The Secret Staircase* enact the traumatic recollections of the narrator-protagonist. As delineated above, the different scenes portray the daughter's process of *re*membering, an exercise consisting in a kind of search for traces of the mother, stemming from present evidence, the quotidian objects which elicit memories. In so doing, the traditional plot of family romance is under revision, following a double process: the nostalgic vision of an ideal motherhood is contested, and the figure of the real mother is reassessed and seen in a new light. The daughter's voice expresses her yearning for the mother in an effort to make up for her sense of loss in the face of her mother's coming death, and it contrasts with the mother's silence. The readers of the sketches, as much as the audience of the installation, become the community with whom the traumatic memories are ultimately shared.

4. *The Secret Staircase* as Memory Text

The terms "memory" and "imagination" are intertwined and ever-present in Michèle Roberts's literary and critical production. Part of her work has in fact been devoted to reflecting on the role of the past, as it concerns the relationship between individual memories and the creation of a communal sense of history. Moreover, Roberts worries about how world and public historical events come to bear on women's lives and experiences in particular. As a writer, she uses language to mediate between reality and imagination, between presence and absence, as she puts it: "Language is founded upon absence. . . . Language erupts out of silence and splinters it. So when I write fiction I'm creating a presence. . . . This presence that fiction creates is crucially connected, I think,

with absence, an absence that can be felt as insistently material" (Roberts 1998, 12-13). She argues, though, that contrary to what it might be expected, literary imagination has the capacity to skirt around both "sentimental nonsense" and "dangerous nostalgia" when looking at the past (1998, 19).

Michèle Roberts associates her own past with the maternal body, which she idealises as paradise both in her literary production and her criticism.[2] A great part of her writing is concerned with the reconciliation with the mother principle, with finding *la jouissance*, in line with proposals like Julia Kristeva's (1980). Accordingly, Roberts plays with the slippery borders between fiction and autobiography and makes a claim for the right to remember the lost mother through an act of imagination. In her suggestive imagery, the writer's desire for the mother manifests both at a physical and a symbolic level, standing at the same time for the concepts of presence and absence mentioned above:

> The experience of absence and loss can include our fantasy that we have killed the mother with our angry, hungry wanting. We're left in a pit of despair, abandonment. Into this emptiness comes the desire to make something: the words of desire themselves, images of desire, images of the beloved body we fear we may have destroyed with our biting, wanting, greedy neediness. Out of this *chaos* of feeling, out of this overwhelming sadness at *absence*, we learn to create something beautiful: our words, later on our gifts, later still our works of art. We re-create the mother inside ourselves, over and over again. (1998, 20-21)

According to Roberts, the writer's art encompasses this duality, representing the child's longing for the mother and endlessly recreating this figure inside themselves.[3]

In 1992 Michèle Roberts published *Daughters of the House*, one of her most popular books to date, winner of the WHSmith Literary Award and shortlisted for the Booker Prize. She began to experiment in this novel with the collective dimension of an individual's memories, recollected by means of objects as traces that made the past

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[2] In her lecture "The Place of Imagination" (1994) Roberts confesses that her return to her figures of mother and daughter is meant to evoke part of her childhood in France, a time which she recreates as paradise: "They stand in, these images of lost bliss, as images of something even more specific than childhood: she who is paradise itself for the baby, the growing child: the mother" ([1994] 1998, 20). For a thorough review of this topic in Roberts's fiction, see Laura Lojo's recent article on the notion of the maternal body as paradise in Robert's short story "Charity" (1994). She claims that this perspective is adopted by a narrator who positions herself as a child, and whose vision is "dependant on language, memory and mythic reconstructions of her own past" (Lojo 2012, 33).

[3] In her interpretation of Freudian psychology Madelon Sprengnether conceives the figure of the spectral mother as the recurrent metaphor of the presence of the absent, prompted by memory. The mother's body becomes in his view the locus of desire and endless return; its loss the necessary step for ego formation: "The mother's body becomes that which is longed for yet cannot be appropriated, a representative of both home and not home, and hence, in Freud's terms, the site of the uncanny. As both origin and Other, the preoedipal mother escapes the equally devastating effects of idealization and erasure, allowing for the possibility of maternal discourse as well as a non-phallocentrically organised view of culture" (Sprengnether 1990, 9).

reverberate into the present. The nun Thérèse comes back to the family house in Normandy, kept by her cousin Léonie. She treasures every object in the house, and each of them sets evocation in motion: the doorbell, the ivory ring, the photographs and the chandelier, are some of the many items that help reconstruct their childhood and the untold secrets of their village during the Nazi occupation. Public history and private memory merge in this novel by virtue of a mnemotechnic exercise, which consists of associating memory images with certain objects and places.[4] In the setting of the family house these pieces of memorabilia, together with material traces like human bones found in a common grave, have the power to reconstruct the fragments of family history which compose the wider picture of world history during the traumatic experience of the Second World War. Similarly, in *Impossible Saints* (1997), Roberts reinforces the link between personal and public history, between memoir, diary and historical writing by reconstructing the private life of Josephine, who stands for St. Teresa of Avila, through her niece's narration. Artificial memory is also enacted in this novel as images are linked to places—Josephine's shed, the so-called "sensual convent" founded by her, or St. Ursula's chapel where the bones of ten thousand women martyrs are exhibited as material reminders of feminine piety and self-sacrifice. Curiously enough, the reader is to know through Isabel's manipulation of her aunt Josephine's *Life* and memory that the "real" Josephine, that is, her flesh and blood as well as the pages of her unauthorised *Life*, have been destroyed, the former cooked and eaten by her religious congregation, in an unholy enactment of the Holy Communion, the latter made into paper rosary beads for the pious consumption of her fellow nuns. More recently, *Ignorance* (2012) explores the thin line between memory and traumatic forgetting by means of a story that starts once more at the time of the Nazi occupation of France during the Second World War. Ironically, Roberts's novel gives voice to the silenced narratives of single mothers, abused women, foundlings and victims of the Jewish Holocaust, showing how even deeply buried and partly forgotten stories, as well as apparently innocent gestures, looks, smells and objects, can bring the past to life.

   In the installation *The Secret Staircase* Roberts's contribution to the workings of memory comes full circle. The exhibition book is meant as a "souvenir of the original show" (Isgar and Roberts 2008, 7). As a whole they constitute a piece of memory work, in the sense that Kuhn uses the term: "Memory work makes it possible to explore connections between 'public' historical events, structures of feeling, family dramas, relations of class, national identity and gender, and 'personal' memory" (1995, 4). In this light, Roberts's sketches match Isgar's drawings to perfection, since they combine a daughter's childhood memories of her aged dying mother with suggestive images reproducing the world of childhood and dreams. Each sketch is based on an object that calls forth a memory of the past and connects it to the present. Every day the

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   [4] Early rhetoricians like the author of *Ad Herenium* considered this "artificial memory," or *artificiosa*, as the basis of *ars memoriae* (Ricoeur 2004, 62).

anonymous narrator visits her mother, who suffers from a terminal cancer and is in a London hospice. The daughter's fragmentary narrative unearths her feelings of love and admiration for her mother, but also her resentment towards this figure. In so doing, she reconstructs her own past, learning to accept her mother's death. Familiar objects and items, which are sometimes rescued from her childhood memories, and on other occasions from her mother's experience of being in hospital, prompt these memories. In all cases, they constitute the traces that evoke the mother-daughter bond. As hinted above, I suggest that Roberts's scenes work as a memory text, as the daughter inscribes memories of her mother and her childhood on the page, but also that these memories constitute a piece of narrative in its own right, defying the traditional time of history and causality in favour of a more random structure.

Through material traces like photographs, the narrator-protagonist claims precedence over the mother's lost body, the memory of which helps her recover their relationship and her own childhood. In terms of structure and narrative design, the first and last sketches, "The Secret Staircase" and "The Russian Doll," respectively, provide a valid frame for the daughter's narration, while the rest of the scenes follow one another without apparent order, except for the fact that as the narration progresses the narrator gradually shows her full acceptance of her mother's death. "The Secret Staircase" invites the reader on a journey of introspection, setting artificial memory in motion, as Roberts's fictional persona relates the motif of the staircase to the intangible capacities of memory and imagination. Immediately though, the metaphor of the staircase gains material entity and turns into a real staircase, leading from her kitchen to the cellar, from outside to inside, where she finds coffins containing women's corpses, "time travellers" (Isgar and Roberts 2008, 9), as she calls them:

> Here's a woman, turbaned and aproned in steam, hauling a twist of boiled sheets through the mangle. Here's a woman dressed in a short swing fur jacket, her hair rolled up in swoops pinned back from her laughing face. A woman in a white brocade evening frock. In a flowered red and white 1940s pregnancy smock, full sleeves caught into tight cuffs fastened with carved red buttons. Here's a woman in a tightly belted camel overcoat walking her scruffy terrier on the common. (2008, 9)

In an attempt to represent memory in physical terms, the staircase of the imagination becomes the staircase of her backbone, sustaining her body: "The staircase, neat and knobbled as my spine, leads down inside myself. I swivel down inside my spinal cord. Memory lives inside us. We have to go down inside ourselves to find it, enter it" (9). This exercise of self-exploration takes her back to her past, once more in a materialisation of artificial memory, by means of which image and place are associated: "A secret staircase down to childhood. Here it is: like a room in a museum; preserved exactly as it was. The sitting-room in which we all lived together, with its coal fire and battered pink settee" (9). House and body, kitchen, cellar and spinal cord turn into apt metaphors of

memory that can be identified with Frow's reading of *lieux de mémoire*, understood as either sites or institutions of memory.

In this first scene the mother figure is also idealised, as the narrator evokes the image of the Virgin, a statue kept in a little shrine in her childhood memories—"a tiny box-shrine, an empty wooden niche, hung up in the forest" (9)—, and then her body turned sacred when, in her imagination, her mother becomes the Queen of Heaven, whom she implores for love and attention—"I built a shrine to you on the shelf over the radiator in the hall in our old house. I put flowers and candles in front of your statue and prayed to you: love me please love me" (9). The image remains fertile in "The Roof," where Roberts continues developing her sensual theology, and the mother stands once more for the Queen of Heaven of Catholic mariology, but also for Nut, the sky goddess in Egyptian mythology, whose body is usually represented as a canopy of stars covering earth and its inhabitants. In bringing both images together Roberts presents the mother's body as a house and a place of protection, holding the baby before it is born, but also keeping the child safe from the dangers of the outside world (13). "The Cotton Reel" shows a similar image as this object stands for the thread, the umbilical cord, reminding the narrator of Demeter and Persephone. The daughter thinks about the attraction-repulsion relationship with her mother as she visits her by tube and bus: "You throw me away, unreeling my thread, then grasp the end of my thread and haul me back . . . You're Demeter and I'm Persephone, your mole-daughter with spade paws. I run away from you, dive down underground, then dive back" (33).

Roberts's biographical pieces turn out to be the only reliable traces of the past, since in spite of the passage of time they will be the written testimony of the daughter's memories. In this light, the final sketch "The Russian Doll" offers a very substantial image of how writing works like a form of memory in *The Secret Staircase*. On her way to the hospice the narrator buys a wooden Russian doll which for her represents the way in which the memories of her mother will remain even after death. This metaphor suggests for her, on the one hand, the interchangeability of the mother-daughter role between the two women, since it is now the daughter who must care for her aging mother—"Eggs inside eggs inside eggs" (42)—and, on the other hand, the image of the doll containing a multiplicity of stories: "You believe in eternal life. I believe in your words. I write down what you say and that way you stay alive inside me" (42). Together with a handful of familiar objects, words are the traces that the mother leaves behind, her testament for her daughter, and also the monument to the mother's memory; all in all, they constitute the perfect illustration of Kuhn's notion of memory work. Reflection on the importance of language and its connection with memory also appears in other two sketches, "The Gifts" and "The Newspaper." The former centres on the mother's legacy—her jokes, advice and stories—which the daughter treasures and which are meant to compensate for the years of unuttered past misunderstandings and for the pervasive

sense of loss at the present time; words function as bridges to the past, both as tools for reconciliation and as weapons to fight and separate:

> You talk and talk to me, as though you want to give me everything you can, give me words and words and words, make up for all those years when we couldn't understand each other, stabbed each other with spiked phrases, did not know how to translate each other. Now I sit next to you, holding your hand, and you talk to me. How I longed for that as a child. Now I have it. (14)

In "The Newspaper" the narrator forwards the link between language and memory by referring to the crosswords her mother tries to fill in while in the hospice to stimulate her brain, but also using this image as her own attempt to come to terms with her mother's terminal disease, like in "Five letters. Death? We're both trying to understand it" (34). The clues in the crossword also activate collective memory, recuperating, for example, her mother's youth in occupied Normandy, thus merging public history and personal memory.

Time is eventually one of the central concerns of the sketches and a fundamental axis to the analysis of memory in *The Secret Staircase*. The dynamics of time are inherent to the nature of each written piece and are explored by means of objects that recreate and bring together past and present. Sketches such as "The Shoes" and "The Hairbrush" focus on the mother's body, bridging the gap between youth and old age, health and sickness. In them, the narrator recalls a childhood memory about her mother's small and feminine feet while contemplating the old woman's currently swollen feet (10), or the fancy long hair her mother wore in the 1940s contrasting with her short white hair more than fifty years later (17). Two other sketches, "The Polka-dotted Frock" and "The Cotton Reel," also suggest the passage of time, and are associated with life stages: the white and black of the polka-dotted dress reminds the narrator of the frock her mother wore at her brother's wedding, as much as the garment that the daughter might choose for her mother's funeral. The choice of dress stands here for a language that the narrator interprets as the opposing forces of life and death, *eros* and *thanatos*: "I keep them apart. My wardrobe holds death and sex mixed up together but I can't" (25). Finally, "The Watch" situates the mother-child bond in an eternal present tense, outside the conventions of linear time, proposing an image of repetition and nonlinearity, as mother and daughter exchange roles: "The child I was lives on inside the woman I am and reaches out towards you. Wanting to make reparation for all that rage I felt towards you when I was younger, my love for you mixed up with aggression. . . . I am your child still and also I'm the adult woman helping my sister to care for you; mothering you; witnessing you" (37).

On some occasions, memory is recalled by an object that belongs to the experience of hospitalisation, as happens in "The Bed," "The Bandages" and "The Bars," all of them representing the mother's current physical dependence and pain, but also the link

with several experiences in the past: the plights of a young working mother, trapped by the chores of her domestic life in "The Bed" (21); the bandaged and invalid mother who brings to mind the fledgling sparrows which children rescued and took care of in "The Bandages" (29); or the bars of the mother's hospital bed which reminds the daughter of the playpen of her childhood (38). In so doing, the narrator manages to reconstruct family history, specifically focusing on the mother-daughter bond. Thus, Roberts carries out "the re-imagining of history," to use Anderson's expression (1990), which relies not on written documents, but on other non-traditional sources, like memory, oral history and objects.

The act of reconstruction of the past, of going back to the origins of the self, is complemented throughout the work with the author's revision and reinterpretation of the popular Mother Goose nursery rhymes, most of them coming from collections like Joseph Ritson's *Gammer Gurton's Garland, or the Nursery Parnassus* (1810). All of them match the motive of the sketch complementing its meaning and uttering the daughter's secret feelings for her mother.[5] The use of these variations on the original nursery rhymes, a popular form already varied and changing in nature, ties the narrator emotionally to her past and gives voice to her unconscious, also evident in the natural flow of the rhyme and in the lack of diacritics. Quite often the daughter's versions contain a veiled critique of the mother's behaviour in the past. The rhymes in "The Gifts" and "The Hairbrush" show the daughter's feeling of lack of affection: "Hush little baby don't say a word daddy's gone to get you a mocking bird and if that mocking bird don't sing daddy's going to get you a diamond ring and if that diamond ring don't shine *don't blame me or you're no daughter of mine*" (Isgar and Roberts 2008, 14; my italics), and "Roses are red violets are blue *ignore the child who cries boo-hoo*" (17; my italics). In contrast, in "The Buttons" she combines two sources from oral and popular culture, the nursery rhyme and the fairy tale, together with official history, by virtue of which the pitiful episode of the Nazi occupation is depicted as a hunting scene in which the Germans are depicted as wolves. In her rhyme, the difference between hunter and prey blurs as the daughter asks for protection: "Bye baby bunting Daddy's gone a-hunting gone to fetch a rabbit skin to wrap the baby bunting in. Bye baby bunting your Mummy's gone a-hunting she's leaving all her kith and kin and now you watch the night begin" (18). "The Polka-dotted Frock" unveils the daughter's desire to occupy the mother's place, "*when you are dead* dilly-dilly I shall be Queen" (25; my italics), and "The Cotton Reel" and "The Watch" show her unconscious longing for her mother's death, "Girls and boys come out to play the moon doth shine as bright as day leave your supper and leave your sleep *Mum*

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[5]   In *From Beast to the Blonde*, Marina Warner studies the status of fairy tales as historical documents which give an account of women's daily experiences, as they illustrate their particular rites of passage and the relevance of maternal figures in their lives. The resonance of Mother Goose is taken by Warner "either as a historical source, or a fantasy of origin" which she can trace into ancient traditions, like the Islamic or the Christian, and which adds credibility to the stories (1994, xxiii).

you're dozing all of a heap die with a whoop and die with a call die when you will don't die at all" (33; my italics), "*Mumpty-dumpty* sat on a wall mumpty-dumpty had a great fall *death's coming we don't know how or when we can't put mumpty together again*" (37; my italics). The collection ends, though, with an image of reconciliation and acceptance. The final rhyme in "The Russian Doll" connects life and death, as the daughter reverts to babyhood at the same time as she grieves for her mother's demise: "I'll suck on my thumb. I'll mourn for my mum oh what a sad daughter am I" (42).

5. CONCLUSION

In *The Secret Staircase* Roberts bridges the gap between literary and non-literary genres, between the autobiographical impulse and the fictional account, as well as between artistic forms, the visual and the literary. She conceives narrative as a form of memory, supplying words for the protagonist's state of mourning. In the face of the disappearance of the loved object, the daughter resorts to creating a memory text that stands as a monument to her mother, by means of which she tries to put their relationship to rights. Roberts's sketches reproduce the workings of memory, understood both as the voluntary reconstruction of the past, but also as an act which involves imagination and thus the unconscious. Though partly relying on objects and remnants of the past like photographs, writing becomes in *The Secret Staircase* the very trace of memory, the material inscription of the past on the blank page and the means by which absence is conjured up and given presence. Isgar and Roberts perform memory in *The Secret Staircase* as they choose to recreate the child's world and unmask feelings of sorrow and resentment for the mother. In this work the mother figure is the object of desire, the source of trauma but also of self-identification and reconciliation.

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"So Far as I and My People Are Concerned the South Is Fascist Now and Always Has Been": Carson McCullers and the Racial Problem

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Carson McCullers was deeply aware of the guilt of southern whites with respect to the oppression of blacks, and her fiction presents an intricate web of different configurations of the racial problem in her native South. In *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* she paints a very sympathetic and complex portrait of an African American man, a Martin Luther King *avant la lettre*. He actively fights for the civil rights of his race, yet paradoxically his obsessive blackness draws him close to the whiteness that oppresses him. In *The Member of the Wedding* McCullers connects racial oppression with gender oppression in the context of the prejudice of the reactionary South of the 1940s, linking the failed desire for gender fluidity with a similarly failed desire for racial hybridity. In *Clock without Hands* she brings existentialist influences to bear on the attitudes of her white characters with respect to the violent racial relations at the outset of the civil rights movement, and explores the tragic consequences here, for both whites and blacks, of polarized conceptions of blackness and whiteness.

Keywords: Southern fiction; Carson McCullers; race; civil rights; existentialism

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"So Far as I and My People Are Concerned the South Is Fascist Now and Always Has Been": Carson McCullers y el problema racial

Carson McCullers tenía una aguda conciencia de la culpa de los sureños blancos en relación con la opresión de los afroamericanos, y su ficción presenta una compleja red de diferentes configuraciones del problema racial en el sur estadounidense. En *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* nos legó el retrato de un afroamericano, un Martin Luther King *avant la lettre* que lucha por los derechos civiles de los negros, aunque paradójicamente su negritud obsesiva lo aproxima a la blancura que le oprime. En *The Member of the Wedding* la autora conecta la opresión racial con la opresión de género en el contexto del Sur reaccionario en la década de 1940, y relaciona

el fracaso del deseo de fluidez sexual con el fracaso de la aspiración al hibridismo racial. En *Clock without Hands* vemos el influjo del existencialismo en las actitudes de personajes blancos en relación con las violentas relaciones raciales a principios del movimiento por los derechos civiles, y cómo McCullers explora las consecuencias trágicas de concepciones raciales extremas.

Palabras clave: narrativa sureña; Carson McCullers; raza; derechos civiles; existencialismo

Two of Carson McCullers' main themes are the frustrated need for self-expression and the isolation of the individual. In the outline for her first novel, *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* (1940), she wrote that "[e]ach man must express himself in his own way—but this is often denied to him by a wasteful, short-sighted society" (McCullers [1938] 1975, 136). In an interview with Ralph McGill, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, soon after the publication of her successful first novel, she related the work to the troubled conscience of her native South:

> All of us seek a time and a way to communicate something of the sense of loneliness and solitude that is in us—the human heart is a lonely hunter—but the search of us Southerners is more anguished. There is a special *guilt* in us, a seeking for something had—and lost. It is a consciousness of *guilt* not fully knowable, or communicable. Southerners are the more lonely and spiritually estranged, I think, because we have lived so long in an artificial social system that we insisted was natural and right and just—when all along we knew it wasn't. (McGill 1992, 217; my emphasis)

In his recent study *Civil Rights in the White Literary Imagination*, Jonathan Gray argues that the literature produced by the white writers Robert Penn Warren, Norman Mailer, Eudora Welty and William Styron during the civil rights movement "permitted the successful recuperation of the premise of white American innocence at precisely the moment when a reinvigorated emancipationist narrative—the civil rights narrative—challenged the basis of that innocence. These writers embraced this ideological innocence in part because each sought to maintain his or her own idiosyncratic idea of American exceptionalism" (Gray 2013, 6-7). Carson McCullers no doubt had a very different view and from the beginning of her writing career she emphasized southern white guilt and inscribed this very notion into southern exceptionalism. It is the guilt that the Lost Cause mythology had tried to abolish by re-writing history and obscuring racial slavery as the central cause of the Civil War.

Like so many other southern writers and intellectuals, McCullers, who lived most of her life away from the South, faced the complex intellectual problems arising from being a southerner deeply attached to her native region and at the same time being out of line with the dominant southern attitudes. She was persuaded that the two main barriers to self-expression for southerners were the monolithic conceptions of race and sexuality that made the South 'an artificial social system.' In her fiction she frequently deals with the twin original sins of the South: the subjection of blacks and the oppression of women. Rachel Adams corroborates that in her novels "McCullers thus engages in a project of social criticism that, at its most penetrating, reveals the links between sexual intolerance and racial bigotry" (1999, 553). McCullers' creation of unconventional female characters that do not fit the rigid mold of traditional southern femininity has been widely studied. But her fictional treatment of the racial problem that brought 'a special guilt' on white southerners has not received enough critical

attention, and one of the reasons for this is probably the negative critical response to *Clock without Hands* (1961), the novel in which the racial problem takes center stage.[1]

Throughout her life McCullers exhibited a heightened sensitivity to social reform. As Oliver Evans notes, the house in which she was born was close enough to the cotton mills for her to "become aware of the poverty of the workers" from an early age (1965, 9). She was always deeply distressed by the hopelessness of the cotton mill workers and in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* expresses a strongly proletarian sympathy and denounces the oppression of American capitalism. Another major concern, which she describes in her unfinished autobiography *Illumination and Night Glare* as one of "certain hideous aspects of the South" which she strongly opposed, was the oppression of blacks (McCullers 1999, 62). She tenderly remembers a fourteen-year-old black cook of the family who was refused a ride by a taxi driver, who bawled, "I'm not driving no damn nigger" (54). She remembers the Depression days, when she was "exposed so much to the sight of humiliation and brutality, not physical brutality, but the brutal humiliation of human dignity, which is even worse" (56).

The militant black novelist Richard Wright, in a review of *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, praised McCullers for being the first southern white writer "to handle Negro characters with as much ease and justice as those of her own race" (1940, 195), for allowing them to express themselves as complex human beings beneath the prevailing stereotypes. Wright was surely referring to Doctor Copeland, perhaps the most complex and sympathetic of all the black characters created by McCullers. The way he is presented to the reader emphasizes his exclusion and isolation: "Far from the main street, in one of the Negro sections of the town, Doctor Benedict Mady Copeland sat in his dark kitchen alone" (McCullers [1940] 1961, 65). It is the geography of exclusion, with the racialized marking of spaces, that best characterizes the segregated South, and this at a time when southern towns are stages for a kind of racial representation in which the racial order is marked by geography in a futile attempt to separate all of life into whiteness and blackness. Copeland's race isolates him in the 1930s South and introduces in McCullers' fiction the discrimination of blacks as an important variation on the theme of the isolation and exclusion that afflict all humans in her work.

McCullers did not make Copeland into a stereotype of the victimized African American. His isolation is not due exclusively to a racialized social order but has many of its roots in his own personality. He alienates himself to a large degree because of his obsessive dedication to a single idea, one that he calls "the strong true purpose" (121): the reconquest of the dignity that has been taken from his race. The desert in which this self-appointed Messiah prepares himself is the North, where he spent a youth of difficulty and sacrifice, "and after ten years of struggle he was a doctor and he knew

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[1] The first books about Carson McCullers were short general studies focusing on timeless themes such as isolation, love and identity, at a time when American literature was still largely taught as being untouched by race (Evans 1965, Cook 1975). In the 1980s, feminist critics drew attention to McCullers' complex treatment of femininity and what it means to grow up female in the South (White 1985, Westling 1985). More recently, Gleeson-White (2003) has brought Bakhtin's theories of the grotesque to bear on the study of gender, and Gary Richards (2005) has explored representations of same-sex desire in Carson McCullers.

his mission and he came South again" (128). But this atheistic Messiah cannot find any disciples, not even in his own immediate family, in that the heaven of freedom that he preaches for the black race must be achieved not through prayer or conformity, but through pride, fierce struggle and the assertion of one's dignity. The town's fellow African Americans admire the doctor, who tends to their material and health needs, but are not interested in his creed aimed at urgent social change.

Carson McCullers was one of the first white writers in the late 1930s and early 1940s to relate the South's racial practices and politics to European fascism. Thus she has Doctor Copeland complain that "so far as I and my people are concerned the South is Fascist now and always has been," in that southern blacks, like the Jews in Germany, are deprived "of their legal, economic, and cultural life" (262-263).[2] As Martin Luther King Jr. would do two decades later, Copeland confronts the wall of resistance of the accommodationists, who prefer slow progress. The black pharmacist Marshall Nicolls is one of these gradualists, and argues that "by gradual means a better condition will come about" (257). In his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," King rejected the argument of the moderates that the natural flow of time would solve all problems, and expressed a different sense of time through his famous assertion that "[w]e must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right" (King [1963] 2009, 187).

More interested in the moral issues inherent in the human relationships of individual characters than in explicit political statements, McCullers problematizes and explores, with the many-mindedness that literature allows, the individual dilemmas and the shortcomings of the ardor of her most important black character. The main problem with Copeland resides in the fact that his purported concern for the members of his race is tarnished by the egocentric monologism of one who sees everything through the prism of an individual obsession. He insists on imposing his atheism and his asceticism on his children and decides what each of them is going to be in life from his "feeling of real true purpose for them" (McCullers [1940] 1961, 74). The very names that he chooses for them (Hamilton, Karl Marx, William and Portia) are all related to ideals of economic and spiritual freedom, a freedom that he himself undermines by imposing on them pre-defined identities, treating them as a means to advance his cause, and turning them into mirrors that reflect his "strong true purpose." Instead of educating through persuasion and in this way fomenting freedom, he in fact mangles the personalities of his children. As Portia says, "[a] person can't pick up they children and just squeeze them to which-a-way they wants them to be" (73).

His monologic conception of blackness clearly alienates Copeland from his family, and his obsession with what he calls "real truths" makes him one of the lonely grotesques

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[2] McCullers' friend and fellow Georgian Lillian Smith also denounced the pernicious effects of the dictatorship of what she called "Southern Tradition" and exposed the totalitarian ideology of segregation which spreads like a cancer, irreparably fracturing and diminishing the lives of both blacks and whites. When the United States entered World War II, Lillian Smith unmasked the hypocrisy of a culture that put so much energy into keeping blacks down while sending them to fight racial hatred in foreign countries, and she refused to support her country's involvement in the war, a decision which she later considered ill-advised (Loveland 1986, 246).

that Sherwood Anderson describes in *Winesburg, Ohio*, where "the moment one of the people took one of the truths to himself, called it his truth, and tried to live his life by it, he became a grotesque and the truth he embraced became a falsehood" (McCullers [1940] 1961, 72; Anderson [1919] 1976, 24). Copeland stays silent at a family reunion because "[i]f he could not speak the whole long truth no other word would come to him" (McCullers [1940] 1961, 133). He is thus reminiscent of the moral fanatics of Nathaniel Hawthorne who sacrifice heart for head in an attempt to build a perfect society. He tries to impose his austerity on his children, and makes his daughter Portia wear black dresses and white collars and cuffs, whereas "[f]or the boys there was black wool for trousers and fine white linen for shirts" (74). He forbids them to wear the "bright-coloured, flimsy clothes" (74) that they prefer and which point to the expressive freedom of African dress. He thus becomes paradoxically complicit in his society's absolute division into whiteness and darkness when he forbids "fanciness" or "gaudy calendars" and insists that "everything in the house must be plain and dark" (74-75).

It is Portia who openly questions her father's totalitarian insistence on black racial purity, a rigid asceticism and an obsessive submission to abstractions which are, ultimately, the opposite of life-affirming. He wants to be "pure Negro," but his daughter favors the word "coloured" which people use, and she reminds him that she and her brother Willie "aren't all the way coloured. Our Mama was real light and both of us has a good deal of white folks' blood in us. And Highboy—he Indian. . . . None of us is pure coloured and the word [Negro] you all the time using has a way of hurting peoples' feelings" (72). More in line with the openness of racial hybridity than with pure blackness, Portia is indeed on the side of feeling, which she defends in a most significant exchange with her father: "Hamilton or Buddy or Willie or me—none of us ever cares to talk like you. Us talk like our own Mama and her peoples and their peoples before them. You think out everything in your brain. While us rather talk from something in our hearts that has been there for a long time" (72-73). Most significant here is that Portia's speech also carries echoes of Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose complex mind always resisted dichotomies and for whom the lack of balance between the head and the heart led inevitably to tragedy. Hawthorne was no defender of slavery but he, like his friend and kindred spirit Herman Melville, saw the abolitionists of his day as impetuous dreamers and expressed doubts as to the limits of moral absolutism in the abolitionist imagination. In his polemical lecture "The Abolitionist Imagination," Andrew Delbanco broadens the meaning of abolition, which he describes as "a persistent impulse in American life" (2012, 3), an attitude characterized by unreasonable impatience and implacability. In Delbanco's view, abolitionism may be regarded not as a passing episode but as "an energy that has been at work in our culture since the beginning" and he advocates an interpretation of abolitionism "not only as a historically specific movement but as an ahistorical category of human will and sentiment—of what we might even dare to call human nature" (23). As a general movement, abolitionism would include implacable defenders of racial integration in the pre-civil rights South like McCullers' Doctor Copeland, those necessary though frequently despised dreamers

who find it impossible to wait for a gradual process of social improvement.[3] Abolition, racial integration or any other cause will always attract the immediatists who demand a radical break from the past in the face of the reservations of the gradualists who prefer incremental reform. And the literary imagination will permanently shun dichotomous thinking in answer to the claims of what Delbanco terms "articulate ambivalence" and expose the complex ways in which the highest idealism may corrode and corrupt (2012, 36), showing how the inflexible dedication to abstract ideas may hide the impulse to dominate, which is what alienates Doctor Copeland from his wife and children, who shun his tyranny.[4]

Not even his own children accept the excessive formality of names like William (Willie) or Karl Marx (Buddy), and Portia expresses herself through the black dialect which is natural and spontaneous for her, in contrast to the hypercorrectness of her father's English, even more formal than that of the whites. If for him the identity of the black race resides in its oppression and the struggle against this, for Portia the main point is a tradition of family ties and openness to life and enjoyment. According to the author, "Portia is the embodiment of the maternal instincts" (McCullers [1938] 1975, 149), and for this simple woman, untroubled by logic or excessive worry about the future, the ideal language is that of love, in sharp contrast to the cold rationality of her father, who is more capable of loving his abstract principles and the masses than the individual human beings around him. The painful paradox is that his inflexible rationality, his rejection of black "exoticism" and his atheism make him a white man in the eyes of Portia. As McKay Jenkins points out, when Portia says that her father's soul is white, "whiteness, to her, is alienated, godless, paralyzing in its reliance on rationality, sobriety, and industry" (1999, 168). In a sense the "colorless" asceticism that Copeland imposes makes him acquiescent to traditional white codes of conduct.

Excessively narrow and intense, Copeland has some of the rigid inhumanity of Melville's Ahab. Copeland's uncompromising zeal and his fanatic defense of the dignity of his race indirectly lead to the mutilation of his own son Willie, in a case of what William Gass calls "the high brutality of good intentions" (1978, 177). In chapter thirteen of part two, Copeland and the Marxist campaigner Jake Blount engage in a brutal verbal exchange because each of them clings to an essentializing narrative, of race and class respectively. The situation of Copeland has all the pathos of a man entirely devoted to the "strong true purpose" of liberating the oppressed. He is right and well-intentioned but ends up being defeated by his own obsessive monologism that disconnects him from his family and race. He is thus a spiritual brother of Julian in

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[3] In 1964 James McPherson concluded that "the civil rights movement of today has a greater chance of permanent success than did its counterpart in the 1860's [*sic*]. But whatever success the contemporary movement finally does achieve will be built partly on the foundations laid down more than a century ago by the abolitionists. . . . The victories of Martin Luther King and his followers are, in a very real sense, victories of the abolitionist crusade" (McPherson 1964, 431-432).

[4] A good example of this problematic issue is Henry James' *The Bostonians* (1886), in which the obsessive idea of freeing women from social slavery becomes the means to enslave and dominate.

Flannery O'Connor's "Everything That Rises Must Converge" (1965) and Dee/Wangero in Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" (1973), but in McCullers we do not find the strong satirical intent of O'Connor and Walker, who chose to berate their would-be reformers. McCullers treats Copeland always with sympathy and compassion and makes him a complex character—he is deficient in some respects but our post-civil rights modern sensibility cannot but admire the fighter who refuses to accept the status quo and does his utmost to reclaim the dignity of his race.

McCullers prophetically made Copeland a Martin Luther King *avant la lettre*, with his faith "in the struggle of my people for their human rights" and his plan "to lead more than one thousand Negroes in this country on a march. A march to Washington" in August of 1939 ([1940] 1961, 265-266). He may be insensitive, dogmatic and egotistical to a certain degree, but he offers a strategy for African Americans to resist an oppressive society that is in most ways more valid than the meekness defended by Portia. In spite of their imbalances and mistakes, people like Copeland are the ones who change the world, a world that at some junctures needs non-conformists more than preservers. Society needs the simple faith, the openness to life, and love of Portia, but it also needs Copeland's rebellious spirit, one that will not accept an oppressive status quo. As Darryl Pinckney says in his refutation of Delbanco, "[n]othing gets started without the rebels. They are the ones who light the way for others through the illumination of their transcendent feelings" (2012, 132).

Portia's devotion to tradition and to family heritage is important, but even more so is Copeland's refusal to give in to unjust impositions. He is, after all, a fictional version of so many determined champions of justice who pursue a righteous cause in often relentless ways and bring renewal to a culture that has a tendency for moral complacency. As Eric Foner contends, "[w]hat is possible would not have been achieved if, in this world, people had not repeatedly reached for the impossible" (2010, quoted in Delbanco 2012, 22). The black and white activists who fought for civil rights in the 1950s and 60s made racial integration possible by building on the work of the abolitionists who, in the previous century, had made possible the freedom of blacks that had once been unthinkable.

In *The Member of the Wedding* (1946) McCullers connects racial oppression to gender oppression in the context of the prejudice of the reactionary South of the 1940s. She opposed the insistence of southern culture on racial purity and the oppression of African Americans as adamantly as she did its demands for rigid sexual definitions and the oppression of any deviant form of sexuality. She was persuaded that just as blackness and whiteness co-exist within individuals of each race, so too can femininity and masculinity be found equally within men and women. Her autobiographical and unfeminine young girls Mick Kelly (in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*) and Frankie Addams (in *The Member of the Wedding*) challenge the prevailing norms and point towards new energies and possibilities for a culture that has always insisted on the stuntedness and

submissiveness of the belle and the lady. *The Member of the Wedding* is the novel in which the author most explicitly explores the parallel between society's stereotypical conceptions of gender and the oppression of blacks, thus becoming part of a southern tradition that started with E.D.E.N. Southworth's *The Hidden Hand* (1888) and would continue with Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) and Fannie Flagg's *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café* (1987). They are all fictions by white women who make use of the sexual ambivalence of the tomboy not only to denounce their region's obsession with the repression of unconventional sexual conduct but also to subvert dominant notions of white racial purity and superiority. Wearing masculine clothes and adopting traditionally male codes of conduct, these white tomboys blur the boundaries between masculinity and femininity, and their physical features or other closeness to people of the oppressed race serve to question the South's rigid racial divisions.

Frankie has been growing too tall for a girl and her bodily excess makes her afraid of becoming a freak like those she sees at the fair. Pressured by the role that a female is expected to play in her culture, she feels ambivalence toward a restrictive role, one which curtails her freedom and restrains her individuality. She wants to be neither a sexual other nor a traditional female. In the summer of her twelfth year she feels "like an unjoined person" excluded from having any real connection with the larger world (McCullers [1946] 1962, 7), and is anguished by her failure to fit in, confused by the social pressure to use her body in such a way as to display appropriate levels of femininity and thus to optimize her appeal to boys. Keith Byerman assesses her situation thus: "She desires a 'we of me' that would transcend all restrictive boundaries, including race, nationality, and gender" (2008, 25).

Frankie's unwillingness to enter the restrictive world of southern womanhood is manifested through the dream of androgyny, frequent in female protagonists when they are no longer allowed a tomboy's freedom to transgress gender boundaries and to display "male" attitudes. When Frankie plays at being creators with her black nanny Berenice and her cousin John Henry she projects a world in which "people could instantly change back and forth from boys to girls, whichever way they felt like and wanted" (McCullers [1946] 1962, 116), a society which would acknowledge and allow the vacillation between one sex and the other that McCullers believes takes place, to different degrees, in every human being. But Berenice insists that "the law of human sex was exactly right just as it was and could in no way be improved" (116).

If Frankie dreams of an avenue of escape from fixed sexual definitions and subscribes to the utopian politics of gender fluidity, for the African American Berenice the ideal world would be a society with racial hybridity, free from the oppressive polarity white/black. In the world she would create "there would be no separate coloured people" and "all human beings would be light brown colour with blue eyes and black hair. There would be no coloured people and no white people to make the coloured people feel cheap and sorry all through their lives" (114-115). The ideal would be to stop thinking in terms of those mutually exclusive categories—male/female, white/black—into which society

insists on placing individuals. In line with Berenice's wish to escape the oppressive boundaries of race, McCullers sometimes indicates the crossing of boundaries through testimonies of hybridity in actual bodies. While Frankie is a girl with the roughness and the trappings of a boy (she wears shorts and sports a crew cut), in Berenice we have a woman who is "very black" but "her left eye was bright blue glass" and "her right eye was dark and sad" (9), as if she wanted to signal her desire to transcend the white/black polarity. Thus the tomboy's blending of male and female is reflected in the blending of black and white, which we also see in Berenice's mother, Big Mama, who "was an old coloured woman" but "on the left side of her face and neck the skin was the colour of tallow, so that part of her face was almost white and the rest copper-coloured" (148). With what Patricia Yaeger describes as her "compulsion to create bodies that are half white and half black" (2008, 125), with so many body features in permanent flux and turning into one another, McCullers destabilizes all those barriers that fix and separate. Early in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* she includes a scene which exposes the absurdity of categorizing individuals according to monolithic notions of racial identity. When Jake Blount brings the black doctor Benedict Copeland into the New York Café, he is confronted by white customers: "Don't you know you can't bring no nigger in a place where white men drink?" Blount answers defiantly, "I'm part nigger myself," and later, "I'm part nigger and wop and bohunk and chink. All of those. . . . And I'm Dutch and Turkish and Japanese and American" (McCullers [1940] 1961, 24). McCullers uses here the metaphorical power of miscegenation to subvert the all-powerful myth of white racial purity, suggesting that hybridity is actually stronger because of the connection and kinship with different people from all over the world.

The fusion of black and white borders on the surreal in a scene where Frankie and Berenice are depicted in a strange composite image in the kitchen: "She could feel Berenice's soft big ninnas against her back, and her soft wide stomach, her wide solid legs. She had been breathing very fast, but after a minute her breath slowed down so that she breathed in time with Berenice; the two of them were close together as one body, and Berenice's stiffened hands were clasped around F. Jasmine's chest" (McCullers [1946] 1962, 140-141). The suggested hybridity is both feared and desired, and possible only momentarily in some contexts, such as with white children and black servants in the kitchen. The scene suggests the fusion of two bodies, one black and one white, into one, and at the same time it exposes the exclusion of blacks from the southern social body. It takes place in the kitchen of a middle-class white family and Berenice has the 'stiffened hands' of the overworked African American woman caught by her racial origin and forced to care for white children. The closeness between black and white here is only momentary, as well as deceptive, as shown by the many times when Frankie flaunts her superiority and treats Berenice with disrespect. In spite of the high level of intimacy between black domestics and white children and the centrality of the former in the white people's lives, such relationships were always unequal due to the drastic separation imposed by the politics and economics of race. In *Telling*

Memories (1988), Susan Tucker quotes the words of Linda Brown, a black woman who demythologizes the issue of whites' closeness to black domestics:

> Course, when you've worked for the same people for twenty-four years, there are people who say you are part of the family. Well, you're *not* part of the family. As long as you work, you have access to the house, the food, the secrets, the stormy life, the fun life. And sometimes you also experience the same things that these people you are working for experience. But so far as you're a part of the family, I can't see that, because you're different than they are. (Tucker [1988] 2002, 258)

The mirror for Frankie and her difficulties in adjusting to society's gender conventions is actually Berenice's half-brother Honey Brown, bound by society and, like Frankie, incomplete. Trapped in the claustrophobic close quarters of racial oppression and poverty, he echoes the situation of Frankie trapped in the stagnant, small town that imposes a paralyzing femininity. Honey, like Frankie, puts up a futile struggle against conformity and defies sexual and racial categories. In appearance and aspirations he is culturally androgynous, again like the tomboyish Frankie. He is sexually ambivalent and "light-skinned" and "could talk like a white school-teacher" (McCullers [1946] 1962, 155, 48); he has musical talents and aspires to learn French but the social pressures deny him fulfillment. Berenice says that "they done drawn completely extra bounds around all coloured people. . . . Sometimes a boy like Honey feel like he just can't breathe no more. He feel like he got to break something or break himself" (141). Feeling confined by the limitations that forbid tomboyishness and female ambition, Frankie explicitly identifies herself with Honey in her struggle against conformity: "Sometimes I feel like I want to break something too" (142). But society will not tolerate non-conformists within categories of race or gender, and at the end of the novel Honey is put in jail and Frankie has renounced most of her dreams and lost most of her ambitions and originality. The dream of transcendence and androgyny has been crushed by a dichotomous culture that persists in its blindness to the fact that black and white have always been as inextricably linked as male and female; that, as McKay Jenkins notes, "[w]hite is defined by the existence of black, not just *opposite* it but *within* it as well, and vice versa" (1999, 191).

Carson McCullers had her first contact with existentialist philosophy in 1941 when W. H. Auden gave her many books by Kierkegaard, the father of existentialism.[5] During her visit to France in November of 1946 she met Jean Paul Sartre, who in his book *What Is Literature?* (1947) rejected the late nineteenth-century ideal of "art for art's sake" in favor of a literature of *engagément*, conceived of as a form of action for which responsibility must be taken, a responsibility that carries over into the content and not just the form (Flynn

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[5] McCullers and Auden were at the time both living in February House, a well-known colony of artists in Brooklyn. Auden urged McCullers to read and embrace the teachings of Kierkegaard (Carr 1990, 109).

2006, 13).[6] *Clock without Hands* (1961) constitutes McCullers' most explicit engagement with social conditions in her native region, and in order to show how the individual finds or loses her/himself depending on her/his ethical stand in relation to others, in her last novel she makes the socio-historical context much more relevant than in any of her previous works. The temporal span is significant in this novel, which opens with the protagonist J. T. Malone being diagnosed with leukemia in March of 1953 and closes with his death on May 17, 1954, coinciding with the famous Supreme Court ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education* that declared racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional. It is a crucial juncture for the American South, as is the imminence of death for the protagonist. In this turbulent South characterized by drastic change, the individual is confronted with frequent and excruciating dilemmas, with both Malone and the South tottering between salvation and condemnation, depending on the decisions they make.

Malone initially seeks comfort in the reactionary rhetoric of former Congressman and Judge Fox Clane, a mid-twentieth-century representative of the myth of the Lost Cause who admires *Gone with the Wind* and defends "the noble standards of the South" (McCullers [1961] 1965, 29). He is the prototypical white supremacist who cannot imagine a South "with no colour line" and will oppose a future in which "delicate little white girls must share their desks with coal black niggers in order to learn to read and write" (29, 17). He repeatedly connects the obsession with racial purity to the mythical purity of the southern woman and laments the fact that his dead, progressive son had lacked "the passion of the southerner who defends his womankind against the black and alien invader" (161). Commenting on the southern rape narrative, Jay Watson says that "this fantasy of a social emergency—the so-called rape narrative or complex—was an anxious response on the part of the white male imagination to the prospect of significant social change in the South: to African Americans seeking economic opportunity, political enfranchisement, and social recognition in the wake of emancipation; to women seeking to widen their sphere of influence beyond the domestic realm" (Watson 2012, 4). In his self-destructive attempt to stop the hands of the clock that will inevitably bring irrevocable change to the South, the Judge insists that, naturally, a black and a white man "are two different things" and that "white is white and black is black and never the two shall meet if I can prevent it" (McCullers [1961] 1965, 39-40). Unlike the other characters in the book, who evolve psychologically to varying degrees, Fox Clane becomes a flat character unable to develop, and his clock has no hands in the sense that he resists change and persists in his self-deception as to the structural injustices in his society. With his retrospective orientation, Clane is a perfect exemplar of what Piotr Sztompka calls the "authoritarian" personality, characterized by "compliance to patterns of life dictated by tradition and authorities" (1993, 240).

The novel's famous opening, "Death is always the same, but each man dies in his own way" (7), sets the task demanded of Malone: he has to stop being part of the herd, a man who dilutes death into an event that happens to everyone. He instead becomes the

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  [6] In *What is Literature* (1947) Sartre wrote: "Though literature is one thing and morality another, at the heart of the aesthetic imperative we discern the moral imperative" (quoted in Flynn 2006, 13).

existentialist man for whom time is of the essence as he has to personalize the impersonal time suggested by the novel's title and bring it under the control of his free will and responsibility. Malone will not realize until near the end that Judge Clane is not the right moral guide, nor is the Baptist minister who preaches about death, although this "remained a mystery" which made Malone feel "cheated" (15). He has to navigate the uncharted waters of a world where traditions no longer hold and individual existence is as uncertain as watching a clock without hands. He finds salvation, not in the empty words of the preacher or in the lifeless rituals of the church, but within himself when he makes the difficult ethical choice that liberates him from the herd.[7] When he draws a marked slip of paper, indicating that he should bomb the house of Sherman Pew, the black youth who rented an apartment in the white section, Malone refuses to follow the herd, saying, "Gentlemen, I am too near death to sin, to murder. . . . I don't want to endanger my soul" (195). He is acutely conscious of mortality which, according to existentialism, puts him in a privileged situation to acquire authenticity, allows him to see an ethical dimension others cannot perceive, and affords him a higher mode of consciousness which permits openness to a creative exercise of responsibility. His blind passage through a life of ordinariness and conformity has so far prevented him from tapping a moral strength that has always been latent but unnoticed. By rejecting the social conventions that he has always accepted and by asserting his responsibility against the impositions of the mass, Malone acquires traits of the existentialist hero who becomes true to himself and achieves a difficult individuality in a mass society.

Clock without Hands pairs two seventeen-year-old boys, Jester Clane, the Judge's grandson, and the African American Sherman Pew, who consistently rejects Jester's attempts at friendship. The search for self is acute in these two and runs parallel to that of J. T. Malone. In Jester, as in the female adolescent Frankie, we find the coexistence of sexual ambivalence and the attraction towards the racial other. He has been anxiously reading the *Kinsey Report* and "[h]e was afraid, so terribly afraid that he was not normal and the fear corkscrewed within him" (84). In line with other adolescents of Carson McCullers' creation, as with the author herself, we are told that "secretly Jester thought that sex was a fake" (84). At the end, Jester, like Malone, will stop caring about being like other people and will find himself when he adopts a set of values that set him apart from the racist society and make him another existentialist hero.

To come to terms with himself, Jester also has to take a stand regarding the culture of race. The break with his grandfather Clane is "a form of death" but indispensable in achieving renewal (34). Breaking with the spiritually dead grandfather allows Jester to connect with the progressive values of his dead father. The murder of his black friend triggers a crucial new phase in Jester's life. Initially, he invites Sammy Lank, the poor white man who killed Pew, for a ride in his small plane, with the

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[7] A major theme of existentialism is the degree to which individuals live under the "dictatorship" of what Søren Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers and Friedrich Nietzsche respectively call "the public," "mass-existence" and "the herd" (Cooper 2012, 41).

intention of killing him. However, in listening to Lank's tragicomic, white-trash story, a man whose only social recognition came after fathering triplets and assassinating an African American, makes Jester reconsider. He has become aware of the complexity of human beings and their social relations, and the initial desire for violence gives way to compassion and understanding, to the recognition of life as the only real value. In her essay "The Flowering Dream" (1959) the author relates southern Gothic, "in which the grotesque is paralleled with the sublime," to Russian realism, remarking the fact that both traditions emphasize "the cheapness of human life," and adding that the South is more complicated, due to the racial problem, than Russian society: "To many a poor Southerner, the only pride that he has is the fact that he is white, and when one's self-pride is so pitiably debased, how can one learn to love?" (McCullers [1959] 1975, 286). *Clock without Hands* is one of those narratives which, as Sharon Monteith says, "reveal much about fear as instrumental in the ideological complex that was massive resistance" (2013, 170). No doubt Sammy Lank, when he murdered Sherman Pew, was convinced that he was carrying out the will of a society threatened by change.

The trip in fact culminates in an epiphany which brings a radical shift in perspective to Jester's life. The aerial view of the earth is unreal, making everything down below appear uniform and symmetrical: "The earth from a great distance is perfect and whole" (McCullers [1961] 1965, 202). From an abstract perspective you cannot see the complexity, the mystery or the tragedy of human life: "But down below the earth is round. The earth is finite. From this height you do not see man and the details of his humiliation" (202). The distant theoretical approach must be substituted by that of the heart, more warm and chaotic. The further you descend, the more imperfections you see, and "the town itself becomes crazy and complex. You see the secret corners of all the sad back yards" (202). Seen from above, individuals do not seem especially human; they are uniform, insignificant, even grotesque: "From the air men are shrunken and they have an automatic look, like wound-up dolls. They seem to move mechanically among haphazard miseries" (202). To save these lives from crippling mechanization and to provide respect for individuality, it is necessary to dig roots in the southern soil and connect with humanity: "The whole earth from a great distance means less than one long look into a pair of human eyes. Even the eyes of the enemy" (202). This is what the well-intentioned Copeland failed to see: that to comprehend humans you have to live in close personal contact with them and avoid relying exclusively on abstractions. To comprehend and to help the South to change, it is necessary to get rid of polarized class and racial prejudices. McCullers could here be suggesting that salvation for the South is not going to come so much from those who theorize from the North as from those who, like Jester, stay in the South and make an effort to understand the mentality of its individuals, both black and white.[8] The truth springs

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8   Thomas Haddox maintains that *Clock without Hands* is one of those white civil rights novels, like Faulkner's *Sanctuary* (1931) or Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), that endorse "a liberal gradualism that supports civil rights for African Americans but rejects violence and clings to the notion that the white South, presented as an organic 'community,' must painstakingly work out its own salvation without interference from the outside" (Haddox 2004, 563).

from sincere contact with individuals, and true understanding originates not in abstract thinking that appropriates and manipulates but from engagement with the human reality. In "The Flowering Dream" McCullers describes her own disposition as a writer in similar terms to the stand taken by Jester: "Above all, love is the main generator of all good writing. Love, passion, compassion are all welded together" ([1959] 1975, 287).

The clock of Jester's life now has hands, in that he has adjusted his life's aims to accommodate the new social realities of the South in which he has found his destiny and where he plans to become a lawyer and follow his dead father's footsteps in the fight for social and racial justice. In treating his African American friend Sherman Pew as an equal, Jester signals a considerable moral advancement in the attitudes of southern whites, and his character embodies great hopes for a better future for the region. The excessively abstract zeal that in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* alienated Copeland from those he wanted to save gives way here to this more realistic embracing of concrete reality and of the human individual. Jester's morality, concerned with social injustice and tyranny, acquires a wider scope than that of Malone, who only at the end of his life reconciles himself with his mortality and with those closest to him, and saves his soul by resisting social pressure.

The African American Sherman Pew is the most frustrated and forlorn of all the adolescents created by McCullers, and he exhibits several similarities to Joe Christmas in Faulkner's *Light in August* (1932). Both were abandoned as babies, at Christmas time, and their names allude to the circumstances of their respective abandonments. As Sherman tells Jester, "I was left in a church pew and therefore I was named Pew in that somewhat Negroid and literal manner" (McCullers [1961] 1965, 63). Both Christmas and Sherman were raised by adoptive parents and have been abused by their fathers. For each of them, the central problem is the definition of their personal identity. Christmas accepts the validity of the rumor that he has black blood, and Sherman Pew has proof of white blood in his blue eyes and mulatto skin. Not quite belonging to either one race or the other, their respective searches for identity, in a society that does not accept racial ambivalence, are agonizing. Both Christmas and Pew become enmeshed in this absolutist pattern and the obsessive search for their social identity in terms of this Manichean division makes them prone to self-destruction, as violence becomes for them the only means of attracting the attention of a society which denies them individuality.[9]

Sherman Pew conducts his life according to the same absolute black/white polarities which drive Judge Clane, and he obsessively conceives of himself as the victim of evil whites. In order to deny any connection to the white race, he makes himself believe that his father was an evil white man who raped his lost and longed for black mother, a sort of reverse mirror of the automatic expectation of whites that led to the lynching of so many African American males accused of raping white women. In his need to conform to his self-inflicted role of victim of the whites, he initially rejects the love and friendship that Jester

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[9] Edmund Volpe says about Faulkner's tragic mulatto: "Joe Christmas's life-long anguish is that he must but cannot identify himself as Negro or white. He cannot accept race as incidental to his individuality, to his humanity. He must know what he can never know, and his life is a process of self-crucifixion" (1964, 161).

Clane offers him, this rejection serving as evidence of the pernicious effects of absolute racial concepts on interpersonal relationships. On discovering that his father was not a white rapist but in fact a black man who had an affair with a married white woman who loved him, the fantasy he has created for himself is shattered. If the discovery of his origins leads Jester in the direction towards greater freedom and justice, in the case of Sherman the direction is toward the prison of the past, and death: "He wanted to die like the Negro man [his father] had died" (184). Tragically disappointed when his stereotyped expectations are contradicted and frustrated, in that the facts of his origins do not coincide with his fantasy, Sherman keeps breaking the law to call attention to himself. Renting an apartment in the white section of the town is the ultimate act of rejection of a society that does not notice him, and thus does he attract not only attention but also violence and ultimately death. He thereby renders himself an indirect victim of the life-denying absolutism that makes its victims seek death as a kind of desired boon. Like Joe Christmas, Sherman becomes another self-crucifier.

Killed by a fire bomb, Sherman's identity is at last that of the black victim martyred by the white society that persists in segregating blackness. His obsession with advancing the hands of the clock of history has proved as destructive as Judge Clane's obsession to move them back. McCullers opposed not only the radical separation of whiteness and blackness but also the Manichean division of individuals into innocent victims and ruthless victimizers. Making Sherman into a flawless martyr would have satisfied some white liberals, those in love with melodrama, as well as those blacks prone to self-pity. However, it would also have detracted from the novel's artistic quality. The portrayal of Sherman proves that McCullers is an exception to Floyd Watkins' accusation that much southern fiction written between 1954 and 1968 is simplistic because it "idealizes the Negro and condemns the white" (Watkins 1970, 3). McCullers wrote fiction that presents a complex commentary on reality and escapes easy simplifications, and she shows that a solution to the racial problem is as desperately needed by blacks as by whites. Nevertheless, we do lament the fact that in this last novel she was not able to imagine the possibility of blacks becoming the agents of their own liberation from the shackles of segregation, as if the solution would have to come not from militant blacks but from liberal-minded whites, those with a progressive orientation like that of Jester Clane. In the case of Doctor Copeland she successfully depicted a very active African American character resolutely from his own perspective, but in *Clock without Hands* the black character is very much a tool for white characters like Malone and Jester to test their ethics and struggle for moral satisfaction. McCullers thus leaves herself open to Toni Morrison's complaint about "the strategic use of black characters to define the goals and enhance the qualities of white characters" (Morrison [1992] 1993, 52-53).

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The Clash Between Memory and the Self in Walker Percy's
The Last Gentleman and *The Second Coming*

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The aim of our article is to analyze how the processes of remembering relate to a sense of self. We assume that both phenomena, memory and the self, are not only closely related, but can also be in conflict. Metaphors may be the most effective way to capture this conflict. The life of Williston Bibb Barrett, the main character in Walker Percy's *The Last Gentleman* and *The Second Coming*, will serve as an illustration of our hypothesis. His life is a record of the dynamics of memory influenced by attacks of amnesia, fugue states and *déjà vu*. A modern semiotic model of cultural memory, theories of the self, Bartlett's modern schema theory and the relationships and conflicts between them will provide entry points for our analysis of Walker Percy's eponymous last gentleman.

Keywords: memory; the self; the gentleman; schema theory; conceptual metaphors; self-transformation

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El choque entre la memoria y el ser en las obras de Walker Percy
The Last Gentleman y *The Second Coming*

El propósito de este artículo es analizar cómo el acto de hacer memoria está relacionado con el concepto de identidad individual. Partimos de la premisa de que ambos fenómenos, la memoria y el yo, no sólo están íntimamente relacionados, sino que, también, pueden entrar en conflicto. La metáfora puede que sea la manera más efectiva de representar este choque. La vida de Williston Bibb Barrett, el personaje principal de las obras de Walker Percy *The Last Gentleman* y *The Second Coming*, servirá como ejemplo ilustrativo de nuestra hipótesis. Su vida es un registro del dinamismo de la memoria, influida por ataques de amnesia, fugas disociativas y momentos de *déjà vu*. Un modelo semiótico de

memoria cultural moderno, teorías del ser, los esquemas teóricos modernos de Bartlett, y las relaciones y conflictos entre ellos aportarán los puntos de partida para nuestro análisis del último caballero epónimo de Walker Percy.

Palabras clave: memoria; el yo; identidad; el caballero; teoría del esquema; metáforas conceptuales; transformación del ser

> "If a man cannot forget, he will never amount to much."
> Søren Kierkegaard *Either/Or* (1843)

Memory and the self are usually analyzed as being mutually dependent, rarely as contradictory or in conflict. Until recently, the self was partially, if not wholly, defined in terms of memory (Grice 1941, 340). It was also perceived as not logically independent (Shoemaker 1959, 869). Recent research devoted to personal identity has paid much more attention to the self than previously. It shows that a sense of self depends not only on the ability to access the memory of past events and recognize one's participation in them, but that it also depends, and indeed, most of all, on experiencing personal recollections as one's own. It has been proven that it is possible to have "factual self-knowledge, trait self-knowledge, and knowledge of episodes," but not have any sense of ownership of autobiographical memories (Klein and Nichols 2012, 689).

Two main types of memory—episodic and semantic—were identified by Tulving (1972). The former registers events in a person's life, and can be called autobiographical memory, while the latter, according to Jean Mandler (1984, 1-30), contains patterns of behavior, space scripts and scenarios of events that are created, strengthened but, ultimately, forgotten. In contradistinction to memory, which is centered on preserving experiences, the self is focused on revising and ordering them. Processes that constitute memory and the self do not always work in a harmonious way, even sometimes colliding with each other. The aim of our article is to analyze how the processes of remembering relate implicitly to the self. We assume that these phenomena, memory and the self, are not only closely related but can also be in conflict. Metaphors may be the most effective way to capture this conflict. The life of Williston Bibb Barrett, the main character in Walker Percy's *The Last Gentleman* (1966) and *The Second Coming* (1980), will serve as an illustration of our hypothesis. His life is a record of the dynamics of memory influenced by attacks of amnesia, fugue states and *déjà vu*. A modern semiotic model of cultural memory, theories of the self, and the relationships and conflicts between them will provide entry points for our analysis of Walker Percy's eponymous last gentleman.

Memory and the self have a common characteristic—namely the fact that they are both processes, not stable constructs, and both are conceptualized through the use of metaphors. The process of creating metaphors correlates significantly with the creation of schemas that help us understand abstract domains of experiences (Allbritton 1995, 33). Draaisma expounds that metaphors create "their own perspective of memory" (2000, 3). Many researchers adopt a similar theoretical angle while analyzing the concepts of selfhood (Smith 1985, 74) or self-transformation (Metzner 1980, 49-61). In order to analyze concepts such as memory and the self, we have to make use of metaphors whose ability to project what is known onto the unknown allows us to visualize these abstract categories. That is why literature seems the most suitable material for studying these two concepts.

1. Memory

In *Forgetting: Myths, Perils and Compensations* Douwe Draaisma claims that novels are seldom used as historical sources, even though some of them are a reservoir of significant data concerning fascinating aspects of social life: "the implicit codes of daily interaction, the unspoken rules of behavior, all those protocols that set out what was proper or improper yet are not themselves set down anywhere" (2015, 179). English psychologist Frederic C. Bartlett points out that sociocultural contexts have a constitutive meaning for individual memory. In *Remembering* (1932), his classic study, which combines elements of both experimental and social psychology, Bartlett proposes that memory is shaped by distortions, leveling, accentuation and assimilation. According to Astrid Erll, "Bartlett's most important contribution to cultural memory studies is his popularization of the notion of 'schemata.' Schemata are patterns and structures of knowledge on the basis of which presuppositions regarding specific objects, people, and situations as well as regarding the nature of their relationship can be made. They reduce complexity and guide perception and remembering. Schemata are acquired through socialization. They are thus not universal, but culture specific" (2011, 83). An important property of the schemata is that it is an abstract organization of experience. Schemata enhance the effectiveness of the retrieval of memories and recollections. That is why the theory of schemata seems most appropriate to illustrate the relationship between memory and the self in literary works in which the cultural context plays a crucial role. Every schema serves as a model in the sense that it is a representation of some category of events. Walker Percy employs many cultural models in his novels. The titular last gentleman is the most important of them all. The conflict between the assumptions of Williston (Will) Bibb Barrett's aristocratic heritage and the moral disarray of the modern times makes it difficult for our hero to adopt the model of a gentleman. His life is fragmented by amnesia and *déjà vu*, both caused by traumatic events from his adolescent years. In order to reintegrate his life, Will has to decode, and then discard, his memories of the old scripts of behavior: "The sometime amnesiac must live in the present as if it were the past that pursues and claims him throughout the book in sudden flashes of imaginative memory" (Ciuba 1991, 102-103).

Will Barrett's quest for an authentic and integrated selfhood involves confronting the schema of the gentleman as a paragon of virtue, embodied by his deceased father, Ed Barrett. The prescription of ideal manhood involves gallant and impeccable manners, refinement and eloquence, along with self-discipline and moral integrity. A gentleman is marked by "strict honour, self-possession, forbearance, generous as well as refined feelings, and polished deportment, . . . scrupulous veracity, essential truthfulness, courage, both moral and physical, dignity, self-respect" (Lieber 1864, 18-19). The endorsement of such values by gentlemen validated their superior character and noble status, and "supersed[ed] rank, office, or title" (Lieber 1864, 23). Such glamorization of the figure of the gentleman was used to create a distinct national type, set apart from the Northerner: "the legendary Southern gentleman . . . seemed to possess every

quality which the Yankee lacked: honor and integrity, indifference to money and business, a decorous concern for the amenities, and a high sense of civic and social responsibility" (Taylor 1963, 96). Thus, the Southern gentleman became a cultural referent symbolizing "the self-discipline of tender-minded persons for the furthering of social and cultural 'values'" (Cady 1949, 211). With reference to such an idealized image, Gary Ciuba perceptively notes that "[l]iving as a gentleman . . . demands an underlying manner that supports all of these social virtues, and integrity characterized by clarity of vision, decisiveness, and self-determination" (1991, 102).

In the Preface to his *The American Gentleman* Charles Butler mentions four "traits which all will unite in ascribing to the genuine character" of a gentleman of the nineteenth century (1836, vi): the sense of dignity of a human being (186), a constancy of principles and manners (17), integrity and benevolence (35), and respect for the past (27, 187). Of them all, the first seems the most indispensable, as this feature of character is revealed, Butler affirms, in the gentleman's trust in Providence and praise for Divine assistance (15), his awareness of his own imperfections (56), his avoiding of all affections of either body or mind (181), and his making time for serious meditation (264). The lack of these traits, which would otherwise lead to self-awareness (17), not surprisingly causes the emotional dislocation and loss of balance of Percy's protagonist. Recognizing Will as a spiritually displaced person, Joyce Carol Oates diagnoses him as "a man without a soul, without an essence because he is without a sensible environment or past" (1989, 39). Will's emotional homelessness results from a discontinued ancestral legacy, which should provide guidance through the schemata of a gentleman: "Will progresses from being outdated to being apocalyptic, from the last upholder of past ideals to a seeker of the time to come. By the end of his journey he acts not so much of noble obligation and dutiful courtesy as out of an urgent love for those lost near the ends of their worlds" (Ciuba 1991, 96-97).

The dominant feature of the image of the twentieth-century gentleman in Percy's novels is the repetition of the rules and principles that are to be followed. It can be observed in the scenarios of events, the schemata of behaviors, space scripts and the ways the characters conceptualize themselves and others. The life of Will Barrett unfolds according to an all-too-familiar script. Born into a respected and influential family of lawyers, he attends Princeton as did his father and grandfather. Will later joins the military and serves for a while in the army, but is discharged due to health problems. During his youthful detour into becoming a humidification engineer at Macy's in New York, he falls in love with Kitty, a *nouveau riche* girl from the South. Her family hires Will to take care of Jamie, Kitty's dying brother, while they travel to the South. After his charge's demise, Williston builds a career as a lawyer, marries Marion, the richest woman in North Carolina, and engages in charitable work after he retires early. Our hero becomes an upstanding member of the community in Linville, North Carolina. At first, Will accepts the way of life that is imposed on him due to his social circumstances: "[w]hen he was a youth he had lived his life in a state of the liveliest

expectation, thinking to himself: what a fine thing it will be to become a man and to know what to do" (Percy [1966] 1972, 11).[1] He is also gifted with features of character that befit a gentleman: he always honored his obligations (*LG* 158) and told the truth (*LG* 165). It is only over time that he notices: "I was trying too hard to adapt myself to my environment and to score on interpersonal relationships" (*LG* 284). Despite the fact that Will seems to have it all, he senses that something is wrong with the inauthentic and aesthetic everydayness he is enmeshed in: he "forgets the past, is victorious in the secular city, but wants to blow his head off" (Rudnicki 1999, 34).

The schemata of Will's reactions, which he consolidates in what Connerton identifies as "bodily social memory" (1989, 71), allow him to attempt to comprehend reality: for instance, when "Kitty touched him, he felt showers of gooseflesh" (*SC* 131). There is a close affinity between Will's reactions to physical stimuli and how sudden reminiscences from the past are revived. Upon Will's return to his childhood home, after many years of sojourn in the North, Will knows how to get in the house without a key (*LG* 333). He also remembers his father's "old Princeton style of sauntering, right side turning forward with right leg" (*LG* 329) and characteristic way of holding a steering wheel while driving a car (*LG* 408-409). Will does not always recognize the schematic character of his own reactions but he can easily recognize it in others. Indeed he is especially sensitive to the needs and expectations of others: "they greeted you, they fell forward and laid hands on you" (*SC* 131), "they move closer, heads weaving like a boxer's, looking for an opening" (*SC* 140). Will's manner of walking (*LG* 98) imitates the Princetonianism of his father, who "used to stroll of a summer night, hands in pockets and head down" (*LG* 328-329). Clearly, such a subconscious empathetic identification with Ed signals Will's desire to understand the situation which led his father to take his own life. Paradoxically, while Will does not want to walk in his father's footsteps (that is, commit suicide), he wants to trace his life choices and internal conflicts.

Will's concept of others and himself is rarely derived from physical traits. Instead, he pays a lot of attention to smell and the manner of talking. Voice and articulation are identifying factors in the case of Will's psychoanalyst, Dr. Garmow (*LG* 33), Chandler Vaught, a millionaire who hired Will to accompany his dying son (*LG* 51), Kitty Vaught (*SC* 131) and Allison, the love of his life whom he meets as a widower (*SC* 76). Will's awareness of, and attention paid to, the proper articulation of, and stress in, words suggest he developed his linguistic competence with particular care. Will often conceives of others using metaphors. The concepts generating the source domain of the metaphors belong to the realm of flora and fauna, rather than to that of humans. Will identifies himself with predatory animals—a cat (*SC* 173) and a tiger (*SC* 221)—and with insects—a cicada and a bug in a cocoon (*SC* 222)—as well as with birds—a falcon

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[1] All references to the quotes from the primary sources, *The Last Gentleman* (Percy [1966] 1972) and *The Second Coming* (Percy 1980), will be made parenthetically in the text with respective abbreviations *LG* and *SC*.

(*LG* 5) and a hawk (*SC* 47). The latter ones are associated by cultural anthropologists with transformation or metamorphosis, often a spiritual one (Roque 2010, 99). It also seems interesting that Will perceives girls and women as camellias (*LG* 167) and mermaids (*LG* 61), such metaphors clearly reveal a romantic side to his nature. The fact that Will identifies his beloved Allison with a blackbird (*SC* 76) and a bat (*SC* 339) proves his unconventional attitude to her.

Will desires to engineer and order his life (*LG* 42), however the sudden remembrances of his traumatic past tend to disorient and alienate him from his present environment. Sometimes he even seems to be unable to recognize himself in the mirror (*SC* 13, 289). In such moments "[h]e heard himself speak without consulting his memory. His voice had a memory of its own" (*LG* 154). When memory fails him, the sound of his voice reminds Will who he is. Even a cursory analysis of the content of Will's memory reveals that his recollections center around the figure of Ed Barrett, his father, whom Will considered a perfect gentleman (*LG* 221). These recollections include conversations, observations, feelings and speculations about his father. Their conversations focused on moral imperatives about the proper conduct towards women and priests (*LG* 100, 223-224), while the observations concerned patterns of behavior (*LG* 329). Depression and sentimentalism resonated in Ed Barrett's artistic interests: he admired Arnold's poetry, read Montaigne's writings, and listened to Brahms' music. Lawyer Barrett also liked nocturnal strolls with his son, during which he convinced the boy to use his trust selectively in the future. The father based the advice on his own unpleasant experiences from his own youth (*LG* 178-179), which made him a target of hatred for treating African-Americans, Jews and Catholics well (*LG* 237). These recollections reveal the feelings of the last gentleman towards his father. Apart from respect and admiration, these memories revive the fear of the possible loss of his father Will felt as a boy years ago (*LG* 238, 330). The fear turns out not to be baseless. After an attempted suicide and murder of his twelve-year old son during a hunting trip, Ed Barrett dies of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. As the schemata of the perfect gentleman becomes refined in his adulthood with the recovered knowledge about his father's suicide, Will tries to learn the true reason behind this tragic event. The breach in Ed's idealized image will haunt Will even in his maturity. The memories of his father from early childhood will be partially forgotten and overprinted with those connected with Ed's suicide.

Will gains access to some recollections during his *déjà vu*, a state in which one re-lives experiences from the past in altogether new circumstances. *Déjà vu* is a state of disagreeable familiarity, which has a procedural character, and which in Will's case is very much akin to watching a film (*LG* 45) or listening to music (*LG* 100-101). In *déjà vu* memories are often brought back in different scenery, the remembered objects overlapping with the present ones, which disturbs Will's sense of time (*LG* 44-45). Thus, "[l]acking secure memory, he cannot make logical and temporal connections" (Luschei 1972, 112). Such moments lead not only to Will's feeling of dislocation and displacement (*LG* 98-99) but also to his loss of credibility as a gentleman (*LG* 295-296).

Following Percy's observation that we "must know one thing through the mirror of another" (1975a, 82), all that Will "saw became a sign of something else" (*SC* 51), or, as Kennedy puts it, became "the emblem of an object in past experience" (1989, 210). Will's *déjà vu* recollections are accompanied by sensory evocations, the narrator reveals: "The brain registers and records every sensation, sight and sound and smell, it has ever received. If the neurons where such information is stored happen to be stimulated, jostled, pressed upon, any memory can be recaptured" (*SC* 6). The sensory evocations are not only connected with the sense of hearing but also with the sense of smell. Smells can produce evocative memories, thus reference to "a smell of cottonseed-oil" reappears in the narrative multiple times, often with reference to repeated sounds (*LG* 99, 223, 237, 329, 330).

However, the most significant stimuli are auditory and tactile. An involuntary recollection of one particular event inscribed in memory is aided by the sense of touch. While standing in front of his family home, the young man "touched the tiny iron horsehead of the hitching post. . . . While his fingers explored the juncture of iron and bark, his eyes narrowed as if he caught a glimmer of light on the cold iron skull" (*LG* 332). The metallic coldness of the hitching post reminds Will of another piece of cold metal—of the gun his father used to kill himself. Will realizes "that his father's despairing, stoical, self-indulgent philosophy had finally killed him, and that the answer to existence for which he was seeking was somehow at his fingertips, in the concreteness of things" (Allen 1986, 70). The answer to despair and everydayness was not in Brahms, or old sad poetry, in other words in "false abstractions he [Ed] became locked in" (Dowie 1989, 160), but rather in "appreciating common objects for what they are in themselves," objects which "have no pretense to autonomy or completeness" (Dowie 1989, 160).

Years later, Will proves he is "a big forgetter" (Schwartz 1987, 112)—the lesson about his father's morbid life and death has been lost on him. When on a golf course, the memory of the despairing gentleman will be aroused by a combination of auditory and tactile stimuli. Will slowly recovers the repressed memory "of an event that had happened a long time ago. It was the most important event in his life, yet he had managed until that moment to forget it" (*SC* 3). Holding his golf club like the big double-barreled twelve-gauge English Greener his father killed himself with "as if he were reenacting an event not quite remembered, as if he had forgotten something which his muscles and arms and hands might remember, he swung the shaft of the iron to and fro like the barrel of a shotgun" (*SC* 51). The touch of the metallic object, coupled with the sound of a fence wire stretching, are "discrete, static memory-signs which contain in coded form the signification of the moment" (Kennedy 1989, 212). They make repressed memories resurface: "Only one event had ever happened to him in his life. Everything else that had happened afterwards was a non-event. . . . Suddenly it crossed his mind that nothing else had ever happened to him" (*SC* 52). What he recovers through an associative response to tactile and audio stimuli is his father's decision to end his son's and his own life.

Will's memories (a)maze him and function in contradictory ways; they influence his system of values, shape his attitudes towards faith and force his patterns of behavior, and allow self-improvement through the re-living and understanding of things that were beyond comprehension before. Thanks to recovered memories, the past becomes present and Will can make a change in his life. A maze seems to be the most appropriate metaphor for memory as it allows the conceptualization of difficult experiences. The source of this metaphor is traced by Draaisma to the German psychologist Carl Gustav Carus (1789-1869), who believed that the diversity and changeability of processes taking place in memory make it impossible to formulate laws that would apply to it ([1995] 2000, 75). The German Romantic philosopher points to the maze-like structure of the memory due to its impenetrability, while Walker Percy focuses on the ambiguity of memory's operations.

2. THE SELF

The relationship between memory and the self is the focus of attention of not only psychologists and sociologists but also of philosophers such as Shoemaker (1963), Perry (1972), Wollheim (1979) and Emmet (1985). They are often interested in how past and present experiences impact on one's self, and such a perception of the relationship between memories and the self suggests that memory provides an adequate criterion of personal identity. Richard Wollheim has supported his claim by identifying two aspects of memory—its capacity and causation (1979, 191). Acknowledging the latter aspect has, in turn, led Dorothy Emmet to identify the procedural character of our experiences. This philosopher claims that "present experience not only comes as arising out of the immediate past, but it also points forward in anticipation of the immediate future" (1985, 95). Thus, our understanding of our own experiences acquires the characteristics of a process encompassing a multiplicity of denotative referents covertly modifying their respective impact.

The self is typically defined as "a locus of experience, including experience of that human's own someoneness" (Harris 1989, 601). Percy's titular gentleman defines it is as "the quiet center of himself" (*SC* 123). In the course of his life, Will's understanding of himself undergoes change; he perceptively captures the essence of the metamorphosis, saying that he has found his center (*SC* 58). The figurative meaning of 'the center' points to what Smith identified as the metaphorical character of identity (1985, 65-69). Hence, the conceptual metaphors of self-transformation elucidated by Ralph Metzner (1980, 49-61) will be instructive in our analysis of the processes of Will Barrett's formation and negotiation of his identity. "From dream sleep to awakening" is the first conceptual metaphor identified by Metzner. Will muses whether his life (between the novels) has been "a long night's dream" (*SC* 73); later on, he admits that his life has passed as if it were a dream (*SC* 124). Such a metaphor alludes to the symbolical and dramatic character of Will's existence, which is characterized by the internal conflict

concerning the schema of a gentleman's behavior. Ed's suicide distorted the image of the gentleman as a paragon of virtue. Because ending one's own life connotes cowardice, Will could neither revise nor imitate the schema of a proper gentleman. Will's life may be likened to a dream, whose processual character lends it to rational analysis. Only such a conscious analysis can afford Will the opportunity to awaken from his dreamlike life. Concentrating on present experiences, rather than on the past, would imply such an awakening.

The literary trope of a journey is one of the ways of conceptualizing dreams, therefore "from being on a journey to arriving at the destination" is another metaphor explaining the processes occurring in self-formation. People encountered in a dream-like state are retrieved from our memory. In order to deal with the conflict between his self and memory, Will has to recover his repressed or seemingly lost memory. A journey back home, to the Southern states, affords such an occasion. His geographical journey acquires the characteristics of a spiritual pilgrimage, as Will has to recover his lost self through retrieving and coming to terms with the memories of what really happened in the past.

However, a journey made in a dream-like state is just an illusion, thus "from illusion to realization" is another metaphor for the formation of self-hood. Barrett feels that the secret of his life has been eluding him (*LG* 11). While he was a boy, he saw his neighbor go insane. Looking back at this event, Will realizes that, had he known what was wrong with his neighbor's life, he would have discovered the truth about human existence (*LG* 10). Years later, upon hearing Sutter tell him a story about a man suffering from a mental breakdown, Will has a similar impression (*LG* 268-269). Will believes in an unwritten law which would explain and regulate human behavior under emotional pressure. The discovery of such a law would allow him to get his life in order. Only after many years, once he contemplates committing suicide, does Will come to the realization that the law is an illusion, and as a consequence people do not know how to be themselves (*SC* 16).

Will's realization of 'the center' can only be achieved through retrieving memories, which leads us to another metaphor, "from fragmentation to wholeness." Retrieving memory does not necessarily mean its complete understanding. Will's recognizing and consequent rejection of the schema of the gentleman leads to the adoption of another schema. Will does not intend to meet the same fate as his father, therefore he decides to marry and make a successful career; in other words, he becomes the very opposite of his father—a Yankee: "I went as far as I could go, married a rich hardheaded plain decent crippled pious upstate Utica, New York, woman, practiced Trusts and Estates law in a paneled office on Wall Street" (*SC* 72-73). Unfortunately, a simple schema-switch does not bring about lasting satisfaction; on the contrary, it leads to resentment and suicidal thoughts. Exchanging this schema for yet another one is not an option, as it would be a case of rotation. Understanding the past, not only retrieving it, can only bring lasting satisfaction. Embodying various schemata oversimplifies and impoverishes life.

The disproportion between expectations and the outcome of role-playing results in cognitive dissonance. Will comes to believe that only the traumatic nature of disasters and catastrophes can restore the life he has missed. The nearness of death enables Will to shed the role-playing and recover his lost self—"It no longer mattered that he couldn't remember everything" (*SC* 321).

The metaphor "from darkness to enlightenment" captures the essence of the metamorphosis of Will's consciousness. Darkness, which connotes feelings of loneliness and isolation, seems to be an apt metaphor for Will's existence shaped by his fear of people (*LG* 112). His aloofness may result from his childhood experiences: Will cannot recollect his father ever kissing him (*SC* 54). By virtue of contrast, Ed Barrett's only attempt to display affection to his son—by hugging him in a swamp while hunting (*SC* 53-54)—seems to prove his emotional unavailability. What makes the gesture even more awkward and poignant is that it was made during Ed's pursuance of his own suicide and at the same time his son's murder. The repressed memory of the incident would later on be revealed in Will's aversion to kissing his father and the general avoidance of physical contact (*SC* 54).

After Marion's death, the eponymous last gentleman will gain the experience of being loved during an eschatological experiment in a cave. Will wants to see if his life has meaning, and in order to do this he has to believe in God. In the Lost Cove Cave experiment Will challenges God to give a sign of his divine presence (*SC* 193). Otherwise, he will die of starvation and thus disprove His existence. Will can see nothing in the cave; apart from the literal meaning, the darkness also has a figurative one for Will. The resonance with Plato's cave symbolizing internal metamorphosis and cognition is obvious here. Thus, the darkness signifies Will's distance from God, lack of self-awareness and potential descent into death. The metaphor "from separation to oneness" defines the process of overcoming the darkness in the cave. The process itself is based on the recovery of the self through reconstructing one's memories and self-knowledge. One cannot be whole without love. Emotional distance, which leads to reserve, if not coldness, is a prison according to Will (*SC* 59). Denying the possibility that one can form true bonds with others, Will robs his soul of inner freedom. He frankly admits that he has lived his life in a prison cell (*SC* 70). Such an observation directs us to yet another metaphor—"from imprisonment to liberation." Only awareness of the self makes the latter possible. Inner strength depends on such an awareness which transcends schemata. In a Hamlet-like fashion, Will confronts the specter of his father: "All I knew for sure then and now was that after what happened to me nothing could ever defeat me, no matter what else happened in this bloody century. If you didn't defeat me, old mole, loving father and death-dealer, nothing can" (*SC* 270). Searching for God and his self in the cave, Will overcomes the darkness. Stumbling out of the cave, Will falls off the cliff right into Allison's greenhouse. At this moment Will is reborn as he discovers the light of his life—a woman. Allowing his affection towards Allison to grow, Will discovers

pleasure in quotidian activities (*SC* 330) and thereby begins a new life. This life will not though be schemata-free. Yet, Will is not terrified; enriched by past experiences, he knows he can revise them.

The final metaphor—"from death to rebirth"—comprises all the afore-analyzed metaphors; it signifies the titular Second Coming. Ed Barrett preferred death; through committing suicide he wanted to escape "a death in life" (*SC* 126). His son, through searching and questioning, rejected both of them—death and "a death in life" (*SC* 131-132, 186, 274). Will's rebirth into authentic existence resembles the "initiatory schema" elucidated by Mircea Eliade (1987). Falling into Allie's greenhouse comprises all the elements of this ritual process that Eliade enumerated (1987, 196)—suffering (the toothache which drove Will out of the cave and the existential nausea), death (Will's "suicide ideation" [Kennedy 1989, 211]) and resurrection (rebirth)—"Allie is Will's second coming" (Ciuba 1991, 218). It would be difficult to disagree with Ciuba's observation that "Percy makes the girl in the greenhouse Barrett's virtual double, for in coming to her Will comes fully to himself and finally to his clearest imitation of God's entry into his life" (1989, 403). After the battle of influences of *thanatos* and *eros*—his father's death wish versus the love and life associated with Allie (Allen 1986, 136-137)—Will is reborn in the greenhouse as he gravitates towards "human love [which] serves as a sign for the divine love at its source. Having rejected various misreadings of the Apocalypse, Will Barrett comes to Allison and in the end to the God whose gradual coming into his own life he almost overlooked" (Ciuba 1989, 399).

After the cave experiment, Will is still struggling with schemata; however, he comes to believe that suicide should not serve as an exemplary model of facing reality. He will finally be able to confront Ed Barrett's love of death. The struggle is most visible in Will's inner monologue: "Come, it's the only way . . . Come, believe me, it's the ultimate come . . . the second, last and ultimate come to end all comes" (*SC* 336-337). He will not embrace the faithful reenactment of schemata, as it leads to the death-in-life with all its concomitant problems of memory and the loss of internal freedom. Whenever Will tries to adopt his father's script of a gentleman, he is either seriously dislocated, as when at university (*LG* 202), or "feels progressively disorientated in the South" (Ciuba 1991, 109). "An alienated homelessness" so characteristic of Percy's characters (Johnson 1989, 139) is part of both Will's experience in the secular North and in the *nouveau riche* South.

"Will's private crisis occurs within the context of an apocalyptic anxiety; he feels oppressed not only by the phantasm of his father's suicide but by an acute, sense of the death-in-life of the twentieth century" (Kennedy 1989, 217). Percy's eschatological orientation infuses the eponymous Second Coming with meaning from the Christian tradition. Percy argues that if "we are living in eschatological times, times of enormous danger and commensurate hope, of possible end and possible renewal, the prophetic-eschatological character of Christianity is no doubt peculiarly apposite" (1975b, 111). Thus, the Second Coming refers to the coming of Christ during the Apocalypse as the

Judge of the world who will establish His reign of justice and peace on Earth. "From the first page, Will Barrett, a naïve apocalyptist, believes that he sees a sign of the last things" (Ciuba 1989, 400). When Will calls his times "the Century of the Love of Death . . . the apocalypse seems less a personal crisis and more a steadily growing but unrecognized national emergency" (Ciuba 1991, 103). The exodus of Jews to the Holy Land is, for Will, an alarming sign of the end of the world (*SC* 11, 133-134, 190). Apocalyptic expectations betray Will's other reason for venturing into the cave: Will was also waiting for the eschaton in Lost Cove (*SC* 212-213). The moral decline of humanity and the loss of faith have shaped Will's expectation of the Last Judgment. Will's vision of the Apocalypse, which is deprived of its theological sense, is yet another schema. In a processual interpretation of the Second Coming, Jesus' return completes our existence. Created in the image of God, human beings will be able to transcend the limitations of our cognition. From a metaphorical perspective, the Second Coming means regained self-consciousness and rebirth.

3. The Clash Between Memory and the Self

While memory retains recollections and schemata, the self manages cognition and strives for the development of the consciousness. The processes making up both phenomena aim at retaining and maintaining the continuity of one's self. Memory works by updating the schemata and recollections by deleting and overwriting information; the self, on the other hand, works by retrieving, ordering and transforming experiences. Conflicts between them arise in three instances. Firstly, when the schemata are unrealized, and thus cannot be recognized and revised. Secondly, when the schemata are distorted by unclear experiences and cannot be recorded properly. And finally, when the schemata are replaced by other, opposing schemata. William Barrett's existence exemplifies all these conflicts. A contradiction between memory and the self manifests itself in Will's psychogenic amnesia (Baddeley 1997, 279) associated with fugue states. The narrator reveals early on in *The Last Gentleman*: "Most of this young man's life was a gap. The summer before, he had fallen into a fugue state and wandered around northern Virginia for three weeks, where he sat sunk in thought on old battlegrounds, hardly aware of his own name" (*LG* 12).

Expressions describing *déjà vu* are different from those connected with a fugue state. *Déjà vu* comes over, assaults or haunts the last gentleman (*LG* 11, 14, 90), while Will falls into, lapses into or goes into the state of fugue (*LG* 12, 22, 270). This state lasts much longer than *déjà vu*, and is connected with a partial loss of consciousness, while a person undergoing it feels like a sailor after a long journey (*LG* 355). Analogously to a musical fugue which repeats its motif by the successive addition of new elements that imitate the subject, a psychic fugue state makes a person look at a familiar place in detail from a different perspective. Will frankly admits that in a fugue state "everything looked strange" (*LG* 11). It is often followed by an attack of amnesia, during which

there is a struggle going on in the mind. Such an attack is not untypical for Will: "There was something that had to be attended to RIGHT NOW. But what? He knocked his poor throbbing head on the steering wheel, but it was no use. The thing was too much in the front of his mind to be remembered, too close to be taken hold of, like the last wrenching moment of a dream" (*LG* 294). In such an attack the process of perceiving reality runs smoothly. Registering information from reality and the ability to react accordingly are, however, impaired. The protagonist is like a person fast asleep, he wants to wake up but is unable to. Sleep is an attempt to solve the conflict experienced in reality, which is expressed through the processes of displacement, symbolization, dramatization and secondary elaboration (Rivers 1923, 17, 19-21). Amnesia, like a dream, is an attempt to resolve a past conflict. It is the result of attempts to forget the past and separate oneself from it. However, by running away from the memories of his father's suicide, Will Barrett separates his self from the ideal of the gentleman he inherited from his father. The need to forget the trauma distorts other recollections and leads to forgetting them: Barrett "remembered nothing more than he had forgotten," there was "the nameless tug pulling him back" (*LG* 294).[2]

Amnesia causes an identity crisis, moral uncertainty and a feeling of being lost. The loss of recollections prevents full self-identification. The protagonist, like a chameleon, always assumes the characteristics of the environment. He plays new roles, tries to find a social group he can belong to. He also undertakes other attempts to deal with the disease: he reads books about mental hygiene, savors art, helps the lonely and the suffering, devotes himself to work (*LG* 11-12). But apart from the negative consequences, amnesia also has a positive dimension. It makes the last gentleman see events anew, his life is not based on schemata only. Prior to the tragic events, Will's memory was built upon schemata—that of a good student, of a prospective Ivy League graduate (Princeton), of somebody on the fast track to a successful career, of an heir to a fortune and a member of the landed class, etc. Were it not for the traumatic experience, Will would lead his life like others—without reflection, superficially and fast-paced. The sudden loss of his father, causing a temporary loss of memories, prevented him from falling into a routine, conventional existence. Deprived of a steady identity he could settle into, Will could not be effective in his endeavors—he could not plan, decide or know what to expect. Aware of his condition, Will made an effort to recover his own identity.

The first stage in his identity-recovery process is using others as a yardstick to discover who he is. Will observes the patterns and schemata of those around him, hoping that they will give a whole new meaning to his existence. Will constantly

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[2] After researching the effects of extreme trauma on memory recall, Draaisma (2015) has come to the conclusion that memories of a traumatic incident, such as a near-death experience, may become something else. A deformed memory is still a memory, but a memory of not what was originally recorded, and that is why it is also a form of oblivion (2015, 192).

searches for somebody to direct his life. Once identification with groups proves ineffectual, Will "undertakes a moral odyssey across America, he confronts and rejects various codes of gentility until he, at last, discovers how to live as the end and epitome of his life by a daring reinterpretation of his family's tradition" (Ciuba 1991, 96). The pilgrimage to the Southern states and, more importantly, to his childhood home are to bring back the memories of the repressed past. However, these memories do not converge with those prior to the incident, mainly because his experiences in life and his new goal have changed Will. The last gentleman's life stands in contradiction to the conventional life. His contemporaries choose a life without reflection, a life which is founded upon the blind fulfilment of social schemata. The superficial security of a stable identity offered by the unquestioning adaptation of schemata actually proves that their condition is much worse than Will's. His affliction pushes Will and, at the same time, allows him to search for and create his own life-pattern, a schema which completes, but does not confine, his identity. While others' schemata seem to be imprinted, Will's is acquired.

Amnesia, which initially seems a curse—"Will's protective amnesia had prevented him from seeing, until late in the book, how he projected his fears of suicide onto society" (Allen 1986, 133)—turns out to be a blessing in disguise because it makes it impossible for the protagonist to look at reality in a conventional or stereotypical way. Amnesia shows alternative paths which are invisible for a man limited by preconceived notions of the world: "possessing acute sensibility, he [Will] cannot perceive the sense of a situation through all the nonsense of its words. He thus serves the author as in instrument for taking a fresh look at the American scene" (Luschei 1972, 112). As Will's case demonstrates, Walker Percy's stance on amnesia, memory and the self is equivocal. In his letter to Shelby Foote, Percy (1971) betrays his fascination with amnesia for its ability to defamiliarize the commonplace and worn out which pollute our perception of ourselves and the world around us. Thus, Will's amnesia is not "simply an inauthentic defense that he must abandon," as Allen suggests (1986, 57). Neither is it "meant as nothing more than a device to underline his identity crisis" (Crews 1989, 42).

A clash between memory and the self indicates a cognitive-processual vision of human beings which emerges from Walker Percy's novels. Williston Barrett both makes his ambient culture and is its final product. He absorbs the schemata of a gentleman and scripts of behavior characteristic of Southern culture and, simultaneously, his behavior is conditioned by cultural and social determinants (such as bodily social memory). The eponymous last gentleman is a creator of his culture as he makes an effort to overcome and revise the schemata. The protagonist's motifs and actions are best analyzed through the prism of metaphors, which reflect the complexity of the processes occurring in his memory and the self. It seems that anamorphosis best illustrates Will's life—his existence is like a distorted image, which can be reconstituted only when one adopts an unconventional perspective.

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Dissent as Therapy:
The Case of the Veterans of the American War in Vietnam

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Most of the fiction that was produced by soldier-writers after the American War in Vietnam has been characterized as therapeutic, with its main objective understood to be healing the wounds caused by the traumatic experience of war. This approach has tended to individualize the experience of particular soldier-writers and to conceive of their fiction as a substitute for psychoanalytic therapy, hence cancelling, in the same maneuver, its political agency. By emphasizing the individual process of overcoming "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder," the critical work analyzing the production of these authors has, intentionally or not, obscured the larger political project by which these writers were literally putting their bodies on the line. In their physical and psychological fragmentation, those bodies became the locus of the struggle to establish a new definition of national identity, at a time when the concept had become unstable to say the least. The aim of this article is to return to the fore an emphasis on the politics of dissent in the study of US Vietnam War cultural production.

Keywords: Vietnam War literature; dissent; therapy; Chaim Shatan; political activism

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La disensión como terapia:
el caso de los veteranos de la guerra americana en Vietnam

Gran parte de la ficción producida por los veteranos de la guerra americana en Vietnam se ha categorizado como terapéutica, y se ha postulado que el objetivo principal de esa producción literaria es contribuir a la sanación de las heridas personales causadas por la experiencia traumática de la guerra. Este enfoque ha tendido a la individualización de la experiencia de cada escritor-soldado y a la percepción de su ficción como sustitutiva de la terapia psicoanalítica; al mismo tiempo, esta maniobra interpretativa suprime el potencial político de sus textos. Al enfatizar el proceso individual de superación del "síndrome

de estrés post-traumático," la literatura crítica sobre la producción de estos autores ha oscurecido, a veces de manera intencionada, el proyecto político al que estaban dedicando su vida. Sus cuerpos, rotos física y mentalmente, se convirtieron en el escenario donde se libraba la batalla para reconfigurar la definición de identidad nacional, en un momento histórico en el que la definición hegemónica de nación estaba, cuando menos, bajo sospecha. El objetivo de este artículo es traer de nuevo a un primer plano el carácter eminentemente político y revolucionario de la producción cultural estadounidense relacionada con la guerra en Vietnam.

Palabras clave: literatura de la guerra en Vietnam; disenso; terapia; Chaim Shatan; activismo político

> One would be concerned with the "body politic," as a set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge.
>
> (Foucault [1975] 1991, 28)

1. INTRODUCTION

Half way through *The Big Lebowski* (1998), Jeff "The Dude" Lebowski is having a cup of coffee with Walter Sobchak, his bowling teammate and friend. They are sitting at a diner counter discussing how to proceed in the unraveling of the kidnapping of Bunny, Mr. Lebowski's—The "Big" Lebowski's—wife. The case has taken a turn for the worse and Mr. Lebowski has just received a severed toe, supposedly Bunny's, as a sign of the kidnappers' intention to kill her unless the ransom money is delivered. Unfortunately, the original ransom money has been stolen from the Dude's car, where it was sitting after Walter had convinced him to keep the briefcase with the money and hand the kidnappers one filled with dirty underwear. Whilst Walter boisterously claims the kidnappers are not professional and should not be taken seriously, the Dude is worried about Bunny ending up dead and is increasingly irritated by Walter's attitude. When the waitress admonishes them saying, "Sir, if you don't calm down I'm going to have to ask you to leave," Walter snaps and shouts out: "Lady, I got buddies who died facedown in the muck so you and I could enjoy this family restaurant!" (Cohen and Cohen 1998).

Facing the camera, Walter, the Vietnam veteran, loud and aggressive, prone to thoughtless violence and the Dude, a West Coast countercultural slacker, have become an ironic reference to the cultural and social turmoil of the Vietnam era.[1] The indirect reference to the American War in Vietnam invests them with added meaning which emerges from their intertextual connections to innumerable versions of the stereotypes they are suddenly perceived to embody. At this point, the filmic text displays—and plays with—two different sources of meaning: on the one hand, that derived from the film having "stipulate[d] [its] referential domain by creating a possible world" whereby the Dude and Walter are rendered meaningful by their insertion in a particular plot line and belonging to a particular, unique possible world (Dolezel 1998, 26);[2] and on the other, that derived from the net of dialogic relationships the filmic text establishes with other texts such that the characters become conglomerates of intertextual references

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[1] I am using here Linda Hutcheon's definition of ironic meaning "as relational, as the result of the bringing—even the rubbing—together of the said and the unsaid, each of which takes on meaning only in relation to the other" (1995, 59).

[2] Dolezel's use of the verb 'stipulate' echoes Kripke's definition of 'possible world,' "A possible world isn't a distant country that we are coming across, or viewing through a telescope . . . A possible world is *given by the descriptive conditions we associate with it* . . . 'Possible worlds' are *stipulated*, not *discovered* by powerful telescopes" (1972, 267).

and their meaning can be inferred from the larger shared cultural background. Walter calls to mind the never-ending collection of crazed Vietnam vets that have appeared on screen since the end of the seventies; the Dude, all the hippie war protesters of the counterculture. And the fact that the scene closes with the Dude standing up and leaving Walter behind re-stages what is a pervasive trope in the representation of the social conflict generated by the war: the rejection and neglect of the veterans by the pacifists and war protesters, who accused them of committing the most horrible crimes, and, in turn, the fact that the vets despised the pacifists for not having lived through the life-changing firsthand experience of war and, as a consequence, for not being able to understand them or their outlook on reality.[3] This way the film relies on the familiarity—sometimes even the ennui—of the audience with certain characters to establish the meaning of this scene. Significantly, only a few clichéd sentences in *The Big Lebowski*—"I did not watch my buddies die facedown in the muck so that. . . ," "If there's one thing I learned in Nam. . . ," "That's fucking combat. The man in the black pajamas, Dude. Worthy fuckin' adversary" (Cohen and Cohen 1998)—suffice to establish Walter as one of those crazed Vietnam veterans that have peopled the screens ever since the end of the war.

More likely than not, these veterans are characterized as either physically or emotionally wounded individuals who, in their pain, stand as emblems of the disfigured national body that emerged from the quagmire that was Vietnam. They are pervasively presented as fragmented bodies, bodies in pain, severed pieces of body, bodies in wheelchairs, dead bodies in black body bags. These mangled bodies insistently hamper the process by which a losing country must "begin to re-imagine itself, re-believe in, re-understand, re-experience itself as an intact entity" (Scarry 1985, 93). When, though, the bodies of these characters are intact, their traumatic experience is signaled by the thousand-yard stare, the unfocused stare that reveals them as deranged, maladjusted individuals who are likely to snap at any time and massacre the patrons of the nearest McDonald's.

2. BODIES IN PAIN

> I could see that this thing—this body I had trained so hard to be strong and quick, this body I now dragged around with me like an empty corpse—was to mean much more than I had ever realized.
>
> (Kovic [1976] 1995, 114)

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[3] The lack of empirical evidence to support this notion, and the ideological and political implications of the widespread circulation of this falsity is brilliantly discussed in Jerry Lembcke's *The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam* where he claims that "to get beyond this syndrome—a 'Vietnam syndrome' of America's political culture—the real story of solidarity between the anti-war movement and Vietnam veterans has to be told, and the image of the spat-upon veteran has to be debunked and its mythical dimensions exposed" (1998, 26).

After our war, the dismembered bits
—all those pierced eyes, ear slivers, jaw splinters,
gouged lips, odd tibias, skin flaps, and toes—
came squinting, wobbling, jabbering back . . .

Since all things naturally return to their source,
these snags and tatters arrived, with immigrant uncertainty,
in the United States. It was almost home.
So, now, one can sometimes see a friend or a famous man talking
with an extra pair of lips glued and yammering on his cheek,
and that is why handshakes are often unpleasant,
why it is better, sometimes, not to look another in the eye,
why, at your daughter's breast thickens a hard keloidal scar. (Balaban 1997, 41)

The 'dismembered bits' in Balaban's poem come back as reminders of the fact that, in a war situation, "what is remembered in the body is well remembered; the bodies of massive numbers of participants are deeply altered; [and] those new alterations are carried forward into peace" (Scarry 1985, 112-113), making the process of forgetting, if not impossible, at least troublesome as "whether or not it is verbally memorialized, the record of war survives in the bodies, both alive and buried, of the people who were hurt there" (1985, 113). After the American War in Vietnam, the 'dismembered bits' dripped into society constantly, persistently—stuffed in black bags or as absences in the bodies of the maimed—and their insuppressible arrival added new meaning to the reality of the United States. An indecipherable, uncanny meaning from which most averted their eyes in fear of what it might tell them about themselves, but which was, nevertheless, there, inescapable. The work of writers and artists bears witness to the ways in which the absence of the dead and the obviousness of the missing limbs of the maimed destabilized the cohesive sense of identity defended by American institutions, and problematized the re-establishment of the pre-war order. Thus, to cite only a few examples, Ron Kovic, opens his memoirs *Born on the Fourth of July* by juxtaposing President Kennedy's famous 1961 line from his inauguration address: "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country" with his own inscription:

I am the living death
the memorial day on wheels
I am your yankee doodle dandy
your john wayne come home
your fourth of july firecracker
exploding in the grave. (Kovic [1976] 1995)

He thus problematizes the proud concept of nation fostered by the administration that sent him to war. Tim O'Brien significantly turns what started as his combat memoirs, *If I Die in a Combat Zone* ([1973] 1995), into a description of his personal transition from reluctant soldier—"I believe, finally, that a man cannot be fully a man until, deciding that something is right, his actions make real the subject bravery of the mind . . . I think the war is wrong. I should not fight in it"—to a bystander who observes, registers and denounces the shame and waste of war (62-63). In Mark Heberle's words: "His positions as bystander/observer and register of shame . . . suggest dual roles of writer and moral reflector. Indeed, the internal narrative of *Combat Zone* depends crucially on O'Brien's taking on those dual roles. Within the memoir, both functions complicate and ultimately displace the ostensible and conventional memoir identity as soldier" (Heberle 2001, 49). Photographer Martha Rösler, in her 1967-1972 series *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, uses the collage technique to embed images from the war within scenes from suburban American living rooms. The dead babies, the anguished faces of the amputees, the dismembered bodies and the tanks, Rösler claims, are not "imposed or forced into those living rooms, they belong there" and they demand a reinterpretation of everyday life in the United States that cannot be easily dismissed (Cottingham 1991): "[Can] you enjoy your car, your TV, your painting in precisely the same way knowing someone died for your enjoyment?" is the question Rösler wants the viewer to confront (Cottingham 1991). She challenges her audience with the same question Kovic throws at his readership: "Is it too real for you to look at? Is this wheelchair too much for you to take?" ([1976] 1995, 137). Maya Lin when thinking of a way to remember the American soldiers who died in Vietnam, instead of imagining a monument "that make[s] heroes and triumphs, victories and conquests, perpetually present and part of life," creates a memorial which is "a special precinct, extruded from life, a segregated enclave where we honor the dead" (Danto 1985, 152). Danto adds, "with monuments we honor ourselves" (1985, 152). According to Joel L. Swerdlow, Maya Lin in contrast came up with a design that "seems able to capture all the feelings of ambiguity and anguish that the Vietnam War evoked in this nation" (Swerdlow, quoted in Petress and King 1990, 6). These are but some of the writers and artists that use unsettling snapshots of bodily or mental fragmentation to conjure up images of the fracture of the social fabric and signify the failure of the political project that had lead the US to Vietnam.

For these artists, writers and intellectuals, then, the body of the soldier became a "contested site where memory, biography and personal histories call attention to, challenge and resist unified and traditional versions of American identity and government, thereby reflecting as well as constructing a diversified and skeptical sense of national identity" (Berdahl 1994, 113). This questioning of the traditional models of national identity translated into significant acts of rejection of the Cold War ideology which had led the country into slow but certain defeat in Vietnam. These dissenting voices permeated all strata of society and eventually—and most forcefully—made their

way into the army itself. The end of the militaristic, imperial nature of US politics was the unanimous demand of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) and of a considerable number of G.I.s, who engaged in all kinds of illegal, underground activities to help stop the war and who were ready to put, literally, their bodies—whole or fragmented—on the line for the anti-war agenda. As Gerald Nicosia describes, the young men, who returned to the US physically and/or psychologically injured "knew that their nation was speaking and acting with the height of hypocrisy, and that their bodies and their lives were being spent to perpetuate that hypocrisy. Such men would bring back to their native land feelings of hatred and shame that would only continue to tear the country apart. Not only that, but they would themselves be a living war wound, which might take the country decades to heal" (2001, 137), and which was interpreted not only as a defiance of the *status quo* but also as proposing a new, more wholesome way of understanding US politics. Thus, Bobby Muller, one of the most vocal VVAW activists, used to repeat in high schools and colleges and in every interview he gave to newspaper reporters or on TV that "the tragedy in my life is not that I'm paraplegic, because I am a lot better man today than I ever was before. The tragedy in my life is that I was, as so many Americans still are, so totally naïve and so trusting . . . I was an idiot because I never asked the question 'Why?' And that is my greatest tragedy—one which was shared by all too many Americans" (quoted in Nicosia 2001, 146).

For Muller, as for so many others, this is what Elaine Scarry labeled the "*referential instability* of the hurt body" of the veteran (1985, 121), which has the potential to highlight fracture and contestation, evidence the opposing forces at stake in the new social order and foster incredulity at the totalizing narratives which attempted to reestablish ideological consensus after the war experience. Scarry defends the position that "the wound is empty of reference" (118); it is exclusively an experience of pain that cancels everything else and destroys language "bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned" (4).[4] That experience is unshareable and any attempt to narrativize it is both a betrayal of the pain felt and a fictionalization through which meaning is superimposed on the sentient body. The bodies of the dead and injured, Scarry contends, will be given meaning by the discourses that, after the war, attempt to make sense of those "sounds and cries" and do so in the name of a post-war national consensus. It is then that "the incontestable reality of the body is continuously reinvoked by both sides" who vie for establishing which side's suffering will be grieved (130), which bodies will be honored and interpreted as generous, brave sacrifices for the necessary larger good

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[4] This cancelling of the centrality of language in human experience is beautifully captured by Kurt Vonnegut's comment on the Dresden massacre in *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969): "It is so short and jumbled and jangled, Sam, because there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre. Everybody is supposed to be dead, to never say anything or want anything ever again. Everything is supposed to be very quiet after a massacre, and it always is, except for the birds.
And what do the birds say? All there is to say about a massacre, things like '*Poo-tee-weet?*'" ([1969] 1991, 14).

and which will be forgotten and fade into oblivion. Post-war discourses "perpetuate a way of dividing lives into those that are worth defending, valuing, and grieving when they are lost, and those that are not quite lives, not quite valuable, recognizable or, indeed, mournable" (Butler 2009, 42-43).

The VVAW and the G.I.s who were against the war made their bodies visible and charged them with countercultural, dissenting value to ward off any official post-war attempt to re-interpret them as icons of national pride and bravery: they articulated "resistance through images, tropes and poetics of mutilation in which the fragmented, dismembered, disincorporated (masculine) body signifies both the brutal incoherence of the war and the failure of dominant ideology's notion of the soldier body as an impenetrable totality" (Bibby 1996, 9). On April 18, 1971, those veterans offered one of the most effective displays of the unsettling meaning of their bodies when they marched to the Capitol, "bedecked with their nation's highest honors" (Nicosia 2001, 106-107). Although they were still young, their "eyes betray[ed] what they had only recently come from" (106-107). They marched to the Capitol not to demand their country's recognition but, quite the contrary, to reject the recognition they had already been given in the form of medals for their service and, which to them had become, in the words of Jack Smith, the first veteran to return his medals, "a symbol of dishonor, shame, and inhumanity" (quoted in Nicosia 2001, 141). These men "no longer felt they had to prove anything to anybody, although many bore a visible proof in the cane they walked with, or a missing limb, or a paralyzed body, or simply in the friends who could no longer walk beside them" (Nicosia 2001, 141).

The compelling presence of those bodies and their hold on public opinion can only be accurately gauged by evaluating the reaction of the US institutions, which will engage in a second war, this time a domestic one, to recover their credibility with the American public. According to Michael Rogin, the US institutions engaged in a strategy of "motivated forgetting"—or "amnesia" (1993, 504)—of the war in Vietnam. This 'motivated forgetting,' however, was not put into effect by silencing or denying public visibility to the cultural representations of the Vietnam War and its veterans. Indeed, the US institutions, threatened by the subversive presence of the dissenting veterans and their anti-war civilian and G.I. allies, aimed to achieve the illusion of a new meaning-giving order precisely through the spectacularization of the veterans' bodies, which had started proliferating in popular representations of the war. "Spectacle is about forgetting," continues Michael Rogin, "instead of dissolving the subject into structures or discourses, the concept of amnesia points to an identity that persists over time and that preserves a false center by burying the actual past" (1993, 508). US society was bombarded by numerous, easily forgettable representations of the past as entertainment.[5] The ultimate objective of this strategy was to prevent the actual experience of veterans from percolating into the narratives that were competing to

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[5] The clearest examples of these cultural products are films such as the *Rambo* or the *Missing in Action* series.

establish a final mainstream version of the history of the war. Instead, their experience was supplanted by that of a fictionalized identity, stable and unchanging, that would "co-opt the veterans' experience while purporting to speak on their behalf" (Bates 1996, 145); a fictionalized entity that the audience would eventually come to recognize as the "authentic" veteran of the war and that would do nothing but foster the restoration of the pre-war consensus and help unfold the interpretations of the war favored by the extant ideological state apparatus.[6]

The success of this strategy depended on making illegitimate the potential political agency of the protesting veterans' bodies. To that end, one of the most effective steps taken was the appearance of the stereotype of the Rambo-like warrior hero. According to Harry W. Haines, *Rambo* "offers a position from which to understand the veterans' postwar silencing in terms consistent with the revisionist interpretation of the war . . . *Rambo* helped rehabilitate the Vietnam veteran politically by purging him of ideological taint. Here, the veteran emerges as a usable sign of postwar consensus, serving the needs of the ideological bloc that assigns particular meanings to the war throughout an array of social institutions" (1990, 88). The veteran character John Rambo has been purged of any possible association with the political left and has been "contained, made manageable, reprocessed by a specific ideological bloc" (89).[7] His body, though scarred, is whole and complete and it stands as much as a metaphor of the conservative, revisionist post-war ideology as the fragmented body had once been a metaphor for the broken body politic. The fissureless, almost auto-regenerative body admits no contestation and masters all threats, becoming an idealized version of the nation. Thus, the lesson taught and, unfortunately, learned is that "the price of reintegration is the strategic forgetting of ideological crisis" (Haines 1990, 88). These new "state-supported American heroes . . . encourage . . . immediate audience identification, elevating a visionary ideal above chaotic, ordinary, daily existence" (Rogin 1993, 508-509), and providing a historical narrative which is a lot more comfortable than being reminded of the ideological crisis involved in, to quote poet W. D. Ehrhart:

> laugh[ing] at old men stumbling
> in the dust in frenzied terror
> to avoid our three-ton trucks . . .

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[6] The strategy of suppressing male war resistance was so successful that "in the mid-1980s when uniformed veterans gathered in protest outside of a Boston opening of *Rambo,* they were attacked by a horde of outraged teenagers. According to the teenagers screaming at the vets to go home, it was Sylvester Stallone—a real man—who was also 'a real veteran'" (Boose 1993, 596).

[7] Rambo himself makes a point of distancing himself from the hippie identity that the sheriff, on first seeing him, pins on him because of his long hair and him wearing a jacket with an American flag on it. And he does so, not by informing the sheriff of his unquestionable patriotism, but by emerging during the saga as a Green Beret hero, the "'symbol of the American spirit,' as Rambo was described in the advertisements" for the second film of the original trilogy (Hellman 1991, 149).

We have been Democracy on Zippo raids,
burning houses to the ground,
driving eager amtracks through new-sown fields . . .

We are your sons, America,
and you cannot change that.
When you awake,
we will still be here. (1989, 59)

3. THOSE WHO HAVE GONE HOME TIRED[8]

There is something I want to say
Not anything you need believe
But there is no thunder here
And the silence
Nothing forgives
(D. F. Brown)[9]

Neutralizing the distorting effect on society of those veterans who returned from Vietnam with psychological wounds that only became visible through their difficulties to adjust smoothly to civilian life proved to be a more complex task. The strategy most commonly used was that of emphasizing their emotional and mental fragility and, so as to represent them as "malcontents, liars, wackos, losers" (Swiers 1984, 198), most of the time as also having serious drug-addiction problems and being highly prone to random violence. Instead of analyzing the nature of their psychological and emotional problems and trying to ascertain their causes, while, at the same time, finding ways to give them appropriate medical care, the hospitals and clinics of the Department of Veterans Affairs tended to neglect their responsibility by systematically casting doubt on the fact that those psychological wounds were actually caused by exposure to traumatic events while serving for the US Army in Vietnam. This official line asserted that the incapacity of the veterans to adjust to being useful members of society was previous to their war experience, thus, denying them any kind of political agency, making their complaints and demands illegitimate and giving the Department of Veterans Affairs the legal subterfuge to avoid treating them. The discourse of these veterans was branded with the stigma of insanity and the only place society was ready to allot their bodies was within the well-secluded walls of mental institutions or prisons, away from any subject position which would allow them participation in the elaboration of the narrative about the significance of the American War in Vietnam and the previously mentioned process

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8   From a 1977 poem by W. D. Ehrhart.
9   Included in Ehrhart's anthology of Vietnam War poetry, *Unaccustomed Mercy* (Ehrhart 1989, 33).

of post-war redefinition of the national identity. To paraphrase Michel Foucault, for the network of relations through which power was exercised to remain unquestioned and intact, these veterans had to be silenced and disempowered. "[P]ower and knowledge directly imply one another; . . . there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" and by rendering the veterans speechless or branding their utterances nonsensical (Foucault [1975] 1991, 27), they were made to radically disappear from the "power-knowledge relations" precisely at the time when the cultural memory of the war was being constructed. Those who sacrificed the most were being condemned to silence and political irrelevance and denied access to the "cultural negotiation through which different stories vie for a place in history" (Sturken 1997, 1).

Fictional representations of the psychologically wounded veterans played a crucial role in spreading the notion that they were uncomfortably awkward, socially and politically useless and, in most cases, dangerous; these stereotypes contributed to the perception of real veterans, in need of psychological help after having been exposed to a traumatic war experience, as deviant selves, unusual and undesirable Americans that needed to be normalized for society to recover its homogeneity and the nostalgically missed pre-war consensus. This process of normalization imposes homogeneity at the same time that it individualizes those who are branded as different: Normalization keeps watch over the excessive and the exceptional, delimiting the outcasts who threaten the order of normalcy. There are institutions to contain these outcasts and—if possible, this is at least the idea—to redirect their course to the latitudes of the normal. Institutions will form and well-adjust the young into supple, happy subjects of normalization. Institutions will reform the abnormal who stray beyond the limits (Caputo and Yount 1993, 6).

Normalization, commonly applied to all "abnormal" members of society—with a definition of "abnormality" which varies according to the historical context in which it is used—is characterized, in the case of the treatment received in the Veterans Administration hospitals, by two factors. On the one hand, they were prescribed a disproportionate number of drugs: as Gerald Nicosia writes in *Home to War. A History of the Vietnam Veterans' Movement*:

> If Vietnam vets were seen at all, it was usually to provide them with the 'quick cure' of a bag full of pills. Whether a vet was depressed, suicidal, chronically drunk, beating his wife, suffering from severe headaches, insomnia, nightmares, night sweats, and attacks of paranoia, or simply unable to hold down a job or to care about the physical circumstances of his life, he was handed a junkie's fortune in tranquilizers, with plenty of renewals. (2001, 176)

On the other, each patient was individualized as an exceptional case whose experience could not be used to understand or relate to another veteran's. The therapy given would

concentrate on evaluating the life of the soldier before the war in an effort to pin the responsibility for his present ailment on his own original dysfunctional nature and, in no case, on the traumatic war experience. "By wanting to know everything, all about the childhood, the personal history, the fantasies of the patient/in-mate/believer, the 'subject' is produced. And power produces its subjects in an unlimited, interminable subjectification, by exceedingly detailed personal dossiers, elaborate records of the individual life and personal history" and the subjects thus created conveniently freed the US institutions from any responsibility and re-cleaned their good name (Caputo and Yount 1993, 6), while condemning the traumatized individual to remorse, self-guilt and social exclusion.

Symptomatic of the efforts of the establishment to dodge responsibility are the difficulties people like Chaim Shatan and Sarah Paley—two of the most successful therapists for Vietnam veterans and whose work I will refer to later—had in getting the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to accept the inclusion of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the third edition of APA's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM III). According to Matthew J. Friedman, the main objection the APA had against the inclusion was that, in the definition of PTSD, "the etiological agent was outside the individual him or herself (i.e., the traumatic event) rather than an inherent individual weakness" (2007, 1). The acceptance of that premise would allow for an interpretation of the veterans' psychological problems that identified combat experience as the etiological agent and, therefore, force the Veterans Administration to defray the expenses of any treatment these men might need. This clashed with the opinion of the majority of the members of APA at the time who were inclined to believe that, in the words of psychologist Lee Robbins, "these guys were all character disorders. They came from rotten backgrounds. They were going to be malcontent and dysfunctional anyway. Vietnam just probably made them worse, but Vietnam is not the cause of their problems. They're alcoholic and drug addicts" (quoted in Nicosia 2001, 205).

This process of subjectification, based on an insistence on the particularity of patients and not on the commonality of their war experience, will prove a crucial aspect of the way veterans of the American War in Vietnam have been represented as unstable psyches. The Vietnam Veteran became a marketable villain for an ever-growing number of Hollywood films and television series—almost weekly, Kojak and Ironside had to face crazed, violent Vietnam veterans armed and ready to kill. This reiteration made the association of the Vietnam veteran with violence and his identification as a threat to the social fabric inevitable, which, in turn, made it natural for the audience to desire their being arrested by the forces of law and order and confined in prisons or institutionalized. Interestingly, if veterans ever managed to adjust, it was only through the repurposing of their violence for social use, as in the case of the characters in *The A-Team* or even of Thomas Magnum in *Magnum P.I.* and James "Sonny" Crockett, the undercover cop, in *Miami Vice*. These are all clear

examples of a palpable yearning for a cultural reconciliation which, symptomatically, can only be achieved through resorting back to the exercise of violence which generated the conditions for the traumatic event in the first place (Doherty 1991, 255). The main character in *Miami Vice* is, by no coincidence, named after David Crockett, "the violent, garrulous, slaughter-loving hunter-buffoon" who became a national hero "by defining national aspiration in terms of so many bears destroyed, so much land preempted, so many trees hacked down, so many Indians and Mexicans dead in the dust" (Slotkin 1973, 308); the association of the main character in *Magnum P.I.* with the tool of his trade speaks for itself.[10] And the members of the A-team remain "honorable" social outcasts persecuted by the army, very much calling to mind the bands of outlaws of the Wild West who operated outside the law while still obeying a strict moral code. The redeemed veteran embodies anew "the 'moral truth' of the frontier experience . . . its exemplification of the principle that violence and savage war were the necessary instruments of American progress" (Slotkin 1993, 171). By the end of the twentieth century, in the United States, however, the moral and legal conditions of the Wild West no longer applied and only these traumatized psyches were permitted to use a kind and degree of violence that, in the hands of police officials, would have been condemned by public opinion; and that is what allows these veterans to reenter the social fabric, albeit in an isolated position.

The representation of veterans as "abnormal" citizens who were, for reasons that predated their exposure to the war experience, incapable of reintegrating as useful, unthreatening members of society made each patient a unique case and contributed to diverting attention from the common plight of these men. This treatment of the veterans was substantially at odds with the work being conducted in the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) offices, where, led by psychoanalyst Chaim Shatan, a group of therapists participated in an initiative which emerged from the veterans' need to talk about their war experiences: the "rap groups" or group therapy sessions. The premises on which their work was based are brilliantly summarized in a paper written by Shatan in 1973 under the title "The Grief of Soldiers: Vietnam Combat Veterans' Self-Help Movement." In it, Shatan first establishes the main reason why this alternative therapeutic practice was needed. He challenges the official claim that the number of psychiatric casualties among Vietnam veterans was low by stating that the "harvest of news [which] contains its quota of hijackings, armed robberies, murders, and suicides involving Vietnam veterans" speaks for itself (1973, 641). He also warns his readers against the perverse structure by which this criminal or self-destructive behavior among veterans, which was not interpreted by the establishment

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[10] "[While it is] a trite saying that 'the pen is mightier than the sword,' it is equally true that the bullet is the pioneer of civilization, for it has gone hand in hand with the axe that cleared the forest, and with the family Bible and school book. Deadly as has been its mission in one sense, it has been merciful in another; for without the rifle ball we of America would not be to-day in the possession of a free and united country, and mighty in our strength" ("Buffalo Bill's Wild West" program, 1886 and 1893, quoted in Slotkin 1993, 171).

as symptomatic of these veterans needing help, would later be used to stigmatize and vilify them. In spite of the fact that the admission of the existence of their crimes should have been tantamount to officially assuming they needed therapy, it, ironically, ended up providing the argument against the veterans' corporate identity and need for help.

As a consequence, many vets distrusted not only standard psychiatric services but also the private offices of former combat psychiatrists, themselves VVAW members. Rap sessions filled an unmet need and gathered together veterans of all political persuasions and even some active-duty G.I.s. These successful rap groups evolved from two different but equally failed approaches: those where "therapists who had no actual survival experience themselves attempted to run them as traditional therapy groups. These groups failed when survivors resisted being 'treated' . . . [and those groups] created by the survivors themselves without therapist involvement. Intensely cathartic, they lacked therapeutic guidance and formal attention to group process" (Russell Smith 1985, 167-168). The VVAW rap groups merged both models and "created a forum to constructively address the distress they all saw in themselves and other veterans" (1985, 168). These rap group sessions provided participants with mutual support from others who had gone through similar traumatic experiences and they encouraged each other to begin confronting their traumas. In these sessions, the main emotional problems dealt with were on the one hand, the terror and grief felt as a direct consequence of their combat experience and on the other, the guilt and rage which the process of trying to reintegrate into a new civilian identity awoke in them. Probably, the most outstanding feature of this practice was that the therapist was to some extent just one more member of the group and got emotionally involved with the participants. Therapists and veterans developed an intense bond as the latter saw the therapists in the group as resource people, not as figures of authority and that generated a unique feeling of coherence. According to Shatan, "any tendencies to endow us [the therapists] with an authoritative mantle have been short-lived, in spite of—or, perhaps, because of—their previous military experience. They have had enough of chains of command" (1973, 642-643). The rap sessions became, in their reevaluation of the role of authority, a way to question the traditional role of the therapist and an example of a more democratic involvement of the patients with their own therapy, providing, in turn, a hint of their desire for more democratic social institutions: "Many veterans feel that officialdom has no place in this self-help movement, not even to fund it" wrote Shatan (1973, 649).

Another striking conclusion reached by Shatan and his team was that "in the face of such amorphous combat,[11] only the most intense ideological commitment can supply a psychic bulwark" (1973, 645).[12] The "talking cure" alone, Shatan states, is

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[11] Cf. Michael Bibby, ed., *The Vietnam War and Postmodernity* (1999).
[12] Cf. P. Gillingham, *Wasted Men; the Reality of the Vietnam Veteran* (1972). Report of Veterans World Project.

worthless. Verbalizing grief and pain allowed the veteran to start "bear[ing] witness to a truth that nonetheless continues to escape him, a truth that is, essentially *not available* to its own speaker" (Felman and Laub 1992, 15). During the rap sessions, however, their testimony was addressed to others, the witnesses, who would then "testif[y] to what has been said *through* him. Because the witness has said 'here I am' before the other" (3), he has established with the person giving testimony a bond of co-responsibility and emotional support which enables the speaker to tentatively look for the words which will hopefully bring order and help to find meaning in the traumatic memory. That, however, did not suffice to help veterans in the transition towards regaining a useful social life.

To the question "[i]f history has clinical dimensions, how can testimony *intervene*, pragmatically and efficaciously, at once historically (politically) *and* clinically?" (Felman and Laub 1992, 9), Shatan and his team had provided a tentative answer: "active participation in the public arena, active opposition to the very war policies they helped carry out, was essential. . . . To be effective, this counter-VA [Veterans Administration] must also be free to undertake relevant social and political action in opposition to the power structure responsible for the Vietnam War, and for its unpinnings" (1973, 649). As Ron Kovic explains so poignantly in *Born on the Fourth of July*, in activism lies recovery:

> I told Skip that I [Kovic] was never going to be the same. The demonstration had stirred something in my mind that would be there from now on. It was so very different from boot camp and fighting in the war. There was a togetherness, just as there had been in Vietnam, but it was a togetherness of a different kind of people and for a much different reason. In the war we were killing and maiming people. In Washington on that Saturday afternoon in May we were trying to heal them and set them free. ([1976] 1995, 107-108)

This kind of activism implies a refashioning of the US institutions and even national identity: "What I really wanted to do was to go on speaking out . . . I honestly believed people would listen to me because of who I was, a wounded American veteran. *They would have to listen*" ([1976] 1995, 110-114, italics added).

The effort towards personal recovery is intertwined with the desire to give testimony, and through that testimony take part in a project of national recovery; individual therapy is understood as a tool for communal therapy. Ron Kovic wised up to that fact after he met a group of veterans to share his experiences: "We were men who had gone to war. Each of us had his story to tell, his own nightmare. Each of us had been made cold by this thing. We wore ribbons and uniforms. We talked of death and atrocity to each other with unaccustomed gentleness" ([1976] 1995, 112); a rap group that center-stages the importance of a therapy based on language, verbalization and narration which empowers G.I.s to enter the cultural war over the meaning of the war.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The description of the veteran from the American War in Vietnam that emerges from Chaim Shatan's recounting of his work as a therapist has nothing to do with the representations of the veteran as abnormal psycho or useless amputee, so common in the films and TV series of the eighties and nineties. Confronted by the veterans' thrust into politics, the institutions responded by denying them their potential as political agents, either by describing them as useless due to their wounds or as dangerous because of a mental or emotional disorder for which the authorities did not accept responsibility. The establishment "could never conceive of the therapeutic implications of Vietnam veterans publishing an anthology of war poems (proceeds going to a Quaker rehabilitation center in South Vietnam and the rebuilding of Hanoi's foremost hospital), preparing a book of prose, or founding their own newspaper" (Shatan 1973, 649-650); they could not face the idea of therapy and politics going hand in hand.

Unfortunately, academic studies of the literature produced by Vietnam veterans, instead of problematizing the said divergence between the reality of the veterans and their cultural representation, have, by and large, been complicit in the efforts made by the hegemonic discourses to deprive veterans of political agency by analyzing their work strictly as an exercise of self-healing therapy. An example of this is to be found in the otherwise brilliant study of Tim O'Brien's fiction by Mark Heberle (2001). Heberle contends, speaking of *Going After Cacciato* (1978), that

> O'Brien's own refabulating of the war is mimicked—or epitomized—by his fictional double, Paul Berlin, who tries to deal with the traumatic facts of his war by dreaming of a scenario that will allow him to escape it. In the end, the dream cannot escape or change reality, but the creation is at least imaginatively redemptive for him. The same might be said for the book as a whole, a fictional revisiting of the site of O'Brien's own traumatization that forever validated his authority as a writer. (Heberle 2001, 108)

This reading of the novel establishes its meaning as the process of the therapeutic recovery of its author after the war, a sort of fictionalized psychoanalytic therapy and, as such, these therapies are, by definition, a personal, subjective process with no points of contact with the larger context of the plight of the veterans against the war. However legitimate this reading of the work of O'Brien might be, it has the undesirable side effect of silencing another of the forces that shape his fiction, that is, the author's open criticism and rejection of the war, best summarized by O'Brien himself: "I was a coward. I went to war" (1991, 63).

Lest we forget the force of antimilitarism among both active-duty G.I.s and veterans of the American War in Vietnam, we will have to keep returning to the work of people who, like Chaim Shatan and Ron Kovic, remind us of the therapeutic value— to both the individual soldier and the nation at large—of dissent and of resistance to

irrational undemocratic authority. As Joseph Urgo, an early leader of VVAW, says when describing the effects of the testimonies of veterans in the *Winter Soldier Investigation*:[13]

> [L]istening to the testimonies [of the veterans accusing the US military of crimes against humanity] had a tremendous impact on me in helping me grasp how criminal what the United States had done in Vietnam [*sic*] . . . the scope of it . . . in a way that I'd not understood before . . . It actually helped prepare me to grapple with trying to understand what was behind this, you know, led me to, like, try to, you know, get into researching what imperialism was, what's the system that gives rise to this. That was one of the stepping stones in the process. (Zeiger 2006)

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[13] The *Winter Soldier Investigation* was a fake trial in which war veterans accused the US Army and government of having committed crimes against humanity in Vietnam. Al Hubbard—executive secretary for VVAW—declares that, during the sessions: "more than one hundred veterans and sixteen civilians gave first hand testimony to war crimes which they had either committed or witnessed," with the intention of establishing the political responsibilities that should derive from those crimes: "the crimes against humanity, the war itself, might not have occurred if we, all of us, had not been brought up in a country permeated with racism, obsessed with communism, and convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that we are good and most other countries are inherently evil" (VVAW 1972, xiii-xiv).

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Strangers in a Strange Land: Cinema, Identity and the Modern Nation-State in Roman Polanski's *The Ghost Writer*

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Cinema and the modern nation-state, both key offsprings of the late stages of the nineteenth century, have had a somewhat parallel, and arguably problematic, relationship throughout their existence. From being a committed partner in the spreading of the traditions and identities that cemented the formation of modern nation-states, cinema has become one of the most prolific media for the contestation of many of the fixities that sustain them. My aim in this article is, first, to explore the reasons and phenomena behind this change of perspective and, second, to apply this analysis to the specific case of Roman Polanski's film *The Ghost Writer* (2010). For this purpose, I will analyse the film from a transnational perspective at different levels, exploring its portrayal of the decayed condition of the modern nation-state, its depiction of the exiled foreigner as a universal trope for contemporary identities, and its careful use of space and mise-en-scène for the transmission of these meanings.

Keywords: art cinema; identity; mobility; Roman Polanski; space; transnational cinema

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Forasteros en tierra extraña: cine, identidad y el estado-nación moderno en *The Ghost Writer* de Roman Polanski

El cine y el estado-nación modernos, ambos frutos de las últimas etapas del siglo XIX, han mantenido una relación paralela, pero ciertamente problemática, durante su existencia. Otrora un medio comprometido con la diseminación de las tradiciones e identidades que cimentaron la formación del estado moderno, el cine ha pasado a ser uno de los canales más fértiles para la contestación de las certidumbres que los sostenían. Mi objetivo en este artículo es, primero, analizar las razones y fenómenos que han dado lugar a este cambio ideológico y, segundo, aplicarlos al caso específico de la película de Roman Polanski *The Ghost Writer* (2010). Para ello, analizaré la película a diferentes niveles desde un punto de vista

transnacional, explorando su representación de la descomposición del estado-nación moderno, su percepción del exiliado como un tropo universal para las identidades contemporáneas y su meticuloso uso del espacio fílmico para la transmisión de estos significados.

Palabras clave: *art cinema*; identidad; movilidad; Roman Polanski; espacio; cine transnacional

1. Introduction

Twenty minutes into Roman Polanski's *The Ghost Writer* (2010), an apparently transitional scene that lasts barely a minute depicting a beach walk under a gloomy, cloud laden sky, encapsulates the whole atmosphere and mood of the film and, simultaneously, foreshadows the ideological concerns and emotions that will drive the plot. In this scene, the protagonist, a nameless ghost writer (Ewan McGregor), hired to help finish the memoirs of the former British Prime Minister Adam Lang (Pierce Brosnan), shares a walk along a rough deserted seashore with Lang's wife Ruth (Olivia Williams) under the constant surveillance of one of her bodyguards. The shoreline is located in a fictional incarnation of Martha's Vineyard, an island off the East Coast of the United States which is a residential retreat for the wealthy, where Lang and his entourage are secluded in order to finish the book. Ruth and the ghost writer, having both followed Lang from England to the island, exchange anecdotes about their lives and jobs in an apparently innocuous conversation. However, as if permeated by the gloom of the weather and the bleak lighting of the scene, the dialogue turns to more serious issues such as their latent anxiety about being displaced in a foreign country, Lang's secret love affair with his secretary Amelia (Kim Cattrall) and the mysterious death of the ghost writer's predecessor, McArra. The way in which the walk is shot infuses the scene with an undertone of tension, suspicion, control and entrapment.

Shooting in the wide open and apparently liberating space of the beach, the camera frames the two characters walking together in close-up in two mobile long takes while at the same time using what John Orr calls a "three-shot" (2006, 8), since the omnipresent bodyguard is glimpsed in the background. By means of this triadic framing, the distant figure of this man is used to separate the two characters in the foreground, splitting the image in two. At the same time, the shot of the walk is filmed with a wide-angle 27-mm lens and is composed in depth, showing with precision and clarity the two foreground figures while enhancing the distance between the characters and the horizon in the background. Several meanings arise from the combination of these techniques. Firstly, the decision to shoot the two characters from human height and using a lens similar to the human eye (which is equivalent to a 22-mm lens) serves to immerse the audience in their predicament and depressive mood. The enduring close-up of the characters, which contrasts with the wide open space behind them, serves to transmit the feeling that even in the open they feel trapped. At the same time, the remoteness of the horizon, reinforced through the depth of the shot, renders any possible escape route inaccessible to the characters, while the nervousness of the mobile camera echoes their anxiety. Finally, the image of the bodyguard, constantly within the shot, continuously informs us of the oppressing surveillance, control and even threat of violence to which their lives are subjected.

In this article, I will analyse the various formal and discursive mechanisms used in *The Ghost Writer* to relate the identitarian crisis of its protagonists with the de-stabilizing effects that globalization and its subordinate phenomena are having on contemporary

nations and their citizens. By resorting to theories of transnational cinema, I will argue that the film presents the turn of the millennium as an inherently conflicting historical period, in which individuals continue to be subjected to the geographical and identitarian control of national institutions, while these same governments are constrained by supra-national forces and borderless global capital.

As part of my analysis, I shall, first, refer to the socio-political and cultural changes that have affected our perception of the absoluteness of any spatial referent during modernity, particularly the nation, and how they have affected our existences and identities. Secondly, I shall explore the reasons why cinema as a whole has become such a powerful symbol and channel for many of the changes that define our contemporary times, and, more precisely, how transnational cinema's contestation of national limitations suits the human experience of the last century so well. Finally, I will analyse *The Ghost Writer* as a transnational effort at different levels, focusing on its portrayal of the exiled foreign as a key trope for contemporary identities, and on how the unease arising from this somehow universal displacement and alienation is anchored in, and conveyed through, a careful approach to space and its representation through mise-en-scène.

2. Cinema and the Withering Away of the Nation

It is a recurrent motif in contemporary sociology that the static and homogenous perceptions of history, geography, identity and human relations that have traditionally sustained the idea of the nation are not only fictional cultural constructions but also consciously deceptive ones. The crystallization of what Benedict Anderson famously defined as "imagined communities" was far from a "natural," harmonious process (Anderson 1983), and inevitably comprised the suppression, and repression, of the ambitions of many lesser, heterogeneous and sometimes conflicting groups by the ruling/more powerful group. Different sets of rules and norms were implemented with the creation of modern states, hoping and expecting "to turn contingency into determination, ambivalence into *Eideutigkeit*, randomness into regularity—in short, the primeval forest into a carefully plotted garden, chaos into order" (Bauman 1998, 60-61). The artificial establishment of this identitarian *hortus conclusus* through localizing and conceptual distinctions was predicated on "the indigenous fantasy of a society anchored since time immemorial in the permanence of an intact soil" while its stability was sustained and assured by a subsequent set of narratives of origin (Augé 1995, 44). Thanks to these mythic narratives, states, originally founded on merely political or economic terms, "ideologise[d] themselves into nations" with a full package of geographical, historical and identitarian specificities that could legitimize their power (Hayward 1993, 5). Simultaneously, they concealed the inevitable processes of exclusion, silencing or repression of "difference" necessary for the establishment of the territorial and identitarian limits of every particular group.

However, today, well into the second decade of the twenty-first century, this fantasy seems to be more unsustainable than ever. Defined almost twenty years ago by Zigmunt Bauman as the "Great War of Independence from Space" (1998, 8), the present stage of modernity has brought about the erosion of territorial referents and, in particular, of the major contemporary incarnation of what he calls the "pride of place," the nation (60). The rise of multiple supra-national political categories and actors has forced the national governments to adapt their legislations so as to grant these entities, and their capital, both domestic and global rights (Sassen 1998, xxviii-xxx). The unstoppable internationalization of capital and economics has brought about a subsequent internationalization of labour, resulting in incessant global migrations, both legal and illegal. At the same time, thanks to the increase in speed and the shrinking of space that new technologies and means of transportation have brought about, the localized cultural particularities that were maintained thanks to the physical and temporal constraints of movement in the past are now relativized, contested and reshaped through contact with the other (Bauman 1998, 12). Not even the physical incarnation of the nation, its territory, is regarded any longer as a timeless "original" referent. Instead, contemporary sociology and history reveal that the particular geography of a nation is more often than not a mere contingency, the aftermath of a rupture with a previous territorial boundary and a subsequent migration (Rushdie 2002, 77). A process that is, in fact, usually repeated more than once and that, as Marc Augé points out, "is doomed always to regard the most recent migration as the first foundation" (1995, 47).

Essentialist theories such as that espoused in Martin Heidegger's 1951 essay "Building Dwelling Thinking," in which he described human identity as anchored, rooted, "territorialized and mapped on to a geographic terrain" as Neil Leach put it, are now, at least in theory, regarded as radically categorical and even fascistic (Leach 1998, 33). In contrast, more recent sociology regards identities as "routes," as never-ending processes rather than permanent locations, processes of "becoming as well as being . . . transcending place, time, history and culture" (Hall 1990, 225). As a result of all this, the identity, relations of coexistence and sustained stability that Augé says served to define any "anthropological" place (any nation), are, he feels, being debunked by the fluid and ephemeral spirit of the contemporary experience (1995, 52-54). Concurrently, the functions that the state is expected to perform, its raison d'être, are decreasing alarmingly, and the whole concept of the nation seems to be, as Georg Henrik Von Wright puts it, "withering away" (1997). Now reduced to mere repressive forces and defined by Bauman as "oversized police precincts" nations are far from being self-sufficient or self-sustained entities, and the identitarian fantasy that held them together is now more unstable than ever (1998, 100).

Within this political and ideological reframing, cinema, formerly a promiscuous and committed mediator in the transmission of national myths and identities,[1] has

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[1] For detailed accounts of the relationship between nation and film, see Mette Hjort and Scott Mackenzie (2000), Andrew Higson (1989) and Stephen Crofts (1993).

grown into the perfect mirror for the "epistemological experience of modernity" and the contestation of fixities that defines it (Charney 1995, 293). Starting with Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1935), several authors have discussed the reasons why cinema has become such a suitable symbol of, and catalyst for, our contemporary experience. Leo Charney provides a careful recollection of philosophical theories that link the last stages of modernity and their "climate of overstimulation, distraction and sensation . . . of fleeting sensations and ephemeral distractions" with the medium of cinema (1995, 279). According to Charney, for authors such as Walter Pater, Martin Heidegger and Jean Epstein, the onset of modernity not only brought about the culture of the momentary but also the inevitable alienation of the human from that moment. Cinema's representations, these authors argue, came to fulfil this need for sensual stimulation and, as Charney concludes, "play into the evacuation of the presence that characterized the modern" (1995, 292).

From the exile from his/her own identity that the actor undergoes when performing in front of the camera (Benjamin 1935, 9) to an audience's experience when they renounce part of themselves in order to understand and identify with the moving images on the screen (Chow 1998, 170), cinema seems to be a medium created around the instability and alienation of the contemporary subject; revolving around ideas of abandonment, displacement and fragmentation, simultaneously reflecting "the dilemmas and contradictions, nostalgias and hopes, that characterize struggles towards modernity" (Chow 1998, 174). In this sense, as Homi Bhabha argues, "the cinematic visuality of cultural modernity that Benjamin introduces as a 'way of seeing' the strangeness of ourselves, can be pushed in the direction of a revision of what it is that we deem to be familiar, domestic, national, homely" (1999, xi).

3. Approaching Transnational Cinema

With such potential for the contestation of the spatial, temporal and identitarian fixities that sustain the idea of the nation, it is surprising how cinema is still very much regarded in national terms by critics, media and film festivals all over the world. Although the enduring "nationalization" of films is a question worth analysing in itself, the truth is that, at least in industry terms, it is becoming increasingly difficult to label any film as "national." Cinema, affected by the globalized nature of today's society just like any other aspect of human life, has inevitably evaded the confines of national industries, circuits and meanings. The coinage of the term "transnational cinema" reflects precisely on this situation. With its origins in economic and sociopolitical studies (Ezra and Rowden 2005, 1), the term "transnational" has revealed itself as a fruitful tool in very diverse areas of investigation in the face of the contemporary questioning of the idea of "nation" as a defining element of our times. Within the field of film studies in particular, a great array of theories have flourished

which explore the notion of the transnational and its fertility for the analysis of both films and the industry's practices. These works have addressed the effects of the sociological and cultural changes that globalization and its parallel phenomena have had on the film industry and language. However, they have also revealed the problematic of establishing the limits of the term "transnational cinema," basically intended to transcend the constrictions and homogenizing drive that rendered the "national" label sterile. While Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (2005) attempted, with uneven success, to offer an all-encompassing approach to the term, Mette Hjort's (2007) stimulating, but rather arbitrary, typology of different cinematic transnationalisms highlights the openness and diverse nature of the phenomenon.

Nowadays, it is safe to say that the academic world is leaning more towards the latter of these two approaches, choosing to treat each instance of transnational cinema as unique and influenced by the specific background and context surrounding it. Along these lines, Deborah Shaw (2013) has offered a deconstructive analysis of the term, which suggests taking into account one at a time each aspect of cinema production and meaning affected by transnationalism, namely production, distribution, exhibition, themes explored, aesthetics, nationalities of the crew and audience reception. However, probably the most relevant and complete work around these ideas is still that of Hamid Naficy (1999a, 1999b, 2001 and 2003). In three seminal articles and a book, Naficy has defended the constantly evolving and heterogeneous nature of the transnational corpus, and its subsequent "not programmic, already formed style" as one of its key features (2001, 26). According to him, transnational or "accented" films, as he also calls them, have as their only constant characteristic the transmission of certain feelings and atmospheres. Rooted in a certain "structure of feeling" defined by "sadness, loneliness and alienation," these films, he argues, resort to dystopic and claustrophobic representations of exile, displacement and conflicts revolving around the relationship between identities and nations (2001, 22-28). Although Naficy's recurrent, and problematic, use of the "author" and his/her personal biography as the main foundation behind these transnational stories will not be applied in the following analysis, much of his work will be utilized in an attempt to decode the specific meanings that a film like *The Ghost Writer* attempts to transmit.

4. *The Ghost Writer*

It can be said that *The Ghost Writer* is a transnational co-production on almost all levels. The film was funded by companies from the United Kingdom, France and Germany, as well as French and German public capital and Polanski's own production company, R.P. Productions. Although the film primarily takes place in Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts, the filming sites were as heterogeneous as its monetary sources. The house was deliberately built from scratch inside Studio Babelsberg in Potsdam, Germany, while the rest of the film was shot at locations in France, the

United States, England and Denmark. Although the main reasons behind the use of these diverse surrogate filming locations relate to the contingencies of contemporary cinema production and Polanski's constant wanderings,[2] it can also be seen as a way of questioning the supposed uniqueness of a geographical space, and therefore, of its impact on the identities of its inhabitants: with the right perspective, it could be argued, any place can stand for any other. As a result of this mobility, the crew was, like the cast, gathered from a multiplicity of countries, including Poland, France, the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States. After the post-production process, in which it went through various laboratories in Germany and France, the film was released at the Berlinale Film Festival of 2010, which Polanski could not attend since he was under house arrest in Switzerland at the time.

A close textual analysis of *The Ghost Writer* reveals that not only its production values were obvious transnational in effort but also, and more importantly, that it is a film "markedly" *about* transnationalism, to use Hjort's terminology (2007, 13-14). Starting with the socio-political background in which the characters' relations are contextualized, the film constantly and conspicuously draws attention to the crisis of the modern nation, becoming a clear example of what is known as "the cinema of globalization" (Shaw 2012, 54). While dealing with the life of a former British Prime Minister, the film also makes constant references to the international relations, changing powers, economic balances and multinational corporations that define contemporary world politics—what Ken Jowitt has referred to as the *New World Disorder* (1992);[3] a state of affairs defined, Bauman argues, by the unpredictability and ex-territoriality of the "self-regulated" transnational forces that are in control and that have taken sovereignty out of the hands of the state (Bauman 1998, 57-58). It is no coincidence, for example, that the lecture to be given by military lobby member and undercover CIA agent Paul Emmett (Tom Wilkinson), Ruth's tutor at Harvard, is entitled "Bipolar Relations in a Multipolar World."

To reflect on this situation, the film focuses on the particular case of Britain and embodies its erosion and malleability in the character of its former Prime Minister Adam Lang, charged during the film with authorizing the torturing of prisoners in a Middle East war. Displaced in the United States from the very beginning, first on his publisher's advice just to finish his memoirs, and later to avoid the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, the character of Lang, "so hated . . . and so loved" as the ghost writer points out, prompts mixed feelings. On the one hand, he is a committed enforcer of fascistic politics of control that rule the lives of many, less

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[2] Lack of space precludes discussion of the notorious reasons behind those wanderings here, but detailed accounts can be found in biographies by authors like Ewa Mazierska (2007), James Morrison (2007), Elzbieta Ostrowska (2006) and Polanski himself in his autobiography *Roman* (1984).

[3] Almost all the fictional characters, events and locations that are part of the political background of the film can be connected with the actual Gulf Wars, including fictional impersonations of Tony Blair, Condolezza Rice and Robin Cook, as well as references to Iraq and the torturing at Abu Ghraib prison.

privileged individuals. Lang's last conversation with the ghost writer, right before he is shot by a protestor, is very revelatory in this respect:

> Do you know what I'd do if I was in power again? I'd have two queues at airports. One for flights where we'd done no background checks, infringed on no one's civil bloody liberties, used no intelligence gained by torture. And on the other flight, we'd do everything we possibly could to make it perfectly safe. And then we'd see which plane the Rycarts of this world would put their bloody kids on! (Polanski 2010)

On the other hand, and ironically enough, his predicament leads him to experience the consequences of similar politics to those he is defending in this quote, i.e., suffering the distress of being displaced and the alienation of living under constant surveillance. As a matter of fact, Lang's geographical, "external" exile is also connected in the film with what Naficy defines as "internal" exile (2003, 206), that is, a detachment, not only from a certain geographical space but also from public life. The extreme security and omnipresence of bodyguards, who are repeatedly depicted preventing his interaction with any human being not belonging to his inner circle, indicates the fact that Lang, for many years, has also been alienated from real human contact. So much so that he does not drive, does not carry money and does not even know what a pen drive memory is. "How does it feel to be so cut-off?," the ghost writer asks him at one point (Polanski 2010). Not only that: as a retired politician now, when he once was one of the most powerful men in the world, his new status also exiles him from power, a situation that on many occasions he is unable to cope with. All these geographical, physical and metaphorical displacements that echo, as Ruth points out, Napoleon's exile in St. Helena, have an effect on Lang's personality and identity. Film critics Manohla Dargis (2010) and David Denby (2010) have noted the constant, even schizophrenic changes of humour of the ex-Prime Minister. Infused with the "defensive self-righteousness of power" (Denby 2010), a residual element from his time as Prime Minister, his sudden fits of rage or nervous laughter, reflect the unstable, fragmented psyche of a man emotionally adrift, detached, confused and nostalgic for the life he once had. The disorientation he shows every time he gets off a plane, as if not knowing where exactly he has landed, and his recurrent use of a cold "presidential wave" even when greeting his wife, reinforce this perception.

In order to transmit these feelings visually, the film portrays him mostly through the eyes of others, taking, also metaphorically, the control of the narration of his life away from him. He is repeatedly shot within very tight mise-en-scènes, using close-ups, leaving little space between the character and the walls surrounding him and, very commonly, enclosing him by means of different frames-within-the-frame, particularly windows. For instance, during an interview with the ghost writer, in a medium shot, Lang is depicted from behind leaning on the enormous window of his study and looking outside. With his arms wide open over his lowered head, he seems to be holding the

stormy sky on the outside, evoking the image of Atlas bearing the weight of the world on his shoulders and transmitting a sense of defeat, entrapment and nostalgia. As in this case, and rather than being indices of freedom in the film, windows are singularly and deceptively used to entrap, revealing a bleak and menacing outside world, constantly reminding the audience that any hope of escape is a mere fantasy and reinforcing the ultimate inexorability of the character's situation.

One of the main particularities of transnational films is, in fact, that they tend to break traditional open-closed binary approaches to space (usually divided in gender or class terms) in their attempt to reflect the constant negotiations that any kind of boundary necessarily undergoes in contemporary times (Naficy 2003, 211). In these films, distress and oppression are not related exclusively to closed/interior spaces and the claustrophobic feelings that accompany them. Instead, open/outside spaces and agoraphobic tensions very commonly connected to them are shown to be equally distressing, and bring about the same feelings of loneliness and displacement (Naficy 2003, 212; Morrison 2007, 16). In order to transmit the feeling that, for the exiled individual, open spaces are as entrapping and oppressing as closed ones, the film uses various techniques. The photography of the film, dominated by pale, cold colours and with the omnipresence of grey tonalities, has been defined as "bleak" (Paulson 2011), "ashen" (Denby 2010) and "wintry," veering at times "into the near-monochromatic" (Dargis 2010). In extreme long shots, the uniform colouring with which the sea, sky and dry land of the island are treated in *The Ghost Writer* serves to fuse them, creating a homogenous backdrop for the story, an "enveloping field" of sorts (Denby 2010) that is never lifted and which leaves no room for alternatives or exits, while their immenseness and openness function as contrasts with the restrained identities and everyday lives of the protagonists. Simultaneously, the blanched but steady light of the invariably cloudy weather, where the sun never appears, somehow effaces the boundaries between one day and the next, which in fact are only discernible thanks to the night scenes. In this way, by transforming the actions of several days into an almost unitary event, the film manages to transmit the feelings of stagnation and entrapment of the characters, who feel as if their displacement will last forever. The ghost writer in fact makes reference to this when he mentions "I'm aging, this place is Shangri-La in reverse" (Polanski 2010), after only three days on the island. This transformation of the typical image of Martha's Vineyard as an elitist "summer playground" for the rich and famous into an elephants' graveyard becomes equated with Lang's career, now a mere vestigial memory (Paulson 2011, 129).

As the plot unravels, and we discover that Lang had in fact been a political puppet of both Ruth and the United States since his days in college, his whole political identity, if he ever had one, is deflated and, by extension, so is that of the country he represents.[4]

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[4] The way in which the film finally discloses that it was the US government, through Emmet and Ruth, that had been controlling the British government's decisions all along, could easily be taken as a self-exonerating excuse for the tormented British morale after the calamitous Iraq War.

His entire political life is thus deconstructed little by little and unmasked as pure façade, more the work of an actor (his main interest in college), of a double, than of a politician.[5] The fragmentation and delusion of the supposedly stable, rigid and reliable image and identity of a British Prime Minister is further enhanced by the fact that he deliberately conceals his British accent, a defining element of a person's social standing, origins and personality (Naficy 2001, 23), in favour of a more "Americanized" one when in front of the cameras. He is, in the end, someone who, as he himself explains of his days as a performer, "pretends to be somebody else and [is] applauded for it" (Polanski 2010).

As a consequence, and taking into account that it was Ruth who got him into politics and made all the important decisions for him, Lang's opinions and public identity are reduced to pure literary constructions that reflect the delusive nature of contemporary national and international politics. His conversations with the ghost writer are also very revelatory of the constructedness of his past and identity, not only in that the ghost writer is writing Lang's memoirs as though it was Lang himself writing, certainly a dishonest practice, but also when Lang is accused by the ICC and the ghost writer has to write a statement for the media expressing Lang's opinion:

> LANG. I should sound confident. Not defensive, that'd be fatal. But I shouldn't be cocky. No bitterness, no anger, and don't say I'm pleased at this opportunity to clear my name or any balls like that.
> GHOST WRITER. So, you're not defensive, but you're not cocky. You're not angry, but you're not pleased?
> LANG. That's it.
> GHOST WRITER. Then what exactly *are* you? (Everybody laughs)
> RUTH. Told you he was funny.
>
> (Polanski 2010)

This lack of a real political perspective and stance, of a real identity, is echoed later when the ghost writer starts writing the statement in Lang's name:

> GHOST WRITER. I've always been a strong, no, committed supporter of the work
> of the International Criminal Court… Has he?
> AMANDA. You're the writer.
>
> (Polanski 2010)

Subject to the pressures of international relations, multinational corporations, political correctness, the omnipresence of global media and, finally, exile, Lang's

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[5] As Ronald Paulson points out, the casting of Pierce Brosnan as Lang fragments even more the character's identity, since it inevitably connects him in the mind of the spectator to the figure of James Bond and the meanings attached to it (2011, 134).

identity has been, since his days in college, displaced and fragmented in the service of the necessities of his position. Just like that of an actor, his identity has been constructed and reworked at every step, not on his terms but on those demanded by the external factors and agents ruling his life, namely Ruth and the United States. Thus, as embodied in the extremely malleable character of Lang, national history and politics that rule and anchor the lives and identities of the masses, reveal themselves as mere literary constructions, "good stories," as Ruth argues, only ruined "by too much research" (Polanski 2010). Even the Twombly paintings hanging inside the house, full of melting images of words, reflect this poststructuralist view of language and history as unstable, mouldable and subject to the contingencies of time.

While Lang's geographical displacement is developed in the film as a metonymy of the unstable and relative nature of national politics and identities, the case of the ghost writer is rather different. An unemployed writer, his experience of mobility is presented more in relation to the work-related migrations that so many people are required to make nowadays in order to earn a living. Like the main protagonist of *Knife in the Water* (Polanski 1962), another story of an outsider coming to disrupt the apparent stability of a couple and their way of life, the ghost writer remains unnamed throughout the whole film. Almost a "blank slate" when he arrives on the island (Dargis 2010), he is only referred to as "man" by Lang or "Brit" because of his acid humour and accent, a "jolly old tone" that will become his only identitarian mark throughout the film (Polanski 2010). He has no family, no apparent origins or past, no political stance (he voted for Lang simply because everybody did) and no identity as a writer since he has only worked as a ghost writer for other people's memoirs. The ghost writer, thanks to his identitarian emptiness, and also to the casting of Ewan McGregor and his middle-class, white, male, "regular type" persona, is meant to represent an ordinary guy on to whom the audience can project themselves and with whom everyone can identify at some level. (Re)incarnating the connotations, seclusion and voyeuristic drive of James Stewart in Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954), the ghost writer becomes a diegetic extension of the audience. He is almost never out of the frame; he is the reference point for the spectator in the film; it is his perspective of the events that we share and his (limited) level of knowledge that we have access to.

Even if the ghost writer seems to be the main focalizer, the one whose perspective is in control of the narration, the film little by little discloses that he is as observed and controlled as the rest of the characters. For a start, all of his movements are orchestrated by others. His arrival on the island, only a day after accepting the job, is completely on his employers' terms; to get there, he has to take a plane, a light aircraft, a ferry, and at the exact moment he is arriving on the island, he receives a message saying that a taxi is already waiting to take him to the house. Before arriving on the island, the images of water accompanying his trip seem to imply a sense of renewal, of baptism and of change of identity (Mazierska 2007, 84). However, in *The Ghost Writer*, both the

writer's journey and the identity resulting from it will be shown to be always on other people's terms, establishing a clear correlation between agency over movement and identitarian determination.

Once on the island, the ghost writer's movements are equally controlled. After a night at a nearby hotel chosen by his employers, he is moved to the house from which he is forbidden to exit without the company of a bodyguard. With no other personal belongings, his suitcase, repeatedly opened and inspected, becomes a symbol of his detached and nomadic life, but also, as usually happens with films about exile, of his everlasting solitude and deprivation (Naficy 2001, 261). Thus the ghost writer becomes a sort of commodity, displaced at will, only inhabiting transit places, without actually dwelling anywhere. His life seems to take place between spaces such as airports, seaports, parking lots and hotels, the "immense parentheses" in modern life that Augé defined as "non-places" (1995, 77, 111). According to the French author, these places are defined by their lack of identitarian, historical or relational connotations, and are an epitome of a world "surrendered to solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral" (1995, 77). Immersed in an environment defined by identity loss, solitude and similitude, the combination of the blank sheet of the ghost writer's identity and the constant surveillance and control over his movements exerted by Lang's entourage serve to restrict his options, conduct his development and rewrite his identity on their terms not his. In this sense, statements like "You're practically one of us now . . . You drafted the statement yesterday. That makes you an accomplice . . . You could be the new Mike McArra" reflect this identitarian manoeuvring and culminate in his overlapping with his predecessor in their tasks, identities and deaths (Polanski 2010).

The fragmentation of the ghost writer's identity does not stop here, as the futility of his task is also reflected in the figure of the Vietnamese houseboy, Duc (Lee Hong Thay). At one point he observes that Duc is trying to gather all the leaves outside the house in a wheelbarrow only to see them immediately scattered again by the wind. As Paulson interprets it, this scene is a "comic juxtaposition," a projection of the alienating, futile and "sisyphean" labour of the ghost writer inside the house trying to put all the pieces of a puzzle together, and an anticipation of the final image of the film, in which the pages of his manuscript are similarly scattered by the wind along a London street (Paulson 2011, 134). The different camera movements also contribute to this equation. The pan shot that connects the image of Duc seen through a chink between the window drapes, with the ghost writer lying in the bed after sleeping with Ruth, becomes a visual metaphor of the entrapment the ghost writer suffers within the walls of the house.

It is precisely in the representation of the closed space of the house, constructed *ex profeso* for the film, that the anxiety, aloofness and alienation of the characters become most salient. Once the taxi that carries the ghost writer crosses the security fence after his passport has been checked, the bleak, austere house appears in the distance as a "giant modernist shoe box" (Denby 2010), surrounded by desert vegetation. Adjacent

to it and anticipating the significance the house is going to have for its inhabitants, the tall iron grilles of the tennis court give the image a prison-like halo. As the car approaches the house, the contour of the building overwhelmingly starts to fill the screen to the point that it seems not to fit in the frame, as if rejecting the idea of a possible alternative or escape. Its façade is plain grey, matching the landscape and photography, with almost no windows. The sense of impassability it transmits is reinforced by the fact that it is wider than it is tall, which confers on the house an air of heaviness and motionlessness. The flat, thick, naked and visually heavy walls of the house become a powerful metonymy for the whole building and the separation deliberately established between its inside and outside, which constantly controls and restricts the movement between the two. Meant to be a safe hideaway, the visual representation of the house turns it into an unwelcoming, imprisoning edifice.

Once inside the house, and after the ghost writer has gone through another security check where his suitcase is opened and inspected once again, its interior is shown to us while Amelia, Lang's secretary, comes down the stairs to receive him. From what we can see in the first interior shot, the cement walls are also unpainted on the inside, the surfaces are flat and sharply angled and the stairs have separate, floating steps with no banister to keep one from falling. Even the railing protecting the first floor from a free fall is made of thin and almost invisible glass panels. After Amelia introduces herself without even asking for his name, the ghost writer is immediately taken to his designated study to begin work on the manuscript, without even being given the chance to acquaint himself with the house. From here on, the house will be presented in a fragmented way, showing the rooms in separate shots, making it difficult to interpret their location and the relation and distance between them. Several other techniques throughout the film help transform the house, a completely uniform and rectangular structure when seen from the outside, into a distorted and disorienting maze. The shots of the characters inside are closer and tighter than when they are outside, using a 35-mm lens and a shallow focus that constantly blur the background. The framings are static and constant visual barriers and frames-within-the-frame are introduced in the mise-en-scène, blocking and fragmenting the view. At the same time, although the doors are always kept half open, it is difficult to tell where they lead; the cold artificial light that illuminates the interiors comes from fluorescent tubes; even views through the scarce though large windows that could evoke a possible escape are constantly impeded by closed curtains or the perpetually obscuring, rainy weather of the outside.

This methodical representation of the distressing space of the "house," which conspicuously breaks its traditional link with the idea of "home," relates the film with the theories on transnationalism and cinema regarding the spatial perception of exilic individuals. According to Naficy's definitions, "*house* is the literal object, the material place in which one lives" while "*home* is anyplace; it is temporary and it is moveable; it can be built, rebuilt and carried in memory and by acts of imagination" (1999b, 5-6, emphasis in the original). For the transnational individual, house and home hardly

ever coincide in time and space. As a result of this separation, a house *per se*, meaning simply the building in which one resides, becomes for the migrant more a signifier of deterritorialization than reterritorialization, of dislocation than of relocation (Naficy 2001, 169). Represented visually almost as a labyrinth, making it difficult to decipher its layout, the house of the film becomes a symbol of the disorientation and entrapment of its displaced inhabitants. As the house is gradually revealed to us, the impersonality that surrounds the building is conveyed through several details. The scarce furniture, the lack of personal belongings decorating the house and the minimum opportunities for personal space and privacy pervades the house with an aura of "temporariness and depersonalization" (Mazierska 2001, 65). The food the ghost writer consumes is reduced to some cold sandwiches and beer, with the exception of the unappetizing soup he eats when he has dinner with Ruth. Even the bath the ghost writer takes in the modern, but surely uncomfortable square bathtub of his room, another metonymy of the whole house as recipient for human life, is interrupted by Ruth's intrusion, apparently careless but quite revelatory of her intentions.

In *The Ghost Writer*, a much more sober film than Polanski's early efforts, there may not be hands coming out of the walls as in *Repulsion* (1965), or twisting elastic stairs as in *The Tenant* (1976), but the feelings behind its images are similar. Imbued with coldness, seclusion, control and danger, the film's representation of the space of the house in Martha's Vineyard (one that extends beyond its walls to encompass the whole island) becomes a projection of the perspective of its inhabitants. Representing the distressing feelings of involuntary displacement, the house is bleak, entrapping and hostile; its walls, the most intimate of borders (Rushdie 2002, 90), being converted into the most oppressing of boundaries.

5. CONCLUSION

The death of the ghost writer, indexed by the image of flying papers in the almost deserted and silent space of the London street that closes the film, accompanied by no extradiegetic score, with no *melos* to reinforce the *drama*, inevitably transmits a sense of emptiness and triviality. Framed in another extreme long shot and using a wide angle lens and a deep focus, the disintegration of the book that takes place after the ghost writer has been run over off-screen comes to metonimize the displacement, alienation and fragmentation he has suffered throughout the film, as well as the futility of his endeavour and life in general. However, even if he and Lang remain the main exponents of the anxieties that define contemporary times, they are not the only characters suffering the ravages of this era. Ruth, never a proper politician in her own right, controls Lang's decisions behind the scenes, but, in turn, is under the complete control of Emmet and the CIA; McArra, the preceding ghost writer, was also a British government spy inside Lang's entourage; even Amelia, devoted to Lang and responsible for his public image, was also his secret lover while both were married. As Naficy

explains, "[transnational] films embody the constructedness of identity by inscribing characters who are partial, double or split, or who perform identities . . . By engaging in the politics of identity, they cover up or manipulate their essential incompletion, fragmentation and instability" (2001, 272). Recovering the original title of the book—the one by which the film was released on British soil—all the characters are *ghosts* in their own way. They are all displaced from their homes and nations and all experience the same seclusion in the house in Martha's Vineyard. They all have fragmented identities, repeat previous patterns, become doubles, and play roles that are not theirs.

In this sense, *The Ghost Writer*, instead of focusing on the particular effects that contemporary experiences of mobility have for each individual depending on their status within society, chooses to represent a common, all-encompassing "structure of feeling," as Naficy calls it (2001, 26), one defined by displacement, alienation, loneliness and deep identity crisis. This homogenization of the nomadic experience is problematic, as it disregards the differences that factors such as class, race, age or gender make in each particular instance of individual mobility. For anyone looking for an explicit answer on such matters, *The Ghost Writer* is remarkably far from providing it, since it equalizes all subjects in their spatial and identitarian alienation. What the film does do, nonetheless, is illustrate the shared psychological struggles of individuals immersed in a world where the "core of the self . . . [is] fundamentally recast in terms of capacities for movement" (Elliot and Urry 2010, 3); a world, as the film suggests, in which those with no control over their own mobility are ultimately deprived of any real agency, being far too often reduced to a faceless workforce moved and disposed of at will by market necessities.

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Liquid Cinematography and the Representation of Viral Threats in Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men*

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Recent cinema has been a reliable purveyor of dystopian tales that focus on the global spread of viruses. The anxiety and fascination over the end of the world and, in particular, over the invasion of infectious pathogens has turned these films into apt modes of expression of a post-9/11 context of pervasive fear that sociologists like Ulrich Beck have termed "world risk society." This article provides a close textual analysis of one of these films, Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* (2006), situating it at the forefront of this trend. Following Zygmunt Bauman's notion of liquid fear, this article aims to explore how the visual language of the long take and the continuous superposition of intertextual references help to construct a liquid space and time in which viral threats, like epidemics and immunological fear mongering discourses on terrorism and migration, easily proliferate. The infertility epidemic works as a suitable metaphor of this liquid environment, representing not only the barren malaise of our globalized times but also every invisible fear that spreads across borders, invades and segregates individuals into healthy *Us* and contaminated and dehumanized *Others*.

Keywords: *Children of Men*; Alfonso Cuarón; long take; *virality*; liquid fear; Bauman

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Cinematografía líquida y la representación de amenazas virales en *Children of Men*, de Alfonso Cuarón

El cine reciente ofrece numerosos ejemplos de distopías basadas en la propagación de epidemias. La ansiedad y fascinación que provocan la idea del fin del mundo y, en particular, la invasión de enfermedades infecciosas han convertido a estas películas en el modo de expresión preferido de un contexto post-11S de miedo generalizado que sociólogos como Ulrich Beck han denominado "la sociedad global de riesgo." Este artículo ofrece un análisis textual de una de estas películas, *Children of Men* (2006), situándola como representante

destacada de esta tendencia. Siguiendo la noción de miedo líquido de Zygmunt Bauman, este artículo sostiene que el lenguaje visual de los abundantes planos secuencia y la continua acumulación de referencias intertextuales ayudan a construir un espacio y tiempo líquidos en los que proliferan amenazas globales como pandemias o discursos del miedo sobre el terrorismo y la inmigración. La epidemia de infertilidad funciona como vehículo metafórico de este ambiente líquido, representando todos aquellos miedos invisibles que se extienden más allá de las fronteras, invaden y segregan a los individuos en sanos e infectados.

Palabras clave: *Children of Men*; Alfonso Cuarón; plano secuencia; *viralidad*; miedo líquido; Bauman

1. Introduction

Communicable diseases have become one of the preferred agents of global disaster in the post-9/11 fantasies of destruction and apocalypse that abound in cinema today.[1] The invasive, invisible and stigmatizing quality associated with viruses, and their disregard of borders, is fictionally exploited in contemporary films to match a social reality in which the term *virality* has acquired undertones that surpass those of biological contagion (Sampson 2012). Alfonso Cuarón's 2006 film *Children of Men* makes use of those qualities ascribed to the virus in order to explore a contemporary context of growing "*debounding* and uncontrollable risks" (Beck 2002, 41, emphasis in original) that sociologists Ulrich Beck (2002) and Zygmunt Bauman ([2006] 2013) have labeled "world risk society" and "liquid fear," respectively. Although there has been extensive writing on the film from the perspectives of racial alterity and bare life (Chaudhary 2009; Latimer 2011), disaster capitalism (Boyle 2009) and transnational cinema (Shaw 2013), among others, and analyses that focus on technical aspects like sound design (Whittington 2011) and, especially, the film's consistent use of long takes (Udden 2009), *Children of Men* has rarely been considered under the lens of *virality*. In this article I argue that Cuarón, together with cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki, engender what I call a "liquid cinematography," a combination of mobile long takes, long shots and the compression of time and space through the conglomeration of intertextual references that endow the film with a fluid imaginary condition. Cuarón thus challenges, as he will also later do in *Gravity* (2013), the long-assumed relation of the long take with locality and with *cinéma verité*, playing with those assumptions and at the same time making long takes encompass the global and the fantastic. This liquid environment is presented in the film as a facilitator of *virality*, of the boundless spread and contagion not only of biological conditions like infertility but also of threatening risks and fear mongering discourses like those employed by the film's dictatorial regime on the pervasive and polluting nature of terrorism and migration. Following Stephen Keane's argument that "[g]eneric cycles are sparked by resonant ideas [and] that they are acutely reflective of social, cultural and political developments" (2001, 4), I will take a zeitgeist and symptomatic reading of the film, arguing that it works as a cautionary tale that presents future dystopia as a hyperbolic representation of the contemporary global state of war which Hardt and Negri (2004) ascribe to post-9/11 capitalist democracies.

2. The Liquid Quality of Time and Space

Set in 2027, *Children of Men* makes use of a genuinely bleak and gloomy filmic style in order to depict the atmosphere of despair that envelops a futuristic London. An epidemic

of female infertility has spread globally. The epidemic has lasted for eighteen years and has turned the world into a daunting childless place. As a consequence, humanity has been brought face to face with its own extinction and imminent death. The film opens with a black screen and the voiceover of two TV reporters reading the global news, comprising city sieges and army occupations, with an ordinary tone that implies their routine occurrence in this dystopian society. Britain seems to have resisted the dominant international chaos. As the journalist announces, the ratification of a Homeland Security Bill is underway to try to protect the British nation by keeping its borders closed and by deporting any illegal immigrants who try to gain access to the island. This introductory news item, which serves as political contextualization for the story, is followed by what the reporter calls the "lead story"—the death of the youngest person on Earth, an Argentinean boy who was "just" eighteen when he was stabbed. The death of this young man sets up the pandemic of infertility as the main backdrop from which global violence stems. In order to emphasize this premise, the black screen is replaced at this point by a shot of people gathered in a coffee shop looking at the television news and silently crying for the loss of "baby Diego" while a diegetic melodramatic tune accompanies the images of the famous "child's" life. At that moment, Theo (Clive Owen) enters the coffee shop, heads for the counter and asks for a coffee. Once he gets it, the handheld camera follows him out of the shop and the emotional TV music is replaced by the sound of horns and engines coming from the city cars. Without a single cut, the camera pans 180 degrees to the left and we get a vision of the entire street. Buildings are covered by huge screens and digital notice boards, but 2027 London does not seem to be a flashy futuristic city. The atmosphere is hazy and dark, with a mixture of gray and brownish tones. Theo walks some steps to his left and stops to pour liquor into his coffee. The camera follows him, circles around him from his back and, still in the same shot, pans 180 degrees again, this time to the right. At that precise moment a bomb explodes in the coffee shop he has just left. The handheld camera leaves Theo behind and moves towards the shop trembling and shaking. Corpses are lying on the street among the wreckage, and a disoriented armless woman wobbles towards the camera. The screen turns black again and the movie title appears in big white letters accompanied by the sound of a disturbing high-pitched tone.

   This opening scene both sets up the main subject matters of the film and introduces some of the fundamental elements that characterize its visual style. The most notable stylistic aspect, and that for which the movie has gained critical praise, is the long take that shows Theo as he comes out of the store and ends with the bomb explosion fifty-two seconds later. Elsewhere, the movie makes extensive use of this stylistic device. In fact, the longest uncut fragment, which is a notorious war-like action scene that takes place at the end of the film ("the Uprising"), has a staggering length of three hundred and sixty two seconds (that is, approximately six uninterrupted minutes).[2]

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   [2] I have used the online site *Cinemetrics* to measure the number and length of shots. The results are published in the following URL: http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=6671.

The technically acclaimed scene of a car ambush also gives the impression of having been filmed in a single shot even if, as James Udden notes (2009, 30), these long takes are multiple shots digitally disguised to give the impression of being a single unedited take. *Children of Men* shows an average shot length (ASL) of more than fifteen seconds and has just 375 shots in total, a striking figure taking into account that the ASL of most contemporary Hollywood films is less than four seconds and that they usually have over one thousand shots in total (Bordwell and Thompson [1979] 2004, 327).

The long take has actually become one of Alfonso Cuarón's personal trademarks, as scholars James Udden (2009) and Deborah Shaw (2013) have remarked. Shaw argues that its use in *Children of Men* has consolidated the "auteur credentials" (2013, 226) Cuarón earned with *Y tu mama también* (2001), while Udden reads it as "an assertion of aesthetic distinction" (2009, 42) and directorial prestige in spite of the film's relative lack of box-office success. Cuarón's short *Parc Monceau*, included in the multiple-directors film *Paris, je t'aime* (2006), lasts nearly five minutes and has barely a cut in it—for the most part the camera tracks, at a relatively long distance, the two protagonists who are walking down a street. And *Gravity*, his latest film (2013), opens with a spectacular thirteen-minute-long take in outer space. Cuarón's preference for the long take articulates a distinctive film language that runs contrary to current mainstream cinematic trends, which, as David Bordwell highlights, tend to rely heavily on editing and fast-cutting—what he refers to as "intensified continuity" (2006, 121). In his 2009 article, James Udden discusses that the long take is probably one of the most risky stylistic devices for a big studio (*Children of Men* was released by Universal Pictures), both economically and aesthetically, precisely because of this mainstream fast-editing tendency. Udden claims that "Alfonso Cuarón has accomplished the seemingly impossible: he proffers a dystopian message concerning globalization, yet he does it under the auspices of one of globalization's key cultural players—Hollywood" (29). For Udden, *Children of Men*'s "defiant" style fits with the film's dystopian counter-message, a fact he finds unlikely for a Hollywood production. Udden even asks himself whether Cuarón will ever get a chance of using this "rarified yet more revered style" (42) of the long take in a studio film again, a question that he recently had answered by the enormous box-office and critical success of the Warner Bros.-produced *Gravity*, and which Alejandro González Iñárritu further corroborated with *Birdman* (2014) and its illusion of an almost single uninterrupted take.[3] What for Udden is a 'seemingly impossible' accomplishment, Deborah Shaw explains in terms of *auterism* (2013, 225-230). Shaw posits that, despite its Universal production, *Children of Men* navigates between commercial cinema and independent filmmaking. The long take, which is normally "taken as a mark of a certain type of art cinema filmmaker" (206), is, according to Shaw, one of the stylistic devices that, together with other transgenre modes of narration and

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[3] In *Birdman*, Iñárritu also collaborates with Cuarón's long-time partner, the Mexican cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki, of whom Iñárritu has referred to as his and Cuarón's "shared secret weapon" (Milliken 2015).

styles, makes *Children of Men* closer to an independent production (211). However, in ideological terms, and unlike other authors such as Udden, Chaudhary and Boyle have noted, Shaw believes that the film's apparent subversive message gets diluted through its rejection of a real "political revolution" (2013, 217), and by its falling into commercial conventions like the happy ending and "the privileged status of the white male hero" (217). Leaving aside whether the film provides a political alternative to its dystopian society, the fact is that the use of the long take in *Children of Men* remains a source of admiration and wonder. As Bordwell (2015) points out, there is something about this technique that speaks of technical virtuosity and prowess. Bordwell even employs the word "braggadoccio" (2015) to refer to the sense of pride and search for recognition that directors seem to share whenever they refer to the challenging difficulties of their sustained shots, an attitude that has been branded as "macho" by Christine Vachon (Bordwell 2012) and that Udden (2009, 41) also detects in Cuarón. But Alfonso Cuarón's deliberate choice of the long take does not simply confirm an aesthetic trademark, a risky "macho technique" that distinguishes him as *auteur*. It also serves to construct, along with other visual strategies that I will explore in this section, a liquid atmosphere of viral threat that challenges the local connotations of this technique. So, what effect does the long take have on *Children of Men*?

Long takes provide an impression of organic continuity. In the case of the opening scene, the camera seems to move freely around the film space, showing everything within it, apparently without any artificial intervention. Instead of introducing the setting of the action by means of the more conventional establishing shot, the long take helps spectators become immersed in a fluid way in this futuristic city by embedding the surrounding setting within the long take by means of camera movements. Thus the long take creates a credible live mood that stays closer to the documentary style, conferring realism to this dystopian scenario. Long takes have actually been traditionally considered more faithful to reality because of the supposed correspondence between fictional and real time duration and the presentation of an uncut space. Cuarón's intention was "to try to create a moment of truthfulness" (quoted in Shaw 2013, 207) that brings to mind the footage of journalists in war zones. André Bazin, one of the most notable defenders of this technique, famously claimed that editing breaks the spatial unity of an event, changing it "from something real into something imaginary" ([1967] 2005, 50) while long takes "reveal the hidden meanings in people and things without disturbing the unity natural to them" (38). This idea, which has been deeply questioned (Bordwell 2015), is particularly misleading in this case, taking into account that Cuarón's long takes are the result of premeditated digital manipulation and that neither the long takes nor the space they portray are real, but highly fabricated (Udden 2009). But Cuarón plays with these long-standing assumptions, and the handheld camera ratifies this realistic documentary mood with its self-conscious shaky movements. Indeed, the camera becomes almost an individual entity, as if it (and, hence, we) were another character roaming around the film space. It usually follows

Theo from behind or moves around him, but we find hardly a single subjective POV shot during the film, adding to this impression of realism.

The fluidity provided by the floating camera and the illusory spatial and temporal continuity achieved acquire undertones of threat in the film. The longest uncut fragments (the opening bomb scene, the car ambush and the final Uprising) coincide with moments of higher risk in the narrative. These long takes build up tension visually in the way music does in a horror film by elongating the notes and delaying the resolution of the chords. The bomb explosion of the opening scene like Julian's (Julianne Moore) unforeseen murder during the car ambush—strikes us all the harder precisely because it is embedded within the documentary-like mood of the long take, making us first-person witnesses of an unexpected event. The scene is similarly crafted to the opening long take of *Touch of Evil* (1958), with the difference that in Orson Welles's film the bomb is presented, and hence the explosion expected, from the very beginning of the long take, generating suspense instead of surprise. The shock effect achieved here is more akin to, albeit that it does not use long takes, the prologue of another dystopian movie, Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* (1985), in which a terrorist bomb explosion abruptly silences the advertisements and jingles of the multiple TVs displayed in the shop windows of a store. Even the way the title appears in both films has its similarities, introducing us directly into an Orwellian dictatorial system. Technically, the surprise attained by the bomb explosion in *Children of Men* is also comparable to the revelation of Gaspard being a baby in Cuarón's short *Parc Monceau* or to the famous appearance of the twins in the corridors of *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick 1980)—a way of playing with the sustained tension of the long take in order to introduce new unexpected elements and information into the frame. In *Children of Men* this effect is used to articulate the uncertainty, insecurity and mistrust aroused by the various dangers that seem to lurk everywhere within the fluid space fabricated by the mobile long take, as I will analyze in the following section.

A further distinctive aspect of long takes is that, in order to facilitate camera movements, they "tend to be framed in medium or long shots" (Bordwell and Thompson 2004, 286), presenting space as if it were a theatrical stage where spectators can choose where to look, and avoiding close-ups as much as possible. This is a conspicuous visual strategy in *Children of Men*. The first consequence of having almost no facial close-ups or POV shots during the film is that it prevents spectators from fully identifying with characters, forcing us to adopt a more distant attitude towards them. The absence of close-ups accentuates the feeling of threat by generating mistrust towards every character, even towards the protagonist himself, who, especially at the beginning, wanders listlessly and skeptically through the streets of London, claiming he just "feels like shit." One of the few moments where we get a glimpse of his motivations (or lack thereof) is when his friend Jasper (Michael Caine) tells Kee (Clare-Hope Ashitey), the only pregnant woman whom Theo has the mission to save, and Miriam (Pam Ferris), a former midwife, the story of how Theo used to be an activist and relates his current loss

of faith and commitment to the death of his son. This revelatory moment is emphasized with the handheld camera slowly zooming in and focusing on Theo's pained expression while he overhears his friend's conversation. This powerful close-up stands out amidst the film's abundance of long shots and allows us, if not to identify, at least to become closer to Theo in his reluctant hero's journey from apathy to active involvement.

A second visible effect that both the mobile camera and the long framing distances have on the film is that the spectators' focus falls on the surrounding setting, sometimes even at the expense of the narrative. In the DVD commentary, cultural critic Slavoj Žižek claims that the content of *Children of Men*'s background has more relevance than the protagonist's journey itself, arguing that "the fate of the individual hero remains a kind of a prism through which you see the background even more sharply" (2006), instead of the other way around. In fact, performance and the story are somehow outshined at some points by Emmanuel Lubezki's stunning photography and by the detailed mise-en-scène, which seems, in accordance with Žižek's claim, to encapsulate the film's essence. Even though the film's setting is clearly marked as being Britain and the year 2027, *Children of Men*'s carefully constructed and visually enhanced background contains an improbable accumulation of references and cross-references to different historical, artistic, religious and mythical landmarks that seem to coexist in fantastic juxtaposition. The superposition of intertextual references is most notable in a scene in which Theo visits his cousin Nigel (Danny Huston), the Minister of Arts, to ask him for transit papers for an illegal immigrant, and again in the final long take of the Uprising. Both scenarios, the Ministry of Arts and the refugee camp, are turned into timeless spaces of, respectively, artistic and historical conglomeration. In the case of the Ministry of Arts, the scene starts with the image of a car driving Theo through the crowded streets of London while the 1969 *King Crimson*'s song "In the Court of the Crimson King" plays extradiegetically. Each line of the lyrics perfectly matches the surrounding setting. The central line, "In the court of the crimson king," the red king of the song being a metaphor for the devil, is accompanied by the climactic image: the Battersea Power Station, the seat of the Ministry of Arts, with a floating pig above it—a recreation of the album cover of Pink Floyd's *Animals* (1977), whose songs, in turn, are based on George Orwell's novella *Animal Farm* (1945). Thus, there is an almost endless string of multiplying intertextualities. The song announces that Theo is about to enter the court of the devil. Once Theo is inside the Ministry-Hell, the lyrics continue with ominous references to a witch and to "the keeper of the city keys." These references bring to mind William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, particularly Act 2, Scene III, when the tipsy porter of Macbeth's castle exclaims: "Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key" ([1623] 2007, 148). This scene seems to be reenacted here by Theo leaving his bottle of Scotch at the entrance of the Ministry when the security guard stops him at the metal-detector arch—the modern-day "pilgrim's door" of the song or *Macbeth*'s 'hell-gate.' Then, as Theo enters the corridor that leads to the Ministry's dining room, the spectacular sight

of Michelangelo's *David* strikes him deeply, and just as the lyrics state 'crimson king' again, Nigel finally appears in scene, becoming within this intricate net of references the embodiment of the devil (Crimson King/Macbeth) himself. He is then constantly framed with the flying pig behind his face, thus extending the connotations both to George Orwell's novella and to Pink Floyd's album, the first being a critique of the communist regime and the latter of capitalism. In both narratives, pigs are presented as the exercisers of a tyrannical totalitarian regime with *Animal Farm* containing the famous final motto "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others," which seems to correspond with Nigel's discourse. Nigel's function consists exclusively in looting works of art from different devastated countries in order to "save" them, collecting them discretionarily. Picasso's *Guernica*, for instance, is hanging in the Ministry's dining room, and he also mentions *La Pietà* and *Las Meninas*. The arbitrary accumulation of works of art rounds up this scene by crowding it with an excess of references that, as scholar Zahid Chaudhary states, "signal a surplus of meaning" (2009, 85).

Following Slavoj Žižek's analysis of the movie, Chaudhary claims that "[e]ach of these images references a certain history. But taken together, the barrage of images signals a reality in which the historical referent seems to have disappeared" (2009, 85). This stream of signifiers with no unitary historical or spatial referent, this heterotopia capable of, in Michel Foucault's terms, "juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces . . . that are in themselves incompatible" (1986, 25), continues for the rest of the film. In Bexhill, the immigrants' refugee camp, an amalgamation of cultures and civilizations are forced to live together in the midst of a medieval-like scenario. In the camp, Islamic references (an Arab march and wall paintings with the word "Intifada") coincide with veiled allusions to the 1789 revolution (a waving French flag) and with Christian connotations (the Nativity scene); and Jewish Holocaust suggestions (the immigration cop responds to the coded message "you're a fascist pig" and the camp itself has clear resonances with Nazi concentration camps) are superposed by references to the Iraq prison of Abu Ghraib through the recreation of the infamous Hooded Man—all of which converts the refugee camp into a timeless space of torture and insurrection, just as the Ministry of Arts was a timeless space of artistic conglomeration.

The film's ceaseless accumulation of references to different times and places, embedded within the continuity of the sustained long take, functions as a catalyst for the compression of time and space without the need to resort to the effects of cross-cutting or other editing techniques. This invites the spectators' imagination to wander along with the camera through a space and time that are, in effect, ungraspable and elusive, and that flow in continuous movement and change. Thanks to the long takes, the film space in *Children of Men* becomes a borderless continuum, a space of cinematic fluidity with no apparent authorial intervention and no apparent borders or cuts. It becomes a visual expression of our "liquid modernity," borrowing Zygmunt Bauman's term ([2000] 2006): an expression of a liquid cinematography that manages to encompass the global

in its apparent locality. Bauman claims that in our contemporary light modernity (as opposed to what he calls "heavy modernity," which was the era of territorial conquest) space has lost its value because of the "annihilation of time" ([2000] 2006, 117). As any place can be reached almost instantly now in the age of globalization, space has lost the worth it used to have. By stretching local time and space, or, as Bazin would say, by showing the unity natural to an event ([1967] 2005, 38), Cuarón seems to apparently contravene the shrinking world logic that is associated with globalization, and which in many films is commonly expressed by means of the compression of remote parts of the world and different time intervals in an almost instant speed-up squeeze of shots. However, Cuarón's use of the opposite technique—the display of a natural (if highly contrived) flow of time and space—, instead of signifying locality, illustrates this light and liquid quality of our times precisely by *liberalizing* the camera and by displaying a mise-en-scène packed with references. The camera's uninterrupted journey turns into an imaginary fluid navigation through different historical and artistic landmarks, all contained in the same place, as if space had indeed become irrelevant and time had actually been, in Bauman's terms, annihilated.

3. Liquid Fears

In *Children of Men* this liquid cinematography serves to introduce the dangers and threats that spread easily and circulate boundlessly within such a fluid environment. One of the most distinguishing features of the constant threats presented in the film is that they usually seem to have neither a cause nor a traceable executor. In a conversation with his friend Jasper after the opening explosion, Theo wonders who may have planted the bomb in the coffee shop, asking himself: "Islamic? Fishes [a terrorist group fighting for the equal rights of immigrants]? Fuck knows," to which Jasper replies, "I'll bet it was the government. Every time one of our politicians is in trouble, a bomb explodes." This difficulty in ascribing an author to an act of terrorism, which leads characters to equate a religion (Islam) or a government with terrorists, brings to mind Bauman's notion of liquid fear, which he establishes as an inseparable counterpart to our liquid times:

> Fear is at its most fearsome when it is diffuse, scattered, unclear, unattached, unanchored, free floating, with no clear address or cause; when it haunts us with no clear rhyme or reason, when the menace we should be afraid of can be glimpsed everywhere but is nowhere to be seen. "Fear" is the name we give to our *uncertainty*: to our *ignorance* of the threat and of what is to be *done* . . . to stop it in its tracks. ([2006] 2013, 2)

In a similar way, sociologist Ulrich Beck makes use of the term uncontrollable risks to refer to those global risks such as terrorism, financial crises and ecological conflicts that are "difficult to impute to a particular agent and can hardly be controlled on the level of the nation-state" (2002, 41). Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, on their part,

argue that in the twenty-first-century war against terrorism "[t]he enemies are posed not as specific nation-states or political communities or even individuals but rather as abstract concepts or perhaps as sets of practices" (2004, 14). The bomb explosion of the opening scene, for which no one claims responsibility during the film, points to that floating quality of threat that makes it all the more dreadful. It sets the tone of the film, immersing us in an unsafe liquid territory where risk is pervasive and uncontrollable. Both terrorists and immigrants are portrayed through the mise-en-scène as invisible faceless enemies that trespass borders, invade territories and attack or threaten its citizens' security, apparently with no clear or valid cause. In the story these liquid fears are partly elaborated and constructed by the media, which seems to be completely controlled by the government. The city of London appears wrapped in advertisements and propaganda that compel British citizens to report terrorists and illegal immigrants with such statements as "Suspect it? Terrorism relies on surprise"; "Terrorism: Trust No-One"; "To hire, feed or shelter illegal immigrants is a crime" and "Suspicious? Report all illegal immigrants," obliquely lumping together immigrants and terrorists as the stigmatized and evil Other. As Hardt and Negri state, "[p]osing the enemy as evil serves to make the enemy and the struggle against it absolute and thus outside of politics—evil is the enemy of all humanity" (2004, 16). These threatening messages, which appear continually in digital billboards and videos, are complemented by other prescriptive announcements that force women to undergo fertility tests, and by disturbing advertisements for a suicide kit (Quietus) and what seems to be a female Viagra (Niagra). The governmental messages point to a highly regulatory regime which exerts, using Foucault's term ([1975-1976] 2003, 243), a biopower that aims to control not only immigration and terrorism but also the most intimate biological matters.

There is a scene which is particularly relevant in this respect where Theo gets a train to meet his friend Jasper. In the carriage a governmental advertisement plays showing fast-cutting images of different cities around the world—Paris, Moscow, Washington and many others—in which chaos prevails. The short war-like images, in which we see corpses and ruined cities, appear like quick flashes, accompanied by apocalyptic music. At one point, the shots and the city names frantically succeed one another to the point of becoming unidentifiable as we read in big letters "The world has collapsed." After that, the Houses of Parliament appear majestically to the sound of ceremonial music and the message "Only Britain soldiers on" comes into view over a waving British flag and an exaggerated zoom into Big Ben. After focusing on this video, the camera moves to capture what is happening inside the train and we can see Theo looking out of the window. The landscape is devastated. Crowds of people are throwing stones at the train, and there are small fires and piles of trash, just as in the video images of other collapsed cities. When Theo gets off the train, he passes enormous cages full of immigrants guarded by armed soldiers waiting to be driven to the refugee camp. The patriotic video and the sentence "Britain soldiers on" acquire at that point their most ironical meaning.

The train video, like the newscast of the opening scene, is presented as a manipulative strategy that emphasizes British grandeur, the reality of which is continually challenged by the surrounding dystopian setting. This manipulation is accentuated by the fast-cutting images that contravene the film's general live mood pace set by the long takes. If these come to be unconsciously associated by the audience with realism and authenticity, then the excessive editing of these videos implies dishonesty and trickery. Music and sound play a central role in this manipulation as well. Both in the case of the Baby Diego video clip of the opening scene and the patriotic video of the train, the deceiving melodramatic and majestic music is replaced, respectively, by the harsh reality of the bomb explosion and by the noise of the stones hitting the train's grilled windows. By presenting a manipulated idealized image of Britain, these videos seem to validate the use of dictatorial measures against those who attempt to disrupt the "peaceful" order. The shots of collapsed foreign cities work as cautionary images that are never actually corroborated in the film. This is so in part because the organic use of the long take restricts the action solely to Theo, never allowing us to see what is going on beyond Britain. The actual means by which the British government tries to 'soldier on' against the dominant prevailing chaos is by implementing extremely tough military policies that are somehow justified through patriotism and through the spread of fear. The prescriptive omnipresent messages against terrorists and illegal immigrants and their seclusion and torture in the Bexhill refugee camp point to a suffocating military regime in which, quoting the words of Hardt and Negri again, there has been "a passage from the welfare state to a warfare state" (2004, 17), best exemplified in the final war scene of the Uprising.

The excessive editing of the videos also works as a visual metaphor for the border policies that the authoritarian government implements to try to stop the undesirable waves of threatening Others from freely floating within the liquid environment outlined by the long take. As the opening voiceover of the reporter states, British borders have remained closed for eight years following the Homeland Security Bill. And the refugee camp uses walls and barbed wires for the confinement and reclusion of the "disgusting" (as one of the camp officials says) immigrants. The media configuration of a dangerous and repulsive Other promotes the creation of defensive borders (or the reinforcement of existing ones) to stop them from metaphorically infecting the general population. As Bauman claims,

> [r]efugees are the very embodiment of "human waste," with no useful function to play in the land of their arrival and temporary stay, and with neither an intention nor a realistic prospect that they will be assimilated and incorporated into the new social body. . . . A distance large enough to prevent the poisonous effluvia of social decomposition from reaching places inhabited by the natives is the main criterion by which the location of their permanently temporary camps are [*sic*] selected. (2007, 41)

The British town of Bexhill has been turned into a large refugee camp where all this 'human waste' coming from neighboring European countries is contained. The Uprising, the upheaval planned by the terrorist group The Fishes, aims specifically at liberating the immigrants from Bexhill, claiming their equal rights as British citizens and trying to fight back against the dictatorial system. But their seemingly just and legitimate cause with their all-means-justify-the-end stance is discredited throughout the film, especially when they plan to use the first baby born in eighteen years as a political weapon, stealing it from its immigrant mother. Terrorists (except for Julian, Theo's ex) are portrayed as untrustworthy and fundamentalist as the totalitarian government, which is the reason why scholar Deborah Shaw criticizes the lack of a true political alternative to the film's supposed revolutionary message.

The infertility epidemic plays a fundamental role in the construction of this allegoric tale of our barren times. It succeeds in setting an apocalyptic background scenario that is far more gripping than other ecological potentially destructive disasters. Global infertility means the slow ageing and decay of populations. It becomes a factual omen of humanity's impending nightfall, which is emphasized visually in the film by means of the frequent use of sunset lighting and the gray and barren urban space. Civilization, in its developed and apparently stable scientific stage, is presented as rather weak and feeble, prone to crumble and revert, as the desperate images of the Repenters point out, to a dark medieval-like stage where unscientific religious sects and apocalyptic ideas proliferate. Infertility becomes a metaphor for the contemporary political, social and ecological malaise of the world, and of the hopeless future that awaits us.

But the epidemic's metaphoric power goes far beyond that. There are many references in the film to different plagues—foot-and-mouth disease, as depicted in the country's burning animals and the global flu pandemic that Jasper relates to the death of Theo's son. The emphasis on epidemics in contemporary culture stems from their pliable and evocative capacity. The three basic principles of epidemics are that they *spread*, *invade* and *segregate*. Just like the different liquid fears that circulate boundlessly within our liquid modernity, viruses are invisible contaminants that can propagate globally, across borders, with no traceable executor or apparent cause. Bauman's notion of liquid fear applies perfectly here. An infectious disease can float unanchored, it can be "glimpsed everywhere but is nowhere to be seen" (2013, 2), it trespasses borders and borders are erected to try to stop it. The uncertainty provoked by the threatening expansion of an immaterial uncontrollable risk that transcends the nation-state is comparable to the fear spread by the media in the film regarding terrorism and migration. The epidemic works thus as a powerful metaphor of everything that spreads following a pattern of contagion within this liquid context. Tony D. Sampson argues that the language used during the War on Terror "exceptionally merges the language used to describe the terrorist with that used to describe the microbial virus" (2012,137) and that the US government's politics of fear followed a pattern of *virality*, "a continuous contagious rumour (or

phantom event)" (137), in order to infuse the population with fear and anticipation of an attack: "The enemy remains advantageously unknown and always at hand to incite (and spread) further anxieties" (137).

Moreover, epidemics are usually envisioned in fiction as microorganisms that not only spread but also invade or attack territorial and body frontiers. A war rhetoric of invasion and defense, what Susan Sontag calls "the military metaphor" (1991, 65), is applied in the fictional representation of viral infections. Infertility is presented here as affecting the female body, even if the cause of it remains unknown. The government's harsh regulation of biological matters in the film compares with the regulation against other "invading agents" like migrants and terrorists, who are also presented as infecting and attacking the healthy organism of the community. This principle of invasion results in the third aspect, segregation. The virus marks a dichotomy between infected, thus dangerous and dehumanized, individuals (carriers of the contaminating illness) and healthy ones, vulnerable to being exposed to it. As Sontag claims, "there is a link between imagining disease and imagining foreignness. It lies perhaps in the very concept of wrong, which is archaically identical with the non-us, the alien. A polluted person is always wrong" (134). This dichotomy, although not represented directly through infertility in the film, is certainly employed in the construction of terrorists and immigrants as the polluted Others, depicted by the government, in Bauman's words (quoted before), as the 'poisonous effluvia of social decomposition.' Bauman explains how modern genocide (the Nazi Holocaust in particular) was possible precisely because of the ruling elite's aspirations of an idealized, homogeneous, ambivalence-free society where those who did not fit in had to be necessarily exterminated. The way in which these unfitting agents were rendered as inadequate was by presenting them as a "diseased organism, 'both ill and infectious, both damaged and damaging'" (Gilman, quoted in Bauman 1991, 47). The destruction of the diseased organism was, in the Nazi discourse, a service to humanity, a question of sanitation and a way of "exterminating the pest" (47). Bauman argues that "[d]efining the Other as vermin harnesses the deeply entrenched fears, revulsion and disgust in the service of extermination. But also, and more seminally, it places the Other at an enormous mental distance at which moral rights are no longer visible. Having been stripped of humanity and redefined as vermin, the Other is no more an object of moral evaluation" (48). The immigrants of Bexhill are regarded by the elite as just such disgusting diseased organisms. Extermination is made possible following the same rhetoric of the Nazi Holocaust, which is compared in the film with more contemporary forms of politics.

The use of a liquid cinematography—the combination of uninterrupted shots with the compression of time and space—becomes the ideal medium for representing the proliferation of literal and figurative epidemics. The sustained tension of the long take and the "liberalization" of the camera match the invisible fluidity of viruses: their abstract, threatening and unpredictable nature. One of the greatest achievements of Cuarón's cinema may indeed be his ability to endow the long take, usually associated

only with the organic and the local, with the capacity to express and evoke a liquid global space. The infertility epidemic also brings to the fore the instability and friability of human bonds that Bauman relates to our liquid modernity. The prospect of a childless world destroys the notion of family itself, as the different estranged and dysfunctional couples illustrate in the film. Liquid modernity is finally materialized in the film through the metaphorical ending, with Theo, Kee and the baby in the middle of the sea waiting for the *Tomorrow*, the boat of the scientific organization of the Human Project that would save Kee and her baby. As Žižek highlights, the fact that the film closes in the open sea (challenging the film's general reliance on barren atmospheres) has important connotations. The sea is a borderless surface; it has no demarcation lines and boats are completely rootless in it. In Foucault's words, the boat "is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea . . . The ship is the heterotopia *par excellence*" (1986, 27). The liquid accumulation of references ends up being conglomerated in the timeless image of the floating boat on a borderless infinite sea, synthesizing visually what the film has been expressing cinematographically, and adding a touch of hope and of mythical regeneration to the general dystopian panorama.

4. Conclusion

The manifold metaphoric implications of epidemics and the representation of other liquid threats like terrorism and migration that proliferate boundlessly within the fluid space and time fabricated by the long take become a wake-up call to specific policies in place at the moment of the film's release in 2006. *Children of Men* has a clear political stance in relation to the War on Terror and the so-called politics of fear. In fact, the film's Homeland Security Bill brings to mind the infamous 2002 Homeland Security Act that the US government of George Bush passed after the September 11 terrorist attacks to increase its border protection and control. The 2003 invasion of Iraq is also mentioned various times throughout the narrative. In Jasper's house there are explicit references to it through newspaper cuttings against the Iraq War. These references obliquely hint at how humanity's downfall started way before the pandemic of infertility broke out in 2009 (the past for the film's narrative, the near future for the film's actual date of release). And this seems to be what Theo refers to when he claims that the world was already a hopeless place before "the infertility thing" happened, as he expresses it. In addition, the aforementioned recreation of the Hooded Man, which became a famous symbol of torture in the Iraq prison of Abu Ghraib, adds very specific connotations to the film's refugee camp and to the battle ground which Bexhill finally turns into. The film's political environment seems to be an embodiment of what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri call the "contemporary global state of war" (2004, 16) specifically in relation to George Bush's administration. As these authors claim, the characteristic factor of this continuous state of war against an immaterial enemy is that, unlike in old

wars, this war's spatial and temporal limits are indeterminate, extending globally and for an indefinite period of time. The representation in the film of a continuous liquid space and time full of interrelated references to different historical, popular, pictorial and literary works of art serves to build up this indeterminate space-time continuum that situates contemporary politics within a wider timeless perspective. The refugee camp of Bexhill encapsulates this idea. Its endless accumulation of references turns it into a synthesis of every kind of prison, torture chamber and historical genocide, from the Jewish Holocaust to Guantanamo and, of course, to Abu Ghraib, converting it into a place in which war is continuous and never-ending.

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All Is not English that Glitters:
False Anglicisms in the Spanish Language of Sports

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Over the past decades, many studies have dealt with Anglicisms in Spanish, not only in science and technology, but also in other areas such as business, fashion and even sports. However, in spite of the large number of works on Spanish Anglicisms in sports, these have often disregarded the distinction between Anglicisms and false Anglicisms. Given their importance as evidence of the particular relationships between languages, this article focuses on the use of false Anglicisms in the Spanish language of sports, which has not only adopted English words giving them new meanings and usage, but has also either imported items with an English appearance from other languages or created its own forms based on English patterns. Although these false Anglicisms, which have proven extremely popular in various European languages (not only Spanish), have frequently been used and disseminated, as some examples will prove, little attention has been paid to their differences with the English term or their non-English origin.

Keywords: borrowings; false Anglicisms; Languages for Specific Purposes; Lexicography

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No es inglés todo lo que reluce:
falsos anglicismos en el español del deporte

Durante las últimas décadas han sido frecuentes los estudios sobre los anglicismos en español, no solo en ciencia y tecnología, sino también en otros campos como la empresa, el deporte o incluso la moda. Sin embargo, a pesar de la pléyade de obras sobre los anglicismos en el español del deporte, a menudo no han prestado suficiente atención a la diferencia entre anglicismos y falsos anglicismos. Dada la importancia de estos últimos como prueba de las relaciones particulares entre distintos idiomas, este trabajo se centra en el uso de falsos anglicismos en el español del deporte, que no sólo ha adoptado términos ingleses

con nuevos usos y significados, sino que también ha importado de otros idiomas elementos con apariencia inglesa, o desarrollado palabras propias sobre la base de elementos ingleses. Aunque estos falsos anglicismos, que gozan de gran popularidad en diversas lenguas europeas (y no únicamente en español), se han usado y difundido con abundancia, como mostrarán algunos ejemplos, no se ha prestado excesiva atención a la diferencia que les separa del término inglés o a su origen ajeno a la lengua inglesa.

Palabras clave: préstamos; falsos anglicismos; lenguas para fines específicos; lexicografía

1. Introduction

It is almost universally recognised that English has become an international lingua franca, used for worldwide communication, mainly among non-native speakers. This has had an impact on those speakers' native languages, which have incorporated an extensive list of English vocabulary (and also from syntax and morphology). This latter phenomenon, known as borrowing, has reached unprecedented levels due to information and communication technologies and the Internet, and is particularly visible in the vocabulary of sports in different languages. In general, English words may enter another language in at least two ways: either in their original form (e.g., *club* in French or Spanish) or after some kind of morphological, orthographic and/or phonetic adaptation (e.g., *chutar* in Spanish, from "to shoot").

Given the variety of phenomena underlying language borrowing, in order to study false Anglicisms, it might be worth clarifying what is meant by the terms Anglicism and false Anglicism. In the case of Spanish, scholars have provided several definitions of Anglicism, which can at times be vague, such as Moliner's (1998, s.v. anglicismo) "palabra o expresión inglesa usada en otra lengua" ["English word or expression used in another language"], but also very specific, such as Pratt's "un elemento lingüístico, o grupo de los mismos, que se emplea en . . . castellano . . . contemporáneo y que tiene como étimo inmediato un modelo inglés" ["a linguistic item or group of items used in . . . contemporary . . . Spanish, whose immediate etymon is an English model"] (1980, 115). The most authoritative reference for the Spanish language, the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* (henceforth, *DRAE*) reads as follows: "1. Giro o modo de hablar propio de la lengua inglesa. 2. Vocablo o giro de esta lengua empleado en otra. 3. Empleo de vocablos o giros ingleses en distintos idiomas" (s.v. anglicismo) ["1. Expression or way of speaking typical of the English language. 2. Word or expression of this language used in another language. 3. Use of English words or expressions in other languages"]. As one can see, this latter definition includes not only direct and indirect influences from English but also semantic, phonological and syntactic features proper to English that affect the Spanish language. Some definitions go even further, and include words for which English has been "a mediator": according to López Morales (1987, 303), Anglicisms are "no sólo palabras que proceden del inglés, independientemente de que sean ya generales en el español y de que hayan sido aceptadas por la Academia, sino también aquellas que proceden de otras lenguas, pero que han entrado al español a través del inglés" ["not only words whose origin is English, regardless of whether they have become generalised in Spanish and have been accepted by its Academy, but also words from other languages which have entered Spanish through English"].

Although reasons of space preclude us from discussing at length the scholarly attention that the use of English vocabulary in Spanish deserves, mention must be made of: (i) synchronic studies like those by Gómez Torrego (1995), Lorenzo (1996), Medina López (1996), Pratt (1980) and Rodríguez González (1996, 2012); (ii) diachronic studies like Rodríguez Segura (1999), and (iii) those on the use of

Anglicisms in specialised or professional languages such as Alcaraz Ariza (2000), Alejo (2004), Alzugaray Aguirre (1982), Balteiro (2009), Campos (2011), Gerding Salas, Fuentes Morrison and Kotz Grabole (2012), and Rodríguez González (2012). Also excluded from this current work are considerations regarding whether Anglicisms should, or should not, be accepted in a language. In general, we would like to take a descriptive stand, whereby one may observe that there are a number of factors explaining the adoption and use of Anglicisms, such as the trend-setting nature of English, the need (at times) for a new word in the recipient language, language economy (English being as a rule more concise and brief than many European languages), prestige, the desire to show greater expertise in a given area, and probably an attempt to facilitate international communication by using words belonging to what is felt to be a lingua franca—on this, see, for example, Bolaños-Medina and Luján-García (2010, 245-249), Durán Martínez (2002), Lorenzo (1996), Medina López (1996) and Rodríguez Segura (1999, 17).

However, a look at some of the reasons for the use of Anglicisms might also explain other phenomena, such as a language developing its own lexical stock in the fashion of a foreign one. Indeed, if a language is ready to use an English word because of prestige, conciseness or a desire to put on an appearance of expertness, or in other words, if it is willing to resort to "imported goods," it might also feel inclined to "copy" or "imitate" the English language. This may be the case of the so-called "false Anglicisms," whose success causes them not only to be accepted as if they were genuine items, but even to be re-exported into other languages, which welcome them because of their apparent English origin. This phenomenon, which has often been described as a result of language contact, though is probably more related in some cases to prestige or other psychological reasons than to linguistic ones, will be presented in the following section.

2. False Anglicisms

While, as has been seen above, Anglicisms have been widely dealt with in the literature, fully-fledged studies on false Anglicisms are quite recent. Furiassi defines false Anglicisms as "autonomous coinages which resemble English words but do not exist in English, or . . . unadapted borrowings from English which originated from English words but that are not encountered in English dictionaries, whether as entries or as sub-entries" (2003, 123). A false Anglicism or "pseudoanglicism"—for discussions of the various labels and definitions, see Furiassi (2010, 19-20), Onysko (2007, 52), Campos (2011, 83) and Winter-Froemel (2011, 44)—may be a word apparently of English origin but actually created elsewhere—e.g., Spanish *footing*, a word created in French, vs. English *jogging* (on mediating languages see Rodríguez González 2002, 134). But a false Anglicism can also be a word which is originally English, but may have undergone changes in the recipient language (in terms of meaning or form) in such a way that it might even not be recognizable by a native English speaker (e.g., Spanish false Anglicism *boogies*

for what is known in English as *crêpe-soled shoes* or *brothel creepers*). In fact, the concept of 'autonomous coinages' as used in Furiassi's definition may be interpreted quite loosely, since (1) it covers both signifier and signified, i.e., it includes semantic shifts where the form remains the same (*crack*, which is used in Spanish for "financial crises," i.e., "crash"), or partial deletion of parts of previously existing compounds (e.g., *smoking,* from a now outdated *smoking jacket* in English), but also (2) many of the false Anglicisms are coined (or modified) in one language and then spread into others.

In fact, not all false Anglicisms are so alien to the English language: in fact, Furiassi remarks that "although it is certainly true that false Anglicisms are not used by native speakers of English, this fact does not necessarily mean that at least some of them would not be understood, with a variable degree of cognitive effort (e.g., *antidoping* vs. *dope test*)" (2003, 121). Spence and Campos have also pointed out that "different meaning" (from English) may be at times an unreliable criterion, for a start, because meaning is a slippery concept not always fully captured by dictionaries, but also because some of these words may have been borrowed from very specialised areas in English (which hence makes them *genuine* Anglicisms) and thus their meaning is not known by the average native speaker (Spence 1987, 169; Campos 2011, 85). It may even occur that an alleged false Anglicism suddenly appears in English with the same meaning as in the other languages, which puzzles lexicographers, since the word may have been re-borrowed by English (Furiassi 2010, 70; Campos 2011, 92), but might also have changed by itself through no foreign influence. This phenomenon can also be found in other languages: an instance of this is *kimono*, whose present meaning in Japanese has changed after being re-imported from English. Another example is *outlet*, whose meaning "shop offering goods at highly reduced prices," as found in Spanish or Italian, may be found in present-day English, although this could be due either to re-borrowing of the "foreign" meaning or simply to shortening of the full form *outlet mall*. The same could apply to *volley* in English, which could either have been re-borrowed from the many languages where it functions as a short alternative for "volleyball," or also have evolved by itself in English. In the case of sports, it is precisely their international nature that might encourage both the spread of Anglicisms and, paradoxically, the importing of such false Anglicisms into English. For instance, in March 2015 Manchester City's coach Manuel Pellegrini repeatedly asked his club owners to sign *a crack* (used as a noun in Spanish meaning "a crack player"), and this was widely reproduced by the media; this could very well help towards *crack* adopting the new meaning, either through ellipsis or through re-borrowing.

Concerning the classification of false Anglicisms according to their origin, to date it seems that the best detailed typology is that devised by Furiassi (2010, 38-52), who classifies them as autonomous compounds (*recordman*), autonomous derivatives (*footing*), compound ellipses (*smoking*), clippings (*relax*), semantic shifts (*mister*), eponyms (*pullman*), toponyms and generic trademarks. Nevertheless, for our purposes, and in order to avoid excessive subcategorization, the false Anglicisms in the Spanish language of sports (as

studied in this paper) will be divided into five categories: autonomous creations (which would include both compounds and derivatives), abbreviations (including both ellipses and clippings), morphological changes, semantic shifts (which include eponyms and toponyms) and hybrid formations.

As may be seen, to the "traditional" categories (Furiassi 2003 and 2010) we have decided to add hybrid formations, also called "loanblends," such as *web café*, which are either not mentioned in the literature as false Anglicisms, or explicitly discarded (Furiassi 2010, 40). However, as will be mentioned in the discussion section, an excessively narrow approach would also exclude many of the "traditional" false Anglicisms, such as *footing*, from any language other than French, if it was argued that in all other languages *footing* is not an Anglicism (false or genuine), but a Gallicism. We have decided to consider all of these Anglicisms because it is their apparent "Englishness" that favours their expansion, and such a criterion applies to this "additional" category of hybrid formations. These may be compounds or two-word phrases, such as *top manta* (the humorous name given to the street sale of illegal copies of CDs and DVDs, which are placed on a blanket or *manta*), or derivations where the base form is a native item and the suffix is an English one *cueling* (from *colarse*—entering the underground without paying by jumping over the barriers).

As we have noted elsewhere (Campos 2011), one of the most interesting features of false Anglicisms is their occurrence in a number of languages, often with French being the common origin or mediator. This is best exemplified again by *footing*, probably one of the most widely known false Anglicisms, which was created in French and then exported into Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, amongst other languages. However, as noted elsewhere (Balteiro and Campos 2012), this has not always been recognised by the literature, which tends to analyse them separately (i.e., each study tends to concentrate on only one receiving language). Note that even the famous *Dictionary of European Anglicisms* (Görlach 2001) sometimes fails to mention the fact that an item might have been transmitted via an intermediate language. This may have its implications for the delimitation of elements and their typology, since the same word may be considered a "true" Anglicism in one language by one scholar and, simultaneously, a false Anglicism in another language by others. For example, Furiassi remarks that *nightclubbing* and *infotainment* (2010, 87), which are considered false Anglicisms by some Italian dictionaries, are perfectly documented in English—according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (henceforth OED), *nightclubbing* is recorded as early as 1925, or *infotainment* in 1980. As for sports, the cases of *center-back* and *down period*, amongst others (which will be discussed below) are further examples of the difficulties in the identification of false Anglicisms. Of course, the opposite process may also be found, with many bilingual dictionaries dealing with false Anglicisms as if they were true English words. See, for instance, the case of the Spanish *holding*, quoted by Balteiro (2011a), who has reported lexicographical tools wrongly listing it in English with the Spanish meaning of "holding company."

In the field of sports, this is also the case with the Spanish expression *gol average* (see below), which according to the *Oxford Spanish Dictionary* (henceforth OSD) means the same as "goal average" in English (in Spanish, though, it is used with the meaning of "goal difference"). Obviously, this could also be due to the fact that lexicographers are always trying to catch up with usage, and some uses may not have reached the OSD yet, but are present in some bilingual dictionaries more in contact with authentic specialised usage. As a result, extreme caution must be exercised when considering a word a false Anglicism; in other words, the bilingual lexicographer who seems to have made a mistake may be later hailed as the first to locate a genuine usage of a word in English.

3. The Spanish Language of Sports: Anglicisms and False Anglicisms

Historically, the expansion of sports at an international level has coincided with a period (from the twentieth century onwards) in which English has become the lingua franca *par excellence*, which means that international federations, major international events and their media coverage almost always use English in order to overcome language differences. As Balteiro has pointed out (2011b), most of the prestigious news agencies reporting sports events, such as Associated Press, Reuters and United Press International, are from English-speaking countries or use English as their only language (Asia News Network in Thailand, Media Line in the Lebanon), or as one of their working languages (most of the other major agencies, such as France Presse, EFE and Interfax). As is the case with the transmission of loanwords having to do with culture or science, the fact that a given referent comes from a specific country or culture causes the receiving language to borrow the terminology as well, and many sports were born or popularised in English-speaking countries, for example, rugby, hockey, volleyball, cricket, football and basketball.

As a result of all this, it is only logical that most of the loanwords in the Spanish language of sports should come from English, with various degrees of adaptation, from direct borrowing (*rugby*) to visible morphological, spelling or phonological adaptations (*fútbol*), or even coexisting outcomes for the same source item, as in the case of the English word *volleyball*, for which a number of different Spanish-speaking countries have come up with *voleibol* or *voléibol*, but also spelling adaptations such as *vólleyball, volleiball,* or even clippings like *vóley* or *volley* (the latter also used in English). Given this situation, the Spanish Academy, who were quite reluctant to accept Anglicisms in the twentieth century, attempted to provide alternative solutions: some of them have generally succeeded, such as *baloncesto* ["basketball"], whereas in other cases the "naturalised" proposal has had little success (as in the case of failed attempts like *balompié* instead of *fútbol,* or *balonvolea* for *voleibol*). In the latter cases, the Real Academia has decided to include such Anglicisms in its editions of the DRAE, which sometimes reflect the coexistence we mentioned earlier (*baseball, béisbol*).

When analysing the changing fortunes of Anglicisms versus native lexical material, the controversy always arises as to why a speaker of a language would prefer to use the English word instead of the one available in his or her language. This is one of the reasons why false Anglicisms are particularly interesting: if the word was genuinely English, we might understand that its usage may be due to immediacy, careless translation, frequent exposure to English, etc. Nevertheless, the false Anglicism does not triumph because of translation or foreign exposure, since often there is no "authentic" English source from which the recipient language has copied its material. The reasons for the use of false Anglicisms are purely the attractiveness and prestige of the English language, due to its connotations of power, fashion, technology, etc., which make speakers "imitate" English models through autonomous creations, modification of existing English material, or the adoption of English-like lexis coming from other languages. For instance, in the case of sports, it could be said that, if Spanish sports commentators use *voleibol* instead of *balonvolea*, it may be due not to the prestige of English, but to the pressure of the use of *volleyball* by international federations and the media. However, if Spanish uses a word like *recordman* or *recordwoman*, this usage cannot be attributed to the influence of English terminology, since the original item is *record holder*. Although the weight of the mediating language may not be completely disregarded, the popularization of these lexical items may not be due to the fact that they sound English (which they are not), but to an *alleged* English origin, which is probably what makes them so attractive.

4. The Present Study

4.1. Methodology and objectives

In this study, we have collected a sample of false Anglicisms in the Spanish language of sports from the main modern lexicographical sources of Anglicisms in Spanish: Rodríguez González and Lillo Buades (2009) and Görlach (2001), after eliminating some items which are, in our opinion, wrongly labelled as false Anglicisms by such sources. The choice of this area is motivated by the fact that Anglicisms have been widely analysed in this field, but until very recently, studies seemed to assume that all seemingly English words were genuine Anglicisms. This has in part changed thanks to a number of studies which specifically mention that some of these are pseudoanglicisms (e.g., Balteiro 2011b, Rodríguez González 2012). However, our point is that precisely the influence of English on other languages is best proved not in those cases in which the use of a word would be "logical," i.e., where the item borrowed is a genuine English word, but in those proposals the success of which is merely due to their English-like appearance. These words may have developed through autonomous creation, or thanks to a number of processes which show how the recipient language has integrated the word and started to modify it on its own. This

study will comment on some of the most salient examples of such differences, and give examples, where appropriate, of the same false Anglicism in other European languages.

As was mentioned earlier, the sources for our analysis were two lexicographic works, one specifically dealing with Spanish Anglicisms, i.e., Rodríguez González and Lillo Buades's *Nuevo Diccionario de Anglicismos* (2009; henceforth NDA), and Görlach's *Dictionary of European Anglicisms* (2001; henceforth DEA). The procedure was as follows: in both cases, a first selection was made of all Anglicisms related to sports from these two sources. Then, the material was filtered: the NDA, for instance, provides plenty of adapted and unadapted forms, but except for a few cases, it does not distinguish between genuine and false Anglicisms, and even some of the false Anglicisms are identified as genuine English words. The DEA has the same problem (occasional mislabelling as false Anglicisms), and also fails to mention that some of the words appear in more languages than those documented in the dictionary; more specifically, some of the items identified in various European languages also occur in Spanish (also as false Anglicisms) without any mention of this being made in the DEA. Therefore, in all cases, each item was considered in order to verify whether the word as such does exist in English, or if it is a false Anglicism. In the case of single-word items (e.g., *cross*) the main criterion adopted was its presence in the latest online version of the OED. As for multiple-word expressions, a number of online searches were conducted in order to verify if websites located in English-speaking countries might use the term (although we are aware of the problems that may arise from using the Internet in lexicographic research, as noted by Grefenstette 2002). This led us to discard some of the items which the DEA originally labelled as false Anglicisms, such as *center-back* (e.g., "Charlie Mulgrew is Celtic's best centre-back . . . just find him the right partner, says Tosh McKinlay"), *down period* ("Every great player throughout history has a down period in their game"), *powerlifting* (it is precisely the name of the sport given by its Federation) or *punching ball*. Similarly, *Fosbury flop,* according to the DEA, is also a false Anglicism because it is now obsolete and "flop" is preferred. Nevertheless, it was also excluded from the sample: it is true that the ellipsis does occur in English, but the form *Fosbury flop* is still widely found. Also, we excluded items which have been re-imported by English from the speech of non-native speakers. For instance, *parapenting*, which is formed in English on the basis of *parapente* (borrowed from French), is recorded by the OED as early as 1988, and therefore, although diachronically the word might not be English, today it is pointless to consider it a false Anglicism. Finally, *corner*, which is very often quoted as a false Anglicism for "corner kick," was reported, even by the OED, as early as 1887.

Concerning types of false Anglicisms, and considering our previous remarks on additional categories, the items in our sample may be classified into five groups:

(1) autonomous creations (ten cases): *autogol*, *antidoping*, *basket average*, *carting*, *footing/futin/ fúting*, *linier* ["linesman"], *looping*, *minibasket*, *recordman/récordman*, *recordwoman*. This category includes compounds (*recordman*) and derivatives (*footing*, *linier*).

(2) abbreviation (twenty-three cases): *all star* ["all star game"], *basket*, *blocking*, *body*, *bodyboard*, *brush*, *bungee/bungy*, *crack*, *cros/cross*, *fly* ["fly shot"], *fun*, *funboard*, *lift*, *jogging* ["jogging shoes"], *mountain-bike*, *off-road* ["off-road racing/off-roading"], *passing* ["passing shot"], *punching*, *skateboard*, *snowboard*, *sparring* ["sparring partner"], *surf*, *tenis* ["tennis shoes"]. This category covers both compound ellipses (*cross*, for "cross-country racing," *crack*, from "crack player," *tenis*, from "tennis shoes," and *fun*, for "funboard") and clippings (*mountain-bike*, *skateboard*, *snowboard* and *surf*, from "mountain biking," "skateboarding," "snowboarding" and "surfing," respectively), and thus avoids any confusion caused by whether the missing element is a word, a free or a bound form.

(3) morphological changes (one case): *aerobic*. This category, which is not explicitly found in Furiassi's typology, is partially mentioned by other authors (e.g., "conversions of existing English words," in Gottlieb 2005, 164), and includes zero-derivation and changes of secondary word-class—although the latter are often not considered false Anglicisms by some authors (see, for instance, Furiassi 2010, 53).

(4) semantic shifts (six cases): *challenger* ["challenge"], *derbi/derby*, *goal average/goal-average*, *mister/mister*, *net*, *pressing* ["pressure"].

(5) hybrid formations (three cases): *cróner*, *goming*, *puenting*.

As we shall see in the discussion that follows, most of the five types are not "pure" false Anglicisms if we consider the receiving language exclusively, in the sense that they may have developed in one non-English language and then been borrowed by others. Such is the case of *recordman*, which appeared first in French and was then borrowed by other languages, such as Spanish and Italian (but not Portuguese, which prefers the hybrid *recordista*). In that respect, many of these items might be seen not as false Anglicisms, but as Gallicisms. However, if we consider all the reasons for the acceptance and use of Anglicisms and false Anglicisms (pure and otherwise) analysed in previous sections, their "re-importation" is not due to the prestige and attractiveness of the mediating language, but of English. In other words, if Spanish has borrowed *footing* from French, it is not because it sounds French (which would be the reason why proper Gallicisms are used in Spanish, such as *amateur*), but because it appears to be English. Therefore, although technically many false Anglicisms might be considered Gallicisms, we still think that they deserve to be analysed as false Anglicisms in Spanish.

4.2. Discussion of results

In this section we shall comment on only a few of the elements found (due to space restrictions), following the five-type classification made earlier. In some cases, as we shall see, there are elements which may be categorised in different ways, depending on the approach; where applicable, remarks will be made on such possibilities, and potential arguments in favour of the different interpretations will be given.

4.2.1. Autonomous creations

As pointed out above, some of these creations have not appeared for the first time in Spanish, but rather in other languages, such as French, and it is difficult to precisely find their first Spanish attestation (since, unlike "native" words, Spanish dictionaries have not traditionally been enthusiastic about including Anglicisms). This is the case of the already mentioned *footing* and *recordman/recordwoman*, but also others, such as *carting*. Other cases are clearly not French, such as *autogol* ["own goal"], since the word for 'goal' in French is *but*. However, it may prove difficult to classify the spelling adaptation *autogol* as an Anglicism, since *auto-* ["self"] is a productive Spanish combining form (*autoadhesivo, autoportante,* etc.) and it might well be seen as a hybrid form, although speakers might still consider it the anglicised alternative to the longer phrase "gol en propia puerta/meta." The same could be said, therefore, about *minibasket* ("biddy basketball" in the US, "mini-basketball" in the UK), which might be considered an autonomous creation, but also a hybrid formed by *mini-* and the clipping *basket* ("mini-" is a productive prefix in Spanish), or even a clipped form, from the English "mini-basketball." Interestingly enough, the abbreviation may be taken to an extreme, and players and fans often refer to this sport as *mini*: "El Mini es el último reducto de pureza, la última esperanza de que un deporte de formación distinto es posible" ["Mini-basketball is the last oasis of purity, the last chance for a different formative sport"].

Other candidates for genuine coinage of false Anglicisms in Spanish are *basket average* ["aggregate score"], which does not occur in French, and appears to have been formed by analogy with *goal average*, a term coined for football and then exported to other sports (although, as shall be seen below, *average* in this case does not mean "average," but "difference").

Probably the most interesting group of items within the general category of autonomous creations is that based on the *-ing* suffix. As is the case with false Anglicisms in most European languages, many of these were actually coined in (and imported from) French, such as the orthographically adapted *carting*: "Dans les environs du Touquet, il y a un Karting outdoor, où vous pourrez faire quelques tours de piste" ["In the surroundings of Touquet, there is a go carting track, where you may take a few laps"]. However, we may very well consider that the most powerful form of false anglicisation is not any specific word, but the *-ing* suffix itself, given its productivity, not only in French but also in Spanish (as seen, for instance, in recent hybrid formations like *buzoning* ["mailbox advertising"] and *poming* ["door handle advertising"]). In our sample, however, there are few cases of genuine autonomous creations in Spanish, and they do not usually correspond to traditional sports, but to outdoor activities (*goming*, *puenting*), and are in fact more accurately loanblends due to the presence of a Spanish baseform, as we shall see below.

Within this section, *antidoping* must also be considered; frequently occurring in Spanish with the meaning of "dope test": "Casualidad o no, para el antidoping de ese partido Maradona volvió a ser sorteado" ["Coincidence or not, Maradona was picked out

again for the dope test after that match"]. This item can also often be found in other languages, such as French: "Ceux qui mériteraient d'être sanctionnés c'est les experts de l'antidoping pour incompetence" ["Those who would deserve a punishment are the dope test experts, for sheer incompetence"]; and Italian: "L'incredibile rivelazione . . . è stata scoperta dopo l'antidoping effettuato nella stessa partita" ["The astounding revelation came out after the dope test in the same match"], etc. The question might arise here as to whether it is an autonomous creation, or an ellipsis from an alleged "antidoping test" form in English. In this case, we are inclined to follow the NDA, according to which it is not an elliptical formation, but an autonomous creation or a hybrid in French, where *anti-* would have been added to *doping*. This could be substantiated by the fact that "antidoping test" is not featured at all in the OED, nor in the British National Corpus (which does contain nineteen instances of "dope test"). It is true that "anti-doping test" is now becoming frequent in English, but this could be an example of re-borrowing, which has not fully replaced "dope test" (yet). For instance, regarding the recent controversy with the former cyclist Lance Armstrong, in the *New York Times* we were able to find the following: "While not a conventional antidoping test, Usada concluded that the findings build a compelling argument consistent with blood doping" (11 October, 2012). However, in the same article "doping test" or "drug test" are used more often.

4.2.2. Abbreviations

Within this category there are two possibilities: clipping of a bound form (*surf* < "surfing"), or shortening, that is, elimination of one of the initially constituting parts of a compound, as in *basket* (< "basketball," but also from "basketball shoes"). The former is interesting, since the increased use of clipping in Spanish as a word-formation mechanism may be seen as an Anglicism in itself (see, for instance, Rodríguez González 1975).

Basket alternates with the orthographically adapted *basquet* or *básquet* (as accepted by the DRAE), and enjoys great popularity, including the names of specialised magazines (*Gigantes del basket*) and top division Spanish teams (*Bilbao Basket*, *Valencia Basket*). In this case, the belief that the word is a genuine English one is reinforced by the existence of international basketball leagues in which speakers of languages other than English are likely to encounter the word being used. In France, the premier league is called *Ligue Nationale de Basket* (www.lnb.fr), and in Pro A (top) category for the 2011-2012 season, the full name of nine out of the sixteen teams contained the word *basket*; in Italy, one of the leading websites is called "www.playbasket.it," and the name of the professional players' association is *Giocatori Italiani Basket Associati.* In fact, one of the most popular radio programmes currently on Spanish radio is called *Playbasket*, and there are frequent uses in English by non-natives:

> Get a taste of the best basket in the Palau. This pass gives you 1 ticket for 3 different regular ACB League and Euroleague matches.

> Air One is official sponsor and carrier of Cimberio Varese and Bennet Cantù, two leading *basket* teams in the *Italian* Basketball League.

4.2.3. Morphological changes

Under this heading we have classified the case of *aerobic/aeróbic*: "La 8ª plaza en el mundial de Aeróbic" ["The eighth place in the world championship of Aerobics"]. Arguably, this could be seen as a case of semantic shift or abbreviation, as the word could probably be considered an ellipsis of the noun phrase *aerobic exercise*. However, it appears that Spanish speakers have eliminated what they interpret as a plural form, although for Rodríguez González this may have been due to the awkwardness of the /ks/ consonantic group for Spaniards (2012, 135). This wrong perception by non-native speakers that the *-s* in English nouns ending in *-ics* is a number morpheme may be confirmed by the frequent elimination of such element in English as a lingua franca (for instance, a Google search of "about politic and" offered 15,400 hits in October 2014).

4.2.4. Semantic shifts

Quite frequently, an original English term may acquire a different meaning in the receiving language, such as *net* used for the genuine "let" in tennis. Some examples are clearly different in meaning, such as *mister*, which is often used as "coach" in Spanish football, whereas in other cases the semantic shifts are sometimes not immediately visible from the context, but can lead to confusion.

The case of *goal average* (and its variants *goalaverage, goalaveraje* and *golaveraje*) is a salient one, because the meaning in Spanish is significantly different. In English, "goal average," according to the OED*,* refers to "the sum of the goals scored by a team divided by the goals scored against it" (s.v. goal average), as shown in examples like "the title was lost to Ely Rangers by goal average of just 0.01," as opposed to "goal difference," that is, "the difference between the number of goals scored by a team in a competition and the number of goals scored against it" (s.v. goal difference). In Spanish *goal average* is used with the meaning of "goal difference," as clearly shown by examples like "marcha en la primera posición con doce puntos en cuatro partidos, así como un gol average de +7" ["topping the league table with twelve points in four matches, and a goal difference of +7"]; the same seems to happen in French: "Lors de la saison 2009/10, à la 18ème journée, on avait un goal average *de* +15" ["In the 2009 season, on the eighteenth round, there was a goal difference of +17"]). The reason this term is used in Spain (and other countries) with this meaning is that, as pointed out by Murray and Murray the method of calculating standings in England when two teams were level on points until 1976 was goal average (i.e., number of goals scored divided by number of goals conceded), and this was then replaced by "goal difference" (1998, 10). Although some Spanish scholars observe this difference (e.g., Lorenzo 1996, 63), this

confusion between the original and the false Anglicism is encouraged, for example, by sources like the Real Academia's *Diccionario Panhispánico de Dudas* (2005), whose entry for "goal average" reads as follows:

> Adaptación gráfica de la expresión inglesa *goal average,* que significa, en ciertos deportes, especialmente en el fútbol, "diferencia de tantos marcados y recibidos, que se utiliza para deshacer el empate entre equipos con el mismo número de puntos en la clasificación" (s.v. golaveraje) ["Spelling adaptation of the English expression *goal average*, which means, in certain sports, especially football, 'difference between goals scored and received, used to resolve ties between teams having the same number of points in the league'"].

As can be seen, the wording is at best confusing, because "which" may refer to "adaptation" or "the English expression *goal average*." However, no effort is made to explain that the English expression does not actually mean this, although it is true that no mention of the difference is made in the same dictionary in clearly false Anglicisms like *parking*. As a result of all this, we can encounter in uses of English as a lingua franca examples of "goal average" with the clear meaning of "goal difference":

> Final standings
> Champions: Brazil, with 6 points and +5 in goal-average to Portugal and Mexico
> Runner up: Portugal, with 6 points and 0 in goal average against Brazil and Mexico
> 3rd place: Mexico, with 6 points and -2 in goal average against Brazil and Portugal
> 4th place: France, with 0 points

4.2.5. Hybrid formations

While the previous categories are the "traditional" types of false Anglicisms in the literature, if we adopt a wider perspective beyond a mere look at the constituting elements, we cannot disregard the expressive power of combinations of English and native, i.e., Spanish, lexical items. In fact, probably one of the most interesting features is that, contrary to what might be expected, the combination (usually derivation) does not always take place between a foreign base and a Spanish affix, as in *rockero*, but rather foreign suffixes are embraced by the recipient language. It must be remembered that many authors (e.g., Winford 2003) do not consider these formations (called "derivational blends") real Anglicisms, but examples of language contact. Nevertheless, we have decided to devote a short section to them because we believe the reasons behind their formation are the same, and thus lead to the adoption of Anglicisms and false Anglicisms.

In this category, the two main representatives are *goming* ["bungee jumping"] and *puenting* ["bridge swinging"]. Both have been created by adding the *-ing* suffix, which has become very productive also in other languages (see, for instance, Lewis 2003). In

Spanish, as is the case in French (as pointed out by Uvírová 1998, 203), this suffix has become synonymous with "[sports] activity," as can be seen by humorous formations like the abovementioned *cueling* ["jumping over entrance turnstiles"] or *balconing* ["jumping from a hotel balcony into the swimming pool"]. Interestingly, these words are genuine Spanish creations, which neither exist in English nor can be attributed to borrowing from French, where the expression for *goming* is *saut a l'elastique*, whereas *balconing* is a practice created in Spain. Therefore, these hybrids could be attributed to the same process as false Anglicisms (unlike *footing*, which is often described as a Gallicism).

The case of *croner* (also *cróner*), for "time trial cyclist" evidences a use of the English suffix *-er* which is not due in this particular case to direct foreign influence from the English equivalent. This suffix has some productive power in Spanish with other autonomous formations (for instance, in Argentina and Uruguay a *rugbier* is a rugby player), probably supported by the similarity with the Spanish equivalent (*-ero*). In this latter case, it could be argued that the *-ero* form preceded the *-er* one; however, **cronero* has never been used, and thus it appears that *croner* has been formed by direct analogy with the real Anglicism *esprínter/sprinter*.

5. Conclusions

In the sphere of language contact, false Anglicisms are an interesting phenomenon. As we have seen in previous sections, they are of great interest to linguists for two reasons: from the point of view of semantics and morphology, they tell interesting stories of lexical evolution away from English, as a result of usage and/or contact with the recipient languages. Moreover, in sociolinguistic terms they offer abundant examples of the extreme influence that English exerts on other languages, beyond mere translation, in the same way as Spanish (and other European) poets did in the Renaissance, not only translating Italian poetry, but also writing poems in what they thought was "the Italian fashion" (*al itálico modo*).

The power of these words does not lie in their being English, or in their coming from English, for sometimes such is not the case: they are attractive because they *look* English, and therefore they convey all the attractiveness of a language associated with power, advancement and prestige. Also in the case of sports, English is the international lingua franca used by the media, international federations and players; speakers feel it only natural that a word that *sounds* English should be acceptable when talking or writing about sports, even if it has no immediate justification in the English language. These false Anglicisms may take different shapes, and may arise through abbreviation, semantic shifts, hybridization, autonomous creation, or even through morphological modification of English originals, but they all share the flavour and the force that stems from their "Englishness."

We are conscious of the limitations of this study: firstly, although the intention was to examine false Anglicisms as labelled in existing repertoires, the results are based on a

relatively small repertoire (forty-three items, from two lexicographical works), which may not fully capture the variety of false Anglicisms used in sports. This could be remedied by using wider corpora, although in this case it would be necessary to prove that the words are seen as Anglicisms in the first place, which could be problematic in some cases. Indeed, as Furiassi and Holland have pointed out (2007), no automatic procedure has been found to extract Anglicisms (false or genuine) from texts in another language.

We are also aware that this, like any study on false Anglicisms, is but a synchronic look at a given stage of the evolution of languages; many of these items may cease to count as false Anglicisms over time, sometimes because they are obsolete in the recipient language, or because they become part of the English language, either through re-borrowing or through the natural evolution of English (as in the case of abbreviations). Undoubtedly, the fact that English is a lingua franca may cause it to influence other languages, as has been widely studied, but also to incorporate some false Anglicisms from such languages in the manner we have seen here.

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APPENDIX: SOURCES OF QUOTATIONS IN THE TEXT

(all websites accessed September 2014)

aerobic

"la 8ª plaza en el mundial de Aeróbic" (http://aragongym.com/historiaold/historia-gimnastas-aerobic/)

antidoping

"Casualidad o no, para el antidoping de ese partido Maradona volvió a ser sorteado." (http://edeportes.es/futbol/diez-anos-sin-el-mas-grande-del-futbol-mundial)

"While not a conventional antidoping test, Usada concluded that the findings build a compelling argument consistent with blood doping." (http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/12/sports/cycling/how-lance-armstrong-beat-cyclings-drug-tests.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

"Ceux qui mériteraient d'être sanctionnés c'est les experts de l'antidoping pour incompétence." (http://www.lefigaro.fr/sport/2012/10/22/02001-20121022QCMWWW00540-les-sanctions-contre-lance-armstrong-vous-semblent-elles-justifiees.php?pagination=6)

"L'incredibile rivelazione . . . è stata scoperta dopo l'antidoping effettuato nella stessa partita." (http://www.calciomercatoweb.it/2011/09/2is8/doping-record-per-il-rabotnicki-tutta-la-rosa-e-dopata/)

basket

> "Get a taste of the best basket in the Palau. This pass gives you 1 ticket for 3 different regular ACB League and Euroleague matches." (http://arxiu.fcbarcelona.cat/web/english/socis/avantatges/gaudeix_espectacle/palau/paquets_basquet.html)
>
> "Air One is official sponsor and carrier of Cimberio Varese and Bennet Cantù, two leading basket teams in the Italian Basketball League." (https://www.flyairone.it/EN-EU/who-we-are/partners/basket.aspx)

centre-back

> "Charlie Mulgrew is Celtic's best centre-back . . . just find him the right partner, says Tosh McKinlay" (Daily Record, 26 September 2011)

carting

> "Dans les environs du Touquet, il y a un Karting outdoor, où vous pourrez faire quelques tours de piste." (http://www.ciao.fr/Le_Touquet__Avis_156649)

down period

> "Every great player throughout history has a down period in their game." (http://news.bbc.co.uk/sportacademy/hi/fun/chat/newsid_3919000/3919817.stm)

Fosbury flop

> "Four decades later, we're all still doing the Fosbury Flop." (*The Independent,* 27 July 2008)

goal average

> "[M]archa en la primera posición con doce puntos en cuatro partidos, así como un gol average de +7." (http://www.intergoles.com/256168-ver-atletico-madrid-juventus-online.html)
>
> "*Lors de la saison 2009/10, à la 18ème journée, on avait un* goal average *de* +15." (http://www.footmarseille.com/5391/om-un-goal-average-qui-peut-inquieter.html)
>
> "The title was lost to Ely Rangers by goal average of just 0.01." (www.clubwebsite.co.uk/cardiffdraconians/History)
>
> "Brazil, with 6 points and +5 in goal-average to Portugal and Mexico." (http://www.beachsoccer.com/news/318)

mini-

> "El Mini es el último reducto de pureza, la última esperanza de que un deporte de formación distinto es posible." (http://puertatras.wordpress.com/2011/05/04/el-ultimo-reducto-de-pureza/)

play volley

> "Carmel High Teams Play 'Volley For The Cure." (http://putnam.dailyvoice.com/sports/carmel-high-teams-play-volley-for-the-cure/596521/)

powerlifting

> "The GBPF was formed out of the powerlifting section of the British Weightlifters Association (BWLA), the original governing body of powerlifting in the UK since the inception of the sport." (http://www.gbpf.org.uk/)

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L1 Use, Lexical Richness, Accuracy and Syntactic Complexity in the Oral Production of CLIL and NON-CLIL Learners of English

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As more focus on communication is promoted in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) classrooms and general proficiency is usually enhanced in these settings, this study aims to explore (i) whether a lower rate of L1 use, as regards interactional strategies and transfer lapses, is found in CLIL learners when compared to NON-CLIL learners; (ii) whether differences exist between both groups in lexical richness (type/token ratio and D), accuracy (word order and correct production of the definite and indefinite article) and syntactic complexity (production of simple and complex sentences and variety of tenses used); and (iii) whether L1 use correlates with lexical richness, accuracy and syntactic complexity. The analysis of an oral production task of two groups of fourteen year-old Basque/Spanish bilingual students learning L3 English indicates that the CLIL group made lower use of L1. The CLIL group also obtained better scores in lexical richness and general proficiency as well as in the correct production of definite and indefinite articles and in the use of complex clauses. No correlation was observed between L1 use and accuracy or syntactic complexity, suggesting that a decrease in L1 use is not always related to better performance in specific aspects of language or the use of more complex language.

Keywords: CLIL; L1 use; accuracy; syntactic complexity; lexical richness; general proficiency

. . .

Uso de la L1, riqueza léxica, precisión y complejidad sintáctica en la producción oral de aprendices de inglés en contextos AICLE y NO-AICLE

Este trabajo tiene como objetivo explorar las diferencias entre un grupo de aprendices en un contexto de Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lenguas Extranjeras (AICLE) y uno en NO-AICLE con respecto a (i) si el grupo AICLE hace un menor uso de la L1 en contextos de estrategias de interacción y de errores de transferencia en comparación con el grupo NO-

AICLE; (ii) si existen diferencias entre ambos grupos en riqueza léxica (type/token ratio y D), precisión (orden de palabras y la producción de los artículos definido e indefinido) y complejidad sintáctica (producción de oraciones principales y subordinadas y variedad de tiempos verbales utilizados); y (iii) si el uso de la L1 se correlaciona con la riqueza léxica, la precisión y la complejidad sintáctica. El análisis de una tarea de producción oral llevada a cabo por dos grupos (AICLE y NO-AICLE) de bilingües vasco-castellano de catorce años, aprendices de inglés como L3 indica que el grupo AICLE hace un menor uso de la L1. También hemos observado que el grupo de AICLE obtiene mejores resultados en riqueza léxica y nivel general. Con respecto a las medidas de precisión y complejidad sintáctica, encontramos diferencias entre ambos grupos solamente en la producción correcta de los artículos definido e indefinido y en el uso de las oraciones subordinadas. No hemos observado ninguna correlación entre el uso de la L1 y la precisión y complejidad sintácticas, lo que sugiere que un menor uso de la L1 no está siempre relacionado con un mejor rendimiento en aspectos específicos del lenguaje ni con la complejidad del mismo.

Palabras clave: AICLE; uso de la L1; precisión; complejidad sintáctica; riqueza léxica; competencia general

1. INTRODUCTION

Cross-linguistic influence is one of the topics that pervades the third language (L3) acquisition literature written from a psycholinguistic perspective (García Mayo 2012b).[1] The study of cross-linguistic influence in L3 acquisition has focused on the identification of the specific conditions that may explain the use of one or more languages when speaking in the L3 and its implications for the organization of the multilingual lexicon (Cenoz 2001, 2003; Dewaele 2001; Hammarberg 2001). The conditions in which cross-linguistic influence takes place are determined by several factors (Cenoz 2001): (i) psychotypology or perception of the linguistic distance among the languages (Bild and Swain 1989), (ii) proficiency level in the languages involved (Ringbom 1987), (iii) age (Cenoz 2001), (iv) context (Dewaele 2001), (v) foreign language effect (De Angelis and Selinker 2001) and (vi) recency (Hammarberg 2001). More recently, Rothman and Cabrelli-Amaro (2010) have claimed that language level (phonetic/phonological, lexical and morphosyntactic levels) is another factor which may intervene in the selection of the source language (see Martínez Adrián, Gallardo del Puerto and Gutiérrez Mangado (2013) for a study conducted in the Basque context in this respect). Nevertheless, it is very difficult to identify one single factor which determines cross-linguistic influence in L3 acquisition (Cenoz 2001; Murphy 2005; García Mayo 2012b).

Cross-linguistic influence has also been related to several functions (Williams and Hammarberg 1997; Hammarberg 2001), different levels of intentionality and automaticity (Poulisse and Bongaerts 1994) and different language modes (Grosjean 1998). On the basis of the different dimensions of transfer, Cenoz proposes two "extreme positions": interactional strategies and transfer lapses (2003, 3). As defined by Cenoz, "[i]nteractional strategies are intentional switches into languages other than the target language (TL). The multilingual speaker makes the decision to use a language other than the TL when s/he is asking for help from her/his interlocutor or making comments about her/his own production" (2003, 3). She describes transfer lapses as "[n]on-intentional switches which are not preceded by a pause or a false start and can be regarded as automatic (see Poulisse and Bongaerts 1994, 3)."

Examples of interactional strategies from Basque and transfer lapses from Spanish are shown in (1) and (2), respectively:

(1)   CHILD: *eh nola da oreina?* ["How do you say deer?"]

(2)   CHILD: # *and # and the dog salt /salt/ the window* [*saltar*, "jump"] (Cenoz 2003, 5)

This paper will follow the categorization of transfer in terms of interactional strategies and transfer lapses depicted in Cenoz (2003). As more focus on communication is promoted in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) classrooms and general proficiency is usually enhanced in these settings, we seek to explore whether a lower rate of first language (L1) use as regards interactional strategies and transfer lapses is found in CLIL learners when compared to NON-CLIL learners while they narrate a story in L3 English. In addition, another goal is to investigate whether differences exist between CLIL and NON-CLIL learners with respect to lexical richness, accuracy (word order and correct production of the definite and indefinite article), as well as syntactic complexity (production of simple and complex sentences and variety of tenses used) in the L3. A previous study carried out with the same sample group revealed no statistically significant differences when learners were tested on the use of null subjects, null objects and negation. However, the CLIL and the NON-CLIL groups analyzed did differ with respect to the use of placeholders.[2] This paper constitutes a follow-up to the previous paper and attempts to shed more light on the acquisition of formal aspects of language by CLIL and NON-CLIL learners. Finally, as previous studies carried out in CLIL and NON-CLIL settings have concluded that there is a decrease in L1 use as TL proficiency increases (Herwig 2001; Navés, Miralpeix and Celaya 2005; Serra 2007; Agustín Llach 2009; Lázaro Ibarrola and García Mayo 2012), our third goal will be to study whether L1 use correlates with lexical richness, accuracy and syntactic complexity.

This paper is organized as follows. It begins with an overview of studies dealing with the use of the L1 in interactional strategies and transfer lapses in CLIL and NON-CLIL learners in written and oral production. The next section describes empirical research studies comparing CLIL and NON-CLIL learners with respect to general proficiency as well as specific linguistic features. The main research questions of the study are subsequently addressed, and the methodology of the study then described. Next the results are presented and discussed and the paper finishes with the main conclusions to be drawn from the study.

2. L1 Use in Interactional Strategies and Transfer Lapses in NON-CLIL and CLIL Learners

Several NON-CLIL studies have focused on both the use of interactional strategies and transfer lapses (Cenoz 2003; Muñoz 2007). Cenoz (2003) examined the influence of two previously known languages (Basque and Spanish) on the acquisition of English as L3 by primary school children at two testing times in an oral narration task. She reported that learners made use of Basque as a source language in

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[2] Placeholders in this sense refer to the insertion of *is* as an agreement morpheme, as in the following example: "the boy *is* come."

interactional strategies. The use of Basque was influenced by its use as the school language, the interlocutor's knowledge of Basque or the level of informality in which the conversation took place. In contrast, use of Spanish was favoured in the case of transfer lapses (as in Cenoz 2001). Factors such as linguistic typology, general sociolinguistic context (Spanish as the majority language) or individual differences could be more important in this case.

Similarly, Muñoz (2007) examined lexical transfer (borrowings and foreignizings) and code-switching in the oral production of English by Catalan-Spanish bilingual learners who had learned French as the first foreign language at school. Spanish and Catalan were the only source languages for transfer. Catalan-dominant learners transferred from Catalan, Spanish-dominant from Spanish and family bilinguals from both languages. On the other hand, learners code-switched into Catalan with much higher frequency than they did into Spanish. This seemed to be motivated by contextual factors: the school setting and the interlocutor. Catalan was the language used in the school and the language used by the researchers who were probably considered by the students to be equivalent to teachers. Additionally, Muñoz (2007) concluded that the type of cross-linguistic influence found was more frequent among less proficient learners (see also Ringbom 1987; Möhle 1989; Poulisse 1990).

Other NON-CLIL studies have examined the use of borrowings and lexical inventions and proficiency as a predictor for transfer. Borrowings are more common in the early stages of acquisition when there is a need to communicate and a lack of lexical knowledge in the second language (L2). Learners resort to the L1 as a compensatory communication strategy (Celaya 1992; James 1998; Ecke 2001). Navés, Miralpeix and Celaya (2005) found a decrease in the use of borrowings and lexical inventions as learners progressed in school grade.

In the case of studies conducted in CLIL contexts, some of the studies dealing with L1 use have been carried out with a single group of CLIL learners (Serra 2007; Lázaro Ibarrola and García Mayo 2012), while others have compared CLIL and NON-CLIL groups (Agustín Llach 2009; Celaya and Ruiz de Zarobe 2010). Lázaro Ibarrola and García Mayo (2012) examined the use of L1 in discourse markers and repair sequences as well as the morphosyntactic development of a group of fifteen-year-old students immersed in a CLIL context in the Basque Country. They concluded that L1 use significantly decreased throughout the two-year period studied and that morphosyntax developed significantly. Similarly, Serra (2007) also analyzed the use of repair sequences by German-speaking primary-school children learning Italian or Romansch in a CLIL context. L1 use in repair sequences also dropped as learners gradually gained a better command of the target language. In contrast, Agustín Llach (2009) compared a group of CLIL students to a group of NON-CLIL learners of L2 English in their sixth year of primary education. In general, more lexical transfer (borrowings, coinages and calques) was observed in the NON-CLIL group in a written production task. This author provides two explanations that could account

for this difference. First, CLIL learners displayed a higher command of English as confirmed by the cloze test and reading comprehension task administered. Second, CLIL learners may conceive English as a means of communication rather than a mere subject matter and their written compositions as a communication act, which leads them to a lower use of borrowings as this would hinder communication. Similar results are reported in Celaya and Ruiz de Zarobe (2010) in the case of secondary school adolescents.

However, in general, there is a scarcity of studies comparing CLIL and NON-CLIL approaches in terms of cross-linguistic influence. There is also a lack of studies comparing CLIL and NON-CLIL learners in which both interactional strategies and transfer lapses are examined. Additionally, most studies carried out in CLIL contexts have found a correlation between L1 use and general proficiency in the TL (Serra 2007; Agustín Llach 2009; Lázaro Ibarrola and García Mayo 2012). However, there is a need to examine whether there is also a correlation between L1 use and lexical richness, accuracy and syntactic complexity in the TL use. These questions will be addressed in this paper.

3. Research Outcomes in CLIL

CLIL is an umbrella term that has been adopted by various European researchers and agencies as a generic term for programmes that use a language different from the L1 as a medium of instruction. CLIL implementations are heterogeneous with different contextual factors influencing both their aims and outcomes (Nikula, Dalton-Puffer and Llinares 2013), all of which makes it difficult to pin down the exact limits of the reality that this term refers to (Alejo and Piquer 2010). This diversity of CLIL implementations leads us to restrict the examination of research outcomes to the context in which the study was carried out instead of offering a more general analysis of research findings in CLIL contexts.

Recent investigations carried out in two bilingual communities in Spain (the Basque Country and Catalonia) in which two co-official languages are spoken (Basque and Spanish in the former and Catalan and Spanish in the latter) have revealed that CLIL instruction has clear benefits on the learners' general proficiency. In primary education, Jiménez Catalán, Ruiz de Zarobe and Cenoz (2006) analyzed the acquisition of English by CLIL and NON-CLIL learners and reported that the CLIL groups outperformed the NON-CLIL groups in tasks designed to measure general competence. In secondary education, Ruiz de Zarobe (2008, 2010b) compared the longitudinal oral and written competence of CLIL and NON-CLIL students in their third and fourth years of compulsory secondary education and in post-secondary education. The results from both tasks showed statistically significant differences in favour of CLIL, even when CLIL learners in lower grades were compared to older NON-CLIL students. Similarly, results reported by Lasagabaster (2008) show that a CLIL group in the fourth year of

secondary education significantly outstripped an age-matched NON-CLIL group in grammar, listening, speaking and writing, and even surpassed the results of a NON-CLIL group of older learners. In the Catalonian context, Navés and Victori (2010) carried out two different studies to investigate whether CLIL learners could catch up with older learners one, two or three grades ahead of them, and reported that the CLIL learners at lower grades were as good as or better than the older learners. A recent study that has compared a CLIL group to matching NON-CLIL groups while keeping constant the variable of age at testing and the number of hours of exposure to the TL (one of the main limitations of previous CLIL studies) has also revealed the superiority of CLIL learners when tested on general proficiency (Martínez Adrián and Gutiérrez Mangado 2015).

Nevertheless, the observed benefits of CLIL as regards general proficiency do not extend to all language specific areas. In a study conducted by Gallardo del Puerto, Gómez Lacabex and García Lecumberri (2009) learners' pronunciation was holistically assessed by five naïve English-native monolinguals on the basis of three different nine-point scales: degree of foreign accent (FA), FA comprehension and FA irritation. Differences between the mean scores obtained by the two groups favoured CLIL learners in the case of the communicative effects of FA (comprehension and irritation) but not when degree of FA was considered. Martínez Adrián and Gutiérrez Mangado (2009) examined data from Basque/Spanish bilingual learners of L3 English in CLIL and NON-CLIL contexts in order to test whether L1 transfer effects (the use of null subjects, null objects, insertion of placeholders and negation) would be minimized by participation in a CLIL programme. The results showed that CLIL learners significantly outperformed NON-CLIL learners only in the use of placeholders. The study carried out by García Mayo and Villarreal Olaizola (2010) on the acquisition of inflectional morphology by secondary school learners of L3 English in a CLIL and a NON-CLIL context reported no significant differences between the groups in the development of suppletive and affixal tense and agreement morphemes (third person singular -*s*, past tense -*ed* and auxiliary and copula *be*). Lázaro Ibarrola (2012) studied the morphosyntactic development of a CLIL and a NON-CLIL group of Basque-Spanish adolescents learning English in high-school over a two-year period. Despite the better results obtained by the CLIL group, the improvement was mainly due to higher production of irregular past forms, not inflectional morphemes.

In light of the results observed as regards specific language areas, several researchers have made a call for more focus-on-form in CLIL classrooms (García Mayo 2009, 2012a; Ruiz de Zarobe and Lasagabaster 2010; Basterrechea Lozano and García Mayo 2013; Martínez Adrián, Gallardo del Puerto and Gutiérrez Mangado 2013) in order to promote the better development of particular aspects of language. Content-based and form-focused instructional options need to be counterbalanced so as to provide L2 learners with a range of opportunities to process and negotiate language through content across the curriculum (Lyster 2007, 134).

4. Research Questions

Based on previous findings on the use of the L1 in interactional strategies and transfer lapses (Cenoz 2001, 2003; Muñoz 2007; Lázaro Ibarrola and García Mayo 2012, among others) as well as the lack of differences between CLIL and NON-CLIL learners found with respect to formal aspects of language (Ruiz de Zarobe 2010a), this study addresses the following research questions:

> Question one: Are there any differences between CLIL and NON-CLIL learners with respect to L1 use in terms of interactional strategies and transfer lapses?
>
> Question two: Are there any differences between CLIL and NON-CLIL learners as regards lexical richness, accuracy measures (word order and production of the definite and indefinite article) and syntactic complexity measures (production of simple and complex sentences and variety of tenses used)?
>
> Question three: Does L1 use correlate with lexical richness?
>
> Question four: Does L1 use correlate with both accuracy and syntactic complexity?

5. Methodology

5.1. Participants

The participants were nineteen Basque/Spanish bilingual learners of L3 English in two schools in the Basque Country where Basque is the language of instruction for all subjects except for Spanish and English language courses. The context in which the subjects are immersed has been defined as additive trilingualism (Cenoz and Valencia 1994), where Basque, the language of instruction, is a minority language of Spain. Spanish is the majority language, and English is taught as a foreign language. It is the case that some learners have Basque and Spanish as their L1s, others have Basque as L1 and Spanish as L2, while a third set of learners has Spanish as their L1 and Basque as their L2. In all cases, the additive context in which these learners live leads to balanced bilingualism.

As we can observe in Table 1, the participants were divided into two different groups: a CLIL group (n = 9) and a NON-CLIL group (n = 10). Learners in both groups started learning English at the age of eight and had been learning English for seven years at the time data were collected. Thus both groups share a common age of first exposure and the same number of years of study. However, learners from the CLIL group had received 118 hours of additional exposure to the English language as they were receiving four hours a week of Social Sciences taught in English in addition to the three hours a week of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lessons which their NON-CLIL counterparts were also receiving.[3] At the moment of testing, CLIL learners had

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[3] We are aware of the fact that there is a mismatch in hours of exposure between the groups as the CLIL group had received a higher amount of hours of exposure to English. This is a shortcoming that many studies comparing CLIL and NON-CLIL groups face. For further discussion, see Martínez Adrián and Gutiérrez Mangado (2015).

been exposed to a total of 910 hours of English instruction and NON-CLIL learners to 792 hours. Note that none of these participants had had additional exposure to English through extra-curricular classes, stays abroad, etc.

Table 1. The participants

	Age at testing	Age of first exp.	Length of exp. in years	Total no. hours
CLIL Group (n = 9)	14	8	7	910
NON-CLIL I (n = 10)	14	8	7	792

5.2. Instruments

The data reported in this paper were part of a project where a wide battery of tests was used to collect data from different schools. Among the tests were oral and written production tests as well as a general proficiency test, various questionnaires and grammaticality judgement tests. All students were informed about the nature of the tasks emphasizing that none of the results would have any effect on their marks at school. The data reported here include, firstly, the test on general proficiency—by means of a standardized Oxford Placement Test for listening and grammar (Allan 1992). This task was completed by all students at the same time in their respective classrooms. And secondly, the oral production task, where the students were asked to individually narrate the well-known story "Frog, where are you?" (Bernan and Slobin 1994) with visual support provided by a series of vignettes. The productions lasted an average of sixteen minutes fifty-nine seconds for the NON-CLIL group and thirteen minutes eleven seconds for the CLIL group. All oral production was orthographically transcribed and codified in CHILDES format (McWhinney 2000), a tool widely used for analyzing oral and written speech. They were assessed on L1 use by identifying cases where learners used Basque and/or Spanish in (i) interactional strategies and (ii) transfer lapses. The narrations were also analyzed for lexical richness—using type/token ratio (TTR) and D—,[4] accuracy (word order and production of the definite/indefinite article) and syntactic complexity (production of simple and complex sentences and variety of tenses used).

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[4] Even though several measures of lexical diversity (D) have been proposed, the best known measure is the type-token ratio (TTR), where the number of different words a learner writes in a text is divided by the total number of words in order to determine the degree of variation. However, one of the limitations is that it is sensitive to the length of the text analyzed. Other measures such as the Guiraud index (Guiraud 1960), D (Malvern et al. 2004), and the measure of textual lexical diversity (MTLD) (McCarthy and Jarvis, 2010), among others, have been developed to solve this limitation. When analyzing texts of one-hundred tokens or more, D and MTLD should be used (McCarthy and Jarvis 2007, 2010). At present, the trend in research is to use different measures to obtain more information. Thus, in the present study, we have chosen TTR as well as D, taking into account that the length of the type of texts analyzed ranges from 135 to 393 tokens.

6. Results

6.1. Oxford Placement Test

Table 2 presents the results of the Oxford Placement Test. As can be observed, the CLIL and the NON-CLIL groups differed in terms of general proficiency. The CLIL group was in a lower intermediate level and the NON-CLIL group was categorized as a "basic-extremely limited user" (Allan 1992).

Table 2. Oxford Placement Test

	Mean	SD
CLIL	99.33	15.81
NON-CLIL	94.00	13.94

6.2. The oral production task

6.2.1. L1 use in interactional strategies and transfer lapses

Table 3 presents the mean number of L1 uses in both groups:

Table 3. Total L1 use

	Mean	SD	T-test	p-value[5]
CLIL	4.33	3.50		
NON-CLIL	32.50	25.62	-3.441	0.007*

The results of the T-test revealed statistically significant differences in favour of the CLIL group who had a lower use of the L1 when interactional strategies and transfer lapses were taken together.

On the basis of these overall results, we decided to break down total L1 use into interactional strategies and transfer lapses. As for interactional strategies (Table 4), the CLIL group used the L1 less than the NON-CLIL group.

Table 4. Total L1 use in interaction

	Mean	SD	T-test	p-value[6]
CLIL	3.67	3.32		
NON-CLIL	23.20	18.20	-3.333	0.008*

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[5] Statistical significance is indicated at < .05 (*) level.
[6] Statistical significance is indicated at < .05 (*) level.

When transfer lapses were examined (Table 5), we observed that, again, the CLIL group made lower use of the L1 although the difference did not reach statistical significance.

Table 5. Total L1 use in transfer lapses

	Mean	SD	T-test	p-value[7]
CLIL	0.67	0.71		
			-2.141	0.061#
NON-CLIL	9.30	12.73		

It is also worth noting that standard deviation figures were considerably high in the NON-CLIL group (both in interaction and transfer lapses), which indicates that individual learners behave differently with respect to the use of the first languages in L3 oral production. This seems to confirm the importance of individual differences in the use of transfer (Odlin 1989; Cenoz 2001; Muñoz 2007; Martínez Adrián, Gallardo del Puerto and Gutiérrez Mangado 2013).

As participants lived in a context of additive bilingualism where two official languages coexist, we decided to carry out a detailed analysis of the source languages used both in interactional strategies and transfer lapses for the CLIL and the NON-CLIL groups. When learners asked for help, some of the utterances produced were exclusively in Spanish as in (3), others only in Basque as in (4), some of them displayed a mixture of Spanish and Basque as in (5), and there were even some utterances in which the first part of the utterance was produced in English and the second part in Spanish or Basque (as in 6 and 7 respectively):

(3) *¿Qué es esto?* (NON-CLIL subject 05)
    what is this
    "What is this?"

(4) *Aurkitu ba nola da?* (CLIL subject 18)
    find then how is
    "So, how do you say find?"

(5) *bote nola da?* (NON-CLIL subject 05)
    jar (Spanish) / how is it? (Basque)
    "how do you say pot?"

(6)   *How do you say <u>caerse</u>* ["fall"]? (CLIL subject 01)

(7)   *How do you say in English <u>bilatu</u>* ["look for"]? (CLIL subject 18)

_____

[7] Statistical tendency is indicated at < .09 (#) level.

The results of the analysis regarding the source languages in interactional strategies are displayed in Table 6:

Table 6. Source languages in interactional strategies

Language(s)	Example #	CLIL		NON-CLIL	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Only Spanish	(3)	1.44	1.67	9.30	14.24
Only Basque	(4)	0.44	0.73	12.30	13.71
Basque and Spanish		0	0	0	0
Spanish and Basque	(5)	0	0	1.10	1.97
English and Spanish	(6)	1.56	2.19	0.50	1.58
English and Basque	(7)	0.22	0.67	0	0

As shown in Table 6, the qualitative analysis of the source languages used in interactional strategies revealed that learners in the CLIL group preferred to use Spanish (1.44) rather than Basque (0.44). Moreover, they did not mix both Spanish and Basque or Basque and Spanish, but rather made use of English plus Spanish (1.56) and to a lesser extent English and Basque (0.22). This contrasts with the use of source languages made by the NON-CLIL group, who used the Basque language (12.30) to a higher extent than Spanish (9.30) when the complete utterance was produced in one of those two languages. On some occasions (1.10) they used Basque in the first part of the utterance—*nola da* ["How do you say"]—and Spanish in the second part. The use of English in the first part of the utterance was uncommon and when it was used, it was only used with Spanish (0.50).

Results regarding the source languages used in transfer lapses are shown in Table 7:

Table 7. Source languages in transfer lapses

	CLIL		NON-CLIL	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Spanish	0.44	0.73	3.10	2.61
Basque	0.22	0.44	6.20	11.32

As observed in Table 7, the CLIL group showed a preference for Spanish in transfer lapses (example 8), whereas the NON-CLIL group tended to opt for Basque (example 9).

(8)   And *bueno* ["well"] is night and the boy go to sleep (CLIL subject 09)

(9)   *Bada* ["then"] boy sees hole (NON-CLIL subject 06)

6.2.2. Lexical richness

The oral narration task was also analyzed in terms of lexical richness by means of TTR and D. As illustrated in Table 8, the CLIL group showed both a higher TTR and D than the NON-CLIL group, indicating that the CLIL group used a larger amount of lexical variation (statistically significant). Not only did the CLIL group have a richer vocabulary but they also obtained a higher score in the Oxford Placement Test (see Table 2).

Table 8. TTR and D

	CLIL		NON-CLIL		T-test	p-value[8]
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
TTR	0.36	0.05	0.25	0.04	4.892	0.000**
D	23.04	8.4	11.59	4.72	3.722	0.002**

6.2.3. Accuracy and syntactic complexity

The oral narration task was also analyzed in terms of accuracy (word order and production of the definite/indefinite article) as well as syntactic complexity (production of simple and complex sentences and variety of tenses used). When the production of wrong word order was considered (Table 9), no statistically significant differences were observed between the CLIL and the NON-CLIL group:

Table 9. Wrong word order

CLIL		NON-CLIL		T-test	p-value
Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
0.22	0.44	1.80	2.61	-1.878	0.091

However, the CLIL group significantly outperformed the NON-CLIL group when they were tested on the correct production of the definite and the indefinite article, as can be observed in Table 10:

Table 10. Correct production of the definite and the indefinite articles

	CLIL		NON-CLIL		T-test	p-value[9]
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Definite	98.24	2.77	71.94	26.02	3.177	0.011*
Indefinite	73.72	19.40	26.74	26.70	4.029	0.001**

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[8] Statistical significance is indicated at < .01 (**) level.
[9] Statistical significance is indicated at < .05 (*) and < .01 (**) levels.

As for syntactic complexity measures, we examined the production of simple and complex sentences as well as the variety of tenses used. As displayed in Table 11, the CLIL group produced a significantly lower amount of simple sentences than the NON-CLIL group but a higher rate of complex sentences. In the case of complex clauses (Table 12), statistically significant differences were observed for infinitival clauses and a statistical tendency was found for the production of relative clauses in favour of the CLIL group:

Table 11. Production of simple and complex sentences

	CLIL		NON-CLIL		T-test	p-value[10]
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Simple sentences	23.33	6.36	29.70	5.36	-2.368	0.030*
Complex sentences	4.22	3.15	1.00	1.05	2.922	0.016*

Table 12. Type of complex clauses

	CLIL		NON-CLIL		T-test	p-value[11]
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Infinitivals	1.22	0.83	0.50	0.52	2.283	0.036*
Gerundials	1.11	1.67	0.10	0.31	1.766	0.113
Time clauses	0.56	0.73	0.40	0.70	0.475	0.641
That-clauses	0.89	1.17	0.50	0.97	0.793	0.439
Relatives	0.56	0.73	0	0	2.294	0.051#

As for the variety of tenses used in both groups (Table 13), learners mainly used the present tense and to a lesser extent progressive forms and the past tense. When both groups were compared, no statistically significant differences were observed:

Table 13. Production of progressive forms, past tense and present tense

	CLIL		NON-CLIL		T-test	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Progressive	2.67	1.94	5.70	4.88	-1.814	0.095
Past tense	2.67	3.21	0.70	0.82	1.790	0.107
Present tense	19.44	6.11	22.00	5.12	-0.992	0.335

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[10] Statistical significance is indicated at < .05 (*) level.
[11] Statistical significance is indicated at < .05 (*) level and statistical tendency is indicated at < .09 (#) level.

6.2.4. L1 use, lexical richness, accuracy and syntactic complexity measures
As observed in Table 14, the correlation analyses conducted did not reveal significant correlations between the use of the first languages and lexical richness in the case of those learners in the CLIL group. No significant correlations were found between L1 use and the accuracy or syntactic complexity measures either.

Table 14. Correlation analyses

CLIL	Total L1 use	
	Pearson	p-value
Wrong word order	0.189	0.626
Correct indefinite	-0.217	0.575
Correct definite	0.336	0.376
Complex clauses	-0.506	0.165
Use of progressive	-0.277	0.471
Use of past tense	-0.569	0.110
Use of present tense	-0.019	0.960
Type/token ratio	-0.267	0.488
D	-0.291	0.447

In contrast, a significant negative correlation was found between L1 use and lexical richness in the NON-CLIL group. However, no significant correlations were established between L1 use, accuracy and syntactic complexity measures in this group, as displayed in Table 15:

Table 15. Correlation analyses

NON-CLIL	Total L1 use	
	Pearson	significance[12]
Wrong word order	-0.048	0.895
Correct indefinite	0.052	0.886
Correct definite	-0.277	0.438
Complex clauses	-0.292	0.413
Use of progressive	-0.032	0.931
Use of past tense	0.103	0.778
Use of present tense	0.613	0.059
Type/token ratio	-0.701	0.024*
D	-0.579	0.079#

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[12]Statistical significance is indicated at < .05 (*) level and statistical tendency is indicated at < .09 (#) level.

7. DISCUSSION

In this section we will answer the four research questions posed for the present study. As for the first research question, the results confirm a lower use of the L1 in the CLIL group both in terms of interactional strategies and transfer lapses. This is consistent with previous research in CLIL contexts (Serra 2007; Lázaro Ibarrola and García Mayo 2012) as well as investigations that have compared CLIL and NON-CLIL contexts (Agustín Llach 2009; Celaya and Ruiz de Zarobe 2010). This result could be explained by the focus on fluency and communication of meaning which are usually promoted in CLIL classrooms (Martínez Adrián and Gutiérrez Mangado 2015). In fact, learners in the CLIL group used the TL to interact with the researcher. The different instructional approaches the learners receive lead to differences in the way they perceive and understand the foreign language (Agustín Llach 2009, 123). Thus, learners in the CLIL group may perceive English as a language they can use to interact with the teacher, unlike NON-CLIL learners for whom English may simply be perceived as the object of study. In addition, the lower rates of L1 use found in the CLIL group may also be triggered by the higher general level attained by CLIL learners when compared to NON-CLIL learners. In the same vein, research has found that cross-linguistic influence is more frequent among less proficient learners (Ringbom 1987; Möhle 1989; Poulisse 1990; Navés, Miralpeix and Celaya 2005; Agustín Llach 2009, among others). Our data also seem to indicate that interactional strategies and transfer lapses are affected by the contextual language as in the CLIL group there is a higher preference for Spanish, the majority language in the small town where the subjects live, and in the NON-CLIL group for Basque, the language used for everyday communication in their area. Apart from that, the fact that the use of Spanish is more common in the NON-CLIL group when learners produced the first part of the utterance in Basque or English suggests that linguistic awareness (Kellerman 1983, 1984; Odlin 1989) is also operative at the level of interactional strategies, as these learners are able to perceive a greater distance between Basque and English. So both factors, the sociolinguistic context and linguistic awareness seem to affect cross-linguistic influence in L3 acquisition, supporting the observation that cross-linguistic influence is not determined by a single factor (Cenoz 2001; Murphy 2005; García Mayo 2012b). In this respect, researchers have also drawn attention to the importance of individual differences in the use of transfer (Odlin 1989; Cenoz 2001; Muñoz 2007; Martínez Adrián, Gallardo del Puerto and Gutiérrez Mangado 2013). The results we have obtained indicate that learners within the NON-CLIL group show a greater variation in the use of the L1/s when compared to the CLIL group.

Regarding the second research question, CLIL learners obtained a higher score in lexical richness (TTR and D) than their NON-CLIL counterparts. Additionally, the CLIL group also performed significantly better when they were administered a test of general proficiency (OPT). This supports previous research that has shown the better performance of CLIL learners when tested on general proficiency (Jiménez Catalán, Ruiz de Zarobe and Cenoz 2006; Lasagabaster 2008; Navés and Victori 2010; Ruiz de

Zarobe 2008, 2010b; Martínez Adrián and Gutiérrez Mangado 2015). With respect to accuracy measures, differences were found for the correct production of the definite and the indefinite article, whereas no differences emerged as regards the production of wrong word order, which supports previous research on the syntax-before-morphology position. Abstract syntax as reflected in word order seems to be in place prior to the acquisition of surface morphology evidenced by the errors observed in the production of the definite and the indefinite article (White 2003). In terms of syntactic complexity, the CLIL group significantly produced a lower amount of simple sentences than the NON-CLIL group but a higher rate of complex clauses, in line with the better fluency observed in immersion students (Harley et al. 1990). However, no differences were observed when they were tested on the variety of tenses used.

The lack of differences between CLIL and NON-CLIL learners with respect to word order and variety of tenses used provides further information about the aspects of language that are not enhanced by CLIL (Ruiz de Zarobe 2010a). Previous research has shown that CLIL learners do not improve in the use of certain morphosyntactic aspects such as inflectional morphology as much as they do in measures of general competence (Martínez Adrián and Gutiérrez Mangado 2015). Word order and variety of tenses used belong to those areas of language that do not benefit from CLIL instruction. Note that different measures of accuracy and syntactic complexity may provide further information on aspects different from those tested in this paper which can be more positively affected by CLIL. A call for more focus-on-form in CLIL classrooms has been made in order to improve those areas of language (García Mayo 2009, 2012a; Ruiz de Zarobe and Lasagabaster 2010; Basterrechea Lozano and García Mayo 2013; Martínez Adrián, Gallardo del Puerto and Gutiérrez Mangado 2013). More explicit instruction (see Harley 1989, 1998; Lyster 1994, 2004; Wright 1996, among others) as well as more overt and explicit corrective feedback (see Ortega 2009; Spada and Tomita 2010; Ellis 2012; Lyster, Saito and Sato 2013) are needed in meaning-oriented approaches. In addition, in view of the lack of connection between the EFL class and the CLIL class that is sometimes reported in some CLIL studies carried out in the same context as this one (see Martínez Adrián and Gutiérrez Mangado 2015) a closer collaborative link between CLIL and EFL classes is needed (Lyster 2013). Content-based and form-focused instructional options need to be counterbalanced so as to provide L2 learners with a range of opportunities to process and negotiate language across the curriculum (Lyster 2007).

With respect to the third research question, the correlation analyses conducted did not reveal significant correlations between the use of the L1 and lexical richness in the case of the CLIL group. This finding could be explained by the marginal use of the L1 in this group, which suggests that this group has already surpassed the stage where there is greater use of the L1. Note also that the range values of the category "Total L1 use" were lower in the case of the CLIL group (CLIL: 12 vs. NON-CLIL: 80). In contrast, as in previous research that has considered proficiency as a predictor for transfer (Ringbom 1987; Möhle 1989; Poulisse 1990; Navés, Miralpeix and Celaya

2005; Agustín Llach 2009, among others), a negative correlation was found between L1 use and lexical richness in the NON-CLIL group, that is, the greater use of the L1, the lower the level of lexical diversity. This seems to suggest that as a consequence of CLIL promoting the use of the TL as a language for communication, the use of the L1 decreases, leading to higher levels of lexical richness.

As regards the fourth research question, no significant correlations were established between L1 use, accuracy and syntactic complexity measures in either group. This suggests that a decrease in L1 use did not lead automatically to better performance in specific aspects of language or to the use of more complex language, either in the CLIL or in the NON-CLIL group.

8. Conclusion

This investigation has emphasized the complexity of the study of cross-linguistic influence in third language acquisition. Apart from the factors that normally determine this phenomenon such as psychotypology, age and proficiency, among others, type of language teaching, in this case CLIL, may also have an effect.

Despite the small number of participants and the different amount of exposure to the L3 between the two groups, the latter also being a confounding factor in much CLIL research, our findings seem to suggest that the CLIL group makes lower use of the L1, which could be explained by the communicative nature of the CLIL classroom. In fact, the CLIL group displays a greater use of the target language in interactional strategies. In line with previous research, we have also observed the better performance of the CLIL group in terms of lexical richness and general proficiency. Specific aspects of language are nevertheless not so favourably affected by CLIL, which could be addressed by means of more explicit corrective feedback and more explicit instruction. Finally, the negative correlation found between L1 use and lexical richness in the NON-CLIL group suggests that L1 use seems to affect lexical richness. Nevertheless, we have not found a correlation between L1 use, accuracy and syntactic complexity measures, which seems to indicate that L1 use is more closely related to vocabulary. In sum, CLIL learners display a higher rate of lexical diversity in their oral narration tasks, less use of the L1 and a greater use of the target language for interaction, all of which can be explained by the focus on meaning and more intense and natural exposure existing in CLIL classrooms. Further research using different types of data would be desirable in order to confirm these results and make them generalizable to a wider context.

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INTERVIEW

ENTREVISTA

Linda Grant: An Interview

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Writer and journalist Linda Grant was born in Liverpool in 1951.[1] The child of Russian and Polish Jewish immigrants, grandchild of Holocaust survivors, she belongs to what might be called the third generation of British-Jewish women authors who, like Jenny Diski and Zina Rohan, among others, "took centre stage" in the British literary panorama during the 1990s (Behlau and Reitz 2004, 12).

Linda Grant read English at the University of York, between 1972 and 1975, and continued with MA and postgraduate studies in Canada. She started her career as a journalist when she returned to Britain in 1985 to work for *The Guardian*. In 2012 she gained an honorary doctorate from the University of York and she currently lives in North London. Her first publication was a non-fiction book on feminism entitled *Sexing the Millennium: A Political History of the Sexual Revolution* (1993) which analysed the cultural changes brought about by the sexual revolution of the 1970s. From the origins of sexual freedom to the backlash against feminism experienced in the 1990s, this book can be read as an optimistic claim for the sexual empowerment of women in order to achieve equality and independence.

Her next work was her liminal memoir, *Remind Me Who I Am, Again* (1998), dealing with the loss of memory of her mother and the way that event challenged all the knowledge she had about her Jewish background, making her question the role of memory and the transmission of family memories in the formation of contemporary identities. This is a very intricate task for those Jewish diasporic identities that have traditionally had recourse to literary practices to keep their memories, (hi)stories and traditions alive (Whitehead 2009, 136); an aspect that turns most of her creations into hybrid and liminal works. At this point she started publishing fictional works: *The Cast Iron Shore* (1996), *When I Lived in Modern Times* (2000), *Still Here* (2002), *The Clothes on their Backs* (2008), *We Had It So Good* (2011), and her latest novel *Upstairs at the Party*, published in 2014.

Writing in a direct, straightforward and realist style, her novels address the generational transmission of memory, the role of place in the construction of Jewish female identities, the journey of rebellious female characters in search of personhood away from traditional patriarchal models of womanhood, the complex family tensions observed within Jewish institutions, the subtle and invisible burden of the memory of the Holocaust in subsequent generations of Jewish survivors. She has also written further non-fiction works such as *The People on the Street: A Writer's View of Israel* (2006)—a hybrid work revolving around her visits to Israel, the distant past of her ancestors and the main historical events that have influenced the present situation in Palestine—and *The Thoughtful Dresser* (2009), as well as continuing to collaborate with *The Guardian* on a regular basis.

Proof of her success as a writer is the fact that she has been shortlisted for many literary prizes and has been awarded various honours in the last few years. Her first novel won the David Higham First Novel Award in 1996 and was shortlisted for The Guardian Fiction Prize. Her memoir *Remind Me Who I Am, Again* (1998) obtained the MIND/Allen Lane Book of the Year Award and the Age Concern Book of the Year Award. Her second novel, *When I Lived in Modern Times* (2000) received the Orange Prize for Fiction and was shortlisted for the Jewish Quarterly Prize. Then, *Still Here* (2002) was long listed for the Booker Prize, and *The People on the Street* (2006) received the Lettre Ulysses Prize for Literary Reportage. In 2008, *The Clothes on their Backs* won the South Bank Show Award. As Bryan Cheyette acknowledges in his review of Grant's novels, after having experienced a "meteoric rise" in her career (2002), Linda Grant has published several novels, receiving good critical appraisal; her presence at book festivals and in the media has increased over the last few years; and many of her works have been re-published in different editions. This is the background to this interview, conducted on August 13, 2014 just thirteen days after the release of her latest novel *Upstairs at the Party*, a novel in which Grant draws on her own experience as an undergraduate to unveil how memory works, following specific characters throughout their lives and allowing readers to see how life has changed them. The novel also provides an insight into male and female relations and female friendship and captures a glimpse of what life is and how certain disturbing events can change our lives forever. In this interview Grant describes the nature of her works, talking about the drives that have turned her into a writer and the main ideas and topoi that configure her brilliant literary career, a career in which we can still expect much more success in the future years.

SP: *Would you say that the fact of having been a journalist for a long time has influenced your process as a writer of fiction and vice versa? For instance, I am thinking of your work* The People on the Street (2006)*, which appears as a journalistic reportage on your journeys to Palestine, collecting your thoughts after interviewing different Israeli people while it also contains traits of many other genres such as fictionalised episodes, memoir, political essay, historical discourse, diary, literary criticism. This book in particular made me wonder whether or not you think consciously about the genre that you want to make use of during your process of creation.*

LG: Of course, before becoming a writer I was writing as a news reporter for quite a long time. A lot of what I was doing at that time was inveigling myself into the souls of complete strangers and getting them to tell me their stories, listening to the way they constructed their identities, watching their body language… And I often felt that, when they were telling me a story, I could tell the story better. I think that training was very important to me, and it spills over in the way that I write, because I think my style is quite observational. A friend just told me that I always write with a sense of time and place, and I think that comes from the journalism: a time, a place and people in a situation. I think that is what I got from journalism. In fact, I am not hugely interested in the experimental novel or in genre and form; I am not massively intrigued by the form of the novel but by the protagonists. I am interested in stories, in how people tell stories, and what their stories are.

SP: *Then what do you think about the explosion of (semi)autobiographical genres that has been recently witnessed in the literary arena? For instance, Alison Light has asserted that literary biography has become the most successful popular literary form among the British readership since the 1960s (2004, 751); Roger Luckhurst considers that a "memoir boom" has invaded the literary panorama since the 1990s (2008, 117); and Leigh Gilmore asserts that "memoir has become* the *genre in the skittish period around the turn of the millennium" (2001, 1, original* emphasis). *These and many other contemporary critics have pointed out the fact that the critical panorama seems to be more and more interested in a variety of autobiographical genres, what do you think about it?*

LG: Well, the memoir boom really took place in Britain in the late 1990s with Blake Morrison's *And When Did You Last See Your Father?* (1993): a book which gave place to many similar pieces of writing. Thus, that was sort of the beginning of the memoir boom, and I do not think it has really abated, we are still writing memoir, as you mentioned. Indeed, I think it is a good aspect of the contemporary literary arena, because it allows people to tell a story without having to novelise it. Sometimes, telling a story as it is becomes the best way of telling it. For me, the creative process is really about the question "can you turn this experience into a story? Is it your story there? Or is it just this happened, this happened, this happened…?" And it is also about the ability to tell a person a story through non-fiction and make it compelling. There is a great hunger for it indeed. When I published my most autobiographical work *Remind Me Who I Am, Again* (1998), some of the most interesting responses to it were people saying that they had liked it because they knew it was a true story, which demonstrated to me that readers wanted it to be true, and somehow they thought it was less true if it was fiction. It could be wrong, but that is what many people thought.

SP: *Well, in fact, when I analysed that work I did not analyse it as a single genre. Although* Remind Me Who I Am, Again *has been classified as a memoir revolving around your and your sister's dilemmas when your mother was diagnosed with dementia, my main claim is that*

it might be too simplistic to classify it as a traditional memoir. In that work, the disintegration of your mother's memory becomes the leitmotif, creating a hybrid book that could be classifiable in multifarious ways: as a photograph album, an essay on memory, a historical insight into the Jewish migratory movements, a personal diary about your dealing with this illness… And I think that nowadays we can observe this blurring of generic boundaries in many contemporary works, which have come to be classified by critics like Leigh Gilmore as limit-case autobiographies: liminal works that blur the boundaries between "autobiography and fiction, autobiography and history, autobiography and legal testimony, autobiography and psychoanalysis, or autobiography and theory" (2001, 14). These liminal creations are usually the product of the paradoxes emerging out of the tensions produced when the representation of the self and his or her fragmented memories overlap. Do you think your works could be read as examples of these hybrid narratives responding to your need to negotiate your personal and family complex memories?

LG: Yes, but then I had some reviews saying things like "this book does not know what it is supposed to be, is it a diary? A memoir?" And that shows that sometimes readers found it difficult because they need to pin down a form and ascribe a book to a particular genre.

SP: *Yes, of course, there has always existed a kind of need for labels to classify works in one way or another… But, in my view, generic uncertainty is not precisely negative, as it may be seen as a positive evolution of literature. Readers, critics and writers alike can learn a lot about texts currently exploring and experimenting with form in order to achieve the complex struggles that come to the fore when representing the self and memory.*

LG: Yes, of course! In fact, the decision to use photographs in the way that I used them, on the page rather than as a separate document, actually came from W. G. Sebald's *The Emigrants* (1992), as I wanted to use photographs to describe the actions.

SP: *Oh, yes, that link with Sebald's work is quite remarkable but, thinking about the connections with other writers, it surprised me to some extent to see that Eva Figes and you both wrote a feminist political manifesto at the beginning of your career.*[2]

LG: Oh, yes! Her book *Patriarchal Attitudes* ([1970] 1986) was really very, very important for the 1970s, and I read it of course.

SP: *Yes, and you also wrote your feminist manifesto at the beginning of your career as a writer with* Sexing the Millennium (1993), *a book exploring the consequences brought about by the sexual revolution and defending women's empowerment through their sexual liberation. So, if this book was written in the early 1990s, how do you see yourself now as a feminist with the passing of time?*

LG: I think that feminism was absolutely the most important political movement of my life, I mean of my lifetime. It is the one that had the biggest influence on

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[2] Eva Figes was a very prolific British-Jewish writer that belonged to that first generation of Jewish immigrants in Britain escaping the horrors of the Holocaust.

me, more than anything else. I think that feminism, for me, makes reference to those occasions when you react to what is happening in the world, and feminism is my way of engaging with it. For instance, it makes me react to the misogyny of the world we live in, which we don't realise because of the social media's pressure. This is very important to me. In the case of my latest novel *Upstairs at the Party* (2014), it is interesting to me that none of the reviewers has picked up on the topic of feminine friendship and the bonds established between the main character Adele and her female friends during the time of the so-called sexual revolution. It is not only that there is female friendship, but the contrast between the way the generation of Adele's mother understood friendship and the way Adele and her friends created theirs. So, yes, I can say that feminism has been and still is extremely significant for me. When I wrote *Sexing the Millennium*, I did not feel confident enough to write a novel, exactly what my agent suggested, and I can think now that it was a sort of wasted opportunity because I did not bring into the world what I was doing, and I allowed it to fall out of print.

SP: *Yes, it is a pity; readers could have had access to a great display of female characters living their sexuality and freedom in very different and complex ways, as happens to some of these female characters in* Upstairs at the Party. *And, continuing with feminism, I feel disappointed when I observe the current feminist backlash explored by feminists such as Natasha Walter* (2010) *and Joan Smith* (2013). *I see many young women of my generation looking at feminism from a very negative perspective as an extreme, essentialist or radical movement and then, they even reject being called feminists or they do not even see themselves as such. What are your views on this?*

LG: Yes, what these women do not seem to understand is that all the freedoms they now have come from feminism. So I would say to them, "do you want to lose all these rights or do you think they came with oxygen?"

SP: *That is a very good answer actually. Moving on to a different aspect now, we were talking about the act of "pigeon holing" writers, which is widespread in present-day literary criticism, and I wanted to know your view on this, how would you define yourself as a writer? Would you agree with being read as a British-Jewish woman writer, as Behlau and Reitz have done when they refer to you as part of that "third generation" of British-Jewish women writers who are strongly trying to add their voice to British literature and history by "exploring their families' past and their Jewishness" in their works* (2004, 12)? *Or would you agree with other different labels that may be given to you, such as that of feminist writer?*

LG: Well, all those things are true. I think that what I would say is that I cannot be a British writer because you can only write out of your culture. I think that Britishness is a minor note in my work, and I don't think that the themes of Englishness or Britishness that are, for instance, present in Ian McEwan are very relevant in my work at all. In my case, I have written all of my novels in the first person because I find the first-person voice the most comfortable to write in and I think that, while I enjoy writing in a male voice, the attempt to write in a female voice who does not belong

to the mainstream culture is part of my identity and it is part of what I am trying to achieve. I am trying to achieve female voices who are not one thing or the other, who do not have clear identities. Usually, I write about people leaving home to make a journey or coming home after that journey.

SP: *And what about Jewishness there? It is well-known that Jewishness has been traditionally linked to the idea of exile, and that Jewish identity has been built around the concepts of homelessness and diaspora. In fact, it could be argued that the idea of homeland as closely related to displacement has featured in Jewish identity since the beginning of times* (Stein 1984, 7)*; a feeling famously described by Yerushalmi as "feeling at home within exile itself"* (1997, 12) *and which has turned the task of defining Jewish identity into a very complex issue. Is this diasporic element an aspect that you have attempted to negotiate through your writing?*

LG: I think that the presence of Jewishness in my work has to do with characters that are faced with conflicts that most people are not faced with. For instance, the character of Sandor in The Clothes on their Backs (2008) is very much that kind of character who has to face a variety of moral dilemmas,[3] surviving struggles, traumatic experiences and public and moral judgements throughout his life. The thing about all my characters is that they are not completely English, they are always negotiating their identity. In the case of Adele, the main character in Upstairs at the Party, I can say she is my most autobiographical character. However, many readers then ask me if my father committed suicide, as happens in the novel, and I have to say "no, my father did not commit suicide," or they ask me about other autobiographical events that appear in the book. I did not do all these things, of course. It is not about the furniture of your life, but it is about the essence. The heart of this novel is about the feelings that I had when I went to university, into this very middle-class environment, feeling an outsider, feeling that I did not fit in. That is where it is autobiographical, having sections of me, of other people's perceptions of me. So I am trying to add that to some of my characters, like Adele; that is where the sense of autobiography is: the I that is in Adele is not the I that is in any of those other characters in this work. I was not like any of those other characters, I did not have the vulnerability of Evie and I did not have the dogmatism of the other three women depicted in the narrative.

SP: *I also see as a recurrent topic of your writings the motif of a woman moving away, travelling to discover her true self, her identity—Sybil in* The Cast Iron Shore (1996), *Evelyn in* When I Lived in Modern Times (2000), *Alix in* Still Here (2002)—*I wonder whether, for you, this is representative of a kind of universal post-war human condition that needs to find alternative models to interpret the traumatic world left behind by the horrors, wars and conflicts witnessed during the twentieth century, a universal woman escaping from the patriarchal stereotypes that have been imposed on her throughout history, or a way of*

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    3 This novel was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2008.

representing the specific Jewish woman identity caught in the dialectical struggle between belonging to a given community and fighting against the Jewish strict traditional models of family and womanhood.[4]

LG: That is a very good question. These dilemmas were going on in the modern novel for quite a long time, a very good representative was the American-born Canadian writer Carol Shields who depicted women who were held within the institutions of marriage and womanhood and in the end they needed to break away, so the ending of that fiction was the breaking away. However, I wanted to write stories that start with the beginning of the journey or the return after that journey. There is a critic called Vladimir Propp who talked about the morphology of the fairy tale ([1928] 1968), and he characterises the fairy tale as a young man leaving home to make a journey, so what I think is that it is always *men* that leave the home to make the journey and not *women*, women are static. So when I wrote *The Cast Iron Shore* (1996) it was not so much about a clear Jewish perspective, but absolutely about a female one, creating a character wanting to discover the world and leaving home. Autobiographically, it originates in the time when I graduated from university in 1975, and then I went to America and spent six months hitchhiking from place to place. That was a very defining period of my life because it was formless, I did hitchhiking, I had no grudge, and it was the same sort of impressions made of the huge, the vastness of the road… And I have tried to depict that in Sybil's journey across America. And this also appears when Adele talks at some moment about America in *Upstairs at the Party*, there again you have some of the feelings and experiences that I obtained during my youth. In this case, the experience of getting to America in 1975 at the end of the Vietnam War had a big impact on me. And then I lived in Canada for a time too. So I had this experience of making these fast moves, making these great journeys and feeling changed afterwards. But I did not feel particularly suited at that exact time to write anything that was situated in a particular place. Then, when some years went by and I wrote *When I Lived in Modern Times* (2000), I remember feeling that the challenge was not to write about the journey itself but about the particular city (Tel Aviv), and my publisher encouraged me to do so, and it was only after the event that I realised that it was something I could do. And also, *Upstairs at the Party* (2014) is absolutely about place, a very imposed place.

SP: *In keeping with your depiction of place, it may be said that an essential element in your fiction is the relationship between the characters and place, as you mention. The characters' identities emerge out of exchange and relationality, and I should say that, in this sense, I mainly like the characters of Sybil and Evelyn; particularly, I find that Sybil in* The Cast Iron Shore *(1996) is a very interesting character, as she wants to run away from patriarchal and family institutions, but then she has very ambivalent relationships with men and depends on them to a great extent.*

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[4] For more information on contemporary Jewish feminist theories, see Baker (1993) and Silberstein and Wolfe (1998).

Yet, she ends up alone eventually and rejects traditional institutions. I read that book as a great contribution to urge contemporary Jewish women to continue looking for their place in the modern world, as is demonstrated by the fact that Sybil travels in order to gain a multidirectional political consciousness as well as her longed-for freedom although, during that journey, she has to lose some things, such as the possibility of forming a family, the capacity to embrace Jewish tradition or the desire to feel she belongs somewhere. Would you agree with that reading of Sybil's quest?

LG: You know the main thing with Sybil, one with which I had to be really careful, was the challenge of writing about someone who was uneducated, and at that stage I was still writing in a kind of amateur way, as it was my first novel. I wanted to depict somebody who was not educated, but who was not part of institutional marriage either. I then realised I wanted to write about those women who had made the tea for the revolution. Therefore, the character of Sybil does not have any sense of purpose, she is acted on by other people, she becomes tougher as she gets older, but there is something lost about her, there is a sort of ruthlessness in her too. But, writing about women who have no education, one of the things about it is that you cannot make any assumptions about what they know. In the particular case of *The Cast Iron Shore*, I can say my main aim was to portray the female condition in general. You know, there is sometimes a trend in the rewriting of history from a female perspective where women are depicted as this terrible word in English *feisty* says, it does not describe men, it only describes women playing much stronger roles. I think this trend is a bit overdone as, in reality, women did not play those roles in real history. So what I wanted to depict was a kind of universal female condition that was as close as possible to the real lives of women.

SP: *Going back to the issue of memory, a key topic that I have analysed in your writings is that of the way in which memory is constructed textually throughout the narrative* (Pellicer-Ortín, forthcoming), *as happens in* Remind Me Who I Am, Again (1998). *As we have been talking about previously, memory has become a central concept within research in the humanities and it has been used by scholars as a way to "critique the totalizing mode of conventional historical discourse"* (Douglass and Vogler 2003, 6). *In fact, it has been observed that those minority groups that had been excluded from hegemonic historical discourses on the grounds of class, gender, race, religion, etc. have attempted to re-construct their fragmented memories through many different cultural and literary practices. In keeping with this, in the Research Group I belong to we really defend the idea that literature plays an important role in constructing and deconstructing memories.[5] So would you say that writing has been essential for the negotiation of your own individual, family, and collective memories?*

LG: Yes, completely. I think that memory is absolutely, totally essential to everything that I write. If you read *Remind Me Who I Am, Again*, it becomes clear

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[5] For more information on the research group "Contemporary Narratives in English" visit the project's website: http://cne.literatureresearch.net/.

why that is the case because, as there is so little written documentation about my family's past and the past of other migrant Jewish families, everything is based on memory, and even on the failure of memory and the value of memory. All memories are unreliable. I mean, memory is not a videotape, it is not a record, memory is interpretation. I have always been fascinated by the way some people remember things about which others have no recollections at all. Clearly, memory is contested, is handed down in families as part of the family inheritance, it is not truthful. When I was writing *Upstairs at the Party*, I was thinking about a girl who died when I was at university, and I was not there, I was not present, I had already left the party when this girl took an overdose, I did not know her very well in fact. Somebody who was there said the last person who saw her alive was this one, and he would know her last words. One day, some years ago, I got an email out of the blue from this man, and I asked him if he had really been the last person to see her alive, and he told me, "no, I wasn't, it could not be me because I wasn't there, I wasn't at that party." I don't know why I had been thinking that, I do not know whether my memory was wrong, so I had been thinking something for around forty years that was wrong, and I misremembered it. We all constantly go through things like that, and in fact, many writers say that the novel is all about memory.

SP: *Yes, and this could support our previous comments on the increasing importance of the field of Memory Studies. It seems that memory has turned into the most widespread source of knowledge in opposition to the prior historiographic claims to universality and objectivity fostered by hegemonic master narratives. The New Historicist claims for the local, the subjective, the individual, those small narratives or* petit (hi)stoires *seem to have reached their final stage with the defence of memory as the major source of reliability in the current social and literary panorama. I think many of your works could also be read as exemplary of these small and local narratives.*

LG: Yes, and in my particular case, talking about the autobiographical aspect, I can say there are fragments of memory in all my novels, they are full of memory. We try the hardest to connect with the past. Returning to *Upstairs at the Party* (2014) and the personal anecdote that inspired it, I think the most baffling and worrying aspect was going back to your university and saying to the librarian, "where has the café gone?" And she says to you, "there was never a café." And then I say, "yes, there was." And she says, "well, I've been here for the last 25 years." And I say, "yes, but there was before!" That was a moment of sudden realisation that there are so many things that only reside in your memory and in nobody else's. You return to places where you have been and they have all gone into the future without you, they are frozen in your memory due to the internalisation of your own experience. This is a mystery to me! It is completely mysterious, you may have been there at the same time and we will have different memories. We are all constantly trying to reconstruct even the past of seconds ago, when we say, "what have I just said? What did I do this morning?"

So when your memory goes, just as my mother's memory went, all that means to be human seems to go down with it. For me, when I think about myself when I was twenty-two years old, obviously, I was the same person, but if I met myself at twenty-two I just do not know what we would say to each other, and I do not understand how that person became this person. That is why a lot of my novels follow people through a whole-life span, and Sybil in *The Cast Iron Shore* (1996) is the biggest example of that, and to some extent *Upstairs at the Party* [depicting the passage through life of Adele and her circle of university friends] as well, and certainly *We Had It So Good* (2011) [which revolves around the lives of Stephen and Andrea from the moment they meet at university to the final days of their lives] too. These novels answer this question of how this person became that person. And I think the answer has to be found in the accumulation of life events, not only the moments of big decisions, things which just happen and construct your life.

SP: *Yes, in that respect, I was fascinated by your novel* Still Here (2002) *too, because you can see how both characters, Alix and Joseph, negotiate their memories. In a way Alix has to go back to the Jewish family roots that she had neglected throughout most of her life because of her feminist and liberal ideals, and Joseph also has to face the repressed memories of war and trauma as he suffers from PTSD after having taken part as a soldier in the Yom Kippur War. In this novel, one can see that the characters are struggling to connect and assimilate their disturbing and fragmented memories. I think this is something inherent to the human subject, but nowadays this is more common for those communities that have had to create new identities in new lands or that have gone through traumatic individual and collective episodes which are very difficult to be assimilated and integrated in rational terms, as has happened to the Jewish and other immigrant communities across the world. What do you think? Is this aspect also present in your works in a conscious manner?*

LG: Any community that has migrated really has to be dependent on memory and create a mythology around memory, because if your family has migrated you have to mythologise very well, that is extremely important. If you suppress this, the memories will not reach the next generation, consequently, it has an enormous importance. In fact, this week I re-watched *The Godfather* films and they are great works about memory and the transmission of memory from one generation to the next. This is constantly happening in our present-day culture, not only in literary practices, where there are so many immigrant communities everywhere.

SP: *I also wanted to ask you about the role of politics in your writings. And I am mainly thinking of* The People on the Street (2006), *a work in which you state your main goal of describing what a Jew is, both for personal reasons—"I suppose I was trying to work out something about Jews, because if I could get that figured out, I might understand something about myself" (5)—and in order to counteract the means by which Western societies have usually looked down on Jewishness—as in your claim that "Jews drive other people mad because they can't work*

out who or what we are" (5). *And you do all this while trying to offer an insight into the conflict in Palestine from the inside, a very complicated issue indeed. To what extent do your writings have a political intention?*

LG: Well, I think I am not very much interested in politics in my novels. Politics is not an issue in my works. They are more about particular characters, particular states of mind. For instance, in *The Cast Iron Shore* (1996) politics is there but not in that way. For that novel, I had been struck by a book I had read about interviews with members of the American Communist Party,[6] there were several interviews and one of them was with a woman that was a very sophisticated, a well-dressed lawyer who said: "I was a member of the Communist Party and that made me better than I was so it couldn't be so much worse," and that remark completely fascinated me. These identity contradictions really inspired me for that novel, but it was not the politics itself. And, regarding your comment on *When I Lived in Modern Times* (2000), it originated with me going as a journalist to Tel Aviv, seeing its architecture, and thinking who the first people that had lived there were… All this, thinking about the origins and roots of the city, was what inspired me to write about that. In brief, as for politics, let's say, I have never been like Doris Lessing with a clear political stance.

SP: *Then, if one observes the chronological evolution in the topics and historical contexts depicted in your novels, one realises that your latest novels depict the 1970s, the time of sexual liberation, characters that mature from that time to the present and look back with a certain nostalgia, why is that?*

LG: Yes, well, I hate the word nostalgia, it is not nostalgia. I am trying to go back to a period that was defining in my own life. I mean, one has a relationship with the past and the times one lives, so I suppose there is an element of that. In fact, I do not see myself writing about something that is happening at the present, I do not see a present topic that urges me to write about it right now.

SP: *Well, and what about the role of literature in contemporary society according to your own perspective as a creative writer? I really like the definition you give of literature in* The People on the Street (2006) *as something that moves you inside, and makes you react and develop empathy for some realities that people could not have access to in any other possible way: "literature . . . should create ambiguity, doubt, discomfort, confusion. At the end of reading a novel or a poem, you should feel that your mind is chaos"* (191). *Personally, these ideals are those that I try to defend with my own research by launching the belief in the idea that literature has that power to recreate memory, identity, even to heal broken identities or traumas.[7] Do you also think that writing and art have that power for society in general and for individuals in*

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  [6] See Vivian Gornick's book *The Romance of American Communism* (1979). The interview Grant mentions here is that with "Diana Michaels," the initial inspiration for the character of Sybil.
  [7] See Laub and Podell (1995), Henke (1998), Cyrulnik ([2005] 2007), Almog (2007), Bloom (2010) on this.

particular? Would you say that writing is a powerful way of working through migration, suffering, even trauma, or to understand one's identity and assume one's position in society?

LG: Yes, I completely agree with that definition of literature. I think that literature has an absolutely transforming power. Recently, it has happened to me to read books and be shocked afterwards because I discover a thought that I assumed to be my own belonging to another person, and this is because I read that when I was twenty years old. I think that when you reach my age you realise that you are more passionate in your reading when you are fifteen or twenty, what you are reading at that stage will have an enormous impact on your future personality; there is no question of that. Someone told me this morning about this quotation by George Martin, the *Game of Thrones* writer, "if you read literature you inhabit thousands of lives, if you don't read literature you only inhabit your own." And this is the power of literature: it puts you in the head of people that you would never meet in another way. I sometimes get letters, emails from people telling me that what I have written is connected with them in some way, it has touched them, and this happens because novels vibrate and some connections are made across people. You do not do it consciously, but when you do it you may see your job has been done. Writers of literature have the power to speak across centuries to a total stranger, and that is what I think Virginia Woolf did for instance…

SP: *Of course, she is my favourite writer…*

LG: Yes, I feel that I may be Virginia Woolf in that respect. There is a moment in the film *The Hours* (2002) when she is thinking about the character of Mrs. Dalloway and, although I am not a big fan of Nicole Kidman at all, she is amazing in that role because she has that writer's look of looking inward. The writer has the power to look inward and then connect to a stranger afterwards, and you do not know who that stranger is. When I receive these letters or emails, it is difficult for me to reply because I do not know what to say. I mean, I want to say something original because I really appreciate the readers telling me, but I do not know exactly how to reply to that.

SP: *Yes, that is so true. What may be a bit sad is that in the world of current scientific research it seems that all the importance is given to the hard sciences, we have to defend what we do so much, but I really believe that art and literature can give voice to many people and minorities that do not have a voice, give expression to memories and conflicts that could not be verbalised in any other possible way.*

LG: Yes, the results of the defining changing and challenging effects of literature in society have been there all time, they have always existed. People have always been changed by every kind of art, by literature, and by music, music in particular, as it is funny that so many people do not see music as art.

SP: *So we agree of course. And my final question then would be whether, although you have just mentioned that you do not see yourself as part of a specific generation of British-Jewish writers,*

you feel that you are somehow connected to this group of Jewish writers (Elaine Feinstein, Clive Sinclair, Dan Jacobson, Gabriel Josipovici, Anita Brookner…) who have recently started to negotiate their diasporic identities by tracing the past of their ancestors in their creations as subsequent generations of Jewish immigrants and Holocaust survivors (Cheyette 2004, 713), *as you do in works like* Remind Me Who I Am, Again (1996) *or* The People on the Street (2006)? *Or even, being more specific, do you find aspects in common with other Jewish female writers like Eva Figes, Anita Brookner, Anne Karpf, Jenny Diski, Bernice Rubens… who are said to have been trying to add the Jewish female viewpoint to the current British culture in the last few decades?*

LG: Well, I do not think so [laughs]. I think that generally we work in quite different ways. One of the greatest secrets of writers is that we use Facebook, for instance, to create private literary salons because of the social isolation that writing implies. I have a group of friends there and we communicate through Facebook about different things, but what we do is to share our torments and triumphs, it is a way of talking to other people that are going to understand you in a way that most people don't. But I have to say I do not feel a part of a specific group. Also, what happens is that when we go to literary festivals, as I did in Edinburgh last week, is that you meet other writers, people you had never met, and it is so great to have that sense of support, I think that is the word for it, even though we may not like what the other person writes, there is some sense of solidarity as we have gone through similar experiences.

SP: *Yes, but it is also true that when one approaches your writings and those of other Jewish women writers, like Anne Karpf, Eva Figes, and Anita Brookner, one finds similar topics and connections, the same idea of fragmented memories and identities and the complex construction of Jewish memory, which are recurrent motifs in your works.*

LG: Well, I am sure that is true too, but do you know the novelist Andrea Levy? We were together in a conference at a university some years ago and people there discovered that we are neighbours. They were shocked, and they were asking us if we usually met and one of them said that he would love to see what our conversations were about. I said, "what do you think we like talking about?" And he said, "postmodernisms." And then I answered, "the last conversation was about a new Marks & Spencer opening nearby!" Our conversations are about daily life, contracts, agents, the practicalities of our job but we do not talk about our work. I mean, I am a huge admirer of Anita Brookner, of the massive work of hers. I have never met her. I would like to breathe the same air as her. I think she has a wonderful style and I really admire what she does… but that is different from feeling I may be grouped with her as part of the same group or generation of writers.

SP: *Yes, I see your point. Thank you very much for your time and for this enriching conversation. Thank you very much, Linda.*

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REVIEWS

RESEÑAS

Gillian Dow and Clare Hanson, eds. 2012. *Uses of Austen: Jane's Afterlives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 254 pp. ISBN: 9780230319462.

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This volume edited by Gillian Dow and Clare Hanson comes as a ground-breaking, enlightening study on Jane Austen's afterlives at a time when her appeal has reached its peak, with rewritings, prequels and sequels of the novels, film adaptations and offshoots, mash-ups in YouTube, blogs and endless translations. Dow and Hanson's volume adds to the emerging field of scholarship on Jane Austen's afterlives, where we find titles such as *Jane Austen's Fame: How Jane Austen Conquered the World* (Harman 2010), *Jane Austen: Cults and Cultures* (Johnson 2012), *Matters of Fact in Jane Austen: History, Location and Celebrity* (Barchas 2012) and *Global Jane Austen: Pleasure, Passion and Possessiveness in the Jane Austen Community* (Raw and Dryden 2013). The volume under review offers a collection of eleven critical essays by renowned scholars who examine the dimension of the Jane Austen phenomenon and analyse Austen in popular contemporary culture. In other words, the book's main strength is how it successfully contributes to a dialogue between scholarly and popular approaches to Jane Austen. The volume opens with a brief introduction that summarises and contextualizes Austen's reception, and skillfully develops the exponential rise in her fame, only equated with Shakespeare's. For the editors, aspects such as the rise of "girlie culture," the myriad 1990s film and television adaptations, third-wave feminism and post-feminism have contributed to Austen's boom. This introductory chapter, then, serves the function of explaining the *raison d'être* of the collection.

Deidre Lynch's thoughtful opening essay entitled "'A Genius for Foretelling': Augustan Austen and Future Fiction" starts by examining the periodicities of Austen's fiction, and emphasises the difficulties of placing her in any single age. For instance, in the decades after the First World War, she seemed an exile from the age to which she belonged, and figured as the last of the Augustans. For Lynch, the construction of an Augustan Austen was not associated with nostalgia, but with the desire to produce an image of the author that could match the aesthetic of the early twentieth century. "This act of distancing Austen in time, making her a creature of the eighteenth century rather than the nineteenth, could also, in some hands, serve as a way of recruiting her

example for the up to date" (21). Thus, Austen was depicted as an Augustan and, at the same time, was constructed as an example of modernity. The next two chapters are also devoted to reading Austen albeit that they slightly change their focus towards rewritings of the novels. In chapter two, Maroula Joannou explores Barbara Pym's *Excellent Women* (1951), Dodie Smith's *I Capture the Castle* (1949) and Elizabeth Taylor's *Palladian* (1946) to see how they were influenced by Austen, especially by *Pride and Prejudice*. Published in the aftermath of the Second World War, all these rewritings turned to Austen because they wanted to distance themselves from all the aspects of contemporary Victorian society they so disliked. Rebecca Munford in chapter three sheds light upon Emma Tennant's four Austen sequels—*Pemberley: A Sequel to Pride and Prejudice* (1993), *An Unequal Marriage: Or Pride and Prejudice Twenty Years Later* (1994), *Elinor and Marianne: A Sequel to Sense and Sensibility* (1996) and *Emma in Love: Jane Austen's Emma Continued* (1996)—whose main aim is to challenge male-centred representations and to go beyond the happy endings. According to Munford, the sequels transgress "the literary and cultural borders of the Austen estate" and should be placed on the borderland of feminist revisioning and postfeminist longing (61). Chapters two and three are useful because they reveal how Austen's work can be transformed via rewritings.

Chapters four and five of the collection shift their focus and move beyond prequels and sequels of Austen's works. Juliette Wells's contribution is perhaps one of the most valuable assets in the whole volume since it offers an original interpretation of Austen fandom. She claims the need to analyse Austen-inspired works on their own terms, since they will help us understand why and how the Austen boom has occurred. This chapter is very much in keeping with the hypothesis of her work *Everybody's Jane: Austen in the Popular Imagination* (2012). If film adaptation has become a crucial area of research in Austen studies, contemporary popular texts should be analysed in depth in order to explore how they approach the novelist, and how they contribute to the current interpretation of her *oeuvre*. Furthermore, Austen-inspired writings equally offer literary scholars "an exceptional opportunity to reach across the divide between academic and amateur readers" (88); they provide a common ground for popular readers and literary scholars. Julian North in "Jane Austen's Life on Page and Screen" (chapter five) addresses the issue of Austen biographies and how they have distorted her image, and have produced and contested a romanticized author. North brings together literary biographies published in the 1990s as well as film biopics, such as Patrizia Rozema's *Mansfield Park* (1999)—the character of Fanny Price is based on Jane Austen—, Julian Jarrold's *Becoming Jane* (2007) and Jeremy Lovering's *Miss Austen Regrets* (2008). Curiously enough, all these texts—whether written or visual—hint at the presence or absence of romance in Austen's life. Given the fact that her life was full of openings for interpretation, retellings are imaginative. Chapter six of the volume highlights the importance of Austen's letters. In it, William May explores the interconnections between novels written by women in the twentieth century, Austen's letters and the

novelist herself. One interesting finding is how Austen's letters create an author who is completely at odds with the Angel in the house and transform—at least partially—some writers' views of Austen, transforming her legacy and inviting readers to rethink Austen's influence.

The remaining chapters within the collection revolve around a travelling and global Austen. The strength of chapter seven by Felicity James, "At Home with Jane: Placing Austen in Contemporary Culture," resides in the exploration of places of pilgrimage, like her home at Chawton and the new Chawton House Library, to see how they have constructed an image of Austen at home in the English landscape "that coexists with the multiple, transnational afterlives of her work" (132). Although Austen's afterlives have occurred in transnational spaces, she continues to be firmly located in a very specific English landscape. The author concludes her chapter showing the possibility of the coexistence of the local and the global. Next, in a well-structured and highly readable chapter, Gillian Dow explores the idea of a global Austen by means of translations and translators. Dow speaks of thinking back to Continental sisters, highlighting the fact that the first female reader of Austen who has left a record of her sustained engagement with the novels was a translator (Isabelle de Montolieu). Interestingly, she is concerned with translations of Austen's *oeuvre* in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries. She shows how France is the country that has been engaged with her the most, that it was not until the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s that all of her six novels were translated into mainstream European languages and that the novels are very difficult to translate into Japanese for linguistic and cultural reasons, amongst others. Her concluding remarks emphasise how translations are continuously remade to adapt Austen to new generations. Although this chapter is a valuable asset to the collection with all the translations mentioned, she neglects in her analysis the translations made in Spain.[1] The paradigm of Austen's global reach is again highlighted in Stephanie Jones's chapter "The Ethics of Geography: Women as Readers and Dancers in Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice.*" Following Edward Said's postcolonial framework, Jones's chapter provides a thorough analysis of Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* as an instance of global mobility. *Bride and Prejudice* is read alongside Rajiv Menon's *Kandukondain Kandukondain* (2000) and Azar Nafisi's book *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003). This chapter needs more theoretical background since, although it talks about dancing on the Indian screen, it does not explain Bollywood conventions. In chapter ten, Mary Ann O'Farrell aims to examine the conjugation and interrelation between Austen and contemporary politics. The author foregrounds how Austen has even been construed in columns on Middle East warfare and Libya. Curiously enough, O'Farrell notices a less productive use of Austen when the novelist is reimagined "as a punchline" consisting of juxtapositions based on

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[1] To read about the translations made in Spain, see Aida Díaz Bild, "Still the Great Forgotten? The Reception of Jane Austen in Spain" (2007).

popular (mis)understandings of the novelist as "unworldly" (192, 202). The volume is brought to a close with Shelley Cobb's chapter entitled "What Would Jane Do? Postfeminist Media Uses of Austen and the Austen Reader." Throughout her essay, Cobb shows how contemporary popular culture's obsession with Austen has more to say about us than about her or her novels; she appears as an antidote to contemporary life. In fact, the female readers in the film *The Jane Austen Book Club* (Robin Swicord 2007) and the TV series *Lost in Austen* (2008) use her to assuage their dissatisfaction. In a well-documented essay with constant references to feminist scholars on Austen such as Deborah Kaplan, Elzette Steenkamp and Devoney Looser, Cobb explores the ideological uses of Austen by postfeminist media to suggest that the use of the author by fans may be associated with a lost feminist identity as well as with discontent with postfeminist culture.

The collection's strategy of dealing with Austen's afterlives in their various forms has its weaknesses at points. More coherence and unity in the volume would have been achieved by means of different sections with brief and short introductions. As the volume has been conceived, it is clear that it is targeted at knowledgeable readers of Austen because considerable background is required. Another shortcoming of the volume is the scarce appearance of screen adaptations. At the end of the collection, the reader may certainly feel an appetite for more films and offshoots and contemporary productions like mash-ups in YouTube. After all, the most frequent encounter with popular culture tends to be via cinema. The main downside of the volume, though, has to do with its lack of theoretical underpinning. With the exception of Juliette Wells, who draws on Abigail Derecho's theorisation of fan culture, Stephanie Jones, who follows Edward Said's theoretical framework, and Shelley Cobb, who refers to feminist scholars, the volume is too light on theory.

Yet, despite these minor shortcomings, Dow and Hanson's volume is a welcome, enlightening and up-to-date contribution to the field of Austen and popular culture. Its engaging and well-researched chapters provide a wide range of encounters between Austen and contemporary popular culture, making it a compulsory collection for those interested in this growing field of study. With it, the authors not only demonstrate how Austen exists in the *milieu* of global mobility but also smooth the way for future research and, above all, consolidate the need to analyse contemporary culture in order to arrive at a new and more complex understanding of Austen.

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Imelda Martín-Junquera, ed. 2013. *Landscapes of Writing in Chicano Literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 233 pp. ISBN: 978-1-137-29360-2.

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One discovery Albert Einstein came up with was that space and time were entirely different from what everyone believed. As follows from his theory of relativity, space is not the constant element in the universe that people thought, and the distinction between past, present and future is only an illusion. It would be preposterous to assume that the conception of space as "setting" or "landscape" held by cultural critics is even remotely close to Einstein's view of space, but his discoveries in the field of science serve as a powerful metaphor to understand the changes in the approach to space in the field of critical theory during the last decades: space has come to be seen as a shifting and fertile domain where the traces and consequences of all the forces and relations that determine social life congregate; it is our misleading perceptions of space that give an impression of stability and keep these complex relationships hidden from sight.

Space was reclaimed as a political category in the context of postmodernism and postcolonialism, and literature on the subject is both abundant and inspiring. Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, John Berger, and, more recently, Fredric Jameson, Edward W. Soja and Doreen Massey have approached space as a process through which social relationships are produced and reproduced. Foucault questioned why time has traditionally been seen as "richness, fecundity, life, dialectic" while space has been treated as "the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile" (Foucault 1980, 70), when, as Einstein had demonstrated, the two are inextricably bound together. In a similar vein, Annette Kolodny argued that "geography and chronology must be viewed as fluid and ongoing, or as a continuously unfolding palimpsest" (1992, 9). It is this conception of space (and time) as cultural practice that proves of particular relevance to understanding the social experiences of the members of ethnic minorities whose lives have been determined by the complex relations of forces inscribed in the land.

Concerned both with issues of space and of Latino life in the United States, Edward W. Soja (1989) and Mike Davis (2000), for example, avoid reductionisms or totalizing stories in favor of relationality to analyze how the convergence of Latino and Anglo cultural forces have determined the urban landscape. While traditional approaches to

space have tended to bar Latinos/as from discourse, forcing them to occupy positions defined by dominant myths about the land that deceptively appear cut off from history, politics, and power relations, Davis and Soja, like Neil Campbell in his studies of the West (2000, 2008), see space as a complex network of relations and Latino life as determined by the interdependence of the historical, the social and the spatial. Thus, in the spirit of Einstein's theory, space and time constitute a multilayered and polyphonic concept where voices, cultures, histories, languages, practices, etc. interrelate to radically change our understanding of the forces that determine social relations.

Edited by Imelda Martín-Junquera, *Landscapes of Writing in Chicano Literature* (2013) represents an effort to engage with this tradition of studies about space and the Latino community. As she observes in the introduction, the volume "interrogates how landscapes of power have been created, sustained, and transformed along the history of Chicano literature and culture" (1). More precisely, the aim of this collection is to lay emphasis on ecofeminism, especially in its approach to questions of land degradation and of social injustice related to the Latino community. Ecofeminism, Martín-Junquera argues, "defies and contests the domination that patriarchal systems exert on nature, women, and oppressed human beings (lower classes and ethnic minorities primarily) and works to eliminate hierarchical differences between the privileged and the oppressed" (2). Unfortunately, a startling gap separates the objectives heralded in the introduction and the essays that make up the volume.

Indeed, while the introduction is a comprehensive overview of the current state of environmental criticism, few of the eighteen chapters included in *Landscapes of Writing in Chicano Literature* can be said to actually engage with questions of space, environmentalism or social justice. The contributors, who include PhD candidates as well as familiar names in the field of Chicano/a studies, adopt a very liberal approach to space by tackling physical as well as symbolical and spiritual landscapes. However, while the editor invites a perception of landscape as overlapping with other categories like history, ecology, biology, economy, politics, gender or labor, many of the contributors see "landscape" simply as a rhetorical trope disconnected from other disciplines and, more worryingly, from the world outside the text. The majority, far from considering how new concepts of space can offer different insights into the complex relations which constitute the actual contexts that disempower Latinos/as in the United States, simply adopt a conformist, decontextualized textual analysis camouflaged as multiculturalism.

Although Martín-Junquera avoids a clear-cut classification of the different chapters in the table of contents, she identifies several implicit, albeit questionable, sections. The first section comprises four articles that deal with Sandra Cisneros's major literary works. It opens with an analysis of the representation of space in *The House on Mango Street* (1984) by Elisabetta Careri that epitomizes the kind of complacent textual analysis mentioned above. Elena Avilés examines how Sandra Cisneros's short story "Woman Hollering Creek" (1991) redefines the relationships between Latinas and the land, contributing to the construction of a Chicana-centered discourse, and granting

women agency and independence. However, throughout the analysis, she ignores the actual contexts of reception. For her part, Ellen McCracken focuses on the performative strategies deployed in Cisneros's *Caramelo* (2002) and Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) to display and assert ethnic identity, which she links to the Chicano Movement's assault on the dominant US multicultural myths. María Laura Spoturno, on the other hand, centers on Cisneros's *Caramelo* to reveal the function of footnotes in the construction of marginal ethnic spaces and the recreation of conflicts between the center and the margin.

The articles included in the second section explore the relationships between landscapes and Latina experiences as articulated in poetry and theater. In line with some of the contributions in the first section, Elyette Benjamin-Labarthe forwards an overview of Chicana poetry as a gendered perception of experience that differs from that of men of their same community. She centers on the work of poetesses Gloria Anzaldúa, Ana Castillo, Pat Mora, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Rebecca Gonzáles and Angela de Hoyos as a means of calling attention to how the symbolism rooted in the natural world represents a rewriting of Mexicanness that attempts to circumvent the gender bias inherent in Mexican culture. Taking the concept of "lived experience" as her theoretical framework, Yolanda Godsey adopts a more political stand to examine how Josefina López's play *Real Women Have Curves* (1997) compels the spectator to consider the relationships between working conditions in the LA garment industry and the niches of undocumented Mexican immigrants. Finally, Carmen Melchor Íñiguez contributes an exploration of Latinas' experiences of sexual awakening and maternity in Chicana literature. Regrettably, her essay is burdened by an exasperating lack of focus.

The third section consists of studies devoted to landscapes of trauma, war and identity conflicts. Berta Delgado contributes an overview of Chicano autobiographies with special emphasis on those written by Vietnam War veterans, which she interprets as an attempt to negotiate their ethnic identity after their war experiences. In one of the strongest essays in the volume, and in line with the work of Soja and Davis, Sophia Emmanouilidou explores how Mario Suárez's depiction of "barrio" life gives cultural visibility to Latinos/as and calls into question traditional racial boundaries. For his part, Manuel Broncano offers a general overview of Rudolfo Anaya's literary corpus. By not engaging, in any way, with the objectives of the book, Broncano's article, like Melchor Íñiguez's, epitomizes the worrying tendency in researchers to substitute the convoluted, self-referential vocabulary of academia for public debate over the actual challenges faced by the Latino community. This is a sample of what passes in the text for a socially engaged study of Chicano landscapes: "[i]t is the world turned into word and the word turned into world. And this textual entrapment of the real in a discursive net reveals Anaya's proximity to the postmodernist tenants" (122). Next comes Diana Rebollero's examination of how a number of authors, most notably Pat Mora, Richard Rodriguez, Jimmy Santiago Baca and Diana García, use the image of the house as a symbol of identity and belonging. From a different, more socially-concerned perspective, María

Jesús Castro analyzes the global dimension accrued by the Virgin of Guadalupe in the context of contemporary transcultural movements and how it has helped counter hegemonic discourses in reception countries. Roberto Ayala contributes an assessment of the space represented by the sanitarium in Alejandro Morales' *The Captain of All These Men of Death* (2008). Making use of Foucault's studies on the subject, Ayala's chapter exemplifies the tendency in literary studies to adopt theories *impersonally*, more as an act of academic ventriloquism (using a text to illustrate a theory) than as a strategy to intervene in the contexts. In the last article in this section, Carmen Flys focuses attention on Rudolfo Anaya's Sonny Baca series and the different ways in which the characters connect with the land in the context of increasing globalization.

The last section deals with linguistic borders and code-switching as spaces of resistance and identity. Norma Elia Cantú contributes one of the strongest and most refreshing articles in this otherwise unexciting collection of essays whose only common facet is their monotonously uniform disconnection from prominent schools of thought on the subject of space and their heavy-handed fetishization of the literary text. She looks at three traditional Latino celebrations—Los Matachines, La Quinceañera, and the Princess Pocahontas pageant—as texts through which "border communities and residents negotiate the existing power relations" in the context of hegemonic discourses about the border (173). By virtue of these cultural expressions, Cantú observes, women of Mexican ancestry resist assimilation along the lines demarcated by the manifold manifestations of power. Rather than a conventional essay, José Antonio Gurpegui offers a personal account of Spanish as by far the most non-English spoken language in the United States. The two remaining articles, by María López Ponz and Cecilia Montes-Alcalá, look at the hybrid language of US Latino writers. The former deals with the problems code-switching poses for translation, while the latter submits a detailed analysis of the different cases of code-switching found in Chicano literature.

Although this collection includes some convincing scholarly essays, on the whole, it does not measure up to the expectations raised in the introduction. Few chapters deal with issues of space and even less adopt an ecofeminist perspective. Instead of an attempt to better understand the complex relationships that hegemonic views on, of and about landscape tend to hide from sight, the majority of the contributions are no more than conventional readings that do not bother to look beyond the textuality of the works. Indeed, instead of interrogating how the text *connects* with the world outside, most of the articles tend to simply rephrase the stories or take them at face value and, in this way, academic explorations of the type further retreat into the fictional world—a strategy that has been condemned by theorists as dissimilar as J. Hillis Miller (1992) and Terry Eagleton (2013). Despite their references to Latino/a identity and living conditions, most of the authors fail to genuinely engage with the *real* contexts of injustice, that is, the actual social, cultural and political challenges faced by Latinos/as. In short, the general approach to theory in most of the contributions reveals a worrying neglect of contexts. Instead of bringing together the social and the spatial

along the routes opened up by the theorists mentioned above, instead of asking what *new* knowledge current theoretical debates on space can offer in a given conjuncture, most of the authors seem content with adjusting their pre-conceived interpretations to narrow, decontextualized readings of a theoretical paradigm. On this premise, Gloria Anzaldúa's often quoted description of the borderlands as "una herida abierta" ["an open wound"] can be looked upon as a case in point (1987, 3). Over and over again, her words are adopted routinely and naively, borrowers of the quote never realizing that any theory brings with it its own limits—limits to the questions we may ask and to the answers the text may yield.

As a consequence, many of the contributions that make up this volume boil down to simplistic denunciations of racism (we all know racism exists) or to reductionist celebrations of multiculturalism (a movement we are all aware of but which is the source of many different readings, e.g., Sara Ahmed, Nirmal Puwar). Without an ideology and a political agenda, the celebration of multiculturalism, as Russell Jacoby observed (1994), may become an ideology in itself, stripped of its potential to challenge hegemonic practices and unable to offer alternatives to the structures that perpetuate racial discrimination. In this respect it would be more creative to keep in mind Anzaldúa's Gramscian plea to "do work that matters" (2005, 102).

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José María Mesa Villar. 2014. *Women in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Arthurian Renditions (1854-1867).* Bern: Peter Lang. 482 pp. ISBN: 978-3-0343-1298-1.

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This book, the twelfth of the series *Spanish Perspectives on English and American Literature, Communication and Culture*, is a revision of the author's doctoral thesis, defended in 2010 in the University of Jaén: *Gazing into the Past: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Arthurian Renditions and their Female Types (1854-1867).*

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) was considered by the pre-eminent Victorian-era critics Ruskin and Pater to be "the period's central artistic presence" (McGann 2000, 2). Today he is the best-known member of the short-lived Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB) (1848-1953), an artistic movement frequently associated with Arthurian-inspired art, although the original paintings of the three founding members did not draw from those sources, but rather wanted to revolutionise the British art world by going back to naturalistic, colourful, heartfelt and detail-oriented aesthetic drawing from the Quattrocento (Doughty 1949, 70). The Arthurian association stems from the enthralling nature of many paintings by J. W. Waterhouse (1849-1917) and other late nineteenth-century artists heavily influenced by late PRB aestheticism, understood through the mirror of Rossetti and his pupils, the already Post-Pre-Raphaelites Morris and Burne-Jones. As Mesa Villar recalls (26), during the nineteenth-century Medieval Revival there was a conscious effort to make Arthurian lore the Great English Epic in the search for the roots of Englishness. It was in that cultural climate that passionate Arthurian re-creator Alfred Tennyson was made Poet Laureate in 1850. When assessing Rossettian sources, Mesa Villar acknowledges the importance of Tennyson's (among other artists') Victorian re-interpretation of Thomas Malory's vision in *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1485) as his primal source.

The book is well organised into three main parts corresponding to three female types identified by the author in the Arthurian legend and that I am, succinctly, going to refer to as the temptress-adulteress, the enchantress and the damsel-in-distress. The author's approach is straightforward and consistent throughout the study. Each section begins by contextualising the specific episode of the legend that Rossetti was using in each of his visual works, sometimes contrasting different sources, before analysing

them. Perhaps excessive attention is paid to densely re-narrating those episodes. The symbology of the drawings is carefully explained and re-interpreted by Mesa Villar in light of Rossetti's biographical facts and Victorian ideology. The author believes that, in his Arthurian renditions, Rossetti transcended the role of illustrator and used the well-known episodes to represent his own artistic and spiritual concerns, especially the struggle between flesh and spirit. Therefore these Arthurian renditions constitute a fundamental bridge to his later, better-known double works: a written (poetic) and visual (painting) exploration of the same theme, i.e., *The Blessed Damozel* (1856-1878).

Mesa Villar's first section (41-160) addresses love triangles in the legend in tune with the evolution of the social assessment of adultery and the traditional role of woman as temptress. The first four chapters focus on Guinevere. Mesa Villar retells her story drawing from different sources and emphasizing that the ever-changing understanding of the character is revealing of equally changeable cultural ideologies. For example, Chrétien de Troyes introduced the sympathetic love affair with Launcelot, ingrained in the French culture of *fin'amor* that Malory transformed into the more chaste Middle English *trew love*, depicting her as a victim of her circumstances. Mesa Villar suggests that Rossetti's interest in Guinevere is linked to his obsession with the conflict of body and spirit later developed in the double works. It may also reflect the artist's personal experiences and his relationship with his muse Jane Burden (betrothed to his collaborator Morris) or the divorce of art critic John Ruskin, who had commissioned the first watercolour in the series, *Arthur's Tomb* (1855). Ruskin's wife had left him for his protégée, another Pre-Raphaelite, John Millais. The watercolour represents a reticent Guinevere resisting Launcelot's amorous advances over the dead body of her husband. Rossetti modified Malory's scene, moving the setting to Glastonbury where the king was buried to give prominence to Arthur's casket, which functions figuratively and physically as a reminiscence of the obstacle between the lovers. His second watercolour, *Sir Launcelot in the Queen's Chamber* (1857), shows the lovers hiding while Arthur's knights try to break into the room to uncover their adultery. Guinevere (bearing Burden's features) seems again repentant while Launcelot appears aggressively furious at the intrusion. The third watercolour, *Sir Launcelot's Vision of the Sanc Grael* (1857, unfinished, study for the Oxford Union murals), depicts a despondent Launcelot, sitting near a well, unable to see the mystic damsel facing him and holding the Grail (with the features of Elizabeth Siddal, Rossetti's fiancée) because Guinevere's body is between them. According to Mesa Villar (113), this configuration illustrates how carnal lust prevents men from achieving spiritual salvation, and, in biographical terms, how Burden's flesh tempted Rossetti more than Siddal's intellectual appeal. Mesa Villar emphasizes common visual elements between the three watercolours, including figures, colours and recurring floral motifs, concluding that Rossetti wanted to stress male sexual weakness in opposition to female superior moral standing (or at least aloofness), ultimately presenting a sympathetic view of women. The last two chapters of this section are about the Celtic legend of Tristam and Iseult that first

inspired the introduction of Launcelot and Guinevere's love affair in the Arthurian canon. The watercolour *Sir Tristram and La Belle Yseult Drinking the Love Potion* (1867, design for William Morris's stained glass) presents the couple drinking a love philtre guarded by Cupid. The exculpatory element of magic alleviates the guilt of their adulterous relationship and presents therefore a murkier moral message than the other watercolours.

The second section (161-282) deals with enchantresses. The first two chapters focus on Morgan le Fay, emphasizing her ultimate role taking Arthur's corpse to the otherworld. This scene is portrayed in the sketch *King Arthur and the Weeping Queens* (1856-1857) included in Moxon's illustrated edition of Tennyson (1857). Mesa Villar stresses the overwhelming effect of the many Siddal-faced figures that symbolize Rossetti's interest in representing women as intermediaries between the sensible and the intelligible. The next chapters systematically address the recurrence of the damsel of the Grail in Rossetti's works, always bearing Siddal's face. For example, the watercolour *The Damsel of the Sanc Grael* (1857), that was later transformed into the well-known oil canvas *The Lady of the Sanc Grael* (1874). Another example is the sketch *The Attainment of the Sanc Grael* (1857), later refashioned in *How Sir Galahad, Sir Bors and Sir Percival Were Fed with the Sanc Greal; But Sir Percival's Sister Died by the Way* (1864). Tennyson's poem *Sir Galahad* (1842) serves as inspiration for the watercolour *The Quest of the Holy Grail* (1855), executed in collaboration with Elizabeth Siddal, as well as for the sketch *Sir Galahad and an Angel* (1857) and the finished watercolour *Sir Galahad and the Ruined Chapel* (1859), in which the tension of body and spirit is resolved in what Mesa Villar calls "the unsexing of the Grail hero" (270). The maiden's unreadable face in both the earlier and later works underpins Rossetti's lifelong fascination with mysterious, suggestive images of females, whose role as mystical threshold contrasts with men's struggle to access the spiritual realm.

In the book's third section (283-432), Mesa Villar explores the role of women as inciters of conflicts, ingrained in a Medieval (and Victorian) paternalistic attitude that rejoices in female defenselessness. The first chapter focuses on *The Death of Breuze sans Pitié* (1857-1865), a Mallorian scene in which two knights fight for custody of a damsel. The second chapter is concerned with Keat's ballad *La belle dame sans merci* (1820) and Rossetti's unfinished sketch of the same title (1855). Mesa Villar highlights Rossetti's attraction to the idea of unleashed female sexuality overpowering masculinity. Chapters three, four and five delve into the Lady of Shalott's legend, drawing on Rossetti's engraving for Moxon's Tennyson, *Launcelout and the Lady of Shalott* (1856-1857), in which Launcelot again symbolizes masculine faults. The sixth chapter is devoted to the six drawings of the legend of Saint George executed by Rossetti for the stained glass designs of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. (1862-1863). Although the theme can be ascribed to the Christian chivalry fashion of the late Middle Ages that was tainted with Arthurian motifs, there is no clear justification for the introduction of these works into a study of Arthurian renditions.

The last pages of this final section fairly hastily analyse the role of Elizabeth Siddal in Rossetti's career. I believe that this point should have been addressed at length at the beginning of the book and more frequently throughout, not only referring to her passive role as model but also to her active influence as an artist in her own right whose drawings were frequently Arthurian (see Lewis and Lasner 1978) and, due to Ruskin's interest in them, may have sparked Rossetti's wish to proceed in that direction. Although the topic of Siddal and Rossetti's mutual influence in the 1850s has been the center of much academic debate recently, Mesa Villar only acknowledges this in passing and does not tackle the question of how Rossetti's Arthurian works, being "so like a parody of Siddal's technical deficiencies in drawing" (Surtees 1991, 72), were sometimes attributed to her, just as her own advanced designs were to Rossetti. Not only has Siddal historically been "denied the credit for her own achievement" but she has also been "sometimes blamed for Rossetti's failures" (Marsh and Gerrish Nunn 1989, 70-73). By minimizing references to her work, Mesa Villar departs from the approach taken by most recent studies of Rossetti, which tend to emphasize his wife's role as an artist in her own right (Matson 2010, 187; Marsh, 1989; Cherry and Pollock 1984). Indeed, although the object of Mesa Villar's study is the representation of women, the author's method fails to render women as active subjects, but rather merely as "background, malleable pretexts," to paraphrase his own assessment of Victorian paternalistic chivalry (295). Furthermore, and given the book's theme, this essay lacks insight into feminist methodologies for art criticism, even insofar as to simply explain why the author is not using them. To my view, considering the clearly gendered canvas of Pre-Raphaelitism, any text discussing the period must mandatorily address issues of essentialist female representation and objectification in the perpetuation of gender hierarchization (Pollock [1988] 2008, 13). And all the more so when, as in this case, medieval imagery is re-analysed with the purpose of highlighting a specific view of womanhood befitting Victorian morals suggesting, additionally, the possibility of a subversive motivation instigated by Rossetti's own renditions.

The text ultimately stands as an interesting analysis of a seldom studied phase of Rossetti's career, providing ample commentary on the painter's take on the Arthurian sources. Therefore the text is valuable not only to Rossetti scholars and Victorianists but also to those interested in Malory, Tennyson, Keats and Arthurian literature in general. The author has succeeded in selecting an innovative topic of study within a classical field and his brave tackling of interdisciplinary themes is commendable. It is also noteworthy as the only Spanish thesis about Rossetti in recent decades (according to online theses databases). The only related thesis found in databases is Julia Doménech's *Imágenes femeninas tennysonianas en la Pintura Prerrafaelita, un trasfondo mítico* (1997), and her later book *La belleza pétrea y la belleza líquida. El sujeto femenino en la poesía y las artes victorianas* (2010). However, neither of these works have been referenced by Mesa Villar, suggesting that it may be necessary to reinforce intercommunication between specialists of different fields in Spain.

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Carme Manuel, ed. 2014. *Interrogating Voices: Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century American Women's Short Stories*. Valencia: JPM Ediciones. 165 pp. ISBN: 978-84-15499-19-0.

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In *Interrogating Voices: Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century American Women's Short Stories* Carme Manuel has compiled eleven stories by American women writers from diverse ethnic backgrounds which span the period from before the Civil War to the early years of the twentieth century. The volume includes stories that have become classics in courses on American women's literature, like "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935); stories by once celebrated antebellum writers now lost in the sands of time, like Lydia Maria Child (1802-1880); unfamiliar stories by well-known writers, like Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888), and stories that will acquaint readers with less known or utterly unfamiliar names, like Grace King (1852-1939), Alice Dunbar-Nelson (1875-1935) and Sui Sin Far (1865-1914). The general aim of this anthology, as the editor explains, has been to offer a sampling of "engaging short stories" by women who "helped shape American short fiction and recreated in their texts their unflagging eagerness to participate in the political, economic, social, cultural and racial issues of their times" (7).

Carme Manuel's compilation appears in the context of an explosion of canon-formation studies that, for the last few decades, have constituted an essential component of the feminist challenge to traditional literary study. In that sense, *Interrogating Voices* engages with a still vital strain in feminist scholarship: the need to discover and recover women's voices, and to make a case for their aesthetic and cultural significance. The anthology cannot be defined as an archival endeavour, as most of the stories included have been brought back into print in modern collections, like Elaine Showalter's *Scribbling Women: Short Stories by 19th-Century American Women* (Showalter 1997) and *The Vintage Book of American Women Writers* (Showalter 2011), as well as in other contemporary editions of literary texts. But current compilations such as Showalter's are lengthy volumes that provide no underlying pattern or motif to sustain the editors' choices. Conversely, *Interrogating Voices*, which is printed in Spain by a small artisan press that specialises in Anglo-American literature, is a compact edition that focuses on women's literary engagement with issues which were pivotal

in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America, in particular the articulation of racial and gender oppression. And because the volume is chronologically organised, the stories allow us to appreciate how some of these national concerns—particularly the black question—evolve and regionally ramify in the time-span covered in the anthology, from the monstrous face of slavery to other more nuanced—or not so nuanced—forms of ethnic oppression. Women writers took part in the discursive construction of an American national identity; they unpacked the myths of pre-Civil War Southern culture, confronted the continuing presence of Southern and Northern racism, put marginal characters (the lonely spinster, the servant, the grandmother, etc.) central stage, presented daring critiques of gendered structures of power, and with their aesthetically committed exploration of key national themes helped shape a rich and diverse literary tradition.

In order to elucidate how the writers selected fit on the timeline of American literature, the anthology is preceded by a scholarly introduction where the editor contextualises the stories, surveys critical interpretations, provides relevant information about authors and underscores their literary significance. There are some statements that, in my view, would have benefitted from a bit of fleshing out, such as the editor's claim that the "eleven stories included in *Interrogating Voices* partake of the wish to be vehicles of knowledge" (29). Is Carme Manuel using the term 'knowledge' in Rita Felski's sense? In her chapter "Knowledge" in *Uses of Literature* (2008) Felski defends the idea that literary works can be objects of knowledge as well as sources of knowledge and that literature may serve cognitive as well as aesthetic ends (Felski 2008, 7). The editor of this volume does not clarify what kind of knowledge the eleven stories convey. By selecting writers who "engaged actively in the reform of society" (29), however, she seems to have cast her lot with Felski's defence of a historically-attuned approach, one which strives "to do justice to the social meanings of artworks without slighting their aesthetic power" (Felski 2008, 9). Manuel never reduces her selection of texts to the bare bones of political or ideological function, nor does she consider them exclusively in terms of their aesthetic or literary otherness.

One of the attractions of this anthology is its thematic approach. Although this is not explicitly stated in the introduction, all the stories share an underlying standpoint: that of siding with the unheard and the wronged. The editor's choice seems to support those critics who have argued that the short story is especially well-suited to the expression of women's or marginal voices (see Patea 2012, 7-8). Most pertinent to this collection seems Clare Hanson's observation that "the short story has offered itself to loners, exiles, women, blacks—writers who for one reason or another have not been part of the ruling 'narrative'" (Hanson 1989, 2). Without exception, all the collected stories have as protagonists single, poor, old or eccentric women, blacks, mulattoes, emigrants or other characters who fall outside the ambit of the 'ruling narrative.'

Political issues are manifestly at the heart of this volume. As the introduction makes clear, in devising the anthology the editor has chosen texts uniting what Andrew J.

Furer in "From 'Water Drops' to General Strikes: Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Short Fiction and Social Change" (2010) judges to be "the two major eras of the short story" which coincide with "the two great upsurges of American reform impulses" (8). The abolition of slavery has to be considered the most significant national reform campaign, and the first two stories were published immediately before and after the Civil War, when the issue of race was taking central stage. The rest of the stories, as Manuel explains, "appeared at a time which saw the growth of labor reform, anti-imperialism, suffragism and women's rights movements together with the fight against racism, segregation and immigration laws" (8). They ponder a variety of concerns, from segregation to immigration laws, from the Woman Question to the issues of women's creativity, independence and domesticity.

The destructive consequences of slavery is a recurrent topic, but in this anthology racial and gender oppression always go hand in hand. In the story that opens the collection, "Slavery's Pleasant Homes. A Faithful Sketch" (1843), Lydia Maria Child encroaches upon a theme that society, as she would put it in her Introduction to Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), considered "indelicate" (Child 1861, 8). It examines, in a language drenched in irony, the plight of slave women forced to have sexual relations with their masters, and the shattering effect it had on the lives of both black and white people. The story, which was based on newspaper articles and interviews with runaway slaves, is so audacious in its treatment of its central theme that the author chose not to include it in her compilation *Fact and Fiction*. American scholars have had to wait for more than 150 years to discover a text that, as Carolyn Karcher remarks in *The First Woman in the Republic: A Cultural Biography of Lydia Maria Child* (1998), "ranks among the masterpieces of antislavery fiction" (9).

The devastating effect of slavery on family life is taken up again by Louisa May Alcott in "My Contraband; or, The Brothers" (1867), where Alcott presents a hero of mixed race struggling against his desire to murder his white half-brother who has raped and caused the death of the woman he loves. The story, which was inspired by Alcott's own experiences as a nurse during the Civil War, challenges the standard view of Alcott as a genteel domestic writer and brings to the fore her political conviction that there could be no true national freedom without racial and gender equality.

The problematic of race in American literature inevitably entails the plight of the mixed-race figure, and four out of the eleven stories draw on the "tragic mulatto" tradition. As well as in Alcott's narrative, it also features in later stories by Kate Chopin (1850-1904), Grace King and Alice Dunbar-Nelson. None of the mulattoes or (more aptly) mulattas survive or have a happy fate, a fact that seems to corroborate Sterling Brown's observation in *The Negro in American Fiction* (1937) that the mulatto figure must "go down to a tragic end" (quoted in Raimon 2004, 4-5). This tragic outcome may suggest writers' incapacity to imagine a place for their racially mixed characters in an emerging nation. Yet in the innovative work of some of these regional

writers, like Kate Chopin, the mulatto-centred stories interrogate, as Manuel aptly notes, the problematic nature of racial difference and the perversity of a racist culture of which these writers disapproved (9, 24).

Another overarching theme that gives shape to the volume is the plight of women, something which is particularly apparent in the stories written after 1870. Suppressed female creativity features in "Marcia" (1872) by Rebecca Harding Davis (1831-1910) and in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892), both dealing with the (hopeless) struggles of women for self-assertion and self-expression in a repressive and intellectually impoverished environment. A more positive note is to be found in other stories by regional writers at the turn of the century. In "The Town Poor" (1896) Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909) portrays not just the deprived lives of unmarried women in the declining rural communities of New England but also, as Manuel points out, the possibility of women's sisterhood amidst appalling material conditions (17). The collection also includes "A New England Nun" (1891) by Mary Wilkins Freeman (1852-1930), a story which has appeared in a previous Spanish anthology in translation (Gómez and Usandizaga 2006).

The underlying thematic pattern of the underrated or the wronged re-emerges in the last two stories, which encompass issues of ethnic exclusion within the American melting-pot. "The Trial Path" (1901) by the Native-American writer Zitkala-Sa (1876-1938) opens a window onto a world overlooked by mainstream society, that of Plains Indian culture. This story, which involves an Indian trial and a conception of justice far removed from the Western tradition, is one of the rarities of this collection. It portrays an Indian grandmother telling anecdotes from the past to her granddaughter, who ends up falling asleep. In her effort to pass on the histories and traditions of her tribe, the Indian storyteller finds it hard to obtain a real hearing, which signals the lack of concern among the younger, non-indigenous Americans for the sacred knowledge of the older aboriginal culture. The collection closes with "In the Land of the Free" (1912) by Sui Sin Far. This narrative depicts a Chinese emigrant family battling with a corrupt legal administration and the cost of assimilation in 'the land of the free.' It seems rather fitting that the editor has chosen this tale, which ends in estrangement, to close her anthology, for all the 'interrogating voices' she has gathered coincide in their vibrant questioning of the myth of an ideal national family.

Women in the nineteenth century would not dare to advertise themselves in the manner in which Walt Whitman did. But neither did they remain silent or literarily disenfranchised. Encouraged by the development of the short story in America, women made use of this adaptable and flexible form (see Showalter 1997, xxxvi; Cox 2005, 131) to intervene in the public arena. It is thanks to studies and anthologies such as the one Carme Manuel has fashioned that we are able to appreciate the extent to which women constituted a vital part of their literary culture. The spin-off of a fertile career teaching, researching, discussing, editing and translating primarily—if not exclusively—American women authors, Manuel's worthy endeavour once again seems

to have lent credence to the claim that, to guarantee the fullest justice to women's writing, women authors have needed "a critical jury of their peers to discuss their work, to explicate its symbols and meanings, and to demonstrate its continuing relevance to all readers" (Showalter 2010, xi).

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In Ireland years of emigration and exile have been supplanted by sustained immigration of a multiplicity of different groups including refugees, asylum seekers, job-seekers and returning Irish migrants, among others. This has altered the ethnic landscape of Irish society, since Ireland, traditionally a land of emigrants, has now been transformed by a new diaspora. The unprecedented arrival of people from different parts of the globe is caused mainly by two factors: Ireland entering the European Union in 1973 and the "Celtic Tiger" years, a term coined by Kevin Gardiner in 1994 to refer to the unprecedented financial boom of the country (in Kirby et al. 2002, 17). Reflecting on this new demographic phenomenon, there has been an important and much needed rise in the publication of research exploring inward migration and its consequences. Piaras Mac Éinrí and Allen White highlight how "[r]esearch on immigration into the state was, until the recent past, extremely limited, largely because immigration was itself extremely limited and greatly overshadowed by out-migration" (2008, 151). The politics and policies of integration have only recently begun to be addressed in Ireland and *Literary Visions of Multicultural Ireland. The Immigrant in Contemporary Irish Literature*, edited by Pilar Villar-Argáiz, is an example of how, as immigration into Ireland has increased over the last decade, so too has the volume of published research work exploring this phenomenon. Villar-Argáiz's work was much needed, as up until the turn of the century, researchers, teachers and students had to rely, when studying immigration to Ireland, on book chapters, occasional journal articles and "semi-public and 'grey' area—reports, commissioned research, policy statements, etc.—publications by the state, semi-state and NGO sectors" (Mac Éinri and White 2008, 158).

It is in the introduction to the volume where Villar-Argáiz gives an account of the previous academic research on the topic, such as *Multi-Culturalism: The View from the Two Irelands* (Longley and Kiberd 2001), *Translocations. The Irish Migration, Race and Social Transformation Review* (Fanning and Munck 2007), *Gender, Ireland, and Cultural Change* (Meaney 2010) and *Facing the Other: Interdisciplinary Studies on Race, Gender, and Social*

Justice in Ireland (Faragó and Sullivan 2008). Villar-Árgaiz does not only trace the critical panorama but also provides the reader with an overview of the literary agenda within which multiculturalism is approached. Within drama, a genre which acts as one of the branches in this collection together with poetry and fiction, Ursula Rani Sarma and Bisi Adigun are two of the most representative authors. In fiction, writers who engage issues of nationhood and ethnicity are Hugo Hamilton, Roddy Doyle, Dermot Bolger, Colum McCann, Kate O'Riordan, Emer Martin and Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, among others, while in poetry, the collection engages with authors such as Colette Bryce, Mary O'Donnell and Michael O'Loughlin, to name a few. Villar-Argáiz reminds the reader that "not all Irish artists have responded so openly and rapidly to Ireland's multiethnic landscape" (4) since multiculturalism in Ireland is too recent a phenomenon to be completely understood. The compilation of essays gathered in this volume has two main points: to visualise the gradual move from themes of the past to Ireland's multicultural reality in the twenty-first century and to fill the research lacuna "by assessing the cultural effects of inward migration in relation to contemporary Irish literature" (5).

The volume is a dialogue between theatre, poetry and fiction throughout the four parts of the collection: (i) the (re)thinking of a new Ireland, (ii) how it positions itself within the idea of a postnationalist society, (iii) the coming to terms with the Irish past in the new Ireland, and (iv) an analysis of gender perspectives and power structures within this multicultural discourse. The seventeen chapters address the obstacles and challenges of a new multicultural arena by referring to the main contemporary Irish-born writers who incorporate a multicultural literary vision into their work. In the first part, entitled "Irish Multiculturalism: Obstacles and Challenges," Charlotte McIvor analyses the work produced by white Irish-born male playwrights, Donal O'Kelly, Declan Gorman and Charlie O'Neill, and questions whether these Irish writers are the most appropriate spokespersons for the new multicultural Ireland, underlying the problematic of their ethnicity in relation to immigrant minority communities. Amanda Tucker follows this line of research by analysing contemporary fiction by Irish-born writers (Doyle, Keegan, Donoghue and Madhavan) coming to the conclusion that either multiculturalism is represented as an obstacle to be overcome by Irish hospitality or as an unresolved process which leads to cultural anxiety (55). Villar-Argáiz interdialogues with these two chapters from the perspective of Irish poets (Olszewska, Bryce, O'Donnell and O'Loughlin). Margarita Estévez-Saá closes this first part of the volume by analysing the depictions of immigrants in Celtic Tiger and post-Celtic Tiger novels and discusses how writers such as Callaghan, Wassell, Haverty, Binchy, Cunningham and Hamilton, prior to the Celtic Tiger era, depict immigrants coexisting but not interacting actively while nowadays immigrants are given a voice of their own. Estévez-Saá insists that there is "an attempt from various Irish writers to represent not only the multicultural atmosphere of the country, but also the many intercultural relationships between natives and immigrants that characterise the country in the new millennium" (91).

Part two, entitled "Rethinking Ireland as a Postnationalist Community," gathers four contributions, by Eva Roa White, Carmen Zamorano Llena, Anne Fogarty and Katarzyna Poloczek, which explore how immigration has challenged the significance of being Irish. These four scholars analyse the different ways in which contemporary Irish writers (i.e., Hamilton, O'Brian, Tóibín and Enright) *rethink* Irishness "by incorporating the reality of 'postnational' Others" (19). Part three gathers the work of five scholars, Paula Murphy, Michaela Schrage-Früh, Jason King, Katherine O'Donnel and Charles I. Armstrong. From the perspective of Ireland's long history of emigration, these essays recover migrant memory at the same time as visualising hybridity and difference as convivial modes of acceptance by both native and non-native peoples. Part four closes the volume, this time from a gender perspective since, as Villar-Argáiz underlines, the volume "would be incomplete without acknowledging the importance of gender difference in shaping the power structures implicit in Ireland's new migratory spaces" (22). This section is much needed since as Eavan Boland explains: "When I was younger Irish literature seemed to be drawn on a paradigm which was male and traditional. Woman's poetry altered that and required the literature to make a new space, not without considerable resistance. Now immigrant voices require another new space" (Villar-Argáiz 2012, 119). González Arias, Morales Ladrón and Altuna García have also argued how, in recent decades, Irish writing has grown sensitive towards non-canonical modes of expressions and authorship, "especially since women writers have struggled to clear some space for their creativity" (2010, 160). This fourth part of the volume reflects the importance of gender in shaping contemporary immigration in Ireland. This is highlighted by authors through the "inclusion of voices of female migrants in empirical accounts of immigration as well as through exploring the importance of gender in developing theoretical understandings of Ireland's immigration population" (Mac Éinrí and White 2008, 160). Maureen T. Reddy and Wanda Balzano offer, in chapters fifteen and sixteen respectively, a feminist reading of anti-racism in Clare Boylan's *Black Baby* (1988) and Emer Martin's *Baby Zero* (2007), showing how gender and race were pressing issues at the turn of the century in Ireland. Another recurrent topic is the changing cartography of the city due to migratory flows. This transformation of geographical spaces is also discussed in *Reading Transcultural Cities* (Carrera Suárez, Durán Almarza and Menéndez Tarrazo 2011), which focuses mainly on European and North Atlantic geographies, linked to geopolitical axes and neo-colonial routes or international displacements, and the contributions by Katherine O'Donnell and Luz Mar González Arias describe the transition from an "old Ireland" to a "modern" nation. Urban spaces are also the backdrop to the literary works discussed by Loredana Salis and David Clark in their respective chapters in *Literary Visions of Multicultural Ireland*; the latter analyses the rise of "homegrown" crime fiction while the former concludes by asserting that migration gives voice to a different Ireland, "self critical and willing to move on, whatever was, whatever may come" (252).

As the editor points out, not all the writers discussed in the volume challenge with the same efficiency the multicultural politics of assimilation or separation between immigrants and the Irish majority (12). Some Irish writers do distort the real experiences of immigration, by favouring the white native perspective (i.e., Claire Keegan, Roddy Doyle). On the contrary, Dermot Bolger, Michael O'Loughlin and Hugo Hamilton place immigrants at the centre of their work. I do consider however, that by giving voice to just white Irish-born writers—as happens in this volume—it becomes the weakest part in the collection. The editor is conscious of this fact and explains how "[a] book of this nature is likely to raise some critical controversy, given the many risks involved in looking at the immigrant solely from the 'native' perspective" (15). One of these risks is not listening to the Others and presenting them as "new Irish," not for what they are or for what they themselves offer. This volume contributes to Hickman's premise that "it is important to see Ireland as a hybrid nation, that has been integrated into the global economic system, and is based on a variety of political and cultural hierarchies and social and economic inequalities" (2007, 23). Villar-Argáiz highlights how a "collection of essays mixing natives' and immigrants' perspectives would divert attention from some of the issues which inevitably arise in the act of writing from the point of view of the centre rather than the periphery" (2014, 15). I would encourage Villar-Argáiz to continue this line of research by studying the perspective of the Others so as to have the basis for a more accurate and enriching multicultural study and agenda.

In the absence of theoretical debates about transnationalism, mobility or diasporas, there is a danger that research on immigration to Ireland will reproduce an "exceptionalist" view of this country—as unique and different—whereas in fact Ireland should be situated within globalised systems and movements of people and capital (Mac Éinrí and White 2008, 164). The editor of the present volume correctly sets all these issues as central key elements of debate and analysis in the literature of an Ireland that embraces the idea of a new multicultural society. It provides new critical views on multicultural Ireland in literature with an academic depth in much need of scholarly assessment.

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Joana Sabadell-Nieto and Marta Segarra, eds. 2014. *Differences in Common: Gender, Vulnerability and Community*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 250 pp. ISBN: 978-90-420-3835-6.

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Differences in Common: Gender, Vulnerability and Community testifies to the relevance of studies on community in social, literary and media criticism. In this regard, community formation is on the agenda in this period of globalization through transnational locations, contributing much to challenging the nationalist suppression of cultural heterogeneity. Nationalist discourses construct imagined communities based on homogeneity and separation in order to control differences; therefore the group of people constructed as different (ethnic minorities, women, etc.) is deemed as the "Other" which may destabilize the apparent national immunity. In contrast, multicultural, ethnic and gender discourses, such as Gunew's, highlight the subversive power of differences to construct communities. According to Gunew, the "dismantling of hegemonic categories is facilitated by the proliferation of difference rather than the setting up of binary oppositions that can merely be reversed" (1993, 1). Subverting the aforementioned homogeneous discourses, then, opens up many possibilities of integration for the outsiders. Likewise, Said states that "cultures actually assume more 'foreign' elements, alterities, differences, that they consciously exclude" (1994, 15). Studying the community as a living entity in a constant flux of differences provides new insights into its formation.

The present book belongs to this approach. In this sense, the editors' aim is to demonstrate how the sum of differences coming together shapes community. Many authors have already theorized about this contact zone, which has gained great relevance for the study on oppressed group of people: it is Soja's "Thirdspace" (1996) or Bhabha's "Meanwhile" (1990). For them, it is the place where differences merge and the "small numbers"—as Appadurai so aptly names this phenomenon—settle (2006, 49). The book's main contribution to this metaphorical space is the affirmation that body exposure and vulnerability are compulsory for the construction of this contact zone/space. To this end, this volume, which is divided into three sections and thirteen chapters, presents a serious examination of community formation through time and space from a multidisciplinary perspective: politics, history, literature, transnationalism, gender, body, postcolonial and media studies, etc.

The first section, "Gender and Trans-National Citizenship," deals with gender in relation to nationalistic discourses. The first chapter, "The Reason(s) of Nation and Gender" by Iveković, focuses on how the heteronormative nationalistic discourse excludes the "Other," mainly women, because they "do not correspond to the norm" (21). Difference is used by the discourses based on reason to deny individuals their citizenship, instead of being used to construct a community. Particularly interesting to the ongoing debate about community therefore is the importance of exchange of differences for the formation of a community. Spivak, a well-known proponent of subverting nationalism writes the next contribution, entitled "Nationalism and the Imagination." For Spivak, the feeling of being part of a community expressed by nationalist discourses is different to her own feeling of belonging which apparently disperse due to the emergence of nationalism. As soon as nationalism, founded on reproductive heteronormativity and wrongly identified with the state, became established, the notion of the Subaltern began to spread. Particularly interesting to the ongoing debate about community is how these "small numbers" subvert the national fiction by means of imaginative processes.

"The Hostage of the Womb by the Motherland" is a contribution by Martín-Lucas. The author analyzes the consequences of comparing women with nation, namely, abuses and the denial of citizenship. In this regard, it is interesting to note how different contexts provoke a range of gender performances and effects. Whereas in national contexts, there are mechanisms to control both female bodies and their citizenship (for example, birth control in China), transnationally, women may form allegiances—defined by Ong as "flexible citizenship" (1999). As a consequence, women disobey the norms imposed upon them, as Chicana feminists do, and the nationalist discourses are threatened.

Persin, in "Women and Citizenship: Poetry of Power, Time and Space," discusses the fluidity of the poetic language as the best way to subvert totalitarian discourses. The author analyzes the poetry of Zodoya ([1965] 1988) and Castro (2000, 2006) to exemplify how official discourses are deconstructed by literary texts. These poems, like Chacon's *La voz dormida* (2002), engage in accomplishing the subversive endeavor of rewriting silenced histories from the perspective of the outsider. Specifically, these poems create a new imaginative space more appropriate to oppressed women and immigrants.

Body and vulnerability frame the second section "Vulnerability and Politics." Blackman in *The Body* (2008) refers to the cultural and social theories about the body, and analyzes one of the best-known critics in this field of research: Judith Butler, whose contribution, "Bodily Vulnerability, Coalitions, and Street Politics," opens the second section. Vulnerability, like the body, needs to be understood in relation to culture, society, geography, history, media, etc. More importantly, according to the author, describing women and nations as vulnerable implies either protecting them paternalistically or excluding them from the democratic processes. Therefore, in order to oppose this hypervulnerability and achieve political changes, public exposure of the body by means of political struggles is needed.

Fuster, in "More than Vulnerable: Rethinking Community," analyzes Resnair's fake documentary *Hiroshima, mon amour* (1959) to demonstrate the impossibility of Butler's community of mourners based on vulnerability (2004). Fuster posits that community construction cannot be justified by the Western social practices that both decide which life is grievable, and then legitimate violence on the different body for security's sake. Instead, political judgment is required to control violence and mourning has to be turned into political action to form communities.

The next contribution, "Passionately Losing Oneself," by Sabadell-Nieto is an analysis of the main characters in two of Coixet's films: *The Secret Life of Words* (2005) and *Elegy* (2008). These characters are victims of their communities because they are sexually abused or have to behave according to the masculine heteronormativity. Since Martín-Lucas criticized the lack of information about women's trauma in national and war contexts, it is worth mentioning how Sabadell-Nieto highlights the insightful treatment of the character's feeling in Coixet's films during their recovery processes. In this sense, as the characters find out, recovering is only possible through human contact and vulnerability.

According to Andrés, in "Opaque Encounters, Impossible Vicinities," in Melville's short story "The Piazza" ([1856] 1997) the characters fail because they do not follow the social normative to correctly interact as neighbors with the "Other." Similarly, in *Moby Dick* (chapter 128, [1851] 1988), the refusal to rescue the "Other" in the middle of the ocean constitutes a denial of the political space that constitutes the community (171).

Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" (1991) is a valuable contribution to both the previous and the following arguments. According to Anderson, communities are imagined because they are founded on the basis of a common feature, which is shared by compatriots who have never met (6), and maintained by nationalist cultural products such as literature, music, etc. (141). Adopting this theoretical framework, the third section, "(Fictional) Identities and the Politics of Memory" analyzes different transcultural products that destabilize this imagined community. In the first chapter, "Community and the Politics of Memory," Segarra focuses on two films by Bouchareb (2006, 2010) that offer unofficial accounts of French historical events. While Poole asserts that a community is constructed through cultural elements (1999, 14), Segarra argues that "[p]olitical, folkloric, literary, musical, cinematic and culinary discourses, among others, contribute to shaping this feeling of being part of a community" (177). It is remarkable how this way of engaging with History challenges the authenticity of homogeneous official discourses.

Similarly, "Fiction Traces: The Ideal Community and Historical Sabotage" by Grasset defies the objectivity of documentaries about past events. The author contends that documentaries cannot be deemed as objective since, being cinematographic, they use film features and techniques. Moreover, in many documentaries, fictional common features are emphasized in order to maintain ideal communities.

The next chapter, "What does Difference Have to Do with Community? Derrida's Diacritic Difference" is a contribution by Masó. As outlined in this chapter, Derrida, in

his contribution to Brenner's visual anthology of the Jewish diaspora (2003), criticizes the notion of universality that lies behind the identification of oppressed minorities with larger majorities in particular contexts since it implies erasing their differences instead of linking them to construct communities.

In "Community as Transit and Stammering in Collaborative Writing," Fernández comments on two blogs by García (2004) and by Ribeiro (2010). The essay focuses on the main difference between the communities that are being formed on the internet and previous, non-digital ones, namely, the impossibility of establishing a sense of permanence and cohesion. It is interesting how both blogs emphasize the polyphony in the process of community construction: the first is an example of a community in transit, where diverse voices emerge, and the second is a stammering of the universal voice that destabilizes the authority of the official narrative.

Finally, in "Blood Ties: Interpretive Communities and Popular (Gendered) Genres," Clúa Ginés analyzes the transfictionality between Charlaine Harris' Southern Vampire Mysteries ([2001] 2009, [2003] 2009, [2004] 2009) and *True Blood* (Ball 2008), their TV adaptation. Particularly remarkable is how the author links two apparently opposed communities to construct an interpretive community.

In conclusion, thanks to these contributions, imagined communities are destabilized and differences are confirmed as pillars of a community. However, regarding the content, some previous knowledge about postcolonial, gender, transnational, historiography, media, literary and body studies is required in order to fully understand the volume as a whole. Nonetheless, this book is a much appreciated contribution to the ongoing debate about community.

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Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade. 2014. *In Search of Jane Austen: The Language of the Letters*. New York: Oxford UP. 282 pp. ISBN: 978-0-19-994511-5.

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The language of correspondence has attracted the attention of scholars for years, but particularly since the compilation of certain corpora such as the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* ([CEEC] 1998) and the *Corpus of Late Modern English Prose* (Denison et al. 1994), which began at the beginning of the 1990s. The study of letters provides not only insights into the grammatical features of the language of different periods but also allows a better understanding of the most significant socio-historical features of a particular time or a specific person. Whereas an analysis of a corpus of letters contributes to a broad description of the characteristics of the language of correspondence in general, the in-depth study of a single author's work can also give information about personal writing styles. As the author of this work points out, "studies of Jane Austen's language are few and far between" (1), despite her popularity as the object of study of many researchers, who have however mainly concentrated on literary analysis.

The book is structured in nine chapters, the first being the introduction and the last the conclusion. Only three refer specifically to linguistic features, chapters five, six and seven, and these comprise the analysis of spelling, words and grammar respectively. The remaining chapters are essential to understand the social context of the letters as well as the corpus that has been put together in order to carry out the linguistic analysis. The book also includes four appendices, which contain lists of the attested and unattested letters (appendices one and two), the transcription of one letter (appendix three) and the network of people Jane Austen corresponded with (appendix four).

The introduction is extensive, since it contains several sections, and at the same time it is extremely clarifying in its description of both the corpus and the method used. The corpus has been compiled by the author using the WordSmith Tools programme. This chapter is particularly abundant in references, which reinforces the quality of this study.

Chapter two, "Letter-Writing," provides a general overview of the culture of letter writing in eighteenth-century England and contains statistical data on the letters that Jane Austen both sent and received. Within the group of the sent letters, Tieken-Boon van Ostade has included not only those letters that have survived and are collected

(Le Faye 1995) but also those that are "referred to in the correspondence" and that the author believes were written as they were mentioned in some way in the surviving letters (32). As regards the received letters, very few have survived and the author has also included those which are unattested. Although the statistics presented might be considered controversial since an extensive number of them are only presumed to have been written, the description of how the references were found in the corpus contributes to strengthening the belief in the validity of the estimations.

From a sociolinguistic and pragmatic point of view chapter three, "A Social Network of Letter-Writers," is very enlightening. Although Jane Austen's sister, Cassandra, was her most frequent correspondent, Austen was also in contact with other members of her family as well as friends. A detailed description of all the different people she corresponded with is presented, along with details related to differences in her writing styles depending on who she was writing to. The analysis includes many tables, which generally clarify the textual comments, although Table 3.4 seems confusing as one of the groups of correspondents has been left without a subcategory (62). In addition, there sometimes seems to be some speculation in relation to data present in the unattested letters, although justification of its interpretation is provided in all cases, making the implications cogent.

Chapter four, "The Letters as a Corpus," concentrates on the selection of the corpus, which comprises 144,002 words in total. The author includes some remarks on the self-corrections that were often found in Jane Austen's letters and the linguistic implications of this. Abbreviations and some punctuation features are also commented on, all of which are duly exemplified as is the case in the rest of the book. The author acknowledges that not all the letters available today are originals; some are copies of the originals and others are simply available in published form. This will have connotations in the linguistic analysis, as editors' choices might have interfered in the process, as the author points out.

Once the corpus, method, correspondents and all other general aspects concerning the letters are described, the focus of the book turns to the analysis of pure linguistic features. In chapter five, "The Language of the Letters: Spelling," Tieken-Boon van Ostade embarks in a complicated task because "Jane Austen's spelling practice . . . has never been described" (108). She addresses several questions which are gradually discussed throughout the chapter. The spelling characteristics of Jane Austen's writings are constantly compared to the spelling features of other writers described previously by other contemporaneous scholars. In addition, not only does Jane Austen's spelling show differences when her private writings are compared with her novels, but the possibility of manipulation by editors has to be considered as well. This clearly explains, according to the author, some of the variations analysed. At the end of the chapter, Tieken-Boon van Ostade admits that although some of the changes that can be observed in her writings as time goes by were definitely influenced by the publishers, it is sometimes more complicated to confirm why some spellings are as they are.

Chapter six, "The Language of the Letters: Words," focuses on Jane Austen's innovation of words and on her influence in terms of vocabulary on later generations. Other scholars have analysed different aspects regarding Jane Austen's use of vocabulary, but never has such

a detailed study been carried out, particularly in relation to the words used in her letters. As is the practice throughout the book, previous studies are mentioned before explaining aspects such as what position Jane Austen occupies in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) as regards her innovative vocabulary, her usage of obsolete words such as "authoress" (137), or her inclusion of vulgar words, particularly when writing to younger generations. This chapter contains a vast number of tables clearly displaying the information provided, but which can sometimes be overwhelming. In addition, the author's assumptions are backed up by other studies on specific issues or by the results found in her careful analysis. Tieken-Boon van Ostade concludes that "a certain amount of idiosyncratic practice" is found both in Jane Austen's spelling and her vocabulary; however, the language of her letters proves interesting because of the presence of new words, which may not have been "necessarily coined by her" (166), but which would not have been brought to light had it not been for her usage. The author admits that since the OED is constantly being updated the figures that she has found in relation to the first attestation of certain words by Jane Austen may not be exact.

The main idea introduced at the beginning of chapter seven, "The Language of the Letters: Grammar," is that it may not be good practice to use Jane Austen's writing as an example of the language of the Late Modern English period. The author justifies this assumption on the basis of the idiosyncrasy of both Austen's spelling and vocabulary, as well as on her findings on grammatical features which she develops in this chapter. The author's point of departure seems to be a strong statement: "Jane Austen had no access to the normative grammars of the period" (176). The fact this is mentioned in other chapters and that Tieken-Boon van Ostade is extremely meticulous in her justification regarding this assumption, makes the information highly credible. Only certain grammatical features are analysed and described. These include the use of double negation, preposition stranding, the use of *-ing* forms and the subjunctive, variation in verb forms and the use of *do*-less negatives and periphrastic *do*. However, most of the features studied occur in low numbers and hence Tieken-Boon van Ostade acknowledges that they "should be interpreted with great care" (199).

In chapter eight, "Authorial Identity," the author argues that some of the features attributed to Jane Austen might in fact be the "spelling preferences of the person or persons who copied the letters before they were lost" (208). In addition, this illuminating chapter includes information in relation to three novels, *Persuasion* (1818), *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *The Watsons* (unknown date). In the case of *Persuasion*, the focus is on the two chapters that were not finally included in the book. As regards *Mansfield Park*, variations in different editions are analysed, which show the spelling preferences of the corresponding printing house, more than the writer's own choice. And finally, the dating of *The Watsons*—one of Jane Austen's few unfinished novels—is considered. This work has never been dated exactly; previous studies have generally been tentative about probably dates. Thanks to her analysis of the spelling features, the author concludes that this novel could not have been written in 1804, as previously suggested. However, she is also extremely careful in her assertion as she states "we may perhaps date the beginning of the Watsons to the early months of 1806" (222).

Finally, in the conclusion in chapter nine, the author encourages more research on letters in general and more specifically those of the Late Modern English period in order to identify characteristics of writers or groups of people, as this would help to increase knowledge of the language of the time. In addition, Tieken-Boon van Ostade suggests that more studies of a comparative nature between letters and novels, both by Jane Austen and by other authors, should be carried out, as she admits that in her study there are only brief references to the novels. Specific emphasis is placed on the often idiosyncratic and conservative language of Jane Austen and the occasional remaining difficulty in identifying dialectal usages in the letters. At the end, a few comments about Jane Austen's life are made, since they probably influenced her writing style: her limited experience of travelling, her lack of contact with large groups of people, and the fact that despite the strong likelihood of familiarity with other writers' works, she probably did not know them personally.

This is not the first book by the author on the correspondence of a specific writer, as she also published one on Robert Lowth's letters in 2011, following a similar pattern. Since Lowth and Austen were contemporaneous, constant references and comparisons between the two studies are made in this current work, which are at times rather tiresome and not always relevant. However, all in all this is an extremely thorough study with many references both to other authors and previous works on Austen, and it not only enlightens the reader on Jane Austen's language but also encourages similar studies.

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This volume includes a selection of papers and plenary lectures from the *Fourth International Conference on Corpus Linguistics* held at the University of Jaén (Spain), from 22 to 24 March, 2012. It is divided into two sections: "Corpora and Historical Linguistics" (consisting of one introductory chapter by Alcaraz-Sintes, plus five further chapters) and "Corpora and Descriptive Linguistics" (with an introductory chapter by Valera-Hernández, plus seven more chapters). All chapters are of high quality, and serve to illustrate the various ways in which Corpus Linguistics has become an essential field in the advancement of linguistic study, particularly lexicological and grammatical studies, and also language acquisition and translation, in that these are the main sub-disciplines represented in the volume.

The paper by Nuria Calvo-Cortés, "A Corpus-Based Study of Gradual Meaning Change in Late Modern English," is a detailed lexical study which traces the evolution of four originally maritime words, *aboard*, *ahead*, *aloof* and *astern*, all of which developed new meanings and uses in the Late Modern English period. The author shows how this period is essential in the evolution of these four items and provides two socio-cultural reasons: (i) the decline of the prescriptive rule to avoid *a-* prefixed words, and (ii) the advance of technology with the arrival of the steam engine, which brought with it the demise of sail power. This led to the decay of the primitive meanings of the terms under investigation, which first underwent lexicalization and, later, grammaticalization, as they developed new metaphorical meanings. The author not only manages to intertwine these two processes of language change, but also provides examples of new meanings and earlier usages than those attested in the *Oxford English Dictionary.*

Teresa Fanego's contribution "Dictionary-Based Corpus Linguistics and Beyond: Developments in the Expression of Motion Events in the History of English" is an exhaustive analysis of *sound emission to motion* construction (SEtoM Cxn, as in *Sir Ascelin clanked into the hall*). This is studied within the framework of Construction Grammar (Goldberg 1995, for example) and Cognitive Linguistics, following Talmy's (2000)

classification of world languages into *satellite-framed* ones (such as English) and *verb-framed* ones (such as Spanish). Based on data from several historical dictionaries, the emergence of this SEtoM Cxn proves to have been motivated by the existence of similar constructions where manner of motion is encoded in the verb (e.g., *crawl*). The paper also contributes to the expanding horizons of Corpus Linguistics, showing that "dictionary-based corpus linguistics," a term coined by Mair (2004, 123), is the most appropriate methodology for studying the development of language with a focus on particularly infrequent lexical items.

The paper "The Use of *if* as a Declarative Complementizer in English: Theoretical and Empirical Considerations," by María José López-Couso and Belén Méndez-Naya, studies constructions such as *It would be a good idea if you hired a bodyguard*, where the link *if* functions as a complementizer. With the exploration of two historical corpora, the authors find more than 8,000 examples of *if*-clauses from Old English to the very late twentieth century, and analyse some 90 examples from different theoretical angles. By applying a series of semantic and syntactic criteria to categorize *if*-clauses along two continua—(i) between conditional and declarative *if*-clauses, and (ii) between interrogative and declarative *if*-clauses—, the authors show that the complementizer *if* differs from central *that* in a number of ways, such as their preference for non-assertive contexts, the fact that they function as the subject of the main clause (usually introduced by an anticipatory pronoun), and their strong tendency to occur in informal contexts.

Matti Rissanen's contribution "On English Historical Corpora, with Notes on the Development of Adverbial Connectives" is an encyclopaedic review of the major English historical corpora combined with the study of three adverbial connectives from Old to Late Modern English, namely *nemne/nymþe* ["except"], *according to* and *concerning.* Although the chapter does not seek to provide a complete evolution of these items, important conclusions are drawn, such as the steps followed in their grammaticalization process. Making use of the motto of the author's team, "Research begins where counting ends" (112), Rissanen includes ample evidence to illustrate the frequency of the three connectives, their distribution in genres and their evolution over time, with data taken from a careful selection of the most authoritative corpora of the different periods studied, from "focused small corpora" to "[l]arge general" ones (132). His invaluable conclusions regarding the usefulness of all ten corpora explored here are the perfect complement to the *Corpus Resource Database* (*CoRD*).

The final paper in this section on diachronic linguistics is Ondřej Tichý and Jan Čermák's "Measuring Typological Syntheticity of English Diachronically with the Use of Corpora." Inspired by Benedikt Szmrecsanyi's (2012) work, which challenges the widely held idea that English has evolved typologically from a synthetic to an analytic status, Tichý and Čermák propose a different measure, by using the standard Shannon entropy formula, which allows them to confirm the traditional assumption quantitatively and thus reject that of Szmrecsanyi (2012). My only concern with this chapter is of a methodological nature, in that it is not clear how the authors have found

the forty-one words they consider in the study. They claim that these words are high-frequency items in all the periods, and they appear to have extracted them from various dictionaries, but the specific sources are not cited.

The first paper in the second part of the volume (after the introduction by Valera-Hernández) is Miguel-Ángel Benítez-Castro's "Formal, Syntactic, Semantic and Textual Features of English Shell Nouns: A Manual Corpus-Driven Approach." Shell nouns, described as abstract nouns that "help to condense long stretches of discourse into smaller discourse entities" (171), include *time*, *thing*, *way*, *example*, *issue*, *lie*, etc. The major strength of this chapter lies in the large amount of manual work done by the author, who finds 922 shell-like units in a two-million-word corpus, classifies them into three frequency-determined groups with three sub-groups each, and analyses them according to nine variables. The findings, which bring into question some common claims in the literature, such as the preference of these forms for postmodifier and cataphoric use, leave the reader intrigued: why use a classification of items into nine frequency-determined groups if no differences between these groups are subsequently discussed?

Eduardo Coto-Villalibre's contribution "From Prototypical to Peripheral: The '*get + Ven*' Construction in Contemporary Spoken British English" provides a reassessment of the classification of constructions involving *get* and a participial element, which ranges from being purely verbal to adjectival and idiomatic. The main strength of this paper, which analyses a 600,000-word spoken corpus, is its proposal of a prototype-based account of these constructions, which the author classifies into six groups: (i) central *get*-passives, (ii) semi *get*-constructions, (iii) pseudo *get*-constructions, (iv) adjectival *get*-constructions, (v) idiomatic *get*-constructions, and (vi) reflexive *get*-constructions. Starting with a list of prototypical features of central *get* passives, as found in the literature, the study confirms only some of these (such as the tendency to occur without an agent *by*-phrase), while others are proved to be erroneously attributed to the central class (such as the assumed responsibility of the subject).

The paper "Encoding '*Throughness*' in English and French," by Thomas Egan, studies the translation of the Norwegian preposition/particle *gjennom* into English and French using a multilingual corpus. The results show that the two languages overlap only in 21% of the occurrences (a total of 313 tokens are analysed). A detailed analysis of the four most common meanings expressed by *gjennom* (eight meanings are identified) shows that the most intuitive sense, namely motion, is in fact the meaning in which the two languages are most distant. Such distance is explained in typological terms, and the author, like Fanego (this volume), refers to the influential work of Talmy (2000) which classifies languages according to the way in which they encode motion. While English behaves like a *satellite-framed* language, French displays a more varied picture. This inspiring study has only one weakness: while the conclusions state that the differences between English and French are statistically significant, no results from statistical tests are cited.

The paper "*If You Would Like to Lead*: On the Grammatical Status of Directive Isolated *if*-clauses in Spoken British English," by Beatriz Mato-Míguez, includes a fine analysis of the literature on *if*-clauses with special emphasis on those that are non-canonical, that is, those which exhibit ellipsis and those considered to be isolated (the study thus complements that by López-Couso and Méndez-Naya in this volume). The author's plea for the consideration of directive isolated *if*-clauses as a case of insubordination (along the lines of Evans 2007) is perhaps the most interesting contribution of this paper. Although the author uses a diachronic corpus, owing to the scarcity of data (only fifty-eight relevant examples), no diachronic picture can be drawn. The topic of the study, however, is highly promising, especially as far as the semantic interpretation of these clauses and their interrelation with modal verbs are concerned.

The next paper differs from the previous ones in this part, and indeed in the volume as a whole, in that it focuses on language acquisition. Detmar Meurers, Julia Krivanek and Serhiy Bykh's contribution "On the Automatic Analysis of Learner Corpora. Native Language Identification as Experimental Testbed of Language Modeling between Surface Features and Linguistic Abstraction" aims to improve tools for Native Language Identification (NLI). With this aim in mind, the authors conduct two types of experiment. Firstly, a data-driven experiment shows that analysing sequences larger than three n-grams reveals important information about NLI. Secondly, a theory-driven experiment shows that some syntactic alternations, such as the locative preposition drop alternation (*climb a mountain* vs. *climb up a mountain*), proves to be revealing for NLI of Chinese speakers of L2 English. The successful application of the two approaches adopted by the authors highlights the need for further research into this hybrid perspective, which may yield a much better understanding of linguistic theories in general and of language acquisition in particular.

Juan Santana-Lario's "'Adjective + *whether/if*-clause' Constructions in English. An Exploratory Corpus-Based Study" is the third study on non-conditional *if*-clauses in the volume. With the aim of describing these constructions within the framework of Construction Grammar (Goldberg 1995, for example), the author analyses the twenty most frequent adjectives preceding *whether* and *if* in a corpus of contemporary British English. Almost 1,800 examples are analysed with regard to (i) the syntactic function of the *whether/if*-clause (extraposed subject, extraposed object and complement of the adjective), and (ii) the lexico-grammatical associations of any of those constructions (including the semantic classification of adjectives, [non-]assertiveness, and the presence of an *or {not}* construction). The author convincingly concludes that it is the interaction between all these factors that gives these constructions some modal non-factual meaning.

The last contribution to the section, and in the book, is Paul Thompson's "Exploring Hoey's Notion of Textual Colligation in a Corpus of Student Writing." With the twofold aim of (i) revising the concept of textual colligation, and (ii) exploring the writing of UK undergraduate students of different levels, the author studies how certain

contiguous (n-grams) and non-contiguous (P-frames) sequences are used by students in their academic essays. The conclusions show that the sequences *this essay* and *one of the **, which have a strong tendency to occur in paragraph-initial sentences, exhibit an increasing frequency year by year and help the writers to construct a critical *persona*. Likewise, modal verbs, which show a tendency to occur in paragraph-final sentences, exhibit an interesting evolution over the years: *will* and *shall* drop, while *would, may* and *should* increase, which, as the author hypothesizes, is the result of students learning to qualify claims, something which they do progressively and gradually.

Summing up, the contributions selected for this edited volume are all of a high quality, innovative and undoubtedly relevant for quite a diverse number of areas of the field of Corpus Linguistics, notably lexicological studies, language variation and change, translation studies and language acquisition. If any improvement could be made, it would be the structure of the volume. The division into two parts, based on diachronic/synchronic grounds, leads to two unbalanced sections, each with an introductory chapter written by a different editor in two obviously different styles. While the introduction by Alcaraz-Sintes follows a traditional outline, with a sound framing of historical corpus linguistics supported by reference to authoritative works and a short summary of each of the five papers, the introduction to the second part by Valera-Hernández is rather heterodox. Here, the co-editor tries to discuss the similarities and differences in the use of dictionaries and corpora as sources of data, this based on a forthcoming paper by Laurie Bauer and Valera-Hernández himself, which, unfortunately, is not included in the reference list. The co-editor's intention is not successful because none of the papers in the second part of the book in fact relies on dictionaries and, therefore, he has to refer to works in the first part (Calvo-Cortés and Fanego); he also fails to include a summary of one of the chapters included in the second part (that by Mato-Míguez). Given the asymmetry between both introductory chapters, it seems to me that the volume would have had greater consistency with a single introduction combining the information offered by both editors. Additionally, organizing the chapters thematically rather than following alphabetical order would have led to a more coherent volume (where, for example, the three contributions on non-conditional values of *if*-clauses, would have been connected). Notwithstanding this minor structural weakness, the editors' work must be praised, as all the papers have undoubtedly been rigorously selected and carefully edited.

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Christopher S. Butler and Francisco Gonzálvez-García. 2014. *Exploring Functional-Cognitive Space*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 579 pp. ISBN: 978-90-272-5922-6.

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For someone unacquainted with the field of linguistics, it may be somewhat surprising to learn that there are so many different theories and approaches which compete to offer the best possible account of the structure and use of human language. The diversity of the theoretical options available is so vast that it is just impossible for an average linguist to keep up to date with the developments in frameworks other than their own. The result is not only that one runs the risk of reinventing the wheel by suggesting linguistic analyses that may have already been proposed in an alternative model, but also, that it is difficult to discern which model is best for the study of particular phenomena. Inter-theoretical comparison is thus an invaluable enterprise in the field and any attempt at clarifying the offer in the grammatical market is always to be applauded.

The aim of *Exploring Functional-Cognitive Space* is clearly stated on the very first page of the opening chapter, where the authors claim that they intend to "investigate the relationships among a subset of those approaches to language that can be considered to fall under one or more of the areas often labelled as functionalist, cognitivist and constructionist" (1). Functionalist theories have sometimes been criticized for (allegedly) constituting a group of approaches whose only point in common is the rejection of formal (mainly Chomskyan) linguistics (Newmeyer 1998, 13). Although there are already several volumes which offer collections of articles by leading functionalist authors (e.g., Tomasello 1998, 2014; Gómez González, Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez and Gonzálvez-García 2014), presenting the main tenets and practical applications of functional models, this work by Butler and Gonzálvez-García (henceforth B&G) fills a gap in this area by providing a careful and exhaustive examination of the differences and similarities between the theories in this group.

The book builds on previous work by the authors (e.g., Butler 2003 and Gonzálvez-García and Butler 2006, among several others). In fact, the term "functional-cognitive" itself was coined by the authors in Butler and Gonzálvez-García (2005) and is the object of explanation in the first chapter. This term is reminiscent of Van Valin and LaPolla's

"communication-and-cognition perspective" (1997) and Tomasello's "cognitive-functional" (1998), also used to group models with a functional-cognitive orientation.

The volume is divided into twelve chapters, which, setting aside the introduction and the concluding chapter, revolve around three main aspects: (i) the selection of the models to be examined; (ii) the design and structure of the questionnaire answered by the experts; and (iii) the authors' critical and statistical analysis of the questionnaire data and the relevant literature. In the first chapter, B&G clarify the terms *functionalism*, *cognitive linguistics*, *constructionist* and *usage-based approaches*, as these are terms which have all been employed with different interpretations in the literature. Essentially, functional models are said to share the following basic assumptions: (i) "language is first and foremost a means of communication between human beings in social and cognitive contexts" (3); (ii) language is not a self-contained object; and (iii) syntax is not autonomous from semantics and/or pragmatics. Similarly, B&G stress that the term *cognitive* in linguistic theory may be understood in different ways, but it is employed in Cognitive Linguistics (with capital letters) to stress the role of conceptualization and language use in the emergence of grammar. The authors make it clear that not all models examined in the volume can be considered both functional and cognitive, but the terms together serve to define a theoretical space in which the different models can be situated and their differences made visible. The remaining pages of the introductory chapter explore previous work by different authors on the characterization of functionalism, functional theories and their differences with formal linguistics.

As for the models examined in the volume, B&G argue that their selection has been guided by three main principles: (i) the set of models should reflect the "breadth of functional, cognitive and constructional linguistics today" (25); (ii) the models should have achieved independent status within the field; and (iii) they should aim at providing a complete account of language including all relevant areas of syntax, semantics and pragmatics. The result is a set of sixteen approaches: Functional Discourse Grammar, Role and Reference Grammar, Systemic Functional Linguistics, the work of Talmy Givón, Interactional Linguistics, Word Grammar, The Columbia School, Cognitive Grammar, Sign-Based Construction Grammar, Cognitive Construction Grammar, Embodied Construction Grammar, Frame-Semantics Construction Grammar, Radical Construction Grammar, the collostructional approach, the Lexical Constructional Model, and the Parallel Architecture.

Chapter two is then devoted to presenting the key features of each model. It would obviously be impossible to provide a detailed analysis of each within the length of one single volume, but the chapter serves its purposes well by furnishing the reader with the information that will be necessary to understand the discussion that follows. The chapter further shows B&G's profound knowledge of functional models as well as their careful examination of the literature and the selection of appropriate sources.

As mentioned earlier, a second key aspect in the book is the detailed questionnaire of fifty-eight items devised by the authors, which is answered by twenty-nine experts

in the different frameworks. I see it as one of the main strengths of B&G's book that the comparison of the different functional-cognitive models is not only based on the reading of the relevant literature but also on the answers provided by experts in those models (including on most occasions the intellectual founders of the theories themselves). Informants were asked to rate on a four-item scale the extent to which their models agree with the item. Chapter three explains the content of the questionnaire and the methodology chosen in the selection of the different features. The chapter opens with a disclaimer in which B&G state that the list of items is inevitably influenced by their own interests and background, and that some of the items might also have been included or modified by the desire of some informants to reveal important aspects of their model. The final questionnaire is then defined as a compromise between including too many specific items and keeping the questionnaire short enough so as not to put respondents off. In this respect, it is important to emphasize the scientific honesty that pervades the whole book. At different places, B&G openly discuss the difficulties they had to face in the development of the work and how certain choices they made would have been different with hindsight. For example, on page 155 they discuss several problems related to the questionnaire: how occasionally the answers were influenced by the informants' own interests or understanding of language and linguistic theory, and how some items required further clarification.

The fifty-eight items of the questionnaire are classified into six main groups. I provide one item (some in a simplified manner) for each category as an example:

1. Features related to foundational matters.
   The communicative function of language is regarded as fundamental in accounting for why languages are the way they are.
2. Features related to the range of phenomena the models intended to cover.
   This approach aims to be a full model of language as a whole rather than primarily a model of just grammar.
3. Features related to the type of data.
   Data from attested samples of language use are employed.
4. Features related to the language external factors appealed to in explanations.
   Knowledge of language is intimately related to use of language.
5. Features concerned with the form of the grammar itself.
   Empty/invisible categories are strongly dispreferred.
6. Features concerned with applications.
   There have been pedagogical applications of this approach.

As can be seen, the items move from general methodological issues to more specific questions regarding the organization of the grammar, the type of rules and categories employed and applications of the theory, points at which more differences among models are to be found.

It should be noted that comparable works on inter-theoretical comparison (e.g., González Escribano 1993) have usually tried to devise abstract independent parameters with which theories can be evaluated and compared. This strategy has the advantage that the parameters of evaluation are kept at a significant distance from the specifics of each model, but they would have been difficult to use as the basis for a questionnaire for obvious practical reasons. B&G's approach has the advantage that the questionnaire can be straightforwardly answered by experts in each model, so that the information obtained from the experts' ratings is then supplemented with B&G's critical examination of the relevant literature, and can be analyzed statistically with the tools introduced in chapter four.

Chapters five to ten represent, in the authors' own words, "the central core of the book" and take, as their organizing principle, the structure of the questionnaire (29). Each chapter is devoted to one of the six main sections into which the fifty-eight items are grouped. Each item in the questionnaire is discussed on the basis of the answers provided by the respondents and of the critical reading of the main sources, and is illustrated with a generous number of relevant quotations from fundamental works. Wherever disagreements are observed between the informants themselves and/or what is stated in the literature and the answers to the questionnaires, these are carefully discussed by B&G as on most occasions they reveal points of friction within the theories, thus highlighting areas that need further work in each model.

Finally, chapter twelve discusses the general findings. The authors show that out of the fifty-eight items, thirty-four show "predominantly positively or negative ratings" (490), which obviously confirms the relations among the models which are to some extent attributed to the historical connections among some of the approaches analyzed. The chapter further explores avenues of collaboration for the different models and suggests ways to promote dialogue among their practitioners.

To conclude this review let me just emphasize once again why I think this book is so valuable and why works of this kind are necessary and usually less appreciated than they should be. Academic honesty demands from every linguist that they should be able to make an informed decision on what to teach and what to research. As mentioned earlier, it is simply impossible to be familiar with all the theoretical options available and the technical details of each linguistic model. However, a true scientific attitude to the study of language requires "an open-mindedness to insights from whatever quarter" and an avoidance of a strategy:

> seems endemic in the cognitive sciences: one discovers a new tool, decides it is the only tool needed, and, in an act of academic (and funding) territoriality, loudly proclaims the superiority of this tool over all others. My own attitude is that we are in this together. It is going to take us a lot of tools to understand language. We should try to appreciate exactly what each of the tools we have is good for, and to recognize when new and as yet undiscovered tools are necessary. (Jackendoff 2002, xiii)

B&G's volume is thus the kind of work which helps scholars understand the relevance and advantages of each of the theoretical options (i.e., tools) in the field and it is precisely for that reason that this volume should be on every linguist's bookshelf. To this it must be added that it is a rigorous piece of academic work, constructed with scientific honesty as a basic pillar and, above all, deep fine-grained knowledge of the field. In all, it is an excellent service to the linguistic community.

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David Lasagabaster, Aintzane Doiz and Juan Manuel Sierra, eds. 2014. *Motivation and Foreign Language Learning. From Theory to Practice*. 190 pp. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. ISBN: 978-9-0272-1322-8.

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The present volume, edited by Lasagabaster, Doiz and Sierra, brings together different perspectives on the interrelation between motivation and foreign language learning. Following the editors' introduction, which carefully summarizes the main ideas explored in each chapter—hence my decision not to organize this review in the same way, but rather to focus on a general aspect that has the potential to encompass all of them—the volume is divided into two parts, each of four chapters. Whereas the first part is theoretically oriented, the second comprises individual studies. The volume ends with the editors' epilogue, in which an attempt is made to present a unified reading of the contributions.

I would like to begin this review by commenting on precisely this epilogue. There, Lasagabaster, Doiz and Sierra conclude that the perspectives gathered in the book are theoretically compatible, but I for one felt that a clear choice was being made in each chapter, and that the contributors were aware of opting for different alignments from those assumed by others. All the authors explore, either implicitly or explicitly, an issue which language teachers or researchers in the field of Foreign Language (FL) education often come across: demotivated learners. However, they do not give the same solution to this common problem and at times the lack of consistency among their proposals seems somewhat problematic. Basically, most of the contributions to this volume reenact the old alternative between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation (Deci and Ryan 1985), which is reformulated in different ways. I do not intend to discuss whether these two approaches are really theoretically compatible, as the editors seem to suggest. What interests me mostly is the fact that these approaches do clash with each other whenever teachers leave the realm of theory and enter the sphere of practice. For it is then that teachers must decide which take on motivation, intrinsic or extrinsic, they choose to favor in their classes, a decision which expresses itself in terms of pedagogical choices which, in turn, translate into specific class proposals and activities, each with its own structure, coherence and

internal meaning. In other words: practice demands FL teachers to make a choice between two different approaches to motivation that may not be contradictory in theory but which (on account of the pedagogical demands that govern language teaching) cannot be harmonized into single class proposals.

Dörney, Muir and Ibrahim, who author chapter one, exemplify the first response to the alternative presented above, separating their proposal from the rest. Their chapter favors extrinsic motivation insofar as it interprets that the key element in motivation lies in the future and on ideality, as their insistence on *goals* seems to suggest. For them, FL learners become motivated when their classes connect with their personal goals. It is then that a Directed Motivational Current (DMC) may arise, one which pushes the whole learning process towards goal attainment, as is described in this chapter. According to these authors, goals are immediately related to the visions that learners have of their own *possible selves*, which represent what "individuals *might* become, what they would like to become and what they are afraid of becoming" (20).

The main problem I find in this argument is that, by making motivation so dependent on outside goals, and goals in turn so dependent on future self possibilities, the authors seem to trust non-existing entities (the future, the realm of individual possibility) to become the main transforming forces in FL education, and not the qualities of the immediate educational context. This move runs against all the efforts made by constructivist (and transformative) pedagogies to provide a scientific base to language education by focusing on the learners' reality (Cummins et al. 2005). Here ideal dimensions are placed in its stead. Rather than uncritically espousing learners' goals and self-representations, constructivism builds on a learner's cognitive and affective background (including their goals) as the first step in an organized and meaningful transition towards a more adequate knowledge of reality and potential ways of transforming it. By contrast, in this chapter at least—I am not assessing Dörnyei, Muir and Ibrahim's entire contribution to motivation studies, which is too significant to summarize here—they seem either to have relinquished all hope of this educational transition ever taking place, or they simply do not consider it necessary. In their framework, the aim of FL education is understood as helping students reach their goals rather than helping them create more meaningful and judicious ones. For instance, never do Dörnyei, Muir and Ibrahim question the adequacy or feasibility of the goals that students' develop from their own imagined possible selves, nor do the authors relate the two constructs to the learners' families or larger communities. In my opinion, this may become counterproductive in the long run. When motivation rests in goals alone, students who fail in attaining their (impossible) goals may end up lacking any motivation whatsoever to continue with their FL education.

Albeit indirectly, the need to take learners' ideas and beliefs into account is also tackled in Alastair Henry's contribution (chapter five), but his proposal seems a more balanced one. His text analyzes Swedish high-school students' spontaneous ideas concerning FL learning, together with the impact the latter may have on learners'

motivation, self-efficacy, self-regulation, etc. In the course of his research, Henry discovered that Swedish students' beliefs on the success of FL education were likely to be inadequate, but that this did not prevent these notions from shaping their attitude and motivation towards the school subject (108-109). For instance, especially extensive among male Swedish high-school students was the assumption that they had learned most of what they knew in English through outside-school activities, an idea which often became translated into less motivation for the EFL class, which led in turn to more fragile school learning.

In line with Dörnyei, Muir and Ibrahim, Henry's chapter puts weight on learners' beliefs and ideas insofar as behavior is likely to be influenced by what one believes to be true, not only by what actually takes place. However, not only does Henry search for the reasons behind these beliefs—namely, bad pedagogical practice on the part of FL teachers, whose class activities did not awaken the students' interest nor provided them with any real academic challenge—but he then tries to find possible ways to change these spontaneous assumptions. And the solution, he suggests, is for teachers to improve their FL pedagogy and thereby raise students' motivation inside the FL high-school classroom, for example, by "bridging between the worlds in and outside the classroom" (99).

This improvement can also be carried out through other strategies. In fact, in line with Henry's final analysis, most of the chapters included in this volume explore two basic ways to increase learners' motivation for EFL education, and suggest doing so as a result of improving students' educational experience in the classroom. Accordingly, these chapters enact an *educational turn* in the study of motivation—as Lorenzo defines it in chapter seven—which opposes the dominant perspective, being as it is focused largely on extrinsic goals, as exemplified by Dörnyei, Muir and Ibrahim in this volume. By contrast, the rest of the chapters suggest that the main motivational problem in FL education lies not in its inability to contribute to the realization of the students' external goals, but rather in "what students find as monotonous language activities in the EFL classroom, a state of demotivation that many teachers find frustrating" (118, in chapter six). In other words: the motivational problem in FL education has a pedagogical origin. This diagnosis is shared by those trends of language research which attempt to prove that qualitative aspects of language exposure (i.e., the quality of the teaching) are more, or at least as, determinant for language learning, as quantitative aspects (i.e., time exposure) (Cummins 2005). Accordingly, whereas the authors of chapter one seem to take for granted that FL education should be meaningless and boring, the rest of the contributors to the volume do not relinquish the hope that learners may become motivated by what is done in their FL classrooms and not simply by focusing on their own private goals. That is, they try to portray FL education as an activity that is worthwhile in itself, and not only because of the goals that learners will be able to attain once they have learned the FL.

Of course learners' external realities, hopes and goals must be taken into account by the teacher, yet only as elements to be incorporated in pedagogy in order to create a more meaningful class experience—i.e., one which will hopefully transform those realities, hopes and goals to make them more reasonable and beneficial for the community. Students' realities are thus put to work at the service of education, not the other way around. FL learning finds its justification in the educational present and not in the professional future; not in the possible self, but in the learning self that participates actively in the learning process.

As I said above, two ways to fulfill this purpose are explored. One is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), an approach through which the FL becomes a means for *academic classroom communication*. This strategy is developed in chapter six (by Doiz, Lasagabaster and Sierra) and chapter seven (by Lorenzo). The other path increases students' intrinsic motivation by drawing their attention to the meta-cognitive dimensions involved in their own learning. This approach is described in chapter two (by Ushioda) and chapter three (by Coyle). All four of these chapters have in common the aim of making the FL learner's classroom experience more interesting and motivating. Whereas the first two attempt do so by drawing on subject matters which learners may consider appropriate for the school context (science, history, literature, mathematics, etc.), the latter two do so by considering the learning process an interesting subject matter in itself, one worth exploring in the FL classroom. In chapter two, for instance, Ushioda argues convincingly that the meta-cognitive dimensions of learning should be addressed explicitly by the teacher in order to help students progress adequately through the higher FL levels, when language becomes more difficult, learning less evident, and numerous obstacles can impact negatively on motivation. By addressing these problems on time, teachers can ensure that students remain capable of engaging in all activities, and make the most of the learning experience. Coyle's take on the meta-cognitive dimension is different since it involves encouraging the students to adopt a research stand on their own learning. That is to say, not only should the teacher become a researcher but also the learners, who are thus invited to reflect, justify and negotiate with the teacher the dimensions that ultimately shape their own learning environment. Along the lines of Collaborative and Participatory forms of action research (Banegas and Velázquez 2014), language learners are thus allowed to produce knowledge about their preferred FL classroom practices, but also to use this knowledge to make decisions they will be strongly committed to.

Finally, the two chapters devoted to CLIL succeed in describing it as a coherent development of the intuition—first formulated by communicative language teaching—according to which language can only be learnt indirectly (Corder 1990, quoted on page 142 of this volume). This intuition was taken a step further towards concretion through Task-based approaches to FL education, by presenting interesting and meaningful proposals (projects, problem-solving, etc.) as the direct

aim of FL teaching, and suggesting that language content should be addressed only indirectly and to the extent that it is necessary to fulfill the assigned tasks. According to Lorenzo, "in CLIL . . . the real justification for the task is learning academic content. L2 acquisition should remain a by-product of the classroom interaction when working on other subjects" (143). Language education is thus justified on the grounds of proposals which the students might consider meaningful (and one can only become motivated by what one understands), not on the grounds of decontextualized language content goals that have to be attained no matter what. In spite of the counterintuitive nature of this pedagogical argument, Doiz, Lasagabaster and Sierra prove in chapter seven that the indirectness that characterizes CLIL provides learners with more affordances for language learning, accompanied by increased student motivation.

Contributions by Vera Busse (chapter eight) and Magdalena Kubanyiova (chapter four) add to the diversity and richness of this volume by introducing frameworks for teachers to analyze their own practice and its impact on learners' motivation. Busse presents a concrete educational FL situation where she found it hard to strike a balance between *challenge* and *feedback*; negative consequences ensued, which bore out the ongoing significance of these two terms, carefully analyzed by Hattie in 2009. Kubanyiova, on the other hand, reformulates elements in Dörnyei's original insights into motivation and comes up with a model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change (LTCC) aimed at helping teachers overcome their received wisdom on FL education as a first step towards embracing sounder pedagogical approaches. All in all, as the editors claim in their introduction, the volume succeeds in addressing the topic of motivation and foreign language learning from three different angles: "the teachers, the learners and the learning context" (2); as such, it is especially recommended for researchers, teachers and teacher-educators who wish to enrich their own perspective on how to translate and manage the motivational variables in real classroom contexts.

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